



In Focus

Parliamentary Elections in Denmark, June 2015

Overview

Denmark's general election was held on 18 June 2015. On 19 June 2015, the provisional results were announced by Danish Broadcaster, DR, [revealing](#) that the [left-leaning](#) 'Red bloc' featuring former-Prime Minister, Helle Thorning-Schmidt's Social Democrats Party, had been narrowly defeated. As a result, Venstre's leader, Lars Løkke Rasmussen—who leads the [right-wing](#) 'Blue bloc' in the Folketing—will be tasked with trying to form a government. Commentators have suggested that the result suggests a [significant shift to the right](#) by Danish voters, and represents a [damaging blow for the future of “Nordic social democracy”](#).

Denmark's Political System

In Denmark, general elections are held every four years to determine who sits in the lower House of the country's parliament, known as the 'Folketing'. The Folketing is comprised of 179 seats, with 175 of the seats held by representatives from Denmark, two seats reserved for representatives from the Faroe Islands, and two seats reserved for Greenland. Danish members of the Folketing are elected using proportional representation.

Of the 175 seats reserved for Denmark proper, 135 seats are distributed among Denmark's constituencies. These are distributed among the political groups based on their vote share, with this being calculated so as to allow “better representation for smaller parties”. The 40 remaining (“[compensatory](#)”) seats are then distributed among the parties which either: have won at least one constituency seat; have obtained, in two electoral regions, at least as many votes as the average number of valid votes cast in the region, per constituency seat; or have obtained at least two percent of all valid votes cast in the country as a whole. This method of distribution is aimed at “[redressing the imbalance caused through the distribution of the constituency seats](#)”.

Background

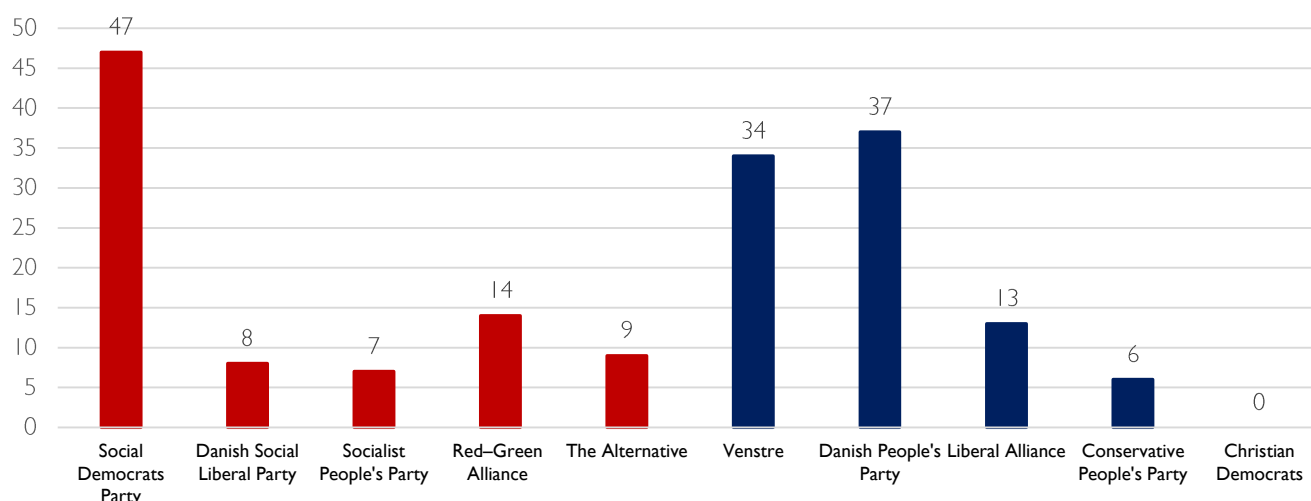
According to Kasper M. Hansen, a professor of political science at the University of Copenhagen, rising levels of immigration were “[a very key and decisive issue](#)” in the election campaign, with both leading parties “[pledging a tougher stance](#)” on the subject. Figures by Statistics Denmark [reveal](#) that 86,683 people immigrated to the country in 2014. This was reportedly an [all-time high](#) for a single year, and a 15 percent increase on 2013 immigration figures.

Discussing the subject of immigration in a campaign speech, the Social Democrats Party's leader, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, [stated](#) that "if you [an immigrant] come to Denmark, you must of course work. You must learn the Danish language, and you must meet and mix with Danish colleagues". The slogan "if you come to Denmark, you must work" would later be used in her party's election campaign. In addition, the opposition party, Venstre, [campaigned](#) for the re-establishment of the Ministry of Refugees, Immigrants and Integration of Denmark, which had previously been abolished in 2011.

Election Results in Full

According to the Danish broadcaster, [DR](#), the 'Blue bloc', consisting of Venstre, the Danish People's Party, Liberal Alliance, the Conservative People's Party and the Christian Democrats, won a combined 90 seats in the Folketing. In contrast, the 'Red bloc', made up of Helle Thorning-Schmidt's Social Democrats Party, alongside the Danish Social Liberal Party, the Socialist People's Party, Red-Green Alliance and The Alternative, won a combined 85 seats. Therefore, despite the Social Democrats Party receiving more seats than any other party (with 47), the 'Blue bloc' achieved an overall majority. As a result, Venstre's leader, Lars Løkke Rasmussen—who also leads the 'Blue bloc' in the Folketing—will be tasked with trying to form a government. A full breakdown of the results is provided below.

2015 General Election in Denmark: Seats Won



Source: Denmark Radio (DR), ['Election 2015'](#), 19 June 2015.

Going Forward

Following the Blue bloc's electoral victory, Venstre's leader, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, [stated](#) that they would seek to introduce reforms to Denmark's immigration system whilst in government. He also told the [Financial Times](#) that, should his party form a coalition with the Danish People's Party, he would "try to balance Venstre's desire for a freeze in public spending with the Danish People's Party push for a big increase". The paper also reported that Rasmussen would seek to cut Denmark's aid budget and the cost of asylum seekers to the country.

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