

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



Factsheet: The Dutch Senate (Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal)

















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. The debate on the Government's budget also gives the Members of the Senate 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, however it does not have the right of amendment. Formally, the Senate can only reject or accept 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 27 May 2019 and current redistribution of seats				
	Party	EP affiliation	%	Seats
	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD) People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	 renew europe.	15%	12
	Forum voor Democratie Forum for Democracy	 ECR European Conservatives and Reformists Group	16%	10 (12)
	Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA) Christian Democratic Appeal	 epp European People's Party	11%	9
	GroenLinks (GL) Green Left	 7	11%	8
	Democraten 66 (D66) Democrats 66	 renew europe.	9%	7
	Partij van der Arbeid (PvdA) Labour Party	 S&D	9%	6
	Partij Voor de Vrijheid (PVV) Party for Freedom	 ID	7%	5

	Socialistische Partij (SP) Socialist Party	Non-affiliated	6%	4
	ChristenUnie (CU) ChristianUnion		5%	4
	Partij voor de Dieren (PvdD) Party for the Animals		4%	3
	50PLUS	Non-affiliated	3%	2
	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP) Reformed Political Party		3%	2
	Fractie-Otten¹	Non-attached Members		2
	Onafhankelijke SenaatsFractie (OSF) Independent Senate Group	Non-affiliated	1%	1
			100%	75
The next Senate elections take place in 2023				

3. Officeholders

<p>Speaker of the Dutch Senate</p>  <p>Prof.dr. Jan Anthonie Bruijn (VVD/ALDE), since 2 July 2019</p>	<p>Chairperson of the Standing Committee on European Affairs</p>  <p>Ms Ria Oomen-Ruijten (CDA/EPP), since 18 June 2019</p>
<p>Clerk of the Dutch Senate: Mr Remco Nehmelman, since 1 October 2018</p>	

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

¹ Former Members of the Forum for Democracy group
Last updated on 03 June 2020. Photo credits: Dutch Senate.

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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