



Senato della Repubblica

Exploring the Senate of the Republic

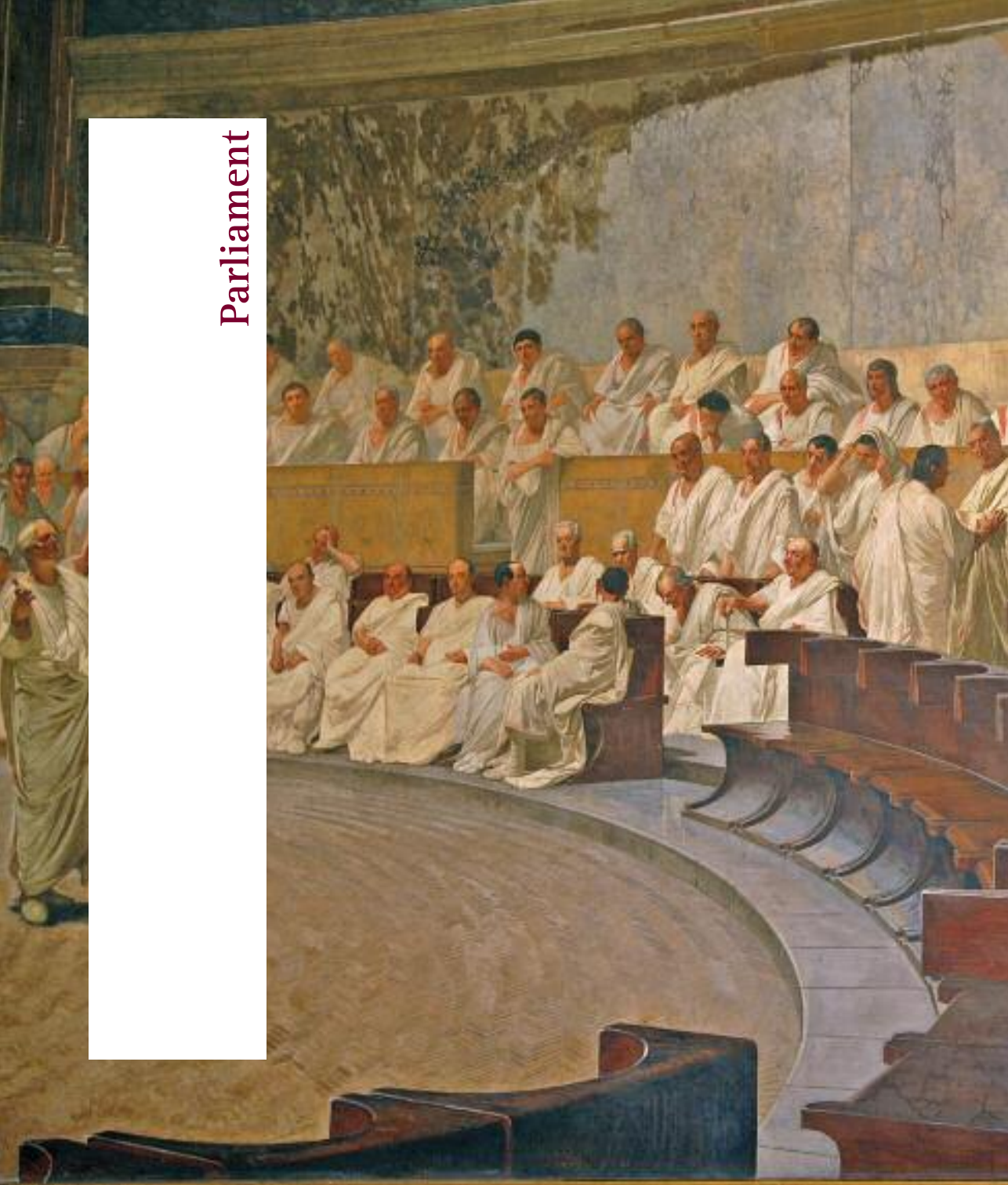




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Parliament





The Italian Parliament consists of two Houses: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic. According to the principle of full bicameralism, the two Houses perform identical functions. Their main function is to make the laws of the country.

By virtue of the vote of confidence, which brings a new Government to life, they establish the political guidelines that the Executive has to follow. The Government is accountable to Parliament, which submits questions and interpellations.

Both Houses are elected every five years. The only differences between the two lie in their composition and the rules for the election of their members.

The 630 Deputies, who must be at least 25 years of age, are elected by all Italian citizens over 18 years of age. The 315 elected Senators must be at least 40 years of age and their electors must be over 25. In addition to elected members, the Senate also includes Life Senators, who are appointed by the President of the Republic "for outstanding merits in the social, scientific, artistic or literary fields" – and the former Presidents of the Republic, who are ex-officio Life Senators.

The election, inauguration and – as the case may be – impeachment of the President of the Republic take place in joint sittings of both Houses. The President of the Republic is elected every seven years.

The elections of one third of the justices of the Constitutional Court and a section of the Higher Council of the Judiciary also take place in joint sittings.

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Senate bodies

Senate statutory business is conducted by several individual and collegiate bodies envisaged in the Constitution and the Senate Rules of Procedure.

The Assembly

The Senate has 315 elected members. It also includes the Life Senators appointed by the President of the Republic "for outstanding merits in the social, scientific, artistic or literary fields", pursuant to article 59(2) of the Constitution.

Moreover, the Presidents of the Republic become ex-officio Life Senators at the end of their term.

The 315 elective seats of the Senate are distributed among the twenty Italian Regions in proportion to their population, with the exception of the seats assigned to the Overseas Constituency. One seat is assigned to Valle d'Aosta, two to Molise and at least seven to each of the other eighteen Regions.

Under Article 58 of the Italian Constitution, any citizen having the right to vote over 40 years of age is entitled to be elected Senator.

The President

Within twenty days after the general election, the Senate must hold its first sitting, presided over by the eldest Senator, in order to elect the new President by secret ballot. For the first two ballots, an absolute majority of all Senate members is required. Should a third ballot be necessary, an absolute majority of the participants suffices. If no candidate obtains an absolute majority of the votes cast, the following ballot is confined to the two Senators who have obtained the highest number of votes in the previous one. In the event of a tie, the elder candidate is declared elected or, if two senators tie in second place, is chosen for the final run-off ballot.

