



វិទ្យាស្ថានសភាកម្ពុជា
PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTE OF CAMBODIA

Research Paper

The Secretary General of the Senate

Functions of the Parliaments of France and Sweden

May 2018

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Executive Summary

In general, the Parliaments of France and Sweden are like most Parliaments that are bicameral or unicameral, and they both have three main functions - legislation, representation and oversight - that they undertake with the support of their General Secretariats/Administration.

It should be noted that, for both countries, as members of the European Union (France joined in 1958 and Sweden in 1995), the national Parliaments also play an active role in the EU law-making process through consultative/approval procedures between the Governments and their Parliaments.

In order to effectively support its Parliament and Parliamentarians, the administration of the French Parliament, in both Houses, is divided into the General Secretariat of the Questeur and the General Secretariat of the National Assembly or Senate. The Questeur is responsible for administration while the General Secretariat of the House is responsible for the legislative service.

With regard to the Swedish Parliament, the General Secretariat is called the Administration and its main duties are facilitating the work of the Parliament, its members and Committees through the parliamentary communication division, committee support, support for international cooperation, legal and research services, records, security and IT services.

The National Assembly of France consists of eight Committees while the Senate has seven. Each House has another Committee, called the European Affairs Committee. Overseas citizens can elect Members of Parliament – 11 members to the National Assembly (2 percent) and 12 members to the Senate (3.5 percent). Regarding the legislative process, the Government can call for a 'shuttle' between the two Houses, with the National Assembly having the last word. In addition, only the National Assembly, not the Senate, can dissolve the Government. The Senate has the constitutional mission to ensure representation of the local authorities, with particular attention to the decentralization movement that aims to strengthen them. Furthermore, the Parliament's oversight mission is supported by several entities such as committees and delegations, that ensure that the process of questioning the Government on its activities and expenditures is properly conducted. Some of these entities have extensive investigative powers. Both Houses are supported by the Parliamentary Office for the Evaluation of Scientific and Technologies Choices (OPECST).

The Swedish Parliament was bicameral in the past and became a single House in 1971. The Parliament, called the Riksdag, comprises 15 Committees and a special

Committee on European Affairs. Swedish citizens inside and outside of Sweden can vote in parliamentary elections; they can vote for political parties or candidates, or acquire blank ballot papers to insert the names of parties and candidates. In relation to the legislation, the bills concerning revenue and expense are divided into the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill submitted in April and the Budget Bill submitted in September. The Spring Fiscal Policy Bill is an assessment of the current sitatus and proposes guidelines and policies. On the other hand, the Budget Bill determines the total budget of the government for the up-coming year. The Riksdag has the support of the National Audit Office to oversee the budget. Moreover, the Swedish Parliament has the role of examining both the behavior of public officials and the relevant documents (laws and regulations). The checking of documents is intended to determine whether or not citizens are properly informed and recognize new laws or regulations before they are applied. Additionally, according to the principle of Government accountability before the Parliament, as in France, the Parliament of Sweden has the power to dissolve the Government.

1. Introduction

The election relating to the fourth mandate of the Cambodian Senate was held on 25 February 2018. After the election, the new Members of the Senate were assigned to their positions. The General Secretariat of the Senate plays an important role in providing them with orientation relating to their parliamentary functions. In this regard, the Secretary General planned to organize a seminar in May 2018 at which the functions of two foreign Parliaments - in France and Sweden - would be presented as comparative studies.

In response to the request of the General Secretariat of the Senate of Cambodia, the purpose of this paper is to provide a brief overview of the functioning of the French and Swedish parliamentary systems so that Members of the Cambodian Parliament can have this information at their disposal on the day of the seminar and thus be better prepared. This document examines how the two foreign Parliaments fulfill their three functions (legislation, representation and oversight), and also focuses on the services of the French and Swedish Secretaries General in support of their Parliaments.

2. Parliament of France (of the Fifth Republic)

The election relating to the 15th mandate of the National Assembly of France took place on 11 and 18 June 2017ⁱ followed by the senatorial election, which was held on 24 September 2017 to renew 170 of the 348 seats in the Senate of the French Fifth Republic. In these elections, there were nine winning political parties (see Annex 1). The Parliament of France consists of two Houses - the National Assembly and the Senate.[1, art 24] Parliamentarians of the two Houses are selected by two different electoral systems: direct and indirect.[2] Each House has Committees that organize legislative debates and oversee the Government.

2.1. The National Assembly

The National Assembly comprises 577 Members of Parliament, 11 of those Members are elected by French citizens abroad. The National Assembly Members are elected for five years by direct universal suffrage.[1, art 24]

ⁱ11 June 2017 was the date of the first round of the election to elect the 15th National Assembly and the second round was on 18 June 2017 to elect the president. In order to be elected in the first round, a candidate must receive more than 50 percent of vote (this process is known as "first-past-the-post").

The main bodies of the National Assembly are the Standing Committees, which organize legislative debates and oversee the Government.[3, p.162] The number of Standing Committees was increased from six to eight on 23 July 2008 by separating two Committees: the Cultural, Family and Social Affairs Committee and the Economic, Environmental and Regional Planning Committee. The eight Standing Committees are:[3, p.162-163]

1. Cultural and Educational Affairs
2. Economic Affairs
3. Foreign Affairs
4. Social Affairs
5. National Defense and Armed Forces
6. Sustainable Development, Spatial and Regional Planning
7. Finance, General Economy and Budgetary Monitoring
8. Constitutional Acts, Legislation and General Administration.

