

## DENMARK

Date of Elections: January 9, 1975

### Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the *Folketing*, which was prematurely dissolved on December 5, 1974. Previous general elections had taken place in December 1973.

### Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Denmark, the *Folketing*, is composed of 179 members elected for 4 years. Of this total, 2 are elected in the Faeroe Islands and 2 in Greenland.

### Electoral System

The right to vote at a *Folketing* election is held by every Danish subject of at least 20 years of age who is permanently domiciled in Denmark, provided that he has not been declared incapable of conducting his own affairs.

Electoral registers are revised at the municipal level in the latter part of January of each year. Voting is not compulsory. Postal voting is permitted particularly for the sick, the aged, prisoners and persons abroad.

Any person who is entitled to vote is 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* ".

In general, any elector can contest an election if his nomination is supported by at least 25 and at most 50 electors of his constituency. No monetary deposit is required. Each candidate must declare whether he will stand for a certain party or as an independent.

For electoral purposes, metropolitan Denmark (excluding Greenland and the Faeroe Islands) is divided into 3 areas — Greater Copenhagen, Jutland and the Islands. These areas are in turn subdivided, with the Copenhagen area comprising 3 large constituencies, and the Jutland and Islands each comprising 7 county constituencies. Each of these constituencies are for their part divided into from 2 to 10 nomination districts: there are altogether 103

of these districts. Two to 15 parliamentary seats are allocated to each constituency.

Members of the *Folketing* are chosen according to a list system of proportional representation. Since each elector can cast either a " personal vote " for one of the candidates or a vote for one of the party lists, candidates receive both personal and party votes. The elector may moreover cast a preferential vote within a party list. He can vote for any of the candidates or parties of his constituency, not being limited to those of his nomination district.

Of the 175 seats reserved for Denmark proper 135 seats are distributed among the constituencies. The mandates in the constituencies are distributed among the political groups in contention according to a modified version of the St. Lague method (whereby the total vote of each party in a constituency is divided by 1,4, 3, 5 and so on by unequal numbers in order to arrive at the quotients on the basis of which seats are allocated). Utilization of this method ensures representation for smaller parties.

The 40 supplementary, or remaining, seats are then distributed among the parties which either have won at least one area seat; have obtained, in two electoral areas, at least as many votes as the average number of valid votes cast, in the area, per area seat; or have obtained at least 2 % of all valid votes cast in the country as a whole. Such distribution, based on votes obtained on the national scale, is aimed at redressing the balance achieved through the distribution by constituencies.

When it has been decided which parties are entitled to a share in the supplementary seats, it is calculated, on the basis of the total number of votes cast for these parties in all parts of the country, how many seats each party is proportionately entitled to of the 175 seats. From the number of seats thus arrived at for each party, the number of area seats already obtained by the party is deducted. The number thus arrived at is the number of supplementary seats due to the party.

The end result of this rather involved electoral system is a distribution of seats in the *Folketing* that faithfully reflects the share of the popular votes received by the parties.

Candidates who have been nominated but not elected figure on a list of substitute members drawn up by the Minister of Interior after each general election. These substitute members fill the seats of the *Folketing* which become vacant between general elections.

## **General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

Asserting that he preferred to consult the electorate after a majority of the parties in the *Folketing* had opposed the economic crisis plan of his minority

Liberal Government, Prime Minister Poul Hartling, on December 5, 1974, called for general elections.

In the outgoing Parliament elected in December 1973, Prime Minister Hartling's Liberal Party, with 22 seats, was in fact heavily dependent on the support it obtained from other right-wing and centre groups. As the economic crisis deepened, the Liberals proposed to freeze all prices and profits in 1975 to combat the rising inflation (over 15 %) and unemployment (estimated at 10 %), as well as to extend all labour agreements through 1975 and to temporarily ban automatic wage adjustments linked to the cost-of-living index.

The issue of the economy predictably dominated the election campaign. The Liberals' economic programme, particularly the freeze on wages, was opposed by the country's Socialist parties and trade unions. The Social Democrats, the outgoing *Folketing's* largest political group, viewed the proposed freeze as an interference in normal collective bargaining. A total of 11 parties contested the elections.

Over 88 % of the electorate cast votes on polling day. While once again no single party gained an absolute parliamentary majority, the Liberals nearly doubled their representation, overtaking the anti-tax Progress Party to become the second largest parliamentary group behind the Social Democrats. These Liberal gains were nevertheless registered largely at the expense of former allies — Conservatives, Radicals and Centre Democrats — rather than of left-wing groups.

After various attempts to form another coalition government, Prime Minister Hartling's Government resigned on January 29 after the *Folketing* voted in favour of an opposition motion calling for efforts to form a majority Government. Following further negotiation between parties, a minority Social Democratic Cabinet under the premiership of Mr. Anker Jørgensen was sworn in on February 13, 1975.

## Statistics

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

Number of registered voters	3,477,621
Voters . . . . .	3,068,302 (88.22 %)
Blank or void ballot papers	18,850
Valid votes . . . . .	3,049,452

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Num Seats <i>Folk</i>
Social Democratic Party	104	913,155	29.94	5
Liberal Party ( <i>Venstre</i> )	106	711,298	23.33	4
Progress Party . . . . .	118	414,219	13.58	2
Radical Liberal Party .	99	216,553	7.10	
Conservative Party . .	96	168,164	5.51	1
Christian People's Party	80	162,734	5.33	
Socialist People's Party	104	150,963	4.95	
Communist Party . . .	103	127,837	4.19	
Centre Democrats . . .	98	66,316	2.17	
Left Socialist Party . .	84	63,579	2.08	
Single Tax Party . . .	99	54,095	1.77	—
Others . . . . .	21	539	.02	—
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\* Four more deputies are elected in Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.

\*\* Before dissolution, 2 deputies left the Progress Party and one left the Centre Demo

## 2. Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category

Managers and administrative executives. . . . .	49
Government employees. . . . .	38
Teachers. . . . .	19
Personnel in administrative, clerical and commercial fields. . . . .	18
Self-employed: liberal professions. . . . .	14
Farmers. . . . .	13
Skilled workers. . . . .	7
Self-employed: crafts and industry. . . . .	4
Technical employees and foremen. . . . .	3
Self-employed: trade and transport. . . . .	3
Unskilled workers. . . . .	2
Housewives. . . . .	2
Others. . . . .	3
	175*

\* Excluding deputies from Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.

## 3. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men. . . . .	151
Women. . . . .	28
	179)

## 4. Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group

20-30 years. . . . .	8
30-40. . . . .	34
40-50. . . . .	51
50-60. . . . .	65
60-70. . . . .	21
	179

## 5. Average Age of Deputies: 48.2 years