



The Parliamentary Electoral System in Denmark

GUIDE TO THE DANISH
ELECTORAL SYSTEM



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Preface

This publication has two aims. First, to provide a brief description in English of the Danish electoral system of proportional representation (PR) for the Folketing, the Danish unicameral parliament; second, to give an account of the current national election administration system. Special emphasis is given to items which are considered particularly interesting in a comparative perspective, such as the establishment and updating of an electoral register, and the handling of advance voting.

The publication has been prepared primarily for the benefit of foreigners with a general interest in electoral systems and election administration, and/or a specific interest in the electoral system and election administration in Denmark, e.g. politicians, journalists, election administrators, and ordinary voters interested in proportional representation systems. The text has been prepared with this audience in mind, while readers with more specialized interests may also consult the material referred to in list of references.

After the presentation of the Danish parliamentary electoral system and a short introduction to the five levels of the Danish election administration system, the description proceeds in three steps. These steps correspond to the main phases of the conduct of elections, which are (1) the administrative procedures connected with the preparation of an election, (2) the rules for polling and counting, and (3) the administrative procedures after election day, including the final computations as well as the election approval procedure.

The first and second editions of this paper dating from 1991 and 1995 respectively were prepared by Professor Jørgen Elklit, Department of Political Science, Aarhus University, and Ms Anne Birte Pade, former Chief Election Officer, Ministry of the Interior and Health. The current edition has been revised by Ms Nicoline Nyholm Miller, Chief Election Officer, Ministry of the Interior and Health, and Jørgen Elklit. This edition has, *inter alia*, been revised according to the changes which were the result of the Electoral District Reform in 2007 and all examples have been updated with new data from the latest general election, which took place in November 2007.

Ms Mette Marie Sundbøll (former Ministry of the Interior and Social Affairs) has assisted in the updating. Her assistance is highly appreciated.

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January 2011

1. The Parliamentary Electoral System in Denmark

The unicameral Danish parliament, the Folketing, has 179 members, 175 from the Southern part of Denmark and two each from the Faroe Islands and Greenland. The members from these two parts of the realm are elected according to separate rules, which is why the following only deals with the election of the 175 members from Denmark *strictu sensu*.

The Danish Constitution states that the members of the Folketing shall be elected by universal suffrage, and by direct and secret ballot. Further, the Constitution states that the electoral system shall be based on two main principles:

- the election shall be by proportional representation (PR) to secure equal representation of different opinions in the electorate;
- in determining the number of seats to be allotted to localities attention must be paid to the number of inhabitants, the number of electors, and the population density.

The purpose of the following description of the Danish electoral system is to explain and demonstrate how these two principles are implemented in the Election Act. Other essential aspects of the electoral law such as franchise and eligibility requirements, rules for registration of new parties, and the like are discussed in Chapter 3.

The Danish system of proportional representation is basically a list system (with provisions for effective preferential – that is, personal – voting within the parties’ lists). Seat allocation takes place at two levels, a multi-member constituency (lower) level and a national (higher) level. For this reason, it is often described as a two-tier allocation system and classified with other electoral systems with the same basic properties – such as Sweden,

Norway, and Iceland, Germany and Estonia, post-1995 New Zealand, and South Africa. The procedural steps whereby seats are allocated in this category of electoral systems actually define the category (Elklit, 2008a; Elklit & Roberts, 1996; see also Lijphart, 1994).

The fact that the Danish PR system can be classified with other PR systems for analytical purposes does not imply that the Danish system is identical to any other system. The Danish system is unique, as are most other PR systems currently in use for parliamentary elections.

Prior to the description of the basic procedural steps in the Danish case in Section 1.2, electoral districting and local/geographical seat distribution will be briefly described. Denmark belongs to the subcategory among the two-tier systems, which Arend Lijphart calls “adjustment-seat systems,” where the electoral “districts at the lower level are used for the initial allocation of seats, but the final allocation takes place at the higher level on the basis of all the votes cast in all of the lower-tier districts that together make up the higher-tier district” (Lijphart, 1994: 32).

1.1. ELECTORAL DISTRICTS AND LOCAL DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS

For electoral purposes, Denmark is divided into three electoral provinces: Metropolitan Copenhagen, Sealand-Southern Denmark, and Northern and Central Jutland. The three provinces are subdivided into a total of ten multi-member constituencies.¹ The multi-member constituencies are subdivided into a total of 92 nomination districts; the nomination districts have no importance as regards seat allocation; their relevance is related to candidate nomination and selection, and to election administration.²

¹ The Danish term is “storkredse”. The number of multi-member constituencies was reduced from 17 to ten after the Electoral District Reform in 2007.

² The Electoral District Reform in 2007 reduced the number of nomination districts from 103 to 92.

Of the nationwide 175 seats, 135 are constituency seats which are distributed among the ten multi-member constituencies, while the remaining 40 seats are compensatory seats, which are distributed among the three electoral provinces as part of the higher tier (i.e. national) seat allocation (see below for details).

Thus, before an election takes place it is clearly established how many of the 135 constituency seats each of the ten multi-member constituencies shall return. It is also known how many of the 40 compensatory seats each of the three electoral provinces shall return. Depending on the actual outcome of the election, the 40 compensatory seats will eventually be further allocated to individual multi-member constituencies within the provinces to which they were first allocated.

Every five years (in 2010, 2015, 2020, and so on), the 135 constituency seats are distributed proportionally to the multi-member constituencies on the basis of the sum of three separate numbers: (1) population, (2) number of registered voters in the latest general election, and (3) area in square kilometres multiplied by 20 (as a measure of population density). The multi-member constituency of the island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea is guaranteed the allocation of at least two seats (even if it might only qualify for one seat on the basis of the said numbers).

For the period 2007-2010, the number of constituency seats allocated to individual multi-member constituencies, apart from Bornholm, ranges from 10 to 21. The number of seats actually returned by each multi-member constituency (i.e. when constituency seats and compensatory seats are combined) at the November 2007 election ranged from 14 to 28, apart from Bornholm which was left with the island's two constituency seats.



As part of the quinquennial allocation of seats, a calculation is also made as to how many of the 40 compensatory seats should be allocated to each of the three electoral provinces. For the period from 2007 to 2010, 11 compensatory seats were allocated to Metropolitan Copenhagen, 15 to Sealand-Southern Denmark, and 14 to Northern and Central Jutland.

⁵ As mentioned, the 175 seats are distributed every five years. However, the last distribution of seats took place in 2007 due to the Electoral District Reform, which was carried out the same year, but the system of a quinquennial distribution was not changed; hence, the next redistribution of seats will take place in 2010, thus re-establishing the system of redistribution every five years hitherto employed.

1.2. THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM STEP BY STEP

The administrative aspects of computing and tabulating election results are dealt with in Chapter 5. However, if we want to identify the individual steps, then there are six basic procedures. These six steps are described in the following subsections:

1.2.1. Step One: Allocating Constituency Seats

In the first step, the 135 constituency seats allocated to the ten multi-member constituencies are further allocated to parties within each

multi-member constituency separately – and definitively – by the d'Hondt formula on the basis of all votes cast for the parties in the multi-member constituency in question. The d'Hondt formula used for seat allocation at this level – i.e. in this first step – is a so-called “divisor method” (or “highest average method”), where the successive divisors are 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. All results of these computations from the 2007 general election are available for public scrutiny in the official electoral statistical publication, [Folketingsvalget den 13. November 2007](#) (only available in Danish).

Table 1. Allocation of Constituency Seats Among Parties and Independent Candidates. Eastern Jutland Multi-member Constituency. November 13, 2007

Eastern Jutland	A. Social Democratic Party	B. Social Liberal Party	C. Conservative People's Party	F. SF - Socialist People's Party	K. Christian People's Party	O. Danish People's Party	V. Liberals	Y. New Alliance	Ø. Unity List
Votes:	127,432	24,921	40,068	61,496	3,820	56,218	125,074	13,389	9,887
1st quota at divisor 1	⁽¹⁾ 127,432	⁽¹⁶⁾ 24,921	⁽⁹⁾ 40,068	⁽⁵⁾ 61,496	3,820	⁽⁶⁾ 56,218	⁽²⁾ 125,074	13,389	9,887
2nd quota at divisor 2	⁽³⁾ 63,716	12,461	20,034	⁽¹²⁾ 30,748	1,910	⁽¹³⁾ 28,109	⁽⁴⁾ 62,537	6,695	4,944
3rd quota at divisor 3	⁽⁷⁾ 42,477	8,307	13,356	20,499	1,273	18,739	⁽⁸⁾ 41,691	4,463	3,296
4th quota at divisor 4	⁽¹⁰⁾ 31,858	6,230	10,017	15,374	955	14,055	⁽¹¹⁾ 31,269	3,347	2,472
5th quota at divisor 5	⁽¹⁴⁾ 25,486	4,984	8,014	12,299	764	11,244	25,015	2,678	1,977
6th quota at divisor 6	⁽¹⁷⁾ 21,239	4,154	6,678	10,249	637	9,370	20,846	2,232	1,648
7th quota at divisor 7	18,205	3,560	5,724	8,785	546	8,031	17,868	1,913	1,412
8th quota at divisor 8	15,929	3,115	5,009	7,687	478	7,027	15,634	1,674	1,236
17 constituency seats	6	1	1	2	0	2	5	0	0

¹⁾ 1 independent candidate with very few votes is not included in this table. Altogether, 13 independent candidates stood for election across the country. All of them only got very few votes.

Table 1 gives – as an example – the numbers from the multi-member constituency of Østjylland (Eastern Jutland).

1.2.2. Step Two: Determining of Passing the Threshold

This step determines which parties are eligible for compensatory seats. This is done by checking if participating parties meet any of three requirements. Thus, the Danish electoral system has not one, but three different electoral thresholds, and parties qualify for participation in the allocation of compensatory seats by any one of them. The three thresholds are:

1. winning a seat directly in any of the ten multi-member constituencies;
2. obtaining in two of the three electoral provinces a number of votes corresponding – at least – to the provincial votes/seat ratio (using in the calculation of these ratios the number of seats in the multi-member constituencies in the electoral provinces in question, excluding the provinces' compensatory seats); or
3. 2 per cent of the valid, national vote.

For parties that do not meet the first requirement (in 2007 it was two of nine participating parties),

the relevant numbers are shown in Table 2, which allows a comparison of thresholds (2) and (3), and the votes for the two parties in question in the three electoral provinces as well as nationally.

Experience shows that threshold (3), the 2 per cent rule, is much more important than threshold (2), the vote/seat ratio in two of three electoral provinces. Parties that meet the 2 per cent requirement will often also have met threshold (2) – as was the case in 2007 with the Unity List – while parties below the 2 per cent hurdle almost invariably will not meet any of the other requirements (as shown by the example of the Christian People's Party in 2007, which failed to cross any of the three thresholds). This experience illustrates how Danish political parties are not (any longer) primarily local or provincial in their support patterns.

1.2.3. Step Three: Allocating Compensatory Seats to Parties

This is the decisive step, since it is here that the proportional, overall, national (or upper-tier) allocation of all 175 seats takes place. The calculation (reproduced in Table 3 below) allocates the seats available to parties which have qualified for participation in this allocation in strict proportionality to the number of votes obtained by these parties. The calculation is done on the basis of the so-called pure Hare quota; seats not allocated by the full

Table 2. How the Parties that Failed to Qualify for Seats at Threshold (1) Fared on Threshold (2) and (3). November 13, 2007.

