PORTUGAL

Date of Elections: 19 July 1987

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following the premature dissolution of this body on 29 April 1987. General elections had previously been held in October 1985.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Portugal, the Assembly of the Republic, consists of 250 Deputies elected to represent metropolitan Portugal and electors residing abroad. The latter are represented by 4 Deputies. The normal term of the legislature is 4 years.

Electoral System

All 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 parliamentary mandate 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.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 3 April 1987, a censure vote proposed by the centre-left Democratic Renewal Party (PRD) of former President of the Republic A.R. Eanes brought down the conservative minority Government of Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva (Social Democratic Party - PSD). The resulting political crisis led President Mario Soares to call general elections for July - some 27 months ahead of schedule.

The legislative poll was held simultaneouly with that for the 24 Portuguese seats in the European Parliament. Altogether 12 parties or coalitions contested the Assembly's 250 seats in a three-week election campaign that began on 29 June. In the rivalry, personalities were seen as important as issues. Mr. Cavaco Silva pointed to the period of economic growth under his term in office. He advocated free-market policies and promised further reform and modernization of the economic sector.

Polling day saw a relatively low turnout, which observers attributed in part to the summer date. Final results allowed the PSD to become the first party since the April 1974 revolution to win an absolute majority in the Assembly, as it captured 148 seats - an increase of 60. These gains came both at the expense of the PRD and the rightist Centre Democratic Party (CDS). Observers viewed the outcome as reflecting the electorate's wish for political stability after the numerous changes of the previous years.

On 17 August, a new PSD Cabinet headed by Mr. Cavaco Silva was sworn in.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors	7,930,668	
Voters	5,676,358	(71.57%)
Blank or void ballot papers .	123,668	
Valid votes	5,552,690	

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats
Social Democratic Party (PSD) . . .	2,850,784	50.22	148 (+ 60)
Socialist Party (PS)	1,262,506	22.24	60 (+ 3)
Unified Democratic Coalition (CDU)	689,137	12.14	31 (−7)*
Democratic Renewal Party (PRD) . .	278,561	4.91	7 (−38)
Democratic Social Centre Party (CDS)	251,987	4.44	4 (−18)
Others		6.05	− < =)
			250

* The CDU replaced the United People's Alliance (APU) and comprised the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), the ecological "Os Verdes" Party and the Democratic Intervention (ID).

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Profession*

Members of the legal profession. 53
Members of the teaching profession. . . . 47
Engineers. 25
Civil servants. 21
Bank and insurance employees. 21
Business, industry, trade sector. 17
Economists. 16
Doctors. 14
Manual workers. 9
Students. 6
Politicians. 3
Writers, journalists. 3
Members of the armed forces. 3
Others. 15
                                          250

3. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men. 231
Women. . . . . I[1])
                                          250

4. *Distribution of Deputies according to Age*

20-30 years. 19
31-40   ». 68
41-50   ». 96
51-60   ». 44
61-70   ». 15
Over 70 years. 8
                                          250