



By: TA | AP Insight

Denmark calls an early election following tense US-Greenland standoff



Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on Thursday called an early general election for March 24 as the country digests the recent standoff with U.S. President Donald Trump over his designs on the semiautonomous Danish territory of **Greenland**.

Frederiksen likely hopes that her handling of the Greenland crisis, in which she appeared straight-talking and tough, will give her a boost with Danish voters.

“It is now up to you, the voters, to decide what direction Denmark will take over the next four years. And I am looking forward to it,” Frederiksen, 48, said as she made her announcement in parliament.

Voters in the NATO and European Union member will determine who sits in 179-member parliament, which includes two seats apiece for lawmakers representing Greenland and the kingdom's other semiautonomous territory, the Faroe Islands.

US-Greenland issue remains a challenge

Trump's push for **U.S. control of Greenland**, which culminated in his short-lived threat last month to impose new tariffs on Denmark and several other European countries, was a major challenge for the Danish government over the past year.

Last month, Frederiksen warned that an American takeover of Greenland would amount to **the end of the NATO** military alliance.

Polls also show a bump in the popularity of the prime minister's Social Democrats during recent weeks which were dominated by the looming Greenland crisis.

In the next four years, we as Danes and as Europeans will really have to stand on our own two feet - Mette Frederiksen

Some Danish citizens have been so upset with the U.S. president's frequent talks about seizing Greenland that they participated in protests and even **boycotted American goods** in supermarkets.

As she announced the election on Thursday, Frederiksen said in parliament: “This will be a crucial election for us, because in the next four years, we as Danes and as Europeans will really have to stand on our own two feet.”

“We must define our relationship with the U.S. We must arm ourselves to ensure peace on our continent. We must keep Europe together,” she added referring to Russia's ongoing war on Ukraine, which is now in its fifth year.

Frederiksen's strict immigration policies

After Trump **backed down on his Greenland threats** last month, the U.S., Denmark and Greenland started **technical talks** on an Arctic security deal.

Still, Frederiksen made clear earlier this month that she remains wary about the **Greenland issue**.

Asked at the Munich Security Conference whether the crisis had passed, she replied: “No, unfortunately not. I think the desire from the U.S. president is exactly the same. He is very serious about this theme.”

Frederik Hjørth, an associate professor for political science at the University of Copenhagen, said: “The Greenland crisis has played a major part in the noticeable bump that the government parties have received over the last couple of months.”

While Trump would likely not feature in a major way in the election campaign, “he will be a sort of a background theme in the campaign because that speaks to the government message of the importance of having, competent people in charge.”

Frederiksen, a center-left Social Democrat, has become known for her strict immigration policies, which are among the toughest in Europe.



The government unveiled a legal reform allowing the deportation of foreigners who have been sentenced to at least one year of unconditional imprisonment for serious crimes

Last month, her government unveiled a legal reform allowing the **deportation of foreigners** who have been sentenced to at least one year of unconditional imprisonment for serious crimes.

Years before other countries on the continent tried to outsource asylum request procedures to third countries or set up so-called “**return hubs**” for rejected asylum seekers outside the European Union, Fredriksen pitched such ideas.

Beyond that, the cost of living in Denmark will probably also become a prominent campaign topic, Hjorth said.

A general election must be held at least every four years but the prime minister can call one at any time.

The last election was held on Nov. 1, 2022, and resulted in a three-party coalition that crosses the left-right divide.

Frederiksen has led Denmark since mid-2019. She currently heads a government with the Liberal Party of Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen and the centrist Moderate party of Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, a former prime minister. If she gets reelected, it

would be her third term.

‘She’s done the best that she could’

Campaigning began almost immediately after the announcement, with major commercial news outlets showing political advertising for the Social Democrats, while supporters of the populist anti-immigration Danish People’s party began leafleting in parliament in Copenhagen.

The call for early elections by Frederiksen came as little surprise to some people.

I can see the support for Mette Frederiksen. It’s up - Laura Beyer

“I can see the support for her. It’s up. So I mean, strategically, I think it’s a smart choice,” Laura Beyer, 33, who works in social media marketing, said in Copenhagen.

Referring to the Greenland situation, Beyer applauded the prime minister for how she handled the crisis and said she herself could have not withheld under the immense American pressure.

“I think if I was in that situation I would have just passed out from stress,” Beyer said, adding: “I think she’s done the best that she could. And from my perspective, I don’t think how anyone could do differently.”