

32 ELECTIONS

Methodological notes

On 23 and 24 September 2022, regular elections to local councils, councils of city districts and city sections in statutory towns, and elections to the Prague City Assembly and councils of Prague city sections were held. On the same date, regular elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic were held in 27 electoral districts. It applied to those districts, in which the electoral term (that started in 2016) was about to be finished. The elections were announced by the Decision of the President of the Czech Republic No 81/2022 Sb of 5 April 2022 and were only held in the territory of the Czech Republic. Execution of the elections was governed by the Act No 491/2001 Sb, on Local Council Elections and amending certain acts, as subsequently amended, and by the Act No 247/1995 Sb, on Elections to the Parliament of the Czech Republic and on change and amendment of other selected acts of law, as subsequently amended. Presented data are derived from the results approved by the State Electoral Committee, which as a permanent electoral body coordinated preparation, organisation, course, and execution of the elections.

Casting of ballot papers, their examination, and the primary counting of votes took place in permanent electoral wards; ward election committees were the same for the announced elections. Elections to local councils were carried out in 14 722 electoral wards (in other wards the elections were not carried out for legal reasons). Elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the CR were held in 4 910 electoral wards and in the second round only in 4 434 electoral wards (in three senatorial districts a senator was already elected in the first round and therefore the second round was not carried out).

The elections to local councils were held on the basis of universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot. A voter ID (an electoral card) is not applicable.

Citizens of the Czech Republic who at least on the second polling day attained the age of at least 18 years, who were on the polling day registered as permanently resident in the municipality, and for whom no legal impediment to the exercise of their right to vote occurred were classified as a voter. Under the same conditions, also a national of another country to whom an international treaty gives the right to vote (a treaty by which the Czech Republic is bound and that has been promulgated in the Collection of International Treaties) was classified as a voter. The Treaty of Accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union is such a treaty based on which also nationals of other Member States of the EU can vote in the Czech Republic; based on the case-law and direct effect of European law, instead of fulfilment of the condition of registration for a permanent residence it is enough when one is registered for a temporary residence in the relevant municipality. Foreigners can exercise their right to vote only provided that they are listed in a supplement to the permanent electoral roll (list of voters).

Any voter for whom it was not determined by law that he or she is deprived of his or her personal liberty due to serving a term of imprisonment or that he or she is deprived of his or her legal capacity to exercise his or her right to vote could have been elected a member of a local council, a council of a city district or a city section of a territorially subdivided statutory town, or councils of Prague city sections.

Regular elections to local councils were held for another four-year term in the total of 6 243 municipalities, small towns, towns, and 140 city sections and districts. Members of a local council (councillors) were not being elected in 11 municipalities due to a failure to present lists of candidates or due to an insufficient number of candidates.

The total of 391 individual political parties, political movements, their coalitions and their associations with independent candidates took part in the elections; besides them, over 8 400 individual independent candidates and over 8 800 various local associations of independent candidates stood for the elections.

The number of members of a local council being elected depended on the number of the population of a municipality ranging from 5 to 55, except for the Prague City Assembly, for which 65 members were being elected. Voters could use one of three ways to mark their vote as it is determined by the Election Act (they could only mark a party, or only candidates from across all parties, or a party and at the same time candidates from other parties) using a ballot paper that was common to all election parties standing for the election. The determined number of seats in the local council was split among the election parties in one scrutiny, using a proportional system and electoral divisors.

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 majority voting system, in single-seat electoral districts. The electoral term of senators is 6 years. A voter ID (an electoral card) is applicable.

Delineation of electoral districts is in the Annex No 3 to the Act No 247/1995 Sb, on Elections to the Parliament of the Czech Republic and on change and amendment of other selected acts of law, as subsequently amended. The amendment No 72/2018 Sb, which became effective on 19 May 2018, cancelled two sections of the Election Act and, as a result, electoral districts are not redistricted every time when the population in some of the electoral districts drops or increases by 15% compared to the average population per seat. Electoral districts remain to be delineated in the same way as in the year 2016.

The right to vote belonged to citizens of the Czech Republic who attained the age of 18 years on the second polling day at the latest; they were entitled to vote provided no legal impediment to the exercise of their right to vote occurred. Voters could exercise their right to vote in an electoral ward, in which they were included in the electoral roll (list of voters) or with a voter ID (an electoral card) in some of the electoral wards in the territory of the electoral district, in which they were included in the electoral roll (list of voters). Citizens of the Czech Republic with permanent residence abroad were also entitled to vote with a voter ID (an electoral card) if they stayed in the territory of the Czech Republic on the polling day. They could vote in any electoral ward of the electoral district, in which the elections took place.

Political parties and political movements with registration at the Ministry of the Interior of the CR or their coalitions were allowed to nominate their candidates for the elections to the Senate or an individual independent candidate was also allowed to register as a candidate for the elections provided that he or she met prerequisites set by law (hereinafter only referred to as "election parties"). In total, 178 candidates were standing for a seat in the elections from the total of 57 election parties.

A voter inserted one ballot paper of the selected candidate into an official envelope and cast the envelope into the ballot box executing thereby his or her vote. If a candidate won over 50% of the total number of valid votes in the electoral district, he or she was elected senator; if none of the candidates won over 50% of valid votes, the senator was not elected and in such electoral district the second round of elections took place a week later. It was a runoff between the two candidates who won the highest numbers of valid votes in the first round.

In the first round of the elections on 23 and 24 September 2022, three senators were elected, namely in the electoral district No. 25 (Prague 6), in the electoral district No. 46 (Ústí nad Orlicí), and in the electoral district No. 64 (Bruntál). In the remaining 24 electoral districts, the second round of the elections took place on 30 September and 1 October 2022.