	All of Denmark	Metropolitan Copenhagen	Sealand-Southern Jutland	Northern and Central Jutland
Threshold 2:				
Valid votes per multi-member constituency seat	n.a.	26,906	25,103	25,146
Threshold 3:				
2 per cent of valid national votes	69,189	-	-	-
The Parties' Votes:				
K. Christian People's Party	30,013	5,513	7,635	16,865
Y. New Alliance	97,295	40,241	30,358	26,696

quota are allocated on the basis of largest remainders. This gives the closest possible approximation to full proportionality (Lijphart, 1994: 159).

Then the aggregate number of seats obtained by the party in all ten multi-member constituencies is deducted from the number of seats to which the party is entitled according to this proportional, at-large allocation. This difference is the party's share of the 40 compensatory seats. After an increase in the percentage of seats allocated as compensatory seats in the late 1940s, the number of compensatory seats has always been sufficient for full compensation, even though that will not necessarily be the case. Taagepera and Shugart argue that an electoral system of this kind should have at least 25 per cent of its total number of seats as compensatory seats (1989: 131). However, Denmark is only just below this level: 40 out of 175 corresponds to 23 per cent.

1.2.4. Step Four: Allocating Compensatory Seats to Provinces

The fourth step is the allocation to the three electoral provinces of the compensatory seats

allocated to each party. Each party's vote in each of the three electoral provinces is successively divided by the divisors 1, 3, 5, etc. (the pure Sainte-Laguë formula). As many of the largest quotients as the party gained constituency seats in the multi-member constituencies in the electoral province in question are disregarded. Then the 40 largest remaining quotients, for all provinces and all parties combined, determine the compensatory seats for the party and the electoral province in question. When all the compensatory seats available for a certain province or party have been allocated, quotients from that province or that party, respectively, are disregarded.

1.2.5. Step Five: Allocating Compensatory Seats to Constituencies

The fourth step left the parties with a number of compensatory seats in each electoral province; in the fifth step these seats are allocated to individual multi-member constituencies within the province in question. Table 3 demonstrated that, e.g., the Social Democrats were entitled to a total of four compensatory seats, and in Step 4 it turned out that one of these seats were to be given to the

Table 3. Allocation of Compensatory Seats to Eligible Parties. November 13, 2007

	The parties' votes	Allocation of 175 seats according to nationwide vote ^{a)}	Obtained multi-member constituency seats	Difference = compensatory seats
Total	3,428,858	175.000 = 175	135	40
A. Social Democratic Party	881,037	44.966 = 45	41	4
B. Social Liberal Party	177,161	9.042 = 9	3	6
C. Conservative Party	359,404	18.343 = 18	11	7
F. SF – Socialist People's Party	450,975	23.017 = 23	19	4
O. Danish People's Party	479,532	24.474 = 25	20	5
V. Liberals	908,472	46.366 = 46	40	6
Y. New Alliance	97,295	4.966 = 5	0	5
Ø. Unity List	74,982	3.827 = 4	1	3

Note a): To three decimal places in the first instance; then the actual seat allocation.

$$\text{Quota} = \frac{3,428,858}{175} = 19,594$$

party in Metropolitan Copenhagen, one in Sealand-Southern Denmark and two in Northern and Central Jutland. In the fifth step, the relevant parties' votes in all the multi-member constituencies in the electoral province in question are divided successively by the divisors 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, etc.⁶, and through a parallel procedure (i.e., by disregarding as many of the largest quotients as the party has already won seats in the multi-member constituency) the compensatory seats for each party are allocated locally to individual multi-member constituencies. Thus, the compensatory seats which the Social Democrats won in Metropolitan Copenhagen ended up in North Sealand, the one won in Sealand-Southern Denmark ended up in Sealand's multi-member constituency and the two in Northern and Central Jutland ended up in Eastern Jutland and Northern Jutland, respectively. With this step completed, all 175 seats (135+40) have been allocated to parties and multi-member constituencies. The next step, then, is to find the persons who will eventually take the seats when the Folketing convenes.

1.2.6. Step Six: Candidate Selection

The sixth and final step establishes which candidates will actually fill the seats (constituency or compensatory) which the political parties have won in each of the ten multi-member constituencies. In this phase, no differentiation is made between the two kinds of seats. The starting point for the candidate selection procedures is that the individual voter can only cast one vote, which must be cast either for his/her preferred party as such (a party vote), or for the voter's preferred candidate among all the party's candidates on the ballot in the multi-member constituency in question (a preferential or personal vote). Both kinds of votes count equally for the party in question in relation to seat allocation.

Each candidate is credited with all preferential (personal) votes given to him/her plus a share of

the votes cast for his/her party as such (the party votes). How this share is calculated depends on the type of list organisation used by the party in the multi-member constituency in question. (On the different forms of list organisation, see below in Section 3.4.2.). A common feature of the calculations of the share of party votes is that the nomination district is the basic unit, not the entire multi-member constituency.

Unless the party uses the "party list" form of list organisation (see Section 3.4.2.), candidates are elected according to the total number of votes received, i.e. the sum for all nomination districts of their preferential (personal) votes plus their allotted share of the party votes. Candidates not elected will be substitutes for members of the Folketing in an order which strictly reflects the size of their vote.

In most cases, candidates with the largest numbers of personal votes also have the largest numbers of total votes. There are, however, exceptions to this general observation, since party votes are allotted for each nomination district separately, not for the entire multi-member constituency, and there might be considerable variation between the different nomination districts within a multi-member constituency as regards the number of party votes to be shared.

If the party has used the "party list" form of list organisation, candidates are selected in the party list order, unless they have obtained enough votes (personal votes and allotted party votes combined) to pass a special threshold, which corresponds to the Droop quota. Substitutes are appointed in list order.

Substitute members fill seats in parliament in cases of vacancies (temporary or permanent) among the

⁶ This string of divisors is sometimes referred to as "the Danish method", (e.g., Taagepera & Shugart, 1989: 31) because it is not used in other electoral systems. The objective of using this method in this step is to ensure a reasonable spread of allocated compensatory seats to the smaller multi-member constituencies; this is achieved by using a relatively large interval (namely 3) between the divisors

party MPs from the multi-member constituency in question (or, in some very special cases, from another multi-member constituency). As a result, by-elections are neither necessary nor are they a feature of the Danish electoral system.

Examples of the tabulations that establish which candidates have been elected under various forms of list organisation are shown in the Annex.

The number of votes – party votes as well as personal votes – credited to every single candidate in the 2007 election can be found in the official electoral statistics, [Folketingsvalget den 13. November 2007](#).

1.3. SOME EFFECTS OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

A prime objective of the Danish electoral system is to ensure the highest possible degree of proportionality among the political parties passing the electoral thresholds. As in all PR electoral systems where the decisive part of the seat allocation process takes place at a national level (Step 3 above), the degree of proportionality is high among contestants above the thresholds. This is caused – among other things – by the use of the “Hare plus largest remainders” allocation formula, which generally results in high levels of proportionality (Elklit, 2008a; Gallagher & Mitchell, 2008, Appendix A; Lijphart, 1994: 96ff; Taagepera & Shugart, 1989: 104ff; Elklit & Roberts, 1996).

The official results of the November 2007 parliamentary election in Denmark are shown in Table 4. The third and fourth columns show the closeness of the parties’ vote and seat shares. Various measures have been used over the years by political scientists to illustrate the degree of proportionality (or disproportionality) of electoral systems, the latest being a “least squares index”⁷ developed by Michael Gallagher (1991; see also Gallagher & Mitchell, 2008, pp. 602-605) and now recommend-

ed in the most authoritative, recent analysis of electoral systems and their effects on party systems (Lijphart, 1994).

The value of this least squares index for the 2007 Danish election is a very modest 0.72, which confirms that Denmark is a country with a very high degree of proportionality (Gallagher, 1991: 46; Lijphart 1994: 96-99). The average value for the last many elections has been around 1.6, which places the Danish electoral system among the most proportional in the world. The average least square index-value for 12 electoral PR systems (not individual election) (using Least Remainders and Hare, like Denmark) during the period 1945 to 1990 was 1.9, while the average value for plurality electoral systems in the same period was 13.6 (Lijphart, 1994: 96; see also Elklit & Roberts, 1996).

The last column in Table 4 is included in order to demonstrate that the proximity of the vote percentages and seat percentages is – of course – improved if one excludes (1) the votes for the parties not qualifying for seats in the Folketing under any of the electoral thresholds, and (2) votes for independent candidates who were not elected. The closeness of the two final columns is indeed striking, demonstrating that the Danish electoral system is certainly capable of achieving its main goal. The only reason for the remaining discrepancies is, of course, that seats in parliaments do not come as fractions, only as whole numbers (or integers)!

Table 4 also shows that only 0.9 per cent of the active electorate is without representatives of their choice in the Folketing elected in November 2007⁸. Compared to other countries this share is low, and it is also lower than usual in a Danish context. The reason is a decline in the number of new party registrations and consequently fewer parties who are not able to achieve one of the

⁷ The formula is: $\sqrt{\frac{1}{2} \sum (v_i - s_i)^2}$, v_i and s_i denoting the vote share and the seat share, respectively, for party #i. The main advantage of this index over others – technically speaking – is that it weighs vote-seat deviations by their own value.

Table 4. Official Results of the 2007 Danish Election to the Folketing

	Votes	Seats	Votes in per cent	Seats in per cent	Votes in per cent; only represented parties and elected independents
A. Social Democratic Party	881,037	45	25.5	25.7	25.7
B. Social Liberal Party	177,161	9	5.1	5.1	5.2
C. Conservative People's Party	359,404	18	10.4	10.3	10.5
F. SF - Socialist People's Party	450,975	23	13.0	13.1	13.2
K. Christian People's Party	30,013	-	0.9	-	-
O. Danish People's Party	479,532	25	13.9	14.3	14
V. Liberals	908,472	46	26.3	26.3	26.5
Y. New Alliance	97,295	5	2.8	2.9	2.8
Ø. Unity List	74,982	4	2.2	2.3	2.2
Independents	549	-	0.0	-	-
Total	3,459,420	175	100.1	100.0	100.1

Note: Turnout in 2007 was 86.6 per cent, i.e. higher than the average 85.4 per cent of the 10 previous general elections (1979-2005) and more than two percentage points up from the 2005 parliamentary election.

three electoral thresholds. The decline in the number of new party registrations might be a result of a change in registration procedures implemented after the 1990 election (see Section 3.4.1.).

1.4. THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN A HISTORICAL AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

Between 1849 - when Denmark got its first free Constitution - and 1915, the electoral system for the Folketing was a traditional plurality system with single-member constituencies. In 1915, the constitutional law was changed and a kind of PR system was implemented. However, an important element of the 1915 electoral system was that a considerable share of the seats was still filled by plurality elections in single-member constituencies.

This "mixed" system of traditional first-past-the-post elections and proportional representation

elements was only used in one election (1918). In 1920, a new electoral law was enacted, which is still in use with regard to its basic principles for the electoral system: (1) the multi-member constituencies, and (2) the nationwide district for the PR allocation of seats.

As a remnant of the pre-1920 system, the previous single-member constituencies have to a certain degree survived as nomination districts within the multi-member constituencies. The importance of the nomination districts is related to candidate nomination and selection. The transformation of the single-member constituencies to nomination districts was intended to safeguard the close relationship between voters and their representatives which is considered by many to be a valuable feature of systems with single-member constituencies. The numbers and the boundaries of the nomination districts have, of course, been changed

⁸ The sum of the votes the Christian People's Party plus the votes for unsuccessful independent candidates.

compared with the pre-1920 single-member constituencies. Moreover, the single-member constituencies in the form of nomination districts are still the most important units in the sub-national election administrative system.

89 years have now elapsed since the present scheme of proportional representation was implemented. Only details have been changed since then, and the electoral proportional representation system is probably one of the least disputed of Danish political institutions. No party any longer seriously wants to return to a plurality vote.

