

## DENMARK

**Dates of Elections:** 8 September 1987  
10 May 1988

### Purpose of Elections

*8 September 1987:* Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 18 August 1987. Since general elections had previously been held in January 1984, they would not normally have been due until January 1988.

*10 May 1988:* Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body in April 1988.

### 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 citizen of at least 18 years of age whose permanent residence is in Denmark, provided that he has not been declared insane.

Electoral registers are compiled on the basis of the Central Register of Persons (computerized) and revised continuously. Voting is not compulsory.

Any qualified elector is eligible for membership of Parliament 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 at least 25 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 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 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 resulting figure 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.

## Background and Outcome of the Elections

8 September 1987

On 18 August 1987, in announcing the date of the premature elections, Prime Minister Poul Schlüter (Conservative People's Party) stated that it was important for Denmark's economy and for the people to avoid uncertainty about governmental responsibility and future policies. The governing, "four-leaf clover", minority coalition (comprising the Conservatives, *Venstre* Liberals, Centre Democrats and Christian People's Party), in power since 1982, held 77 of the 179 seats in the outgoing *Folketing*. It was supported by the Radical Liberal Party.

Debate during the three-week, generally lackluster campaign focused primarily on economic issues (foreign debt, balance of payments deficit), with the governing parties defending their achievements in reducing inflation and unemployment. A total of 1517 candidates from 16 political groups contested the parliamentary seats.

Polling day was marked by setbacks for three of the coalition partners but also for the main opposition Social Democratic Party, which nevertheless remained the single largest group in the *Folketing*. Mr. Schlüter then submitted the resignation of his Government. Despite a reduction of its parliamentary total to 70 seats, the outgoing coalition and Prime Minister continued in power, the new Cabinet being announced on 10 September.

*10 May 1988*

On 14 April 1988, the coalition centre-right Government of Prime Minister Poul Schliiter was defeated on an opposition resolution to tighten Denmark's peacetime ban on nuclear weapons within its territory, including ports. As a result, the Prime Minister deemed it necessary to consult the electorate on Denmark's continued full membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The date of the premature elections - the second in eight months - was set on 19 April.

Primary opposition to the minority Government once again came from the Social Democrats, who had tabled the above-mentioned motion and were led by Mr. Svend Auken. During the three-week campaign, the opposition strove as well to underline continuing economic problems. Altogether 12 parties and more than 1200 candidates were in the running. A general status quo emerged from the voting results, as the Social Democrats remained the largest single group and the outgoing governing coalition partners retained their 70 seats. Biggest gains were registered by the right-wing Progress Party.

On 3 June, Mr. Schliiter announced agreement on the formation of a new three-party coalition Government comprising the Conservatives, Liberals and Radical Liberals (together controlling 67 *Folkeing* seats).

## Statistics

8 September 1987

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

Number of registered electors. . . . .	3,907,454
Voters. . . . .	3,389,201 (86.7%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	26,644
Valid votes. . . . .	3,362,557

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	985,906	29.3	54	56	56
Conservative People's Party	104	700,886	20.8	38	43	42
Socialist People's Party	103	490,176	14.6	27	23	21
Liberal Party ( <i>Venstre</i> )	96	354,291	10.5	19	23	22
Radical Liberal Party	101	209,086	6.2	11	10	10
Centre Democrats . . .	97	161,070	4.8	9	8	8
Progress Party . . . . .	99	160,461	4.8	9	4	6
Christian People's Party	94	79,664	2.4	4	4	5
Common Course* . . .	97	72,631	2.2	4	—	—
Faeroe Islands and Greenland				4**	4	4
Other parties and independ- ents . . . . .	622	146,366	4.4		4	5
				179	179	179

\* New party.

\*\* Two of these members (one from Greenland and one from the Faeroes) joined the Social-Democratic Party.

## 2. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men	127
Women	<u>52</u>
	179

10 May 1988

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

Number of registered electors. . . . .	3,911,897	
Voters. . . . .	3,352,651	(85.7%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	23,522	
Valid votes. . . . .	3,329,129	

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections
Social-Democratic Party	175	992,682	29.6	55	54
Conservative People's Party	103	642,048	19.1	35	38
Socialist People's Party . . . . .	105	433,261	12.9	24	27
Liberal Party ( <i>Venstre</i> ) . . . . .	98	394,190	11.6	22	19
Progress Party. . . . .	105	298,132	8.9	16	9
Radical Liberal Party	100	185,707	5.5	10	II
Centre Democrats . . . . .	95	155,464	4.6	9	9
Christian People's Party	92	68,047	2.0	4	4
Common Course . . . . .	119	63,263	1.9	—	4
Other parties . . . . .	264	92,702	2.7	—	—
				175*	175*

\* Excluding Greenland and Faeroe Islands seats.

4. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men	124
Women	<u>55</u>
	179

5. Distribution of Deputies according to Age

18-29 years . . . . .	7
30-39 » . . . . .	18
40-49 » . . . . .	82
50-59 » . . . . .	45
60 and over	<u>26</u>
	179