

Chronology of events in Portugal drawn up by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (13 August 1976)

Caption: This chronology, drawn up in August 1976 by the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, sets out the major political events that have taken place in Portugal since 5 May 1976.

Source: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe - Committee on European Non-Member Countries. Portugal and the Council of Europe: Chronology of events since 5 May 1976 drawn up by the Secretariat on the instruction of Mr Gessner, Rapporteur, Restricted AS/NM (28) 3. Strasbourg: 13.08.1976. 6 p.

Copyright: (c) Council of Europe

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/chronology_of_events_in_portugal_drawn_up_by_the_parliamentary_assembly_of_the_council_of_europe_13_august_1976-en-a5f5e8f7-17e1-4e5e-a814-443de668fda9.html

Publication date: 07/09/2012

Portugal and the Council of Europe

Chronology of events since 5 May 1976 drawn up by the Secretariat on the instruction of Mr Gessner, Rapporteur

May

5. Chancellor Kreisky, speaking before the Assembly, described Portugal as "a fully-fledged democracy".

6. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs, at the 58th session of the Council of Ministers, "welcomed the good prospects of an early Portuguese accession to the Council of Europe".

7. The Assembly unanimously adopts Resolution 627 on the situation in Portugal and Resolution 628 on the refugees from the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, after a debate in which representatives of the four principal parties represented in the Portuguese Parliament took part.

(The share of the vote in the 25 April elections and of parliamentary seats won by the parties are:

Socialists: 35.01%, 107 seats;

Popular Democrats (PPD): 24.01%, 73 seats;

Centre Democrats (CDS): 15.87%, 42 seats;

Communists: 14.59%, 40 seats.)

11. The leaders of three of the major parties state their position regarding the future government:

Mr Soares (SP): the party had promised the electors not to enter into a coalition with either the CP or the PPD; he would therefore try, after the presidential election, to form a homogeneous minority Socialist government with a few independents.

Mr Sa Carneiro (PPD): the PPD would prefer a coalition government, but would not be totally opposed to a minority government.

Mr Cunhal (CP): hoped for an SP-CP coalition.

12. The Socialist leader, Mario Soares, declares that his party supports the candidature of General Remalho Eanes for the presidency of the republic. He describes General Eanes as "the only man capable of achieving a consensus among the armed forces and assuring the latter's cohesion". The Socialists thus become the third party, after the PPD and CDS, to declare support for General Eanes.

12-15. Visit by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to Portugal: exchange of views with the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Ministers of Education, the Interior, Information and Justice; the possibility of Portugal joining the Council of Europe after the presidential election and the formation of a new government, and the arrangements for doing so, are discussed.

21. In an interview with the PPD leader, Sa Carneiro, published in the Lisbon weekly O Pais, there is reference to a Council of Europe "pseudo declaration" according to which "Western Europe would welcome a coalition between the PS and the PPD without Sa Carneiro". Sa Carneiro comments: "The Council of Europe affirmed very clearly that a PS-PPD coalition, which would be considered of the centre-left, appeared desirable. And since it has no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of democratic parties, it abstains from all irresponsible declarations".

June

1. The presidential election campaign opens, with the following four candidates:

- General Eanes, Armed Forces Chief of Staff;
- Admiral de Azevedo, Prime Minister of the caretaker government;
- Major de Carvalho, former Commander of the internal security force COPCON, and member, with Generals Costa Gomes and Gonçalves, of the "ruling triumvirate" in the summer of 1975;
- Octavio Pato, "Number Two" of the Communist Party;

The electoral commission rejected the candidature of Pompilio da Cruz who represented a pressure group of "Retornados" from the former African colonies.

8. General Eanes states that: "...a minority government working together with a President of the Republic elected by universal suffrage is no longer altogether a minority government..."

His manifesto calls for "a model Socialist society, based on the values, history, culture and characteristics of our people ... respect for all those ... who have been the victims of exploitation or oppression ... defence of the rights of the workers as laid down in the Constitution;"

12. The European Communities and Portugal sign:

- a financial protocol providing for aid of 200 M units of account (IUC = \$1.24) over 5 years and
- a commercial protocol facilitating access to the EEC market for certain Portuguese products.

