

FINLAND

Dates of Elections: 18 and 19 March 1979

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 Finland, the *Eduskunta*, is composed of 200 members elected for 4 years.

Electoral System

All Finnish citizens who have attained the age of 18 before the year in which the election takes place are entitled to vote, with the exception of those who have been convicted of vagrancy or certain corrupt practices connected with elections.

Electoral registers are revised annually at the constituency level. Voting is not compulsory.

Every member of the electorate is eligible to become a member of the *Eduskunta*, except persons under guardianship and those on active military service. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with the posts of Chancellor of Justice and Ombudsman of Parliament and with membership of the Supreme Court of Justice and the Supreme Administrative Court. Candidates are nominated by registered political parties.

Finland is divided into 15 electoral constituencies, which roughly correspond to the boundaries of the country's provinces. In 14 of them, 199 members of the *Eduskunta* are elected by proportional representation from party lists of candidates. Seats are distributed among the individual parties, or alliances of several parties, in accordance with the d'Hondt rule of highest average. For the distribution of seats within each list, candidates are ranked according to the number of personal votes they have polled.

The province of Aland elects a single deputy by simple majority vote.

A vacancy arising in the *Eduskunta* between general elections is filled by the individual who is "next-in-line" on the list of the party which formerly held the seat.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Following the September 1975 general elections and the formation of a five-party (Social Democrats, Communist Party, Centre Party, Swedish People's Party and Liberal

People's Party) coalition Government two months later, disagreement over economic policy led to the resignation of this same Government in September 1976. Prime Minister Miettunen (Centre Party) then proceeded to lead a new three-party minority coalition (excluding the Social Democrats and Communists) until 1977, when Mr. Kalevi Sorsa, former Prime Minister and leader of the Social Democratic Party, formed a new five-party Cabinet. Internal friction over the policy of devaluing the Finnish currency subsequently led to the departure, in March 1978, of the Swedish People's Party.

The 1979 election campaign dealt mainly with economic policy and problems, especially unemployment. Twelve parties and some 1,370 candidates were in the running.

Voters turnout was slightly higher than in the 1975 elections. Polling results brought changes in the balance between the socialist and non-socialist parties. The latter won 113 seats as compared to 106 at previous elections while the socialists dropped from 94 to 87. Clear-cut gainers were the National Coalition (Conservative) Party (35 to 47 seats) and the Rural Party (2 to 7 seats).

Negotiations in view of forming a new Government once again proved lengthy. A four-party (Social Democrats, Centre Party, Communist Party and Swedish People's Party) coalition Government was finally decided upon on 25 May, with Mr. Mauno Koivisto (Social Democrats) as Prime Minister.

Statistics

I. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the Eduskunta

Number of registered electors		3,858,537					
Voters		2,891,823(74.9%)					
Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats obtained	Number of Seats held at Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections	
Social Democratic Party . . .	225	691,256	23.9	52	54	54	
National Coalition Party (Conservatives).	226	626,108	21.7	47	35	35	
Democratic League of the People of Finland (Communists).	220	516,276	18.9	35	40	40	
Centre Party.	185	501,012	17.3	36	41	39	
Christian League.	115	137,850	4.8	9	8	9	
Rural Party.	75	132,070	4.6	7	2	2	
Swedish People's Party	57	131,736	4.5	10	10	10	
Liberal People's Party	83	106,609	3.7	4		9	
Constitutional People's Party	78	35,022	1.2			1	
Unification Party of Finland .	73	9,383	0.3			1	
Socialist Workers' Party . . .	7	2,936	0.1				
Party Organization of the En- trepreneurs.	21	1,333	0.0				
Others.	1	232	0.0				
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2. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Professional Category*

Municipal and civil servants.	30
Managers.	28
Teachers.	26
Salaried clerks.	18
Farmers.	18
Party officials	17
Journalists.	12
Doctors.	10
Manual workers.	9
Lawyers.	7
University professors.	5
Others.	20
	200

3. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex*

Men.	148
Women.	52
	200

4. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Age Group*

Under 30 years.	8
30-39.	60
40-49.	62
50-59.	56
Over 60.	14
	200