

## Topic 4 Political Symbols of Germany

### Lesson 4 How are state government elections organized in Germany?

#### Lesson Objective

The student will explain how the parliamentary system in Germany operates to form a government.

#### Material and Resources

- Handout 9 “Elections for the State Legislature”
- Transparency 25 “Elections for State Legislatures”

#### Strategies

In preparation for conducting a student simulation of the formation of state government in Germany, the teacher should review **Transparency 25 “Elections for State Legislature”** and **Handout 9 “Elections for the State Legislature”** which identifies the major political parties and explains their general views. Begin the simulation activity by organizing the classroom to facilitate students working in groups to negotiate on issues. Describe the scenario of a recent state election in Lower-Saxony (February 2, 2003) with the following results:

<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>
CDU	1,925,055	48.3	91
SPD	1,330,156	33.4	63
F.D.P.	323,107	8.1	15
Alliance 90/ The Greens	304,532	7.6	14

Show **Transparency 25 “Elections for State Legislature”** and explain to students that if no single party receives a majority of the votes or seats in the election, two or more of the parties must form a coalition to obtain the necessary majority of votes to govern.

Assign a corresponding ratio of students to play the roles of party members, making sure that they can explain the political goals/ideas of their party. Use **Handout 9 “Elections for the State Legislature”** to provide students with background information about the various parties. The objective is for one of the two major parties (SPD and CDU) to organize a government by forming an alliance with one or more of the minor parties (FDP, Alliance 90/The Greens, or the PDS).

After a coalition is formed, discuss with the class how this parliamentary style government compares with the two-party government in the United States. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?