

The Role of Parliamentary Groups and Parties in the Nordic Countries

Report 2021

To the reader

The goal of this study is to produce information about the relationships between Nordic parliaments, parliamentary groups and political parties as well as their roles and the services they offer. The study aims to add to an understanding of the systemic factors that give rise to the varying operating models in the different systems. The findings of the study can be used in Finland to support joint development work, especially on services supporting the political process related to parliamentary work.

The study is part of Sitra's Reforming the decision-making process project, which aims to accelerate the development of the public decision-making process towards silo-free joint action. The project falls under Sitra's Democracy and participation theme, which aims to renew and strengthen democracy so that everyone in Finland has the opportunity to participate in and influence the development of an inspiring future. The study is based on Sitra's Updating Democracy project (2018–2021), which focused on strengthening Finland's position as a model democratic country with a capacity for renewal.

The study was conducted and authored by Deloitte Ltd in February–June 2021 based on the information gathered from public sources and expert interviews conducted in the countries discussed in the study. Jenni Ala-Peijari, Jouni Backman, Henna Hiilamo, Lea Konttinen, Joonas Leppänen, Ilari Lovio and Anna Välimaa from Sitra contributed to the coordination and editing of the study.

Contents

To the reader	2
Abstract	4
1. Practices in the Nordic countries	7
1.1 Finland	8
1.2 Sweden	26
1.3 Norway	42
1.4 Iceland	59
1.5 Denmark	75
2. Key observations and findings	91
3. Summary	97
References	103

Abstract

1/4

The roles and relationships of the parties and the parliamentary groups that represent the parties are not clear. In the eyes of the general public, the party and the parliamentary group it represents are one and the same. Nevertheless, the reality is that in all the Nordic countries, the parliamentary group and the party are subject to different legislation. However, their relationship or activities are not regulated by specific legislation in any of the countries discussed in the study. Instead, the relationship between the party and the parliamentary group is based on the party's and the parliamentary group's own rules. Therefore, in each of the countries, there are differences in relationships between the parliamentary group and the party, even within the country, depending on the specific party and the parliamentary group.

Parties and parliamentary groups have clearly converged in recent years in all the Nordic countries. One reason is the faster pace of day-to-day politics. The party organisation is slow to form positions, so those party members who are also members of the parliamentary group gain significant power and visibility within the party. This convergence has not been regarded as a solely positive change everywhere. In Norway, for example, the goal is to keep the activities and roles of parties and parliamentary groups clearly separated with the aid of local legislation. In Sweden, parties and parliamentary groups work closely together and the parties have their offices in the parliament. In Finland, parties and parliamentary groups are separate entities, but they co-operate closely and use some of the same resources.

Abstract

2/4

The growing number of minority governments in the Nordic countries has also highlighted the role of parliamentary groups. A minority government must constantly negotiate also with opposition parliamentary groups and find compromises, which is why, in a minority government, the relationship between the government and other parliamentary groups is closer and less confrontational. Majority governments are more government-led and opposition parliamentary groups and Members of Parliament (MPs) play a narrower role. In this case, the role of the party is particularly pronounced, as the task of the opposition parliamentary groups is mainly to criticise the government's actions and implement election-oriented policies. In Finland, too, it has been noted that the influence of parliamentary groups has grown over recent decades, although there have been mainly majority governments in the country.

The parliament, as an institution, supports MPs and parliamentary groups with various services. The target group of the parliament's support services is mainly MPs. However, parliamentary groups make use of many of the services targeted at MPs, such as information services and support for preparatory work. One of the key services is assistants. In Sweden, Norway and Denmark, parliamentary groups employ assistants with the help of support granted by the parliament and MPs may use these assistants to assist in their work. In Iceland, the assistants of the parliamentary groups are on the parliament's payroll. In Finland, some parliamentary groups have moved to the group office model, in which assistants are directly on the parliamentary group's payroll, and some parliamentary groups still have their assistants on the Parliamentary Office's payroll.

Abstract

3/4

Both parties and parliamentary groups receive public support for their activities. However, there are also differences between the Nordic countries in terms of financial support for the activities of parties and parliamentary groups. In Sweden and Norway, opposition parliamentary groups receive additional support from the parliament. In Iceland, they receive additional support from the Ministry of Finance. There is no such additional support in Denmark and Finland. In Sweden, not only opposition parliamentary groups but also party organisations receive an additional opposition party subsidy. The additional support distributed in Iceland is relatively modest compared to Norway, where opposition parliamentary groups of more than five MPs receive twice as much support. In all countries, this additional support is intended to ease the demanding workload of opposition parliamentary groups. In Finland, efforts have been made to support the knowledge base of opposition parliamentary groups and MPs by increasing the resourcing of the parliament's information services.

Abstract

4/4

The review of the Nordic parliaments' activities and services, legislation and the organisation of parliamentary groups and parties showed that all comparison countries have different approaches regarding the relationships between the various entities operating in the parliament. In the background of these different operating models, we identified seven factors related to the political system and the legislative framework: (1) the electoral system, (2) the provisions on the activities and funding of parliamentary groups and parties, (3), the provisions on MP and ministerial positions, (4) the relationship between the government and the opposition, (5) the support services provided by the parliament and their allocation, (6) the relationship between the party and the parliamentary group and (7) the attitude of the parliament towards the relationship between the parliamentary group and the party.

1. Practices in the Nordic countries

1.1 Finland

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland



BASICS 1/5

PARLIAMENT

Parliament's name in local language

Eduskunta (FI), riksdagen (SV)

Electoral system

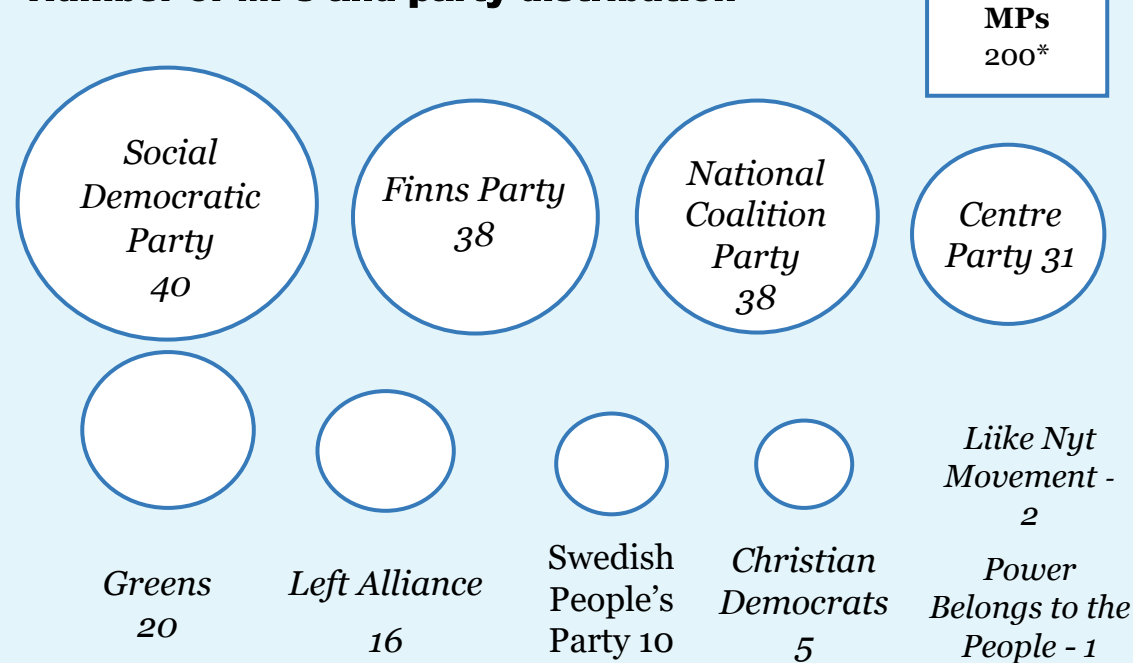
Proportional representation

Legislation guiding the parliament's activities

*Constitution of Finland
1999/731*

The Constitution guides all legislation and serves as a basis for the exercise of public authority.

Number of MPs and party distribution



Next parliamentary elections

2 April 2023

Parliament's key tasks

- Enacting laws – The parliament's most important task. Laws are enacted in a plenary session and the enactment of a new law or the amendment of an old law is made on the basis of the government's or an MP's initiative or a citizens' initiative.
- State budget – The parliament has budgetary powers that authorise the state budget to be processed.
- The election of the Prime Minister.
- Supervisor of the government's activities – Political control ensures the support of the majority of the parliament for the activities of the government. Judicial supervision ensures the legality of ministers' official activities.
- Adoption of international agreements and matters related to the European Union – The parliament decides on Finland's position on EU affairs.

*Number of Members of Parliament on 27 June 2021

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland



BASICS 2/5 GOVERNMENT

- The Prime Minister is elected by the parliament and appointed by the President.
- The President appoints the other ministers proposed by the Prime Minister.

Ministries

12

Ministers

19 (10 December 2021)

- The current majority government has been in office since 2019.
- The government consists of the Social Democratic Party of Finland, the Centre Party of Finland, the Green League, the Left Alliance and the Swedish People's Party of Finland.
- The government's task is to exercise the highest executive power and to lead foreign policy together with the President. The government prepares legislative affairs for the parliament, implements adopted laws, supplements provisions that specify the laws, prepares the budget, represents Finland in the EU, directs state administration and participates in general social development.
- A Minister may act simultaneously as an MP but not as a member of a committee of the parliament.

Minority/majority governments

- In Finland, the previous minority government was in 1977. In Finland, there is a tradition of majority governments.



1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland



BASICS 3/5 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF PARLIAMENT

Management

- The Speaker of Parliament directs parliamentary work together with the Speaker's Council in accordance with the provisions in the Constitution and the Parliament's Rules of Procedure. It is for the Speaker to grant the floor for speeches in the plenary session, to decide on the final order of business and to make voting proposals.
- The Speaker's Office is composed of the Speaker of Parliament and the Deputy Speakers of Parliament. The Speaker and the Deputy Speakers chair the Office Commission and the Speaker's Council.
- The Speaker and the Deputy Speakers are elected in the first plenary session of the parliament.

Administration

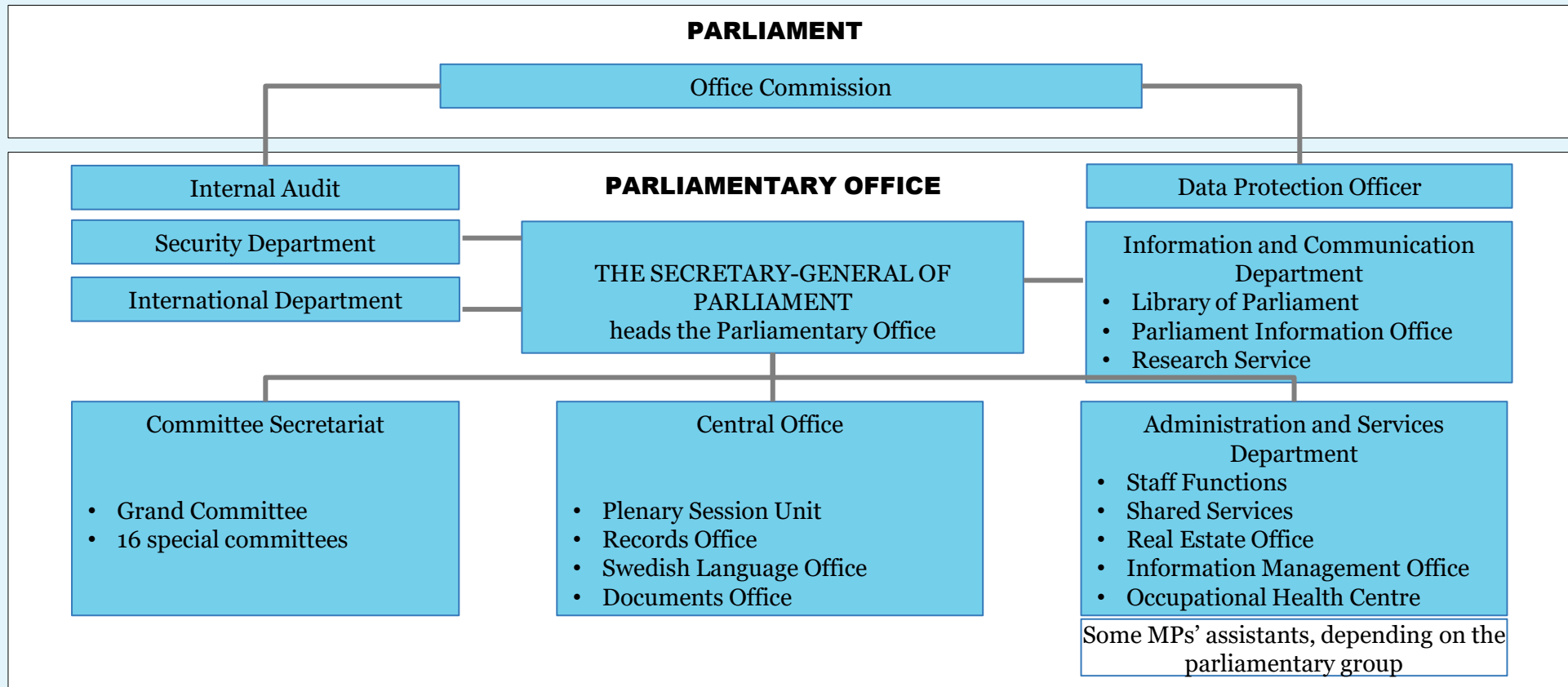
- The Office Commission leads the administration of the parliament. It consists of Members of Parliament. The members of the Office Commission are the Speaker of Parliament, the Deputy Speakers of Parliament and four elected MPs and their four alternate members. Internal Audit, the Data Protection Officer and the Parliamentary Office operate under the Office Commission.
- At the end of 2020, there were 520 persons working in the Parliamentary Office.
- The Parliamentary Office is headed by the Secretary-General of Parliament. The task of the Parliamentary Office is to establish the necessary conditions for the parliament to carry out its duties. The Parliamentary Office has six operating units: the Central Office, the Committee Secretariat, the Information and Communication Department, the International Department, the Administration and Services Department and the Security Department.

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland



BASICS 4/5 ORGANISATION CHART

Parliamentary administration organisation chart



1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland

BASICS 5/5 DEPARTMENTS OF PARLIAMENTARY ADMINISTRATION

- **The Central Office** is responsible for preparatory tasks related to the plenary sessions of the parliament. The Central Office also provides support for implementation and service tasks, the distribution and storage of documents, the acquisition of information necessary for parliamentary work and the drafting and publication of parliamentary documents and registers.
- **The Administration and Services Department** is tasked with the organisation of the meetings of the Office Commission. In addition, the Administration and Services Department helps: 1) in the planning of parliament's budgets, financial management and operations; 2) in the budgets of the Parliamentary Ombudsman's Parliamentary Auditor, the Nordic Council and the Library of Parliament; 3) in the management of the Parliament Building and the premises used by the parliament; 4) in MPs' remuneration; and 5) in the parliament's personnel administration.
- **The Committee Secretariat** is responsible for the secretarial services of the committees, the preparation of parliamentary matters to be brought before the committees and the arranging of related support functions.
- **The Information and Communication Department** is responsible for information services, communications and library and archive services. The Information and Communication Department sets out the information services strategy, the communication strategy and the strategy for the Library of Parliament. One of its responsibilities is to promote transparency and the availability of information.
- **The International Department** supports the Speaker's Office and the international delegations of the parliament. The department also contributes to the parliament's bilateral parliamentary co-operation.
- **The Security Department** is responsible for matters related to the security of the parliament. The Act on Security Measures in Parliament (364/2008) provides for the mandate for the Security Department's security measures.



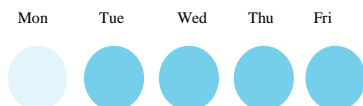
Parliament Building.
Photo: Joanna Moorhouse, Parliament

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland



PARLIAMENTARY WORK FROM AN MP'S PERSPECTIVE 1/2

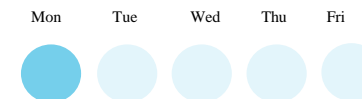
WORK IN THE PARLIAMENT



- According to the interviews, MPs are independent political operators. MPs receive a monthly remuneration from the parliament, amounting to EUR 6,614 from the beginning of the 2019–2022 parliamentary term. The remuneration will increase to EUR 6,945 after four years as an MP and to EUR 7,408 after 12 years.
- MPs spend much of their time working in committees and plenary sessions. In addition, an MP represents the constituency of their own party.
- Otherwise, an MP's job description varies from person to person and according to their personal profile. The job description may include tasks related to the activities of the parliament, the parliamentary group, the government and the party as well as municipal, organisational, publicity and personal activities.
- The parliament typically has plenary sessions on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.



CONSTITUENCY WORK



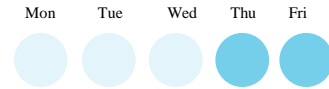
- The working of the parliament is designed so that MPs can hold a regional day on Mondays and work in their own constituency.
- Meetings of the municipal institutions are also scheduled for Mondays.
- MPs also meet businesses, organisations and voters in their constituency.

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland



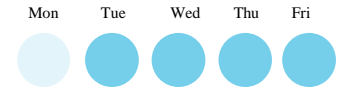
PARLIAMENTARY WORK FROM AN MP'S PERSPECTIVE 2/2

PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



- The parliamentary group is led by the chairperson of the group and discussions are conducted on the basis of the chairperson's proposals. Parliamentary groups usually meet on Thursdays.
- Parliamentary groups are either government or opposition groups. Opposition groups aim to take a critical look at the government's actions, produce alternative proposals for government policy and demand justifications for the government's decisions. The aim of the parliamentary groups representing the government parties is to support the formation of government policy, although changes are often proposed in committees.
- The work of parliamentary groups is typically organised in committee groups.
- Some parliamentary groups have moved to the group office model.
- In some parliamentary groups, the MPs' assistants are on the parliamentary group's payroll, while in others, they are on the Parliamentary Office's payroll (partly the National Coalition Party, the Swedish People's Party and the Finns Party).

COMMITTEE WORK



- The committees prepare the parliament's decisions. The parliament has 16 special committees and the Grand Committee, which focuses on EU affairs. The committees deal with matters of the administrative branch of a specific ministry.
- The Committee Secretariat supports the work of the committees. For example, it supports the legislative and content-related preparation of committee statements, plans and organises committee work and carries out other auxiliary tasks.
- Each committee has 17 members and nine alternate members (except for the Grand Committee and the Finance Committee) representing parliamentary groups. The larger parliamentary groups have a larger number of representatives in all committees.

