

GREECE

Date of Elections: 18 October 1981

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 19 September 1981. Previous general elections had been held on 20 November 1977.

Characteristics of Parliament

According to the 1975 Constitution, the unicameral Parliament of Greece, the Chamber of Deputies, comprises no fewer than 200 and no more than 300 Deputies, all elected for 4 years. The present number of members is 300; of these, 288 are directly elected and 12, called "honorary" or "State" Deputies are nominated by the most successful political parties from among the "most prominent personalities" in their ranks.

Electoral System

All Greek citizens at least 20 years of age and in full possession of their civil rights are entitled to vote. Barred from voting are persons disfranchised pursuant to legal prohibition or criminal conviction for an offence defined in the common penal or military code.

Electoral registers are compiled at the local level and revised annually. Voting is compulsory, failure to participate resulting in a term of imprisonment ranging from one month to one year.

All qualified electors at least 25 years of age may be elected to Parliament. If they are candidates, members of the armed and police forces, certain public officials or holders of public office, notaries, registrars of mortgages, and employees or directors of semi-governmental agencies or organizations must resign from their posts at least 18 days before announcing their candidature. All candidates must be supported by a minimum of 12 electors and make a deposit of 8000 *drachmae*.

Deputies are elected in 56 different constituencies in accordance with a system of reinforced proportional representation. Under this system, seats are allocated to the different parties presenting lists of candidates on the basis of proportional representation (calculated by dividing the total number of votes cast in each electoral region by the number of seats for that region, plus one), with those remaining to be allotted after this first allocation being distributed among those parties which have received more than a required minimum proportion of the vote (17% of the national vote for a single party, 25% for a two-party coalition, 30% for a coalition of three or more parties).

By-elections are normally held to fill parliamentary seats which become vacant between general elections. A vacancy that arises during the last year of a parliamentary term is not filled by election as long as the number of vacant seats does not exceed one-fifth of the total number of members.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

General elections had previously taken place in November 1977. On 5 May 1980, Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis (New Democracy Party ND) was elected President of the Republic. The new leader of the centre-right ND, Mr. George Rallis, then formed a Government, reshuffling the previous Cabinet.

The date of the 1981 poll was set on 24 August 1981. The Chamber of Deputies was prematurely dissolved on 19 September, normal expiry of the Parliament's four-year term having been due two months later. A growing challenge to the ruling party from the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) emerged prior to the elections. During the campaign, PASOK, led by Mr. Andreas Papandreou, called for tighter government control of the economy, a greater decentralization of government administration and increased non-alignment in foreign affairs. ND countered by stressing its record in office and the reliability and experience of its leadership. In all, 2916 candidates (including 204 women) and 14 parties were in the running.

On polling day*, PASOK swept to victory as only three parties (compared to seven in 1977) obtained seats. Greece thus had its first socialist Government. Mr. Papandreou became Prime Minister and his 21-member Cabinet was sworn in on 21 October.

* Also on 18 October, PASOK won a relative majority in the country's first direct elections (for 24 members) to the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Community, which Greece had joined on 1 January 1981.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies

Number of registered electors.	6,927,880
Voters.	5,753,478 (83.05%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	82,421
Valid votes.	5,671,057

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Election
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	378	2,726,309	48.02	172	94	93
New Democracy (ND).	377	2,034,496	35.87	115	177	172
Communist Party of Greece	374	620,302	10.93	13	11	11
				300		

*2. Distribution of Deputies according
to Professional Category*

Lawyers.	140
Doctors.	31
Architects.	27
Teachers.	19
Ex-military.	18
Economists.	11
Journalists.	6
Industrialists.	5
Farmers.	5
Actors.	4
Others.	34
	300

3. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men.	287
Women	
	300

*4. Distribution of Deputies according
to Age Group*

<u>Under 50 years</u>	160
<u>50-60</u>	72
<u>Over 60</u>	68
	300