2.2. The Senate

The Senate comprises 348 Senators elected for six years through indirect elections: every three years, half of the number of Senators are subject to an election [1, art 24], including 12 Senators representing French citizens outside of France. The senatorial elections involve 162,000 elected officials including regional councilors, department councilors, and municipal councilors.[4, p.8] In addition, there are seven Standing Committees in the Senate:

1. Economic Affairs
2. Foreign Affairs, Defense and Armed Forces
3. Social Affairs
4. Culture, Education and Communications
5. Sustainable Development, Infrastructure, Facilities and Town and Country Planning
6. Finance
7. Constitutional Laws, Legislation, Universal and General Administration.

In addition to the Standing Committees, both Houses have one covering European Affairs. [1, art 88-4]

France joined in the European Union (EU) in 1958. The European Affairs Committee of France replaces^[5] the Delegation for the European Union based on the Constitutional Additional Act of 23 July 2008 - the French Parliament – the National Assembly and the Senate - established the European Affairs Committee in 2008. This has 48 Members from the National Assembly and 41 from the Senate. Their work involves checking and providing information about European activities that are relevant to French national interests.^[3, p.403]

2.3. The three functions of the Parliament

2.3.1. Legislation

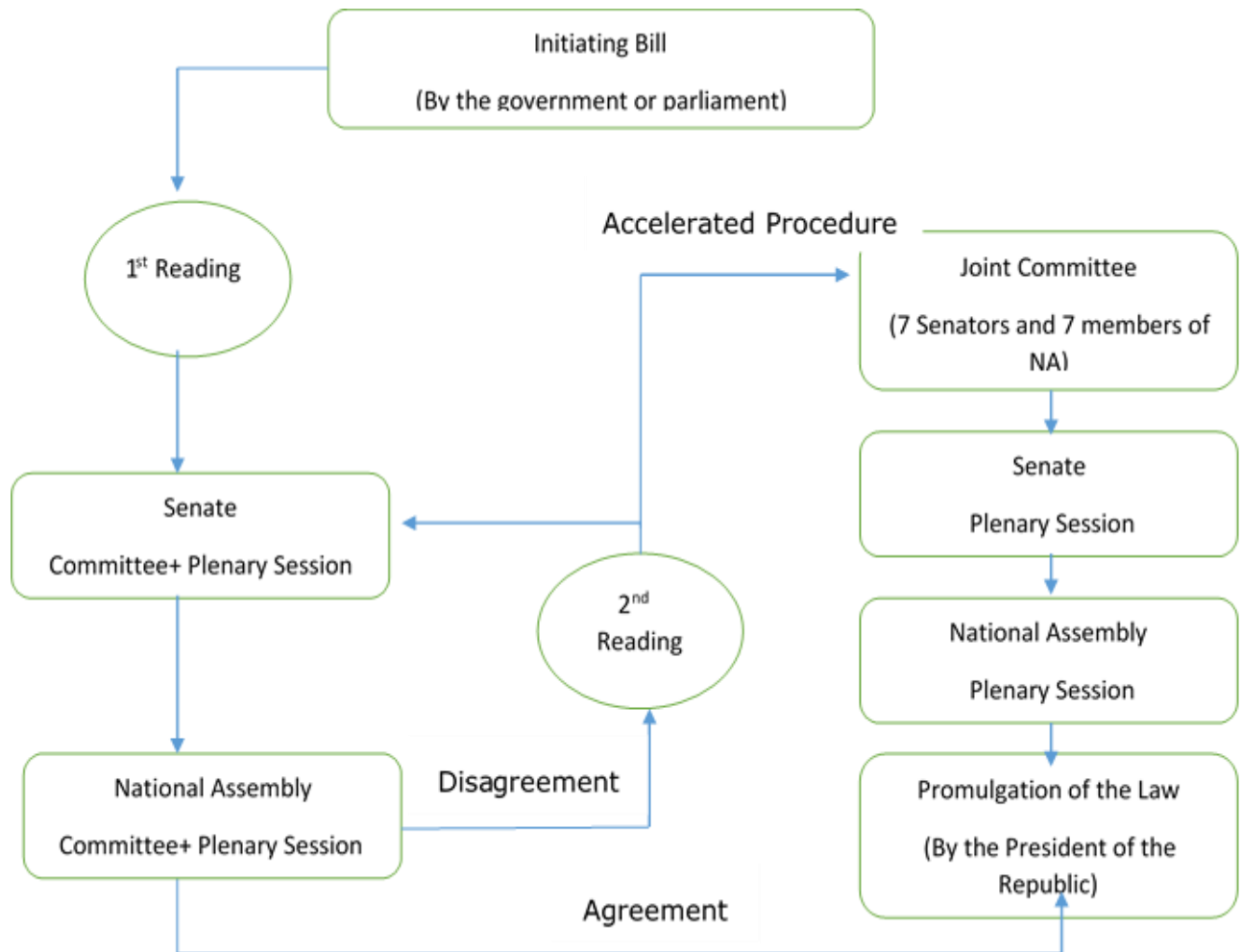
In the Constitution, Members of Parliament and the Prime Minister have the right to initiate legislation.^[1, art 39] Most of the legislation comes from the Government, but some comes from parliamentary initiatives. The two Houses have their own powers to dispute draft law or proposed law (See Figure 1 below for the legislative process).^[4, p.23]

Bills or law proposals must be examined by both Houses until both agree on the draft. This process is known as the “the shuttle” because the bill ‘shuttles’ back and forth from one House to the other. The government is authorized to end the shuttle after two readings in each House. The Prime Minister then requests a meeting of the Joint Committee which is comprised of seven members from each House. In cases of disagreement between the two Houses, the government can ask the National Assembly to vote on the bill as presented at its final reading.^[4, p.23]

Before public sessions, the relevant Standing Committee plays an important role in examining bills/law proposals and appoints a Rapporteur with the task of examining and explaining the bill to Parliamentarians. ^[3, p.166, p.20, 4] The Standing Committees frequently organize hearings involving members of the Government, public officials, and representatives from the public and private sectors.

