

## **POLAND**

**Date of Elections:** March 21, 1976

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament on the normal expiry of their term of office.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Poland, the *Sejm* (Diet), is composed of 460 members elected for 4 years.

### **Electoral System**

All Polish citizens are entitled to vote provided they are at least 18 years old, have not been convicted of crime or deprived of their civil rights by judgement of a court and are not mentally deficient. Also entitled are persons who have resided in Poland for five years and have no other nationality, even if their Polish citizenship is not yet established.

Electoral registers are drawn up at the constituency level by the local people's councils and revised before each election. Voting is not compulsory.

Any qualified elector who is at least 21 years of age may stand for election to the Diet. The mandate of deputy is not incompatible with any other public or private function.

According to the Constitution amended in 1976, candidates are nominated by political and social organizations embracing the country's urban and rural population.

For the 1976 general elections, Poland was divided into 71 constituencies, each returning from three to ten deputies, depending on the constituency's population. Deputies are elected by absolute majority system, with electors in each constituency voting for lists of candidates presented by political parties. Each elector votes for as many candidates as there are seats to be filled in the constituency and, since the names on any party list can exceed this total, may cast preferential votes for candidates of his choice by crossing out names of others. If not enough candidates to fill the available seats in the constituency obtain the absolute majority of votes in the first ballot, or if less than an

absolute majority of the total number of registered electors have voted, a second ballot is held. On this second ballot, a simple majority of votes is sufficient for election.

A Diet seat which becomes vacant between general elections is filled by the candidate who is " next-in-line " on the list of the party which formerly held the seat.

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

The election date was announced on January 19, 1976. The names of the 631 candidates contesting the 460 parliamentary seats were published on March 1. All of them had been approved by the country's National Unity Front, the umbrella organization for all Polish political groups and social associations, including the Polish United Workers' Party, headed by Mr. Edward Gierek, the United Peasants' Party and the Democratic Party.

On polling day, a significant number of candidates were elected to Parliament for the first time. The distribution of seats in the Diet among political parties, deputies with no party affiliation and those belonging to Roman Catholic groups remained unchanged; as before, 55% of the deputies belonged to the United Workers' Party.

At its first session on March 25, the newly-elected *Sejm* re-elected Mr. P. Jaroszewicz as Chairman of the Council of Ministers and elected a new Council of State (the collegial body fulfilling the functions of Head of State) to be headed by Mr. H. Jablonski.

Poland

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the Diet*

Number of registered voters . . . . .	24,069,579	
Voters . . . . .	23,652,256	(98.27%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	14,923	
Valid votes. . . . .	23,637,333	
<i>Votes in favour of the National Unity Front</i>	23,502,983	

Political Group	Number of Seats
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National Unity Front

Polish United Workers' Party . . . . .	255 (=
United Peasants' Party. . . . .	117 (=
Democratic Party. . . . .	39 (=
Non-Party. . . . .	37 (=
Catholic Groups. . . . .	12 (=
	460

2. *Distribution of Members of the Diet  
according to Sex*

Men . . . . .	366
	94
	<hr/> 460