

ITALY

Dates of Elections: June 20 and 21, 1976

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament following premature dissolution of the legislature on May 1, 1976. Previous general elections had taken place in May 1972.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Italy consists of a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate.

The Chamber of Deputies comprises 630 members elected for 5 years.

The Senate is composed of 315 members elected for 5 years, five members appointed by the President of the Republic chosen from among persons who have brought honor to the nation in the fields of literature, art, science and social science, and, as *ex-officio* members, former Presidents of the Republic (presently two). Persons belonging to the last two categories are members of the Senate for life.

Electoral System

All citizens at least 18 years of age and residing in Italy can vote for deputies if they have not been convicted of crime or found morally unworthy under a legal provision; the minimum age of electors for the Senate is 25.

Electoral registers are compiled at the constituency level and revised annually between December and March. Voting is considered a civic duty; failure to vote without a justifiable reason is noted for five years in the public record.

Qualified electors at least 25 years old are eligible to be candidates for the Chamber of Deputies; the minimum age for the Senate is 40 years. Membership of Parliament is incompatible with a number of public posts (including judge of the Constitutional Court and the *Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura* and member of the National Council of Economy and Labour), as well as with the post of executive of a State enterprise or State-assisted company.

Candidates for the Chamber of Deputies appear on lists of political parties, which must be supported by 350 to 700 electors, depending on the size of the constituency. Senate candidates are nominated as individuals but group with other candidates of the same region for purposes of distribution of seats.

Deputies are elected in 31 constituencies by a party-list system of proportional representation. In accordance with the Constitution, division of seats among the constituencies is based on population. Within each constituency, seats are distributed among the parties on the basis of an electoral quota determined by dividing the total number of votes by the number of seats to be filled, plus two. (Remaining seats are distributed on the national level according to the method of the greatest remainder, taking into account only those party-lists which have won at least one seat and 300,000 valid votes cast.) Within each fist, candidates are elected on the basis of preferential votes; each elector can express three preferences in a constituency with less than 16 seats, four in a constituency with 16 or more seats.

The Senate is elected on a regional basis. Each of the country's 20 regions is allotted a number of Senators proportionate to its population, and is divided into as many single-member districts as there are seats. Each elector votes for a single candidate of a party in his district. A 65% majority of votes cast is required for a candidate to win the district seat. If this qualified majority is not attained, the seats concerned are distributed on the regional level according to the d'Hondt method of proportional representation.

The Aosta Valley, which elects a single deputy and Senator by simple majority vote, is the one constituency having an electoral system differing from the ones described above.

If a seat becomes vacant in the Chamber of Deputies between general elections, it is filled by the individual who is "next-in-line" on the list of the party which formerly held the seat. Senate vacancies are filled by the "next-in-line" regional candidates of the party which formerly held the seat.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The Parliament was dissolved by the President of the Republic one year in advance amidst a political crisis in which the minority Christian Democratic Government of Prime Minister Aldo Moro resigned after being unsuccessful in gaining the support of the Socialist group in Parliament. The resignation came in the face of mounting economic (inflation, unemployment) and social problems.

The election date was fixed on May 3, and the election campaign officially opened three days later. Christian Democrat Party Secretary Benigno Zaccagnini campaigned on a policy of renewal within the party, which had been in power for 30 years, and party leaders predicted a radical change in Italian politics were the Christian Democrats to lose their primary position in Parliament. The Communist Party, which had greatly strengthened itself through success in the 1975 regional elections, was led by Enrico Berlinguer, who stressed the need for his party's participation in the government.

For the first time, 18-year-olds were entitled to cast ballots for deputies. There were therefore some five million more registered electors for the Chamber of Deputies than for the Senate. The polling results did not bring about such radical changes as had been predicted. The Communists gained more votes and parliamentary seats than ever before, but could still not overcome the Christian Democrats, who retained their lead in both Chambers while they still fell short of absolute majority therein. The Socialists dropped four seats in each Chamber while small centre parties — Social Democrats, Liberals and Republicans — lost heavily. As compared to the previous legislature, the number of female members of Parliament grew considerably, rising from 27 to 58.

After the elections, a Christian Democrat was chosen to preside over the Senate and a Communist over the Chamber of Deputies. Christian Democrat Giulio Andreotti was designated as Prime Minister; his minority Government was sworn in on July 30, 1976.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies

Valid votes 36,707,104

| Political Group | Votes obtained | % | Number of seats |
|--|-------------------|------|--------------------|
| Christian Democratic Party | 14,209,519 | 38.7 | 263 (—3) |
| Italian Communist Party | 12,614,650 | 34.4 | 227 (+48) |
| Italian Socialist Party | 3,540,309 | 9.6 | 57 (-4) |
| Italian Social Movement-National Right | 2,236,141 | 6.1 | 35 (—21) |
| Democratic Socialist Party | 1,239,492 | 3.4 | 15 (—14) |
| Republican Party | 1,135,546 | 3.1 | 14 (-1) |
| Proletarian Democracy | 557,025 | 1.5 | 6 (+6) |
| Liberal Party | 480,122 | 1.3 | 5 (—15) |
| Radical Party | 392,419 | 1.1 | 4 (+4) |
| South Tyrol People's Party | 184,375 | 0.5 | 3 (=) |
| Others | 117,506 | 0.3 | M= |

630

2. Results of the Elections and Distribution
of Seats in the Senate

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Voters. | 32,618,835 |
| Blank or void ballot papers. | 1,169,394 |
| Valid votes. | 31,449,441 |

| <i>a</i> , ~ Political Group | Votes obtained | n/ % | Number of ^ |
|---|-------------------|---------|----------------|
| Christian Democratic Party. | 12,227,353 | 38.9 | 135 (=) |
| Italian Communist Party. | 10,637,772 | 33.8 | 116 (+21) |
| Italian Socialist Party. | 3,208,164 | 10.2 | 29 (-^t) |
| Italian Social Movement-National Right | 2,086,430 | 6.6 | 15 (-11) |
| Democratic Socialist Party. | 974,940 | 3.1 | 6 H) |
| Republican Party. | 846,425 | 2.7 | 6(+1) |
| Liberal Party. | 438,265 | 1.4 | 2 (-6) |
| Radical Party. | 265,947 | 0.8 | — |
| South Tyrol People's Party. | 158,584 | 0.5 | 3(+1) |
| Proletarian Democracy. | 78,170 | 0.2 | — |
| Others. | 527,391 | 1.8 | 3 (+3) |
| | | | 315 |

*Distribution of Members of Parliament according
to Professional Category*

| | Chamber of Deputies | Senate |
|--|---|---|
| Lawyers, notaries | 112 | ◊◊ |
| Salaried clerks | 79 | IS |
| Journalists, public relations officers | 76 | 28 |
| Teachers in elementary or secondary schools | 66 | 36 |
| University professors | 36 | 20 |
| Industrialists | 34 | L7 |
| Doctors, pharmacists | 28 | It) |
| Trade unionists | 26 | 16 |
| Party officials | 26 | 20 |
| Engineers, architects, survey- ors | 22 | 7 |
| Civil servants | 22 | 9 |
| Economists | 19 | — |
| Workers | 18 | 6 |
| Others | 26 | 12 |
| No indication of profession . . | 35 | 41 |
| | <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/> 630 | <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/> 322 |

4. *Distribution of Members of Parliament
according to Sex*

| | Chamber of Deputies | Senate |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------|
| Men | 583 | 311 |
| Women | 47 | 11 |
| | 630 | 322 |