The importance attributed to the President of the Senate is due to the fact that he/she represents the Senate and is the second highest-ranking officer of the Republic, acting as the deputy of the President of the Republic, should the President be absent or unable to discharge his/her duties. The President presides over plenary sittings, conducts and moderates the debates, rules on the admissibility of texts, calls upon speakers, sets the voting schedule and announces the results of votes.

The President directs all the activities of the Senate bodies under the conditions laid down in the Rules, supervises the activities of Quaestors and Secretaries and ensures that the administrative activity is properly conducted.





The Bureau

After electing the President, the following sitting is devoted to the election of the Bureau.

The Bureau consists of the President, four Vice-Presidents, three Quaestors, and eight Secretaries. Vice-Presidents deputise for the President chairing debates by turns and representing the Senate at public ceremonies; Quaestors are jointly responsible for the security, budget and financial accounts of the Senate and the management of Senate funds; Secretaries assist the President during plenary sittings, read the bills and other documents to the Assembly, call the roll, confirm the results of votes and edit the minutes of public sittings. The number of Secretaries may be increased in the cases provided for in the Rules of Procedure.

The Bureau is the ultimate authority on administrative and disciplinary issues.

On a proposal from the President of the Senate, the Bureau appoints the Secretary-General, who is responsible for the Senate Administration.

The activities of the Senate Bureau and the Board of Quaestors are made public through the regular publication of a Bulletin of Collegiate Bodies.

Parliamentary Groups

Within three days from the first sitting, Senators must notify the Presidency the Group which they intend to join. Otherwise, they are assigned to the Mixed Group.

Each Group shall comprise at least ten Senators from a party or political movement, or a combination of parties and political movements, whose candidates ran for and were elected to the Senate under the same party symbol. Senators belonging to language minorities may establish a Group of no less than five members. Each Group elects its own chairperson and, if deemed necessary, one or more deputy chairs and secretaries.

Within five days of its establishment, each Group designates its representatives in the Standing Committees and notify the Senate President thereof.

The Conference of Parliamentary Group Chairs

All the Chairs of the Parliamentary Groups convene in the Conference of Parliamentary Group Chairs, which approves the bimonthly programme and the monthly agenda.

Committees

The composition of the **Standing Committees** – so called because they are permanent bodies and are not established ad hoc to consider individual measures – is proportional to the sizes of Parliamentary Groups, and their members are appointed by the Parliamentary Group they belong to.

Once established, within five days, each parliamentary Group decides the distribution of its members among the Standing Committees, informing the President of the Senate, with the exception of the 14th Committee (EU Policies), the members of which are only chosen after the appointment of the members of all other Committees. Each Committee has legislative and non-legislative responsibility for one or more sectors, corresponding to the activities of one or more Ministries.

The Senate Standing Committees are responsible for the following subject matters:

- 1 Constitutional Affairs, Affairs of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Home Affairs, Organisation of the State and the Civil Service;
- 2 Justice;
- 3 Foreign Affairs, Emigration;
- 4 Defence;
- 5 Economic Planning, Budget;
- 6 Finance and Treasury;
- 7 Education, Cultural Heritage, Scientific Research, Entertainment and Sport;
- 8 Public Works, Communications;
- 9 Agriculture and Agri-food Production;
- 10 Industry, Trade, Tourism;
- 11 Public and Private Employment, Social Security;
- 12 Health;
- 13 Land, Environment, Environmental Assets;
- 14 European Union Policies.

Upon a decision by the Assembly, **Special Committees** are established to scrutinise specific bills. Their composition is proportional to the sizes of Parliamentary Groups.

Committees of Investigation have the same powers and limitations as the judiciary, and are established to investigate specific matters of public interest. They are established by Act of Parliament or by a resolution of the Senate.





Delegations

Permanent Delegations of the Italian Parliament participate in the activities of the following international institutions:

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- NATO Parliamentary Assembly
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Central European Initiative (CEI)
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean

Joint Committees are envisaged in the Constitution or created by Act of Parliament. They are advisory, supervisory, policy-setting or control bodies. They are comprised of members of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

Three Senators form the **Committee on the Library and Historical Archives**, which is responsible for the management of the Senate Library and Historical Archives.