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 1/2

- The parliamentary group and the party are separate operators, but the parliamentary group is bound by the party's policies and political agenda. They work closely together and the majority have joint weekly meetings.
- A parliamentary group consists of the MPs who have been elected to the parliament by a personal mandate as a party's representative.
- Although they are separate operators, they operate in close synergy. The parliamentary group represents the party, but a parliamentary group can also operate without a registered party. In these situations, the parliamentary group is led solely by the leadership of the parliamentary group.
- The party must have a general programme that shows the key objectives and principles of the party's political decision-making and societal influencing. The role of the parliamentary group is central to practical parliamentary work.
- Several interviewees noted that the relationship had become closer and more intensive and, at the same time, many considered that, in case of a minority government, the role of the parliamentary group would increase even further.
- The resources of the parliamentary group and the party should be separate; however, in practice, the parliament has no supervisory responsibility in relation to the use of the party's resources. For example, the same communication resources may be used in practice by both the party and the parliamentary group.
- Sometimes, there may be conflicts and differences between parliamentary groups and parties. In this case, joint decision-making can become more difficult.
- Legally, the parliamentary group has certain functions that are in practice considered to belong to the party (e.g. government negotiations). In these situations, it may be unclear which is the real operator.

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries - Finland

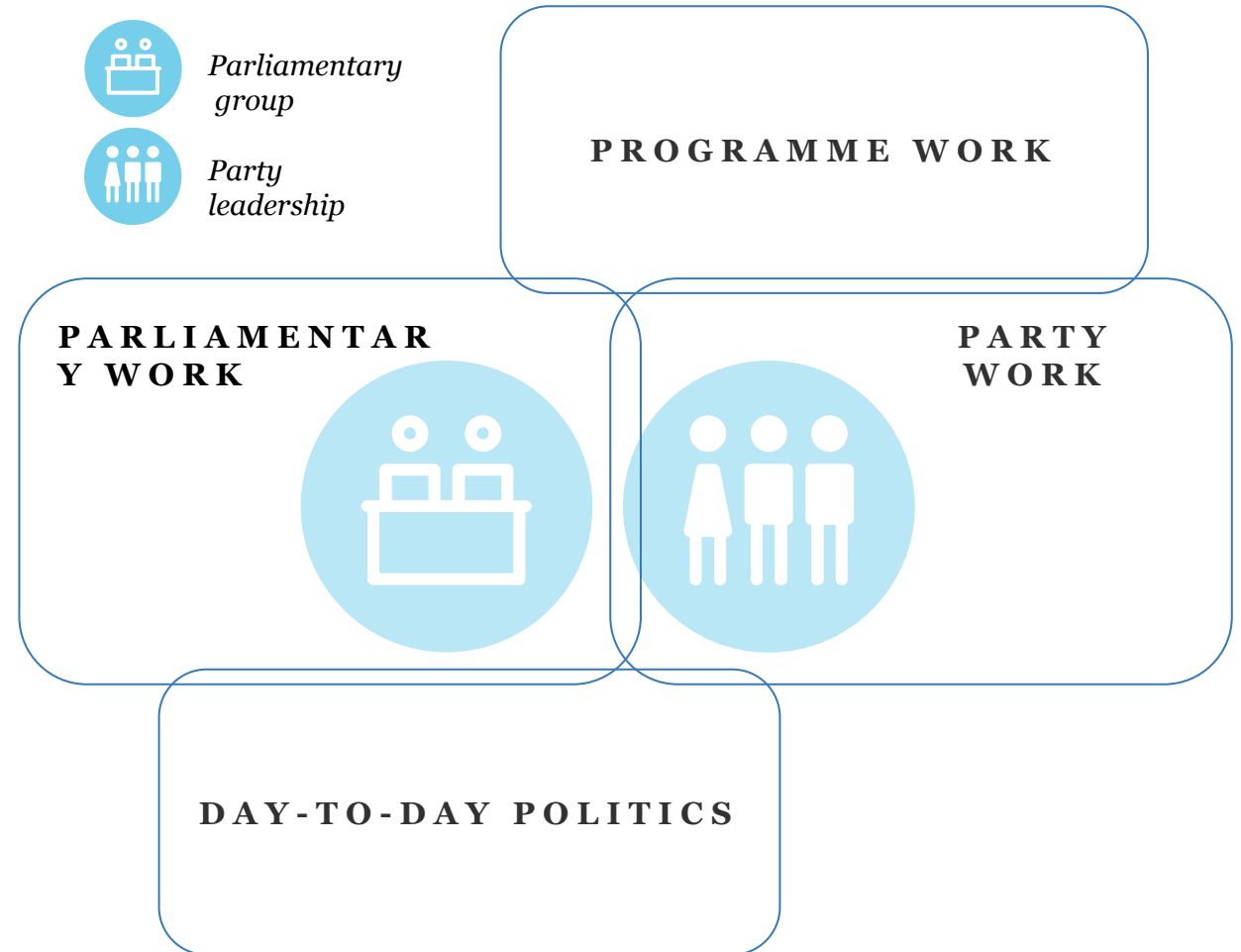


RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 2/2

TASKS, ROLES AND CO-OPERATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND THE PARTY

The icons give a simplified description of how close the parliamentary group and the party are from the perspective of rules and general practices and which areas their work focuses on.


- **Parliamentary work:** The parliamentary group co-ordinates and implements the party's policy in the parliament. The parliamentary group acts as a group of MPs. The amount of group discipline varies by group. In a vote of conscience, an individual MP is usually allowed to vote according to their own personal conscience.
- **Day-to-day politics:** The parliamentary group is a key player in day-to-day politics and the group's chairperson is responsible for leading the group. MPs, the parliamentary group and the party work together in day-to-day politics.
- **Programme work:** The party is responsible for the general programme. Party leadership and party politics are decided at party conferences. MPs participate in programme work as party members.
- **Party work:** The party's policy and the content of party work are decided by the various party leaders. There are differences in the structures of the party leadership. The party acts as an "election machinery" and party work is aimed at elections.



1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland FUNDING 1/2



 Additional support for opposition

 Joint use of money

 Support targeted at Members of Parliament

 **Parties can accept anonymous donations**

Support granted by the government is the largest source of income for parties at the national level. In 2021, party subsidies were determined as follows:

Soc. Dem. MEUR 7.127;

Finns MEUR 6.948;

Coal. MEUR 6.770;

Centre MEUR 5.523;

Green MEUR 3.563;

Left A. MEUR 2.850;

Swed. MEUR 1.603;

Christ. D. MEUR 0.890;

Liik. MEUR 0.178 and the

Government of the Province of

Åland MEUR 0.178.

PARTIES

- The parties receive public support from several quarters:
 - State (under an obligation, enshrined in law).
 - Municipalities (justified, not under an obligation).
- The regulation on the supervisory role of parties was reformed in the amendment provision of the Act on Political Parties (683/2010). After the reform, the National Audit Office of Finland (NAOF), the Ministry of Justice and the auditors of the relevant entities or foundations will supervise the parties.

The State supports the general activities of the parties. Party subsidies are granted by the government. In the 2021 budget, they amounted to EUR 35,635,000, including the Åland Islands. Party subsidy is intended to support the political, information and communication activities of parties. The political activities of women in the party receive 5% and another 5% goes to the parties' district organisations. The NAOF supervises the use of party subsidies, but the accounts of the use of the state subsidies are not public in all parties.





Party funding:

1. Party subsidy: determined by the number of MPs in the party.
2. The party's own fundraising: Parties may have their own returns from investments or other holdings, such as real estate or own business activities (e.g. the National Coalition Party has a publishing company).
3. Membership fees: parties may collect membership fees from their members.
4. Donations: Donations of less than EUR 1,500 can be made anonymously. Donations larger than this are public. Candidates can accept support of up to EUR 3,000 in municipal elections, EUR 6,000 in parliamentary elections and EUR 10,000 in European Parliament elections. A party or a party association can give larger donations.

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland FUNDING 2/2



PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

-  Additional support for opposition
-  Joint use of money
-  Support targeted at Members of Parliament
-  **Parties can accept anonymous donations**

The State supports parliamentary groups with grants for hiring the necessary personnel and for other expenses incurred by the group's activities. Each parliamentary group receives the same basic amount and an additional amount based on the number of MPs from the parliament on a monthly basis. The basic amount is paid to the parliamentary group formed on the basis of the election results.

In the budget proposal for 2021, the group offices of the parliamentary groups receive support of EUR 4,510,000. For each representative, EUR 1,724 per month is distributed. In addition, until the end of the parliamentary term, the parliamentary group formed on the basis of the result of the 2019 parliamentary elections will be paid an additional monthly amount corresponding to the monthly sum of two MPs. Some parliamentary groups may also collect group fees or group tax (e.g. the National Coalition Party and the Greens).

The Parliamentary Office acts as the employer of the assistants of some parliamentary groups (the Finns Party's parliamentary group, the Swedish People's Party's parliamentary group and half of the National Coalition Party's parliamentary group) and, for other parliamentary groups, the assistants are employed by the parliamentary group.

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland

GUIDING LEGISLATION



Parliamentary
activities

Constitution of Finland (1999/731)

- The powers of the State in Finland are vested in the people, who are represented by the parliament that has gathered in the parliamentary session. The legislative powers are exercised by the parliament.
- Chapter 3 of the Constitution concerns provisions on the parliament and Members of Parliament, such as the composition and term of the parliament, parliamentary elections, eligibility for election, the independence of MPs, parliamentary immunity, the freedom of speech of MPs and conflict of interest.
- Chapter 4 of the Constitution concerns provisions on parliamentary activity, such as the parliamentary session, the Speaker of Parliament and the Speaker's Council, committees, the election of the parliamentary organs, the initiation and preparation of matters, interpellations, the public nature of parliamentary activity, the referendum and the citizens' initiative.



Party
activities

Constitution of Finland (1999/731)

- The Constitution refers to parties in connection with elections – registered parties may nominate candidates in parliamentary and presidential elections.

Act on Political Parties (1969/10)

- The Act on Political Parties sets out provisions for the formation and registration of a party. In addition, the Act on Political Parties defines the party's support and grants as well as the party's auditing and supervision.



Parliamentary group
activities

Constitution of Finland (1999/731)

- The work of parliamentary groups is not officially defined in the Constitution and this work is determined by the groups' own rules and practices. In practice, there are many similarities in the working methods of different parliamentary groups.
- However, the Constitution states that parliamentary groups negotiate on the political programme and composition of the government before the election of the Prime Minister.
- Section 26 of the Constitution, which provides for extraordinary parliamentary elections, mentions the parliamentary groups.

Act on Parliamentary Groups (2012/979)

The Act on Parliamentary Groups provides for parliamentary groups and their registration. In addition, the Act provides for the support granted to parliamentary group and its implementation and supervision.

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland

OVERVIEW OF SUPPORT SERVICES 1/2















	Parliament offers to MPs	Parliament offers to parliamentary groups	Parliament offers to parties	Parliamentary group offers to group members	Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group	Additional comment
	●	■	★	▲	♥	
Information technology	● PG					Premises and technical equipment are free.
Information services	● PG					Especially used by the opposition.
Budget Office	● PG					As part of the parliament's information services.
Housing	● PG					Reimbursement of expenses if the MP is from outside the Uusimaa constituency.
Communication with members and voters					♥	Minor election support from the party.
Foreign language training	●					
Orientation to parliamentary work	●					The parliamentary group offers to some extent.
Support for preparatory work				▲		

Sources: 7

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland

OVERVIEW OF SUPPORT SERVICES 2/2



	Parliament offers to MPs 	Parliament offers to parliamentary groups 	Parliament offers to parties 	Parliamentary group offers to group members 	Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group 	Additional comment
Assistant						
Business-related travel						The Office offers support for travel.
Media tracking	 PG					
Support for hiring personnel						Support for hiring assistants.
Offices	 PG					The parliament offers meeting rooms.
Additional support for opposition						
Library	 PG + PA					

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland



EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS

Parliamentary groups and parties

“According to the law book, the party makes the most important decisions. In reality, the effective decision-making power has been transferred to groups or individual MPs.”

*

“The parties have different types of relationships or tensioned relationships between the parliamentary group and the party.”

*

“The party chairperson is number one. The party chairperson sets the pace and a clear division of duties, even though the chairperson of the parliamentary group is part of the ‘action group’ that runs politics.”

*

“In a minority government, the focus would shift more and more to the parliament as the parliament’s support should be sought for each proposal. In this case, the negotiations would take place in the meeting rooms of the parliament.”

Effects of the electoral system

“--The background is that there are no list elections in Finland. The candidates carry out their own election work and get to the parliament themselves. No resources are allocated to election work and the candidates must assemble their own support groups for the elections. This leads to greater independence of MPs, which in turn shifts to the influence of the parliamentary group, which is in practice greater than what the lawbook or rules say.”

*

“The party’s operating field has narrowed. Parties are the ‘election machinery’, but they are no longer so effective in this.”

Development areas in the parliament’s activities

“The Speaker of Parliament is responsible for developing parliamentary work and the processes of the parliament. The Speaker is responsible for the administration of the parliament. They determine the administration and discussion culture.”

1.1 Practices in the Nordic countries – Finland SUMMARY



PARTY & PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

- The parliamentary group and the party are separate operators, but the parliamentary group is bound by the party's policies and political agenda. They work closely together, and it is felt that this co-operation has intensified in many areas over the past few years.
- The party has a general programme that shows the key objectives and principles of the party's political decision-making and societal influencing. In general, the party is regarded as an "election machinery", with its work aimed at elections.
- The role of the parliamentary group is central to practical parliamentary work and day-to-day politics. In case of a minority government, the role of the parliamentary group is considered to increase even further.

FUNDING

Party

The State supports the general activities of the parties. Party subsidy is intended to support the political, information and communication activities of parties and its amount is determined by the number of MPs in the party. In addition, parties may carry out their own fundraising, collect membership fees or receive donations.

Parliamentary group

The State supports parliamentary groups with grants for hiring the necessary personnel and for other expenses incurred by the group's activities. Each parliamentary group receives the same basic amount and an additional amount based on the number of MPs on a monthly basis.

MP

Receives monthly remuneration for their work from the parliament.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- The parliament's support services are mainly aimed at individual MPs. The services include IT, travel agency and information services, occupational health services, orientation training for new MPs and conference technology services, among other things.
- The use of the parliament's information services is particularly pronounced among opposition parliamentary groups and MPs. Efforts have been made to improve the parliament's information services and analysis activities; for example, by increasing the human resources of information services in order to strengthen the opposition's knowledge base.
- There is no separate additional support for opposition parliamentary groups. However, the parliament's information services are considered to even out the differences between opposition work and government work.

RULES VS. PRACTICES

- The relationship between the parliamentary group and the party is determined by the rules of each party and parliamentary group. Consequently, different parties have different leadership structures, for example.
- The resources of the parliamentary group and the party should be separate; however, in practice, the parliament has no supervisory responsibility in relation to the use of the party's resources. For example, the same communication resources may be used by both the party and the parliamentary group.
- Legally, the parliamentary group has certain functions that are in practice considered to belong to the party (e.g. government negotiations). In these situations, it may be unclear which is the real operator.

1.2 Sweden

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden



BASICS 1/5

PARLIAMENT

Parliament's name in local language

Riksdagen

Electoral system

Proportional list election (closed)

Legislation guiding the parliament's activities

The Riksdag Act (2014: 801)

Includes the rules for the parliament's work and activities; comprehensive compared to similar laws in other countries.

Number of MPs and party distribution

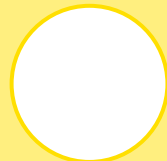
MPs
349

Social Democratic Party
100

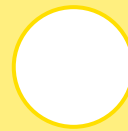
Moderate Party
70

Sweden Democrats
62

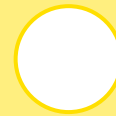
Centre Party
31



Left Party
27



Christian Democrats
22



Liberal Party
19



Green Party
16

No party
2

Next parliamentary elections

11 September 2022

Parliament's key tasks

- Deciding on laws – Most of the proposals come from the government, but an individual MP or a group of MPs can also create a proposal for a new law. The adoption of a law requires the support of more than half of the MPs.
- Deciding on the state budget – The government submits a draft budget for this purpose.
- Government supervision – MPs can, for example, put questions to the government and the Committee on the Constitution assesses the extent to which the government acts in accordance with the rules.
- Working on EU affairs – The government consults the parliament on EU affairs.
- Foreign policy implementation – The parliament and the government jointly formulate Swedish foreign policy.

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden



BASICS 2/5

GOVERNMENT

- The parliament elects the Prime Minister on the basis of a proposal from the Speaker.
- The Prime Minister elects the ministers and can change the size and composition of the government.

Ministries

12

Ministers

22 (15 February 2021)

- The current minority government has been in office since 2019.
- The government parties are the *Social Democratic Party* and the *Green Party*.
- The government's task is to guide Sweden. It has a comprehensive impact on the development of society by, for example, submitting legislative proposals to the parliament, implementing the decisions of the parliament, guiding the activities of the state and representing Sweden in the EU.
- The government must have the parliament's support to implement its policy.
- A Minister may not simultaneously act as an MP.



Minority/majority governments

- In the 21st century, Sweden has mainly had minority governments, apart from 2006–2010.

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden



BASICS 3/5

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF PARLIAMENT

Management

- The Speaker of Parliament (*talman*) leads the parliament's work together with the group leaders and with the support of the parliament's administration. The Speaker leads the government negotiations in connection with the change of government and makes the proposal regarding the Prime Minister.
- The parliament has three Deputy Speakers (*vice talmän*) and together with the Speaker, they are the presiding officers (*presidium*) of the parliament.
- The parliament elects the Speaker of Parliament and the Deputy Speakers. The position of the Speaker of Parliament is the highest position to which you can be elected in Sweden.