In summary, the two Houses of Parliament are not equal in power: the balance is skewed towards the National Assembly as its members are selected through direct and universal elections.^[3, p.10] While the two Houses have equal rights during the course of the legislative procedure, if disagreement arises the Government can ask the National Assembly to vote on the bill/law proposal (and that becomes the final decision).^[1, 3, art 45, p.10] Furthermore, only the National Assembly can dissolve the Government.^[3, p.10]

Figure1: French Legislative Process[4]



Source: The Senate of France, 2014.

2.3.2. Representation

According to the Constitution, the Senate has a special role relating to representing the local authorities of the Republic, municipality councils, department councilors and regional councilors – both in metropolitan France and in overseas territories.[1, art 24] In this regard, the Senate has adopted some laws to strengthen the work of local representatives and to support the decentralization process in respect of local authorities through monitoring the implementation of the constitutional principles of local authorities' autonomous administration.

2.3.3. Oversight

The Senate plays an important role in monitoring the actions of the Government through exercising its legislative power.[1, 4] In order to oversee the Government, the Senate scrutinizes the legislation passed and its effects. In this, the Senate focuses on Government activity and public policies, and works closely with the Standing Committees and delegations which are "permanent in-

formation and control bodies specializing in areas with cross-cutting issues. They provide Parliamentarians with independent expertise in relation to the Government and they do not participate directly in legislative work, independent of the normative process".[4, p.24] To enable the Senate to be an effective recipient of information, there are some processes and instruments that allow the Senators to gather information:

- a. **Written questions:** a Senator can send questions to any Minister, who then has 30 days to respond.
- b. **Discuss recent problems with the Government:** these discussions are held in public meetings on Thursday afternoons at 2 p.m. and are broadcasted live on France 3 and the Public Senate channel. They are also posted on the Senate website.
- c. **Oral questions:** these questions are posed in public sessions on Tuesday morning twice a month.
- d. **Thematic screening questions:** sessions for this are held twice a month on Thursdays - based on the agenda of the Senate.
- e. **Committees of inquiryⁱⁱ and joint fact-finding missions:** these enable Senators to explore an important or relatively serious issue and allow for in-depth study.[3, p.351]
- f. **Budgetary control:** the Members of the Finance and Social Affairs Committees have to assist other Senators in monitoring the implementation of the Finance Acts and Social Security Financing Acts as well as in evaluating public policies.[1, art 47-2]
- g. **Delegations and duties:** there are seven delegations tasked with observing activity in a specific area.[3, p 383] For example, members of the Parliamentary Office for the Evaluation of Scientific and Technologies Choices (OPECST) are from the two Houses. The Office is a general information organ serving both the National Assembly and the Senate. This office is comprised of 18 Deputies and 18 Senators. Its mission is, according to the law, "*to inform the Parliament of the consequences of scientific and technological choices in order, in particular, to inform its decisions*". It thus enables Parliament to have its own in-house expertise to inform long-term political choices.

ⁱⁱ According to Article 51-2 "Committees of inquiry may be set up within each House to gather information, according to the conditions provided for by statute"

As France is a member of the European Union, EU legislation must be transposed into national law. Furthermore, all the decision-making relating to EU treaties, the accession to the EU of new members, and national resources contributed to the EU budget must be approved by each House.[1, art 88-3] A delegation focusing on European Union issues was established in 1979 to ensure that the Houses are well-informed. In addition, Article 88-4 of the French Constitution provides that the Government must submit to both Chambers (Houses) draft normative texts that it wishes to suggest to the EU for adoption at the European level.

2.4. The Secretaries General

There are two Secretaries General, one for legislative matters and the other for administrative matters.[3, p 469] The President of each House is the Chairman of the Bureauⁱⁱⁱ or the Office of the Senate/National Assembly .[6] The Questeurs^{iv} are the members of the Bureau. They are responsible for the administrative management of services and for budget management.[3, p.141]

Therefore, the legislative departments are under the control of the President while the Questeurs have full authority over administrative tasks.[3, p.469] Together, the two Secretaries make up a joint department called "the Human Resource Department and the Information Systems Department".[3, p.471]

The Questeurs work closely with the Standing Committees in order to fulfill their tasks relating to administrative activity without any restrictions. However, the Questeurs cannot be members of a Standing Committee nor members of the Special Committee for Audit and Internal Evaluation.

By way of illustration, the Annex 2 includes a diagram of the various structures of the National Assembly's administration. There are 12 legislative departments:[3, p.467]

1. General Secretariat of the Presidency
2. Table Office "Le service de la séance".
3. Legal Affairs
4. Cultural and Social Questions

ⁱⁱⁱ The Bureau of the Senate is composed of 26 members: the President of the Senate, eight deputy speakers, the three Questeurs, and 14 Secretaries. The Bureau of the National Assembly is composed of 22 members: the President of the National Assembly, the six vice-presidents, the three Questeurs, and 12 Secretaries

^{iv}The Questeurs are three Members of Parliament elected by their peers at the beginning of each term of Parliament

5. Economic and Scientific Assessment
6. Public Finance
7. European Affairs
8. International and Defense Affairs
9. Communication and Multimedia Information
10. Library and Archives
11. Verbatim Reports for the Sitings
12. Verbatim Reports for the Standing Committees.

