

Political Developments and Data in 2022: Introducing the 2023 *Political Data Yearbook*

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Issues in national politics in 2022

Despite being the year when the Covid-19 restrictions were finally lifted in all the countries covered by the *Political Data Yearbook*, 2022 was marked by new challenges arising from Russia's war in Ukraine and its political, social and economic consequences.

In November 2021, the WHO announced that a heavily mutated variant of the coronavirus, known as Omicron, posed a very high risk of infection (Nebehay 2021). While some travel restrictions were re-enacted and several countries (e.g., Norway and the Netherlands, among others) started the year 2022 under lockdown, high vaccination rates prevented the rapid multiplication of serious cases witnessed in previous waves. Thus, in the first half of the year, most countries saw a gradual rollback of Covid-19 restrictions.

Attention shifted overnight away from the pandemic when, in February, Russia announced its decision to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In one way or another, the war in Ukraine was the issue that dominated national politics in 2022 in virtually all the countries included in this volume. But while foreign policy remained one of the top issues throughout the year for several European countries, particularly those that share a border with either Russia or Ukraine, in other countries, it was the economic consequences of the war that stole the spotlight.

In the majority of countries covered by the *Yearbook*, the initial response to the war was one of support for Ukraine. Economic sanctions against Russia were sponsored by Canada, the European Union (which comprises 75 per cent of countries in the volume), the United Kingdom and the United States, with most countries also sending humanitarian, financial and/or military aid to Ukraine. In the aftermath of the invasion, millions of Ukrainians crossed the borders of neighbouring countries, with over 9.5 million Ukrainians entering Poland and around 2.5 million entering Romania by the end of the year (Jasiewicz & Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2023; Stan & Zaharia 2023). On 4 March, the European Union (EU) activated its temporary protection directive to provide immediate rights for displaced Ukrainians entering EU territory. Although many Ukrainians eventually returned to the Western part of the country, a total of 4.1 million people received refugee status in the EU, with Germany and Poland welcoming the largest absolute numbers of refugees (1.1 million and 970,000, respectively) (European Council 2023).

Foreign relations with Russia dominated national politics throughout the year in many Central and Eastern European countries. Poland and the Baltic countries played a very

active role in pushing the EU to adopt punitive measures against Russia and provide support for Ukraine in all possible ways. Lithuania even went so far as to initiate a process of ‘de-russification’ of public life (Jastramskis & Ramonaitė 2023). Farther south, Romania also showed unwavering support for Ukraine, facilitating exports of wheat and imports of medicine and military equipment (Stan & Zaharia 2023). In contrast, Hungary and, to a lesser extent, Bulgaria, adopted a more timid response to the aggression. In the latter, there was a rift in society (as well as within the Cabinet, and between the president and the parliamentary majority) over the country’s position towards Russia (Spirova 2023). While Bulgaria sent humanitarian and financial aid to Ukraine, it refrained from sending over any weapons. Hungary was, however, the major outlier in the region. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s government took an ambivalent position, condemning the aggression while retaining economic relations with Russia, and railing against EU sanctions against the latter (Várnagy 2023).

Defence policy became an important national issue in many countries. In an unprecedented move, the parliaments of Sweden and Finland (which shares 1,340 km of border with Russia) authorised their respective governments to apply for NATO membership, which they eventually did (Palonen 2023; Widenstjerna & Anders Widfeldt 2023). In June 2022, Danish voters decided in a referendum to drop Denmark’s EU defence opt-out, which prevented the country from joining the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy and EU military operations (Kosiara-Pedersen 2023). In Switzerland, the Federal Council decisively condemned Russia’s actions and decided to adopt all the sanctions against the latter adopted by the EU, shaking the foundations of the Alpine country’s longstanding neutrality policy (Freiburghaus 2023). The conflict also triggered increases in the defence budgets of many countries, especially among NATO members. In Japan, the government raised concerns that the Russia–Ukraine war might embolden China, and approved a 50 per cent increase in defence spending (Hino et al. 2023).

