

## PORTUGAL

**Date of Elections:** April 25, 1976

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution promulgated on April 2, 1976\*.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Portugal, the Assembly of the Republic, consists of 263 deputies elected for 4 years. Four of these represent Portuguese citizens residing abroad.

### **Electoral System**

All Portuguese citizens, even if residing abroad, are entitled to vote if at least 18 years old and registered as electors. The insane, prisoners, persons serving their sentences following conviction for crime, as well as a number of persons who held certain high public positions or belonged to anti-democratic organizations prior to April 25, 1974, are barred both from voting and standing for election to the Assembly of the Republic.

Electoral registers are revised before elections.

All persons holding Portuguese citizenship for at least 15 years, aged over 21 and resident for at least six months in the constituency in which they stand as candidates, are eligible for election to the Assembly of the Republic. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with membership in the Government and active service in the military and police forces, as well as with the post of magistrate, diplomat, and certain public and ecclesiastical offices. Candidates are nominated by political parties.

Deputies are elected in 24 constituencies (of metropolitan Portugal, the Azores, Madeira, Macao and overseas where Portuguese are residing in significant numbers), by a party-list system, with proportional representation based on the d'Hondt method. Parties qualify for representation in the Assembly if they obtain at least 5% of the total votes cast.

• See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 18.

## General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

As was the case for the Constituent Assembly elections one year earlier \*, the 1976 poll for the Assembly of the Republic afforded the Portuguese electorate a choice between political groups and candidates holding a wide spectrum of opinions.

The election date was fixed two months in advance. Fourteen political parties fielded over 3000 candidates (including 442 women), many of them less than 30 years old. The most prominent groups were the Socialist Party headed by Dr. Mario Soares, the centrist Popular Democratic Party, the Portuguese Communist Party, and the Social Democrat Centre, the four parties which held nearly all the seats in the Constituent Assembly. Key issues in the lively three-week electoral campaign centred on various economic problems, such as the balance-of-payments deficit, inflation and unemployment.

Polling day was conducted without incident. The Socialists remained the single leading party but fell short of an overall majority in the Assembly in the face of a strong centrist and conservative vote. The conservative Social Democratic Centre doubled its share of the votes, thus becoming the third largest party in the Assembly in front of the Communist Party.

A minority Socialist Government was formed on July 23, 1976, following the presidential elections which took place on June 27. Mr. Soares was designated Prime Minister.

\* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections IX* (1974-1975), p. 71.

**Statistics**

*1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the Assembly of the Republic*

|                                      |           |          |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Number of registered voters. . . . . | 6,481,352 |          |
| Voters. . . . .                      | 5,396,112 | (83.26%) |
| Blank or void ballot papers. . . . . | 258,180   |          |
| Valid votes. . . . .                 | 5,137,932 |          |

| Political Group  | Votes<br>obtained' | n/<br>% | Number<br>of Seats |
|--|--------------------|---------|--------------------|
| Portuguese Socialist Party. . . . .                                      | 1,887,180          | 36.67   | 107                |
| Popular Democratic Party. . . . .  | 1,296,432          | 25.23   | 73                 |
| Social Democratic Centre. . . . .  | 858,783            | 16.71   | <b>42</b>          |
| Portuguese Communist Party. . . . .                                      | 785,620            | 15.29   | 40                 |
| Popular Democratic Union. . . . .  | 91,383             | 1.77    | 1                  |
| Popular Social Front . . . . .   | 41,954             | 0.81    | —                  |
| Movement for the Reorgajiization of the<br>Proletarian Party** . . . . . | 36,237             | 0.70    | —                  |
| Movement of the Socialist Left . . . . .                                 | 31,065             | 0.60    | —                  |
| Christian Democratic Party** . . . . .                                   | 28,226             | 0.54    | —                  |
| Popular Monarchic Party. . . . .   | 28,163             | 0.54    | —                  |
| International Communist League. . . . .                                  | 16,235             | 0.31    | —                  |
| Portuguese Communist Party (Marxist-<br>Leninist)** . . . . .            | 15,801             | 0.30    |                    |
| Alliance of Workers & Farm Labourers**                                   | 15,671             | 0.30    | —                  |
| Workers' Revolutionary Party** . . . . .                                 | 5,182              | 0.10    | —                  |

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263

\* Excluding the votes cast abroad.  
 \*\* Did not participate in the 1975 elections.