

30. ELECTIONS

On 12 and 13 October 2012, regular regional council elections were held in 13 regions of the Czech Republic for another four-year term of office. 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. At the same time, regular elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic were held in 27 election districts – those districts, in which the term of office came to an end of senators elected in the election in 2006 or in by-elections in 2007–2011. The elections were announced by the President of the Czech Republic's decision of 27 June 2012.

Ballots were cast, examined, and counted for the first time in permanent electoral wards where the ward election committees were supervising both the regional council elections and elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. The regional council elections took place in 13 670 electoral wards, the elections to the Senate in 4 812 electoral wards; 4 335 electoral wards served both the regional council elections and the elections to the Senate.

The elections took place only on the territory of the Czech Republic and were managed by the State Electoral Committee as a permanent electoral body. The Act No. 130/2000 Sb., on Regional Council Elections, as amended, and the 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 government bodies within the execution of state administration.

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 at 1 January 2012, and 45, 55 or 65 councillors could be elected.

The voters were citizens of the Czech Republic who had attained the age of 18 on the second day of the elections at the latest. They were entitled to vote in some of the electoral wards in the territorial district of the region, in which 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 of the selected political party, political movement or coalition standing for election (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% of the total number of valid votes in the region could compete for the determined number of 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 that a candidate gained preferential votes making up at least 5% of the vote for the party in the region, jumped 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 2006, ten out of 27 election districts where the elections took place were re-determined as for their territory. The underlying reasons were the population size outside the permitted range in senatorial districts and changes in the delineation of administrative districts of the Czech Republic.

The voters were citizens of the Czech Republic who had attained the age of 18 on the second day of the elections at the latest. They were entitled to vote in the electoral ward of the election district where they were included in the electoral roll, provided no legal impediment to the exercise of their right to vote occurred. Citizens of the Czech Republic with permanent residence outside the country were also entitled to vote 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, in which the elections took place.

A voter inserted a ballot paper of the selected candidate into an official envelope and put the envelope into the ballot box. If a candidate won over 50% of the total number of valid votes in the election district, he 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 took place a week later. It was a runoff between two candidates who won the highest numbers of valid votes in the first round. No senator was elected in the first round of elections on 12 and 13 October 2012 so the second round was held on 19 and 20 October 2012 in all of the 27 electoral districts.

In January 2013, the first direct presidential election took place in the Czech Republic. The election was held on the basis of universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot, using the plurality voting system, and the territory of the Czech Republic constituted the only election district.

The election of the President of the Czech Republic was announced by the decision of the Chairman of the Senate from 1 October 2012 to be held on 11 and 12 January 2013. The election took place pursuant

to the Act No. 275/2012 Sb., on the Election of the President of the Czech Republic and the Decree No. 294/2012 Sb., on Implementation of Some Provisions of the Act on the Election of the President of the Czech Republic.

Such citizen may be elected President who at least on the second day of the election reached the age of at least 40 years and has not been incapacitated. At least twenty deputies or at least ten senators may nominate a presidential candidate as well as a citizen may do so who attained at least 18 years of age provided that his proposal is supported by a petition signed by at least 50 000 citizens with the right to vote for a president of the CR.

The voters were citizens of the Czech Republic who had attained the age of 18 at least on the second day of the election, provided that no legal impediment to the exercise of their right to vote occurred. Voters could exercise their right to vote in some of the permanent electoral wards on the territory of the Czech Republic or in a special electoral ward abroad, in which they were included in the electoral roll. A voter could vote also in any permanent or special electoral ward upon submission of an elector's certificate.

A voter inserted a ballot paper of the selected candidate into an official envelope and put the envelope into the ballot box. Such a candidate is elected President of the CR who won overall majority of the total number of returned valid votes. In case that none of the candidates wins in the first round the number of votes necessary to be elected, the second round takes place after 14 days. There are two candidates in second round run-off, who won in the first round the biggest number of returned valid votes. Since the President had not been elected in the first round of the election, there was the second round on 25 and 26 January 2013. The candidate, who won in the second round of the election the highest number of valid votes of qualified electors, is elected president.

First names, surnames, and degrees of candidates were taken over from lists of candidates, which had been submitted to the relevant registration office. The sums of relative values do not have to equal 100 due to rounding off.

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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The complete election results broken down by territorial administrative unit can be found on the website of the Czech Statistical Office at:

– www.volby.cz/index_en.htm