Select Committees

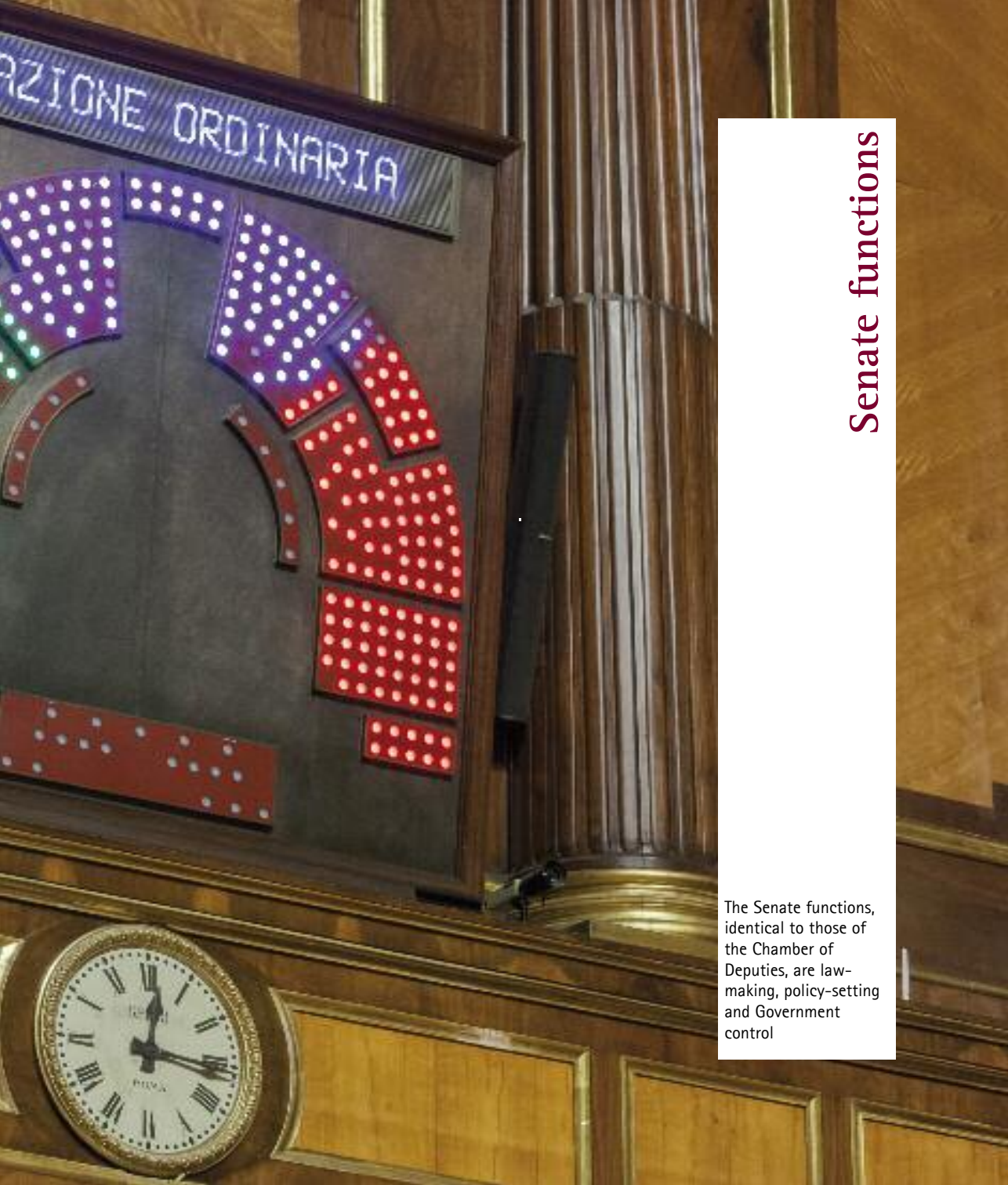
At the beginning of a new Parliament, the President of the Senate appoints the members of the Select Committees in proportion to the sizes of parliamentary groups.

The **Committee on Rules** is comprised of ten Senators, so as to reflect as far as possible the proportionality of parliamentary groups and is chaired by the President of the Senate, who may extend its membership to a maximum of two additional members. It considers and proposes changes to the Senate Rules of Procedure and issues opinions when the Senate President submits question on the interpretation of the Rules.

The **Committee on Elections and Parliamentary Immunity** is comprised of twenty-three Senators, who elect their Chairperson from among their opposition members. It checks credentials and any causes of disqualification. This Committee also considers requests by the judiciary for authorisation to conduct personal or house searches on Senators, or to arrest Senators, wiretap their conversations, intercept communications or impound their correspondence. It also considers requests to prosecute Ministers.



VOTE



Senate functions

The Senate functions, identical to those of the Chamber of Deputies, are law-making, policy-setting and Government control

The legislative function

The legislative function is the process whereby new laws are introduced into the national legislation.

The Constitution establishes that this function is fulfilled by both Houses. Consequently, in order to become law, a bill must be adopted by both Houses with the same final text.

The Constitution envisages two types of laws: **constitutional laws**, which may either amend existing articles of the Constitution or introduce new ones without changing any article, and **ordinary laws**, which regulate the life of the community. These two types of laws differ in terms of legislative procedure and rank in the legal system.

In our system, Constitutional laws ranks first, followed by ordinary laws or other acts having the force of law, i.e. delegated legislation and decree-laws.

The legislative procedure for ordinary laws

According to the Constitution, the subjects having legislative initiative are: individual Members of Parliament, the Government, the people – provided the bill is signed by no less than fifty thousand voters –, individual Regional Councils, or, within its province, the National Council of the Economy and Labour.

A bill must have a title, an introduction (explanatory report) and a regulatory part divided into articles. The Senate provides drafting services to Senators to assist them in writing a bill with the appropriate wording.

The submission of a bill is announced by the President before the Plenary Assembly and the bill is promptly printed for distribution.

The President also refers the bill to the Standing Committee responsible, informing the Senate.

A Standing Committee may consider the bill:

- in a **reporting capacity**, in which case the bill is debated by the Committee, which may propose amendments before sending it back to the Assembly for further debate and a vote;
- in a **drafting capacity**, in which case the Committee considers the bill before returning it to the plenary for votes on individual articles without amendments, explanations of vote and the final vote on the whole bill;





- in a **legislative** capacity, in which case the bill is either rejected or adopted by the Committee, which votes individual articles before the final vote is taken on the whole bill.
- A bill may also be referred to a Committee for an opinion to be given to the Committee responsible, to which the bill has been referred for consideration in the first place: in this case, the Committee sits in an **advisory capacity**.

When a bill has been considered by a Committee in a reporting capacity, the Rapporteur submits a written report – oral, in case of urgency – to the Senate. A general debate on the bill follows, with the conclusive remarks by the Rapporteur and the Representative of the Government. At the end, articles are considered individually, with a discussion, scrutiny and vote for each amendment, if any, and adoption or rejection of the article. After the scrutiny of all articles, a final vote is held on the whole bill.

Once a bill has been adopted, the Senate staff prepare what is known as "message", that is the text of the adopted bill signed by the President of the Senate, and it is sent to the Chamber of Deputies. A bill that has already been adopted by the Chamber of Deputies and then by the Senate without any amendments is signed by the President of the Senate and sent to the President of the Republic for promulgation and publication on the Official Journal. In order for a bill to become a national law, it must therefore be adopted by both Houses of Parliament with the same final text. If a bill adopted by one House is amended by the other, it is referred back to the House of first reading to approve the modifications (a procedure called "shuttle").

