



The House of Representatives

(situation 1th July 2005)

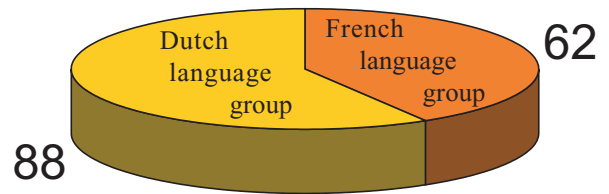
Dividing up in language groups

The deputies (150) 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-Halle-Vilvoorde, 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.

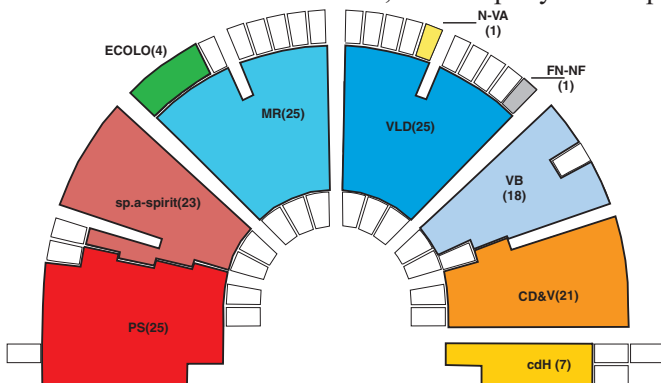
The dividing up in language groups is important. In fact certain special laws require, in addition to a majority of two thirds in total, a majority within each language groups (the “community laws”).



Composition of the House : language groups

Political groups

The deputies who belong to one party constitute a political group. The House rules stipulate that a political group must have at least five members⁽¹⁾ in order to be recognised. The role played by the political groups in parliamentary proceedings continues to grow (distribution of the tasks and specialisation of the members belonging to the political groups). 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, ...). The current allowance is 45.791,85 EUR per year and per member (amount for 2005).



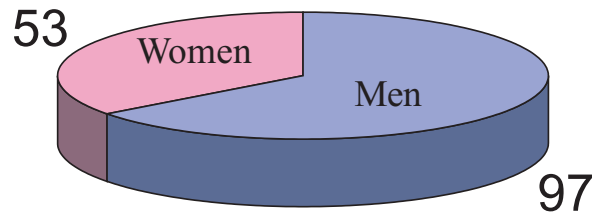
Composition of the House

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| PS: | Parti socialiste = French-speaking socialists |
| sp.a-spirit: | Socialistische Partij Anders = Flemish socialists.
Spirit: progressive party born out of the former
flemish nationalist party.
sp.a and Spirit built a cartel for the elections of May
2003. Their representatives build now one political
group in the House and the Senate. |
| ECOLO: | Ecologistes Confédérés pour l'Organisation de
Luttes Originales = French-speaking green party. |
| MR: | Mouvement Réformateur = French-speaking liberals. |
| VLD: | Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten = Flemish
liberals. |
| N-VA: | Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie : Flemish nationalists. |
| FN: | French-speaking nationalist party. |
| Vlaams Belang: | Flemish nationalists. |
| CD&V: | Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams = Flemish
christian-democrats. |
| cdH: | Centre Démocrate Humaniste = former French-
speaking christian-democrats. |

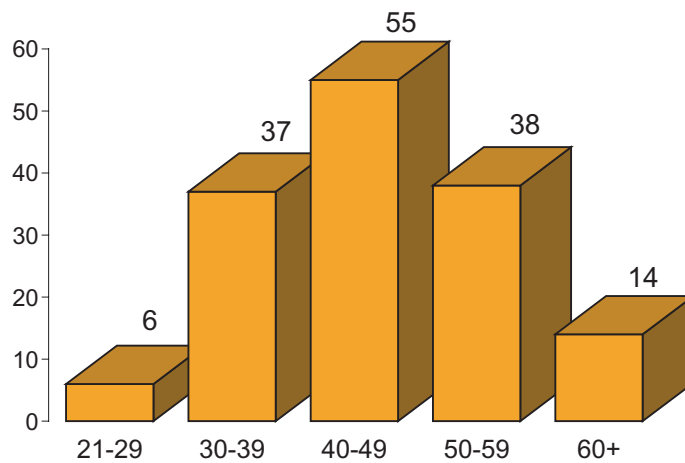
⁽¹⁾ Consequently, six current members don't belong to a political group :
 – the four Ecolo deputies
 – the N-VA deputy
 – the Front National deputy

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. Since then 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 so called law “Smet-Tobback” 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. As a result of that law, at this moment, 35,3% of the deputies are women.

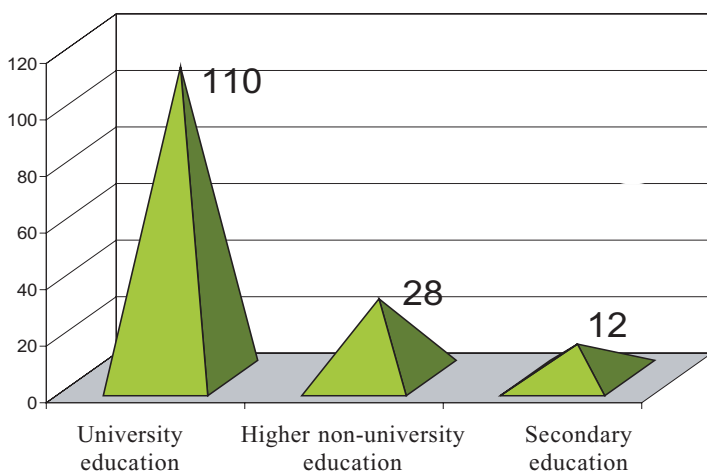


Breakdown according to the age category

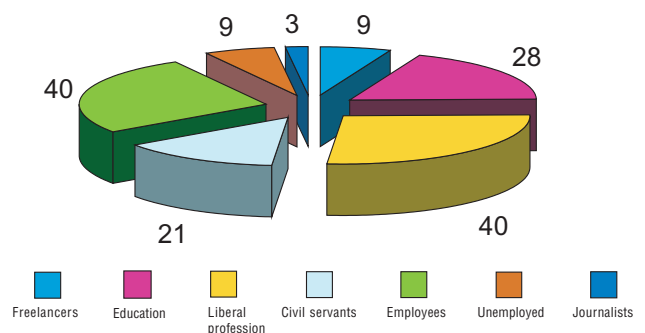


The youngest member is 23 year (Alisson De Clercq)
 The oldest member is 68 year (Pierrette Cahay-André)
 The average age : 44,7 year (previous Chamber: 47 year)

Breakdown according to the educational level



Breakdown according to professional groups



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