

Assembly, which legislates within the context of its prerogatives. The important control function is provided by appropriate national institutions and permanent state bodies. At the national level, the supreme authorities of the FLN are the following:

- the congress;
- the central committee (the highest authority of the FLN Party between the congresses); and
- the political bureau.

The country is divided into 48 political and administrative constituencies called *wilayas* and subdivided into communes or *dairas*.

## Population

The population is estimated at 21.5 million. The birth rate is 3.2 per cent per year, one of the highest in the world. Approximately 57.3 per cent of the population is less than 20 years old.

## Religion and Languages

Although the official language is Arabic, French is the prevailing language in business and the administration. Islam is the national religion.

## Climate

The climate is Mediterranean and temperate, at least in the coastal region. The winters are relatively damp and cool (10°C to 15°C on the average), and the summers are hot and dry (25°C to 35°C). In the higher regions the climate is cooler, and in the desert regions there are marked temperature changes between night and day in all seasons.

## Holidays and Local Timetables

There are two legal holidays, January 1 and May 1, and three national holidays, June 19, July 5 and November 1. There are also four Muslim holidays, the dates of which vary from year to year according to the lunar calendar. For 1985 they are: Ramadhan, May 19; Aid El Fitr, June 20; Aid El Adha, August 27, El-Mawlid, November 25.

The Muslim fasting period also varies from year to year. During this 30-day period Muslims must refrain from certain activities, including smoking, drinking and