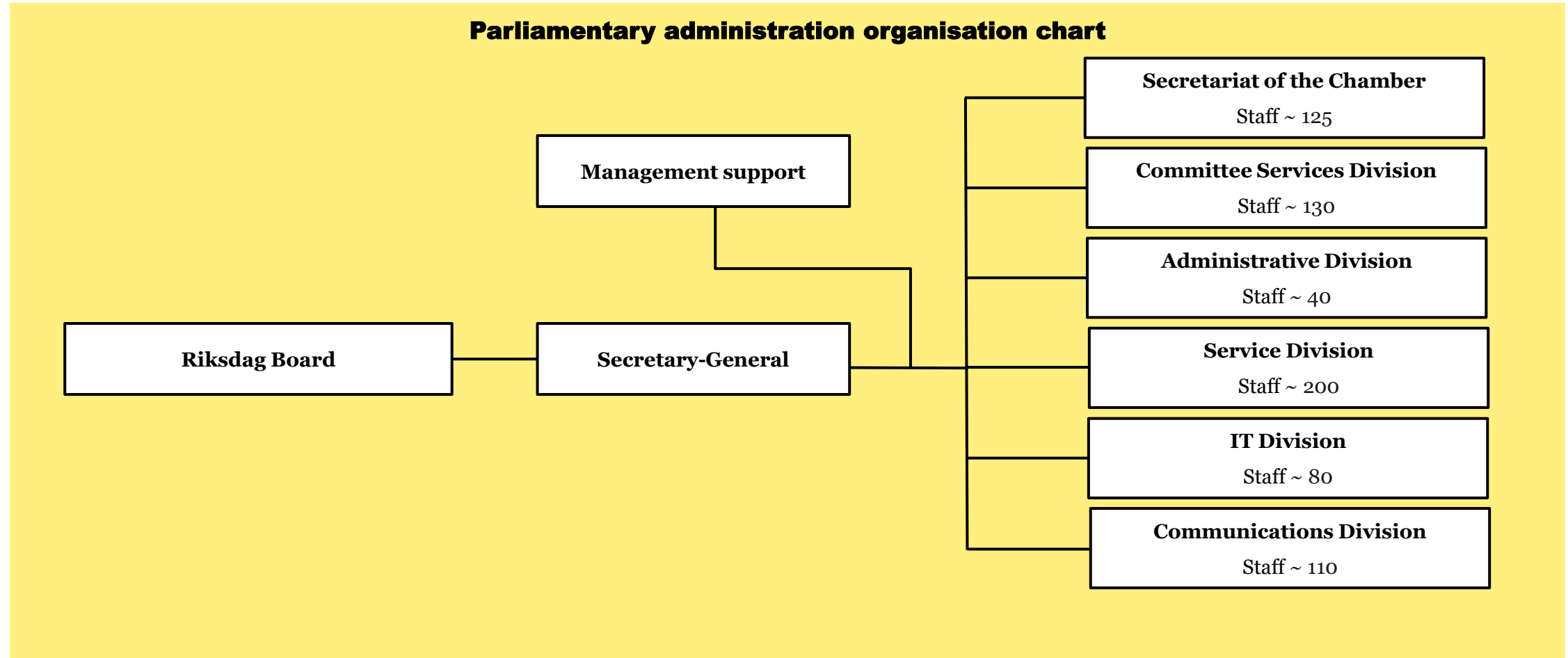
Administration

- There are about 700 people working in the parliament's administration.
- The administration is led by the Riksdag Board (*riksdagsstyrelsen*). It is chaired by the Speaker of Parliament (*talman*). In addition, the Riksdag Board consists of 10 MPs elected by the parliament. The Riksdag Board decides, among other things, on the rules, the action plan, the annual report and the draft budget of the parliament's administration and is responsible for the development of parliamentary processes.
- The head of the administration is the Secretary-General (*riksdagsdirektör*), who is elected by the parliament. The Secretary-General is responsible for the administration and its management in accordance with the directives and guidance of the Riksdag Board.
- The management support (*the Office of the Speaker and the Secretary-General / ledningsstab*) supports the Speakers and the Secretary-General in their work. It co-ordinates the development of support services, which is continuously carried out as part of the services.

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden



BASICS 4/5 ORGANISATION CHART



1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden

BASICS 5/5

DIVISIONS OF THE PARLIAMENT'S ADMINISTRATION



- **The Secretariat of the Chamber** (*kammaravdelningen*) plans and implements work carried out in plenary sessions. The Secretariat of the Chamber consists of the EU Coordination Secretariat, the Central Bureau, the Legal Services Department, the Department for the Parliamentary Record, the International Department and the Riksdag Research Service.
- **The Committee Services Division's** (*utskottsavdelningen*) task is to support MPs in their committee work. The division is staffed by public officials. The division consists of committee secretariats, the Secretariat of the Committee on EU Affairs and the Evaluation and Research Secretariat.
- **The Administrative Division** (*förvaltningsavdelningen*) is responsible for tasks related to finances, HR and remuneration and tasks associated with the administrative matters of MPs.
- **The Service Division** (*fastighets- och serviceavdelningen*) provides support and services to the parliament, the MPs, party offices and parliamentary administration. The Service Division is divided into the Security Department, the Property Management Department, the Internal Services Department and the Department for Parliamentary Documents. The Service Division has approximately 200 employees.
- **The IT Division** (*it-avdelningen*) provides IT support to MPs, parliamentary administration and party offices. The division also develops and maintains IT services and is responsible for IT architecture and technical infrastructure. The division also produces all television broadcasts from the parliament.
- **The Communications Division** (*kommunikationsavdelningen*) aims to promote transparency and the accessibility of information related to the parliament and the EU. The division consists of the Department for Communications Planning, the Department for Media, Communications and Digital Development, the Department for Visits, Education and Events, the Riksdag Library and the Democracy Centenary Secretariat. The Communications Division has approximately 110 employees.



Parliament building – Photo: Riksdagen

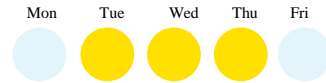
1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries

– Sweden

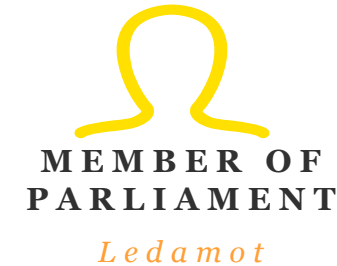


PARLIAMENTARY WORK FROM AN MP'S PERSPECTIVE 1/2

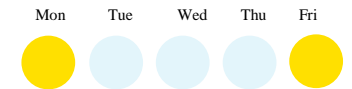
PARLIAMENTARY WORK



- MPs receive a monthly remuneration from the parliament (approx. EUR 6,700 / SEK 69,900) but do not receive other support from the parliament. MPs from the same party form a parliamentary group.
- MPs spend much of their time working in committees. Committee membership has a key impact on the topics, on which the MP focuses in their work.
- MPs also take part in plenary sessions.
- Otherwise, an MP's job description varies from person to person and according to their personal profile – for example, media co-operation is an integral part of the job description of MPs who belong to the party leadership.
- The parliament works on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.



CONSTITUENCY WORK



- The working of the parliament is designed so that MPs can work in their own constituency on Mondays and Fridays.
- Some MPs are members of local councils.
- MPs also meet businesses, organisations and voters in their constituency.

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden



PARLIAMENTARY WORK FROM AN MP'S PERSPECTIVE 2/2

PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



- The parliamentary group is usually led by the Executive Board or the Management Board (*styrelse / förtroenderåd*). The parliamentary group leader (*gruppledaren*) is responsible for day-to-day matters. Parliamentary groups meet on Tuesday afternoons for closed meetings, discussing the agenda prepared by the Executive Board.
- The aim of the parliamentary group's work depends on whether the party is in the opposition or in the government. The opposition parliamentary groups aim to produce alternative proposals for government policy and seek support for them in the parliament. The aim of the parliamentary groups representing the government parties is to participate in the formation of government policy and to seek support for this in the parliament. Another factor influencing the work is whether the government is a majority government or a minority government. In case of a minority government, the importance of parliamentary groups increases.
- The work of parliamentary groups is typically organised in thematic committee groups.

COMMITTEE WORK



- 15 parliamentary committees preparing proposals for the parliament.
- Each committee has its own secretariat in the Committee Services Division, which consists of a Permanent Secretary and 5–10 public officials. They provide committee members with both subject matter expert support as well as practical support in day-to-day matters.
- In addition, the parliament has the Committee on EU Affairs (*EU-nämnden*), which formulates the government's EU policy positions.
- Each committee has 17 members (15 February 2021, the number of members will be decided after the elections), with representation from all parties. The major parties have a larger number of representatives in all committees.

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 1/2

- The parties create an election programme that defines the party's main objectives and guidelines for the upcoming parliamentary term. Parliamentary groups, for their part, play a key role in co-ordinating the party's policies.
- In the past, parliamentary groups and parties were clearly separate entities, but they have gradually converged and their co-operation is very close, especially in day-to-day politics. This is due to the change in the pace and nature of politics – parties must now formulate their position on several issues quickly. This underlines the role and importance of the parliamentary group for the party.
- The leader of the parliamentary group is therefore described as the party's internal leader and the party's second most influential member after the party's Secretary-General. In practice, the party members who belong to the parliamentary group also indirectly influence the party's policies and guidelines through day-to-day politics.
- Each parliamentary group has its own office or secretariat, consisting of experts, political secretaries and assistants employed by the party. Political secretaries work primarily for the parliamentary group and secondarily for individual MPs. Formally, parties' political secretaries have no role in the parliament but, in practice, there are several people employed by the party working in the parliament.
- Both political parties and parliamentary groups are led from the parliament and interviewees described the situation as the same people leading "both legs".

Example of a practice:

Moderate Party (*the Moderates*)

- The Secretary-General of the party attends the parliamentary group's Tuesday meeting at least once a month.

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden

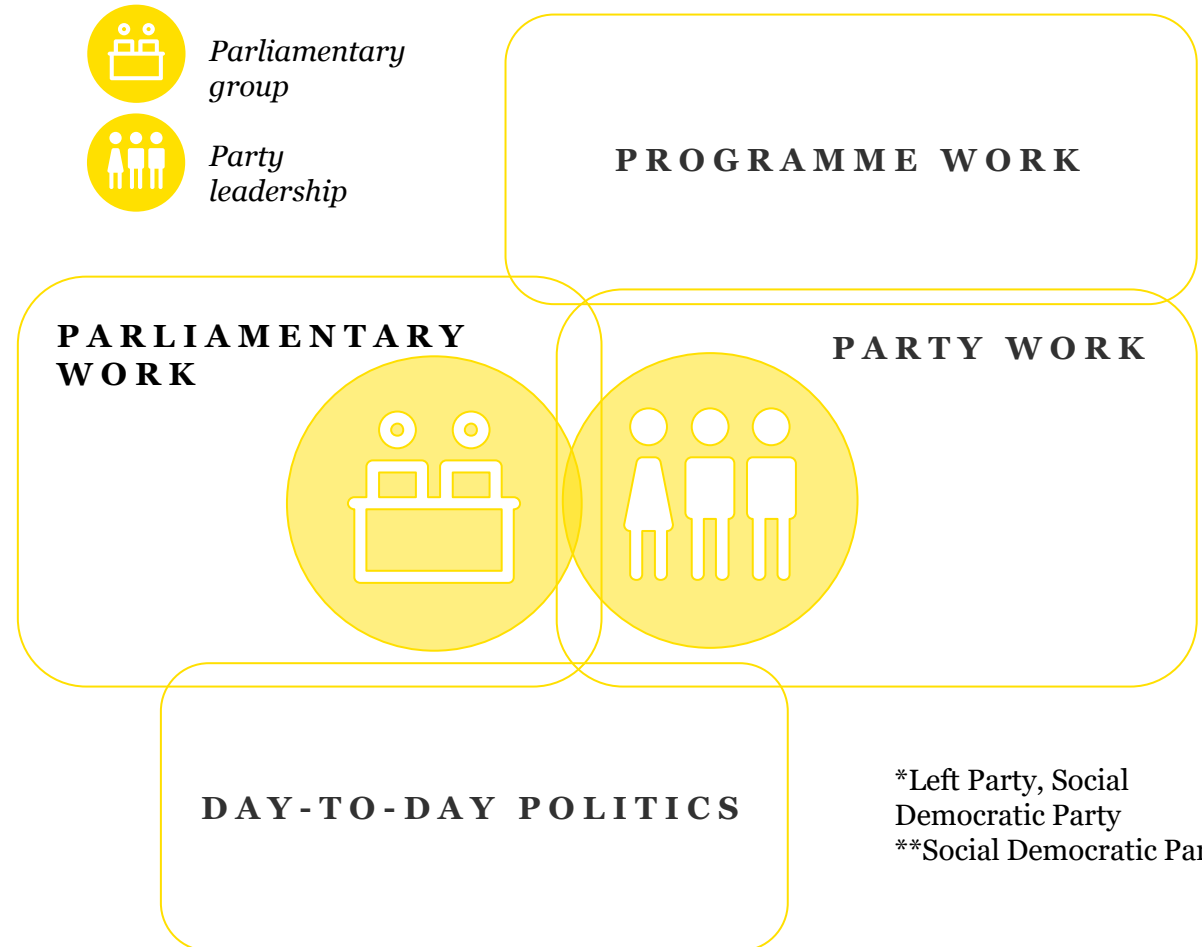


RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 2/2

TASKS, ROLES AND CO-OPERATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND THE PARTY

The icons give a simplified description of how close the parliamentary group and the party are from the perspective of rules and general practices and which areas their work focuses on.

- **Parliamentary work:** The parliamentary group co-ordinates the party's policy in the parliament. The parliamentary group determines the themes in which its members specialise in their work. The parliamentary group reports annually to the party on its work*.
- **Day-to-day politics:** The parliamentary group is a key player in day-to-day politics and the group leader is responsible for leading the group. The parliamentary group is an important co-operation partner for the party's Secretary-General. MPs tend to be loyal to parties, the culture is community-focused.
- **Programme work:** The party is responsible for programme work. Party leadership and party politics are decided at party conferences. MPs participate in programme work as party members.
- **Party work:** Parties usually have offices in the parliament. The Executive Boards of the parties decide on the parliamentary group's rules* (and in some cases, the budget**).




*Left Party, Social Democratic Party
**Social Democratic Party

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden

FUNDING 1/2

 **Additional support for opposition**

 Joint use of money

 Support targeted at Members of Parliament

 **Parties can accept anonymous donations***

Support granted by the State and the parliament is the largest source of income for parties at the national level. The State and the parliament distribute a total of approximately SEK 480 million (approximately EUR 46 million) of support to the parties on an annual basis. The share of public support in the party's income varies from party to party. For example, the share is 77% in the Left Party, 66% in the Green Party and 34% in the Social Democratic Party.

PARTIES

- The parties receive public support from several quarters:
 - State (under an obligation, enshrined in law)
 - Municipalities (justified, not under an obligation)
 - County administrative boards (justified, not under an obligation)
- In order to increase the transparency of the funding of politics and parties, seven parties agreed in 2000 on a uniform presentation of party income statements to promote the comparability of data. The Financial Transparency Act, which entered into force in 2018, was aimed at further increasing the transparency of party funding.

The State supports the general activities of the parties. The parties may decide on the use of the support independently and its use is not supervised. The support is distributed to the national party organisation, from where it is further distributed to different purposes.

Parties elected to the parliament:

1. Party subsidy: Based on the number of MPs in the party. Party subsidy is EUR 30,354 (SEK 318,257) per year per each MP.
2. Office support: Office support is divided into basic and additional support. The basic support is approximately EUR 550,000 (SEK 5.8 million) per year per party. The additional support is determined by the number of MPs in the party and the party's status as an opposition or government party (government parties receive less support than opposition parties).
The additional support is EUR 1,559 (SEK 16,350) per MP for government parties and EUR 2,318 (SEK 24,300) per MP for opposition parties.

Parties not in the parliament:

Parties are eligible for support if they receive at least 2.5% of the votes cast in the whole country in at least one of the last two elections.

*small anonymous donations only (less than 0.05 x standardised price base, i.e. approximately SEK 2,365 / EUR 225)




1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden

FUNDING 2/2



 **Additional support for opposition**

 Joint use of money

 Support targeted at Members of Parliament

 **Parties can accept anonymous donations***

PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

The parliament supports, by law, the parliamentary work of parliamentary groups and MPs. The parliamentary groups report annually to the parliament on the use of the support. The support is divided into four categories:

1. Basic support consisting of a basic component and an additional component based on the number of MPs in the group. The basic component is approximately EUR 162,000 (SEK 1.7 million). Parliamentary groups in the government receive one basic component and opposition groups receive two. The additional component is approximately EUR 5,400 per MP (SEK 57,000).
2. Support for political secretaries: Equals the salary of one political secretary per MP (EUR 6,200 / SEK 64,600 per month). The parliamentary group decides on the use of the support on the basis of the needs and wishes of its own members and MPs.
3. Support for trips abroad is paid to parliamentary groups and is intended to support, for example, MPs' conference trips. Support for trips abroad is approximately EUR 480 / SEK 5,000 for each of the first 20 MPs and half of this for each of the other MPs of the parliamentary group. In addition, parliamentary groups receive annually EUR 240 / SEK 2,500 per MP for trips related to co-operation in the European Economic Area.
4. Support for MPs' language training. The parliament supports MPs' participation in language training. The support amounts to EUR 190 / SEK 2,000 per MP during the two years following the elections.

*small anonymous donations only (less than 0.05 x standardised price base, i.e. approximately SEK 2,365 / EUR 225)

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries –

Sweden GUIDING LEGISLATION



Parliamentary activities

The Riksdag Act (2014: 801)

- Constitution until 1974 – after that, the status of a special act somewhere between the Constitution and an ordinary act: amendments to the Act are made in accordance with the constitutional enactment procedure even though formally and legislatively the Act is not part of the Constitution.
- Comprehensive compared to similar laws in other countries.
- Includes the rules for the parliament's work and activities – including parliamentary elections, sessions, the steering and planning of parliamentary work, members, committees, interpellations and questions to ministries, the presentation and preparation of legislative proposals and deciding on them, parliamentary operators and administration.

Constitution (1974: 152), (1810: 0926), (1949: 105), (1991: 1469)

- The Constitution refers to parties mainly in relation to elections – in elections, people vote for parties and, in addition, they can indicate a preference for a particular candidate.
- The party needs at least 4% of the votes (14 MPs) to enter the parliament. Representation is possible even with a smaller number of votes under certain conditions.

Other legislation

- *Act (1972: 625) on State Support for Political Parties.*
- *Act (2016: 1109) on Parliament's Support for Parliamentary Groups' and Parliament Members' Work at the Parliament.*
- *Law (2018: 90) on Transparency in the Financing of Parties.*
- *Election Act (2005: 837).*

Constitution (1974: 152), (1810: 0926), (1949: 105), (1991: 1469)

- The work of parliamentary groups is not officially defined in Swedish legislation and this work is determined by the groups' own rules and practices. In practice, there are many similarities in the working methods of different parliamentary groups.
- However, the Constitution states that the Speaker of Parliament consults the representatives of various parliamentary groups when forming the government.

Other legislation

- Parliamentary groups have been mentioned in the *Riksdag Act* in only a few contexts, such as the representation of parliamentary groups in the various parliamentary bodies.
- The parliamentary group leader has been defined in the *Riksdag Act*. The Act often mentions parliamentary groups (*party group*) instead of parties (*party*).







Parliamentary group activities

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden

OVERVIEW OF SUPPORT SERVICES 1/2



	Parliament offers to MPs 	Parliament offers to parliamentary groups 	Parliament offers to parties 	Parliamentary group offers to group members 	Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group 	Additional comment
Information technology						Premises and technical equipment are free.
Information services	 PG					
Budget Office	 PG					Mainly used by parliamentary groups.
Housing						If the MP lives more than 50 kms from Stockholm.
Communication with members and voters						
Foreign language training		 PG				To parliamentary groups, which offer to group members.
Orientation to parliamentary work						Also IT training.
Support for preparatory work						

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden

OVERVIEW OF SUPPORT SERVICES 2/2



	Parliament offers to MPs 	Parliament offers to parliamentary groups 	Parliament offers to parties 	Parliamentary group offers to group members 	Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group 	Additional comment
Assistant						
Business-related travel	PG					The parliament pays support for travelling to parliamentary groups.
Media tracking						
Support for hiring personnel						Support for one political secretary per group member & other support.
Offices						The main party offices are in the parliament.
Additional support for opposition						From the parliament to parliamentary groups and from the State to parties.
Library	PG + PA					Used by both the parliamentary group and the party.

