

# CZECHOSLOVAKIA

**Dates of Elections:** 5 and 6 June 1992

## **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following the normal expiry of the term of the transitional Federal Assembly elected for a shortened mandate of two years in June 1990 . This Assembly also had constituent powers.

## **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of Czechoslovakia, the Federal Assembly, consists of the Chamber of the People and the Chamber of Nations.

The Chamber of the People is based on population and composed of 150 Deputies, of whom 99 are elected in the Czech Republic and 51 in the Slovak Republic. The Chamber of Nations has 150 members - 75 from each of the two Republics.

All Federal Assembly members have 4-year terms of office.

## **Electoral System**

All Czechoslovak citizens who are at least 18 years old and on the territory of one of the electoral districts on election day are entitled to vote unless they are insane or their competence for legal acts has been taken away or limited. Electoral registers are compiled by local authorities and made public at least 30 days before polling day. Voting is not compulsory.

All qualified electors who have attained the age of 21 years on election day may be candidates for the Federal Assembly. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with the office of President of the Republic, membership of the Czech or Slovak National Council, membership of the armed or police forces, and the office of judge, attorney or State arbiter.

Candidates may run either as political party members or as independents. No monetary deposit is required. Any contending party must have at least 10,000 members or supporters. It must present its list of candidates in each district no later than 60 days before the polling.

Deputies are chosen pursuant to a proportional representation system (Hagenbach-Bischoff and greatest remainders) in 12 electoral districts. Each elector votes for the party list of his choice and can also cast four preferential votes for individual candidates on the list. Two calculations take place, the first to determine whether a given party received at least the 5% of the national vote required to gain Federal Assembly representation (7% in case of coalitions of two or three

\* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XXIV* (1989-1990), p.57.

parties, 10% for coalitions of four or more parties), the second to proportionally distribute the remaining seats after the initial calculation. Substitutes fill the seat of any Deputy which becomes vacant between general elections.

### **Background and Outcome of the Elections**

The election dates were set on 3 March 1992 by the Federal Assembly presidium. Simultaneous polling for the Czech and Slovak National Councils (regional legislatures) was also scheduled.

The previous general elections, in June 1990, had given the Deputies a transitional two-year mandate to prepare a new Constitution. However, its adoption was delayed by continuous disagreement over the delimitation of powers between the federal authorities and the constituent republics. It was ultimately agreed that negotiations should be adjourned until after the June 1992 **poll**.

The election campaign lasted 23 days. The main points of each party platform were its attitude to the process of the country's economic transformation to a free-market system, social policy and, especially in the Slovak Republic, independence and sovereignty for the region. Main contestants included the four parties members of the outgoing government coalition in the Czech Republic: the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), led by federal Finance Minister Vaclav Klaus, in alliance with the Christian Democratic Party (KDS), the Civic Democratic Alliance and the Christian Democratic Union. Prominent Slovak challengers were the Movement for Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), led by Mr. Vladimir Meciar, the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL) and the Slovak National Party (SNS). Generally speaking, candidates in the wealthier, more industrialized Czech region favoured a rapid move away from a centralized economic system as well as preservation of the federation, while those in Slovakia, facing higher unemployment and other economic problems, opposed fast-paced reform and pushed for autonomy. If successful, Mr. Meciar vowed Slovak sovereignty. Altogether some 35 parties or groups vied for the Federal Assembly's 300 seats.

Polling day was marked by a high voter turnout. The results bore out the sharply differing views that had previously surfaced, and handed down contradictory mandates to those elected. While in the Czech Republic right-wing parties (especially ODS-KDS) met with considerable success, the majority of seats in the Slovak Republic went to left-oriented groups or those with strong national programmes (particularly HZDS). This outcome meant that in the Federal Assembly both blocs were strong enough to impede the other side's initiatives. Communist groups fared relatively well, coming in second in both Republics, but the former governing party in the Slovak Republic, the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), incurred losses and became an opposition party.

In this deadlocked context, Czechoslovak Premier-designate Klaus and Mr. Meciar agreed on 20 June, to the formation of a national caretaker Government and on preparations for the transformation of the Czech and Slovak Republics into two separate countries. The pact called for the formation of a federal caretaker Cabinet of no more than 10 members; it is headed by Mr. Jan Strasky (ODS).

## Statistics

## I. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Federal Assembly

Number of registered electors. . . . .	11,515,699
Voters . . . . .	9,750,978 (84.67%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	167,522
Valid votes . . . . .	9,583,436

Political Group	Number of Seats		Total
	Chamber of the People	Chamber of Nations	
Civic Democratic Party (ODS)- Christian Democratic Party (KDS) coalition	48	37	85
Movement for Democratic Slovakia (HZDS)	24	33	57
Coalition Left Bloc (KSCM, DL, CSFR)	19	15	34
Party of the Democratic Left (SDL)	10	13	23
Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party	10	6	16
Slovak National Party (SNS)	6	9	15
Association for Republic - the Republican Party of Czechoslovakia	8	6	14
Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)	6	8	14
Christian Democratic Union - Czechoslovak People's Party	7	6	13
Social Liberal Union (LSU)	7	5	12
Hungarian Coalition (MEM)	5	7	12
Slovak Social Democratic Party	-	5	5
Others			
	150	150	300

## 2. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men . . . . .	275
Women . . . . .	25
	300

3. *Distribution of Deputies according to Age*

	Chamber of the People	Chamber of Nations
Below 30 years . . . . .	14	11
31-40 " . . . . .	34	42
41-50 " . . . . .	61	60
51-60 " . . . . .	29	30
Over 60" . . . . .	<u>12</u>	<u>1</u>
	150	150