

## DENMARK

**Date of Elections:** 10 January 1984

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 16 December 1983. Since general elections had previously been held in December 1981, they would not normally have been due until December 1985.

### **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 composed on the basis of the Central Register of Persons (computerized). Voting is not compulsory. Postal voting is permitted particularly for the sick, the aged, prisoners and persons 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. Laguc 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 caused 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 complicated 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 Ministry of Interior after each general election. These substitute members fill the seats of the *Folketing* which become vacant between general elections.

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

Subsequent to the December 1981 general elections, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, Mr. Anker Joergensen, continued as Prime Minister of the Social Democratic minority Government. Due to increasing opposition to its policies, Mr. Joergensen's Cabinet resigned in September 1982 and a four-party (Conservatives, Liberals, Centre Democratic and Christian Popular Party) coalition minority Government, under the leadership of Mr. Poul Schliiter (Conservative), was formed. On 15 December 1983, Prime Minister Schliiter announced his Government's resignation after Parliament voted 93 to 77 against his 1984 Finance Bill. The *Folketing* was dissolved the next day.

Debate during the election campaign centered on the issue of whether the centre-right coalition Government had succeeded in its efforts to stabilize the economy and reduce public spending. The Radical Party and, to some extent, the Progress Party, supported the outgoing coalition's claims that the Government should pursue the new line of economic policy. There were over 1,000 candidates and 13 parties in the running for the *Folketing's* 179 seats.

On polling day, the Conservatives, Liberals, Radicals and Christian Popular Party all gained seats whereas the Progress Party, Centre Democrats and Social Democrats were not so fortunate. The overall outcome gave Mr. Schliiter's coalition Cabinet just enough strength (90 seats including the support of the Radicals and three overseas Deputies) so that it could continue unaltered in office.

Denmark

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors. . . . .	3,829,600	
Voters. . . . .	3,386,733	(88.4%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	24,723	
Valid votes. . . . .	3,362,010	

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections
Social Democratic Party	104	1,062,561	36.6	57*	60**	60**
Conservative Party	103	788,224	23.4	42	26	26
Liberal Party . . . . .	96	405,737	12.1	23 "	21**	21**
Socialist Popular Party	103	387,122	11.5	21	21	21
Radical Party . . . . .	99	184,642	5.5	10	9	9
Centre Democrats . . . . .	96	154,553	4.6	8	15	15
Progress Party . . . . .	96	120,641	3.6	6	12	16
Christian Popular Party	85	91,623	2.7	5	4	4
Left Socialists . . . . .	85	89,356	2.7	5	5	5
Outside of above parties (Faeroe Islands, Greenland and independents)						
Other parties and independent candidates . . . . .	272	77,551	2.3			
				179	179	179

\* Including one MP from Greenland.

' Including one MP from the Faeroe Islands.

2. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men	133
Women	<u>46</u>
	179