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS



Parliamentary groups and parties

“The parties have a strong position in the parliament, that is a fact. They possess all the funds. In theory, it can be said that there would be enough money for every MP, but the funds still go to the parties anyway”

*

“Parliamentary groups play a key role in defining the party’s practices.”

*

“The general tendency is for parties to move into parliamentary groups – it is difficult to separate the secretaries of the party and those of the parliamentary group.”

*

“The parliamentary group’s weekly meeting on Tuesday (4 p.m. to 6 p.m.) can be seen as a contact point for political work. There, the group has the influence to establish its position on issues such as legislative proposals, investigative work or other political work.”

Development areas in the parliament’s activities

“Opposition groups would like more support. This is a hot topic at the moment. In general, legislation is drafted in ministries, but the opposition would like to see this work transferred to committees. This would require more resources.”

Effects of the electoral system

“--This is why MPs are stronger than individuals in Finland. In Sweden, it is common for a less charismatic person to be chosen for leadership because they are a professional in their field. They may be elected because the party needs them in the parliament. This electoral system produces different politicians – perhaps also different needs.”

*

“Parties are comparatively more important in Sweden than in Finland.”

1.2 Practices in the Nordic countries – Sweden SUMMARY



PARTY & PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

- Political parties usually have offices in the parliament. As a result, both the party and the parliamentary group are led from the same place.
- The party is responsible for programme work. The parliamentary group, for its part, co-ordinates the party's policy in the parliament and reports annually to the party on its work.
- The Executive Boards of the parties decide on the parliamentary group's rules and in some cases, its budget.
- In the past, parliamentary groups and parties were clearly separate entities, but they have gradually converged and their co-operation is very close, especially in day-to-day politics.
- The leader of the parliamentary group is described as the party's internal leader and the party's second most influential member after the party's Secretary-General.

FUNDING

Party

The State supports the general activities of the parties. The State offers party subsidy and office support to parties elected to the parliament. Parties that do not have MPs are eligible for support if they have at least 2.5% of the votes cast in the whole country in at least one of the last two elections.

Parliamentary group

The parliament supports the parliamentary work of parliamentary groups and MPs. Support is divided into basic support, support for political secretaries, support for trips abroad and support for MPs' language training.

MP

Receives monthly remuneration for their work from the parliament.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- The parliament's support services are mainly aimed at individual MPs. The services include IT, travel agency and information services and orientation training for new MPs, among other things.
- The parliament also provides a budgeting service, which is used especially by parliamentary groups.
- The parliament pays support to the parliamentary group for hiring political secretaries and assistants as well as for language training and trips abroad. The parliamentary groups decide on the use of the support independently.
- The parliament provides premises for parties and parliamentary groups.
- Opposition parliamentary groups receive additional support from the parliament.
- The Management Support unit is responsible for co-ordinating the development of support services.

RULES VS. PRACTICES

- The Riksdag Act is comprehensive and includes the rules for the parliament's work and activities – including parliamentary elections, sessions, the steering and planning of parliamentary work, members, committees, interpellations and questions to ministries, the presentation and preparation legislative proposals and deciding on them, parliamentary operators and administration.
- According to law, the public funding of parties is defined so that the State supports the general activities of the parties and the parliament supports the activities of parliamentary groups and MPs. In practice, the use of the support is decided by the party and the parliamentary group.
- MPs have a formal mandate to act as MPs for their constituency. However, party loyalty is typically high in the parliament (differences can be found between different parties).

1.3 Norway

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

BASICS 1/5



PARLIAMENT

Parliament's name in local language Stortinget	Number of MPs and party distribution <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Party</th><th>MPs</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Labour Party</td><td>48</td></tr><tr><td>Conservative Party</td><td>36</td></tr><tr><td>Centre Party</td><td>28</td></tr><tr><td>Progress Party</td><td>21</td></tr><tr><td>Socialist Left Party</td><td>13</td></tr><tr><td>Red Party</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>Liberal Party</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>169</td></tr></tbody></table>	Party	MPs	Labour Party	48	Conservative Party	36	Centre Party	28	Progress Party	21	Socialist Left Party	13	Red Party	8	Liberal Party	8	Total	169	Parliament's key tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The parliament's main tasks are: to adopt new laws and to amend and repeal existing laws, determine the State's revenue and expenditure in accordance with fiscal budgeting, supervise the government and public administration, confirm plans and guidelines related to state activities and discuss internal and foreign affairs.• In accordance with the principles of parliamentarianism, the parliament decides the composition of the government.• The parliament has the decision-making power on holding referendums.
Party		MPs																		
Labour Party	48																			
Conservative Party	36																			
Centre Party	28																			
Progress Party	21																			
Socialist Left Party	13																			
Red Party	8																			
Liberal Party	8																			
Total	169																			
Electoral system Proportional list election (open)																				
Legislation guiding the parliament's activities The Norwegian Parliament The Rules of Procedure (1965). The parliament cannot be dissolved between elections; instead, the parliament always operates until the end of its 4-year term.	Next parliamentary elections September 2025																			

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

BASICS 2/5



GOVERNMENT

- The government is indirectly elected through parliamentary elections. The previous government is not discharged until a new government is formed.

Ministries

16

Ministers

19 (14 October 2021)

- The current government has been in office since 2021.
- The government parties are the Labour Party and the Centre Party.
- The Prime Minister and other ministers form a body called the Office of Prime Minister and Ministries, which co-ordinates the work of the government.
- Under the King, the government acts as the King's Council (the Council of State).
- The current government is a minority government.
- A Minister may not simultaneously act as an MP.
- The government actively recruits MPs to various ministry positions.

Minority/majority governments

- Norway has a tradition of minority governments.



1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway



BASICS 3/5

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF PARLIAMENT

Management

- The parliament's activities are led by **the Presidium**, which is in turn led by **the President of the Storting**. In addition, the members of the Presidium include five Vice Presidents. The Vice President model was introduced in 2009.
- The President of the Storting may not simultaneously be a member of any parliamentary committee, but otherwise the President has the same rights as other MPs and is allowed to take part in political debate.
- The Presidium decides, among other things, on the parliament's order of business and working schedule, ensures that constitutional rules are upheld in parliamentary work and ensures compliance with the constitutional principles regulating the work and division of duties between the parliament and the government. The Storting's Presidium attempts to avoid taking a stand on purely political issues.

Administration

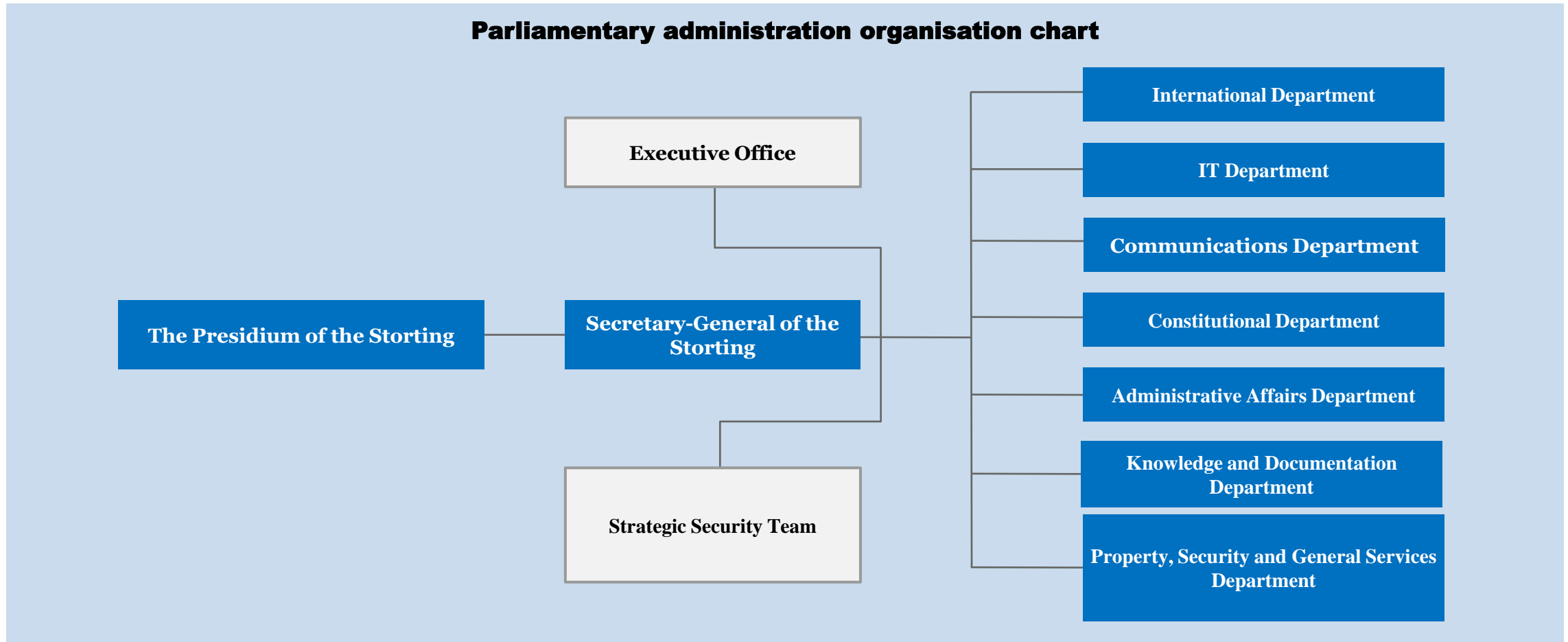
- There are approximately 450 people working in parliamentary administration. Parliamentary administration is led by **the Secretary-General of the Storting**, who also acts as the secretary to the Storting's Presidium. Parliamentary administration is organised into seven departments and 29 sections.
- **The Executive Office** supports the Storting's Presidium and its Secretary-General in their work.
- **The Strategic Security Team** advises the management support and the Secretary-General on security and other preparedness-related matters.

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

BASICS 4/5



ORGANISATION CHART



1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

BASICS 5/5



DEPARTMENTS OF THE PARLIAMENT'S ADMINISTRATION

- **The International Department** supports the parliament in all its international activities, including the international work of the Presidium, parliamentary delegations and committees. This support also extends to activities of individual MPs at international meetings and events (support for both practical arrangements and political issues).
- **The IT Department** is responsible for IT training and user support. It maintains and updates the parliament's computer-based information systems.
- **The Communications Department** is responsible for external and internal communication and for organising events and guided tours in the parliament.
- **The Constitutional Department** is responsible for all matters associated with the activities of the parliament as a constitutional body – including parliamentary processes, work plans and rules.
- **The Administrative Affairs Department** assists parliamentary administration in HR administration, funding and general accounting. It is responsible for various services directly targeted at MPs, such as accommodation, insurance, business trips and other benefits.
- **The Knowledge and Documentation Department** is responsible for collecting and organising information to support parliamentary work and documenting the parliament's activities.
- **The Property, Security and General Services Department** is responsible for the management and development of the parliament's property, security and general services.



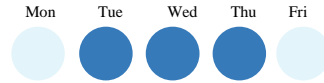
Parliament building – Photo: Stortinget

2.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

PARLIAMENTARY WORK FROM AN MP'S PERSPECTIVE 1/2



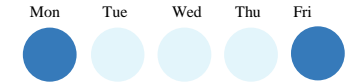
PARLIAMENTARY WORK



- MPs are elected to the parliament as individuals. However, their work and decision-making in the parliament are strongly influenced by the parliamentary group.
- MPs almost always belong to a party, from the lists of which they have been elected to the parliament. However, unaffiliated candidates may also be elected to the parliament.
- MPs are under an obligation to participate in the parliament's activities and votes.
- There are several support services targeted at MPs but, for example, they do not have their own parliamentary assistants and do not receive financial support for parliamentary work (other than their salary).
- If an MP is absent or cannot act in their position as an MP (e.g. if they are appointed as ministers), their seat is taken by a deputy MP.



CONSTITUENCY WORK



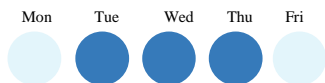
- MPs often find it important to take voters into consideration. However, this is not an official part of an MP's job description.
- MPs work together across party lines in constituencies to reach out to voters. It is common practice to organise a joint visit to a constituency, once a month, for example.

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

PARLIAMENTARY WORK FROM AN MP'S PERSPECTIVE 2/2

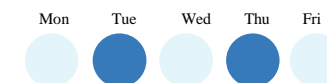


PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



- MPs from the same party form a parliamentary group.
- Each parliamentary group must elect a chairperson and a steering group.
- The parliament offers financial support to parliamentary groups, much of which is spent on hiring assistants, as well as office spaces as a new service.
- The parliamentary group offers several support services (e.g. assistants and training) to MPs.
- Parliamentary groups usually meet once a week on Wednesdays – the meeting is not officially scheduled in the parliament's weekly calendar but, in practice, this time slot is dedicated to meetings.
- The leaders of the parliamentary groups meet on Tuesdays to prepare for Wednesday's parliamentary group meeting. The party leadership may also be present, depending on the party.

COMMITTEE WORK



- Each MP belongs to one of the 12 standing committees.
- In practice, the parties agree internally on their representatives in the committees.
- The work of the committees and their members is supported by a secretariat.
- The committees mainly prepare* matters that the parliament has assigned to them.
- The committees travel a lot.
- The committees have “closed-door” meetings on Thursdays. The committees also have a lot of unofficial shadow meetings that are less closed in nature; they can be open to assistants, for example.
- The committee groups of the parliamentary groups meet on Tuesdays but these meetings are not officially scheduled.

*Only the Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs may initiate its own matters for consideration.

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 1/2



- Norway has a tradition of strong parties and extensive party programmes. The parties therefore have a significant influence on the activities and decision-making of the parliamentary groups. There has been a lot of discussion in the parliament about parties making use of the services and benefits targeted at parliamentary groups.
- In Norway, it has become a habit that the party's chairperson is also the chairperson of the parliamentary group. However, this is not the case for all parliamentary groups. In any case, the parliamentary group and the party leadership often co-operate closely to ensure that the parliamentary group's activities are aligned with the party's line.
- However, due to parliamentary rules, a clear distinction is made between the parliamentary group and the party. This can be seen in the following, for example:
 - The parties cannot use the financial support allocated to the parliamentary group.
 - Parliamentary group assistants must work for the parliament and not for the party. In practice, however, parliamentary groups decide on and supervise the work of assistants and assistants may also work for the party.
 - If the parliamentary group wishes to use the services of the party's administrative department, it must pay appropriate compensation for these services. The party cannot offer support to the parliamentary group for free.
- There are party-specific differences as to which entity has more power, the parliamentary group or the political party. However, the interviewees believed that, in most cases, parliamentary groups have more power because the group manages day-to-day matters in the parliament and formulates policy in negotiations with other parliamentary groups.

Example of a practice:

Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet)

- The Executive Board of the party (*sentralstyret*) sets time limits for the nomination of candidates for parliamentary elections.
- The Executive Board supervises the activities of the parliamentary group.
- The Secretary-General of the party attends the weekly meetings of the parliamentary group.
- The parliamentary group is invited to attend the party's major meetings.

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

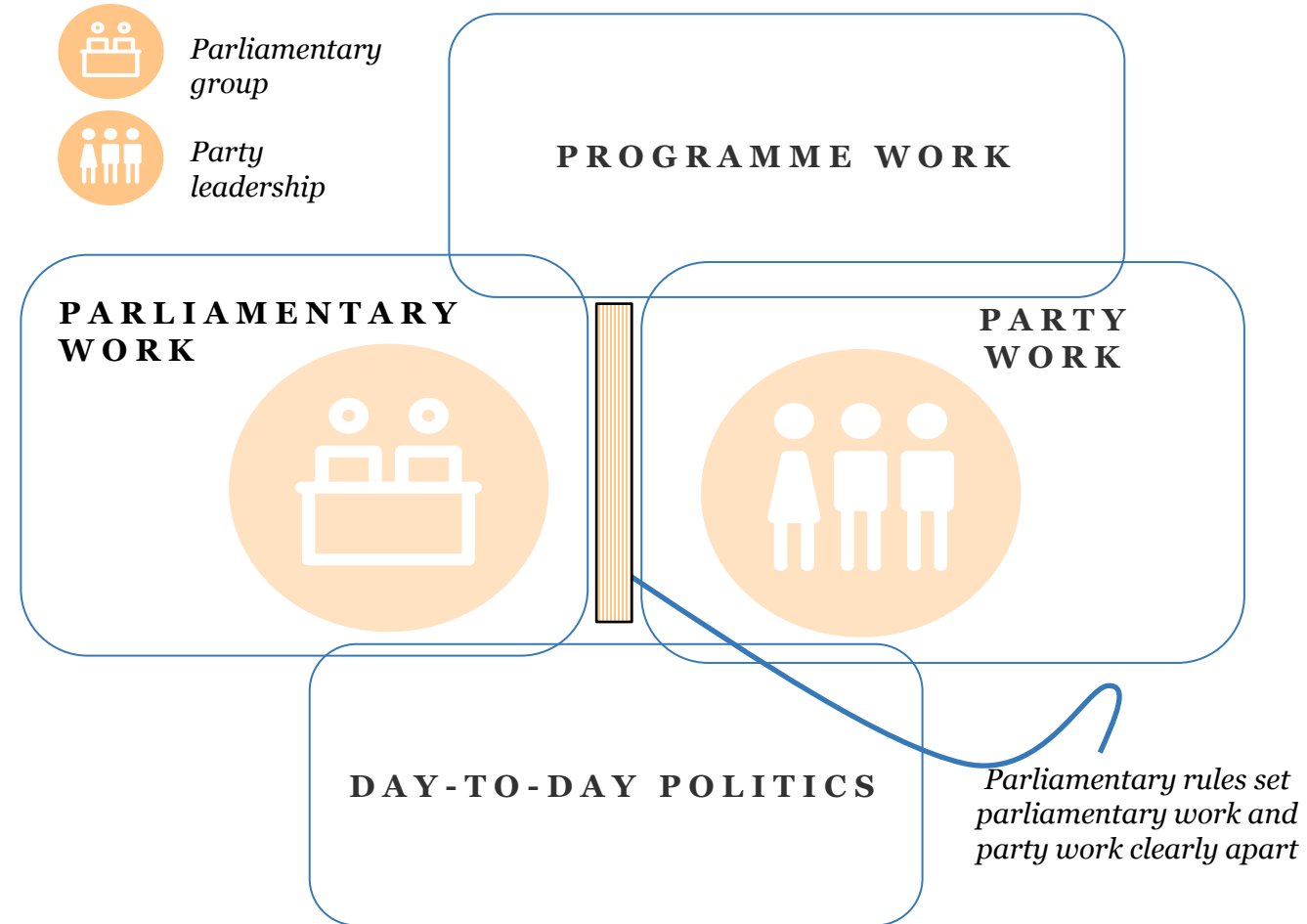


RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 2/2

TASKS, ROLES AND CO-OPERATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND THE PARTY

The icons give a simplified description of how close the parliamentary group and the party are from the perspective of rules and general practices and which areas their work focuses on.