The Secretary General of the Questeurs, assisted by the Director General of the Administrative Department, organizes the five administrative departments:

1. General Administration and Security
2. Parliamentary Logistics
3. Budget, Financial Monitoring and Procurement
4. Financial and Social Management
5. Building and Heritage.

The Senate structure is similar to that of the National Assembly. However, the organizational chart differs slightly (see Annex 3).

3. National Parliament of the Kingdom of Sweden

The legislative branch of the Kingdom of Sweden was previously a two-chambered Parliament.[7] However, in 1971 it was altered into a single chamber, known as the "Riksdag." [7] The Riksdag consisted of 350 seats for the first four years (1971-1975); however, it has reduced the number of seats to 349 to avoid an even division of seats between two political parties.[7] In addition, each political party has to obtain more than 4 percent of the total votes to get a seat in the Parliament.[8] According to Article 3, Chapter 3 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Sweden, the mandate for Swedish Parliamentarians covers four years, and elections are ordinarily conducted on the Sunday of the second week of September.^v [9] Citizens can vote for political parties or candidates; otherwise, they can obtain a blank ballot sheet to write the name of the political parties and candidates they favor.[10] Votes are first distributed among parties and then among the candidates.[8] With regard to the current mandate for 2014-2018, the Riksdag comprises eight political parties (see Annex 4).[11]

In addition, the Riksdag has 15 committees:[12]

^v The next election is scheduled to be on Sunday 9 September 2018.

1. Civil Affairs
2. The Constitution
3. Cultural Affairs
4. Defense
5. Education
6. Environment and Agriculture
7. Finance
8. Foreign Affairs
9. Health and Welfare
10. Industry and Trade
11. Justice
12. Labor Market
13. Social Insurance
14. Taxation
15. Transport and Communication.[12, 13]

In addition to these 15 Committees, the Riksdag has a special Committee on European Union Affairs.[12, 13]

3.1. The Three Functions of the Parliament

Similar to the Parliaments of other countries, the Riksdag undertakes three main functions - legislation, representation and oversight.

3.1.1. Legislation

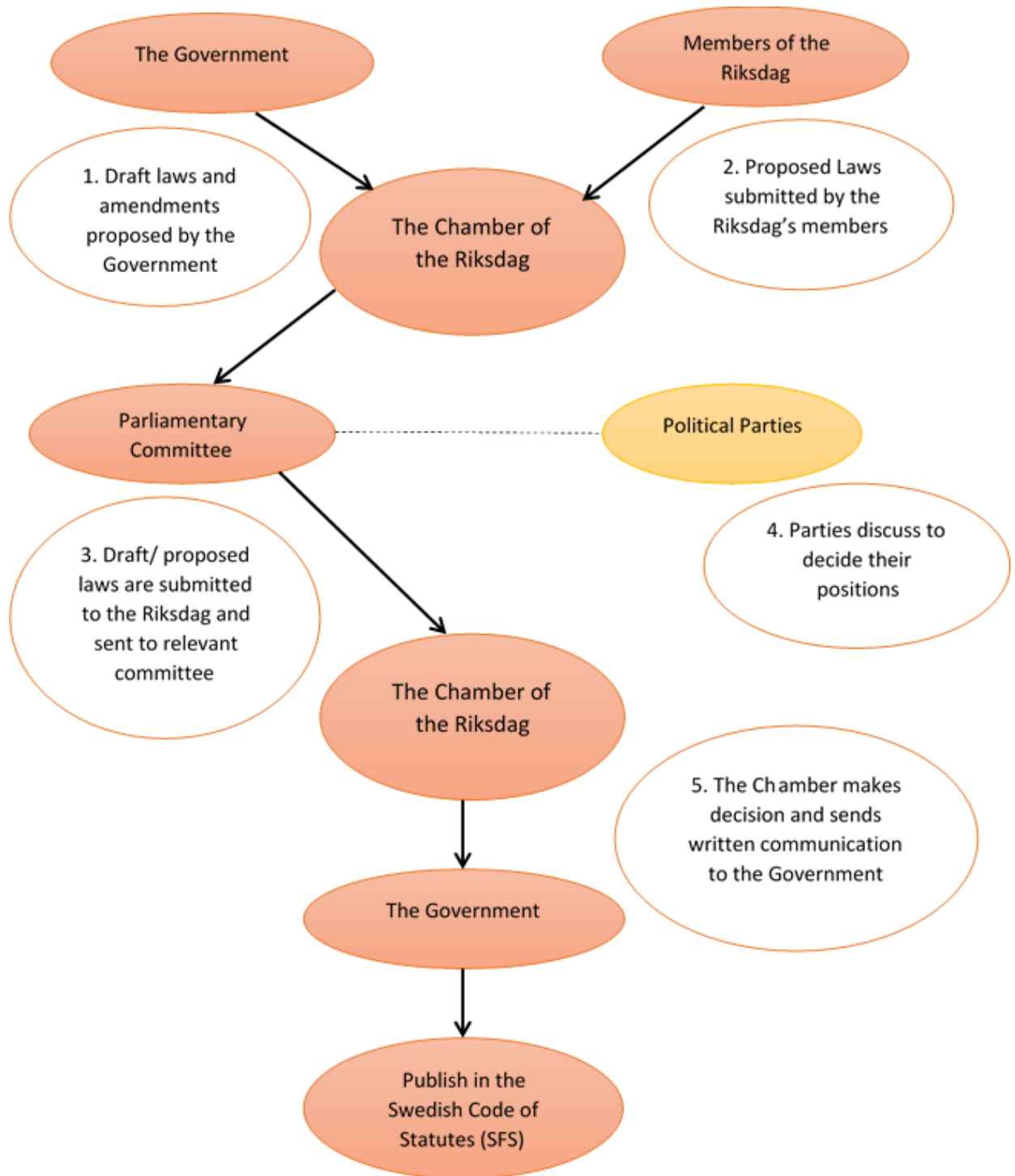
Enacting law is an important function of the Riksdag.[14] Despite the fact that the Government usually proposes new laws or amendments to existing laws (see Figure 2 below for the legislative process), the Members of the Riksdag can also present proposals.[14] Riksdag Members reach decisions through votes and can adopt new draft or proposed laws, or halt or amend existing laws.[14]

