

SPAIN

Date of Elections: 1 March 1979

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the elected members of Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 2 January 1979. General elections had previously been held in June 1977.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Spain, the *Cortes*, consists of the Congress of Deputies and the Senate.

The Congress of Deputies comprises a minimum of 300 and a maximum of 400 members. It currently has 350 members elected for 4 years: 3 for each of the country's 50 provinces, plus one Deputy for every 175,000 inhabitants; the African Territories of Ceuta and Melilla are each represented by one Deputy.

The Senate is composed of 208 members elected for 4 years. It is based on territorial representation. Each province elects 4 Senators. Each island or group of islands forms one constituency; Gran Canaria, Mallorca and Tenerife return 3 Senators each, the others one each. The Autonomous Communities return, in addition, one Senator, plus one more for each 1,000,000 inhabitants, appointed by the legislative assembly of the Community. Ceuta and Melilla elect 2 Senators each.

Electoral System

All Spanish citizens at least 18 years of age, in full possession of their political rights, are entitled to vote for members of the *Cortes* and be elected thereto. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with a number of high-ranking Government, political and public posts, membership of the armed forces, membership of the assembly of an Autonomous Community (for Deputies) and membership of an electoral committee (*junta*).

Candidatures for the Congress of Deputies are submitted by duly registered political associations and federations, coalitions of the same, or by at least 0.1% (and no less than 500) of the constituency's registered electorate. These same candidates appear on blocked lists and are elected by the d'Hondt system of proportional representation, subject to a minimum number per province; each voter chooses one list among those presented in his constituency (province). Deputies from Ceuta and Melilla are elected by simple majority vote.

Elected Senators are chosen from among candidates nominated like those for the Congress; they appear on party lists. According to the number of Senators to be elected in

each constituency, electors can cast one, two or a maximum of three votes. Candidates receiving the most votes are declared elected.

Vacancies in the Congress of Deputies are filled by the "next-in-line" candidate on the list of the same party which held the seat in question (or by substitutes in Ceuta and Melilla). By-elections are held to fill vacant elective seats in the Senate.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The 1979 elections followed approval of a new Constitution by popular referendum in December 1978*. This Constitution, which defines Spain as a multi-party democratic parliamentary monarchy, entered into force on 29 December 1978. The same day, Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez (Union of the Democratic Centre-UCD) announced the date of the March poll.

The three-week electoral campaign opened on 7 February. Primary contenders for the 558 elective *Cortes* seats were the ruling UCD and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), the Communist Party and the Democratic Coalition (formerly the Popular Alliance).

The UCD and the PSOE were led, respectively, by Mr. Suarez and Mr. Felipe Gonzalez. The latter stressed the country's high unemployment and inflation rates and the growing incidence of political terrorism, among other things. The Prime Minister emphasized his decisive role in democratizing Spain's political system since 1976 and his experience as Head of Government during that period. Personalities of these two leaders had a strong impact on the campaign. Some 9,000 candidates and a multitude of political groups vied for seats of both Houses.

For this poll, the minimum age for voting had been lowered to 18. Voter turnout was nevertheless relatively low. Results led to little overall change in the position of the two major parties. In the 350-seat Congress of Deputies, the UCD won 168 seats—three more than in 1977 but eight short of an absolute majority—while the PSOE and its Catalan and Basque wings jointly won 121 seats. The two parties also won the largest number of Senate seats.

On 5 April, Prime Minister Suarez appointed a new centrist Council of Ministers.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 28.

Statistics

*1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the Congress of Deputies*

Number of registered electors.	26,836,500
Voters.	18,255,555(68%)
Void ballot papers.	326,544
Valid votes.	17,929,011

D,,I:,;,I r,, Political Group	Votes obtained	0/ %	Number Of Seats
Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD).	6,268,593	34.96	168 (+ 3)
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party - Socialists of Cata- lonia (PSOE-PSC/PSOE).	5,469,813	30.51	121 (+ 3)
Spanish Communist Party.	1,911,217	10.66	23 (+ 3)
Democratic Coalition.	1,067,732	5.96	9 (- 7)
Convergence and Union*.	483,353	2.70	8 (- 3)
Basque Nationalist Party.	275,292	1.53	7 (- 1)
Andalusian Socialist Party.	325,842	1.82	5 (+ 5)
Others.	2,127,169	11.86	9 (- 3)
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* Stood in the 1977 elections as part of the Democratic Pact for Catalonia.

2. Distribution of Seats in the Senate

Political Group	Number of Seats
Union of the Democratic Centre.	120
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party.	41
Andalusian Socialist Party.	20
Catalan Democracy & Socialism.	10
Basque Senators.	10
Mixed Group.	7
	208

3. Distribution of Members of the Cortes according to Professional Category

Lawyers.	102	59
Members of the teaching profession.	65	22
Civil servants.	41	18
Engineers.	31	12
Economists.	19	4
Manual workers.	17	5
Doctors.	9	19
Farmers.	7	6
Architects.	2	2
Other liberal professions.	27	15
Others.	30	40
No indication of profession.	6	6
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	350	208

4. Distribution of Members of the Cortes according to Sex

Men.	331	202
Women.	19	6
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	350	208

5. Distribution of Members of the Cortes according to Age Group

	Congress of Deputies	Senate Senators
20-25 years.	4	—
26-30.	15	3
31-35.	67	17
36-40.	81	28
41-45.	63	40
46-50.	45	38
51-60.	47	48
61-70.	26	24
Over 70.	2	6
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	350	204*

* No data available on four Senators.