- **Parliamentary work:** The parliamentary group manages day-to-day matters in the parliament. The parliamentary group interprets the party programme and acts according to it. With resolutions, the party can send a strong signal to the parliamentary group about the party's position on a particular issue.
- **Day-to-day politics:** Both the parliamentary group and the party leadership are involved in day-to-day politics. MPs actively keep in touch with their voters and take part in debates.
- **Programme work:** The party is responsible for programme work in the big picture. Officially, the parliamentary group has no role to play in the preparation of the party programme but, in practice, the role is significant.
- **Party work:** The party is responsible for policy guidelines and programme work in the big picture. The party leadership supervises the activities of the parliamentary group and often attends the meetings of the parliamentary group at regular intervals.



1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway



FUNDING 1/2

- ✓ **Additional support for opposition**
- ✗ Joint use of money
- ✗ Support targeted at Members of Parliament
- ✗ Parties can accept anonymous donations

PARTIES

- Parties may receive **public support** for party activities from the State, counties or municipalities, depending on the bodies in which the party has members. State support is conditional on receiving at least 2.5% of the votes cast in parliamentary elections or having at least one MP elected to the parliament. The amount of support is calculated on the basis of the party's parliamentary elections results. The use of support is not supervised by the authorities.
- Parties may **fund their operations by conducting business** or, for example, by collecting membership fees.
- Parties may accept **private funding** as donations, gifts or internal transfers. Parties cannot accept anonymous donations, foreign donations or donations from state-administered entities. The origin of the funding and private donors must be disclosed openly.

According to Statistics Norway, the average distribution of funding between Norwegian parties is as follows:

- **68% – state support** (including 57% central government support, 9% county-level support and 2% other state support)
- **20% – income from own business operations** (including 9% membership fees, 3% business income and 4% other own business income)
- **12% – donations** (including 4% private donations, 3% donations from commercial companies and 3% from labour organisations).

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

FUNDING 2/2



Additional support for opposition

The provisions on the funding of parliamentary groups were amended in November 2020. The reform added transparency requirements especially for the funding of parliamentary groups – from now on, the financial data of the parliamentary groups will be made public in more detail.

A ceiling was also set for the capital generated by state support, in other words, parliamentary groups will no longer be able to accumulate their assets as significantly and freely as they used to. In connection with the reform, the additional support previously received by the parliamentary group of the President of the Storting was eliminated (entry into force on 1 October 2021).

PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

- The parliamentary groups receive three types of financial support from the parliament.
 - Basic support distributed to all parliamentary groups – approximately NOK 5 million (EUR 500,000).
 - Additional support based on the members of the group – approximately NOK 800,000 (EUR 80,000) for each member.
 - Additional support for opposition groups. The amount of additional support depends on the size of the parliamentary group: groups with 3–4 members receive 50% more support and groups with more than 5 members receive 100% more support. Groups with less than 2 members do not receive any additional support.
- Most of the support is used for hiring assistants and political advisors. Key assistant tasks include tasks related to communications and committee work.
- The parties may not use the support granted to the parliamentary group. One of the preconditions for the parliament's support to parliamentary groups is that **no political advisor** used for party office tasks **may be hired with the support**.



1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

GUIDING LEGISLATION



Parliamentary activities

The Norwegian Parliament The Rules of Procedure (1965)

- A key law related to parliamentary activities.
- Includes guidance on, among other things, the formation of the parliament, the election of chairpersons, the functioning and working methods of committees, the functioning and working methods of the parliament, parliamentary debates and voting.



Party activities

Constitution (1814)

- Parliamentary seats are allocated between parties in proportion to the number of votes they receive.
- The original Constitution did not refer to parties as in 1814, there were no parties in Norway. The parties have been referred to in the Constitution since 1884.

Other legislation

Act on certain aspects relating to the political parties (The Political Parties Act) ACT 2005-06-17 no. 102

- The act defines guidelines related to party registration, funding, rules, accounting and sanctions for neglecting accounting. The parties must follow these guidelines. The Political Parties Act Committee is the administrative body that supervises compliance with the act.

Amendments to the Political Parties Act (2012)

- The aim is to increase the transparency and control of party funding.



Parliamentary group activities

Constitution (1814)

- Parliamentary groups were not mentioned in the Constitution.

Other legislation

Parliamentary groups are mentioned but no specific guidelines regarding activities are given in the *The Norwegian Parliament The Rules of Procedure* document.

- Section 77 specifies what parliamentary groups mean: “By the term “parliamentary party group” in these Rules of Procedure is understood the Member or Members who were elected from a registered party which presented lists of candidates for election in at least one-third of the counties.”

The parliament’s *Guidelines on the parliamentary party group grants* document provides guidance on the funding of parliamentary groups. The rules were reformed in 2020.

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway



	Parliament offers to MPs	Parliament offers to parliamentary groups	Parliament offers to parties	Parliamentary group offers to group members	Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group	Additional comment
	●	■	★	▲	♥	
Information technology	●					
Information services	● PG					
Budget Office	● PG					
Housing	●					
Communication with members and voters						MPs communicate with their voters independently.
Foreign language training	●					
Orientation to parliamentary work	●			▲		Chiefly PG's responsibility. The parliament organises an introduction.
Support for preparatory work	●			▲		

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway



	Parliament offers to MPs	Parliament offers to parliamentary groups	Parliament offers to parties	Parliamentary group offers to group members	Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group	Additional comment
	●	■	★	▲	♥	
Assistant				▲		Funded by the group with parliament support. Used by the members.
Business-related travel	●					Support on business-related trips and for organising them.
Media tracking						Groups generally have comprehensive resources of their own.
Support for hiring personnel		■				
Offices	●	■				New principle for offering premises to parliamentary groups.
Additional support for opposition		■				
Library	● PG					

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS



The relationship between the parliamentary group and the party is close; however, in Norway, the aim is to keep them clearly as two separate organisations.

“The parliamentary group has a special status... People who have been elected. Technically, they are responsible for their actions, but there is a solid tradition of strong parties making major proposals.”

*

“In new parties’ organisations, the parliamentary group and the party are interconnected. In Norway, parties have not moved to the parliament. Parties and parliamentary groups are separate entities.”

*

“For a few years, there has already been heated debate about how parties use parliamentary groups’ support services and benefit from them abundantly. There are strict instructions in place.”

*

“Parliamentary groups work closely with parties. There must be a lot of discussion about matters because publicly they must project unanimity.”

*

“Parliamentary groups and parties are clearly separated! The party may not use funds that the parliament has allocated to the parliamentary group.”

Parliamentary work is significantly influenced by whether the parliamentary group is in the opposition or in the government.

“If the parliamentary group is in the government, all resources are concentrated to ministers and their work.”

*

“The parliamentary group in government must support the work carried out for the government and the country – there can be no obstacles, and so on. Being an MP is easier in the opposition. You can listen to people and go talk to the press. Government work is slow... you must support the government.”

Parliament’s support services.

“If you are not an important politician, you won’t get much support. It is more like a one-man show.”

1.3 Practices in the Nordic countries – Norway

SUMMARY



PARTY & PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

- In practice, the party and the parliamentary group are close to each other, although officially they are separate organisations.
- The parliamentary group often has more power than the party because it takes practical political action and constantly negotiates with other parliamentary groups.
- However, Norway has a tradition of strong parties and the party often supervises the activities of the parliamentary group and actively seeks to influence and guide its actions.

FUNDING

Party

- The parties receive support from the State, with the support amount determined by the parliament. On average, support accounts for 68% of a party's income.
- The use of support is not supervised by the authorities.
- Parties can receive private support or raise money through membership fees, for example.

Parliamentary group

- Parliamentary groups receive basic support from the parliament and additional support depending on the number of its members.
- Opposition groups receive additional support from the parliament.
- Most of the support is spent on hiring personnel.
- The parliamentary groups are accountable to the parliament for their use of the support.
- Support targeted at the parliamentary group may not be allocated to party activities.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- Most of the parliament's support services are targeted at MPs. However, the parliament has no responsibility for MPs' assistants.
- The parties do not receive any support from the parliament.
- Parliamentary groups receive financial support from the parliament, which they use for arranging support services to the members of the parliamentary group – the most significant support service is parliamentary assistants, usually at least 1 per MP. Parliamentary groups are also responsible for organising training.
- The parliament provides MPs with office space. The aim is to place the representatives of the same parliamentary group near each other.
- The Administrative Affairs Department and the President of the Storting are responsible for support services and their development as well as for the parliament's practical activities (e.g. defining the agenda).

RULES VS. PRACTICES

- The parties' activities are guided by legislation. The parliamentary groups' activities are guided by the parliament's rules of procedure and guidelines.
- Guidance on the funding of parliamentary groups has been reformed in recent years, including increased transparency requirements for the use of funds.
- The legislation specifies that a parliamentary group must not use the resources allocated to it by the parliament for party work. In practice, however, the party benefits considerably from the parliament's services and the parliamentary group's political assistants may also be used for party work. One of the underlying reasons for this is the fact that the same people often work for both the party and the parliamentary group.

1.4 Iceland

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



BASICS 1/5

PARLIAMENT

Parliament's name in local language

Althingi

Electoral system

Proportional list election (open)

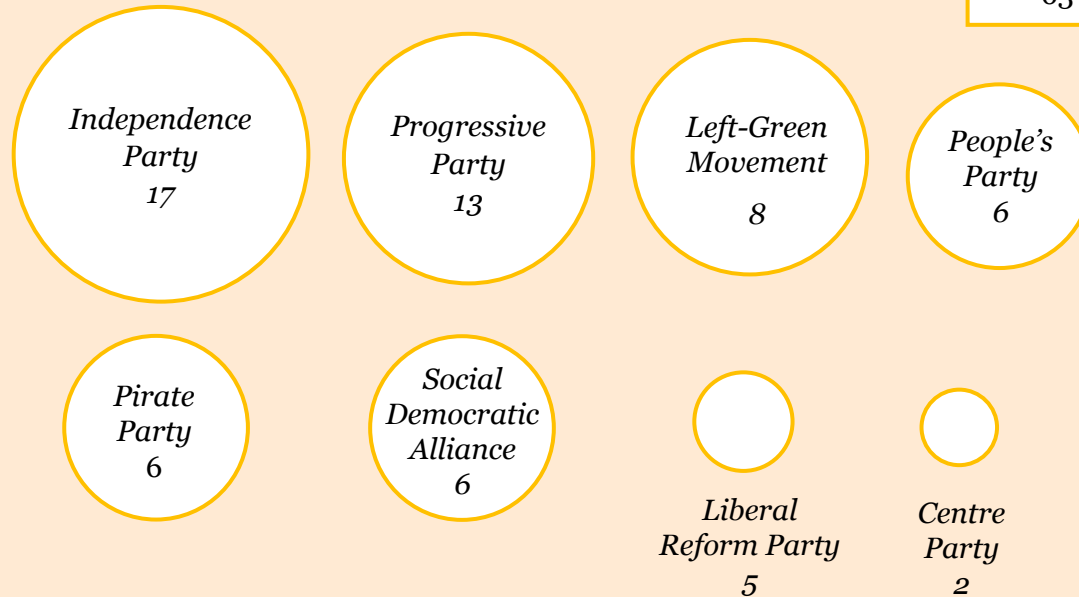
Legislation guiding the parliament's activities

Althingi's rules of procedure

The government has the power to dissolve the parliament with the President's approval. The last time the parliament was dissolved in the middle of a term in Iceland was in 2017.

Number of MPs and party distribution

MPs
63



Next parliamentary elections

2025

Parliament's key tasks

- According to the Constitution, the parliament and the President share legislative powers.
- The parliament's main task is to produce legislation and to supervise the activities of the government and administration.
- The parliament elects the executive boards and committees appointed by the government for their duties.

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



BASICS 2/5

- The current government has been in office since 2021. The government parties are the Left-Green Movement, the Independence Party and the Progressive Party.

Ministries

10

Ministers

12 (28 November 2021)

- The government is led by the Prime Minister.
- According to the Icelandic Constitution, the number and names of ministers are set out in a Presidential Decree, which also includes the division of tasks and responsibilities between ministers.
- The Prime Minister may, with the approval of other ministers, appoint a Council of Ministers to support the work on a specific topic or topics.
- The Procedure of the Government contains rules for the government's activities.
- MPs do not need to resign if they are appointed as a minister.

Minority/majority governments

- There is a tradition of majority governments. The current government is also a majority government.



1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



BASICS 3/5

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF PARLIAMENT

Management

- **The Speaker of Althingi** is the parliament's highest authority. The Speaker is responsible for the parliament's activities, determines the content of parliamentary meetings and the schedule for parliamentary work and represents the parliament to the people. The Speaker also supervises the activities of committees and international delegations, approves questions to ministers from the parliament and co-ordinates the parliament's agenda and the organisation of debates with the chairpersons of parliamentary groups. The Speaker does not have the right to vote in the parliament.
- The Speaker of Althingi is one of three deputies of the President of Iceland and, together with the Prime Minister and the President of the Supreme Court, assumes the presidential functions when the President is prevented from carrying out presidential duties.
- The Speaker of Althingi and the Deputy Speakers form the Presidium, which organises the parliament's activities and the content of parliamentary sessions. The Presidium meets weekly to prepare the agenda.

Administration

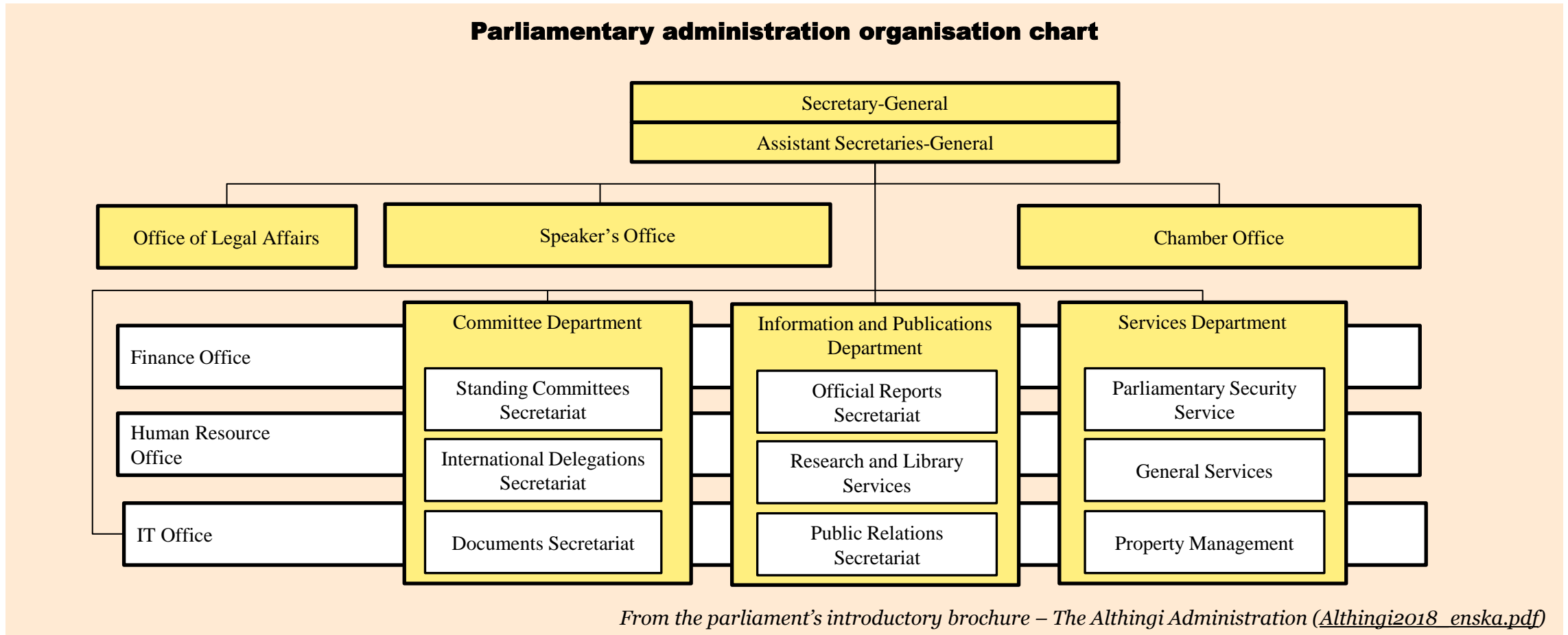
- There are approximately 130 people working in parliamentary administration.
- Parliamentary administration is led by the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General is responsible for executing the decisions made by the Speaker and the Presidium. Three Assistant Secretaries-General (*Management and Finance, Administrative and International Affairs* and *Parliamentary Business*) support the Secretary-General. These four persons constitute the Executive Board of the parliamentary administration. The *Parliamentary Business* Assistant Secretary-General supervises especially matters related to parliamentary work.

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



BASICS 4/5

ORGANISATION CHART



1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



PARLIAMENTARY WORK FROM AN MP'S PERSPECTIVE 1/2

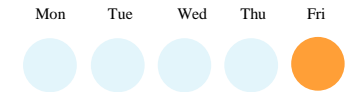
PARLIAMENTARY WORK

Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri

- MPs are elected to the parliament as individuals. According to the Constitution, MPs must make decisions according to their conscience and not be influenced by others.
- Officially, MPs have very few binding duties in the parliament. They are under an obligation to attend all parliamentary sessions (only absolutely necessary reasons for absence are accepted) and to be present at and take part in the votes.
- If an MP is prevented from attending (e.g. parental leave or illness), their duties may be carried out by a substitute.
- The seating arrangement in the Chamber is determined every autumn by the drawing of lots among MPs (excluding the Speaker and the ministers).
- MPs who are not ministers can make legislative proposals independently both inside and outside parliamentary groups and committees.



CONSTITUENCY WORK



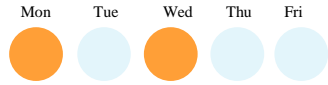
- On Fridays, time is reserved for other work, which often takes place in the MP's own constituency.

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



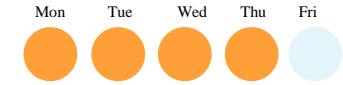
PARLIAMENTARY WORK FROM AN MP'S PERSPECTIVE 2/2

PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



- It is not mandatory to belong to a parliamentary group.
- The organisation of parliamentary groups has not been formally defined. The only rule is that a parliamentary group must elect a chairperson from among its members and have at least three members. An MP may belong to only one parliamentary group at a time.
- The members of the parliamentary group decide on the division of tasks and obligations within the group.
- The parliament's weekly calendar has two meeting times for parliamentary groups.
- The parliament provides parliamentary groups with political assistants (totalling 30) to strengthen parliamentary work.

COMMITTEE WORK



- Each MP belongs to one of the 8 standing committees, each of which consists of 9 MPs. Each committee has its own secretary.
- The committees deal with the legislative proposals of the government and individual MPs as well as the parliament's resolutions. The committees themselves may also submit legislative proposals to and draw up reports for the parliament on their own initiative.
- The parliamentary groups jointly determine the committee to which each MP is elected.
- The committees' official weekly meetings are closed. If an external expert has been invited to the meeting for consultation, the meeting can be held as an open meeting. The committee may also arrange an open meeting in a public place, for example.

