

Directorate-General for the Presidency
 Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments



Factsheet: The Dutch Senate (Eerste Kamer)

1. At a glance

The Netherlands is the main constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Since 1848 it has been governed as a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy, organised as a unitary state. The Dutch Parliament "Staten-Generaal" is a bicameral body. It consists of two chambers, both of which are elected for four-year terms. The First Chamber, or Eerste Kamer, consists of 75 Members and is elected by the (directly elected) Members of the 12 Provincial Councils and 3 Electoral Colleges from the Caribbean part of the Netherlands.

The Senate's main duties are in the legislative field, but it also plays a role in scrutinizing the actions of the Government. Formally the Senate can only reject or accept legislation. The debate on the Government's budget also gives them the opportunity to debate current and future policy with the government. Members of the House of Representatives are full-time politicians, whereas Members of the Senate are part-timers who often hold other positions as well. The Senate has a revising role in relation to draft legislation.

The current Dutch coalition government under the third term of Prime Minister Mark Rutte (VVD/ALDE) since October 2017 is composed of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD/ALDE), the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA/EPP), Democrats 66 (D66/ALDE) and the Christian Union (CU/ECR).

2. Composition

Results of the Senate elections on 26 May 2015				
	Party	EP affiliation	%	Seats
	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD) People's Party for Freedom and Democracy		17%	13
	Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA) Christian Democratic Appeal		16%	12
	Democraten 66 (D66) Democrats 66		13%	10
	Partij Voor de Vrijheid (PVV) Party for Freedom		12%	9
	Socialistische Partij (SP) Socialist Party		12%	9
	Partij van der Arbeid (PvdA) Labour Party		11%	8
	GroenLinks (GL) Green Left		5%	4
	ChristenUnie (CU) ChristianUnion		4%	3
	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP) Reformed Political Party		3%	2
	50PLUS	Non-affiliated	3%	2
	Partij voor de Dieren (PvdD) Party for the Animals		3%	2
	Independent Senate Group (OSF)	Non-affiliated	1%	1

			100%	75
The next Senate elections must take place in 2019.				

3. Officeholders

Speaker of the Dutch Senate	Chairperson of the Standing Committee on European Affairs
	
Ms Ankie Broekers-Knol (VVD/ALDE), since 2 July 2013	Mr Bastiaan van Apeldoorn (SP/GUE-NGL), since 2016
Clerk of the Dutch Senate: Mr Remco Nehmelman, since 1 October 2018	

4. Relations with Members of the European Parliament

Participation rights for Dutch MEPs in plenary sittings	Partially (Upon invitation)
Participation rights for Dutch MEPs in committee meetings	Partially (Upon invitation)
Availability of videoconferencing system in the Dutch Senate	Yes

5. Information links

- Official website: <http://www.eerstekamer.nl>
- [Election, procedure and history of the Senate in English](#)
- [List of committees in Dutch](#)
- [Recent documents submitted by the Dutch Senate to the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange \(IPEX\)](#)
- [European Parliament Information Office in The Hague](#)

6. Contacts

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