The only issue which is sometimes discussed is the threshold rule - i.e., the rule which dictates that in order to get a share of the compensatory seats and subsequent representation, a party must win at least one constituency seat or obtain a certain minimum number of votes (see above, Section 1.2.2.). Because some parties fall close to or short of the all-important two per cent threshold, political voices are frequently raised in favour of either eliminating or at least lowering the threshold.

The argument is that a threshold rule is undemocratic as it leaves some voters without representation, which is not in accordance with the constitutional principle of equal representation of different political opinions and attitudes. Bills to either eliminate or lower the threshold are from time to time submitted to the Folketing, but they are never passed. Conversely, other voices - especially from the larger parties speak in favour of raising the barrier to, for instance, five per cent as in Germany. The main argument in support of such a change is that it would lead to fewer parties in parliament, which would in turn produce stable governments, greater political decision-making power, fewer elections, and the like. However, a bill to raise the threshold has not been submitted to the Folketing since 1953.

It is safe to say that the Danish electoral system will stay intact for many years to come. It will retain the principle of proportionality, so hallowed in Danish politics, while making it possible to preserve a relatively close relationship between voters and their representatives.



2. The Election Administration System

The body of law governing elections to the Folketing comprises the [Constitutional Act](#), the [Parliamentary Elections Act](#), and regulations issued by the Minister for the Interior and Health in accordance with this Act. The Constitutional Act of the Kingdom of Denmark Act (1953) contains the main principles of the electoral system and the approval procedure. The franchise and eligibility requirements are also laid down in the Constitution. The Election Act (1987 with later amendments) contains the detailed rules for the electoral system and rules for election administration.

The Danish election administrative system is best described as a five-level system, each with distinct functions to perform:

2.1. THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The Election Act assigns a number of specific tasks to the Minister for the Interior and Health. In practice, these tasks are dealt with in a separate election unit in the Ministry, headed by the Chief Election Officer. The number of staff assigned to handle electoral matters between elections is small (5). When an election is called, however, additional staff is temporarily assigned to assist the election unit in carrying out its tasks at the national level, directly connected with the conduct of the election.

A common feature of the tasks at the national level is their central character:

- (1) issuance of detailed, permanent rules and guidelines for the entire election administration,
- (2) the allocation every five years of seats to the various provinces and constituencies according to the rules in the election law,
- (3) reception of registration requests from new parties,

(4) issuance of guidelines concerning the conduct of ongoing elections to all relevant authorities, and until October 2008 also

(5) computations of the overall distribution of seats after an election, as well as the actual selection of elected candidates, etc. As of 1 October 2008, computations and the production of various election statistics have been outsourced to Statistics Denmark, although the responsibility for the computations and selection of candidates etc. still formally lays with the Ministry of the Interior and Health.

A separate (and independent) electoral commission has not been established at the national level.

2.2. THE MULTI-MEMBER CONSTITUENCY LEVEL

Even though the ten multi-member constituencies are the central units in the Danish electoral system (and their borders outside the capital follow the boundaries of the five regions), the corresponding administrative level is not equally important in the election administration system. Only a few – but crucial – tasks are performed at this level.

The tasks assigned to the registration authorities⁹ concern the registration of candidates and the form of list organisation. The registration authorities compile a complete list of all parties and candidates who are up for election in the constituency. The list is based on information received (1) from all candidates who have to file an announcement of their candidature with the registration authorities, and (2) from the political parties about their approved candidates, their chosen form of list organisation, and the order of their candidates. These lists are sent to the election committees (see below) to form the basis for the procurement of the ballot papers. The lists are also distributed to other relevant authorities.

⁹ The registration authorities are the five regional state administrations and the chairman of the election committee of the Municipality of Bornholm (for nomination districts located in the Bornholm Multi-member Constituency).

2.3. THE NOMINATION DISTRICT LEVEL

For each of the 92 nomination districts an election committee is elected, by and among the council members (including the mayors, who are ex officio members) from the municipalities of the nomination district. About 1/3 of the nomination districts consist of two or three municipalities. The opposite is the case in the larger cities consisting of several nomination districts, with one election committee covering all nomination districts in such municipalities (in 37 of the 92 nomination districts). Therefore, the number of election committees is only 68, compared with the 92 nomination districts. When a nomination district consists of two or more municipalities, the Election Act distinguishes one of the municipalities as the “district municipality.” The tasks assigned to the election committee are performed in this municipality, and its mayor is ex officio chairman of the election committee. In cases where a nomination district consists of only one municipality or where a municipality consists of more than one nomination district, this municipality is, of course, the “district municipality” and its mayor ex officio chairman of the election committee.

The election committees are responsible for the procurement of ballot papers for all polling districts within their nomination district(s). Furthermore, they are assigned the tasks of collecting and reporting to the Ministry and Statistics Denmark the election evening counts from the district’s polling stations. They are also in charge of the final count of the votes in the nomination district the day after the election.

2.4. THE MUNICIPALITY LEVEL

Election administration directly related to the voters is carried out at the municipal level. Each of the 98 municipalities is governed by a council elected on the same day in local elections every four years.

The tasks assigned by the election law to the municipal councils are primarily of a practical nature. They include voter registration, mailing poll cards to voters, arrangements for parts of advance voting (see below), dividing the municipality into polling districts, and other practical and administrative polling arrangements.

2.5. THE POLLING DISTRICT LEVEL

Each municipality is divided into polling districts. Each such district has one polling station (with one or more polling sections), usually at a school, a sports centre, or a town hall.

The total number of polling districts (and polling stations) amounts to about 1,645. The average number of polling districts per municipality is, thus, about seventeen, and per nomination district about 18. These averages conceal wide variations, with the number of polling districts per municipality ranging from two (in two municipalities) to 61 (in Aalborg), and the number of polling districts per nomination district ranging from four to 44. The number of voters per polling district averages about 2,446, ranging from 32 (on a small island) to 20,224.

The municipal council appoints polling supervisors as well as other polling station officials (appointed electors) from among the local electorate (in practice, they are party representatives). Their duties – primarily connected to the orderly conduct of the polling and the preliminary count – are described below (in Section 4.1.2). Polling supervisors and appointed voters are elected by proportional representation, unless the municipal council can agree on this election unanimously. Voters standing as candidates in the election are eligible both as polling supervisors and appointed electors, although there are some restrictions in the electoral legislation as to candidates’ participation in the counting of votes.¹⁰

¹⁰ No candidate standing for a party in a multi-member constituency is thus allowed to participate in counting the number of votes cast for the party concerned. Similarly, no candidate standing as an independent candidate in a multimember constituency is allowed to participate in counting the number of votes cast for each independent candidate. Furthermore, no candidate standing for a party in a multimember constituency is allowed to participate in the tabulation of votes cast for the party reflecting the distribution between personal votes for each individual candidate and party votes. Similar rules apply for candidates standing for elections to the European Parliament and local and regional elections.

3. Administrative Procedures Preceding an Election

3.1. ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS AND ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

A central feature of the Danish electoral system is that districts at all levels¹¹ are delimited according to the boundaries of other administrative units, i.e. the regions (for the multi-member districts) and the municipalities (for the nomination districts, both when one or several municipalities together constitute a nomination district and when one municipality is divided into several nomination districts).

Since the central level of the electoral system is the multi-member constituencies, and since they correspond exactly to the administrative regions, district delimitation issues are virtually absent from the Danish political debate. Furthermore, the distribution of the 135 seats in the multi-member districts and the 40 compensatory seats among the three electoral provinces (Metropolitan Copenhagen, Sealand-Southern Denmark, and Northern and Central Jutland) is undertaken according to principles set out in the Constitution and spelled out in detail in the Election Act. As mentioned above (Section 1.1), new computations are compulsory at fixed five-year intervals (i.e. after the publication of the official population figures on January 1, 2010, 2015, 2020, etc.). The distribution is valid for the following five years.

Because the overall electoral system is a nationwide PR-system (with thresholds 1 and 2 referred to in Section 1.2.2. as the only non-national elements), the distributions of seats among (1) multi-member constituencies and (2) electoral provinces have no implication for the number of seats which a political party can expect to win on election day. The computations are purely technical, and therefore no allegations of gerrymandering are ever heard. This is a positive side-effect of having a nationwide proportional representation system.

The delimitation of the local polling districts is the responsibility of the municipalities. These districts have no effect at all on the outcome of the election, and changes in delimitation are carried out primarily for reasons of convenience.

3.2. THE ELECTORATE

The Constitution states the franchise requirements as: (1) Danish citizenship, (2) permanent residence in the realm, and (3) the voting age prescribed by law (18, since 1978). Furthermore, a prospective voter must not have been declared legally incompetent.

The residence requirement of the Constitution does not allow the extension of franchise to all Danes living abroad, but the interpretation of the meaning of “permanent residence” has been broadened to a certain extent since 1970, giving the way for some Danish citizens to retain their right to vote despite living abroad. The first step away from a strict interpretation of the term “permanent residence” was taken in 1970, where the residence requirement was construed to the effect that employees of the Danish state working abroad (diplomats) are regarded to fulfill the residence requirement. Furthermore, since 1980 the requirement has also been construed in such a way that employees of a Danish public agency or Danish private companies working abroad, people working in international organisations of which Denmark is a member, or Danish aid or relief organisations, students studying abroad, or people living abroad for health reasons – as well as their spouses, registered partners or co-habiting partners – are all considered to have fulfilled the residence requirement, provided that their stay abroad is not permanent.¹² Finally, in 2003 the group of Danish citizens who retain their right to vote at national elections in Denmark despite living

¹¹ Except within municipalities.

¹² According to the practice of a special board that decides on applications by Danish citizens staying abroad to be included in the electoral register (the Election Board), this means less than 10 years, except for diplomats, who are no longer registered as emigrated in the national civil registration and therefore automatically retain their right to vote and registration in the electoral register.

abroad was further broadened to include all Danish citizens taking up residence in a foreign country provided they intend to return to the realm within two years of their departure. Beyond this, it is not likely to see any further broadening of the interpretation of the “permanent residence”-criteria in the Constitution.¹³

It is a prerequisite for voting that the prospective voter is registered in the electoral register (the voters’ list). The computerized electoral register is based on information already available in the national civil registration system (also administered by the Ministry of the Interior and Health), to which the municipal authorities continuously convey basic, administratively relevant information about citizens, including the acquisition of voting rights, changes of address, and death. Thus, inclusion on the electoral register – and changes due to change of residence, etc. – take place automatically and continuously. As a result, the register is permanently updated, and only people living abroad, i.e. the various groups mentioned above, have to take the initiative and apply for registration in the electoral register by sending a request to the municipality where they were permanent residents before going abroad.

A printout of the permanently updated, computerized electoral register is made, with 15 days prior to an election as the reference day. Different deadlines apply to different groups of voters who move to Denmark or are otherwise allowed to vote (Danish citizens living abroad) close to election day:

- Voters moving to Denmark from Greenland or the Faroe Islands will be entered in the electoral

register provided that they have moved to the Danish municipality and notified the local national registration office of the change of address no later than on the 18th day prior to election day. If they move to Denmark after this date, they will remain on the Greenlandic/Faroese election register and can either vote in Greenland or the Faroe Islands proper or vote in advance in Denmark (their votes will then be sent by mail to their North Atlantic destination).