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 1/2

- The parties have no formal connection with the parliamentary group. There are very few official guidelines in Iceland in relation to party activities.
- Parliamentary groups often play an important role within the party and thus have a major impact on the party's activities. The most important major decisions are taken by the parliamentary group in consultation with the party.
 - The chairperson of the parliamentary group plays a very central role and is responsible for which proposals from the parliamentary group or the party are taken forward.
- Iceland has many young parties, which have their own practices and in which the party appears to play an important role in the activities of the parliamentary group.
- The offices of parties and parliamentary groups are separate.
- The parties use many of the services offered to the parliamentary groups by the parliament.
 - The parliamentary groups independently decide how they use the assistants that the parliament offers them. It is therefore common for parliamentary group assistants to be members of the party, work for the party at the same time and focus extensively on party work especially during the elections. In some parties, the assistants offered by the parliament and the party's own assistants work in a centralised manner.

Example of a practice:

The Left-Green Movement

- The members of the parliamentary group are automatically members of the Group Council.
- In the parliament, the parliamentary group must promote those matters the party decided on at party conferences.
- The parliamentary group must seek and obtain the approval of the smaller party conference to participate in the government.
- The parliamentary group regularly informs the party of its activities.

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland

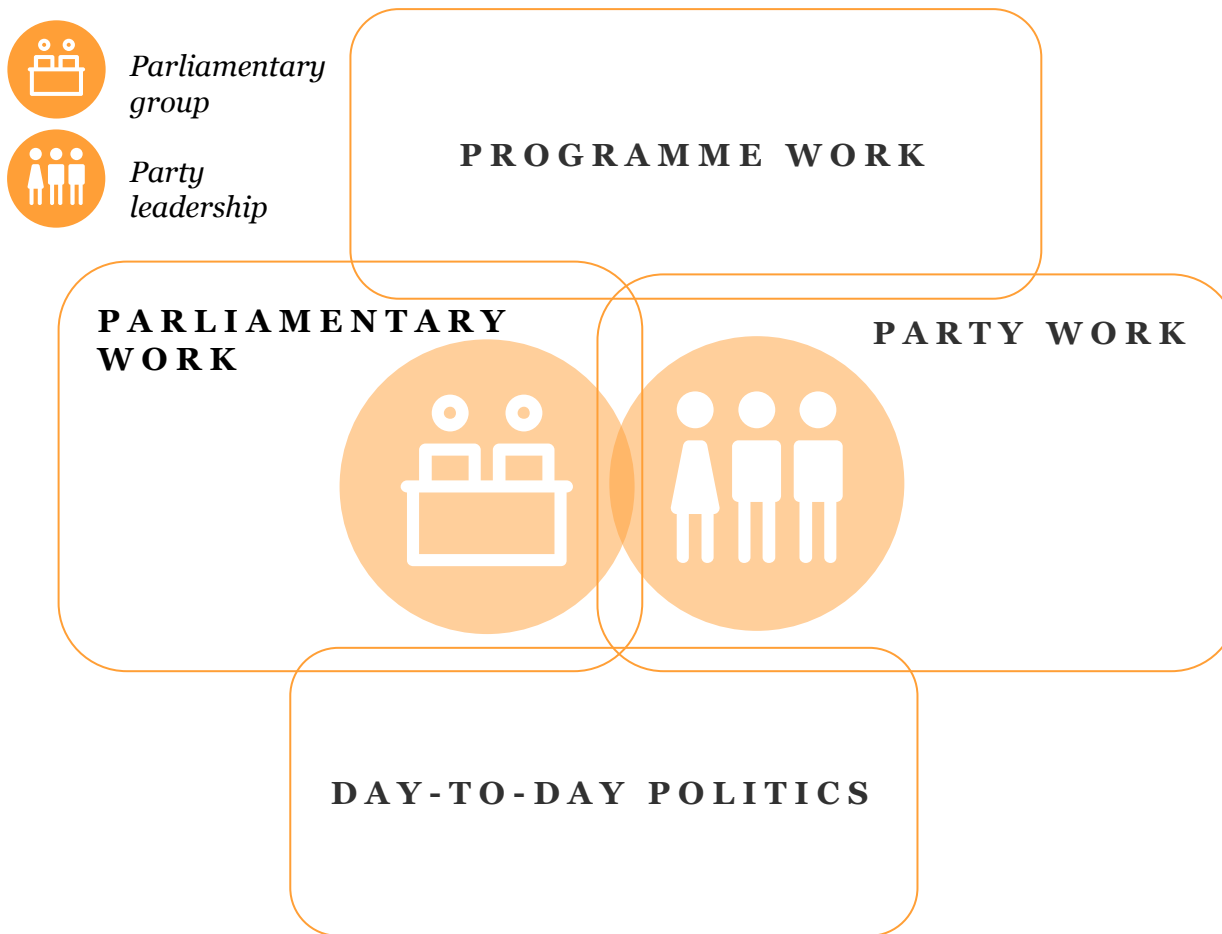


RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 2/2

TASKS, ROLES AND CO-OPERATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND THE PARTY

The icons give a simplified description of how close the parliamentary group and the party are from the perspective of rules and general practices and which areas their work focuses on.

- **Parliamentary work:** The task of the parliamentary group is to produce legislation in line with the party's guidelines.
- The parliamentary group decides on the party's position in the parliament but communicates closely with the party leadership.
- Minor policy guidelines are decided independently by parliamentary groups.
- **Day-to-day politics:** Both the parliamentary group and the party leadership are involved in day-to-day politics.
- **Programme work:** Most parties define the party programme at annual or half-year meetings, in which the parliamentary group also participates.
- **Party work:** The party is responsible for policy guidelines and programme work in the big picture. The party works in close co-operation with the parliamentary group and often uses the resources of the parliamentary group, such as assistants.



1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



FUNDING 1/2



**Additional support for
opposition**



Joint use of money



Support targeted at
Members of Parliament



Parties can accept
anonymous donations

PARTIES



- The parties fund their activities with party subsidies and private funding.
- **Party subsidies** and parliamentary group support are guided by the *Act on the Finances of Political Organizations and Their Information Disclosure, no. 162/2006*. The act deals with the party's fundraising, funding and reporting.
- Party subsidies are paid by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.
- The parties receive two types of party subsidies:
 - Support for basic functions – the same for all parties.
 - Additional support – the amount is proportional to the number of votes received by the party.
- Support is conditional on having at least one MP in the parliament or receiving at least 2.5% of the votes cast in parliamentary elections. The party will not receive full support until the second parliamentary term.
- Parties that nominate candidates in more than three counties can apply for additional support from the ministry.
- Parties may accept **private donations** only from known legal entities. The funding ceiling is ISK 400,000 per year.
- The act also sets a ceiling on how much the party can spend on election campaigning (the ceiling on the permitted campaign budget is determined by the number of residents in the counties).

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland

FUNDING 2/2



Additional support for opposition

An amendment to the act that governs the finances of parties and parliamentary groups (162/2006) is pending in Iceland. The aim of the proposed amendment is to establish a comprehensive legal framework for the activities of political organisations and to increase transparency and democratic practices.

The proposed amendments include:

- Additional guidelines related to party activities, such as party registration and funding.
- To change the name of the law: *Laws on the activities of political organizations.*

PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

- Parliamentary groups mainly operate with support granted by the parliament.
- **Parliamentary group support** and party **subsidies** are guided by the *Act on the Finances of Political Organizations and Their Information Disclosure, no. 162/2006.*
- Parliamentary group support is paid by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.
- The amount of support distributed depends on the total state budget.
- The amount of support received by a parliamentary group is calculated on the basis of the number of MPs in the parliamentary group (1 MP = 1 unit). Each parliamentary group receives one additional unit of support.
- The additional 12 units are divided among the parliamentary groups that are not in the government.
The share is made in proportion to the size of the group.

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



GUIDING LEGISLATION



Parliamentary
activities

Standing orders of the Althingi (1991 no. 55)

- Provisions governing the parliament's activities

Highlights – *Article 79 – Standing orders of the Althingi:*

- The Speaker of Parliament must consult the chairpersons of parliamentary groups regularly in relation to the parliament's agenda and activities.
- The Speaker must send the parliament's weekly agenda to the chairpersons of the parliamentary groups on a weekly basis.
- The Speaker must also consult the chairpersons of the parliamentary groups on the provisions related to major debates, such as time constraint provisions.
- It is also the Speaker's duty to ensure that parliamentary groups and individual MPs have working spaces. .



Party
activities

Constitution (1944)

- The Constitution states that seats in the parliament are elected in such a way as to reflect as far as possible the number of votes the parties received (with a minimum 5% of votes).

Other legislation

- *The Act on the Finances of Political Organizations and Their Information Disclosure, no. 162/2006* contains guidelines related to party funding, fundraising and reporting.
- There is a pending amendment proposal, which would also include new guidelines related to party registration and other activities.



Parliamentary group
activities

Constitution (1944)











- The Constitution does not mention parliamentary groups.

Other legislation

- *The Act on the Finances of Political Organizations and Their Information Disclosure, no. 162/2006* contains guidelines on the funding of parliamentary groups.
- There are only a few mentions of parliamentary groups in the parliament's rules of procedure – *Article 79 – Standing orders of the Althingi:*
 - If MPs are organised into parliamentary groups, they must elect a chairperson for the group.
 - At least three MPs are needed to form a parliamentary group, and an MP cannot belong to more than one group at the same time (in this context, the possibility of a two-person group is mentioned as an exception).











1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



	Parliament offers to MPs 	Parliament offers to parliamentary groups 	Parliament offers to parties 	Parliamentary group offers to group members 	Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group 	Additional comment
Information technology						
Information services	 PG					
Budget Office						
Housing						
Communication with members and voters						
Foreign language training						
Orientation to parliamentary work						No other training.
Support for preparatory work						The assistants of the parliamentary groups support in preparatory work.

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



	Parliament offers to MPs 	Parliament offers to parliamentary groups 	Parliament offers to parties 	Parliamentary group offers to group members 	Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group 	Additional comment
Assistant		 PA				Selected by the PG and hired by the parliament. The party uses.
Business-related travel	 PG					
Media tracking						
Support for hiring personnel						
Offices	 PG					
Additional support for opposition						Additional support from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.
Library	 PG					

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland



EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS

There are many development projects underway in Iceland, which are aimed at strengthening the parliament's activities.

“There are new agreements in the labour market aimed at reducing working hours to 36 hours [per week]. There is no additional funding to achieve this, so we must seek efficiency.”

*

“There is ambition to have some kind of knowledge base in the parliament. (At present) in many cases, information from the government must be used.”

*

“The Secretary-General is quite independent in relation to the proposals he receives regarding the development of political processes.”

*

“We are going to build the parliament week differently. There are many projects and changes underway: No committee meetings on Mondays and earlier starts to chamber meetings.”

*

“We are currently discussing the provision of constitutional education to ministers and the provision of continuous training and learning.”

*

“There is also discussion about a more family-friendly parliament – A wide range of options – This is a debate among MPs.”

Parliamentary groups are key players in the parliament.

“The aim of increasing the number of assistants has been to strengthen the parliamentary groups in particular. The strengthening will primarily affect MPs through the provision of practical assistance.”

*

“The parties are present and have influence, but the main operators are the parliamentary groups.”

Parliamentary work is significantly influenced by whether the parliamentary group is in the opposition or in the government – the opposition relies heavily on the information it receives from the government.

“The relationship between the opposition and the ministers is practically non-existent.”

1.4 Practices in the Nordic countries – Iceland

SUMMARY



PARTY & PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

- There is no formal connection between the party and the parliamentary group. In practice, however, they are very close to each other.
- The parliamentary group interprets the party programme and generally discusses all major decisions with the party.
- The parliamentary group usually has a strong position within the party and in decision-making.
- The party leadership influences the parliamentary group's activities.
- The party and the parliamentary group have separate offices but otherwise they share a lot of common resources, such as assistants.

FUNDING

MP

- No support targeted at MPs (in addition to the salary).

Party

- Party subsidies are paid by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.
- The parties receive the same basic support as well as additional support that is determined on the basis of the number of MPs the party has.
- The parties' spending on election campaigns and the ceilings on private donations have also been defined.

Parliamentary group

- Parliamentary group support is paid by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.
- The amount is based on the size of the parliamentary group.
- Additional 12 units of support is distributed among opposition parliamentary groups.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- The support services provided by the parliament are mainly targeted at MPs.
- Efforts have been made to strengthen the parliament's activities with the assistant amendment, which entered into force in 2018. The assistants are hired by the parliament but elected by the parliamentary groups themselves.
- The party makes significant use of the services targeted at parliamentary groups by the parliament, especially assistants.
- The parliamentary administration, led by the Secretary-General of the Administration, develops the parliament's working methods, organisation and support services (e.g. the reorganisation of the parliament's agenda).

RULES VS. PRACTICES

- Iceland has very few rules related to the activities of parties and parliamentary groups. The pending amendment to Act 162/2006 would bring more practices related to the party's activities within the scope of the Act.
- In practice, the assistant support targeted at strengthening parliamentary groups also benefits the parties as assistants may spend a significant part of their working time on party work.

1.5 Denmark

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



BASICS 1/5

PARLIAMENT

Parliament's name in local language

Folketinget

Electoral system

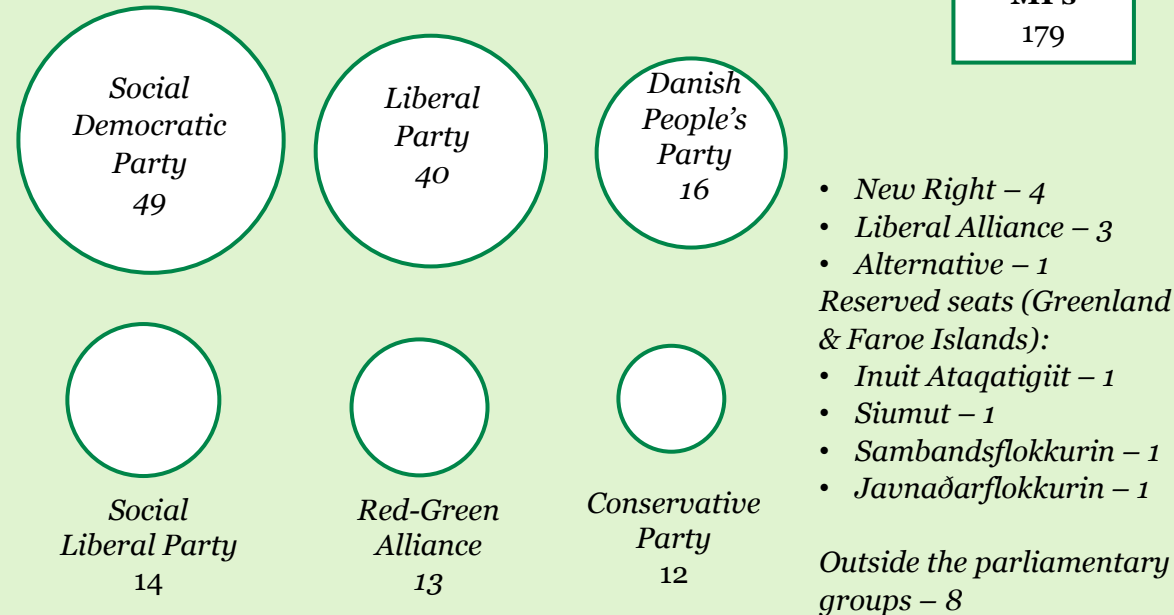
Proportional list election (closed)

Legislation guiding the parliament's activities

Forretningsorden for Folketinget

- The parliament's activities are also guided by the Constitution.
- The parliament shares power with the monarchy.
- The Prime Minister has the right to call early elections at any time during the parliamentary term.

Number of MPs and party distribution



Parliament's key tasks

- The parliament's main task is to produce legislation and to supervise the activities of the government and administration.
- The parliament elects the executive boards and committees appointed by the government for their duties.
- Committees play a key role in the preparation of legislation and proposals.

Next parliamentary elections

4 June 2023

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



BASICS 2/5

GOVERNMENT

Ministries

17

Ministers

25 (5 May 2021)

- According to the Constitution, the Danish monarch has formal authority to form a government and party representatives propose a government spokesperson to the Queen. The Queen decides on a new government in accordance with party negotiations.
- The Prime Minister can call parliamentary elections to be held at any time.
- In the parliament, there must be no majority opposing the government. Governments are usually minority governments, supported through common agreements by a majority in the parliament.
- The Prime Minister is not automatically a representative and/or chairperson of the largest party. Ministers are also not always the chairpersons of their party.



Minority/majority governments

- There is a tradition of minority governments. The current government is also a minority government.

