

## DENMARK

**Date of Elections:** 8 December 1981

### **Purpose of Elections**

Following the adoption of a resolution by a majority of 78 votes against 74 (10 abstentions) condemning a government plan of transfer of means from pension funds to industry and agriculture, Parliament was dissolved and the Government resigned on 12 November 1981. Writs for a new election were issued and elections held for all the seats in Parliament. Previous general elections had taken place in October 1979, and the normal expiry date of the mandate was October 1983.

### **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 in a *Folketing* election is held by every Danish subject of at least 18 years of age whose permanent residence is in Denmark, provided that he has not been declared incapable of conducting his own affairs.

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

Any person who has a right to vote at *Folketing* elections 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*".

Any elector can contest an election if his nomination is supported by a minimum number of electors of his constituency. This minimum number is 25. 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 is for its part divided into two to 10 districts: there are altogether 103 of these districts. Two to 15 parliamentary seats are allocated to each constituency.

The electoral system is one 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. 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 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 remaining, or supplementary, 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 imbalance achieved through the distribution by constituencies.

When it has been decided which parties are entitled to a share of 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 *Folkeing* 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 Ministry of Interior after each general election. These substitute members fill the seats of the *Folkeing* which become vacant between general elections.

### General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The 1981 elections were the fifth general elections in Denmark within a period of a little less than eight years.

After the elections of 1979, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, Mr. Anker Jørgensen, had formed a minority Government. At the 1981 elections, 13 political parties nominated 1130 candidates for the 175 seats of metropolitan Denmark (excluding Greenland and the Faeroe Islands). The main problems discussed during the campaign were the country's economic difficulties, particularly the ever-increasing foreign debt and unemployment, as well as the role of trade unions in Government policy-making. The Liberals, together with the Conservatives, put forward a joint plan for the recovery of the economy and limitations in Government spending. The Social Democrats presented an "action programme" containing among others a framework for a reform of the supply of investment means to industry and agriculture from pension funds and insurance means.

On polling day, the Conservatives, Socialist Popular Party and Centre Democrats made progress, whereas the Progress Party, the Liberal Party and the Radical Party declined. The Single Tax Party lost all its seats in the *Folkeing*. The Social Democrats, despite a loss of nine seats, maintained their leading position in Parliament. Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen again formed a minority Social Democratic Cabinet on 30 December.

## Statistics

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

Number of registered electors. . . . .	3,776,333
Voters. . . . .	3,143,444 (83.2%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	19,881
Valid votes. . . . .	3,123,563

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Election
Social Democrats. . . . .	105	1,026,726	32.9	60*	69	69
Conservative Party . . . . .	88	451,478	14.5	26	22	22
Socialist Popular Party . . . . .	99	353,373	11.3	21	11	11
Liberal Party. . . . .	95	353,280	11.3	21*	23	23
Progress Party. . . . .	96	278,383	8.9	16	20	20
Centre Democrats . . . . .	77	258,522	8.3	15	6	6
Radical Party. . . . .	98	160,053	5.1	9	10	10
Left Socialist. . . . .	85	82,711	2.7	5	6	6
Christian Popular Party . . . . .	81	72,174	2.3	4	5	5
Single Tax Party . . . . .		44,964	1.4		5	5
Outside of above parties (Greenland). . . . .				2		
				179	179	179

\* Including one MP from the Faeroe Islands.

2. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men. . . . .	137
Women . . . . .	42
	179