The legislative procedure for constitutional laws

The differences in the legislative procedure between ordinary and constitutional laws are:

- the Standing Committee responsible may only act in a reporting capacity;
- a constitutional law must be adopted twice by each House, with an interval of at least three months, a procedure known as "double reading";
- in the second reading, the bill must obtain at least an absolute majority of the members of each House;
- if a constitutional law is adopted with a majority of less than two thirds of the members of either House in the second reading, it is published in the Official Journal without the promulgation formula and one fifth of the members of either House, five hundred thousand voters or five Regional Councils may request to hold a referendum on the bill within three months of publication. In the second reading, if the bill obtains a two-thirds majority in both Houses, it is published in the Official Journal and promulgated.

The policy-setting function

The Constitution requires the Government to obtain a vote confidence in both Houses.

Each House grants or withdraws confidence through a reasoned motion, which is put to a roll call vote.

This provision enshrines the policy-setting function of Parliament, the highest expression of which, in addition to **motions**, **resolutions** and **recommendations**, is the approval of the political programme proposed by the Government through a motion of confidence.

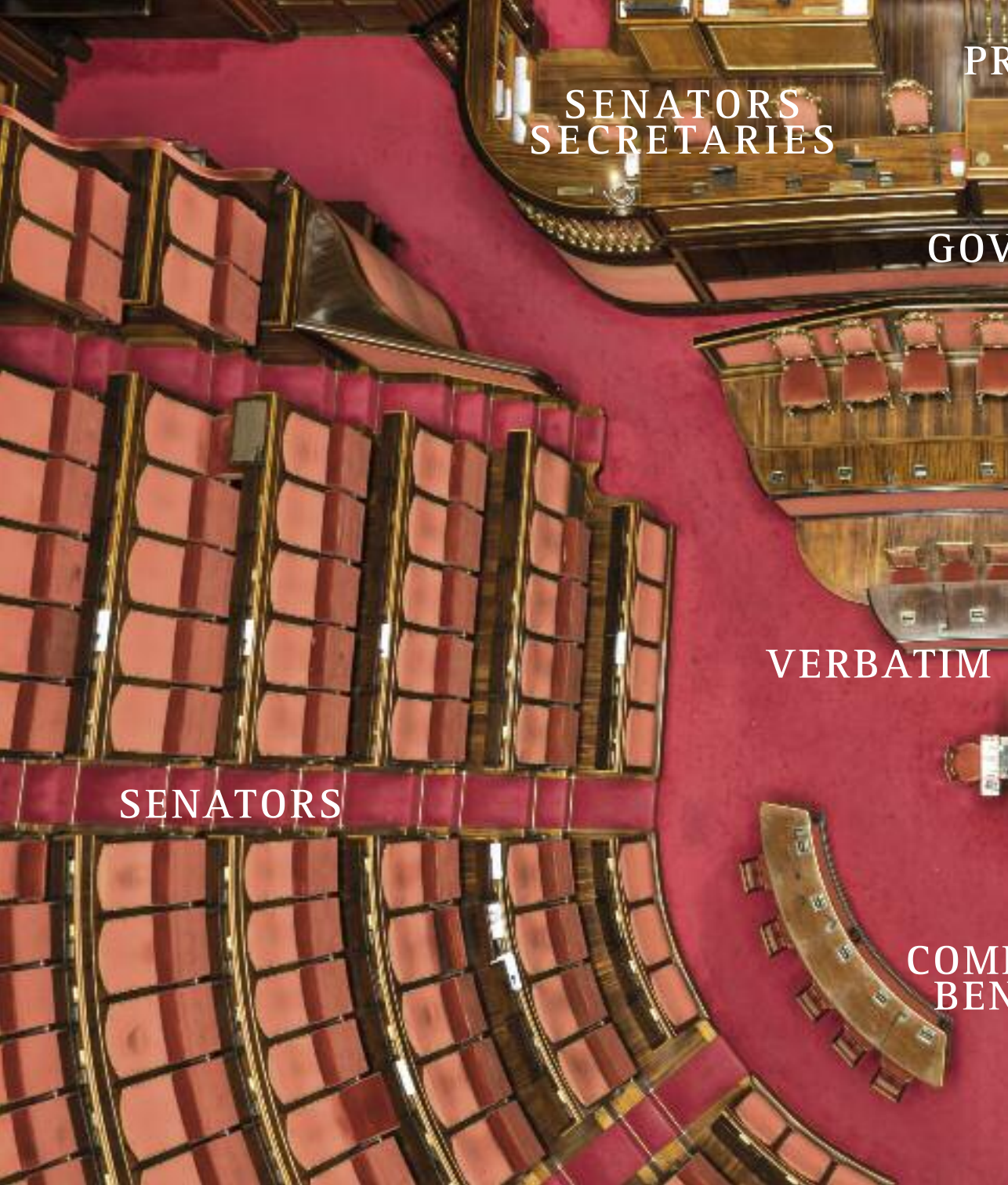




The Government oversight function

The Government is accountable to Parliament, which performs its functions in this respect using various means. Any Senator may ask **questions** of the Government – to seek information or explanations on particular issues from the Ministers responsible, or to learn which measures have been adopted or are planned to be introduced in relation to any issue – or **interpellations** – to ask the Government the reasons for or intentions underlying its conduct on matters of general nature or particular importance.

Investigations into matters of public interest may be conducted through specially established Committees – in some cases also comprising members of the Chamber of Deputies. Investigation Committees are vested with the same powers and subjected to the same limitations as the judiciary. Data, information and documents may be obtained by Standing Committees through **fact-finding enquiries**. Generally, at the end of the enquiry, a final report is adopted and printed for distribution.



SENATORS
SECRETARIES

PR

GOV

VERBATIM

SENATORS

COM
BEN

RESIDENT

SENATE
OFFICIERS

VERNMENT

REPORTERS

SENATORS

MITTEE
NCHES

The Senate and the public

A modern institution that aims at keeping a direct relation with the public, constantly looking for new, advanced communication channels: YouTube, satellite TV, social networks, in addition to the Inform-Educ@tion Centre and Multimedia Bookshop, the Archivi on-line Internet portal and the Library of Parliament. Traditional forms of communication are also used: guided tours of Palazzo Madama, attending sittings or visits to the Senate stand at fairs and exhibitions.



