PORTUGAL

Date of Elections: 5 October 1980

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 Portugal, the Assembly of the Republic, consists of 250 Deputies elected to represent metropolitan Portugal and electors residing abroad. The latter are represented by 4 Deputies. The normal term of the legislature is 4 years.

Electoral System

All Portuguese citizens, even if residing abroad, are entitled to vote if at least 18 years old and registered as electors. Disqualified are the insane and mentally infirm, persons incompetent to manage their own affairs, persons serving their sentences following conviction for crime, those deprived of their political rights and certain categories of persons who held important public positions prior to 25 April 1974 and did not clearly repudiate before this date the political regime then in power.

Electoral registers are permanent and revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

All qualified electors are eligible for membership of Parliament. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with membership of the Government and active service in the military and police forces, as well as with the post of magistrate, diplomat, and certain public and ecclesiastical offices. Portuguese citizens who have a second nationality may not stand as candidates in the constituency which is adjacent to the territory of this nationality. Deputies who are civil servants or members of public corporations may not exercise the latter functions during the term of the legislature.

Candidates are nominated by political parties. The lists may bear names of persons who are not party members.

Deputies are elected in 22 constituencies by party-list system, with proportional representation based on the d'Hondt method. The lists must bear as many names as there are seats to be filled in the constituency. Electors may only vote for one list.

Assembly seats which fall vacant between general elections are filled by the first of the "next-in-line" candidates appearing on the same party list.

*See "General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections", below.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

General elections were previously held in April 1976 and December 1979. The October 1980 poll was nevertheless due under the 1976 Constitution. Article 174 of this text states that each legislative period is to last four years, and that in the event of a premature dissolution (as in 1979), the Assembly subsequently elected does not begin a new legislative period.

As in 1979, one of the main competitors for Assembly seats was the ruling electoral coalition of the Democratic Alliance (consisting of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), headed by Prime Minister Francisco Sa Carneiro, the Centre Democratic Party (CDS), and the People's Monarchist Party (PPM)). This rightist Alliance (AD) was challenged by the Republican and Socialist Front (FRS), formed in June 1980; it comprised the Socialist Party (PS), the Socialist and Democratic Left (UEDS) and the Independent Social Democratic Association (ASDI). The third major contender was the United People's Alliance (APU), composed of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and the Democratic Movement (MDP).

During the election campaign, which lasted from 14 September to 3 October, government expropriation of land was one of the key issues raised by the AD, which opposed such action; the Socialist Party, as well as the Communists, questioned the Prime Minister's personal integrity, particularly in financial dealings.

On polling day, both the Socialist Party and the APU lost ground, as the AD was returned with an increased absolute majority in the Assembly. Dr. Sa Carneiro's Council of Ministers, which had first taken office on 3 January 1980, remained intact until the accidental death of the Prime Minister in December 1980.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors 7,179,024
Voters 6,026,395 (83.94%)
Blank or void ballot papers 137,662
Valid votes 5,888,733

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections
Democratic Alliance (AD)*	240	2,706,667	44.91	126	
Social Democratic Party (PSD)**	10	147,644	2.45	8	128
Centre Democratic Party (CDS)**	10	13,765	0.23		
Republican and Socialist Front (FRS)*** . . .	236	1.606,198	26.65	71	74 (Socialist Party
Socialist Party (PS)**** . . .	14	67,081	1.11	3 /	only)
United People's Alliance (APU)	250	1,009,505	16.75	41	47
Popular Democratic Union	250	83,204	1.38		1
				250	250

* The Democratic Alliance is an electoral coalition comprising the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Centre Democratic Party (CDS) and the People's Monarchist Party (PPM).
"The PSD and CDS fielded separate candidates in the Madeira Islands and the Azores.
*** The Republican and Socialist Front is an electoral coalition comprising the Socialist Party (PS), the Socialist and Democratic Left (UEDS) and the Independent Social Democratic Association (ASDI).
****The Socialist Party fielded candidates in the Madeira Islands, the Azores and in the two constituencies of electors residing abroad.
•****The United People's Alliance (APU) is an electoral coalition comprising the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and the Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP/CDE).