

POLAND

Date of Elections: 13 October 1985

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament after postponement of the poll since spring 1984.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Polish Parliament is unicameral. The Diet (*Sejm*) is composed of 460 Deputies elected for 4 years. Of these, 410 are chosen in local constituencies and 50 are important public figures selected from a "national list" of candidates.

Electoral System

All Polish citizens are entitled to vote provided they are at least 18 years of age; also qualified are persons who have resided in the country for five years and are stateless, even if their Polish citizenship is not yet established. Disqualified from voting are persons under court-imposed guardianship due to mental deficiency and those deprived of their civil rights by court decision.

Prior to each election, electoral registers are compiled at the constituency level by the local organs of State administration and scrutinized by the electors. Voting is not compulsory.

Any qualified elector who is at least 21 years of age may stand for election to the Diet. The office of Deputy is incompatible with the post of judge of the Constitutional Tribunal. Lists of candidates are drawn up after consultation of the electorate. Nominations are made by the Patriotic Front for National Rebirth (PRON), which embraces the political parties and social organizations which originally proposed the candidates.

For the election of the 410 local *Sejm* members, Poland is divided into 74 constituencies, each of which returns from three to eight Deputies appearing on lists put forward by electoral councils, depending on population. In accordance with the new voting regulations approved in 1984, two candidates must be fielded for each seat. Candidates are elected if they have obtained more than half of the votes cast in the constituency, provided that a majority of the registered electors have participated in the elections. If these conditions are not met, a second majority ballot is held within three weeks.

As mentioned above, a total of 50 *Sejm* members are chosen from a national list comprising a like number of names of prominent public figures. There are similarly deemed elected if they obtain more than 50% of the votes cast.

If 23 seats of local Deputies or one-half of the seats of an electoral constituency fall vacant between general elections, by-elections are held within three months; no such elections take place during the last six months of the legislature's term.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Normally scheduled for spring 1984, the general elections were first indefinitely postponed and then set for October on 10 June 1985. On 3 December 1984, the *Sejm* had voted to dissolve itself on 31 August 1985.

The parliamentary elections were the first to be conducted under the new voting regulations of 1984/1985, which introduced the notion of local and national Deputies. For the 410 seats of the former category, 820 candidates (two per seat) were in the running; the 50 national candidates were unopposed, their names having been made public on 6 August 1985. All those in contention had subscribed to the programme of the Patriotic Front for National Rebirth (PRON), the country's umbrella political organization.

Polling day was marked by a voter turnout of 78%. Altogether 362 of those elected were newcomers to the Diet and 74 were non-party members; the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) maintained its parliamentary majority, capturing 245 seats.

The newly-elected *Sejm* convened on 6 November; it elected Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski - who had called for a programme of economic and social reform - as Chairman of the Council of State (President) and chose Mr. Zbigniew Messner to head a reshuffled Council of Ministers.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Diet

Number of registered electors. 26,065,497

	Local lists	National list
Voters.	20,554,182 (78.86%)	20,498,633 (78.64%)
Blank or void ballot papers	65,096	62,724
Valid votes.	20,489,086	20,435,909

Political Group

number

Patriotic Front for National Rebirth (PRON)	
- Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR)	245
- United Peasants' Party (ZSL)	106
- Democratic Party (SD)	35
- Non-party.	<u>74</u>
	460

2. *Distribution of Members of the Diet according to Professional Category*

Intellectual workers.	282
Labourers.	106
Farmers.	53
Craftsmen.	10
Retired.	<u>9</u>
	460

3. *Distribution of Members of the Diet according to Sex*

Men.	367
Women.	<u>93</u>
	460

4. *Distribution of Members of the Diet according to Age Group*

Under 25 years.	2
25-29 years.	13
30-39 ».	88
40-49 ».	152
50-59 ».	141
60-69 ».	55
70 years and over.	<u>12</u>
	463