- Persons who move to another municipality less than 15 days before a general election remain on the electoral register of the initial municipality until after election day.
- Changes in the electoral register because of (1) emigration, (2) death, (3) issue (or withdrawal) of declarations of legal incompetence, and (4) people losing or obtaining Danish citizenship, which are reported to the local authorities less than 15 days before an election, are entered manually in the electoral register printout.
- Voters formerly living abroad, who move back to Denmark no later than seven days before election day and notify the local national registration office of their move no later than this day will be included manually in the electoral register. Prospective voters who move to the country after this date cannot be included in the register and are therefore not allowed to vote.
- Similarly, voters living abroad who no later than seven days before election day apply to retain their right to vote despite their foreign residence on one of the grounds mentioned above, and

¹³This latest change of the rules regarding the legal interpretation of the franchise requirement of “permanent residence” stated in the Constitution was a culmination of a political process, where the newly elected government after a change of system from a left wing to a right wing government in 2001 set out to fulfill one of its electoral pledges: to broaden “to the widest possible extent” the group of Danish citizens, which could retain the right to vote despite living abroad and therefore, formally according to the wording of the Constitution, did not have “permanent residence within the realm”. The government set up a committee consisting of among others three impartial legal experts on constitutional law to investigate this question. The committee concluded that the legal interpretation of the wording of the Constitution could only be further broadened to include any Danish citizen staying abroad, who intended to return to the realm within two years of their departure. At the same time, the committee concluded that the interpretation of the term “permanent residence” in the Constitution could not be stretched any further, thus quashing any future attempts to open the discussion again, which have of course nonetheless been attempted, but hitherto failed.

whose request to be included in the electoral register is granted by the authorities no later than seven days prior to election day, will be manually included in the election register.

The electoral register is not published for inspection and it is not accessible either for the public in general, or for the political parties.

One week prior to polling day, the municipal authorities send all voters a poll card to be used in connection with polling. The cards have to be delivered to voters not later than five days before election day. Through nationwide advertisements in newspapers ten days before election day the Ministry of the Interior and Health tries to attract the attention of voters to inform them about the distribution of the poll cards. The advertisements also inform voters who do not receive a poll card of how to complain to the relevant municipal authorities. In this way, erroneous omissions from the electoral register can be corrected. Poll cards are not sent to voters abroad, who instead should bring some form of ID in order for the election officials to be able to match the voter with the electoral register.

The poll card is printed on the basis of the electoral register. It contains the following items: the voter's name and address, his/her serial number in the electoral register, the location of the voter's polling station, the date of the election, and the opening hours of the polling station. These items correspond to those of the electoral register, apart from the voter's birthday, which is not printed on the poll card.

As mentioned above, some Danish citizens living abroad are allowed to participate in general elec-

tions (and elections to the European Parliament and referendums as well). At the November 2007 election, 4,904 Danish citizens living abroad were registered as voters in the electoral register (0.12 per cent of the total electorate). Foreign citizens living in Denmark, on the other hand, are not allowed to participate in general elections. Furthermore, the Constitutional requirement of citizenship prevents changing this part of the parliamentary election law.

By contrast, the municipal election law bestows voting rights (and the right to stand as a candidate) not only to Danish citizens resident in the municipality in question,¹⁴ but also to foreign citizens on the additional condition that they have been resident in the realm for three years prior to election day. At the November 2005 local elections, 189,485 voters (4.5 per cent of the total electorate) were foreign citizens. Since 1995 citizens from the other Member States of the European Union as well as citizens from the other Nordic countries¹⁵ have enjoyed voting rights and the right to stand as candidates on the same basis as Danish citizens (i.e., without the 3-year residence requirement). Foreign citizens from other countries will, however, remain subject to the 3-year residence requirement.

Danish citizens living in any EU Member State as well as citizens from the other EU Member States resident in Denmark who meet the other franchise requirements (having reached the qualifying age - 18 - for national elections and not having been deprived of their legal capacity under a guardianship order) can participate in the quinquennial elections to the European Parliament in Denmark. They must, however, at the same time abstain from voting for the same election in their residence

¹⁴ Or regions, when election to regional councils are concerned.

¹⁵ Citizens from the other Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland) have been permitted to vote at municipal elections since 1977, initially provided that they had been resident in the realm for a minimum of three years prior to election day. This requirement was later abolished in 1995. In 1981 this right was also bestowed to immigrants and refugees with a valid residence permit that had been resident in the realm for at least three years prior to election day (i.e. as for Nordic citizens).

(Danish citizens living in one of the other EU Member States) or home (EU citizens living in Denmark) country. All EU citizens can also stand as candidates. Since Greenland and the Faroe Islands are not part of the European Union, their inhabitants do not possess voting rights in these elections.

3.3. THE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Constitution states that MPs are elected for a period of four years. The Prime Minister can, however, call an election at any time, whether for parliamentary, political-strategic, or other reasons. A new election has the obvious implication that (1) old parliamentary mandates lose their validity once the election has taken place, and (2) a new electoral period of four years starts.

This prerogative of the Prime Minister means that the electoral administration has to be permanently alert, since elections can be called at any time. Normally, though, the authorities concerned are able to stay so well informed about the situation in parliament that they will not be taken by surprise.

Neither the Constitution nor the election law states that a certain period of time has to elapse between the calling of an election and polling day. But a number of time limits in the Election Act – e.g. the rules about advance voting, procurement of computerized electoral registers and poll cards, registration of new parties, and announcement of candidacies – require at least a three week period between the announcement of an election and polling day itself. However, the general state of preparedness and readiness of the Danish election administration does allow parliamentary elections to be called with only three weeks' notice.

Elections are traditionally held on Tuesdays, although the September 1994 as well as the December 1990 elections were held on Wednesdays.

3.4. PARTIES AND CANDIDATES

As in other proportional representation systems, political parties are assigned a major role. This is, for example, the case with the nomination of candidates, the layout of ballot papers, the polling procedures, and the allocation of seats.

3.4.1. The National Level

All political parties which gained representation in parliament at the previous Folketing election and which are still represented in parliament when an election is called, are automatically assigned the right to participate in a Folketing election as a registered party.

New parties have until 15 days before polling day to register, and do so by requesting registration and by presenting signatures on a special form from voters supporting the registration of the party in question. The number of signatures must correspond to at least 1/175 of the valid votes cast at the previous election. The number of signatures required for registration prior to the February 2005 election was 19,185 (because 3,357,215 valid votes were cast in the February 2005 election). Because of an increase in the number of votes cast in the November 2007 election (3,459,420 valid votes), the requirement has now risen to 19,769. The German Minority Party can participate in general elections without presenting signatures, but has not done so since 1971.¹⁶

To make sure that non-voters do not sign such forms, all signatures must be checked by the voter's local municipal authorities – normally at the party's request – to verify that the signer has voting rights. After this validation the form is not returned to the party, but to the signer who must forward it to the party, provided the voter still wishes to participate in the registration of the party. The latter part of the procedure was implemented in 1989 in order to improve verification of the signatures and to impose a modest barrier on the registration of new

¹⁶ The problem of the German Minority Party as regards representation in Parliament, are discussed by Elklit (1981).

parties. The effect of this rule has indeed proven to lead to a decline in the registration of new parties.

The registration of a new party is valid until the next parliamentary election or – if the election comes within a year – for at least one year.

The registration of new parties – some of which might have stood at previous elections – takes place centrally, in the Ministry of the Interior and Health. The Ministry counts and scrutinizes the forms with voter signatures to ensure (1) that voters who support the registration of a new party only sign one form, and (2) that voters do not sign for more than one new party. The scrutiny is carried out manually, as computerized scrutiny is not allowed. Before registration, the Election Board¹⁷ has to approve new party names to ensure that such names are distinguishable from party names already in use.

The Ministry is also responsible for the allocation of party letters to be used on the ballot paper, where parties are listed alphabetically, according to party letter.

The Ministry of the Interior and Health must publish the official list of registered parties as well as their assigned party letters in the official Gazette as soon as possible after the 15th day before an election. At the November 2007 election, only one of the eight participating parties was totally new, while another was at that time not currently represented in parliament, but had been so previously.

3.4.2. The Multi-member Constituency Level

Any person fulfilling the franchise requirements is eligible for membership of the Folketing (unless convicted of an act which in public opinion makes

him/her unworthy of membership. The House itself is the judge of this).

A person who wants to stand in an election must register as candidate in at least one nomination district, either as a candidate for a registered party or as an independent candidate. The candidate registration form must be submitted to the registration authorities not later than noon 11 days prior to election day. This time limit must be strictly observed – as is the case with all other time limits specified in the election law. Candidates who register as party candidates must have the approval from the party in question (see below), while independent candidates – along with their request for registration – have to submit between 150 and 200 recommendations in writing from voters resident in the nomination district. A person can be a candidate in more than one nomination district within a multi-member district (even in all the nomination districts),¹⁸ but a candidate cannot stand in more than one multi-member constituency.

At least eight days before election day, all registered parties must inform the registration authorities who their official (i.e. approved) candidate or candidates are in each nomination district within the multi-member constituency. The registration authorities then check this information against the received registrations of candidates in the individual nomination districts. Inconsistencies may entail that prospective candidates will not be able to stand. A party's approval of a candidate for a specific nomination district is ineffective if the prospective candidate has not filed his/her candidature for the relevant nomination district with the registration authorities (and vice versa). The parties also have to inform the registration

¹⁷ An independent body, which has two tasks according to the Election Act: 1) to decide on certain applications from Danish citizens living abroad, who wish to retain their right to vote and apply to be included in the electoral register, 2) to approve forms for voter's declarations for new parties requesting to participate in general elections and elections to the European Parliament in Denmark. In this last capacity, the Board also has to approve the name of a new party and in this process ensure that there is no risk of confusion with another already approved party or a party entitled to participate in general or European Parliament elections.

¹⁸ If a party wants to use the "Standing in Parallel" form of list organisation in its pure form, all candidates from the party must stand in all nomination districts in the multi-member constituency.

authorities eight days before election day of the form of list organisation chosen (see below). If they give no such information, the registration authorities will know by implication which form of list organisation the parties have chosen.

On the basis of the information received, the registration authorities then compile and forward to the election committees a complete list of all parties and candidates standing in the multi-member constituency. Besides the names of the candidates, the list also contains all other information which each election committee in the multi-member constituency will need to print its individual ballot papers. A copy of the registration authorities' list is forwarded to the Ministry of the Interior and Health for the dual purposes of preparing the central, final computations and informing the mass media and the public about candidacies, etc. Another copy is forwarded to each municipality within the multi-member constituency to serve as information for voters voting before election day (see Section 4.2 on advance voting).

There are two forms of list organisation:

(1) Standing by District

This form is the traditional form, with one candidate in each nomination district. The name of this candidate is placed at the top of the party's list on the ballot paper in the nomination district in question. He/she receives all the votes cast in the nomination district for his/her party as such (i.e., party votes) in addition to the votes he/she gets as preferential (or personal) votes in his/her own nomination district as well as in the other nomination districts in the multi-member constituency. Preferential votes are always attributed to the preferred candidate.

If a party in a multi-member constituency chooses this form of list organisation, it can further indicate that it wants to present the candidates in a fixed

order, which reduces the voters' chances of influencing the selection of candidates within the party. This latter form of list organisation is termed "party list."

(2) Standing in Parallel

In this form of list organisation, which is the form most commonly used today, all the party's candidates in the multi-member constituency stand in each nomination district. Votes cast for the party as such (party votes) in each individual nomination district are then distributed among the party's candidates in exact proportion to the number of preferential votes they get. This form of list organisation greatly increases the effect of preferential voting, i.e. it reduces the influence of the party organisation vis-à-vis voters.

