

Beat: Health

Autopsy rules out natural death for Dutch ex-deputy PM Borst

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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, died of injuries that were found on her body, excluding the possibility of a natural death, police said on Wednesday. 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.

A forensic investigation was launched soon after when a coroner was unable to determine a natural death. Police said Wednesday that an autopsy carried out on Tuesday afternoon was inconclusive but ruled out the possibility of a natural death. "Police received the results at around midnight. This at least shows that the injuries that were found on the body led to her death," a police spokesperson said. Police spokesman Thomas Aling said it remains unclear whether Borst died as the result of an accident or a crime, though details about the injuries have not been made public. "This at least means that it was not a natural death, such as heart failure. Thus everything else is still open. In this regard this means we will continue to thoroughly investigate this case to determine whether this is a crime or an unfortunate accident," he said. Earlier, Michiel Scheffer, a local leader for the Democrats 66 party in the province of Gelderland, had 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 on Monday. Borst served as minister of health under then-Prime Minister Wim Kok between August 1994 and July 2002, helping push through legislation that made the Netherlands the first country in the world to legalize euthanasia. 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 ever received the title.

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