

## TURKEY

**Date of Elections:** October 12, 1969

### Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of Turkey, or Grand National Assembly, is composed of 2 Houses:

- The National Assembly, of 450 members elected for 4 years;
- The Senate, which consists of 15 members appointed by the President of the Republic, 150 Senators elected for 6 years, a third of whom are renewed every 2 years, and 18 members *ex officio*, i.e. the President and the members of the National Unity Committee who signed law No. 157 of December 13, 1960, and former Presidents of the Republic.

In the general elections of October 12, 1969, the entire National Assembly was renewed upon the normal expiry of the previous legislature.

### Electoral System

All Turkish citizens of either sex, at least 21 years old, in possession of their civil and political rights are eligible to vote in the constituency in which they have resided for 3 months. Voting is not compulsory and the electoral list for each constituency is revised 6 months before the elections.

All Turkish citizens of either sex, at least 30 years old, who can read and write Turkish are eligible for the National Assembly, with the exception of those who have not performed their military service without valid excuse, those disqualified from public service and those sentenced to more than 5 years' imprisonment or convicted of a dishonourable offense, etc. Judges are required to resign their posts in order to present themselves as candidates. Officers of the armed forces must also have resigned their commissions at the latest 7 days after the proclamation of a general election in order to stand for the constituency in which their unit is stationed. Similarly, persons employed in national or local administrations must resign their posts within 7 days following the announcement of an election, but only if they are presenting themselves as candidates for the constituency in which they serve.

Every Turkish citizen who is at least 40 years old, has completed his university education and is eligible for the office of Deputy may be elected a member of the Senate of the Republic.

The country is divided into 67 constituencies corresponding to the 67 provinces.

In each constituency, the Deputies and elective Senators are elected by party list system with proportional representation according to the d'Hondt method. The seats won by each list are allotted to the candidates in the order in which their names appear on the list.

Should a seat fall vacant in the National Assembly more than one year before the term of the legislature, a by-election is held.

The seats of the appointed Senators are refilled within one month in the event of a vacancy during a legislature. However, no by-election is organized should an elected Senator's seat become vacant during a legislature. Such vacancies are filled simultaneously with the next two-yearly elections.

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

The recent electoral campaign, one of the calmest in the history of Turkish democracy, was contested by 8 political groups and numerous Independent candidates.

However, two parties outclassed their rivals: on the one hand, the Justice Party, lead by the Prime Minister, Mr. Sulyman Demirel, a Conservative group that had succeeded to the Democratic Party on its dissolution following the military coup d'etat of 1960, and with a fairly broad spectrum of opinions amongst its members; on the other hand, the Republican People's Party, a centre-left group, headed by Mr. Ismet Inonu.

This polarization of the vote between the two leading parties was due not to the electorate's disaffection towards the small parties — which together obtained 5 per cent more of the vote than in 1965 — but to the introduction of a system of straight proportional distribution of seats in constituencies, whereas locally "unused" votes had previously been pooled on a national basis. Thus, apart from the two major parties, only the Reliance Party, founded by Mr. Turhan Feyzioghon, a dissident of the Republican People's Party, won more than the 10 seats needed to form a parliamentary group.

Another notable feature of these elections was the high abstention rate which has increased with each popular vote; participation has in fact declined from 81 per cent in **1961**, to 71.3 per cent in 1965, to reach only 64.3 per cent in 1969. Certain observers saw this, plus the fact that half the Independents elected had left the Justice Party shortly before the elections, as an explanation for the Government party's loss of some 700,000 votes in relation to the previous election figures.

**Statistics**

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

Number of registered voters	14,788,552
Voters. . . . .	9,516,035 (64.3 %)
Void ballot-papers . . . . .	476,169
Valid votes. . . . .	9,039,866

Political Pro "	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	0/ %	Number of Seats
Justice Party. . . . .	450	4,229,712	46.53	259
Republican People's Party . . . .	450	2,487,006	27.36	144
Reliance Party. . . . .	450	597,818	6.58	14
National Party. . . . .	444	292,961	3.22	6
National Action Party . . . . .	432	275,091	3.03	1
Union Party. . . . .	252	254,695	2.8	8
Labour Party. . . . .	448	243,631	2.68	2
New Turkey Party. . . . .	349	147,929	2.18	6
Independents. . . . .	221	511,023	5.62	10
	3,496			450

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men. . . . .	445
Women. . . . .	5
	450

3. *Average Age: 43*