Using this form of list organisation, the party can further decide which candidate should appear at the top of the party's list on the ballot paper in each individual nomination district. To implement such a decision, the party must inform the registration authorities accordingly, i.e. give notification about these so-called "nominations." If no such notification is given (within the above-mentioned time limit), the candidates will be listed alphabetically, which means that they will appear in the same order on the ballot papers in all nomination districts. "Nomination" is typically used to the effect that one candidate is placed at the top of the party's list on the ballot papers in each nomination district. The notion of each candidate having his/her "own" nomination district (approaching the traditional concept of a single-member constituency), even under the "parallel" form of list organisation, can thereby be maintained. After the election, one can also – to a certain degree – see the nomination district as a constituency with "its" representative(s) in parliament.¹⁹ In the extract of the ballot paper reproduced in an annex to this paper the phenomenon is visible in e.g. "A. Social-

¹⁹ But not all nomination districts have representatives in Parliament, and other districts may have more than one; thus the parallel between nomination districts and constituencies should certainly not be taken too far.

demokratiet” (the Social Democrats), where Mr Jens Chr. Lund was nominated in this particular nomination district and therefore is placed at the top of his party’s list of candidates in this nomination district. The rest of the Social Democratic candidates appear in alphabetical order.

The above description covers the two forms of list organisation in their pure (or complete) form. It is a prerequisite for the pure form that the number of candidates for the party in question corresponds to the number of nomination districts in the multi-member constituency. The two forms can, however, be used in several variants and combinations, since the distinction between them basically depends on the number of candidates (one or more) standing for a party in an individual nomination district. The number of candidates may also differ from the number of nomination districts. If a party does not put up candidates in any of the nomination districts in a multi-member constituency, the name of the party will not appear on the ballot papers in that particular multi-member constituency, and consequently the party will get neither party votes nor preferential votes in this constituency.

Previously, the various forms of list organisation and their effects on candidate selection constituted an important theme in the scholarly literature on Danish elections, but this has changed with the dominance of the system of standing in parallel (see, however, Pedersen 2002; Elklit 2008b).

3.4.3. The Nomination District Level

Printing the ballot paper is the responsibility of the individual nomination district election committees. The information needed for the printing of ballot papers is provided by the registration authorities in form of the list of candidates (see above). All candidates in a multi-member constituency must appear on the ballot papers in all nomination districts in the multi-member constituency. The ballot papers are not the same in all nomination districts, since the form of list organisation chosen by the individual parties in practice always entails that the

candidates must appear in a different order on the ballot papers in the different nomination districts.

The rules for the preparation of the ballot papers are spelled out in considerable detail in the election law and in the official guidelines ([Vejledning om afholdelse af folketingsvalg, 2007](#)). These rules cover both how names should be printed and the order in which parties and candidates must appear on the ballot paper. Thus, they leave no room for undue attempts to favour one party or one candidate.

3.5. THE CAMPAIGN

The election law does not stipulate rules for the conduct of election campaigns, either as regards the maximum amount of money to be spent or the time periods where campaigning may – or may not – take place.

The only reference to election campaigning in the election law is that campaigning (e.g. the placing of election posters) is not allowed on the premises of a polling station, and that polling officials are not allowed to wear political badges, etc. The Ministry of Justice can also issue rules in order to secure that election campaigning in certain public areas (streets etc.) will not disturb public order.

It should be noted, however, that the guidelines of the “Danish Radio and Television” (a national public service station) ensure all political parties registered to participate in the elections equal access to pre-election programmes on radio and television. The parties in question (no matter how small) are given equal time free of charge to present their manifestos, etc. to the public. Advertisements by political parties on national Danish television and radio and local Danish television channels are not permitted, but are allowed on commercial radio broadcasting channels.

The conduct and publication of opinion polls are not regulated by law. Consequently, such polls can be carried out and published right up to (or even on) election day.

3.6. PUBLIC FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Rules for public financial support for political parties were enacted in 1986 and took effect from 1987. Support is handed out by the government, regional councils, and municipal councils.

Government support is available to parties as well as to independent candidates who participated in the latest Folketing election, provided they obtained at least 1,000 votes at the election. Each party (and independent candidate) is entitled to receive DKr. 26.50 in 2009 per year per vote obtained in the latest Folketing election.

The scheme for government support is administered by the Ministry of the Interior and Health. The fund to parties is awarded to the central party organisation which is then supposed to distribute the money to the various parts of the organisation according to its own wishes. The parties (or independent candidates) do not have to account for

how the money is spent. The only requirement is that once a year recipients return a written declaration to the Ministry of the Interior and Health stating that “the amount has been used for political purposes within Denmark, and that such activities will be carried on.” Since 1996, however, the parties have been required to submit a copy of their statutory annual account to the Ministry in addition to this declaration.

Rules for publication of party accounts were enacted in 1990. According to these rules all parties who nominate candidates for Folketing elections (as well as for elections to the European parliament) are obliged to deliver to the Folketing an annual account of their finances providing information about various types of income with regard to the central party organisation: public support, membership fees, other private donations, interests, contributions from international organisations, collective private organisations, trade unions, occupational organisations, private enterprises, foundations, and associations in general. From 1996, the annual account must further contain the name of every single private donor who on an annual basis has donated more than DKr. 20,000 to the central party organisation. (In this context “private” also includes trade unions, occupational organisations, etc.). Effective as from 1996, too, information about anonymous donations must also be provided.

There is no specific public support for election campaigning apart from the free access to the public broadcast media (see Section 3.5.).

The schemes for regional and municipal council support for political parties as well as independent lists of candidates are generally the same as the scheme for government support. Eligibility hinges on participation in the latest election to the county or municipal council. The annual rate per vote obtained in a regional council election is DKr. 3.75 (2009-rate). The annual rate per vote obtained in a municipal election is DKr. 6.00 (2009-rate).



4. Polling and Counting

4.1. POLLING ON ELECTION DAY

4.1.1. Practical Preparations for Polling

The municipality has the task of providing accommodation and other necessities for polling, including polling booths, ballot boxes, pencils, etc. The municipal authorities also have to distribute to the polling stations a sufficient number of ballot papers (received from the election committee) as well as voting material specifically related to that particular polling district, such as the electoral register of voters resident in the district, the letters containing advance votes from electors resident in the polling district, and the poll book, in which the results of the poll, i.e. the counting of the votes, etc., are registered.

Finally, the municipality has to ensure that polling officials are duly informed about their tasks and obligations in connection with the poll and the ensuing count of the votes. Usually, written instructions are handed out or sent to each polling official prior to the election. A copy of the election law is available at the polling station. The above-mentioned tasks must be carried out in due time before polling starts on election day.

Polling hours are the same across the country, i.e. from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Before the first vote is cast, the polling officials demonstrate to the electors present that the ballot boxes are empty. The ballot boxes are then locked or sealed.

4.1.2. Polling Supervisors and Appointed Electors

A minimum of five and a maximum of nine polling supervisors are in charge of the polling and the subsequent counting. The polling supervisors are assisted in their duties by a group of other polling officials called “appointed electors.” Secretarial and administrative support for the polling supervisors is obtained from the municipal administration.

Polling supervisors as well as appointed electors are elected by the municipal council. Any elector resident in the municipality, including council

members themselves, are eligible. Normally, all council members except the mayor are elected to function as polling supervisors, and especially as chairman of the polling supervisors at the polling station. Other polling supervisors and appointed electors are usually elected from the members of the political parties represented in the municipal council, i.e., they are in practice appointed by the local branches of the political parties themselves.

Formally, all electors have a legal obligation to function as a polling official if appointed. In practice, however, reluctant electors cannot be forced to perform these functions. Polling officials receive a modest allowance, which at present amounts to DKr. 750 (slightly less than € 100 or USD133) per day. The fee is taxable income. The election law states that polling officials are not allowed to give electors any kind of advice or recommendations regarding voting for a particular party or a particular candidate. Neither are they allowed to wear badges, etc., related to a party or a candidate. The polling officials must also ensure that no kind of late campaigning takes place on the premises of the polling station.

4.1.3. Polling

The act of voting requires on election day the presence of the elector at the polling station. At the polling station, people activate their right to cast a vote by handing the official their poll card (see Section 3.2) (the usual procedure), or by stating name, address, and date of birth. For electors without a poll card, a card is written out manually on the spot, since such cards are kept by polling officials for control purposes. If the identity of an elector is contested, his/her identity has to be confirmed immediately, usually by presenting some kind of authorized ID such as a passport or a driver's licence.

When the elector has presented his/her poll card (or his/her identity has been otherwise confirmed), his/her name is marked in the electoral register and a ballot paper is given to the voter.

Voting takes place in secret in a polling booth screened off to ensure the confidentiality of the vote. The act of voting is done by placing a cross (x) next to the name of a political party (a so-called party vote), next to the name of one of the candidates of the parties (a personal – or preferential – vote), or next to the name of an independent candidate. By casting a personal vote, the elector thereby also automatically votes for the party of this particular candidate. Party votes and personal votes thus count equally and identically when it comes to seat allocation.

The voter folds the ballot paper to secure secrecy and personally puts it in the ballot box placed just outside the polling booth. The ballot boxes are constantly supervised by a polling official.

This voting procedure may be modified if the elector is unable to perform the ordinary procedures because of physical disability or poor health. In such cases, voting can take place outside the polling station, e.g. in a car. Such electors can either request the assistance of two polling officials, or be allowed the assistance of a person of their own choice, for example a relative, and a polling official to prevent undue influence. When assistance in the actual filling in of the ballot paper is provided, it is required that the voter himself/herself is able to indicate unambiguously how he/she wants to cast his/her vote.

A copy of a ballot paper is shown as an annex to this paper. It is from Western Jutlands Multi-member Constituency, 3rd Nomination District. The true size of the ballot paper was 63 cm x 12.5 cm.

4.2. ADVANCE VOTING

Casting a vote is in principle based on the presence of the voter at the polling station on election day. However, a special voting procedure is available for voters unable to appear in person at their polling stations during voting hours. Voters are not allowed to vote at polling stations other than the one where they are designated according to the electoral register.

The Danish term for this special voting procedure (“brevstemmeafgivning”) literally means “postal voting.” However, this term is inadequate for comparative purposes, since the procedure is quite different from what is usually associated with “postal voting”. We therefore prefer the term “advance voting,” since it conveys the central feature, i.e. that this kind of voting must take place before election day.

4.2.1. Advance Voting in Denmark

Advance voting is available to any voter at any of the 98 national registration offices and the citizen service centres, i.e. in any of the municipalities. These offices are usually located at the City Hall.

Advance voting can take place within three weeks prior to a general election and no later than two week-days before election day.

Patients in hospitals, voters who live in nursing homes, etc., and inmates in prisons, etc. can cast an advance vote in these institutions from three weeks prior to election day up until two weekdays preceding election day. Voters who on account of illness or disability are unable to appear at their polling station can cast an advance vote in their home, provided they have applied for this at least 12 days before election day at the local national registration office (see section 4.2.4. below for further details).

The municipalities are in charge of advance voting in local national registration offices, in nursing homes, etc., and in the voters' homes. At a national registration office advance votes are accepted by members of the administrative staff. At nursing homes, etc., and in private homes, advance votes are collected by appointed electors elected by the municipal council.

Advance voting in hospitals, prisons, etc. is conducted by the institution itself. The administrative head of the institution is responsible for the

appointment of members of the administrative staff to collect the votes.

4.2.2. Advance Voting Abroad

Danish voters living abroad as well as Danish voters temporarily abroad (e.g. on vacation or business) can cast an advance vote at any Danish diplomatic or consular mission. Such votes are accepted by the administrative staff. Instructions issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contain a section on “Voting Abroad in Elections and Referenda.”

Advance voting abroad can also take place with a “vote receiver” appointed for particular purposes by the Ministry of the Interior and Health. This possibility is mainly used to serve Danish military personnel abroad, e.g. as members of UN peace-keeping forces.

Danish sailors serving on Danish ships in foreign waters – and Danish passengers as well – may also vote on board the ship. The ship’s master (or his/her substitute) collects these votes.