The image shows the entrance to the Inform@zione Centre. Above the glass doors, there is a large red sign with a white logo consisting of a stylized 'S' and 'I' intertwined. Below the logo, the text 'Centro di In-Form@zione' is written in white. The interior of the building is visible through the glass, showing a well-lit space with a piano, a bookshelf, and a sign that reads 'PALAZZO MADAMA'.

Centro di
In-Form@zione

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Libreria del Senato



The Historical Archives

The Historical Archives store all the documents produced by the Senate of the Kingdom and, subsequently, the Senate of the Republic; in addition, also those of the Two-House Investigation Committees.

The Historical Archives has an intense cultural and publishing activity aiming at promoting its archival heritage and conduct or favour studies and researches, in particular on the role played by the Senate in the Italian history.

Since 10th April 2003, when they were first opened to the public, the Historical Archives have made their stocks available to the public, particularly to scholars.

Moreover, through the Archivi on-line - Le carte della politica Internet portal, the public can personally consult the digitised documents of personalities, parties and political movements kept by the Senate Archives or other archives, institutions or foundations.









The Library

The Senate Library, established in 1848, was opened to the public after moving to Piazza della Minerva on 21st June 2003. Since then, its book and bibliography collections have been more easily available to scholars and researchers.

In 2007, the Libraries of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies joined, forming the Library of Parliament, in order to pool resources and co-ordinate services.

The Library's holdings amount to approximately 700,000 volumes, 3,500 Italian and foreign periodicals (152 of which current periodicals), 600 newspapers, parliamentary records and papers, Italian and foreign legislative texts, over 1,000 manuscripts, about 100 incunabula and several ancient printed books.

What is particularly valuable is the collection of medieval statutes of the Italian communes, charters of guilds and other important local institutions from the Middle Ages to the late 18th century.

The Library does not only have the publications necessary for the legislative activity, but also for the study of medieval and modern history, Italian local history, history of law and journalism.

The Library of Parliament has a rich newspaper section.

The search on all the collections of the Libraries of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies is possible through the Catalogue of the Library of Parliament (opac.parlamento.it)

The Senate Library houses the Newspaper Collection of the Joint Parliamentary Library. Inside its on line catalogue (opac.parlamento.it) it is possible to browse both Senate and Chamber of Deputies collections.

InformEduc@tion Centre and Multimedia Bookshop

At the *InformEduc@tion* Centre and Multimedia Bookshop located at 27, Via della Maddalena, a free Wi-Fi connection is available to consult parliamentary data banks, as well as screens to follow live or pre-recorded plenary debates, other programmes concerning parliamentary business and videos on the historical buildings of the Senate.

At the Bookshop, all publications of the Senate can be purchased. Some of them are available in electronic format and can be found on the Senate website.

At the Multimedia Bookshop information is provided on parliamentary business and educational activities are offered daily to visiting school groups, brochures, leaflets and Senate promotional material are on free distribution.

Parliamentary records and papers and electronic publications can be requested by e-mail (libreria@senato.it).

Throughout the school year the Senate bookshop welcomes students from primary and secondary schools (aged from 10 to 19 years old) up to six groups a day.

All citizens have free access to the Bookshop in via della Maddalena in order to ask information concerning the Senate activity or to watch from the tv screens specific events or celebrations (such as the Christmas concert from the Senate Chamber and the Parade which takes place each year on June 2nd).

The on line catalogue contains a wide range of all Senate publications such as the epub file of the Italian Constitution which can be downloaded from the Senate website directly to your tablet or smartphone.





Information on parliamentary business

Parliamentary information can be requested sending mails to infopoint@senato.it or asking personally at the [InformEducation](mailto:InformEducation@senato.it) Centre and Multimedia Bookshop.

By these means the public is granted direct and friendly access to information on the activity of the Senate in the current and past Parliamentary terms.



The Internet website

The Senate website provides information on the functions, structure, services and membership of the Senate, as well as information, data and texts on the activities of the Senate and Senators in real time.

On the website, plenary – and sometimes Committee-sittings are broadcast live and parliamentary texts can be easily consulted and are freely available for download in PDF format.

The satellite channel

Senate sittings can be watched live via Eutelsat Hot Bird 2 by all viewers who have a satellite dish and FTA digital receiver or a common pay-TV device. Broadcasting is unscrambled.

When the Senate is in recess, videos on the history of the Senate, parliamentary business and educational activities for schoolkids are shown.

The YouTube Senate channel

On the occasion of the first sitting of the 17th Parliament (15th March 2013), the YouTube Senate channel was launched.

The web address for the YouTube Senate channel is www.youtube.com/senatoitaliano. It can also be accessed through the Senate homepage, www.senato.it.

Social Networks

The Senate is present on the social networks and can be found on Twitter, where information on the activities in progress is promptly provided (@SenatoStampa). News on the activities for schoolkids are also available via Twitter (@SenatoRagazzi).

Guided tours of Palazzo Madama

Guided tours of Palazzo Madama are generally held on the first Saturday of each month, when it is open to the public. For information on access, go to www.senato.it -Relations with the Public - Guided Tours.

Italian and overseas visitors may watch Senate debates from the public gallery sending a request by ordinary mail (Servizio di Questura e del Cerimoniale - Visite ai Palazzi - Senato della Repubblica - Piazza Madama, 11 - 00186 Roma), fax (+ 39 06 9291 2878) or e-mail (visitealsenato@senato.it).

Requests must include: name and family name, place and date of birth, nationality, address, number, place and date of issue and expiry date of a valid identity document, and a telephone number for communications.





Book fairs and exhibitions

The Senate participates in important Italian cultural exhibitions.

Information is provided on the activities and functions of the Senate and its publications.

Publishing

The Senate Historical Archives edit several series, among which *Discorsi Parlamentari* (Parliamentary Speeches), *Dibattiti storici in Parlamento* (Historical debates in Parliament), *Inventari* (Inventories), *Carteggi* (Correspondence), *Storia e documenti* (History and Records), *Biografie* (Biographies).

Mention should also be made of the volumes that include the records and papers of the fact-finding enquiries conducted by the Senate, *Quaderni di documentazione del Servizio Studi* (Documentation Papers of the Senate Research Department), *Quaderni europei e internazionali* (European and International Papers), as well as *Lavori preparatori* (Preparatory proceedings) and *Raccolte normative* (Legislative collections), available on DVD.

