

ICELAND

Date of Elections: 25 April 1987

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of Iceland, the *Althing*, is divided into two Houses: the *Eefri deild*, or Upper House, and the *Nedri deild*, or Lower House. When, as often happens, both Houses work together, Parliament is known as the United *Althing*.

The Upper House consists of one-third of the members whom the *Althing* chooses from amongst the newly-elected representatives, the remaining two-thirds forming the Lower House. Each House and the United *Althing* elects its own Speaker.

The *Althing* comprises 63 members, all elected for a 4-year term.

Electoral System

All Icelandic subjects who are at least 18 years of age and have been domiciled in the country for no less than five years prior to the elections have the right to vote. Persons who have been convicted of a crime are disqualified.

Electoral registers are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

Every citizen qualified to vote is eligible for the *Althing*, with the exception of Supreme Court judges. Civil servants do not require governmental permission to stand for election. However, once elected, they must ensure that, throughout their term of office, their duties are carried out in a satisfactory manner and at no additional cost to the Treasury.

The 63 members of the *Althing* are elected in eight multi-member constituencies. The constituencies vary in size, ranging from five to 18 representatives. The apportionment of seats to the constituencies is to some extent tied to the number of electors. The electors vote for party lists. The allocation of seats to parties is done in two main stages. First, three-quarters of the seats in each constituency are allocated independently according to a modified method of greatest remainder. In this stage, 50 of the 63 seats are allocated. The rest of the seats are assigned to parties, according to the d'Hondt rule, on the basis of the national outcome. Then the allocation of the seats in the constituencies is concluded in a certain order subject to the limitation that each party is no longer eligible when it has been awarded all its seats.

Deputy members elected at the same time as full-fledged members fill parliamentary seats which become vacant between general elections, in the order of their appearance on the list in question.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The election date was set on 3 December 1986. Opposing the partners of the outgoing coalition Government (the centrist, agrarian Progressive Party of Prime Minister Steingrímur Hermannsson and the conservative Independence Party, which together held 38 seats) for the enlarged *Althing's* 63 seats were six parties. During the campaign - which focused on personalities as much as on policy issues - the Progressives were the first group in Iceland to use extensive television advertising.

On a polling day marked by a high voter turnout (which for the first time included 18-year-olds), the coalition parties together lost six seats and thus their overall parliamentary majority, while the newly-formed Citizens' Party captured seven and the Social Democratic Party became Parliament's third leading force.

After weeks of inter-party negotiations to form a new Government, the Independence, Progressive and Social Democratic parties formed a new ruling coalition on 8 July. It is headed by Prime Minister Thorsteinn Pálsson (Independence Party).

Statistics

*1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the Althing*

Voters. 90% (approx.)

Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats
Independence Party	48,885	27.2	18 (-5)
Progressive Party.	28,883	18.9	13 (-1)
Social Democratic Party	23,260	15.2	10 (+4)
People's Alliance.	20,382	13.3	8 (-2)
Citizens' Party*.	15,819	10.8	7 (+7)
Women's Alliance.	11,646	10.1	6 (+3)
Others.		4.5	1 (-3)

63**

* New party.

** Three seats added since last elections.

*2. Distribution of Members of Parliament
according to Sex*

Men	50
Women	13
	63

3. *Distribution of Members of Parliament
according to Age Group*

26-30 years.	. . . . .	.1
31-35 ».	. . . . .	4
36-40 ».	. . . . .	.6
41-45 ».	. . . . .	.10
46-50 ».	. . . . .	.16
51-55 ».	. . . . .	.8
56-60 ».	. . . . .	.11
61-65 ».	. . . . .	.5
66-70 ».	. . . . .	.2
		63