

NORWAY

Dates of Elections: 8 and 9 September 1985

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 Norway, the *Storting*, consists of 157 members (formerly 155) elected for 4 years.

The *Storting* is in reality a unicameral system, but when dealing with legislation, it divides in two parts. The first division is called the *Lagting* (acting as Upper Chamber) and the second division is called the *Odelsting* (acting as Lower Chamber).

Under the terms of the Constitution, the *Storting* nominates one-fourth of its members (39) to constitute the *Lagting*. The remaining three-fourths (118) constitute the *Odelsting*. These nominations take place at the first assembly of the *Storting* following a general parliamentary election.

Electoral System

Norwegian citizens of either sex and over the age of 18 years on polling day are entitled to vote, provided they have resided in Norway during the previous 10 years. The right to vote is lost in the case of any person who is sentenced for criminal offences, enters the service of a foreign power without the consent of the Government, is found guilty of electoral fraud or is declared incapable of managing his or her own affairs.

The electoral registers are revised every four years. Voting is not compulsory.

Every qualified elector is eligible for the *Storting*, with the exception of Ministers and officials of the Ministries, the Royal Court and consular or diplomatic services, whose posts are deemed incompatible with the parliamentary mandate.

Although the great majority of candidates are nominated by a recognized political party, this is not obligatory and persons may run as independents. A candidate may run simultaneously in several constituencies; if he is elected in more than one he must select the constituency he wishes to represent.

Each of Norway's 19 counties (*fylker*) constitutes an electoral constituency. In each of them, four to 15 Deputies and their substitutes are elected by party list system, with proportional distribution of seats according to the St. Lague method. These same substitutes are called upon to fill any vacant seat which may arise between the general parliamentary elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Campaign issues for the 1985 general elections centred mainly on economic questions. The Conservative Party, led by Prime Minister Kaare Willoch, stressed the Government's economic achievements (cuts in personal taxes, reduction of unemployment and inflation rate, programme of deregulation) over the previous four years, while the opposition Labour Party, headed by Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, concentrated on social policy, claiming that increased social expenditure had failed to cope with higher demands, especially in the health sector and care for the elderly. Prior to the polling, the three governing coalition partners (Conservative Party, Christian People's Party and Centre Party) had concluded an electoral pact whereby votes cast could be transferred among them in a given multi-member constituency.

Election day was marked by the highest voter turnout since 1969. The ruling centre-right coalition pulled out a narrow victory over the socialist opposition parties (Labour and Left Socialists), capturing 78 *Storting* seats to the latter's 77. The small, right-wing Progressive Party, with two seats, chose not to join the coalition but at the same time assured it that it would not use its votes against the Government. Labour maintained its position as the largest single party. A record number of female candidates were elected.

On 26 September, Prime Minister Willoch announced a new 18-member Cabinet.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.	3,100,479	
Voters.	2,605,436	(84%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	3,619	
Valid votes.	2,601,817	

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats
Norwegian Labour Party	,061,712	40.80	71 (+ 5)
Conservative Party	791,537	30.42	50 (-3)
Christian Democratic Party	214,969	8.26	16(=)
Centre Party	171,770	6.60	12 (+ 2)
Socialist Left Party	141,950	5.46	6 (+ 2)
Progressive Party	96,797	3.72	2 (-2)
Liberal Party	81,202	3.12	- (- 2)
Red Election Alliance	14,818	0.57	—
Liberal People's Party	12,958	0.50	—
Norway's Communist Party	4,245	0.16	—
Others.	9,859	0.38	—
			<hr/> 157*

•Two seats added since last elections.

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

Men	47
Women	<u>60</u>
	157

3. *Average Age of Members of Parliament: 47.6 years*