

democratic rule in 1983 represented a re-establishment of the principles of the 1853 Constitution.

Under the Constitution, the federal government consists of the executive branch, in the person of the president; the legislative branch (Congress), consisting of two chambers, the members of which are senators and deputies, respectively; and the judicial branch, represented by the courts of justice, headed by the Supreme Court of Justice. Provincial governments are organized along similar lines. Legal concepts have their origins in Roman law and in the Napoleonic Code. Argentina has not accepted compulsory International Court of Justice (ICJ) jurisdiction.

Population

The estimated population in 1985 was 30.7 million. The people are predominantly of Spanish or Italian descent and to a lesser extent of other European nationalities. There is little trace of the original Indian inhabitants. The average annual population growth rate is approximately 1.6 per cent.

Language

Spanish is the spoken and commercial language of Argentina although it is not uncommon for government officials and business people to possess a good command of either or both English and French.

Religion

The official and predominant religion is Roman Catholicism. The Constitution, however, guarantees complete freedom of worship, and there are many churches and temples of a wide variety of religions. The population is estimated to be 90 per cent Roman Catholic, 2 per cent Protestant, 2 per cent Jewish and 6 per cent other.

Education

There is compulsory free primary education throughout the country, and state secondary schools and universities provide advanced tuition free of charge. Literacy is consequently high (93 per cent) and labor is comparable in skills and aptitudes with most developed countries. Technical and professional levels are also comparable. Private schools are permitted provided they comply with the official syllabus. There are several English, German, and other foreign-language primary and secondary schools of high reputation. There are also 29 state universities and 23 private universities.