Furthermore, the Riksdag makes important decisions with regard to the budget of the central Government.[12, 15] The bills concerning revenue and expense are proposed by the Government annually.[16] The bills are divided into two types; the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill (proposed in April) and the Budget Bill (proposed in September).[16] The Spring Fiscal Policy Bill is an assessment of the current situation (taking global affairs into account) and proposes guidelines and policies. In contrast, the Budget Bill determines the total budget of the government for the up-coming year.[16]

Since Sweden is a member of the European Union (EU), the Riksdag is not the only Swedish legislative body;[14] the EU also plays an important role in making laws, and most of its supranational decisions must be implemented by its members.[16] Regarding EU legislation, some laws are automatically

applied in Sweden, and others must be debated and adopted by the Riksdag to be part of domestic law.[17] In the process of EU decision-making, the Government of Sweden represents the country as well as the Riksdag in EU Council of Ministers and European Council meetings and must notify the Riksdag of all the matters discussed.[16] Additionally, the Government must consult with the Riksdag's Committees, particularly with the Committee on European Union Affairs, before each meeting.[16] The Riksdag also brings EU concerns to open debate in its parliamentary sessions.[16]

Figure 2: Legislative Process of the Kingdom of Sweden[12]



Source: The Parliament of the Kingdom of Sweden

3.1.2. Representation

The Members of the Riksdag generally represent Swedish citizens since citizens directly vote for the Members/Parties to make important decisions on their behalf.[12] However, instead of representing the whole population, each Member acts as a representative of one constituency.[8] Sweden has 29 constituencies (also known as counties) and the Riksdag seats^{vi} are divided among them.[8] The number of seats varies from one constituency to another and depends on the number of eligible voters in the constituency.[8] For example, Stockholm County is the biggest constituency with 39 Riksdag's Members, while only two Members represent Gotland County – the smallest.[8]

3.1.3. Oversight

In addition to their legislative and representative functions, the Parliamentarians undertake their oversight function by scrutinizing the performance of the Government as well as the public institutions as a whole. It is the responsibility of the Committee on the Constitution to ensure that the Government's conduct is appropriate, especially through reports from Parliamentarians or complaints from citizens via the Parliamentary Ombudsman.[18] The Committee divides its examination into two types:[18]

The first type is to inspect the performance of officials; the Committee checks whether officers have followed the regulations. The second type involves an examination of the Government's documentation, particularly in relation to laws and ordinances issued. This ensures that the issued enforcement date is appropriately set, leaving enough time for citizens to familiarize themselves with the law while still allowing it to be implemented in a timely manner.[18] Moreover, the Committee on the Constitution has the authority to send the Government written inquiries if it needs further information, or it can request the presence of relevant officials so that they can be questioned orally.[18] Sometimes the Committee asks for public hearings which the general public and the press can also attend.[18]

The Riksdag Members debate issues with the assistance of a "Scrutiny Report" from the Committee on the Constitution.[18] The "Scrutiny Report" usually concerns criticisms about officials' performance but it does not rec-

^{vi} There are two types of seats in Sweden; permanent seats (or fixed constituency seats) and adjustment seats. The permanent seats number 310, and the adjustment ones 39. (The adjustment seats ensure that the seat division corresponds as closely to the number votes as possible.)

commend penalties as the Committee does not have any authority to impose these.[18] The report and the Chamber's debate aim only to alert officials so that they can improve their working behavior.[18] However, cases will be submitted to the Supreme Court if the officials have committed crimes.[18]

Riksdag Members can also question the Government to ascertain action plans relating to specific issues - for instance, the country's foreign policy - though most questions are related to bills (interpellation) that need to be debated nearly weekly.[13, 18] In addition, the Prime Minister attends parliamentary sessions about once a month to answer questions directly.[18]

The Parliament of Sweden has the power to remove one or more members of the Government, or the Government as a whole.[12] This is called "a declaration of no confidence".[12] This might compel a Minister to resign from his/her position. Additionally, the whole Government must step down in cases in which a declaration has been made about the Prime Minister.[12] At least 175 Riksdag Members are required to be present for a vote of no confidence to be passed.[12]

The most important oversight activity of the Riksdag is to audit the Government's budget.[18] This is conducted by the National Audit Office,[18] and ensures that the use of the national budget is effective and efficient.[18]

Apart from these three main functions, the Parliament of Sweden collaborates with Parliaments of other EU Member States, and particularly with the European Parliament, to exchange experiences with regard to working procedures and accomplishments.[16]