The list of the Senate publications is in the online Catalogue. The Senate website hosts, from 2003, a publishing news page with a brief description and PDF file for each publication.

Electronic-format publications

There are many Senate publications in PDF format on the publishing news page or available on request. The list of the Senate publications is included in the online Catalogue.

Requests can be made personally at the *InformEduc@tion* Centre and Multimedia Bookshop, by ordinary mail (Via della Maddalena, 27 - 00186 Roma), phone (06 6706 2505), fax (06 6706 3398) or e-mail (libreria@senato.it).

The PDF file with the scanned publication will be provided.



Cultural events

Promoting the organisation of prestigious cultural events, often hosted in the superb setting of the Zuccari Hall at Palazzo Giustiniani, is a long-standing practice of the Senate.

Love of music is expressed through the Christmas concert held in the Senate Main Chamber. This tradition, started by former Senate President Nicola Mancino, has now become an awaited and relished event.



The Senate and schools

The activities organised by the Senate for schoolkids are basically intended for those groups who decide to go to Rome and be informed about this institution, its history and how it works. They also include contests for primary-, secondary- and high-school children concerning Constitution and parliamentary activities. Educational activities and a workshop developed for different age brackets can be found on the www.senatoragazzi.it website.



Activities at the *InformEduc@tion* Centre and Multimedia Bookshop

Before visiting Palazzo Madama or attending a plenary debate, school groups have a preparatory meeting at the *InformEduc@tion* Centre and Multimedia Bookshop in Via della Maddalena, 27. Secondary- and high-school children are given explanations on the law-making process and, more in general, how the Senate works.

They are invited to use the Wi-Fi connection to make their contributions to the activities on the <http://lab.senatoragazzi.it> play the role of Senators in mock sittings reading scripts based on simplified records of historically important parliamentary debates.

Primary-school pupils read amusing educational comic strips based on the Constitution and parliamentary history, as a way to spread the knowledge of these subjects.

Guided tours of Palazzo Madama

Guided tours of Palazzo Madama are organised for schoolchildren, starting from the last primary-school year.

The groups (formed by a maximum of 50 people) are guided by Senate staff in a tour of approximately 50 minutes.

The form to fill in order to book a tour can be found on the www.senato.it website in the section Relations with the Public - The Senate and schools or in the Incontra il Senato section of the www.Senatoragazzi.it website.

Attending debates

In order to be admitted to watch Senate debates, schoolchildren from the secondary-school first year upwards must fill a booking form that can be found on the www.senato.it website in the section Relations with the Public - The Senate and schools.



Contests

The Italian Senate promotes initiatives for schoolchildren in co-operation with the Education Ministry. There are contests for all different school levels. The relevant information can be found on the www.senatoragazzi.it website.



Vorrei una legge che... (I wish there were an Act that...), for primary and secondary schools.

This initiative aims at making children understand the importance of the laws that regulate the everyday life of the community and making them grow as civic-minded individuals.

In this contest, pupils in their last primary school year or in their first secondary school year, under the supervision of their teachers, prepare and creatively illustrate a "bill" on an issue that they feel of importance for their personal development and the improvement of the area in which they live.



Testimoni dei diritti (Witnesses to Rights), for secondary schools.

This initiative aims at making children appreciate the importance of human rights. After studying and debating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, they are invited to make proposals to improve the implementation of one or more of its articles.

It also aims at favouring an exchange of views on the e-Workshop.



Un giorno in Senato (One Day at the Senate), for high schools.

The teenagers of the selected schools are hosted in the Senate for two half-days, during which they have an opportunity to sit in a Committee room and debate the bill that they have drafted, visit the main buildings, meet Senators and officials. In other words, they can see with their own eyes the various facets of the activities which take place in the Senate.




Dalle aule parlamentari alle aule di scuola. Lezioni di Costituzione (From Parliament sitting rooms to classrooms. Lessons of Constitution), for high schools.

This contest organised in co-operation with the Chamber of Deputies is intended to offer high-school students and teachers educational opportunities and interactive tools for the analysis of and research on the numerous themes that can be identified in our constitutional Charter.


The participation in the initiative implies the creation of a multimedia product.



The Senatoragazzi.it website

 The purpose of the website is to intensify and deepen the dialogue with Italian schools.

It provides information on contests and meetings specially organised for schools, but also activities on the online Senatoragazzi-LAB educational workshop.

The initiatives for schoolkids are constantly advertised through Twitter (@SenatoRagazzi). 

Other activities for students



The students who take part in educational activities in the Senate bookshop can be involved in meetings - called "Weeks in the Senate Bookshop" - which take place on a regular basis throughout the year. They usually tackle topics related to Parliamentary activities or Celebration and Commemorative Days established by specific Bills which concern subjects peculiar to school students.







The Senate buildings

Within the urban setting of an ancient town like Rome, with all its historical vestiges, some buildings have a precise symbolic meaning as emblems of the past embedded in the present. One of them is Palazzo Madama, main building of the Upper House since the proclamation of Rome capital of a unified Italy, but all other buildings that host the Senate departments and offices also perfectly combine respect for history with the functions required by a modern democracy.





Palazzo Madama

In 1478, the land on which Palazzo Madama was built was given to France by the monks of the Farfa Imperial Abbey to accommodate French pilgrims in Rome.

The first important refurbishment works were carried out when the building was acquired by the Medici family. Architect Giuliano Sangallo renovated it and what was left of the library of Giovanni de' Medici - son of Lorenzo the Magnificent who was to become Pope Leo X - was moved there after the Medici family had been ousted from Florence. When Leo X died in 1521, Palazzo Madama passed to his cousin Giulio de' Medici, who had lived there for a long time before becoming Pope under the name of Clement VII. In 1534, it was inherited by Alessandro de' Medici, who died in 1537, whereupon his widow, Margaret of Austria, enjoyed it in usufruct. She was the illegitimate daughter of Emperor Charles V of Habsburg, become Duchess consort of Parma and Piacenza by marriage. She was called *la Madama (the Milady)* and the building she chose to live in was named after her. The building remained a property of the Medici family and the Grand Dukes of Tuscany until the 18th century.

