

## PORTUGAL

**Date of Elections:** October 26, 1969

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of Portugal consists of a National Assembly and a Corporative Chamber.

The National Assembly has 130 Deputies elected for 4 years. The Corporative Chamber is made up of approximately 200 members nominated by the Government for a term of 4 years to represent local autonomous bodies and social interests of an administrative, moral, cultural and economic order. It has the power to stop laws passed by the Assembly.

The elections of October 1969 were held to renew the entire National Assembly upon the normal expiry of the previous legislature.

### **Electoral System**

Under the terms of the Electoral Law adopted on December 5, 1958, the right to vote belongs to Portuguese citizens of either sex, who have attained their majority or are emancipated, who can read and write Portuguese or who pay a certain amount of tax, who have not been convicted of a crime and do not profess an opinion which might endanger the security of the State.

Members of the electorate are eligible for the National Assembly provided they are Portuguese by birth and have been resident in the country during the 5 years preceding the elections.

The elections are held in the 18 constituencies by majority party-list system, whereby the list which receives the greatest number of votes is awarded all the seats, with provision for striking out names on the lists. Each list must contain at least as many names as there are seats to be filled in the constituency.

By-elections are held should at least 1/5th of the seats in the National Assembly become vacant.

### **General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

The date of the elections was officially announced on August 12 by the Minister of the Interior, and gazetted on September 2. It was stated that candidates representing all shades of opinion, except Anarchists and Communists, could stand for election and be present at the scrutiny of the ballot

papers. At the same time, the Minister issued a series of strict regulations governing the electoral campaign which got under way on September 28.

The Government party, the National Union, presented a list of candidates, the majority of whom had not been members of the previous Assembly. The list included a great many young technocrats and even some former critics of Dr. Salazar.

The opposition was organized into 2 main parties:

— the Democratic Electoral Commission represented the Socialists, progressive Catholics and Republicans and was led by Dr. Francisco Pereira de Mouro.

— the United Democratic Electoral Commission, under Dr. Mario Soares, consisted of Social Democrats, Lisbon Monarchists and some ultra-Conservatives from Braga.

In addition, the Monarchists presented some candidates. The main extreme left-wing party declared that it would not take part in the elections and recommended the electorate to abstain from voting.

The National Union based its campaign on the theme of "diversity in unity", and the opposition parties concentrated on re-establishing contact with the electorate after many years of absence. A certain number of violent incidents took place, directed particularly against opposition candidates and offices.

The results of the elections, notable for a very high rate of abstentions (38 %), gave victory to the Government party which won all the seats in the Assembly.

On November 8, 1969, the Minister of the Interior announced that the "Commissions", which had been permitted to form during the campaign and for the purposes of the legislative elections, were no longer legal and should be disbanded.

## Statistics

### *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly*

Number of registered voters. . . . .	1,784,341
Voters. . . . .	1,115,248 (62.5 %)
Void or blank ballot papers. . . . .	1,053
Valid votes. . . . .	1,114,195

Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the National Assembly
National Union . . . . .	981,263	88	130
Democratic Electoral Commission . . .	114,745	10.2	0
United Democratic Electoral Commis- sion . . . . .	16,863	1.5	0
Monarchist Electoral Commission . . .	1,324	0.1	0
			130