

POLITICAL SYSTEMS

American political system

The Constitution went into effect in March 1787. The Bill of Rights was added in 1791 and other 26 amendment have been added over the years. The Constitution opens with a statement that the government of the country is created by “We, the people” and its purpose is to “promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity”. This document guarantees freedom of religion, free speech, free press, the right of citizens to bear arms. In USA the principle of a balance power divided into three branches – legislative, executive and judicial.

The legislative branch is made up of elected representatives. The main body is called the Congress – its seat is in the Capitol. The Congress is divided into two parts – the House of Representatives and the Senate. The House of Representatives consists of 435 lawmakers who are elected according to the population of each state and serve for two years. The Senate has 100 members – 2 members from each state, who serve six years. The main task of the Congress is to make federal laws, declare war and deal with foreign treaties. A law is read, studied, commented on in both houses and then voted upon.

The executive branch is represented by the President and 13 executive departments. The president together with his Vice-President is chosen in nationwide elections every 4 years. The president can be elected to only two terms. Presidential powers are – he proposes bills, can veto or refuse a bill, he is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, makes treaties, appoints federal judges and ambassadors. The head of each department is appointed by the president and is responsible to him. The departments are: State, Treasury, Defense, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy, Education.

British political system

Britain is a constitutional monarchy. It means that the head of state is the Queen. The Constitution of the UK is unwritten, it is based on custom, tradition and common law. The supreme law-making body in the country is Parliament. It consists of: The House of Commons and the House of Lords. British parliamentary system is one of the oldest in the world, it developed slowly during 13th century after King John's signature of Magna Carta in 1215. The Commons has 650 elected and paid Members of Parliament (MPs) from England, Scotland, Wales and from Northern Ireland.

The major part of Parliament's work is revising the Government's work. On the first day when the Parliament's session is opened the Queen reads a speech that outlines the Government's policy. This opening ceremony takes place in the House of Lords. From Monday to Thursday all ministers must answer MP's questions for one hour. Another important parliamentary task is law-making. A proposal of some new law – a bill – must pass through both Houses and then is sent to the Queen for Royal Assent. General elections to choose MPs are every five years. Voting is not compulsory and is from the age of 18.

The Government is formed by the party which has the majority in Parliament and the Queen appoints its leader as the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister appoints a team of main

ministers as the Cabinet (about 20 people) who take decision on major policy. The second largest party forms the official Opposition with its own leader and “shadow cabinet”.

The Czech System of Government

The Czech republic is a sovereign, united and democratic state. Its government is divided into three branches – the **legislative** (represented by the Parliament), the **executive** (represented mainly by the president and the government), and the **judicial** (represented by courts at various levels).

The Parliament consists of two chambers – the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The 200 Deputies and 81 Senators have the exclusive duty of making laws. The elections to the Chamber of Deputies take place every four years while every two years one third of the Senators is renewed. When these times come, every citizen from the age of 18 can exercise the universal, equal, direct, and secret right to vote. The parliament’s main task is to pass laws, ratify international treaties, and decide on sending troops abroad.

The President is elected every five years by the Parliament but no one can serve more than two terms in office in a row. The president represents the state abroad and concludes foreign treaties. He has many duties in relation to the other bodies of government: appointment of all judges, generals of the army, ambassadors and other officials. The president is also the commander-in-chief of the army. In the law-making process he can exercise the power of veto.

The government is composed of the premier, the vice-premier and the ministers. The hierarchy of the executive branch goes further down to the local authorities where the municipality is the smallest unit. The municipal elections take place every four years. Some of the ministries are: Interior, Foreign Affairs, Defense, Justice, Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, Finance, Transport, Labor and Social Affairs, Education, Culture, and Health.

The judicial power is divided into a system of courts, starting with the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court and going down to the courts at all levels of regional government. They apply the law in practice in individual case. Judges serve for an unlimited period of time, must have a good reputation, and must be professional lawyers.