3.2. Administration

The General Secretariat of the Swedish Parliament is called the "Administration".[19] It is not really different from the arrangements of other Parliaments as the main task of the Administration is to assist parliamentary work.[19] The Administration is under the control of the Riksdag Board (known as the Standing Committee in other countries), consisting of the Speaker and 10 selected Riksdag's Members; the Board plans the working procedures of the Parliament as a whole.[13, Art.4, Chap. 4, 19] The Administration's head is the Secretary General^{vii} who is designated by the Parliament.[13, 19]

The Riksdag's Administration (see Annex 5 for the organization chart) is composed of the following divisions:

^{vii} There is a list of candidates nominated to be the Secretary General of the Riksdag, and then the election is prepared by the Speaker and group leaders of each political party

- Secretariat of the Chamber
- Committee Services
- Administrative
- Service
- IT
- Communications.[19]

Among these, the Secretariat of the Chamber tends to be the most important because it plays a major role in facilitating and carrying out parliamentary work.[19] This division has six main sub-divisions:

1. The European Coordination Secretariat: dealing with EU concerns and documents
2. The Central Bureau: reviewing inquiries and interpellations written by Parliamentarians, based on the Swedish Constitution as well the Riksdag Act; receiving proposed and draft laws; listing the Speakers for parliamentary sessions; and preparing *written communications* for the Government
3. The Legal Services Department: accountable for all the legal features (laws and rules) and for archiving parliamentary documents
4. The Department for Parliamentary Records: reporting each parliamentary session and translating the Swedish documents into English
5. The International Department: facilitating foreign field visits made by Swedish Parliamentarians abroad
6. The Riksdag Research Service: researching and producing research documents/reports for the Riksdag's Members upon their requests to enable them to better understand the background and facts before making policies and decisions.[19]

4. Conclusion

To conclude, while the Parliament of France has two Chambers, the Swedish parliament has a single Chamber. The Parliaments of France and Sweden perform three main functions - legislation, representation and oversight - similar to those of other countries. Due to the fact that France and Sweden are members of the EU, the EU also acts as a legislative body in respect of which legislation adopted must be implemented by the two countries. While France transposes all EU legislation directly into domestic law, some legislation is automatically implemented in Sweden and some is not. In this respect, both Parliaments have a Committee on European Affairs to deal with EU documents and tasks. Furthermore, the General Secretariats/Administrations of the two Parliaments help to facilitate the work of Parliamentarians, including administration management and legal services. In contrast to the Swedish Parliament, the Parliament of France does not have a research ser-

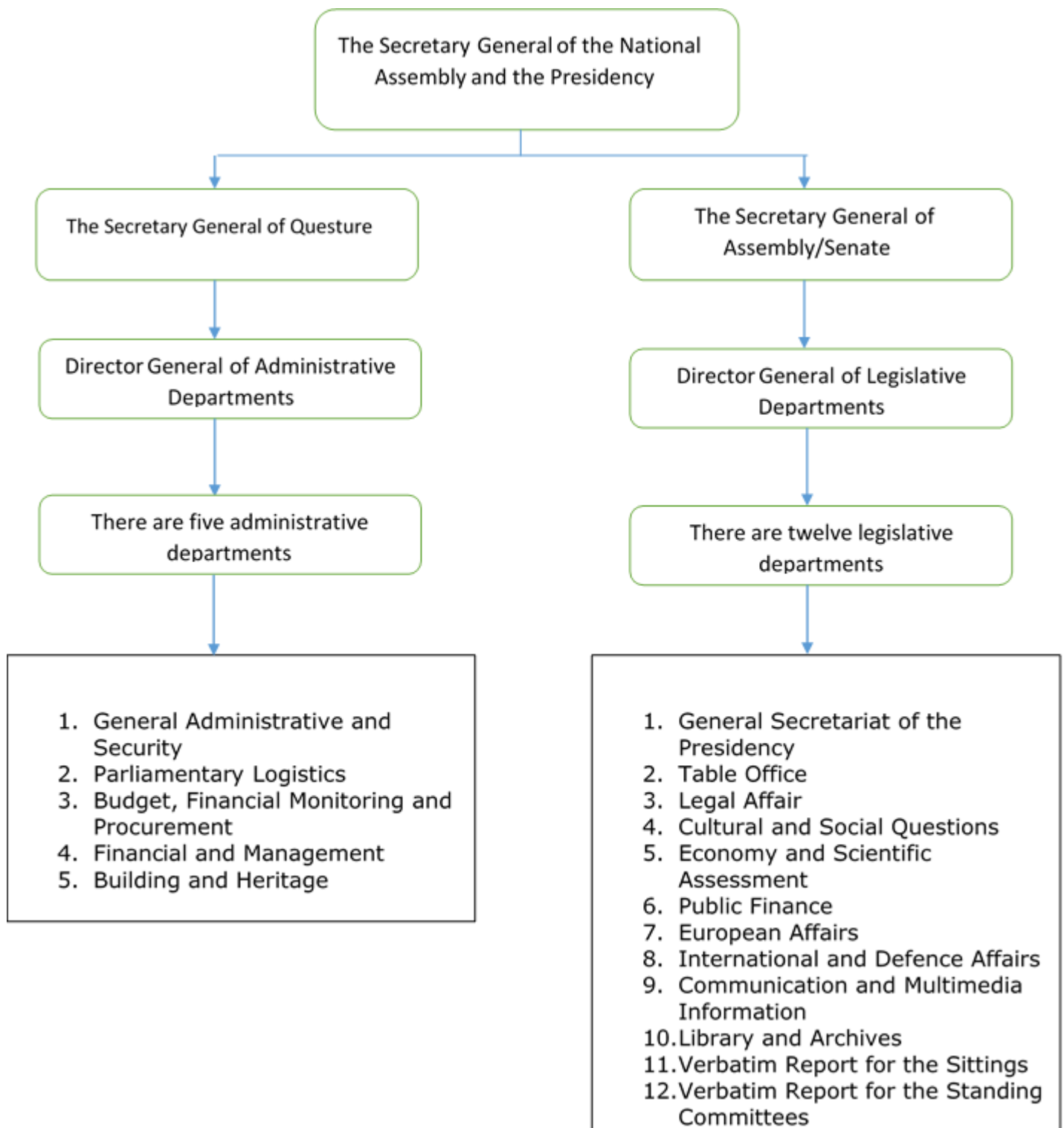
vice. However, it does have Delegations that provide expertise and technical information for Parliamentarians. In spite of some differences, both Parliaments make great efforts to carry out their three major functions effectively.