22. US arms deliveries to Portugal are resumed after a 10 years break.

23. Admiral de Azevedo, Prime Minister of the caretaker government and presidential candidate, suffers a heart attack. The Minister of the Interior, Commander Vasco Almeida e Costa, takes over as acting Prime Minister.

24. Major Melo Antunes, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the caretaker government, is named by the Council of the Revolution as Chairman of the Constitutional Commission, empowered by Article 284 of the Constitution to pronounce on whether the Constitution has been infringed by acts committed or omitted.

27. General Eanes is elected President of the Republic with 61.54% of the votes cast. Major Carvalho, the candidate of the extreme left, comes second with 16.52%, in front of Admiral de Azevedo (14.36%) and Octavio Pato (7.58%).

28. The Bureau and Standing Committees meeting in Vienna, decide to offer observer status to Portugal as soon as the Portuguese Parliament should request it, following the invitation of the President of the Assembly.

(As a consequence of this decision the situation in Portugal will not be debated at the September 1976 part-session.)

July

9. The outgoing caretaker government's ruling that elections to works' committees in factories will be valid only if they represent the choice of a majority of the workers regularly employed provokes an immediate negative reaction from Intersindical, the communist-dominated unitary trade union organisation.

The president-elect states that he would be prepared to call in the army to maintain essential services in the event of a strike wave intended to challenge democratic government.

12. The Council of the Revolution publishes the last section of the report on the events of 25 November 1975 seriously implicating Major de Carvalho.

14. General Eanes installed as President at a ceremony at which he swears "dutifully to carry out the duties incumbent upon me and to defend the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic and enforce its execution".

16. President Eanes names Mario Soares as Prime Minister "after consultation with the Council of the Revolution and with the parties represented in the Assembly of the Republic, due regard being had to the election results" in accordance with Article 190 of the Constitution.

23. After sounding out leaders of political parties, trade unions and employers. Prime Minister Soares introduces his government, consisting of socialists, military men and independents, before the Assembly of the Republic, as follows:

Minister of State: Henrique de Barros

Defence: Colonel Firminio Miguel

Foreign Affairs: José Medeiros Ferreira

Interior: Colonel Costa Bras

Planning and Economic Co-ordination: Antonio Souza Gomes (independent)

Justice: Antonio de Almeida Santos (independent)

Finance: Medina Carreira

Agriculture and Fisheries: Antonio Leopes Cardoso

Trade: Antonio Barreto

Industry: Walter Rosa

Social Affairs: Armando Bacelar

Labour: Marcela Curto

Education and Scientific Research: Mario Sottomayor Cardia

Transport and Communications: Rui Vilar

Public Works: Almeida Pina (independent)

Housing: Edouardo Pereira

Social Communication (Information): Manuel Alegre

Without Portfolio: Jorge Campinos

Secretary of State in the Prime Minister's Office: Victor Cunha Rego

Salgado Zenha, Minister of Finance in the outgoing caretaker government, takes over responsibilities for party matters.

President Czernetz addresses the following telegram, which is given wide publicity in Portuguese media, to Mario Soares:

"Warmest congratulations on behalf of all my colleagues of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on forming Portugal's first fully democratic government for 50 years. We wish you and your new government every success. Remembering your inspiring words before our Assembly on 28 September 1974, we firmly hope that your country will soon become the Council of Europe's nineteenth member."

29. Vasco da Gama Fernandes (Socialist) elected Speaker of the Assembly of the Republic.

Major Melo Antunes declares, in an interview with the weekly Opcao, that the armed forces will not restrict themselves to the role of mere spectators or to a strict professionalism. Their direct responsibilities in the country's political life will continue "until the transition to socialism under democracy has been made irreversible". There must be no going back on nationalisation, he adds.

August

1. Portugal joins the Council of Europe Resettlement Fund.

2. Mario Soares presents his government's programme, which gives priority to the fight against inflation and unemployment, to the Assembly of the Republic. Also included is the government's intention to apply immediately for full membership of the Council of Europe, "which could become effective in September".