The conflict in Ukraine had clear economic consequences. At the beginning of the year, it had become evident that the rapid surge in consumer demand caused by the loosening of Covid-19 restrictions, paired with a temporary bottleneck in the global supply chain, was set to bring about rising levels of inflation (Chakraborty 2023). Russia’s invasion of Ukraine only made things worse, with bans on Russian oil and gas driving energy prices up, and Ukraine’s problems to secure a safe route to export its grain contributing to increasing food costs. As the cost of living continued to increase, inflation became a major national issue in most of the *Yearbook* countries, sometimes reaching levels that had not been witnessed for three or four decades.

Industrial action and growing public dissatisfaction spread across many countries. In the UK, an unprecedented number of strikes since the Thatcher era led to the loss of 2.472 million working days between June and December (Middleton 2023). In Finland, there were a total of 64 industrial disputes affecting around 180,000 people (Palonen 2023). In the Czech Republic, high energy prices prompted a number of anti-government protests (Petrušek & Kudrnáč 2023). In Belgium, a demonstration brought together 80,000 people in Brussels, the country’s capital, in June, and was then followed by a one-day national strike in November (Baudewyns et al 2023).

Many governments responded to these developments by approving packages aimed at alleviating the consequences of the cost-of-living crisis, including caps on energy price

increases, social transfers, temporary tax breaks and minimum wage rises. In the EU, the European Commission also stepped in by introducing a temporary cap on natural gas prices (European Commission 2022).

Despite high inflation, economic performance in 2022 continued the 2021 rebound (against the 2020 Covid-19-induced contractions) in most countries, though often at more modest per capita growth rates (The World Bank, 2023). Ireland retained the fastest per capita growth rate by a large margin, for another year. It was the only country to grow in 2020; it led the *Yearbook* cases with per capita growth of 13.6 per cent in 2021; and it led again in 2022 with per capita growth of nearly 12 per cent, almost double the next best performers (Croatia, Iceland, Israel, Malta and Portugal, all in the 6.0 per cent–7.0 per cent range). The Irish government used the growth to ease the burden of rising energy costs through tax cuts and energy credits (Arlow & O'Malley 2023). At the other end of the per capita growth spectrum is Estonia, which is the only case of contraction in 2022. Despite this, domestic economic issues—including high inflation, the energy crisis and the continuing Covid-19 stress—lost political salience in the face of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which led to a rally around Prime Minister Kaja Kallas and her Reform Party (Mölder 2023). The rest of the *Yearbook* countries had per capita growth rates distributed pretty evenly between 1 per cent and almost 7 per cent.

The state of democracy in 2022

In 2022, democratic performance continued with mixed reviews across the 37 cases in the *Yearbook*, in line with the recent past. In this introduction, we examine the cases descriptively to summarise patterns in the aggregate, which are borne out in the case narratives published in this volume. To perform comparisons, we rely upon the Varieties of Democracy project's 2022 report (Papada et al. 2023) and related methodologies. On the former, we summarise democratic performance using the Liberal Democracy Index (LDI). On the latter, we report performance using the Regimes of the World's four-fold typology of regime classifications: liberal democracy, electoral democracy, electoral autocracy and closed autocracy (Lührmann et al. 2018). Overall, 25 of the cases are classified as liberal democracies. Eleven—Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia—are electoral democracies. One—Hungary—has dropped into the ranks of electoral autocracies. In Poland, Hungary, the United States and Cyprus, where democracy has eroded over the decade, LDI scores held mostly stable.

The standout cases in 2022 include Romania, Portugal, Greece and Austria on the negative side, and Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria on the positive side. In Slovenia, the gains are attributed to high participation in the elections for the National Assembly, which hit 70 per cent. The results led to the replacement of the government of Prime Minister Janez Janša of the Slovenian Democratic Party—which had been considered responsible for democratic erosions—with a new government headed by Prime Minister Robert Golob of the Freedom Movement. He had campaigned on a promise to revitalise democracy, and his coalition has begun implementing liberalising reforms (Krašovec 2023). In Greece, the regression arises from attacks on individual liberties, especially a

scandal-inducing state surveillance programme of opposition politicians, journalists and others (Mylonas 2023).