Voting abroad can take place at any time, but advance votes cast more than three months before election day are not accepted as valid votes as they are not counted. A special rule is applicable to sailors and their accompanying spouses, according to which they can cast a new vote as early as one day after an election, which will remain valid until the next election,²⁰ provided the voting takes place on the ship.

4.2.3. Voting Material for Advance Voting

Advance votes are only valid if the authorized materials procured by the Ministry of the Interior and Health are used. They include:

1. A special ballot paper for advance voting. The ballot papers bear the imprint “Stemmeseddel” (“Voting Paper”). Three spaces are available for filling in a party letter, a party name, and the name of a candidate.

2. Separate envelopes. A special non-transparent coloured envelope (the colour differs according to the election and is e.g. blue for general elections) which covers the ballot paper completely is provided with each ballot paper.
3. Cover letters. The cover letter contains a declaration to be filled in and signed by the voter and an attestation clause to be filled in and signed by the person who receives the vote.
4. Covers. These envelopes – with an imprint on the front indicating that they contain a ballot paper – have space for filling in the name of the addressee, i.e. the council of the municipality where the voter is on the electoral register. On the back of the cover the voter must write his/her name in full, date of birth, and permanent address.

National registration offices, Danish embassies and consulates, and Danish ships in foreign waters must keep sufficient stocks of all four sorts of material for advance voting. A reproduction of an Advance Voting ballot paper (actual size: 15.0 cm x 10.5 cm) is shown below:

The image shows a ballot paper with the following layout:

- Top left: Title "Stemmeseddel til Folketingsvalg"
- Top right: A rectangular box labeled "Partibogstav".
- Middle: A wide rectangular box labeled "Partinavn".
- Bottom: A wide rectangular box labeled "Kandidatnavn".

²⁰ This means that such vote can remain valid for a period of up to four years.

4.2.4. Procedures for Advance Voting

1. A voter who wants to vote before polling day must appear in person at a place where such voting can be performed. As far as voting in institutions is concerned, the voter goes to the room set up for that purpose, unless voting can take place in the voter's own room (such as a hospital ward). If advance voting takes place in the voter's private home, the voter is visited by two appointed electors.
2. After proper identification (passport, driver's licence, etc.) the voter receives a set of advance voting material (as described above).
3. The voter must cast his/her vote immediately after receipt of the voting material. Provisions for securing the secrecy of the vote must be taken. The voter must not leave the room without handing over the voting material.
4. On the ballot paper the voter can write either the letter or the name – or both – of any party having nominated candidates in the multi-member constituency, where he/she is registered as a voter. If he/she wants to cast a preferential (personal) vote – or to vote for an independent – he/she writes the name of the preferred candidate on the ballot paper, adding – if he/she so desires – the letter and/or the name of the candidate's party.
5. Immediately after voting, the voter puts the ballot paper into the envelope provided for that purpose and seals it. Voters must not let anyone see how they voted.
6. The cover letter must be filled in immediately after the ballot paper has been put into the envelope. The cover letter contains:
 - (a) A declaration by the voter, stating that he/she personally filled in the ballot paper in private, put it into the envelope, and sealed the envelope. The cover letter must be signed in the presence of the vote receiver. It must state the place and date of signature as well as the voter's full name, birthday, and address in the municipality where he/she is on the electoral register.
 - (b) A certificate issued by the vote receiver, stating that the voter signed the cover letter him/herself, the correctness of the date, and that the vote was cast in private. The vote receiver must sign the certificate, state his/her name and title, and provide the certificate with the official stamp (or name) of the place.
7. When the cover letter has been duly completed and certified, the voter puts the envelope with the ballot paper and the cover letter in the cover envelope provided and seals and addresses it to the council of the municipality where he/she is on the electoral register. He/she must also fill in the space on the back of the cover with his/her name, date of birth, and address in the municipality in question.
8. The voter then hands over the envelope to the vote receiver, who will post it as soon as possible. Postage is paid by the institution where the vote is cast. When an advance vote is cast at the national registration office in the municipality in which the voter is resident, the vote is not posted, but handed over directly to the municipal authorities concerned. This is also the procedure in some other cases.

The above description covers the ordinary procedures, which may be modified – e.g. in the case of voters in need of special assistance in the same way as the ordinary voting procedures may be modified on election day, see section 4.1.3. above.

4.2.5. Examination of Advance Votes

All advance votes are marked with the date of arrival in the municipality and are registered in an advance voting logbook. Before polling starts on

election day – or, if necessary, the day before – the cover envelopes are opened and the cover letters examined. The identities of the advance voters are checked against the electoral register and if a voter does not appear on the register (or has died after having cast a vote), the vote will not be taken into consideration, i.e. it will not be put in a ballot box and counted together with the ordinary votes cast during polling day at the polling stations. Other reasons for rejection of advance votes are incorrect completion of the cover letter, or casting advance votes outside the official periods for lawful advance voting.

If a voter is found to have cast more than one advance vote, only the latest is considered. Advance votes arriving after the start of polling on election day are not counted, and therefore the cover envelopes are not opened.

Advance votes are examined by polling supervisors from the polling district to which the voter belongs (according to the name and address on the back of the cover). When an advance vote is accepted, the name of the voter in question is marked on the electoral register to indicate advance voting. When this mark appears, the voter will not be allowed to vote on election day in the ordinary way.

When polling hours end on election day, the unopened coloured envelopes containing ballot papers are put in a ballot box. The envelopes are not opened until the counting starts.

In the November 2007 election, 173,027 votes (or 4.97 per cent of all votes cast) were advance votes. This number does not include 1,818 advance votes which arrived in time, but were rejected for one or other of the above-mentioned reasons.

4.3. COUNTING

4.3.1. Preliminary Count

As soon as polling closes at 8 p.m. on election day, counting starts at all polling stations. Anyone can attend the counting. The validity of ballot papers

and advance voting ballot papers is examined (see below). Valid votes are counted for parties and independent candidates separately. No discrimination between party votes and preferential votes for candidates within the parties takes place during the preliminary count. Invalid votes are also counted in order to allow a complete check of the total number of votes cast against the number of voters marked in the electoral register as having cast a vote. The latter number is also checked against the number of poll cards received from voters in connection with polling. As a further control, a so-called “ballot paper account” is completed.

The result of this preliminary count is announced to those present and then reported by telephone to the chairman of the election committee in question. The results of the count and a specification of the reasons for rejecting invalid votes are entered in the poll book. The “ballot paper account,” etc. is entered as well. All voting material is packed and handed over to the municipal authorities, who keep it safely locked up until the final count the following day.

The chairman of the nomination district election committee reports the total number of votes for each party and each independent candidate in the nomination district both electronically and by telephone to the Ministry of the Interior and Health (or rather to Statistics Denmark, which since October 2008 has been entrusted with the task of the computation of the polls on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and Health), after the results from all polling districts have been reported to him/her and the numbers have been added up. The nomination district results have hitherto usually been received by the Ministry (and presumably the same will apply re. Statistics Denmark) between 8:30 p.m. and midnight on election evening.

Statistics Denmark hands over the results to the major mass media at the same time as they are

made public on the election website of Statistics Denmark. Statistics Denmark computes the official preliminary election results, including the allocation of the 175 seats among the parties (and – if necessary – the independent candidates). Parallel – though unofficial – computations and allocations are carried out and published by the TV networks and the radio.

4.3.2. The Final Count

A final count takes place the day after election day in one place in the “district municipality” (see Section 2.3.) under the responsibility of the election committee. The final count is open to the public.

The final count consists of: (1) a repetition of the count carried out at the individual polling stations on election evening, (2) a count where – for each party – the party votes and the preferential votes for each individual candidate are kept apart.

The election committee also has the final decision concerning the validity of votes. A vote is declared invalid if it is not obvious which party (or which independent candidate) the voter intended to vote for (including blank votes), if the ballot paper (or the advance voting ballot paper) has not been provided by the election committee in question (or the Ministry of the Interior and Health respectively), or if there is any indication as to the voter's

identity. All invalid votes are registered in the election records according to one of 26 causes of invalidity²¹ established by the Ministry in accordance with the Election Act. In the November 2007 election, 24,113 votes (0.7 per cent of all votes cast) were deemed invalid. Of these, 15,738 were blank.

The results of the final count are registered in the committee's election records. The entry of this and other information in the election records takes place according to a set of detailed rules issued by the Ministry. A copy of the election records is sent to both Statistics Denmark and the Ministry immediately after the completion of the final count. The voting material is kept by election committees until the election has been approved (see Section 5.5.), and then it is destroyed.

Voter turnout in Denmark is usually quite high, particularly during general elections. The November 2007 election was 86.6 per cent – above the average of 85.4 per cent for the ten elections held from 1979 to 2005. In comparison, the voter turnout during the last election to the European Parliament (June 2009) was 59.5 per cent, while during the latest local and regional elections in 2005 the turnout was 69.5 per cent for local elections and 69.4 for regional elections, respectively.



²¹ 14 for votes cast on election day, 12 for advance votes.

5. Administrative Procedures Following an Election

5.1. THE CENTRAL COMPUTATIONS

The central computations of the election results take place in Statistics Denmark on the basis of the information from the 92 nomination districts provided by their election committees and contained in their election records.

Prior to the computations, each election record is closely and thoroughly scrutinized in order to secure that (1) all requested information is available, (2) the numbers given are consistent, and (3) the allocation of party votes to individual candidates is correct according to the form of list organisation adopted by each party. Missing information has to be provided and inconsistencies and mistakes corrected – if necessary by consulting a representative of the election committee concerned.

Unused ballot papers from each nomination district as well as the information about parties and candidates in each election record – including the form of list organisation – are checked against the lists compiled by the registration authorities (see Section 3.4.2).

A memorandum on all corrections carried out as a consequence of the scrutiny is submitted to the Folketing for its first sitting after the election (see below).

The computerized computations include the following:

1. aggregation of nomination district level counts to the multi-member constituency, the provincial, and the national levels;
2. allocation of the 135 seats in the ten multi-member constituencies to parties (and independent candidates);
3. examination of the parties which did not win a seat in a multi-member constituency in order to

see if they did pass at least one of the other two thresholds for gaining access to the 40 compensatory seats;

4. allocation of compensatory seats to eligible parties;
5. allocation of each party's compensatory seats to the three electoral provinces;
6. distribution of each party's compensatory seats within the electoral provinces among the multi-member constituencies in the provinces in question; and
7. selection of the elected candidates for each party in each multi-member constituency.

After completing the calculations, the Ministry of the Interior and Health issues election returns to the elected candidates.

According to the Election Act, the Ministry must submit the following documents to the Folketing for its first sitting after the election:

- (1) copies of all election records,
- (2) the computations of the allocations of both multi-member constituency and compensatory seats,
- (3) tabulations that establish which candidates have been elected (see the Annex – these tabulations contain sheets with the number of votes (both personal votes and allotted party votes) obtained by each candidate in each nomination district within the multi-member constituency), and
- (4) a list of all substitutes in the order in which they will have access to vacant seats. The number of votes obtained by each substitute is included in the sheets mentioned above.

Furthermore, the memorandum mentioned above (containing details of corrections) is also submitted to the Folketing.

5.2. ELECTION COMPLAINTS

Any voter has the right to complain about the election. Such complaints must be sent to the Ministry of the Interior and Health (but addressed to the Folketing) within a week of the election. The Ministry comments on the complaints before they are submitted to the Folketing for consideration. Complaints may concern any topic related to the conduct of the election and the counting of votes. Requests for recounts are also considered.

No court is involved in the handling of election complaints as regards the outcome or the validity of the election.

5.3. THE APPROVAL PROCEDURE

According to the Constitution, the Folketing itself determines the validity of the election of its members. The Folketing is also the sole judge in matters of eligibility. The documents to be used by the parliament for its decisions on election approval are mentioned in Section 5.1.

