

DENMARK

Date of Elections: September 21, 1971 (October 5, 1971 in Faeroe Islands)

Reason for Elections

Elections were held to renew all the members of the *Folketing*, which was dissolved 4 months before the expiration of its term.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Danish Parliament, the *Folketing*, is comprised of 179 members, 2 of whom are elected in the Faeroe Islands and 2 in Greenland. It normally has a 4-year term.

Electoral System

The right to vote at a *Folketing* election is held by every Danish subject of at least 21 years of age who is permanently domiciled in the Kingdom of Denmark, provided that he has not been declared incapable of conducting his own affairs. (A referendum which was combined with the elections lowered the age limit to 20 years *.)

Electoral lists are revised continuously. Voting is not compulsory.

Any person who is entitled to vote at legislative elections shall be eligible for membership of the *Folketing*, unless he has been convicted of an act which " in the eyes of the public makes him unworthy of being a member of the *Folketing*. "

Parties already represented in Parliament qualify to contest an election by notifying the Ministry of the Interior; non-represented parties, by at least 10,000 electors giving the same notice. Any elector can do so provided his nomination is supported by at least 25 and at most 50 electors. The candidate must indicate the party he supports, or whether he is independent of parties. The parties can refuse to recognize candidates, who are then regarded as independents.

No candidate may seek nomination in more than one electoral area or for more than one party, or declare himself independent and at the same time support a party.

In metropolitan Denmark, the electoral procedure applies an ingenious method of ensuring the proportional representation of political forces as faithfully as possible. Its main characteristics are as follows:

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, page 10.

1. Metropolitan Denmark is divided into 3 zones (Great Copenhagen, Jutland, Islands), split into 23 electoral areas which are further subdivided into 124 constituencies.

2. The parties can choose 3 ways of designating their candidates: a single candidate per constituency; several candidates per constituency with indication of an order of priority; or a single candidate per constituency with indication of an order of priority by constituency. In this way, candidates receive both personal and party votes. The elector can vote either for a candidate or for a party, but he can impose his own order of preference on the latter. He can vote for any one of the candidates or parties in his area and is therefore not bound by the lists drawn up for his particular constituency.

3. To ensure that Parliament reflects as closely as possible the composition of the electorate, the seats are filled in 2 stages.

First, 135 Deputies are elected in the fight of the results obtained by each party in the electoral area, the seats being distributed according to the Saint-Lague method.

Forty supplementary seats are then distributed in each of the 3 zones among the parties which

- (a) have won at least one area seat, **or**
- (b) have obtained, in 2 out of 3 zones, at least as many votes as the average number of valid votes cast in the zone per area seat, or
- (c) have obtained at least 2 % of all valid votes in the country as a whole.

A fictitious distribution of the 175 seats then takes place among the parties fulfilling the above conditions, in proportion to the total number of votes cast for these parties in all parts of the country.

From the number of seats thus allotted to each party, the number of area seats already obtained in each case is deducted. The figure thus arrived at is the number of supplementary seats due to the party.

The " next-in-line " of the list from which the holder had been elected fills any seat which becomes vacant between general elections.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The early dissolution of Parliament announced by Prime Minister Hilmar Baunsgaard, in early September, was prompted by several factors— the unpopularity of winter elections, the need for a clear public pronouncement on joining the Common Market, and the undesirability of the election interrupting the normal *Folketing* session all weighing heavily.

Before the general election, the Government was formed by the coalition of 3 parties (Conservatives, Radical Liberals (*Radikale Venstre*) and Liberal Democrats (*Venstre*)), which held 73 seats against the 62 seats of the Social Democrats. In addition to these 4 parties, 6 more presented candidates in the 1971 general elections but only one of them obtained seats. The number of candidates was some 900.

The campaign lasted less than one month. The primary issues — the economic situation and Denmark's application to join the Common Market — played to no clear advantage of either side. While the governmental coalition was hurt by the balance-of-payments deficit and public hostility toward measures of austerity introduced therefore since 1969, the Social Democrats were internally divided on the Market question, the Socialist People's Party being alone in opposing entry outright. The Christian People's Party, founded in 1970, arguably also played a part in weakening the outgoing coalition; with its platform opposing relaxation of pornography and abortion legislation, it attracted voters from the right and the center.

Mr. Jens Otto Krag, leader of the Social Democrats, took office as Prime Minister on October 11, 1971.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Folketing*

Number of registered voters	3,332,034
Voters	2,904,096 (87.2 %)
Blank or void ballot papers.	20,196
Valid votes.	2,883,900

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Political Group	Obtained	%	Area
Social Democrats	1,074,777	37.3	58
Conservatives	481,335	16.7	24
Liberal Democrats	450,904	15.6	24
Radical Democrats	413,620	14.3	20
Socialist People's Party	262,756	9.1	9
Christian People's Party	57,072	1.9	—
Single Tax Party	50,231	1.7	—
Left Socialists	45,979	1.6	—
Communists	39,564	1.4	—
Schleswig Party (German Minority Party)	6,743	0.3	—

* Number of seats for Metropolitan Denmark only.

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category*

Private administrative and executive positions . . .	67
Civil servants.	29
Teachers.	16
Commercial Farmers.	17
Liberal professions.	13
Industrialists.	11
Housewives.	5
Others.	8

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3. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men.	149
Women.	30

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4. *Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group*

20-30.	6
30-40.	28
40-50.	52
50-60.	63
60-70.	28
Over 70.	2

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