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



BASICS 3/5

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF PARLIAMENT

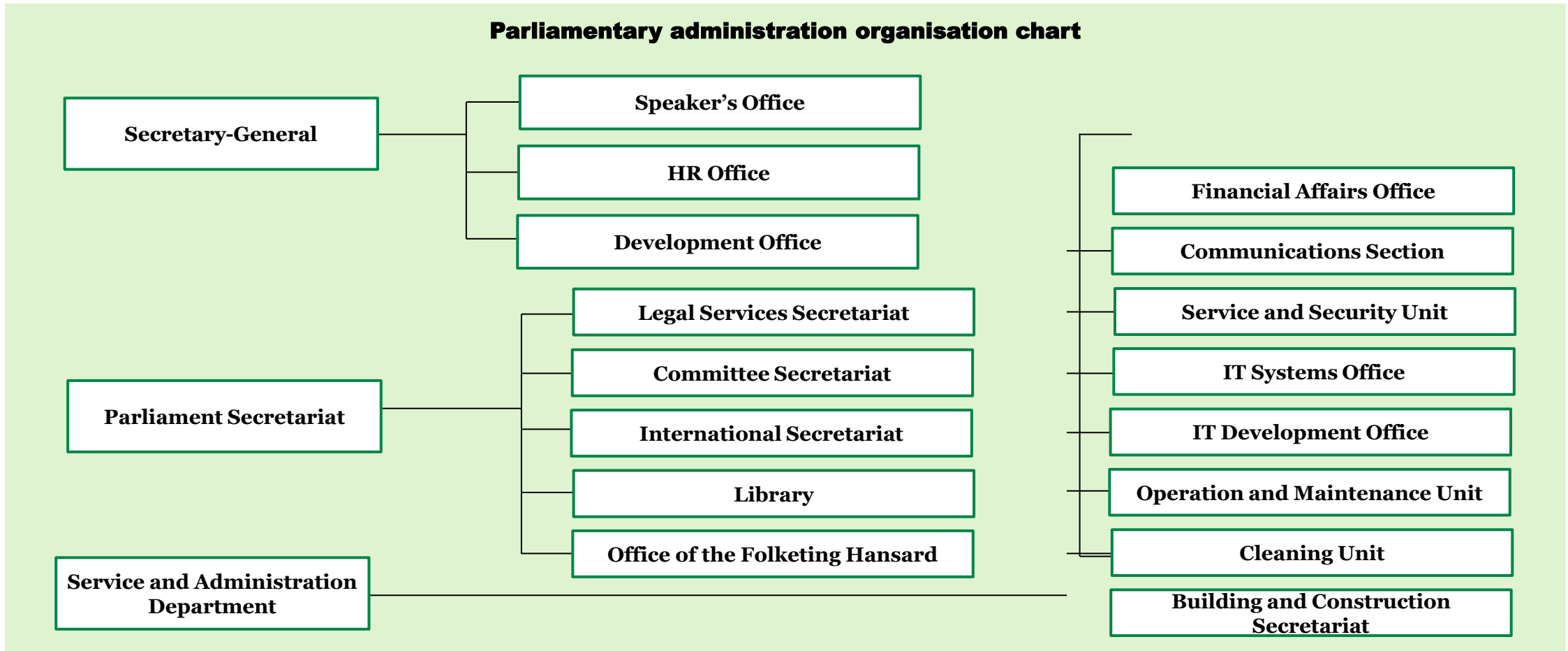
- **There are approximately 440 people working in parliamentary administration.**
- The head of the administration is the **Secretary-General** and two Deputy Secretaries-General, each with specific areas of responsibility. The Speaker is the highest-level director of personnel for public officials and the person elected as the Speaker is usually a respected and seasoned politician. The Presidium is the supreme authority of the Danish Parliament. It comprises a Speaker and up to four Deputy Speakers, who are elected by the Parliament at the beginning of the parliamentary year or after a general election.
- The Presidium consists of representatives of the parliament's four largest parliamentary groups. It decides on the rules governing access to the written documents by the Danish Parliament, the administration of the Danish Parliament and the Danish committees.
- The chief task of the Presidium is to make sure that the work of the Danish Parliament is organised and performed in a satisfactory manner. This includes ensuring that parliamentary regulations are complied with, both when it comes to political work in committees and in the Chamber and when the administrative work of the Parliament is concerned. The Presidium has overall responsibility for the 179 MPs and the 425 administrative employees. The Presidium's areas of responsibility and the regulations for the work of the parliament are laid down in the Standing Orders of the Danish Parliament.
- **Development work** will be promoted through a joint conference between the parliament and the government.

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



BASICS 4/5

ORGANISATION CHART

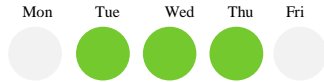


1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



PARLIAMENTARY WORK FROM AN MP'S PERSPECTIVE 1/2

PARLIAMENTARY WORK



- According to the Constitution, MPs are bound by their own conscience, so MPs are independent of their voters and their party. In reality, they follow the party's line.
- The seat always belongs to the MP and not to the party.
- Most MPs are organised into parliamentary groups, but an MP can also choose not to be a member of a parliamentary group and be a so-called “independent” MP instead.
- MPs can set up new parties and parliamentary groups during the parliamentary term.



MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT

Folketingsmedlem

CONSTITUENCY WORK



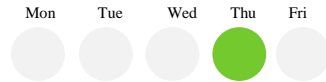
- MPs are supposed to use the parliament's day off, i.e. Monday, for work in their own constituency. In general, however, MPs from outside Copenhagen do not participate in local politics when they are MPs.

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



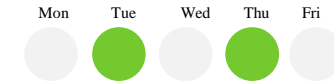
PARLIAMENTARY WORK FROM AN MP'S PERSPECTIVE 2/2

PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



- According to the parliament's rules of procedure, the parliamentary group refers to a group 1) which includes MPs who have been elected from the same party and who represent the same party as a group, 2) which has been set up as a new parliamentary group or party, 3) which is associated with an existing party that is not represented in the parliament, 4) where the group no longer represents the same party but acts on the basis of commonly agreed practices.
- Parliamentary groups operate directly within the parliament's scope of activities and services. Each parliamentary group operates under its own rules and practices. Some groups have strict rules and clear group discipline. In other groups, MPs are allowed to make their choices more independently.
- Parliamentary groups have their own group meetings, which are not included in the parliament's official weekly calendar.

COMMITTEE WORK



- 26 parliamentary committees preparing proposals for the parliament. The key committees are the Finance Committee and the European Affairs Committee. The committees' tasks include discussing legislative initiatives and proposals as well as exercising parliamentary scrutiny. The committee may ask questions and request an oral or written reply from the government.
- The parliamentary groups of individual parties are proportionally represented in parliamentary committees. All members of the Danish Parliament – apart from those who are appointed as ministers – are members of at least one and, most often, three to five committees. As far as committee membership is concerned, parties often form election groups to secure as many seats as possible.

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 1/2

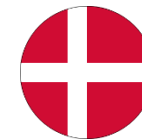


- The Constitution does not mention parties. The parties play a central role especially in elections and the voters vote mainly for the party.
- The leadership and members of the parliamentary group are active in the party's work and decision-making. The party's Executive Board may discuss political issues with the parliamentary group.
- In most parties, especially the major parties, the party leader and the leader of the parliamentary group are the same person. An exception to this is the current Prime Minister's party, where the Prime Minister is the party chairperson but where the separate parliamentary group leader has the final say.
- Parliamentary groups play a key role: a minority government has a general agreement with other parliamentary groups but it must negotiate programme items separately with the parliamentary groups.
- Co-operation between the party and the parliamentary group has intensified over the years and its importance has increased.
- The parliamentary groups have their own secretariats.
- The legislation does not define co-operation between the parliamentary group and the party.
- However, each party and group has its own operating methods and rules.
- There are no formal parliamentary meetings on Mondays and meetings between the party and the parliamentary groups are often held on that day.
- Parties have different ways of working. Some parties have strict discipline, while other parliamentary groups have a lighter way of working together.

Example of a practice:

- The Executive Board (*hovedbestyrelse*) may discuss political issues with the parliamentary group. (The Liberal Party)
- The chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and spokesperson of the parliamentary group are members of the party's Executive Board (*hovedbestyrelse*). (The Liberal Party)
- The Executive Board of the Party (*hovedbestyrelse*) nominates one main candidate for the parliament from each constituency. (The New Right)

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark

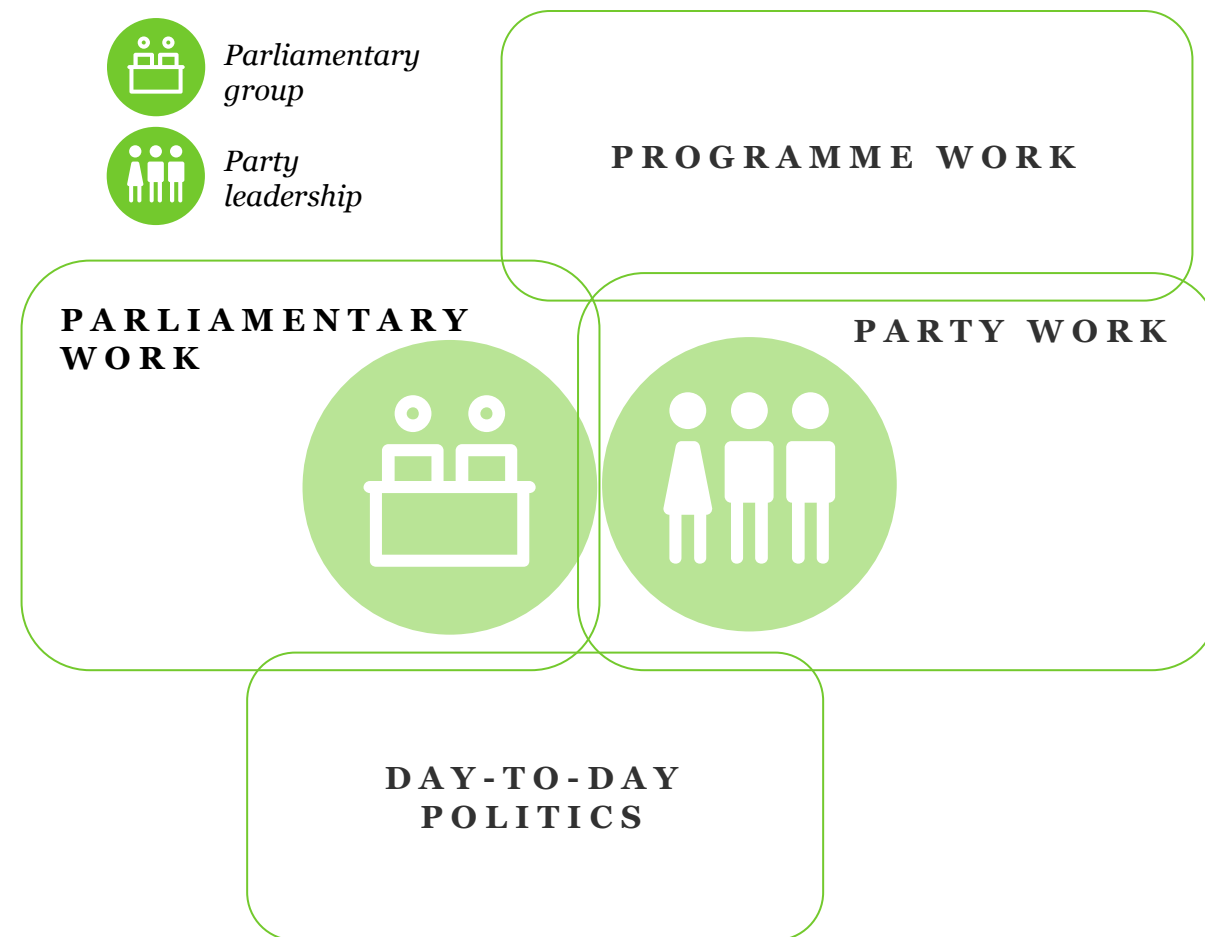


RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 2/2

TASKS, ROLES AND CO-OPERATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND THE PARTY

The icons give a simplified description of how close the parliamentary group and the party are from the perspective of rules and general practices and which areas their work focuses on.





- **Parliamentary work:** The leader of the parliamentary group is described as an internal party leader if the party chairperson and the parliamentary group chairperson are not the same person. The party and the parliamentary group meet regularly to outline common positions.
- **Day-to-day politics:** The party leadership discusses political issues with the parliamentary group. The largest parties have more power in the parliament and in the committees.
- **Programme work:** Most parties define the party programme at annual or half-year meetings, in which the parliamentary group also participates.
- **Party work:** The leadership and members of the parliamentary group are active in the party's work and decision-making. The parliamentary group has an important role in deciding the party's policy in the parliament.



1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



FUNDING 1/2

-  Additional support for opposition
-  Joint use of money
-  Support targeted at Members of Parliament
-  **Parties can accept anonymous donations**

PARTIES



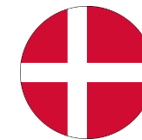
The **parties** receive public support. Support received by the parties is define in the *Act on Funding for Political Parties, etc. (Political Parties Funding (Consolidation) Act)*

Party subsidies can be received by all parties that nominate candidates for election.





- The party subsidy in national elections is DKK 22.30 per every vote cast for the party. However, the party must get more than 1,000 votes in the elections to qualify for the party subsidy.
- The party subsidy for parties nominating candidates for local elections is DKK 2.50 per every vote cast for the party. However, the party must get more than 1,000 votes in the elections to qualify for the party subsidy. The law also provides for other exceptions.

Parties do not need to separately disclose their donors. Certain parties have close ties with different types of entities, such as labour market organisations.

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



FUNDING 2/2

-  Additional support for opposition
-  Joint use of money
-  Support targeted at Members of Parliament
-  Parties can accept anonymous donations

PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS



Parliamentary groups receive a monthly appropriation for the salaries of assistants, for example. In addition, an appropriation per member is distributed, with higher rates for the ministers and the Speaker.

Parliamentary groups that have at least four members receive a monthly group appropriation (2020=DKK 311,964).

- Support for parliamentary groups includes a basic amount per group and per member of the parliamentary group. The basic amount is the same for all parliamentary groups with at least four members.
- Moreover, groups may receive additional support for the use of experts.
- Parliamentary groups with fewer than four members receive a smaller appropriation based on the number of members.

The appropriations are used for paying the salaries of the parliamentary group secretariat, advisors, communications specialists, etc.

In addition to the group-specific appropriation, a **member-specific** appropriation is distributed (2020=DKK 48,912).

- Individual MPs who do not belong to any of the parliamentary groups may also apply for an appropriation corresponding to the member-specific appropriation of the parliamentary groups.
- An additional appropriation is paid for ministers or the Speaker (2020=DKK 16,304).

MPs receive separate **remuneration** and are also offered housing if they come from outside *Zealand*. Remuneration is defined in the *Parliamentary Election Act*.

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



GUIDING LEGISLATION



Parliamentary
activities

Standing Orders of the Danish Parliament (1953)

- Includes the rules for the parliament's work and activities.
- Covers regulation on topics such as the Presidium, committees, legislative proposals, interpellations, citizens' initiatives, debates, voting, public sessions, absences, parliamentary administration and ministerial responsibilities.



Party
activities

Constitution (1849)

- The Danish Constitution is the Constitutional Act, introduced in 1849. Political parties had not yet been formed at the time so there are no mentions of parties in the Constitution.

Other legislation

- *Folketing (Parliamentary) Elections Act (Consolidated Act No. 369 of 2014)* – includes legislation related to the activities of parties, especially in elections, and legislation related to MPs' remuneration.
- *Standing Orders of the Danish Parliament* – just a few mentions of the parties, e.g. “*The Speaker notifies the Members by reading out the name(s) of the mover(s) using abbreviated designations of the political parties in cases in which...*”



Parliamentary group
activities

Constitution (1849)

- The Constitution does not mention parliamentary groups.

Other legislation

- *Standing Orders of the Danish Parliament* – Instead of parties, the law mainly refers to parliamentary groups, e.g. the law specifies that The Deputy Speakers are elected from the four largest parties (with the exception of the Speaker's party).
- *Annex to Standing Orders of the Danish Parliament* – provides for parliamentary groups: The members of a parliamentary group represent an existing party and thus also a parliamentary group. The existence of a parliamentary group is based on a party that fulfils the conditions set out by law in relation to elections. If the parliamentary group's connection with the party it represents is broken, the parliamentary group can continue to act as a united group with a common goal.

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



	Parliament offers to MPs 	Parliament offers to parliamentary groups 	Parliament offers to parties 	Parliamentary group offers to group members 	Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group 	Additional comment
Information technology						
Information services	 PG					
Budget Office	 PG					
Housing						If living outside Zealand. Or compensation.
Communication with members and voters						
Foreign language training						
Orientation to parliamentary work						
Support for preparatory work	 PG					

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



	Parliament offers to MPs	Parliament offers to parliamentary groups	Parliament offers to parties	Parliamentary group offers to group members	Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group	Additional comment
	●	■	★	▲	♥	
Assistant				▲		Funded by the group with parliament support. Used by the members.
Business-related travel	●					
Media tracking					♥	
Support for hiring personnel		■			♥	
Offices	●		★			Some parties have their party office in the parliament.
Additional support for opposition						
Library	● PG + PA					

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS

In Denmark, the parliamentary groups play a key role in day-to-day politics and political negotiations.

“Voters in Denmark do not see the difference between parties and parliamentary groups: they are considered as one entity. Most people vote for the party.”

*

“The life cycle of the government depends on its relationship with all parliamentary groups, especially those that support the government. Even small groups have great influence.”

*

“The government has become increasingly political and the number of personnel has increased.”

Development areas in the parliament’s activities

“More and more frustration has arisen over the democratic control of the government. There are a lot of meetings organised outside the parliament.”

*

“Criticism has arisen over non-disclosure of party funding. Trade unions support social democrats, right-wing parties receive more funding from banks and businesses.”

In Denmark, new parties emerge even in the middle of the parliamentary term.

“It is easy to start a new party if you are already in the parliament.”

*

“Over the past 20 years, there have been interesting developments, in which new parties have emerged and disappeared.”

Parliament’s services

“The parliamentary groups in the government always receive better service, thanks to their ministers.”

*

“You have everything available in the parliament. You can practically live your life there.”

1.5 Practices in the Nordic countries – Denmark



SUMMARY

PARTY & PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

- The party and the parliamentary group work closely together but are two different entities. In the eyes of the voters, they are perceived as one entity.
- There are no legislative practices for the division of duties between the party and the parliamentary group and the division varies from party to party and from parliamentary group to parliamentary group.
- The leadership and members of the parliamentary group are active in the party's work and decision-making. Parliamentary groups play a key role: a minority government must negotiate programme items separately with the parliamentary groups.
- The leadership and members of the parliamentary group are active in the party's work and decision-making. The party's Executive Board may discuss political issues with the parliamentary group.

FUNDING

MP

- In addition to the group-specific appropriation, a **member-specific** appropriation is distributed.

Party

- Party subsidies can be received by all parties that nominate candidates for election. The amount of subsidy is determined by the votes received by the party.

Parliamentary group

- Parliamentary groups that have at least four members receive a monthly group appropriation.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- The parliament provides parliamentary groups and MPs with basic services, such as IT services.
- MPs can get an apartment.
- The parliament offers support for budgeting and preparatory work.
- With the support targeted at parliamentary groups, the groups pay for their assistants.
- Most parties have separate office space, but some parties also have party facilities in the parliament.

RULES VS. PRACTICES

- The mutual activities of parliamentary groups and parties are based on their rules and practices. Each party also has rules, practices and culture.
- In case of a minority government, regular consultation between parliamentary groups is based on general practices.
- A minority government only has a general agreement, so even small parliamentary groups can have power when the government is looking for the votes it needs for a variety of political issues.

2. Key observations and findings

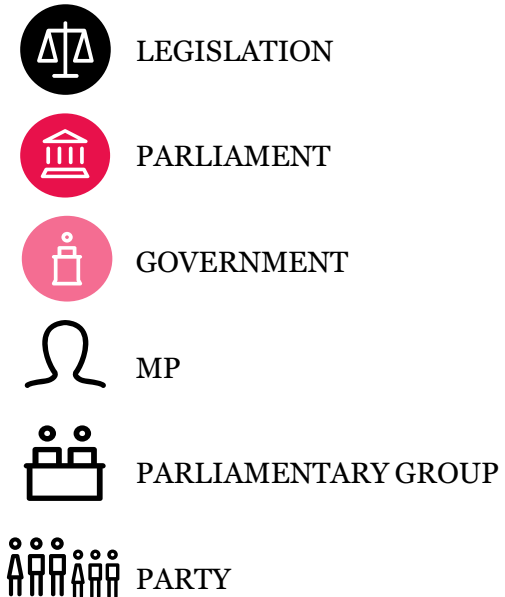
2. Key observations and findings

SYSTEMIC FACTORS BEHIND OPERATING MODELS 1/5

The country-specific findings regarding the Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic and Danish parliaments' activities and services, legislation, as well as the organisation of parliamentary groups and parties show that all Nordic countries have their own specific operating model associated with the relationships and roles of the various parliamentary operators. On the basis of these country-specific findings, we identified seven factors in the background of these different operating models, related to the political system and the legislative framework. The systemic factors are:

1. **Electoral system**
2. **Provisions on the activities and funding of parliamentary groups and parties**
3. **Provisions on the MP and ministerial positions**
4. **Relationship between the government and the opposition**
5. **Support services offered by the parliament and their targeting**
6. **Relationship between the party and the parliamentary group**
7. **Attitude of the parliament towards the relationship between the parliamentary group and the party**

More detailed descriptions of these systemic factors are presented on the following pages. The descriptions on the following pages use **the icons on the right to indicate the political area to which the systemic factor is related.**



2. Key observations and findings

SYSTEMIC FACTORS BEHIND OPERATING MODELS 2/5

1. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland all have proportional list elections. In some of these countries, however, the emphasis is more on the person than on the party when voters make their choices. If the electoral system emphasises the party, the party's role in the parliamentary group is often more significant. The emphasised role of the parliamentary group also influences the work of the parliamentary groups and the support services they need.