The Constitution also states that the Folketing shall assemble at 12 a.m. on the 12th weekday after the day of the election, unless the Monarch has summoned an earlier meeting.

The [Standing Orders of the Folketing](#) contain detailed rules for the entire approval procedure. At the first sitting of the parliament after a general election – and immediately after the election of a temporary President – a provisional 21 member parliamentary committee is formed for the scrutiny of the elections. The committee must examine the reports on the election returns, the calculations carried out by Statistics Denmark on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and Health, and other data submitted according to the Election Act. The committee must also consider complaints lodged against the elections. Eventually, the committee

submits a recommendation on the approval of the election to the House.

Since 1920, no election has been declared invalid – which would result in a second ballot taking place. The November 2007 election was approved after a single meeting of the committee.

At a few elections, approval has only been given after extensive examination, including recounts by the provisional Folketing committee of some of the votes. After the January 1984 election, for instance, all advance votes (i.e. about 120,000 advance voting ballot-papers) were submitted to the committee for closer scrutiny and recounting. However, the recount altered neither the distribution of seats nor the selection of candidates.

Thus, decisions on matters related to the approval of elections rest entirely with the parliament itself. This is in accordance with traditional parliamentary theory and theories of representation.

5.4. THE PUBLICATION OF ELECTION RESULTS

On election evening and night, radio and TV continuously publish the preliminary election results. The following day, of course, they appear in the newspapers.

The day after election day – as well as the following day – the mass media publish the final counts with regard to candidate selections. Newspapers and other media get the basic information directly from the individual election committees. Hence, most of the names of (possibly) elected candidates are known the evening after election day.

When the central computations in Statistics Denmark are completed – usually on the 5th day after the election – a summary of the election results, primarily containing the overall distribution of votes and seats among parties and independent candidates, is published on the election websites of the Ministry of the Interior and Health and of Statistics Denmark.

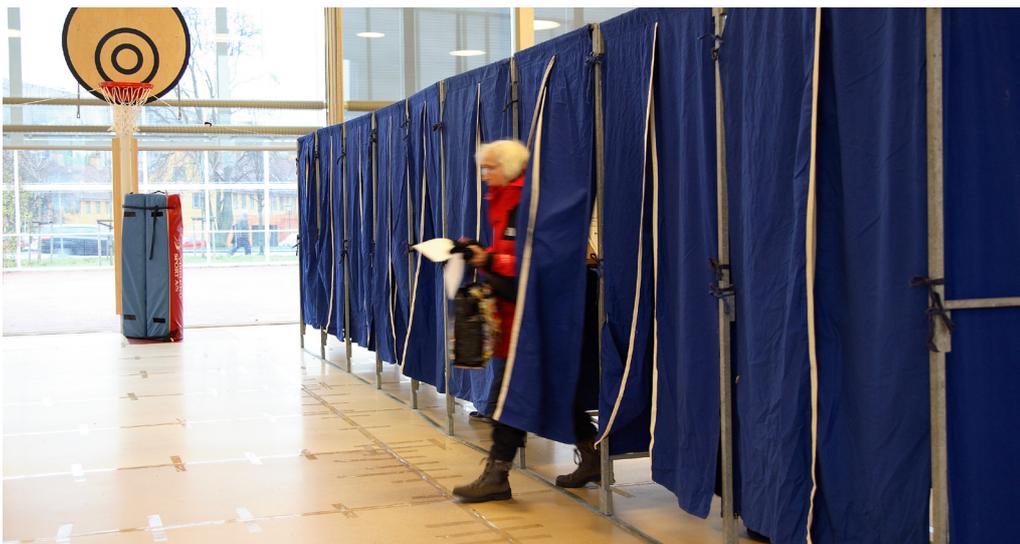
When the newly elected Folketing meets, the computations of the allocation of the seats in the multi-member constituencies, as well as the allocation of the compensatory seats, etc., are – by tradition – published in a special issue of the Statistical News²² of the National Bureau of Statistics. Copies of this issue of the Statistical News are submitted to the Folketing in order to fulfil the requirements of the Election Act. In this way, both the Folketing and the public are able to follow – step by step – all computations carried out by the Ministry.

The number of personal votes for each candidate is published later by the Ministry of Interior and Health and Statistics Denmark²³ in a statistical publication containing all election results in detail.²⁴ Thus, all information – including the above-mentioned sheets with specifications of votes obtained by individual candidates – is made accessible to the public.

5.5. DESTRUCTION OF THE VOTING MATERIAL AND PAYMENT OF THE BILL

When the Folketing has approved the election, all voting material, i.e. the ballot papers, the advance voting material used, the electoral register, and the poll cards, is destroyed.

The expenses connected with elections are covered mainly by the municipalities. The total expenses connected with a general election for municipalities have been estimated to be around Dkr. 50-60 million (approximately US \$10 million). For the Ministry of the Interior and Health, direct expenses are only Dkr. 800,000 (approximately US \$145,000).



²² In the series "Befolkning og valg."

²³ Statistics Denmark took over the computation of election results regarding parliament elections, European Parliament elections and national referenda from the Ministry of Interior and Health on October 1, 2008.

²⁴ <http://www.ism.dk/NOEGLETAL/VALG-FOLKEAFST/FOLKETINGSVALG/Sider/Start.aspx>

6. Computerization

Computerization has not been discussed much above. For the time being, only the establishment of the electoral register (the voters' list) and issuing poll cards must be computerized. All other functions related to the preparation of elections and the tabulation of returns can in principle be carried out without the use of computers.

6.1. ELECTRONIC COMPUTATION OF ELECTION RESULTS

Central computations were performed manually until 1990. The December 1990 election was the first general election where the official central computations were computerized. The election committees use computers for various purposes, and the production of most election records are now computerized. Furthermore, a nationwide computer system has been introduced which enables the election committees of the nomination districts to convey the results of the count in the nomination districts directly to Statistics Denmark. This system has been gradually introduced and was finally employed by all election committees in the 2007-elections.

6.2. ELECTRONIC ELECTORAL REGISTERS AND ELECTRONIC LOGBOOKS

In 2005, the Parliamentary Elections Act, the Act on Local and Regional Government Elections, and the Act on Elections of Danish Members to the European Parliament were amended to authorise the local councils to employ electronic electoral registers - on an optional basis - in one or more polling districts. Furthermore, the local councils were authorised to employ an electronic logbook to record the reception of advance votes.²⁵

Later that year, during the local and regional government elections on 15 November 2005 six municipalities participated in a pilot project in which an electronic electoral register and electronic logbooks were employed in one polling

district in each of the participating municipalities. The evaluation of the pilot showed that the use of electronic electoral registers and electronic logbooks was a great success. The municipalities were particularly enthusiastic about the electronic electoral lists, which practically eliminated the queues at the polling stations because the voters could register at any table instead of being bound to register at a pre-selected table.

Electronic electoral registers and electronic logbooks have since been further developed by the IT-supplier of the municipalities. Both electronic solutions are planned to be introduced more widely to an increased number of polling districts and/or municipalities during the coming local and regional government elections on 17 November 2009; it was also used in a number of municipalities at the European Parliament elections on 7 June 2009.

6.3. E-voting

The introduction of electronic voting systems (e-voting) is, on the other hand, not considered a realistic option for the time being.

The mayors of eight of the largest urban municipalities in Denmark addressed the former Minister for Social Welfare in 2008 requesting the Minister to take steps to contribute to the creation of the necessary statutory authority that would enable the municipalities to carry out a pilot project on e-voting at polling stations, i.e. non-remote e-voting. The government, however, decided to turn down the municipalities for the time being inter alia on grounds of being opposed to a replacement of the current public control with the counting and final counting of votes with a more sophisticated control of the electronic counting of votes that only specialists knowledgeable of IT-systems could reasonably undertake. Quoting examples from other countries which have experienced serious security problems with non-remote e-voting, the

²⁵ The logbook contains records of the number of advance votes received, the receiving dates, the number of advance votes which are forwarded to other municipalities (i.e. if the sender is resident in another municipality than the recipient municipality) and the forwarding date.

government also stated that it wished to await further experiences with e-voting in other countries before it wished to embark on pilot projects re. non-remote e-voting.

Remote e-voting (voting via, internet) was most recently discussed during the legislation process following the introduction of the above-mentioned bill on electronic electoral registers etc. The government's remarks on the bill contains a discussion of the pros and cons of remote e-voting, finally rejecting for the time being remote e-voting in statutory elections partly because of the problems securing that it is indeed the voter in question that actually casts the vote and not some other person in his or her place, partly because of the difficulties in safeguarding the secret ballot. Remote e-voting contravenes with one of the principles of Danish election legislation, i.e. that a voter's casting of his or her vote shall be monitored by election authori-

ties in the sense that an election official shall be present to ensure not only the identity of the voter before he or she is allowed to vote, but also that the vote is cast without giving others the opportunity to see how the voter has voted. This applies both to voting on election day at the polling stations as well as to advance voting.

The fact is that secret balloting is not only a right for the voter according to Danish election legislation, but also a duty. The right and duty to secret balloting is only ever deviated from when the voter is in need of assistance to vote due to disability, poor health, or for similar reasons. Hence, the government rejected the prospect of introducing remote e-voting for the time being, and this standpoint was not contradicted by the other parties in the Folketing during the reading of the bill on electronic electoral registers.

²⁶ The central election administration was under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Welfare from November 2007 until 7 April 2009.

7. Conclusion

Conclusions concerning the Danish electoral system of proportional representation were contained in Sections 1.3 and 1.4.

As regards election administration, the main conclusion of this presentation is that the Danish election administration system has two outstanding features:

1. It is possible to call a general election at any time with only three weeks' notice; and
2. the election administration system is a smooth-running combination of a centralized and a decentralized system, involving a considerable number of local administrators and politicians. The system is, almost without exception, believed to produce fair and reliable election results, and serious allegations of dishonesty or election fraud have never been raised. When considering the election administration system, one should remember that both the local politicians and the municipal administration personnel involved in elections also maintain their skills by using them for local body elections, elections to the European Parliament, and referendums – all conducted according to similar administrative systems. Hence, it is safe to conclude that local, administrative election expertise is considerable.

The two points are interconnected, since the decentralized character of the election administration system and the local election administration skills obviously are prerequisites for holding national elections at short notice.

Another important point is that the linkage between the national civil registration system and the electoral register allows for the continuous updating of the latter on the basis of corrections to the former. This linkage is another prerequisite for the general readiness of the entire system. This preparedness was also, however, a central feature of the Danish election administration system before computerization of the civil registration system.

Furthermore, this linkage also means that special administrative tasks related to the electoral register are almost entirely unnecessary between elections. The administrative tasks related to elections that need to be carried out by municipal administrations between elections are negligible, even though the procedure for the registration of new parties may – every now and then – involve additional work for local authorities.

The introduction of a computerized civil registration system has in itself brought about a considerable decrease in the workload connected with updating this register.

