

URUGUAY

Date of Elections: 25 November 1984

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament for the first time since the military coup d'Etat of 1973.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Uruguay, the Congress (General Assembly), comprises the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate.

The 99 Representatives and 30 of the 31 Senators are elected for 5 years. The Vice-President of the Republic is an *ex-officio* member of the Senate with the right to vote; he is also *ex-officio* President of the Senate and of the two Houses when they meet in joint session.

Electoral System

All Uruguayan citizens at least 18 years of age and resident in the country during the three months preceding general elections have the right to vote. Foreign nationals who have relatives in Uruguay, have resided in the country for 15 years and have observed "good conduct" during this period, and have economic interests in the country likewise are entitled to vote. On the other hand, members of the armed forces holding a rank lower than corporal, the mentally or physically unsound, and persons convicted of dishonest practices are disqualified from being electors.

Voting is compulsory, unjustified abstention being punishable by a fine.

A candidate for the Chamber of Representatives must be at least 25 years of age, Uruguayan by birth or naturalized for no less than five years and in possession of his civil rights. A candidate for the Senate must be at least 30 years of age, Uruguayan by birth or naturalized for no less than seven years and in possession of his civil rights. Judges, prosecuting attorneys, police officials and military officers may not be candidates for either House in the constituency where they hold office unless they resign from their posts at least three months prior to the elections; directors of national enterprises must do so a minimum of 12 months before the elections. A Representative or Senator may neither maintain a teaching post at the university level nor be a member of the armed forces; members of the military or university instructors who become parliamentarians are given a leave of absence during their legislative mandate.

Political parties must submit their list of candidates to the national Electoral Court at least 20 days prior to the elections.

Members of Congress are elected according to a party-list proportional representation system. For senatorial elections, all of Uruguay forms a single constituency. For elections

to the Chamber of Representatives, none of the 19 constituencies may have less than two Representatives. Any vacancy arising in the Congress between general elections is filled by the substitute elected at the same time as the titular member.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The parliamentary elections were combined with those for President and Vice-President of the Republic, mayors and members of municipal councils. Some 631,000 citizens were voting for the first time.

Issues during the 60-day campaign focused on the country's economic problems (inflation, foreign debt, unemployment) as well as on the questions of land reform, nationalization of banks and amnesty for political prisoners. In a campaign agreement, the three main parties - *Colorado*, *Blanco* and *Frente Amplio* (Broad Front) - had pledged to work together after the elections to consolidate democracy and rebuild the economy.

On polling day, Mr. Julio Maria Sanguinetti (*Colorado* Party) won the presidential race; he had been regarded as the most moderate of the three leading candidates, advocating a conciliatory approach to the country's problems. Mr. Sanguinetti had also promised that, if elected, he would seek foreign loans and renegotiate Uruguay's foreign debt of some US\$5.3 billion. The centre-right *Colorado* Party also topped the opposition in the General Assembly (Parliament), winning 13 Senate seats and 41 in the Chamber of Representatives. The leftist coalition *Frente Amplio* was highly successful in Montevideo, the capital, where approximately half of the nation's electorate resides.

President Sanguinetti took office on 1 March 1985, thus terminating the military rule which had lasted since 1973. His Cabinet was sworn in the same day.

Statistics

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

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats in the Senate	Number of Seats in the House of Representatives
	Number of registered electors		2,197,503	
	Voters		1,928,316	(87.75%)
<i>Colorado</i> Party.	744,999	38.87	13	41
<i>Blanco</i> Party.	634,166	33.09	11	35
<i>Frente Amplio</i> .	393,949	20.56	6	21
Civic Union.	44,273	2.31		2
			30	99