Elections and referendums in 2022

Compared with 2021, a higher number of the countries in the volume held lower house elections in 2022: Australia, Bulgaria, the de facto Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Denmark, France, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and the United States. This amounts to 38 per cent of countries in the *Yearbook* (compared to 27 per cent in 2021). Among these, citizens of three countries we also called to renew the upper house (Australia, for half of the Senate; Italy; and the United States for one-third of the Senate), while another two countries, Czech Republic and Japan, only held upper house elections. Direct presidential elections were also held in Austria, France and Slovenia. In total, 43 per cent of the countries covered held a national election.¹

Regional elections were held in 11 countries (Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States), with referendums being held in Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland. Not surprisingly, Switzerland, with its established tradition of direct democracy, presented the highest number of referendum questions (a total of 20, held on three different dates), while Denmark only held one referendum, on 1 June 2022 (see *Issues in National Politics in 2022*).

Table 1 provides an overview of which and how many elections and referendums occurred in our 37 countries in 2022.

Election results produced a mixed picture. Seven prime ministerial parties had a good electoral performance and remained in government (Australia, Denmark, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Portugal and TRNC). The incumbent president's party lost support in legislative elections in both the United States and, especially, in France. Finally, four countries (Israel, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden) witnessed the exit of the prime ministerial party from Cabinet. In Italy, a partisan Prime Minister (Giorgia Meloni) replaced a technocratic chief executive (Mario Draghi).

Among the ruling parties, the most significant electoral improvements were those of the Australian Labor Party, the Portuguese Socialist Party and the Latvian 'National Unity'. The first two increased their popular support and went on to obtain a majority in Parliament. Labor moved from being the largest partner of a minimum-winning coalition government to controlling a single-party majority Cabinet (see Table 2); in Portugal, a single-party majority Cabinet replaced the previous single-party minority government, both under the leadership of Prime Minister António Costa. The party of the Latvian Prime Minister, Kariņš, obtained an 18 per cent increase in seats but fell short of achieving an overall majority in Parliament.

In Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's 'Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union' renewed its parliamentary majority and its leading role in the oversized coalition Cabinet. In Malta, the Labour Party also renewed its majority, reinforcing Prime Minister Robert Abela's leadership. A slightly different case is that of the Danish Social Democrats, which, after being the only party in a minority government and increasing their seats by 2 per cent, went on to form a minority coalition government. In the north of Cyprus, the ruling National Unity Party obtained three additional seats in Parliament and was able to form a coalition

Table 1. Elections and referendums in 37 countries in 2022

Country	Lower house election	Upper house election	Presidential election	Regional elections ^a	National referendums
Australia	Yes	Yes		2	
Austria			Yes	1	
Belgium					
Bulgaria	Yes	–			
Canada				2	
Croatia		–			
Cyprus	Yes (Northern)	–			
Czech Republic		Yes			
Denmark	Yes	–			1
Estonia		–			
Finland		–		20 ^b	
France	Yes		Yes		
Germany			Yes (indirect)	4	
Greece		–			
Hungary	Yes	–	Yes (indirect)		4
Iceland		–			
Ireland					
Israel	Yes	–			
Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes (indirect)	1	5
Japan		Yes			
Latvia	Yes	–			
Lithuania		–			
Luxembourg		–			
Malta	Yes	–			
The Netherlands					
New Zealand		–			
Norway		–			
Poland					
Portugal	Yes	–			
Romania					
Slovakia		–		8	
Slovenia	Yes		Yes		3
Spain				2	
Sweden	Yes	–			
Switzerland			c	7	11 ^d
The United Kingdom				1 ^e	
The United States	Yes	Yes		36 ^f	

Note: – indicates that there is no upper chamber.