Annex

EXTRACT OF BALLOT PAPER FROM THE GENERAL ELECTION IN NOVEMBER 2007

Københavns Storkreds 2. opstillingskreds	
Folketingsvalget 2007	
Sæt x til højre for et partinavn eller et kandidatnavn Sæt kun ét x på stemmesedlen	
A. Socialdemokratiet	
Jette Bergenholtz Baurup	Karen Hækkerup
Yildiz Akdogan	Mette Reissmann
Christine Antorini	Bo Sandberg
Jacob Bjerregaard	Helle Thorning-Schmidt
Lars Gaardhøj	Michael Vindfeldt
Susan Hedlund	Lars Weiss
B. Det Radikale Venstre	
Laura Friberg	Dorthe Kjerulf-Thomsen
Christian Holm Donatzky	Johannes Lebech
Lone Dybkjær	Karen Lumbhof
Charlotte Fischer	Mia Nyegaard
Per Svejstrup Hansen	Mikkel Sarbo
Rune Heiberg Hansen	Manu Sareen
C. Det Konservative Folkeparti	
Claus Christiansen	Paula Larrain
Annette Birch	Asger Larsen
Channe M. Bjerringgaard	Mogens Lønborg
Flemming Brank	Per Stig Møller
Anne-Louise Eppler	Jakob Næsager
Peter Grane	Helle Sjelle
F. SF – Socialistisk Folkeparti	
Özlem Sara Çekic	Anne Grete Holmsgaard
Baldur Mørk Andersen	Torben Lund
Ida Auken	Trine Mach
Lotte Thim Bertelsen	Kamal H. Qureshi
Rachid El Mousti	Ole Riisgaard
Marie Fugl	Ninna Thomsen
K. Kristendemokraterne	
Bodil Kornbek	Anette Nilsson
Andreas Eriksen	Bent Sohn Thomsen
Michael Hedelund	Hanne Wahl
Jens Lund Jensen	
O. Dansk Folkeparti	
Allan Lønborg	Paw Vagtberg Karstlund
Anet Burchard	Peter Skaarup
Martin Henriksen	Karin Storgaard
V. Venstre, Danmarks Liberale Parti	
Lone Yalcinkaya	Michael Lange
Leslie Arentoft	Marion Pedersen
Ulrik E. Fink	Søren Pind
Poul F. Hansen	Torben Skytte Raahede
Rikke Hvilshøj	Bent Soelberg
Jan E. Jørgensen	Søren Toft
Y. Ny Alliance	
Naser Khader	Jamilla Jaffer
Aamer Ahmad	Lene Koch Langhoff



TABULATIONS ON CANDIDATE SELECTION

This annex illustrates how candidate selection takes place under the various systems of list organisation discussed in Sections 1.2.6 and 3.4.2 above.

(1) Standing by District

In the November 2007 elections no parties used this traditional system of list organisation. Therefore, the following example is only for illustrative purposes.

In this example we use a multi-member constituency with only four nomination districts, and the party has one candidate in each of these.

The vote total of, e.g., candidate no. 3 consists of the candidate's personal votes in all four nomination districts (497, 5,893, 481, and 509, respectively) plus the party votes (5,371) in the candidates nomination district (the 2nd nomination district). Figures in bold indicate in which nomination district the various candidates are nominated. The figures mentioned add up to 12,751. Accordingly, candidate no. 3 is elected on the second of the three direct (constituency) seats (indicated by "2K" in the second last column) which the party gets in this multi-member constituency.

Area	1 st nomination district	2 nd nomination district	3 rd nomination district	4 th nomination district	Vote total	Elected number	Elected as substitute number
Party							
Candidate no. 1	1,277	2,235	2,508	11,975	7,995	1K	
Candidate no. 2	191	436	6,003	507	7,137		1
Candidate no. 3	497	11,264	481	509	12,751	2K	
Candidate no. 4	8,466	336	386	253	9,441	3K	
Total	10,431	14,271	9,378	13,244	47,324		
Party votes	2,981	5,371	2,490	4,024	14,866		
Personal votes	7,450	8,900	6,888	9,220	32,458		
Personal votes in the candidate's nomination district	5,485	5,893	3,513	7,951	22,842		

The second example is the Socialist People's Party in the Aarhus County multi-member constituency which here presented its candidates in a fixed order. This fixed order can only be overruled by the voters if a candidate gets more votes than what corresponds to a Droop quota (in Danish electoral law terminology: "fordelingstal"). This way of presenting candidates is called "presenting candidates on a party list".

The calculations are conducted as in the example below, and since all candidates have vote totals smaller than the quota (15,375, given below the table), the party's fixed order is maintained. The main consequence is that a candidate who gets more votes than any other of the party's candidates (both personal votes and total votes) in this multi-member constituency, and who would have been elected if the candidates had not been presented on a party list, is not necessarily elected. Candidate no. 2 is elected even though candidate no. 3 got more votes. The order of the substitutes (last column) is determined in the same way.

Central Jutland- Eastern Jutland	Eastern Jutland multi-member constituency													
	1. Århus Syd	2. Århus Vest	3. Århus Nord	4. Århus Øst	5. Djurs	6. Randers Nord	7. Randers Syd	8. Favrskov	9. Skander- borg	10. Horsens	11. Heden- sted	Vote total	Elected number	Elected as number substitute
F. SF – Socialist People's Party party list														
1. Pernille Frahm	1,053	1,111	1,094	8,364	451	321	393	448	1,061	486	348	15,130	1K	
2. Eigil Andersen	226	5,512	268	315	58	22	28	29	115	24	4	6,601	2K	
3. Jonas Dahl	5,793	289	360	373	48	104	97	46	123	49	14	7,296	1T	
4. Jane Alrø Sørensen	122	112	7,397	205	24	14	18	32	73	35	24	8,056		1
5. Kirstine Bille	55	60	93	108	4,857	27	34	17	54	31	11	5,347		2
6. Sanne Rubinke	37	28	37	25	15	6	8	9	282	4,831	35	5,313		3
7. Jette Møller	42	43	51	49	25	2,184	180	15	31	23	7	2,650		4
8. Michael Tersbøl	18	28	35	26	19	5	7	2,067	22	19	2	2,248		5
9. Mogens Bedsted	15	9	8	17	2	5	5	7	4,507	16	5	4,596		6
10. Erik Poulsen	5	10	7	13	8	67	2,145	2	9	5	5	2,276		7
11. Lasse Eriksen	10	6	15	10	7	4	3	2	4	17	1,905	1,983		8
Total	7,376	7,208	9,365	9,505	5,514	2,759	2,918	2,674	6,281	5,536	2,360	61,496		
Party votes	5,343	4,952	6,941	7,026	3,065	1,851	1,991	1,795	4,237	4,065	1,747	43,013		
Personal votes	2,033	2,256	2,424	2,479	2,449	908	927	879	2,044	1,471	613	18,483		
Personal votes in the candidate's nomination district	450	560	456	1,338	1,792	333	154	272	270	766	158	6,549		
Droop quota: 15,375														

(2) Standing in Parallel (see table page 39)

The example of this form of putting up candidates is the Social Democrats in Aarhus County multi-member constituency. The constituency has 11 nomination districts, and the party won no less than seven seats here, six constituency seats (marked “K” in the second last column) and one compensatory seats (marked “T”). The last column gives the order of the substitutes.

Mr Henrik Dam Kristensen can be used as our example here. All voting figures in this table are set in bold, since all candidates formally stand in all nomination districts, but Henrik Dam Kristensen is specifically nominated in the 10th nomination district, Horsens, and therefore his total vote figure here is not only bold, but also italicized (11,254).

Mr Henrik Dam Kristensen’s overall vote total (19,500) consists of his personal votes in all eleven

nomination districts (which can be found in the lower part of the table). They are 355, 356, 345, 295, 281, 117, 161, 275, 430, 6,554 and 1.541, respectively, adding up to 10.710. In each and every nomination district, Mr Henrik Dam Kristensen also gets his proportional share of the party votes for the Social Democratic Party, calculated on the basis of his number of personal votes compared to the personal votes cast for all the party’s ten candidates.

In the 1st nomination district he got 355 personal votes, while the total number of personal votes here is 6,496. His proportional share of the 6,081 party votes in this particular nomination district is 332, which are added to his 355 personal votes. The sum (687 votes) is then ascribed to him in the upper part of the table, and the aggregate sum from all eleven nomination districts is then his vote total. On this basis he eventually was elected on the second constituency seat (“2K”).



Central Jutland- Eastern Jutland	Eastern Jutland multi-member constituency													
	1. Århus Syd	2. Århus Vest	3. Århus Nord	4. Århus Øst	5. Djurs	6. Randers North	7. Randers South	8. Favrskov	9. Skander- borg	10. Horsens	11. Heden- sted	Vote total	Elected number	Elected as substitute number
	A. Social Democratic Party													
Hüseyin Arac	428	1,151	1,629	662	116	150	61	89	195	246	122	4,849		2
Svend Auken	5,930	6,163	7,977	7,947	2,939	1,606	1,860	2,912	3,612	1,262	905	43,122	1K	
René Skau Björnsson	833	3,976	1,349	869	114	21	33	255	298	39	33	7,820	6K	
Kirsten Brosbøl	1,003	996	998	1,034	266	79	68	327	8,399	251	143	13,564	3K	
Jan Frits	6	34	36	18	51	16	12	25	26	76	876	1,176		4
Torben Hansen	60	63	70	80	201	6,251	3,812	162	37	53	35	10,824	4K	
Leif Lahn Jensen	66	97	186	149	9,107	28	36	34	38	15	22	9,778	5K	
Henrik Dam Kristensen	687	677	690	593	464	184	265	580	755	11,254	3,351	19,500	2K	
Anne-Marie Meldgaard	3,326	1,056	856	706	305	146	135	388	318	232	163	7,631	1T	1
Maja Panduro	139	129	270	225	162	1,707	2,824	120	67	129	76	5,848		3
Iben Sønderup	99	89	136	115	45	27	201	2,451	74	53	30	3,320		
Total	12,577	14,431	14,197	12,398	13,770	10,215	9,307	7,343	13,828	13,610	5,756	127,432		
<i>Party votes</i>	6,081	6,835	7,101	6,234	5,430	3,729	3,658	3,861	5,949	5,684	3,109	57,671		
<i>Personal votes</i>	6,496	7,596	7,096	6,164	8,340	6,486	5,649	3,482	7,879	7,926	2,647	69,761		
Hüseyin Arac	221	606	814	329	70	95	37	42	111	143	56	2,524		
Svend Auken	3,063	3,244	3,987	3,951	1,780	1,020	1,129	1,381	2,063	735	416	22,769		
René Skau Björnsson	430	2,093	674	432	69	13	20	121	170	23	15	4,060		
Kirsten Brosbøl	518	524	499	514	161	50	41	155	4,786	146	66	7,460		
Jan Frits	3	18	18	9	31	10	7	12	15	44	403	570		
Torben Hansen	31	33	35	40	122	3,969	2,314	77	21	31	16	6,689		
Leif Lahn Jensen	34	51	93	74	5,516	18	22	16	22	9	10	5,865		
Henrik Dam Kristensen	355	356	345	295	281	117	161	275	430	6,554	1,541	10,710		
Anne-Marie Meldgaard	1,718	556	428	351	185	93	82	184	181	135	75	3,988		
Maja Panduro	72	68	135	112	98	1,084	1,714	57	38	75	35	3,488		
Iben Sønderup	51	47	68	57	27	17	122	1,162	42	31	14	1,638		

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“The Parliamentary Electoral System in Denmark” provides a description in English of the Danish electoral system of proportional representation (PR) for the Folketing, the Danish unicameral parliament, with special emphasis on items which are considered particularly interesting in a comparative perspective, such as the establishment and updating of an electoral register, and the handling of advance voting. The publication also gives an account of the current national election administration system and contains a number of tables to illustrate the computation of election results.

The Parliamentary Electoral System in Denmark

Published by

Ministry of the Interior and Health
and The Danish Parliament
Copenhagen 2011

Editors

Jørgen Elklit, Anne Birte Pade and
Nicoline Nyholm Miller

Photography

Anders Hviid, Bjarne Stæhr

ISBN (electronic publication)

978-87-7982-116-3

For further information please visit the
election website of the Danish Ministry of the
Interior and Health: <http://elections.im.dk>
or contact the Ministry by e-mail: valg@im.dk