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RÉSUMÉS

On January 27th, 1984, the Council of Ministers decided to submit a bill to Parliament which would amend the electoral law so as to enable most foreign immigrants in the Netherlands to take part in local elections. This decision is a crucial step in the long process which will lead eventually to a fuller participation of immigrants in the Dutch political system, and consequently also in Dutch society as a whole. This paper considers in some detail the arguments that have been put forward during the long debate that prepare the recent cabinet decision. For a better understanding of these arguments we shall first have to give a brief outline of Netherlands government policy for immigrant minorities in general.