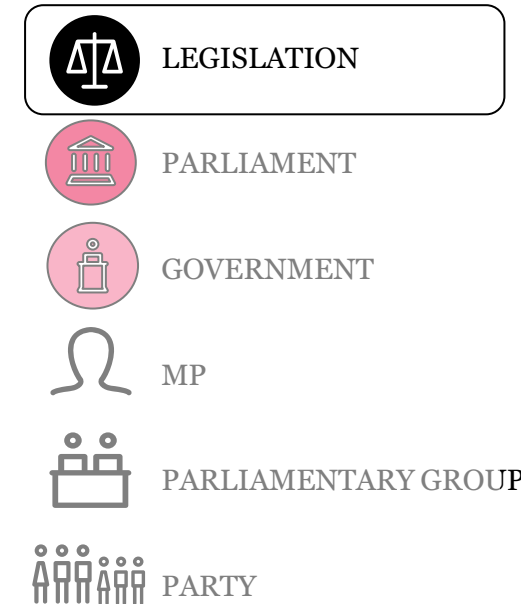
2. PROVISIONS ON THE ACTIVITIES AND FUNDING OF PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS AND PARTIES

In the Nordic countries, legislation and provisions related to the activities of parties mainly include provisions related to party funding, registration and fundraising. In the study, no legislation was found in any of the countries that would influence or determine the operating methods in the relationship between the party and the parliamentary group.

In Finland, there is no separate additional support for opposition parliamentary groups. In Sweden, the parties of opposition parliamentary groups receives an additional opposition party subsidy, along with additional support targeted at the parliamentary group. In Norway and Iceland, opposition support is only available to opposition parliamentary groups. The additional support distributed in Iceland is relatively modest compared to Norway, where opposition parliamentary groups of more than five MPs receive twice as much support. Additional support for opposition strengthens the parliament's activities.

3. PROVISIONS ON THE MP AND MINISTERIAL POSITIONS

In Finland, a minister may act simultaneously as an MP but not as a member of a committee of the parliament. In Sweden and Norway, ministers may not act simultaneously as MPs, while in Iceland and Denmark, this is allowed. The separation of the ministerial and MP positions increases, or at least maintains, the division between the parliament and the government, while the simultaneous holding of different positions brings the parliament and the government closer together and improves the flow of information between them, at least with regard to the parliamentary groups the members of which serve as ministers. This, in turn, influences the parliament's internal power relations between the parliamentary groups.



2. Key observations and findings

SYSTEMIC FACTORS BEHIND OPERATING MODELS 3/5

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION

In Sweden, Norway and Denmark, there is a tradition of minority governments, while Finland and Iceland have a tradition of majority governments.

The relationship and working practices between the government and the opposition is influenced by a country's tradition of either minority or majority governments. This is directly relevant for the role of the parliamentary group and its increased importance in politics, compared to the party.

In a culture of minority governments, there is more negotiation and mutual interaction between the opposition and the government in the parliament because the government needs the support of opposition parties for all of its activities. A minority government is usually supported by other parliamentary groups. The overarching principles are agreed on at the beginning of the government term and the details will be discussed separately. In a minority government, the relationship between the government and other parliamentary groups is closer and the number of negotiations is higher, which is why the role of parliamentary groups is emphasised in minority governments.

Majority governments are government-led and opposition parliamentary groups and MPs play a narrower role. This leads to an emphasised role for parties, which are more focused on conducting election-oriented politics in the opposition instead of negotiating on individual decisions. In these situations, the work of the parliamentary groups is also closer to electoral politics, where criticism or support for the government's actions is at the centre stage. The general guidelines for work are in this case given more clearly by the party. During majority governments, the role of parties is emphasised especially in opposition politics. This is supported by the observation related to Iceland, where additional assistants introduced in 2018 to strengthen the activities of the parliamentary groups are also working to a large extent for the party.

The role of a member of an opposition parliamentary group is particularly arduous in both minority and majority governments and several of the countries have developed additional support for opposition parliamentary groups to reduce this workload. The groups in the government receive support and services through ministers, while the opposition parties, which are strongly involved in the drafting of legislation in minority governments, also do a lot of preparatory work without ministry support. In the interviews, the additional support practice was considered fair as it was seen as balancing the workload caused by the division of duties between the government and the opposition.



2. Key observations and findings

SYSTEMIC FACTORS BEHIND OPERATING MODELS 4/5

5. SUPPORT SERVICES OFFERED BY THE PARLIAMENT AND THEIR TARGETING

The target group of the parliament's support services is mainly MPs. However, parliamentary groups make use of many of the services targeted at MPs, such as information services and support for preparatory work.

In Finland, the parliament's support services are mainly aimed at individual MPs. The services include IT, travel agency and information services, occupational health services, orientation training for new MPs and conference technology services, among other things.

In Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, parliamentary groups employ assistants with the help of support granted by the parliament and MPs may use these assistants to assist in their work. In Iceland, the assistants of the parliamentary groups are on the parliament's payroll. Parliamentary groups also provide some other services with the support they receive from the parliament. For example, in Norway, the parliamentary groups bear the main responsibility for providing training to MPs.

The only parliamentary support service specifically targeted at parties can be found in Sweden, where the parliament provides office space for parties in the parliament. In Finland, the parliament offers meeting rooms for parties. In Denmark, certain parties operate in the parliament's premises, but this is not a common practice. In addition, Iceland's assistant reform indirectly serves also the parties even though the support is specifically targeted at the parliamentary groups.

The role of parliamentary groups is particularly important in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, where there is a tradition of minority governments. Yet the parliament's services are targeted at MPs in the same proportion as in Iceland.

The services include clear expert and information services but also services that make life easier for MPs, such as a gym.



LEGISLATION



PARLIAMENT



GOVERNMENT



MP



PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



PARTY

2. Key observations and findings

SYSTEMIC FACTORS BEHIND OPERATING MODELS 5/5

6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

In the eyes of the general public, the party and the parliamentary group it represents are one and the same. Nevertheless, the reality is that in all the Nordic countries, the parliamentary group and the party are subject to different legislation and rules.

Parties and parliamentary groups have considerably converged in recent years in all the Nordic countries. However, the relationship between the party and the parliamentary group is based on the party's and the parliamentary group's own rules, not on legislation or other practices. One crucial reason for this is the faster pace of day-to-day politics – as the party organisation is slow to form positions, those party members who are also members of the parliamentary group gain significant power and visibility within the party.

The growing number of minority governments in the Nordic countries has also highlighted the role of parliamentary groups and made them clearly an independent entity alongside the party. In Denmark, for example, the parliamentary group is a stronger player than the party, which operates as an “election machinery” and makes decisions together with the parliamentary group. The leadership of the parliamentary group is linked to politics in a manner that differs from the party leadership. The positions of the party leader, the parliamentary group leader and a minister, for example, are no longer always held by the same person. In these situations, the roles of the various persons require clearer co-operation between the party and the parliamentary group.

7. ATTITUDE OF THE PARLIAMENT TOWARDS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND THE PARTY

In especially Iceland and Norway, the attitude of the parliament towards the relationship between the parliamentary group and the party and towards its intensification are very different. In Norway, the parliament tries to keep these two organisations clearly apart by means such as rules related to the funding of parliamentary groups and the work of assistants. Iceland, on the other hand, has no clearly-defined boundaries between the parliamentary group and the party, which allows for closer co-operation. In Finland and Sweden, the parliament financially supports the parliamentary group, but also provides the party with premises in the parliament.










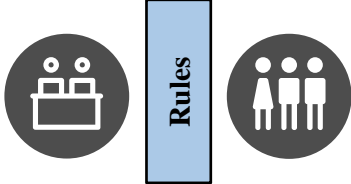
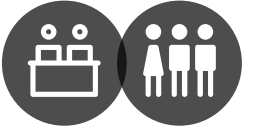

3. Summary

3. Summary

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP


























The proximity of these icons reflects the relationship between the parliamentary group and the party leadership



 FINLAND	 SWEDEN	 NORWAY	 ICELAND	 DENMARK
				
<p>In Finland, the parliamentary group and the party are legally separate entities with different duties, but their co-operation is close, especially in day-to-day politics. In practice, ambiguities may arise over which is the official operator in each case. Officially, the chairperson of the party leads the activities, but the role of the parliamentary group has grown.</p>	<p>In Sweden, the parliamentary group and the party are separate entities with different duties, but they have gradually converged and their co-operation is very close, especially in day-to-day politics.</p> <p>The chairperson of the parliamentary group is usually the second most influential person in the party after the chairperson of the party.</p>	<p>In Norway, the roles and duties of the parliamentary group and the party are clearly separate and the party organisation cannot officially use the parliamentary group's resources, such as assistants or funding, in its activities.</p> <p>In practice, however, the parliamentary group has a lot of influence over the party's activities and programme work, for example.</p>	<p>In Iceland, the parliamentary group and the party are separate organisations with different duties, but they are capable of co-operating quite closely. The party organisation can use the parliamentary group's resources, such as assistants, in party work.</p>	<p>In Denmark, the parliamentary group and the party are two separate entities, but they co-operate closely.</p> <p>In practice, the parliamentary group is on a par with the party and, in some cases, it is more significant than the party as the parliamentary groups participate more in negotiations concerning various political questions.</p>

3. Summary

PARTY AND PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FUNDING 1/2






 FINLAND	 SWEDEN	 NORWAY	 ICELAND	 DENMARK
 Additional support for opposition	 Additional support for opposition	 Additional support for opposition	 Additional support for opposition	 Additional support for opposition
 Joint use of money	 Joint use of money	 Joint use of money	 Joint use of money	 Joint use of money
 Support targeted at Members of Parliament	 Support targeted at Members of Parliament	 Support targeted at Members of Parliament	 Support targeted at Members of Parliament	 Support targeted at Members of Parliament
 Parties can accept anonymous donations*	 Parties can accept anonymous donations**	 Parties can accept anonymous donations	 Parties can accept anonymous donations	 Parties can accept anonymous donations

*Donations of less than EUR 1,500 can be made anonymously. Depending on elections, donations of more than EUR 10,000 must be made through the party or the party association.

**Small anonymous donations only (less than 0.05 x standardised price base, i.e. approximately SEK 2,365 / EUR 225).

3. Summary






PARTY AND PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FUNDING 2/2

 FINLAND	 SWEDEN	 NORWAY	 ICELAND	 DENMARK
<p>The State supports parties and parliamentary groups with party subsidies and appropriations. Support is mainly based on the number of members in the party and the parliamentary group.</p> <p>Support granted by the State is the largest source of income for parties and parliamentary groups at the national level. The party may also carry out its own fundraising and accept donations.</p>	<p>Parliamentary groups receive support for their activities from the parliament and parties from the State. Support consists of a fixed basic component and an additional component based on the number of MPs.</p> <p>Support granted by the State and the parliament is the largest source of income for parties at the national level. Both parties and parliamentary groups receive additional support for opposition.</p>	<p>Parliamentary groups receive support for their activities from the parliament and parties from the State. The support amount is based on the number of members in the parliamentary group and the party's parliamentary elections results.</p> <p>Party funding is composed as follows: 68% state support, 20% income from own business operations and 12% donations. Opposition parliamentary groups are entitled to additional support for opposition, but the party organisation does not receive additional support.</p>	<p>Parliamentary groups and parties receive funding for their activities from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. The amount of support received by the parliamentary group is based on the number of its members. Opposition parliamentary groups receive some additional support.</p> <p>The party subsidy consists of basic support, which is the same for all, and additional support determined on the basis of the parliamentary elections results. Opposition parties do not receive additional support, but parties that nominate candidates in more than three counties can apply for additional support from ministries.</p>	<p>Parliamentary groups receive support for their activities from the parliament and parties from the State. Parties receive support based on the number of votes cast for them in national and local elections. Parliamentary groups or parties do not receive additional support on the basis of the opposition status. Parties do not need to separately disclose their donors.</p>

3. Summary

SUPPORT SERVICES 1/2

PG = the parliamentary group uses
PA = the party uses









































	 FINLAND	 SWEDEN	 NORWAY	 ICELAND	 DENMARK
Information technology	● PG	●	●	●	●
Information services	● PG	● PG	● PG	● PG	● PG
Budget Office	● PG	● PG	● PG		● PG
Housing	●	●	●		●
Communication with members and voters	♡			▲ ♡	
Foreign language training	●	■ PG	●		●
Orientation to parliamentary work	●	●	●	●	●
Support for preparatory work	▲		● ▲		● PG

- Parliament offers to MPs
- Parliament offers to parliamentary groups
- ★ Parliament offers to parties
- ▲ Parliamentary group offers to group members
- ♡ Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group

3. Summary

SUPPORT SERVICES 2/2

PG = the parliamentary group uses
PA = the party uses

	 FINLAND	 SWEDEN	 NORWAY	 ICELAND	 DENMARK
Assistant				 PA	
Business-related travel		 PG			
Media tracking	 PG				
Support for hiring personnel					 
Offices	  PG	 	 	 PG	 
Additional support for opposition					
Library	 PG + PA	 PG + PA	 PG	 PG	 PG + PA

 Parliament offers to MPs
  Parliament offers to parliamentary groups
  Parliament offers to parties
  Parliamentary group offers to group members
  Party offers to group members or the parliamentary group

References

1/2

Finland

1. [Government – activities](#); [Government – ministers](#); [Government – history](#); [Government – Minister’s Handbook](#); [Tasks of Parliament](#); [Constitution](#); [Ministry of Justice](#); [Parliament – power ratios](#).
2. [Parliament – MPs](#); [Parliament – organisation](#); [Parliament – annual report](#).
3. [Parliament – annual report](#); [Finlex](#); [Parliament – organisation](#).
4. [Parliament – parliamentary groups](#); [Parliament – MPs](#); [Parliament – committees](#); [Finlex](#).
5. [Parliament](#); interviews.
6. [Government](#); [Oversight of election campaign financing](#); [Oversight of election campaign financing](#); [National Audit Office of Finland](#); [Finlex](#); [Ministry of Finance](#); [Parliament – register of parliamentary groups](#); [Parliament – register of parliamentary groups](#); interviews.
7. [Parliament – remuneration](#); interviews.

Sweden

1. [Talmannens uppdrag – Riksdagen](#); [Riksdagen – Start](#); [Ledamöter & partier – Riksdagen](#); [finska.pdf \(regeringen.se\)](#); [Riksdagens uppgifter – Riksdagen](#); websites of parties; interviews.
2. [Talmannens uppdrag – Riksdagen](#); [Vice talmän – Riksdagen](#); [Riksdagsstyrelsen – Riksdagen](#); [Riksdagsförvaltningen – Riksdagen](#); [Organisation – Riksdagen](#).
3. [Talmannens uppdrag – Riksdagen](#); [Vice talmän – Riksdagen](#); [Riksdagsstyrelsen – Riksdagen](#); [Riksdagsförvaltningen – Riksdagen](#); [Organisation – Riksdagen](#); [Press photos – Riksdagen](#).
4. [Så arbetar ledamöterna – Riksdagen](#); [Så arbetar utskotten – Riksdagen](#); [Ledamöter & partier – Riksdagen](#); interviews.
5. [Ledamöter & partier – Riksdagen](#); [Så arbetar partierna – Riksdagen](#); [The parties at work – Riksdagen](#); [Constitution \(socialdemokraterna.se\)](#); [Stadgar – Vänsterpartiet \(vansterpartiet.se\)](#); interviews.
6. [Ledamöter & partier – Riksdagen](#); [Så arbetar partierna – Riksdagen](#); [Gemensam intäktsanalys för riksdagspartiernas centrala verksamhet | Nya Moderaterna](#); [Redovisade intäkter från politiska aktörer – Kammarkollegiet](#); [Lag \(2018:90\) om insyn i finansiering av partier Svensk författningssamling 2018:2018:90 t.o.m. SFS 2019:982 – Riksdagen](#); [Lag \(2016:1109\) om stöd till partigrupperna för riksdagsledamöternas arbete i riksdagen Svensk författningssamling 2016:2016:1109 – Riksdagen](#); [Lag \(1972:625\) om statligt stöd till politiska partier Svensk författningssamling 1972:1972:625 t.o.m. SFS 2018:1406 – Riksdagen](#); [Prisbasbelopp för 2021 fastställt – Regeringen.se](#); interviews; exchange rate: [Exchange rates 2020 – vero.fi](#).

References

2/2

Norway

1. [The Storting \(stortinget.no\)](#); [Ministries \(regjeringen.no\)](#).
2. [The Presidium \(stortinget.no\)](#); [The President of the Storting \(stortinget.no\)](#); [Administration \(stortinget.no\)](#).
3. [About the Standing Committees \(stortinget.no\)](#); [Ethical Guidelines for Members of the Storting \(stortinget.no\)](#); interviews.
4. [\(Arms of the Norwegian State\) \(regjeringen.no\)](#); [Political parties' financing – SSB](#); [Changes to the guidelines on the parliamentary party group grants \(stortinget.no\)](#); interviews.
5. [\(Arms of the Norwegian State\) \(regjeringen.no\)](#); [Amendments to the Political Parties Act \(2012\) – regjeringen.no](#); [partiloven_amendments_eng.pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](#).

Iceland

1. [Political Parties | Alþingi \(althingi.is\)](#); [Althingi2018_enska.pdf](#); [Government of Iceland | About Government Offices](#); [Government of Iceland | Government of Iceland](#).
2. [Althingi2018_enska.pdf](#).
3. [Standing Orders of the Alþingi | Alþingi](#); interviews.
4. [162/2006: Lög um fjármál stjórn málasamtaka og frambjóðenda og um upplýsingaskyldu þeirra | Lög | Alþingi \(althingi.is\)](#); [1137/151 frumvarp: fjármál stjórn málasamtaka og frambjóðenda og um upplýsingaskyldu þeirra | Þingtíðindi | Alþingi \(althingi.is\)](#).

Denmark

1. [Danish Parliament website](#); [The Parliamentary Electoral System in Denmark](#); [Folketinget – The Danish Parliament](#); [Standing Orders of the Danish Parliament](#).

**Reforming
the decision-
making process
project website**