Annex

Annex 1: French Political Parties Elected to the 15th Parliament[20]

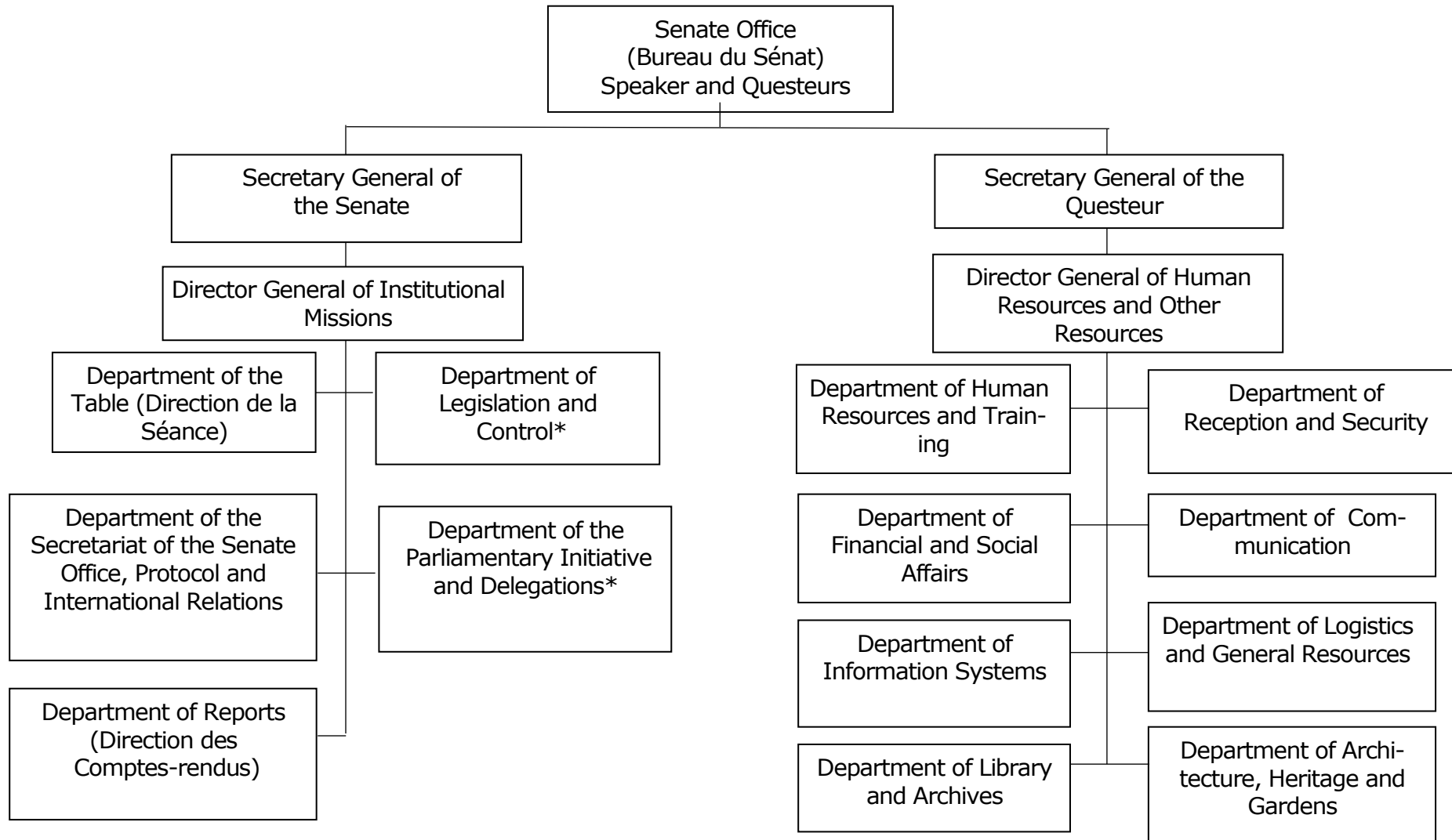
Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage of Votes Won
La République En Marche (REM)	312	54
The Republicans (LR)	102	17.7
Democratic Movement and affiliated representatives (MoDem)	47	8.15
UDI, Agir and Independents (UAI)	32	5.55
New Left (NG)	31	5.37
La France Insoumise (FI)	17	2.94
Democratic and Republican Left (GDR)	16	2.77
Non-inscrits (NI)	19	3.30
Vacant or unfilled seats	1	0.10

