

## 28. ELECTIONS

On 17 and 18 October 2008 regular Regional Council Elections were held in 13 regions of the Czech Republic. The term of office is four years. Elections were not conducted in the Hl. m. Praha Region where the Assembly of the City of Prague elected pursuant to the Municipal Council Election Act fulfils the function of the regional council. Simultaneously, regular elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic were held in 27 election districts. These were election districts in which the term of office came to an end of senators elected in the election 2002 or in by-elections in 2003–2007. The elections were declared by President of the Czech Republic's decision of 16 July 2008 (No. 262/2008 Sb.).

Ballots were cast and counted in permanent electoral wards where the ward election committees were supervising both the Regional Council Elections and the Senate Elections. The Regional Council Elections took place in 13 659 electoral wards, the Senate Elections in 5 122 electoral wards; 4 769 electoral wards served both the Regional Council Elections and the Senate Elections.

The elections took place on the territory of the Czech Republic and were managed by the State Electoral Committee as a permanent electoral body. Act No. 130/2000 Sb., on Regional Council Elections, as amended, and Act No. 247/1995 Sb., on Elections to the Parliament of the Czech Republic, as amended, regulate the competence of individual electoral bodies in such a way that, except the tasks of the ward election committees, the complete organisational and technical preparation for the elections and the processing of election results was made by central and local governments.

**The Regional Council Elections** were held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot, using the proportional representation system. The number of seats in each regional council was determined in proportion to the population of the region as of 1 January 2008, and 45, 55 or 65 councillors could be elected. In contrast to the elections 2004, there were no changes in territories of the regions (two municipalities were new and two ceased to exist).

The voters were citizens of the Czech Republic who had attained the age of 18 on the second day of the elections. They were entitled to vote just in the electoral ward where they were included in the permanent electoral roll according to their domicile, provided no legal impediment to the exercise of their right to vote occurred.

The voters cast their votes using one ballot for the political party, political movement or coalition (hereinafter referred to as the party) and were allowed to give preferential votes to up to four candidates on the ballot. Only parties winning at least 5 per cent of the vote in the region could compete for the seats in the council. The seats were then split among the parties in a single scrutiny, using the Election Act algorithm and election divisors. The seats won by a party were allocated to the candidates starting from the top of the list of candidates; provided a candidate gained preferential votes making up at least 10 per cent of the vote for the party in the region, he/she came to the top for seat allocation or to the top of the list of substitutes.

**The Elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic** were held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot, using the plurality voting system, in single-member election districts. In comparison to 2002, nine out of 27 election districts where the voting took place were re-determined. The underlying reasons were the population size outside the permitted range in election districts and changes in the determination of administrative districts of the Czech Republic under Decree No. 513/2006 Sb.

The voters were citizens of the Czech Republic who had attained the age of 18 on the second day of the elections. They were entitled to vote in the electoral ward of election district where they were included in the electoral roll, provided no legal impediment to the exercise of their right to vote occurred. Entitled to vote were also citizens of the Czech Republic with permanent residence outside the country if they stayed on the territory of the Czech Republic on the election day. They could vote in any electoral ward of the election district.

The voters cast a ballot for their candidate. If a candidate gained over 50 per cent of the vote in the election district, he/she became the senator; if none of the candidates gained over 50 per cent of the vote, the second round took place a week later. It was a runoff between two candidates who received the highest numbers of votes in the first round. Just one senator (in election district No. 75 –

Karviná) was elected in the first round on 17 and 18 October 2008; the second round held on 24 and 25 October 2008 took place in 26 election districts.

**Elections to the European Parliament** took place on 5 and 6 June 2009 in the Czech Republic for the second time already. Owing to an increase of the number of Member States to 27 and due to a change in the total number of Members of the European Parliament, the total of 22 Members were elected from the Czech Republic.

Elections to the European Parliament were governed by Act No. 62/2003 Sb., on Elections to the European Parliament and on Amendments to Certain Acts. The date of elections was declared by the President of the Czech Republic in the President's decision No. 46/2009 Sb. The European Parliament elections were held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot according to the proportional representation principle.

Any citizen of the Czech Republic or any citizen of another Member State might be elected on the territory of the Czech Republic a Member of the European Parliament if on the second day of election at the latest he/she had attained the age of 21, had not been deprived of his/her legal capacity, who had met statutory conditions to exercise the right to vote and who had been for a minimum period of 45 days before the second day of elections registered in the population register under a special law. Members of the European Parliament are elected for a term of five years.

The voters were citizens who had attained 18 years of age on the second day of election at the latest. They were entitled to vote if no legal impediment to the exercise of their right to vote occurred. Every voter could be registered only in one election roll and could cast his/her vote in any of about 14 700 polling stations. As a rule, voters cast their votes in such polling station established for electoral ward by the voter's domicile. If voters applied for the voter pass they were entitled to vote anywhere in the Czech Republic.

The ballots were received and assessed and the votes counted first at permanent and separate electoral wards (see Act No. 491/2001 Sb., on Local Elections, as last amended). The application of the one voter – one vote principle was ensured by the procedure in which the voter received one official envelope from the ward election commission for him/her to insert in it one ballot of the party in favour of which he/she wished to cast his/her vote. On the ballot the voter could mark not more than 2 candidates whom he/she preferred to give vote to. The total of 22 seats in the European Parliament could be allocated only to those parties which won at least 5% of all valid notes.

The table **28-9** gives the list of elected Members of the European Parliament. Percentage of preferential votes is calculated from the number of valid votes received by political party, political movement or coalition.

The sum of constituent items may not always be 100 due to rounding.

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Only data for identical political entities in the framework of individual types of elections are comparable with data from previous years. However, identification by name of the political party may not be unambiguous due to frequent changes (political entities come into being, they change their names).

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Overall results of elections by territories can be found on the website of the Czech Statistical Office at:

– [http://www.volby.cz/index\\_en.htm](http://www.volby.cz/index_en.htm)