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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW**  
**(VENICE COMMISSION)**

**THE CONSTITUTION  
OF NORWAY**

(Extract - Election Provisions)



# The Constitution

## The basic principles

The Norwegian Constitution was adopted on 17 May 1814 and is the second oldest written constitution in the world. It was originally founded on the principles of

- the sovereignty of the people
- the separation of powers
- human rights

## *Below relevant election provisions § 50 - § 64:*

### **Article 50**

Those entitled to vote in elections to the Storting are Norwegian citizens, men and women, who, at the latest in the year when the election is held, have completed their eighteenth year.

The extent, however, to which Norwegian citizens who on Election Day are resident outside the Realm but who satisfy the aforementioned conditions are entitled to vote shall be determined by law.

Rules may be laid down by law concerning the right to vote of persons otherwise entitled to vote who on Election Day are manifestly suffering from a seriously weakened mental state or a reduced level of consciousness.

### **Article 51**

The rules on the keeping of the electoral register and on the registration in the register of persons entitled to vote shall be determined by law.

### **Article 52**

(Repealed)

### **Article 53**

The right to vote is lost by persons:

- a) sentenced for criminal offences, in accordance with the relevant provisions laid down by law;
- b) entering the service of a foreign power without the consent of the Government.

### **Article 54**

The elections shall be held every fourth year. They shall be concluded by the end of September.

### **Article 55**

The elections shall be conducted in the manner prescribed by law. Disputes regarding the right to vote shall be settled by the Electoral Committee, whose decision may be appealed to the Storting.

**Article 56**

(Repealed)

**Article 57**

The number of representatives to be elected to the Storting shall be one hundred and sixty-nine.

The Realm is divided into nineteen constituencies.

One hundred and fifty of the representatives to the Storting are elected as representatives of constituencies and the remaining nineteen representatives are elected as members at large.

Each constituency shall have one seat at large.

The number of representatives to the Storting to be chosen from each constituency is determined on the basis of a calculation of the ratio between the number of inhabitants and surface area of each constituency and the number of inhabitants and surface area of the entire Realm, in which each inhabitant counts as one point and each square kilometre counts as 1.8 points. This calculation shall be made every eighth year.

Specific provisions on the division of the Realm into constituencies and on the allotment of seats in the Storting to the constituencies shall be determined by law.

**Article 58**

The polls shall be held separately for each municipality. At the polls votes shall be cast directly for representatives to the Storting, together with their proxies, to represent the entire constituency.

**Article 59**

The election of representatives of constituencies is based on proportional representation and the seats are distributed among the political parties in accordance with the following rules.

The total number of votes cast for each party within each separate constituency is divided by 1, 4, 3, 5, 7 and so on until the number of votes cast is divided as many times as the number of seats that the party in question may be expected to obtain. The party which in accordance with the foregoing obtains the largest quotient is allotted the first seat, while the second seat is allotted to the party with the second largest quotient, and so on until all the seats are distributed.

List alliances are not permitted.

The seats at large are distributed among the parties taking part in such distribution on the basis of the relation between the total number of votes cast for the individual parties in the entire Realm in order to achieve the highest possible degree of proportionality among the parties. The total number of seats in the Storting to be held by each party is determined by applying the rules concerning the distribution of constituency seats correspondingly to the entire Realm and to the parties taking part in the distribution of the seats at large. The parties are then allotted so many seats at large that these, together with the constituency seats already allotted, correspond to the number of seats in the Storting to which the party in question is entitled in accordance with the foregoing. If a party has already through the distribution of constituency seats obtained a greater number of seats than it is entitled to in accordance with the foregoing, a new distribution of the seats at large shall be carried out exclusively among the other parties, in such a way that no account is taken of the number of votes cast for and constituency seats obtained by the said party.

No party may be allotted a seat at large unless it has received at least four per cent of the total number of votes cast in the entire Realm.

Specific provisions concerning the distribution among the constituencies of the seats at large allotted to the parties shall be determined by law.

#### **Article 60**

Whether and in what manner those entitled to vote may deliver their ballot papers without personal attendance at the polls shall be determined by law.

#### **Article 61**

No one may be elected as a representative unless he or she is entitled to vote.

#### **Article 62**

Officials who are employed in government ministries, except however State Secretaries and political advisers, may not be elected as representatives. The same applies to Members of the Supreme Court and officials employed in the diplomatic or consular services.

Members of the Council of State may not attend meetings of the Storting as representatives while holding a seat in the Council of State. Nor may State Secretaries attend as representatives while holding their appointments, and political advisers in government ministries may not attend meetings of the Storting as long as they hold their positions.

#### **Article 63**

It is the duty of anyone who is elected as a representative to accept such election, unless:

- a) He is elected outside the constituency in which he is entitled to vote.
- b) He has as a representative attended all the sessions of the Storting following the previous election.
- d) He is a member of a political party and he is elected on a list of candidates which has not been issued by that party.

Rules for the time within which and the manner in which anyone who has the right to refuse election shall assert this right shall be prescribed by law.

It shall similarly be prescribed by law by what date and in which manner anyone who is elected as representative for two or more constituencies shall state which election he will accept.

**Article 64**

The representatives elected shall be furnished with credentials, the validity of which shall be adjudged by the Storting.