

## NETHERLANDS

**Date of Elections:** 21 May 1986

### **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 in September 1982 and were therefore not due until September 1986.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The Parliament of the Netherlands, the States-General, is bicameral. The First Chamber (Upper House) comprises 75 members indirectly elected for 4 years, half of whom are renewed every 2 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 resident 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 districts, 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 at 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**

In the 1986 general elections, the ruling centre-right coalition Government comprising the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) and the Liberal Party (VD) was once again mainly opposed by the Labour Party (PvdA) headed by former Prime Minister Joop den Uyl. The latter challenged the economic austerity policies of the Government since it came into power in 1982 as well as its support of nuclear power, advocating tax increases on businesses and increased Government spending to reduce the high (15%) unemployment rate. Outgoing Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers (CDA) pointed out that the austerity programme had minimized inflation and promoted economic growth. "Let Lubbers finish the job" was the CDA's campaign slogan.

Election day was marked by a high (87%) voter turnout. Contrary to more pessimistic opinion polls, final results gave the governing coalition the same absolute majority number of seats as before (81), with the Liberals' losses being offset by the CDA's gains; this outcome was attributed by observers in large part to the personal popularity of Mr. Lubbers. The socialist PvdA, for its part, added five seats to its overall total, but surrendered its position of leading parliamentary party to CDA. On 14 July, a new coalition Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Lubbers was sworn in.

Statistics

*Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the Second Chamber*

Voters . . . . . 85.7%  
Valid votes 9,127,335

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats
Christian Democratic Appeal ( C D A ) . . . .	3,170,081	34.6	54 (+ 9)
Labour Party (PvdA) . . . . .	3,012,268	33.3	52 (+ 5)
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (WD) (Liberals) . . . . .	1,595,377	17.4	27 (- 9)
Democrats'66 (D'66) . . . . .	561,865	6.1	9 (+ 3)
State Reform Party (SGP) . . . . .	159,867	1.8	3 ( = )
Radical Political Party (PPR) . . . . .	115,009	<b>13</b>	2 ( = )
Pacifist-Socialist Party (PSP) . . . . .	110,331	1.2	1 (- 2)
Reformed Political Association (GPV) . . . .	88,006	1.0	1 ( = )
Reformed Political Federation (RPF) . . . .	83,269	0.9	1 (- 1)
Netherlands Communist Party (CPN) . . . .	57,840	<b>0.6</b>	- (- 3)
Centre Party (CP) . . . . .	36,701	0.4	- (- 1)
Others . . . . .	136,691	1.4	- (- 1)
			150

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

	First Chamber	Second Chamber
Men	59	120
Women	16	30
	75	150