

Beat: Politics

Former Dutch Deputy PM Borst found dead under suspicious circumstances&

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USPA News - Former Dutch Deputy Prime Minister Els Borst, who served as health minister and led the Democrats 66 party in the 1990s, was found dead Monday at her home near the city of Utrecht, prompting an investigation to determine whether foul play was involved, officials said. Borst, 81, was found deceased at around 6:19 p.m. local time on Monday in the garage of her house in Bilthoven, a small village located about 7.5 kilometers (4.6 miles) northeast of Utrecht, the country's fourth-largest city.

Roads in the area were soon cordoned off and fences were installed as part of a forensic investigation. "The coroner immediately responded to the scene and could not immediately determine a natural death, meaning the area was cordoned off and forensic investigators responded to find out what happened," police spokesman Thomas Aling said. "This means that at this time we do not know how she died. There are several possibilities." De Telegraaf newspaper said blood was found at the scene but cautioned it does not necessarily indicate foul play, and Aling said investigators did not immediately find evidence to suggest a crime took place. "It can be a natural death, that we later see she died a natural death. It can also be an accident or a crime, but at this time we have not yet found indications of the latter," the spokesman added. Michiel Scheffer, a local leader for the Democrats 66 party in the province of Gelderland, said his mother had discovered Borst's body. "My mother found her dead this evening. I was one of the last persons to talk to her on Saturday," the politician said. Police were unable to say when Borst may have died. Borst served as minister of health, welfare and sport under then-Prime Minister Wim Kok between August 1994 and July 2002. She briefly led the D66 party in 1998 and was named deputy prime minister in August of that year. She was given the honorary title Minister of State by Queen Beatrix in December 2012, making her only the second woman to have received the title. D66 leader Alexander Pechtold said he was "intensely sad" by Borst's "completely unexpected" death. Other politicians also expressed their sadness, including foreign minister Frans Timmermans, who called news of Borst's death a "very sad" message and praised her as an "extraordinary woman." "Few have given such a great contribution to the medical-ethical debate in the Netherlands. Thanks to her our laws make a dignified end of life possible. I am very grateful for this," Timmermans said.

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