^a This category includes state elections in federal countries.

^b County elections.

^c The Swiss president is annually elected by the Parliament. The elections are not competitive and follow consociational logics.

^d Four referenda were held on 13 February, three on 15 May and four on 25 September.

^e Elections to the Parliament of Northern Ireland.

^f Gubernatorial elections in US states. Voters elected also many state legislatures.

Table 2. Cabinet and gender composition of cabinets and parliaments in 37 countries on 31 December 2022 (or on the last day in office for cabinets terminated in 2022)

Country	Cabinet	Cabinet starting date	Parties in Cabinet (N)	Cabinet type ^a	Cabinet members (N)	Women in Cabinet (N)	Women in Cabinet (%)	Women in the lower house (N)	Women in the lower house (%)
Australia	Morrison II	29/05/2019	2	MWC	22	6	27.3		
	Albanese I	01/06/2022	1	SPMA	23	10	43.5↑	58	38.4↑
Austria	Nehammer I	06/12/2021	2	MWC	14	5	35.7↓	74	40.4↓
Belgium	De Croo I	01/10/2020	7	OC	20	11	55.0↑	63	42.0↑
Bulgaria	Petkov I	13/12/2021	4	MWC	21	5	23.8		
	Donev I	02/08/2022	0 ^b	NP	20	3	15.0↓	59	24.6↑
Canada	Trudeau III	26/10/2021	1	SPMI	39	19	48.7	103	30.7↑
Croatia	Plenković II	23/07/2020	2	MC	18	5	27.8↑	51	33.8↑
Cyprus									
Republic	Anastasiades II	01/03/2018	1	SPMI	12	1	8.3↓	8	14.3
TRNC	Sucuğlu I	05/11/2021	2	MC	11	1	9.1		
TRNC	Sucuğlu II	21/02/2022	3	MWC	11	1	9.1		
TRNC	Üstel I	22/05/2022	3	MC	11	1	9.1	11	22.0↑
Czech Republic	Fiala I	17/12/2021	5	OC	18	2	11.1↓	52	26.0↑
Denmark	Frederiksen I	27/06/2019	1	SPMI	20	6	30.0		
	Frederiksen II	15/12/2022	3	MC	23	8	34.8↑	75	42.9↑
Estonia	K. Kallas I	26/01/2021	1	SPMI	8	5	62.5		
	K. Kallas II	18/07/2022	3	MWC	15	7	46.7↑	28	27.7↑
Finland	Marin I	10/12/2019	5	OC	24	13	54.2↑	91	45.5↑
France	Castex I	07/07/2020	6	OC	41	22	53.7		
	Borne I	16/05/2022	5	OC	28	12	42.9↓	218	37.8↓
Germany	Scholz I	08/12/2021	3	MWC	17	8	47.1	257	34.9
Greece	K. Mitsotakis I	09/07/2019	1	SPMA	23	2	8.7	62	20.7↑
Hungary	Orbán IV	18/05/2018	2	OC	13	2	15.4		
	Orbán V	24/05/2022	2	OC	14	1	7.1↓	26	13.1
Iceland	Jakobsdóttir II	28/11/2021	3	MWC	12	5	41.7	30	47.6

Table 2. (Continued)

