

GENERAL ELECTIONS 2017

If you are a Czech citizen you are eligible to vote in the Czech parliamentary elections this year. Below are answers to questions you may have if you are a first-time voter in this country.

When is voting taking place? October 20 from 14:00 to 22:00 and on October 21, from 8:00 to 14:00.

Who is being voted in?

Members of the lower house, or the Chamber of Deputies, of the Czech parliament (Poslanecká sněmovna). The lower house has 200 members, who are elected for four-year terms. It is the more powerful of the two chambers of parliament. The formation of a new government will also depend on the results of these elections (see the next government section below for further information).

Who can vote? Any citizen (born or naturalized) of the Czech Republic over the age of 18¹.

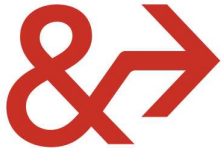
Where can I vote?

In the district where you have your official permanent residency in the Czech Republic. The exact location of your polling place should be available on the website of your town or city district. If you are not able to be there at the time of the elections you can request an absentee ballot (voličský průkaz) and vote in another location in Czechia. In most cases you can do this in person at the place of your permanent residency before October 18th, or by mail before October 13th, but do check with the local town hall for exact dates and requirements.

How do the elections work?

If you are a citizens of the Czech Republic you do not need to register, your election ballots should arrive in the mail to your permanent residence address at the latest on October 18th. If they do not arrive, and it is your first time voting, it may be safer to give your town hall a call to make sure you are in the voter registry.

¹ If you have been granted Czech citizenship recently, you will need to have received all the paperwork, including your new birth certificate and state ID by October 18, in order to vote in the elections. If your paperwork arrives close to this date and you do not receive the ballots in the mail, contact your local town hall to make sure you are in the voter registry.



You will receive one ballot for every party that is competing in these elections.² In the general elections you vote for a party rather than individual candidates, but you are allowed (but not required) to circle up to 4 candidates on the ballot, which will make them more likely to become MPs, if the party you chose receives enough votes to be in parliament.

What happens when I go to the polls?

When you arrive at the polling location you will need to show your Czech ID card (občanský průkaz) or Czech passport. You will then be shown to a booth where you will be able to choose ONE ballot for the party that you want to vote for and insert it into the envelope you received in the mail together with the ballots. You can also circle your preferred candidates at this time. DO NOT place more than one ballot into the envelope, otherwise your vote will be ineligible. If you forget to bring your ballots from home, or do not receive them, you will receive a new set at the polling station.

How are the results calculated?

The results are calculated on the basis of a proportional system in 14 electoral regions that the whole country is divided into. Parties that receive more than 5 % of all votes will be in the parliament. Who will actually take seats in the lower house of parliament depends on their placement on the voting ballots and the preferential votes they receive.

Parties that receive less than 5 % will not get any seats in parliament, but those who receive more than 1.5 % are eligible for minimal funding based on the number of votes they receive, those who pass the 3 % threshold receive annual funding until the next elections.

How will the next government be formed?

After the election, and if no party has won more than 50% of the votes, the president usually appoints the chairman of the party that has won the most votes to form a government, meaning a coalition of parties that would have a majority in parliament. This is the normal practice, but in theory the president can appoint another party's chairman or allow there to be a minority government.

² The numbers listed on top of each ballot were selected in a random draw and has nothing to do with the significance of the party.



Who is running?

This year there are a total of 31 parties and political movements running in the elections. Not all have candidates in all regions. For a full list in Czech see [this Wikipedia article](#). The top 10 parties according to the latest polls are:

- ANO 2011, chairman Andrej Babiš
- Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), temporary leaders Milan Chovanec and Lubomír Zaorálek, current coalition leader
- Communist Party (KSČM), chairman Vojtěch Filip
- Civic Democratic Party (ODS), chairman Petr Fiala
- Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD), chairman Tomio Okamura
- Czech Pirate Party (Piráti), chairman Ivan Bartoš
- Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL), chairman Pavel Bělobrádek
- TOP 09, chairman Miroslav Kalousek
- Mayors and Independents party (STAN), chairman Petr Gazdík
- Green Party, chairman Matěj Stropnický