Major renovation works were carried out in the 17th century: a baroque façade by Paolo Marucelli completed in 1642 replaced the older asymmetric pediment and the interior was enriched with decorated ceilings and friezes under the supervision of Romano Monanni.

The Medici family, however, did not use the building until 1725, when Violante Beatrice of Bavaria, sister-in-law of Gian Gastone de' Medici, the last member of the House of Medici, moved there. Palazzo Madama then experienced its final period of splendour: it became the setting for balls and parties, and first the Accademia dell'Arcadia, then the Accademia dei Quirini were based in the building.

When Gian Gastone died in 1737, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany passed from the House of Medici to the Lorrainers, with Palazzo Madama included in the properties. In 1755, it was purchased by Pope Benedict XIV and became a government building of the Holy See. Substantial refurbishment works were undertaken again: a second courtyard was opened in the area which now accommodates the Senate Main Chamber and Luigi Hostini redesigned the square in front of the main

entrance. Later, the offices of the Court of Justice and the Police Headquarters were housed there. This is the reason why the local population still often refer to the police as "la Madama".

In 1798-99, Palazzo Madama accommodated the central offices of the French-client Roman Republic. Subsequently, Pope Pius IX moved the Finance and Public Debt Ministry there, and, reportedly, in 1850 the drawing of lotto numbers was transferred from Palazzo Montecitorio - now main building of the Chamber of Deputies - to Palazzo Madama. The Pontifical Post Office was relocated here in 1851.

When Rome became the capital of Italy, in February 1871, Palazzo Madama was chosen to house the Senate of the Kingdom. This required new changes to reorganise the building: Architect Luigi Gabet decided to close the courtyard of the Post Office in order to create the Main Chamber, where the Senate held its first sitting on 28th November 1871.

In 1888-89, architect Gaetano Koch designed the well-proportioned classical-style building that was to house the Library until 2003.

In 1926-31, after the broadening of Via della Dogana Vecchia, the back of the building was reconstructed in neo-XVI-century style, while architect Nori added rusticated double columns in travertine under windows decorated with heads of elderly people to the external wall overlooking Piazza Sant'Eustachio.

At present, Palazzo Madama houses the Senate Main Chamber, the offices of the President, Bureau, Parliamentary Groups and Secretary General of the Senate and their staff and the offices most directly involved in parliamentary business.



Ground floor

The Courtyard of Honour

It has Renaissance-style architectural features, with the six columns left of the building that existed at the time of Pope Leo X.

A modern statue by Emilio Greco was placed in the centre of the courtyard in 1972. The travertine of the ancient floor was replaced by the marble taken from Nero's Baths.



Monumental Staircase

The most outstanding feature of the monumental staircase of St. Louis de France, completed in 1931, is a wooden ceiling that was originally placed in the room behind the Anteroom of the Balustrade. Without any doubt, this massive coffered ceiling dates back to the 16th century.

A Medici coat of arms can be seen in the centre, dominating over the surrounding decorative motifs with mermaids and tritons belonging to the theme of the battle of the marine gods. The fine gilded carvings stand out thanks to the effect of the dark background that intensifies their brightness.

First floor

Maccari Hall

This hall is named after Cesare Maccari, the artist who decorated it after winning a contest of the Ministry of Education in 1880. On the ceiling, four medallions around a central motif symbolising Italy depict allegorical figures that represent trade, agriculture, the arms, science, humanities and the arts. A sentence by Guicciardini and one by Machiavelli are written along the frieze that runs along the ceiling.

The walls are painted with scenes from the history of the Roman Senate: Appius Claudius the Censor led into the Senate to exhort the Romans not to accept the humiliating peace conditions imposed by Pyrrhus's ambassador Cineas; Marcus Papirius bravely seated motionless while the Gauls are invading Rome; some Samnites trying to bribe Curius Dentatus to convince the Senate to make peace; Cicero delivering his oration against Catiline; Atilius Regulus who, sent back to his country after being captured in the Battle of Tunis by the Carthaginians to negotiate with Rome on condition that he considers himself a prisoner, is going back to keep his word although he knows he will be certainly put to death.

Senators' Lounge (also known as *Buvette*)

In this spacious room designed by Marucelli, a 16th-century Medici tapestry with a large coat of arms and wide borders borrowed from the Uffizi Gallery of Florence hangs on the wall in front of the bar counter, on which there is a figurine fountain by Vincenzo Gemito. Two still



life paintings by Luciano Ventrone, *The Pause* (2002) and *The Return of Ulysses* (2002), adorn the other walls.



Garibaldi Hall

This hall is named after Giuseppe Garibaldi, hero of the Italian Risorgimento whose bust is located in this large space created in the early 30s by pulling down a partition wall between two rooms.

The coffered ceiling is modern. The motifs of the 17th century frieze formed by an alternation of frescoed historical scenes and grotesques are not in sequence, since they were originally painted for two separate rooms and, by analysing certain details, it can be inferred that they are the work of two different artists.

The seascape *Black and Blue* (2003) by Piero Guccione was placed in this room in 2003.

Hall of the Ostrich

It boasts a splendid 17th-century coffered ceiling in the centre of which an ostrich stands out. There is an interpretation whereby the ostrich may have been chosen to represent Margaret of Austria's original lineage through a French play on words between *Autriche* (Austria) and *autruche* (ostrich). According to another interpretation, this bird was chosen as a heraldic symbol of speed and precedence, or of steadiness and strength, or as a symbol of passionate love. In any case, the ostrich was adopted as own representation by an important member of the Medici family who did not hold any religious office, as testified by the crown on the bird's head.



Risorgimento Hall

The hall features busts and portraits of some of the most outstanding figures of the Italian Risorgimento, in an efficacious alternation of representatives of the Democratic-Republican current of thought and representatives of the liberal constitutionalism that characterised the Kingdom of Sardinia after 1848. The frieze has a central scene depicting events from Clement VII's pontificate.