Country	Cabinet	Cabinet starting date	Parties in Cabinet (N)	Cabinet type ^a	Cabinet members (N)	Women in Cabinet (N)	Women in Cabinet (%)	Women in the lower house (N)	Women in the lower house (%)
Ireland	Martin I	27/06/2020	3	MWC	15	4	26.7		
	Varadkar II	17/12/2022	3	MWC	14	4	26.7	37	23.3
Israel	Bennet I	13/06/2021	8	MWC	26	9	34.6		
	Lapid I	01/07/2022	4	MWC	30	5	16.7		
	Netanyahu VI	29/12/2022	4	MWC	30	5	16.7↓	29	24.2↓
Italy	Draghi I	13/02/2021	7	OC	24	8	33.3		
	Meloni I	22/10/2022	3	MWC	25	7	28.0↓	129	32.3↓
Japan	Kishida II	10/11/2021	2	OC	20	2	10.0↑	46	9.9↑
Latvia	Kariņš I	23/01/2019	4	MC	14	2	14.3		
	Kariņš II	14/12/2022	3	MWC	15	5	33.3↑	29	29.0↑
Lithuania	Šimonytė I	11/12/2020	3	MWC	15	7	46.7	40	28.4
Luxembourg	Bettel II	05/12/2018	3	MWC	17	6	35.3↑	21	35.0
Malta	Abela II	23/11/2020	1	SPMA	21	1	4.8		
	Abela III	30/03/2022	1	SPMA	19	2	10.5↑	22	27.8↑
The Netherlands	Rutte III	26/10/2017	4	MWC	15	4	26.7		
	Rutte IV	10/01/2022	4	MWC	20	10	50.0↑	57	38.0↓
New Zealand	Ardern II	06/11/2020	1	SPMA	22	8	45.0↑	60	50.0↑
Norway	Støre I	14/10/2021	2	MC	19	9	47.4↓	76	45.0↓
Poland	Morawiecki II	15/11/2019	1	SPII	25	4	16.0↑	129	28.0
Portugal	Costa II	26/10/2019	1	SPII	17	8	47.1		
	Costa III	28/03/2022	1	SPMA	18	8	44.4↓		
Romania	Ciucă II	25/11/2021	3	OC	22	2	9.1↑		
Slovakia	Heger I	01/04/2021	4	MWC	15	3	20.0		
	Heger II	13/09/2022	3	MC	15	2	13.3↓	33	22.0
Slovenia	Janša III	13/03/2020	4	MC	18	2	11.1		
	Golob I	01/07/2022	3	OC	17	6	35.3↑	34	37.8↑
Spain	Sánchez II	13/01/2020	2	MC	23	14	60.9	147	42.0↓

Table 2. (Continued)

Country	Cabinet	Cabinet starting date	Parties in Cabinet (N)	Cabinet type ^a	Cabinet members (N)	Women in Cabinet (N)	Women in Cabinet (%)	Women in the lower house (N)	Women in the lower house (%)
Sweden	Andersson I	30/11/2021	1	SPMI	22	11	50.0		
	Kristersson I	18/10/2022	3	MC	24	11	45.8↓	162	46.4↓
Switzerland	Cassis I	01/01/2022	4	OC	7	3	42.9	83	41.5↓
	Johnson II	12/12/2019	1	SPMA	23	6	26.1		
The United Kingdom	Truss I	06/09/2022	1	SPMA	23	5	21.7		
	Sunak I	25/10/2022	1	SPMA	22	6	27.3↑	224	34.8↑
The United States	Biden I	20/01/2021	1	SPMA	25	13	52.0↑	120	27.6

Notes: 1. MC, minority coalition; MNC, minimum winning coalition; NP, non-partisan OC, oversized coalition; SPMA, single-party majority Cabinet; SPMI, single-party minority Cabinet; TRNC, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

2. The arrows indicate lower (down) or higher (up) percentages of women in government and Parliament, compared to 31 December 2021.

^aBased on the seats controlled in the lower house.

^bThe Cabinet included one partisan minister from PP (‘We Continue the Change’).

government, even if its main competitor, the opposition Republican Turkish Party, enjoyed a growth of six seats.

In France, the ‘Together!’ coalition, which comprised party lists supporting President Emmanuel Macron, experienced a substantial electoral defeat in the legislative election, losing 18 per cent of seats to the ‘New Popular, Green and Social Union’ and the far-right *Rassemblement national* (+12 per cent and +13 per cent of seats, respectively). Nevertheless, Macron’s party (*La République En Marche!*, now *Renaissance*) nominated Élisabeth Borne as Prime Minister, who managed to put together a minority coalition government. In contrast, the Democratic Party’s defeat in the United States House of Representatives elections was much less dramatic. Despite losing nine seats to the Republicans, the election produced a fairly balanced distribution of seats between both parties.

