

32. ELECTIONS

On 7 and 8 October 2016, regular elections to regional councils were held in 13 regions of the Czech Republic for another four-year term. (The elections were not held in the Capital City of Prague, the Hl. m. Praha Region, in which the function of the regional council is performed by the Prague City Assembly, elected pursuant to the Act on elections to local councils.) Taking place concurrently with elections to regional councils, also regular elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the CR took place in 27 electoral districts. It concerned districts, in which the electoral term of senators elected in 2010 was about to be finished (as well as the term of one senator in the electoral district No 22, who was elected in by-elections in 2014). The elections were announced based on the Decision of the President of the Czech Republic No 138/2016 Sb from 21 April 2016.

Ballots were cast, examined, and counted in permanent electoral wards where the ward election committees were the same for both elections. The elections to regional councils took place in 13 660 electoral wards, the elections to the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in 4 903 electoral wards, and in 4 588 electoral wards the aforementioned elections were held concurrently.

The elections took place only on the territory of the Czech Republic and their execution was governed by 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.

The elections to regional councils 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 2016, and 45, 55, or 65 councillors were to be elected.

The right to vote belonged to citizens of the Czech Republic who had attained the age of 18 on the second day of the elections at the latest provided no legal impediment to the exercise of their right to vote occurred. Voters could exercise their right 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.

Lists of candidates for elections to regional councils were to be submitted to registration offices by a political party, political movement or coalition standing for the election (hereinafter referred to as parties). The total of 11 803 valid candidates listed on 88 registered lists of candidates of election parties stood up in regions in the elections for the total of 675 seats in regional councils.

Votes were cast as follows: voters inserted one ballot paper of an election party chosen by them into an official envelope and put the envelope into the ballot box, while they were allowed to mark in a required way up to four candidates on the ballot paper and thereby prefer them to others (hereinafter referred to as preferential votes). 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. Provided that there were more such candidates, their order on the top positions was decided about by the number of preferential votes. In case that the number of their preferential votes was the same, what was deciding was the order of the candidate on the ballot paper.

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 electoral districts. In comparison to 2010, nine out of 27 electoral districts where the elections took place were re-delineated as for their territory. The underlying reason was that the population size in the senatorial districts was at that time above or below the permitted range.

The right to vote belonged to citizens of the Czech Republic who had attained the age of 18 on the second day of the elections at the latest provided no legal impediment to the exercise of their right to vote occurred. Voters could exercise their right to vote in some of the electoral wards on the territory of the electoral district, in which they were included in the electoral roll. 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 electoral district, in which the elections took place.

Political parties and political movements with registration at the Ministry of the Interior or their coalition were allowed to nominate their candidates for the elections to the Senate or an individual independent candidate was also allowed to apply provided that he or she met conditions set by law (hereinafter referred to as election parties). In total, 233 candidates were standing for a seat in the elections from the total of 63 election parties.

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 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 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 7 and 8 October 2016 so the second round was held on 14 and 15 October 2016 in all of the 27 electoral districts.

Registered voters are the number of persons included in electoral rolls (persons who meet statutory conditions for execution of the right to vote).

The number of issued official envelopes is equal to the number of voting voters who came to vote and were given an official envelope in the polling station to put their ballot paper in.

The number of returned official envelopes is the number of official envelopes cast by the voters to ballot boxes.

Turnout is calculated as the share of the number of voting voters (persons who were given an official envelope in the polling station) in registered voters (persons included in the electoral rolls).

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

First names, surnames, and degrees of elected senators 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.

Since the percentages are rounded off, their sum may not be equal to 100. In the Table 32-3 data on the percentages of valid votes for election parties are not rounded off and are provided to two decimal places.

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Further data can be found on the website of the Czech Statistical Office at:

- www.czso.cz/csu/czso/elections_en
- www.volby.cz/index_en.htm