

ITALY

Dates of Elections: 26 and 27 June 1983.

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 4 May 1983. Previous general elections had taken place in June 1979.

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, 5 members appointed by the President of the Republic chosen from among persons who have brought honour to the nation in the fields of literature, art, science and social science, and, as *ex-officio* members, former Presidents of the Republic (currently 2). 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 judgeship of the Constitutional Court and the *Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura* and membership 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 list, 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 with 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 Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Premature dissolution of Parliament came about as a result of a governmental crisis which arose after the Socialist Party withdrew its support from the ruling four-party coalition led by Prime Minister Amintore Fanfani (Christian Democratic Party - DC). The last Parliament to last its entire five-year term was that elected in April 1963.

The election date was set on 5 June. A total of 31 parties and groups nominated 6357 candidates for the Chamber of Deputies seats, and another 2433 for the Senate. Campaign debate focused on the outgoing Government's austerity measures to combat economic problems such as inflation and unemployment, as well as on the personalities of the various party leaders.

On polling day, the DC, the country's largest party, slipped considerably in both Houses, losing nearly 6% of the vote it had obtained four years earlier, while its main rival, the Communist Party, saw its overall parliamentary standing decrease slightly. These losses were picked up by the smaller rightist and centrist groups, and by the Socialist Party. In this context, formation of a new Government entailed several weeks of negotiations. Socialist leader Bettino Craxi ultimately was named Prime Minister as head of a five-party centre-left coalition (Christian Democrats, Socialists, Republicans, Liberals and Social Democrats); his 28-member Cabinet was announced on 4 August.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.	43,925,733
Voters.	(89%)
Valid votes.	37,071,018

Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats
Christian Democratic Party (DC)	12,145,800	32.9	225 (-37)
Communist Party (PCI)	11,028,158	29.9	198 (-3)
Socialist Party (PSI)	4,222,487	11.4	73 (+11)
Italian Social Movement - National Right (MSI-DN)	2,511,722	6.8	42 (+12)
Republican Party (PRI)	1,872,536	5.1	29 (+13)
Democratic Socialist Party (PSDI)	1,507,431	4.1	23 (+3)
Liberal Party (PLI)	1,065,833	2.9	16 (+7)
Radical Party (PR)	809,672	2.2	11 (-7)
Proletarian Democracy*	541,493	1.5	7 (+7)
South Tyrol People's Party (SVP)	184,892	0.6	3 (-1)
Others	1,180,994	2.2	3 (-5)
			630

* New party.

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

Number of registered electors. 37,606,533
Valid votes. 29,505,523

Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats
Christian Democratic Party (DC)	10,076,141	32.4	120 (-18)
Communist Party (PCI)	9,579,964	30.8	107 (-2)
Socialist Party (PSI)	3,541,218	11.4	38 (+6)
Italian Social Movement - National Right (MSI-DN)	2,283,691	7.3	18 (+5)
Republican Party (PRI)	1,452,359	4.7	10 (+4)
Democratic Socialist Party (P S D I)	1,186,271	3.8	8 (-1)
Liberal Party (PLI)	834,235	2.7	6 (+4)
Radical Party (PR)	551,644	1.8	1 (-1)
South Tyrol People's Party (SVP)		0.5	3 (=)
Others		4.7	4 (+3)
			315*

* There are moreover seven Senators for life.