

NETHERLANDS

Date of Elections: 8 September 1982

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in the Second Chamber of the States-General following premature dissolution of this body. General elections had previously been held on 26 May 1981 and were therefore not due until May 1985.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of the Netherlands, the States-General, is bicameral. The First Chamber (Upper House) comprises 75 members indirectly elected for 6 years, half of whom are renewed every 3 years, except in case of a change in the Constitution, when the whole Chamber is dissolved. The Second Chamber (Lower House) is composed of 150 members elected for 4 years.

Electoral System

Every Netherlands citizen who is at least 18 years old and resident in the Netherlands is entitled to vote unless he is insane, a prisoner, has been disenfranchised as a result of certain criminal convictions, or has been deprived of parental authority or guardianship over his children.

Any Netherlands civil servant serving abroad and his Dutch spouse are deemed to be residents of the Netherlands for the purpose of the Election Act.

Electoral registers are continuously kept up to date. Voting is not compulsory. Proxy voting is permitted within strict limits.

To be eligible for election to either Chamber, a candidate must have Netherlands nationality and be at least 25 years of age. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with the office of civil servant, member of the armed forces. Minister, Vice-President or member of the Council of State, judge of the Supreme Court, member of the General Board of Auditors, Queen's Commissioner in a province and Clerk of either Chamber. A Minister who is chosen as member of the States-General may nevertheless, for a period not exceeding three months, hold both these posts.

In each electoral district, lists of candidates must be supported by at least 25 electors. The 25 nominating persons can appoint a representative who is empowered to link their list with other lists, at the national level, into what is then called a group of lists. Nominations of lists of parties which are not already represented in the Second Chamber must be accompanied by a deposit of 1,000 *guilders*. This deposit is not refunded if the number of votes obtained by the political group remains below 75% of the established electoral quota.

For elections to the Second Chamber, voting takes place in 18 districts, under a party-list system with proportional representation. Seats are distributed on the national level

among different lists or groups of lists, each being awarded as many seats as its total number of votes for its candidates is the multiple of an established national quota (the total of valid votes in the country divided by the number of seats (150) to be filled). Within each list, seats are then allocated among candidates according to the order in which they appear on the list. The seats remaining unfilled after this first distribution are then allocated according to the d'Hondt method of highest average.

Members of the first Chamber are elected by the 11 provincial councils (grouped into four electoral colleges) by party-list system, with seats proportionately filled as for members of the Second Chamber.

If a seat becomes vacant between general elections, it is filled by the candidate who is "next-in-line" on the list of the same party which previously held the seat.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The Second Chamber was prematurely dissolved following a split in the governing coalition over the issue of how to combat unemployment, which led to the resignation of the Labour Ministers. The life of the Chamber would normally have expired on 17 September 1985, after an election on 22 May 1985.

The coalition that resulted from the May 1981 general elections had an unsuccessful start. The centre-left Cabinet of the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), the Labour Party (PvdA) and Democrats'66 (D'66) that was sworn in on 11 September 1981 resigned on 16 October, then was reinstated on 4 November.

Although this coalition enjoyed a large majority of 109 seats in the Second Chamber, the relations between the partners remained strained throughout. Rising budget deficits made it impossible to carry out fully the laboriously-reached agreement between the three parties. Added to this were the divergences about the stationing of NATO Cruise missiles on Dutch territory and the nuclear energy policy. The coalition finally broke down on 12 May 1982, when the Labour Ministers resigned. Prime Minister Andries van Agt (CDA) subsequently formed a caretaker Government together with D'66.

On polling day, the Labour Party became the largest party in the country again, with two seats more than CDA. Out of 20 parties which had taken part in the election, 12 succeeded in obtaining seats. CDA and the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VD) together gained an overall majority of Second Chamber seats, which they had lost in 1981. On 4 November, they formed a centre-right coalition and Mr. Ruud Lubbers (CDA) became Prime Minister; his Cabinet was sworn into office the same day.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the Second Chamber

Number of registered electors.	10,213,017
Voters.	80.6%
Valid votes.	8,228,582

Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats
Labour Party (PvdA).	2,501,665	30.4	47 (+ 3)
Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA).	2,416,718	29.3	45 (- 3)
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VD) (Liberals).	1,899,346	23.1	36 (+10)
Democrats'66 (D'66).	350,900	4.3	6 (- 11)
Pacifist-Socialist Party (PSP).	187,394	2.3	3 (=)
State Reform Party (SGP).	156,633	1.9	3 (=)
Netherlands Communist Party (CPN).	147,699	1.8	3 (=)
Radical Party (PPR).	136,272	1.6	2 (- 1)
Reformed Political Federation (RPF).	124,222	1.5	2 (=)
Centre Party.	68,415	0.8	1 (+1)
Reformed Political Association (GPV).	67,158	0.8	1 (=)
Evangelical People's Party.	56,457	0.7	1 (+D)
Others	115,703	1.5	- (=)

150

*2. Distribution of Members of the Second Chamber
according to Professional Category*

Civil servants. . . . .	.31
Teachers and researchers. . . . .	.26
Trade, private industry or banking. . . . .	.14
Aldermen of large municipalities. . . . .	.14
Salaried functions in political parties or closely allied institutions. . . . .	.14
Press or broadcasting. . . . .	.10
Welfare institutions. . . . .	.10
Trade union employees. . . . .	.8
Lawyers or notaries. . . . .	.4
Military. . . . .	.4
Burgomasters. . . . .	.4
Farmers. . . . .	.3
Others. . . . .	.8
	150

*3. Distribution of Members of the Second Chamber
according to Sex*

Men. . . . .	.131
Women. . . . .	.19
	150

*4. Distribution of Members of the Second Chamber
according to Date of Birth*

Before 1925. . . . .	.19
1925-1934. . . . .	.37
1935-1944. . . . .	.64
1945-1954. . . . .	.28
1955 and later. . . . .	.2
	150