

DENMARK

Date of Elections: February 15, 1977

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the Parliament, which was prematurely dissolved on January 22, 1977. Previous general elections had taken place in January 1975.

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 three areas — Greater Copenhagen, Jutland and the Islands. These areas are in turn subdivided, with the Copenhagen area comprising three large constituencies, and the Jutland and Islands each comprising seven county constituencies. Each of these constituencies are for their part divided into from two 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. Each elector can cast either a "personal vote" for one of the candidates or a vote for one of the party lists. 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, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on by odd 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

The 1977 elections were the third general elections in Denmark in slightly more than three years.

Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen, head of the Social Democratic minority Government, called the elections two years before schedule after negotiations

with the Opposition failed to achieve agreements on economic and housing policies and defence spending. Jørgensen's Government had remained in office for 25 months through a series of compromises and complex alliances with smaller parties.

The 175 seats of metropolitan Denmark were contested by the 11 political parties which had competed in the 1975 elections as well as by the Pensioners' Party, which collected the requisite number (17,500) of voters' signatures to obtain authorization to present candidates.

The paramount problems discussed during the election campaign were the country's economic difficulties, especially unemployment, foreign debt and a large trade deficit. The Social Democrats advocated a two-year 6% wage increase limit as from March 1977, more State aid to stop unemployment, and higher taxes, whereas the Liberals called for a reduction in taxes and State spending. The anti-tax Progress Party fielded the most candidates — 108.

With a gain of 12 seats on polling day, the Social Democrats solidified their leading position in Parliament. Prime Minister Jørgensen formed a minority Social Democratic Cabinet on February 25.

Statistics

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

Number of registered voters.	3,522,904
Voters.	3,124,967 (88.7%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	18,670
Valid votes.	3,106,297

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	o o	Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dis- solution	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections
Social Democratic Party	104	1,150,355	37.0	65	53	53
Progress Party	108	453,792	14.6	26	23	24
<u>Liberal Party.</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>371,728</u>	<u>12.0</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>42</u>
Conservative Party . . .	90	263,262	8.5	15	9	10
Centre Democrats . . .	82	200,347	6.4	11	4	4
Socialist People's Party	104	120,357	3.9	7	9	9
Communist Party . . .	103	114,022	3.7	7	7	7
Radical Liberal Party .	99	113,330	3.6	6	13	13
Christian People's Party	80	106,082	3.4	6	9	9
Single Tax Party . . .	M	102,149	3.3	6	—	—
Left Socialist Party . .	M	83,667	2.7	5	4	4
Pensioners' Party . . .	86	26,889	0.9	—	—	—
	9	317	0.0			—
				175*	175*	173**

• Four more deputies are elected in Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.

** Before dissolution, one deputy left the Progress Party and one deputy left the Conservative Party.

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category*

Managers and administrative executives . . .	42
Government employees.	34
Personnel in administrative, clerical and com- mercial fields.	23
Teachers.	17
Farmers.	16
Self-employed: liberal professions.	15
Skilled workers.	7
Self-employed: crafts and industry	6
Housewives.	5
Technical employees and foremen.	4
Self-employed: trade and transport.	4
Unskilled workers.	3
Others.	3
	179

3. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men.	150
Women.	29
	179

4. *Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group*

20-30 years.	5
30-40.	37
40-50.	57
50-60.	56
60-70.	24
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