Annex 2: Organizational Chart of the Administration of the National Assembly of France [3]



Source: The National Assembly of France

Annex 3: Organizational Chart of the Administration of the Senate of France [21]



*** See detailed information below:**

Department of Legislation and Control

- Service of the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Armed Forces Commission
- Service of the Commission on Culture, Education and Communication
- Service of the Commission on Land Management and Sustainable Development
- Service of the Commission on Constitutional Law, Legislation, Universal Suffrage, Regulations and General Administration
- Service of the Social Affairs Commission
- Service of the Economic Affairs Commission
- Service of the Finance Commission
- Service of the European Affairs Commission

Department of Parliamentary Initiatives and Delegations

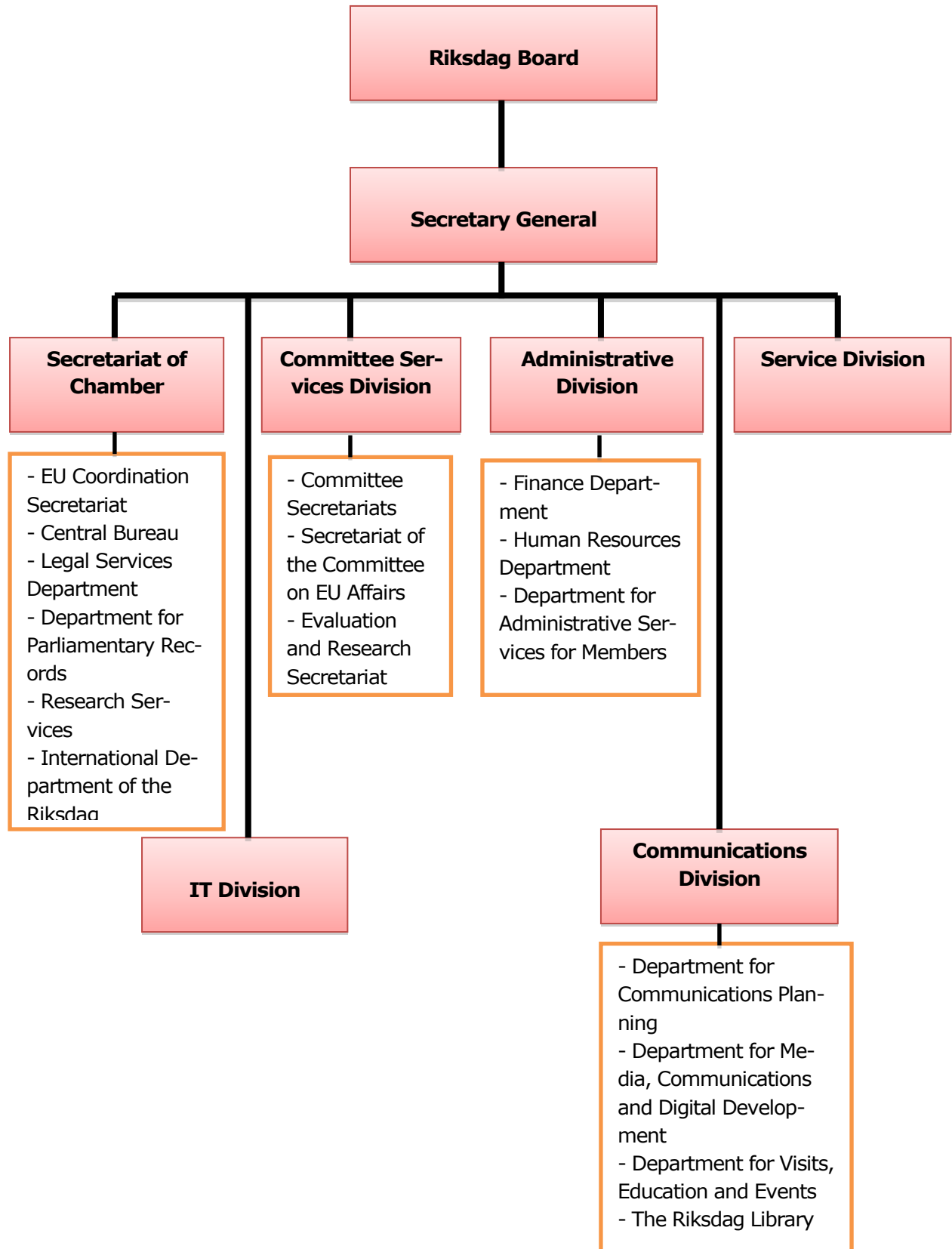
- Parliamentary Initiative Support Division
- Division of Comparative Legislation
- Division of the Parliamentary Office for Assessment of Scientific and Technological Choices
- Division of the Delegation for Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women
- Division of the Delegation for Local Authorities and Decentralization
- Division of the Delegation for Foresight
- Division of the Delegation for Overseas France
- Division of the Delegation for Enterprises

Annex 4: Swedish Political Parties in the Mandate 2014-2018[11]

Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage of Votes Won
Social Democratic Party	113	31.2
Moderate Assembly Party	84	23.2
Swedish Democrats	49	12.9
Green Party	24	6.8
Center Party	22	6.1
Left Party	21	5.7
Liberal Party	19	5.4
Christian Democrats	17	4.6

Note: After the elections held in 2014, seven members withdrew from their political parties but are still Riksdag Members.

Annex 5: Organization Chart of the Riksdag Administration[19]



Source: The Parliament of the Kingdom of Sweden

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