In five countries (Bulgaria, Israel, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden), the largest coalition government party lost executive power. In Bulgaria, where the election was prompted by the government’s loss of a no-confidence vote in June, the main governing party until that date, ‘We Continue the Change’, ended up losing 6 per cent of its seats. However, it remained with one minister in the non-partisan caretaker Cabinet while prolonged Cabinet negotiations continued throughout the rest of the year. In Israel, the Prime Minister’s party, *Yesh Atid*, won the election, obtaining seven further parliamentary seats, but its inability to form a new coalition government enabled Benjamin Netanyahu and his party, *Likud*, which had gained three more seats, to return to power. Similarly, despite obtaining an additional seat, the Swedish Social Democrats were unable to renew their minority government or form a coalition. Instead, the centre-right parties reached a government agreement and formed a minority coalition Cabinet that relies on the radical-right Swedish Democrats for parliamentary support. Two remarkable cases are Italy and Slovenia. In the former, the only party that was in opposition before the September election—‘Brothers of Italy’—enjoyed an increase of slightly more than 20 per cent in votes and seats (22 and 23, respectively); her leader, Meloni, became Prime Minister of a centre-right minimum winning coalition. In the latter, the brand-new party ‘Freedom Movement’ entered Parliament with 46 per cent of the seats and became the major partner of a new oversized government coalition with the Social Democrats and The Left.

Moving on to presidential elections, in Austria, the incumbent president, Alexander Van der Bellen (formally an independent, but financially supported by his former party, the Greens), won in the first round with 57 per cent of votes, well ahead of the second most-voted candidate, Walter Rosenkranz, who was endorsed by the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ. In France, the incumbent president, Macron, remained in office, but it took two rounds for him to win a majority of votes against the candidate of the *Rassemblement National*, Marine Le Pen. Last, Slovenian voters elected a new president, Nataša Pirc Musar, who is also the first female president of Slovenia. Pirc Musar ran as an independent but was supported by several progressive parties. She defeated Anže Logar, an independent who was supported by conservative parties.

To conclude, in 2022 most incumbents (or their parties) succeeded in preserving their power in government. This applies to 65 per cent of cases (nine parliamentary and two presidential elections), out of a total of 17 elections.

Changes in the composition of Cabinets and parliaments

Table 2 presents key information on Cabinet changes in 2022 across the 37 *Yearbook* countries. As can be seen, 21 new cabinets were formed during the year (20 in 2021). The highest degrees of Cabinet instability are found in the TRNC, Israel and the United Kingdom, where two executives entered office after 1 January 2022. In Israel, the Lapid I Cabinet was sworn in as a caretaker Cabinet led by the former Deputy Prime Minister of the outgoing Bennet I Cabinet. In contrast, 15 countries experienced one Cabinet change, but in all but Estonia, Ireland, the Netherlands and Slovakia, this happened after a general election. The other 19 countries (excluding Switzerland due to its peculiar directorial form of government) were ruled throughout 2022 by the same Cabinet. This amounts to half of the countries in the volume (if we consider the Republic of Cyprus and the TRNC as two distinct cases).

Prime ministers changed in 12 of the 21 cases of Cabinet change (57 per cent). Not surprisingly, most of these 12 prime ministers (58 per cent of them) led post-election cabinets: Albanese in Australia; Donev in Bulgaria; Borne in France; Netanyahu in Israel; Meloni in Italy; Golob in Slovenia; and Kristersson in Sweden. Prime ministers who, in contrast, remained in office after the formation of a new Cabinet in 2022 were Sucuoğlu in the TRNC (later replaced by his party fellow üstel); Frederiksen in Denmark; Kallas in Estonia; Orbán in Hungary; Kariņš in Latvia; Abela in Malta; Rutte in the Netherlands; Costa in Portugal; and Heger in Slovakia. The highest prime ministerial turnover is found in Israel and the United Kingdom, with three different heads of government in a single year.

