

The House of Representatives Composition

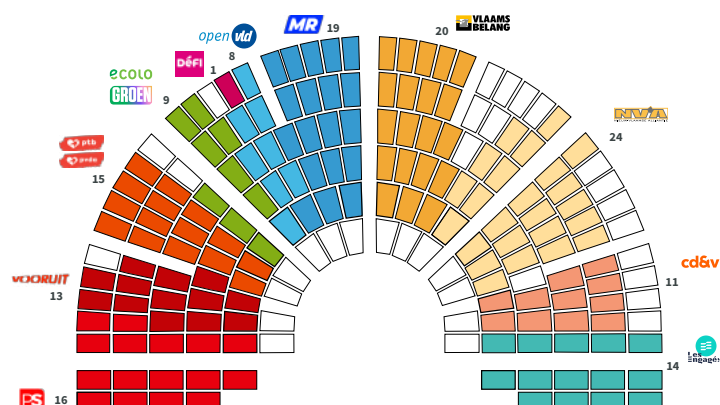
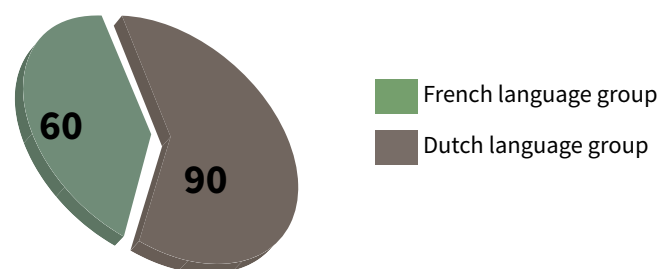
Dividing up in language groups

The 150 deputies are divided into a French language group and a Dutch language group.

A deputy automatically belongs to the French language group or the Dutch language group depending on whether the constituency in which he was elected forms an integral part of the French language region or the Dutch language region. As for those elected in the constituency of Brussels-Capital, the language that they use first when taking the oath determines which language group they belong to.

Those elected from the German-speaking region belong to the French language group.

The dividing up in language groups is important. In fact certain special laws require, in addition to a majority of two thirds in total, a majority within each language group (the “community laws”).



Political groups

The deputies who belong to one party constitute a political group. In principle, a political group can also include members from different parties. The House rules stipulate that a political group must have at least five members¹ in order to be recognised. The group members meet regularly to draw up a common line of policy. The group leader, elected by the members of the group, acts as the spokesman who sets out the position of the group in the plenary meetings. The groups receive financial resources from the House for the good working of the group (personnel remuneration, administrative charges,...).

PS	Parti Socialiste
Vooruit	Flemish socialists
PTB-PVDA	Parti du Travail de Belgique - Partij van de Arbeid van België
Ecolo-Groen	The French-speaking ecologists (ecolo) and the Flemish ecologists (Groen) have built one political group in the House
DéFi	Démocrate Fédéraliste Indépendant
Open Vld	Open Vlaamse liberalen en democraten
MR	Mouvement Réformateur
Vlaams Belang	Vlaams Belang
N-VA	Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie
CD&V	Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams
Les Engagés	Les Engagés

¹ Consequently, the DéFi MP doesn't belong to a political group.

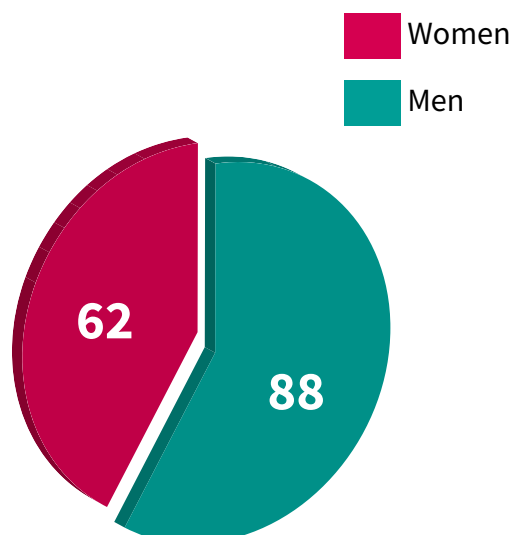
Dividing up: men and women

There have been some women who have seated in the House since 1929. They were eligible as deputies but could not take part in legislative elections. It was only in 1948 (introduction of female suffrage) that they obtained the right to vote.

Up until the seventies, the number of women represented in Parliament varied from around 2 to 4%. In the 1974 elections, the number of women in Parliament doubled. After that, the percentage of women represented in Parliament has remained static at around 10%.

In 1994, quotas for the representation of men and women on the lists of candidates were introduced in the electoral code. The law of May 24, 1994 stated that maximum two thirds of the total number of places on the list could be taken by candidates of the same gender.

With the electoral law of 13 December 2002 the equal representation of men and women on the electoral lists became a reality. On a list with for example 21 candidates a maximum of 11 may be of the same gender. Moreover, the first two candidates may not be of the same gender. As a result of that law, at this moment, 41,33% of the deputies are women.



» Breakdown according to the age category

