

European
Elections monitor

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RESULTS

Democrats 66 come out ahead in Dutch general election

Democrats 66 (D66), a centre-left liberal party led by Rob Jetten, emerged as the strongest party in the snap general election in the Netherlands on 29 October. As opinion polls had predicted, D66 continued to rise in the polls throughout the final days of the campaign and ultimately beat Geert Wilders' radical right-wing Party for Freedom (PVV). D66 won 16.89% of the vote and 26 seats (+17 compared to the previous general election on 22 November 2023), while the PVV won 16.75% of the vote and 26 seats (-11).

Geert Wilders, who had caused a political crisis by forcing PVV ministers to leave the government on 3 June 2025, therefore lost his gamble. He was defeated at the polls and lost his position as the leading figure on the Dutch political scene. The general election, brought forward by two years, followed the resignation of PVV ministers after the coalition partners refused to endorse Geert Wilders' plan to reduce asylum and immigration. The radical right-wing parties (PVV, Forum for Democracy (FvD), led by Thierry Baudet, and Juiste Antwoord 2021 (Correct Answer, JA21)) together won 26.57% of the vote and 42 seats, or nearly a third of the lower house of Parliament. Correct Answer 2021 made a strong showing with 5.95% of the vote (+8). *'The result is more fragmented, but the far right remains a significant bloc,'* said Benjamin Biard, a researcher at the Centre for Socio-Political Research and Information (CRISP) in Brussels. Moreover, Geert Wilders' anti-immigrant rhetoric has spread throughout the political landscape and been taken up by many parties. *"The traditional right has adopted a view of social problems that is characteristic of the far right. It emphasises the cultural differences between "Dutch" people and citizens with an immigrant background, which are now presented as the root cause of many of these problems. This is the case, for example, with the housing crisis, which is attributed to asylum seekers, expatriates and international students,"* said Sarah de Lange, professor of political science at the University of Amsterdam. D66 leader Rob Jetten has pledged to devote more funds to integration programmes and to combat illegal immigration by allowing asylum applications outside the European Union.

The two traditional right-wing parties – the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), led by Dilan Yesilgoz, and the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), led by Henri Bontenbal – are struggling. The former held steady with 14.24% of the vote and 22 seats (-2). The latter made gains, winning 11.79% and 18 seats (+9), but it achieved its lowest result ever in the previous elections in November 2023 and has benefited from the collapse of the New Social Contract (NSC), created by a former CDA member and led by Nicolien van Vroonhoven, which obtained 0.38% of the vote and will therefore no longer be represented in the lower house (-20).

The situation is no better on the left, as the coalition formed by the Green Left and the Labour Party (GL-PvdA) led by Frans Timmermans lost ground with 12.67% of the vote and 20 seats (-5). Frans Timmermans, former European Commissioner for Climate Action (2019-2023), resigned as head of the coalition when the results were announced. Further to the left, the Socialist Party (SP) led by Jimmy Dijk obtained 1.89% of the vote and 3 seats (-2), and Stephan van Baarle's Denk (DENK) obtained 2.42% of the vote (3 seats, =). Chris Stoffer's Reformed Political Party (SGP) and Mirjam Bikker's Christian Union (CU) won 2.28% and 2.06% of the vote respectively. Both parties won three seats each (=). The Farmer-Citizen Movement (BBB), led by Caroline van der Plas, lost ground with 2.66% of the vote and four seats (-3).

The Second Chamber (*Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal*) is therefore highly fragmented following the

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general election. Fourteen parties and one coalition (comprising two parties) are now represented. *"There has never been an election where not a single party has passed the 30-seat mark,"* noted historian Christophe de Voogd. D66, which won the highest number of seats ever in a general election, nevertheless achieved the lowest result of any party that finished top in an

election like this one. D66 came first in the country's largest cities, such as The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht and Groningen, while the Green Left-Labour Party coalition won in Amsterdam and the PVV in most rural areas.

Voter turnout was slightly higher than in the general election of 22 November 2023: 78.40%, up 0.8 points.

Results of the general election held on 29 October 2025 in the Netherlands

Turnout: 78,40%

Political Parties	Number of votes won	% of votes won	Number of seats
Democrats 66 (D66)	1 767 721	16,89	26
Party for Freedom (PVV)	1 753 640	16,75	26
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)	1 491 089	14,24	22
Coalition Labour Party-Green Left (PvdA-GL)	1 324 521	12,67	20
Christian Democrat Appeal (CDA)	1 234 425	11,79	18
Correct Answer 2021 (JA 21)	622 469	5,95	9
Forum for Democracy (FvD)	476 587	4,55	7
Farmers – Citizens Movement (BBB)	278 561	2,66	4
Denk (DENK)	252 595	2,42	3
Reformed Political Party (SGP)	237 606	2,28	3
Party for Animals (PvdD)	200 074	2,06	3
Christian Union (CU)	215 176	1,92	3
Socialist Party (SP)	197 872	1,89	3
50 +	150 587	1,44	2
Volt	112 515	1,08	1
New Social Contract (NSC)	39 286	0,38	0
Others	110 903	1,03	0

Source : <https://app.nos.nl/nieuws/tk2025/>

'We did it!' Rob Jetten rejoiced when the results were announced. *"I am delighted that we have become the leading party in the general election. This is a historic result for Democrats 66. At the same time, I feel a great sense of responsibility (...) We have shown not only the Netherlands but also the whole world that it is possible to defeat populist and far-right movements by campaigning with a positive message for our country"* he said, adding, *"Millions of Dutch people wanted to turn the page on Geert Wilders and say goodbye to a politics of negativity and hatred. I want to bring*

the Netherlands back to the heart of Europe, because without European cooperation, we are nowhere,' Rob Jetten emphasised after voting. He ran an optimistic, progressive and pro-European election campaign with a programme *'diametrically opposed to that of Geert Wilders,'* in the words of French political scientist Jean-Yves Camus. *"Rob Jetten took the opposite tack to the strategy of many traditional parties in Europe towards the far right,"* said Benjamin Biard. *"The rise of Democrats 66 took place in the last two weeks of the campaign. People did not like the chaos created by*

the previous government and showed that they want more stability," analysed Sam van der Staak, European director of the intergovernmental organisation International Idea.

Rob Jetten, 38, is from Veghel, south of the country in the province of North Brabant, and holds a degree in public administration from Radboud University in Nijmegen. He first worked for ProRail, the public body that manages the Dutch rail network, before embarking on a political career. He was elected to parliament in the general election on 15 March 2017. He became leader of the D66 parliamentary group the following year. In 2022, he was appointed Minister of Climate and Energy in Mark Rutte's (VVD) government, a position he held for two years. In 2025, he has led his party to a historic victory that should allow him to become the next Prime Minister.

Rob Jetten has stated that his priority now is to form a '*stable and ambitious*' government. The most likely coalition, according to political observers, would bring together D66 (26 seats), the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (22), the Christian Democratic Appeal (18 seats) and the Labour Party-Green Left coalition (20 seats), for a total of 86 MPs. The absolute majority in the *Second Chamber* of Parliament is 76 seats.

The VVD has ruled out working with the coalition led by Frans Timmermans, which it considers too radical. However, Timmermans' resignation could change its position. Negotiations to form the future government could take some time. After the previous general election on 22 November 2023, it took 223 days to form a coalition government.

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