In terms of party composition, full alternation in government occurred at least once in Australia, Slovenia and Sweden, whereas Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Israel and Italy experienced only partial alternation of parties in the Cabinet. Finally, no alternation is detectable in the TRNC, Denmark (yet, with coalition enlargements in May and December), Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia (although 'Freedom and Solidarity' exited the Cabinet in September) and the United Kingdom.

The average percentage of women in cabinets at the time of termination (or at the end of the year if the Cabinet was not dismissed) is similar to that of 2021, with a slight decrease: 30 per cent in 2022 and 31 per cent in 2021 (Gomez et al. 2022). The figures do not change substantially when we look at the gender balance in lower legislative bodies: women occupied — on average — 32 per cent of seats. Among cabinets, the lowest female composition corresponded to the Abela II Cabinet in Malta, with 5 per cent of female ministers; the highest performing Cabinet was the female-led Kallas I Cabinet in Estonia, with 63 per cent of female ministers. In this latter case, these figures were achieved after the exit of one of the coalition partners from the Cabinet, which on 1 January 2022 only included 40 per cent of women. In addition to the Kallas I Cabinet, women were also a majority in five other executives (De Croo I in Belgium, Marin I in Finland, Castex I in France, Sánchez II in Spain and Biden I in the United States), while the Dutch Rutte IV and the Swedish Andersson I cabinets were characterised by full gender parity.

Among parliaments, the highest percentage of women can be found in New Zealand (50 per cent) and the lowest in Japan (10 per cent). Overall, only 10 parliaments (26 per cent of the total, considering the Republic of Cyprus and the TRNC as different cases) had at least 40 per cent of women members: Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, New Zealand,

Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland); women comprised between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of the members in 12 parliaments (32 per cent) and between 20 per cent and 30 per cent of the members of the parliaments in 13 countries. Remarkably low percentages are found, alongside Japan, in the Republic of Cyprus (14 per cent), Hungary (13 per cent) and Romania (19 per cent).

Annual variations in the representation of women in Cabinet and Parliament were analysed by comparing numbers on 31 December 2021 and 31 December 2022. The percentage of female ministers increased in 17 countries: Australia, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and the United States. But it decreased in another 12 countries: Austria, Bulgaria, the Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia and Sweden. The trend is more positive among parliaments, with 42 per cent of the assemblies (in Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Japan, Latvia, Malta, New Zealand, Slovenia the United Kingdom) witnessing increases in the percentage of women. On the other hand, the proportion of women MPs decreased in 24 per cent of cases (Austria, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). This means that gender equality either increased or remained steady in 76 parliaments.

Overall, women were still significantly underrepresented within political institutions in 2022, but there were also positive trends towards higher descriptive representation.

The format of the Political Data Yearbook

The *Political Data Yearbook* includes 37 countries and covers the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022. As in earlier editions, the country reports broadly follow the following framework:

- Introduction.
- Election report.
 - Parliamentary elections.
 - Presidential elections.
 - Regional elections.
 - National initiatives and referendums.
- Cabinet report.
- Parliament report.
- Political party report.
- Institutional change report.
- Issues in national politics.

The election reports discuss the relevant lower house, presidential, regional and/or referenda elections that have taken place that year. Each country report consists of a Cabinet report and a lower house report. If a country has seen multiple cabinets in office or multiple lower chambers, for instance after a general election, multiple Cabinet/lower house reports are included. Significant changes to political parties are discussed in the political party

report. Changes to the institutional design of a country's political system are addressed in the institutional change report. If a heading is not included, the theme in question was not relevant for the annual country report.

Note

1. For further information on the specific events mentioned in this section, see the relevant contributions in this *Political Data Yearbook* volume.

Sources

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