

provides for an eight-year non-renewable term for the president of the Republic, a bicameral congress (to function from 1989) and an independent judiciary and central bank.

Population.

Chile's estimated population in 1985 was 12.3 million with more than 80 per cent concentrated in urban areas. In the Latin American context, Chileans stand out because of their ethnical and cultural homogeneity. A high percentage of descendants of European settlers — Spanish, English, French, German and Italian — who arrived over the centuries, together with mixed Indian and Spanish stock form the basic Chilean population.

Language

The official language of Chile is Spanish. Many Chilean business persons, however, speak or understand English. Interpretation and translation services in Santiago are available through various agencies and in major hotels. The Canadian Embassy can also direct you to competent interpretation and translation services.

Religion

Chile is predominantly Roman Catholic. The Catholic Church is influential at all levels of society. Religious freedom, however, is guaranteed by the constitution.

Education

The academic year begins in early March and ends in mid-December. In addition to the summer holidays in January and February, there is a two-week holiday in July and a one-week holiday in September.

Public schools throughout Chile offer education in Spanish to all children of school age. School is compulsory through the eighth grade. The education system is divided into nursery, kindergarten, eight grades of primary school, followed by four years of secondary education (high school). Private schools offering education in French or English are also available in Santiago.