

TURKEY

Date of Elections: June 5, 1977

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the National Assembly and one-third of the Senate following the premature dissolution of Parliament. Previous general elections had taken place in October 1973.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Turkey, the Grand National Assembly, comprises the National Assembly and the Senate.

The National Assembly is composed of 450 deputies elected for 4 years.

The Senate is composed of 150 members elected for 6 years, one-third of whom are renewed every 2 years. It furthermore consists of 15 members appointed by the President of the Republic, as well as of *ex-officio* members (the Chairman and the members of the National Unity Committee who signed Law No. 157 of December 13, 1960, and former Presidents of the Republic).

Electoral System

All Turkish citizens at least 18 years old and in possession of their civil and political rights are eligible to vote in the constituency in which they have resided for three months.

Electoral registers of each constituency are revised six months before the election. Voting is not compulsory.

Every citizen, male or female, who has attained the age of 30 is eligible to be elected deputy. Ineligible are illiterates, persons in the official service of a foreign State without permission, persons barred from public service, persons convicted to a term of penal servitude or sentenced to five years' imprisonment (except in case of negligence) or convicted of certain dishonourable offences, and persons who have not performed their military service without being excused from it. Judges, army officers, non-commissioned officers and military employees are not entitled to be candidates or to be elected unless they resign from office.

Every citizen of 40 years of age who has received a higher education and is eligible to be elected deputy may be elected to the Senate. Senators appointed by the President are chosen from among people distinguished by their accom-

plishments in various fields; at least 10 such Senators are not to have any political party affiliation.

For electoral purposes, the country is divided into 67 constituencies, corresponding to the 67 provinces. In each, deputies and elected 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.

By-elections for both Chambers are held every two years at the same time as the senatorial elections; no by-elections can however take place within one year prior to the general elections for the National Assembly. Seats of appointed Senators are, for their part, filled within one month of the vacancy.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Following the general elections of October 1973, Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of the social democratic Republican People's Party (RPP) — who had formed a coalition Government with the National Salvation Party (NSP) in January 1974 — resigned in September 1974 in the hope of provoking elections which would return his party with a parliamentary majority and eliminate the need for a coalition. Instead of a poll, however, a caretaker minority Government and later a four-party Nationalist Front coalition Government, headed by Justice Party (JP) leader Suleyman Demirel, were formed. In the spring of 1977, Prime Minister Demirel decided to call for premature general elections after clashes with the Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the NSP, a coalition partner. It was generally recognized that critical problems facing the country related to the high inflation rate and balance-of-payments deficits, turmoil in educational establishments, the situation in Cyprus, relations with the United States of America, and disagreements with Greece over the Aegean Sea.

The two-month campaign was fiercely contested. Mr. Ecevit criticized the Nationalist Front for its failing to deal with student uprisings and for its inflationary economic policies, and stressed that the RPP would restore public order and provide extensive social services for the country's poor. Mr. Demirel warned against unrealistic economic policies. NSP leader Erbakan for his part appealed to traditionalist Islamic conservatism.

On polling day, both the RPP and right-of-centre JP made substantial gains, obtaining more than 400 of the National Assembly seats between them, as among the other smaller parties all but the extreme right-wing National Action Party lost heavily. Three right-wing parties together obtained 229 Assembly seats. The RPP won 28 of the 50 Senate seats at stake the

same day. In this context, Mr. Ecevit formed a minority Government on June 21, which however lost a confidence vote in the National Assembly on July 3. Mr. Demirel subsequently became Prime Minister for the fourth time, forming a three-party (JP, NSP, National Action Party) coalition Government on July 21.

Statistics

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

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Number of registered voters. | 21,000,000 (approx.) |
| Valid votes. | 14,785,814 |

| Political Group | Votes obtained | | Number of Seats |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|------|--------------------|
| Republican People's Party. | 6,117,280 | 41.4 | 213 (+28) |
| Justice Party. | 5,467,649 | 36.9 | 189 (+40) |
| National Salvation Party. | 1,271,620 | 8.6 | 24 (—24) |
| National Action Party. | 942,606 | 6.4 | 16 (+ 13) |
| Republican Reliance Party. | 277,059 | 1.9 | 3 (- 10) |
| Democratic Party. | 273,426 | 1.8 | 1(—44) |
| Turkish Unity Party. | 58,319 | 0.4 | - (- 1) |
| Workers' Party. | 20,683 | 0.1 | - (=) |
| Independents. | 367,172 | 2.5 | 4 (—2) |
| | | | 450 |

2. Distribution of Seats in the Senate

| Political Group | Seats won in 1977 Elections |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Republican People's Party | 28 |
| Justice Party. | 21 |
| National Salvation Party | 1 |
| | no |