The election of the President of the Czech Republic took place in January 2023 and it was the third direct election. The election was held on the basis of universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot, using the first-past-the-post system and the territory of the Czech Republic constituted the only electoral district. Voters could use a voter ID (an electoral card) and vote in any electoral ward in the CR or abroad.

The election of the President of the Czech Republic was announced by the Decision of the Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic No 207/2022 Sb of 27 June 2022 to be held on 13 and 14 January 2023. The execution of the election was governed by the Act No 275/2012 Sb, on the Election of the President of the Czech Republic and amending certain acts (the Act on the Election of the President of the Czech Republic), as subsequently amended, and by the Decree No 294/2012 Sb, on Implementation of Some Provisions of the Act on the Election of the President of the Czech Republic.

A citizen of the Czech Republic who at least on the second polling day of the presidential election attained the age of at least 40 years and had not been incapacitated as for execution of his/her active right to vote could have been elected President of the Czech Republic. At least twenty deputies or at least ten senators may have nominated a presidential candidate as well as a citizen may have done so who attained 18 years of age provided that his/her proposal was supported by a petition signed by at least 50 000 citizens eligible to vote for a President of the Czech Republic.

The voters were citizens of the Czech Republic who at least on the second polling day attained the age of 18 years and no legal impediment to the exercise of their right to vote occurred. Voters could exercise their right to vote in a permanent electoral ward in the territory of the Czech Republic or in a special electoral ward abroad, in which they were included in the electoral roll (list of voters). A voter could also vote in any permanent or any special electoral ward upon submission of a voter ID (an electoral card).

To vote, a voter inserted one ballot paper of the selected candidate into an official envelope and then cast the envelope into the ballot box. Pursuant to the Act, a candidate, who wins an overall majority of the total number of returned valid votes, is elected President of the Czech Republic. Since none of the candidates won in the first round the number of votes necessary to be elected, the second round of the election took place after 14 days. Two candidates who won in the first round the biggest number of returned valid votes advanced to the second round run-off. The second round of the election of the President of the Czech Republic took place on 27 and 28 January 2023. The candidate who won in the second round of the election the highest number of valid votes of eligible voters was elected President of the Czech Republic.

In this election, the Act No 411/2022 Sb, on Special Ways of Voting in the Election of the President of the Czech Republic in 2023, published in the Collection of Laws on 16 December 2022, provided for special ways of voting for persons to whom a quarantine or isolation was ordered due to their becoming ill with the covid-19 disease. The Act also enabled voting for voters placed (staying) in establishments (facilities) that had been closed (put under lockdown) by the decision of a regional public health authority. Special ways of voting were secured by special (electoral) commissions for voting. Counting of these votes were done by vote-counting commissions established at regional authorities. The Act enabled three types of special ways of voting:

- 1) Drive-in voting (voting from a motor vehicle) at a drive-in voting point (drive-in polling station) – these voting points had been established for each District (and in the territory of the Capital City of Prague) and were adapted for a motor vehicle to drive through.
- 2) Voting in a residential facility that had been closed (under lockdown, quarantined) – a regional public health authority reported closed facilities in its territory to the regional authority and the regional authority sent to those facilities a special (electoral) commission for voting.
- 3) Voting by casting votes into a special portable ballot box – if a quarantine order or isolation were imposed on a citizen and he/she therefore could not use the drive-in voting, they could ask the regional authority for a special (electoral) commission for voting to come, which came to the citizen's home with a special portable ballot box.

The number of registered voters refers to the number of persons registered in electoral rolls (lists of voters) who meet prerequisites determined by law for the exercise of their right to vote or, in other words, active suffrage and in case of the election of the President of the Czech Republic also persons kept in records of eligible voters pursuant to the Act No 411/2022 Sb.

The turnout is calculated as the share of the number of voting voters (i.e. those who came to vote and were issued an official envelope) in registered voters (i.e. persons eligible to vote and included in the electoral rolls (lists of voters) or records).

Names of election parties, which are too long, have been shortened for presentation in the tables. Only data on identical political entities are comparable to those from previous years. Nevertheless, identification according to the name (or an abbreviation) when comparing in time may not be unequivocal (clear) due to often changes (births of new political entities, changes of their names, changes in the composition of coalitions, etc.).

Tables 32-1 and 32-2 do not include results of elections to councils of city sections and city districts of territorially subdivided statutory towns and elections to councils of Prague city sections.

The piece of data on the number of votes won in the Table 32-2 reflects the fact that each voter who participated in the elections had maximally as many votes as was the number of councillors in the local council being elected. A piece of data on the number of seats won thus does not have to be in direct proportion to the number of votes won, because to obtain a seat a much lower number of votes was necessary in smaller municipalities compared to larger ones (when measured by the number of voters).

First names, surnames, and degrees of elected senators in the Table 32-5 are taken over from applications for registration for the elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the CR, which had been submitted to the relevant registration office.

First names, surnames, and degrees of candidates for President of the Czech Republic in the Table 32-7 have been taken over from the lists of candidates submitted to the Ministry of the Interior.

Tables 32-6 and 32-7 include complete voting results as they were processed for the State Electoral Committee, modified based on the Resolution of the Supreme Administrative Court Vol 100/2023 – 74, of 21 February 2023. Data also include results from special ways of voting.

Due to rounding off (or showing data on percentages of valid votes to two decimal places without rounding off), the sum of percentages may not be equal to 100.

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Further information can be found on the websites of the Czech Statistical Office at:

– www.czso.cz/csu/czso/elections_en

– www.volby.cz/index_en.htm