

## ARGENTINA

**Date of Elections:** 30 October 1983

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament. Legislative elections had previously been held in March/April 1973, but Parliament was dissolved three years later.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of Argentina, the National Congress, comprises the Chamber of Senators and the Chamber of Deputies.

The Chamber of Senators has 46 members elected for a term of 9 years, one-third of the seats being renewed every 3 years. There are 2 Senators for each of the country's 22 provinces and the Federal Capital.

The Chamber of Deputies has 254 members elected for 4 years, one-half of the seats being renewed every 2 years. There is one Deputy for approximately 160,000 inhabitants.

### **Electoral System**

All Argentine citizens at least 18 years of age are entitled to vote unless disqualified by law.

A register of electors is compiled at the national level and permanently kept up to date. Registration is automatic for native Argentinians, but naturalized citizens must ask for it three years after naturalization. Voting is compulsory, with some exceptions (old age, illness, great distance from polling stations); penalties for abstention consist of a fine of approximately US\$20 and prohibition on holding public office or employment for approximately three years.

Any candidate for being a Deputy must be at least 25 years old and must either have been born in the district in which he is a candidate or must have resided there for at least two years preceding the date of the elections. Any candidate for being a Senator must be at least 30 years old and must either have been born on the territory of the province in which he is a candidate or resided there for at least two years preceding the date of the elections. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with the office of Minister of the Government, provincial governor, clergyman, judge and any public office (unless permitted by Congress, lawyers cannot practise their profession as long as they belong to Congress).

Deputies are elected in each electoral constituency on the basis of the party-list system, with proportional distribution of seats according to the d'Hondt method. Senators are elected by simple majority by the provincial legislative bodies. Chamber of Deputies seats which become vacant between general elections are filled by substitutes elected at the same time as nominal members. Senate vacancies are filled through by-elections.

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

On 28 February 1983, President of the Republic Reynaldo Bignone announced general elections for October and a transfer of power from the military to a civilian Government shortly thereafter. In August 1982, new regulations for party political activity had been approved.

The legislative elections were held simultaneously with those for President of the Republic and for provincial and municipal authorities. Primary contenders for the Congress seats were the Radical Civic Union (UCR), led by Mr. Raul Alfonsín, and the union-based Peronist Justicialist National Movement, headed by Mr. Italo Luder. Economic and financial issues (inflation, unemployment, foreign debt) were in the forefront of the campaign debate. The UCR presented a centre-left programme, calling for cuts in military expenditures and increased spending on education, housing and nutrition. Mr. Alfonsín moreover indicated that he planned to renegotiate Argentina's foreign debt to obtain better terms, but he also said that his Government would not repudiate the debt. The Peronists - somewhat hampered by internal divisions - and Mr. Luder sought to attract middle-class voters by stressing the theme of national unity and maintaining that repressive government tactics belonged to the past; he also appealed to the party's traditional working-class following, emphasizing a fair distribution of social wealth among all citizens. Altogether 11 parties or coalitions fielded presidential candidates.

On polling day, the UCR gained a surprisingly large victory, winning an absolute majority of Chamber of Deputies seats. The results marked the first time the Peronist party had lost a national election since its foundation. On 10 December, Mr. Alfonsín was sworn in as President.

## Statistics

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

Number of registered electors. . . . .	.17,892,797	
Voters. . . . .	.14,630,039	(81.76%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	415,058	
Valid votes. . . . .	.14,214,981	

Political Group	Number of Candidates Deputies/Senators		Votes obtained*		Number of Seats in Chamber of Deputies	Number of Seats in Senate
Radical Civic Union (UCR) . . . . .	254	46	6,849,326	46.81	132	18
Justicialist National Movement . . . . .	254	46	5,425,205	37.08	<b>112</b>	22
Intransigent Movement (PI). . . . .	254	46	398,607	2.72	<b>3</b>	
Christian Democratic <b>Party</b> . . . . .	254	46	135,243	0.92	1	
Central Democratic Union . . . . .	95	4	233,224	1.59	2	
"Bloquista" Party . . . . .	5	2	50,259	0.34	1	
Liberal Autonomist Pact "Neuquino" Popular Movement . . . . .	7	2	33,496	0.23	1	
"Jujeno" Popular Movement . . . . .	5	2	22,569	0.15	<u>1</u>	
	5				254	46

\* Totals refer only to Deputies, since Senators are elected indirectly.

*2. Distribution of Members of Congress  
according to Sex*

	Senate	Chamber of Deputies
Men	43	243
Women	<u>3</u>	<u>11</u>
	46	254

3. *Distribution of Members of Congress  
according to Age Group*

	Senate	Chamber of Deputies
25-30 years	—	2
30-35« .	2	7
35-40« .	1	24
40-45 « .	4	38
45-50« .	3	38
50-55 « .	8	40
55-60« .	6	38
60-65« .	7	38
65-70« .	12	15
70-75« .	2	12
75-80« .	1	2
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