

## PORTUGAL

Date of Elections: 2 December 1979

### Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all members of Parliament following the dissolution of this body by the President of the Republic on 11 September 1979 on the advice of the Council of the Revolution.

### Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Portugal, the Assembly of the Republic, consists of 246 Deputies\* elected to represent metropolitan Portugal and other Deputies chosen by electors residing abroad. The latter comprise two electoral constituencies, one for European territories and the second for other territories and Macao; the constituencies each return one Deputy when there are less than 55,000 electors and 2 Deputies when there are more than this number. The normal term of the legislature is 4 years.

### Electoral System

**1** Portuguese citizens, even if residing abroad, are entitled to vote if at least 18 years old and registered as electors. Disqualified are the insane and mentally infirm, persons incompetent to manage their own affairs, persons serving their sentences following conviction for crime, those deprived of their political rights and certain categories of persons who held important public positions prior to 25 April 1974 and did not clearly repudiate before this date the political regime then in power.

Electoral registers are permanent and revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

All qualified electors are eligible for membership of Parliament. The office of Deputy is incompatible with membership of 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. Portuguese citizens who have a second nationality may not stand as candidates in the constituency which is adjacent to the territory of this nationality. Deputies who are civil servants or members of public corporations may not exercise the latter functions during the term of the legislature.

Candidates are nominated by political parties. The lists may bear names of persons who are not party members.

Deputies are elected in 22 constituencies by party-list system, with proportional representation based on the d'Hondt method. The lists must bear as many names as there are seats to be filled in the constituency. Electors may only vote for one list.

Assembly seats which fall vacant between general elections are filled by the first of the "next-in-line" candidates appearing on the same party list.

\* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XIII* (1978-79), p. 24

### General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The Parliament elected in 1976 would normally have reached the end of its term in 1980. On 13 July 1979, the President of the Republic, General Antonio Ramalho Eanes, announced that he intended to dissolve the Assembly and call new elections. This dissolution was officially carried out on 11 September, the President justifying it in a public speech on the ground that it was urgently necessary to find stable political solutions in view of the manifest impossibility, within the existing parliamentary framework, of achieving a minimum of governmental stability with minority Governments.

This instability was particularly demonstrated by failure of the non-partisan Government of Mr. Alfredo Nobre da Costa that fell on 14 September 1978, three weeks after it came into power, and that of Dr. Carlos Mota Pinto, also non-partisan, which assumed power on 22 November 1978 and fell on 7 June 1979 following motions of censure tabled by the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. These difficulties also reflected the country's economic and financial crises, marked by high unemployment and inflation rates. On 30 July, a non-partisan interim Government entrusted with preparing the elections was named, with Dr. Maria de Lurdes Pintassilgo as Prime Minister.

On polling day, voter turnout was high, reaching 82.87%. The electoral coalition of the Democratic Alliance (AD) comprising the Social Democratic Party (PSD) headed by Dr. Francisco Sa Carneiro, the Centre Democratic Party (CDS), the People's Monarchic Party (PPM) and the Reformists obtained an absolute Assembly majority with 128 seats of the 250; at the preceding elections, the Alliance parties had won 115 of 263 seats. The United People's Alliance (APU) electoral coalition comprising the Portuguese Communist Party led by Mr. Alvaro Cunhal and the People's Democratic Movement also made progress; it won 47 seats as opposed to the 40 for the parties which comprised it at the previous elections. On the other hand, the Socialist Party of Mr. Mario Soares lost 33 seats. Overall, the results marked the first time since 25 April 1974 that one political group had gained an absolute Assembly majority. It was also the first time that centre-right parties had defeated all left-wing parties together.

In late 1979, the Prime Minister of the interim Government resigned. Dr. Sa Carneiro was designated Prime Minister and formed a 14-member AD Cabinet made up wholly of civilians; this composition was approved by the President of the Republic on 31 December 1979.

## Statistics

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

Number of registered electors. . . . .	7,249,346
Voters. . . . . I .	6,007,453 (82.87%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . . I .	163,714
Valid votes. . . . . I .	5,843,739

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections
Democratic Alliance (AD)*	2,554,458	45.52	~1		
Social Democratic Party (PSb)**	141,227***	2.35***	7***	38	73
Centre Democratic Party (CDS)**	23,523***	0.39***	-	41	42
Socialist Party (PS) . . . . .	1,642,136	27.33	74	101	107
United People's Alliance (APU)****	1,129,322	18.8	47	40	40
Portuguese Commu- nist Party (PCP)					
People's Democratic Movement (MDP) .					
People's Democratic Union Independents . . . . .	130,842	2.18		1	42*
			250	263	~263

\*1979 electoral coalition comprising the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Centre Democratic Party (CDS), the People's Monarchic Party (PPM) and the Reformists.

\*\* The PSD and CDS fielded separate candidates in the Madeira and the Azores.

\*\*\* In Madeira and the Azores only.

\*\*\*\* 1979 electoral coalition comprising the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and the People's Democratic Movement (MDP).

\*\*\*\*\* Deputies who had left the PSD, PS and CDS.

*2. Distribution of Members of Parliament  
according to Professional Category*

Members of the legal profession. . . . .	59
Civil servants. . . . .	47
Teachers. . . . .	34
Engineers. . . . .	24
Workers. . . . .	19
Company directors. . . . .	16
Doctors. . . . .	14
Economists. . . . .	11
Journalists. . . . .	8
Students. . . . .	6
Others. . . . .	12
	250

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

Men . . . . .	227
Women. . . . .	23
	250

*4. Distribution of Members of Parliament  
according to Age Group*

20-30 years. . . . .	12
31-40. . . . . I . . . . .	89
41-50. . . . . j . . . . .	70
51-60. . . . .	56
Over 60. . . . .	23
	250