Signing Hall

Its name is due to the fact that Senators, before the adoption of the new electronic system, used to sign the attendance book in this room before sitting in the Chamber.

The walls are hung with two tapestries from the valuable Medici collection that depict the biblical story of Tobit and his son Tobias.

The coffered ceiling with gilt decorations dates back to the 17th century, as well as the frieze, with its little putti, fruit, vine stocks, flowers, and medallions depicting historical events at the time of Cardinal Alessandro de' Medici (then Pope Leo XI).

Marconi Hall

This recently restored hall has a 17th century frieze that depicts episodes of Pius IV's pontificate.

It houses the busts of Guglielmo Marconi and Pietro Canonica and, on the walls, views of the Roman Forum and Baths of Diocletian painted by Giovanni Paolo Pannini (1691-1765).



Anteroom of the Balustrade

The gilded wooden ceiling and the frieze date back to the 17th century. The two late 17th century paintings on the walls were recently attributed to Fancesco Solimena (1657-1747), the first depicting Zeuxis, an ancient Greek painter, who chooses the most beautiful parts of the body of some young girls to represent ideal beauty, and the second showing Alexander the Great who orders Apelles to paint a portrait of Campaspe. The room also features a painting by Carlo Dolci (1616-1686) entitled *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*.

Hall of the Choir Stalls

It owes its name to the 17th century walnut-wood choir seats taken from a seminary in Ancona that line the lower part of the walls.

A circular seamless wrought-iron chandelier made by Alberto Gerardi (1889-1965) hangs from the centre of the ceiling.

This room houses busts of Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, Francesco Saverio Nitti and Luigi Einaudi.



Pannini Hall

This hall already existed when an opportunity was afforded to salvage a fresco painted in 1725-26 by Pannini (1691-1765) in a building located in Via del Tritone, which was doomed to be pulled down under the 1926 Urban Development Plan. In the centre of the ceiling, a Sun Chariot is enveloped in thick clouds from which imaginary architecture, aerial perspectives, allegorical figures, putti, amphorae and garlands of flowers radiate.

It is the room where the Senate Bureau and the Conference of Parliamentary Group Chairs hold their meetings.

Corridor of the Hero

The more important of the two corridors parallel to the Main Chamber is the Corridor of the Hero, named after a fresco by Lodovico Gimigniani (1643-1697) that decorates the ceiling. Originally, the fresco adorned a corridor in former Palazzo Carpegna, eventually pulled down, and was painted to glorify the legendary founder of the family, probably Julius Caesar. In the central picture, "the Hero introduced by Hercules receives solemn formal acknowledgement of his feats from Jupiter, who is with Mars and Venus. The trumpets of fame announce his glory". The pagan theme of this fresco is a rarity for the historical period when it was painted.

Cavour Hall

This room houses the two friezes that previously decorated the partition wall in the Garibaldi Hall. An oval painting of Bacchus and Ariadne by Giambattista Pittoni (1698-1767) is nested in the middle of the coffered ceiling.

The room is open to the members of the Government during sittings and is occasionally used for meetings of the Council of Ministers.

Main Chamber

The Senate Chamber, designed by Luigi Gabet, occupies the former courtyard of the old papal Post Office.

In the 1930s, the galleries of the members of the Chamber of Deputies and Diplomatic Corps, supported by pillars rising from the floor, were replaced by overhanging galleries at a higher level. Other alterations were also



made to the middle aisle to increase the number of seats, but the original structure and the decorations in this room have remained practically unchanged.

The wooden ceiling is covered with a canvas by the artists Fumanti, Nava, Bruschi, Mei, Barilli and Gaj, that features symbolic representations of Strength, Justice, Concord and Law.

Second floor

The President's Office

The room is decorated with a painting from the school of Bonifazio Veronese, Adoration of the Magi, and, on the opposite wall, a male portrait by Gerard van Honthorst (1590-1656), a Dutch Mannerist known in Italy as Gherardo delle Notti (Gerard of the Night Scenes) because of his many candlelit nocturnal paintings, and a painting with a Gospel theme by the Neapolitan artist Luca Giordano (1632-1705), Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. Between the two windows, a 15th-century Virgin and Child with Saint John and Saint Blaise in the manner of Pinturicchio stands out, while the opposite wall is hung with a tapestry showing Aristotle with his disciple Alexander of Macedonia, who is to become Alexander the Great.

The windows of the Senate President's office at Palazzo Madama overlook the dome of the Baroque Church of Sant'Agnese in Agone.

Quaestors' Anteroom

An ornate wooden staircase behind the Public Gallery leads to the Quaestors' Anteroom.

The walls are hung with two tapestries: wool-woven *Narcissus* (cm. 330x330), designed by Corrado Cagli (1910-1976) and made by the Scassa Tapestry Factory of Asti; and 17th-century *Prudence*.

A painting by Sandro Chia, *The Triumph of Reason* (2003), can be seen on the right side of the wooden staircase.



Palazzo Carpegna

Previously named Palazzo Baldinotti Carpegna, this building by architect Giovanni Antonio de' Rossi (1619-1695) was erected on its present location at the end of the 17th century.

Until the early 20th century, it housed departments of Rome University, relocated in 1930. Following the adoption of the urban development plan of 1926, the building was pulled down and then reconstructed. In particular, the new façade was rebuilt in 1935 moving it back to make room for a broader Corso Rinascimento.

In the 1940s, the building was connected to Palazzo Madama to make up for the parts lost as a consequence of the clearance to broaden Via della Dogana Vecchia. The two buildings were linked with a two-storey arcade. The upper part is supported by seven Tuscan-order granite columns and its arches, featuring Ionic columns, are closed with large window panes. Cardinal John's Courtyard, also known as the Courtyard of the Palm, is enclosed by the arcade, Palazzo Madama, the Crescenzi Tower and the building designed by architect Koch.

Using a technique which was very advanced at that time, a fresco by Lodovico Gimigniani depicting the founder of the Carpegna family was carefully detached from this building and moved to the ceiling of the *Corridor of the Hero* at Palazzo Madama.

The Senate Standing Committees hold their sittings at Palazzo Carpegna. For this reason the building was recently renovated in order to make the most of its ample spaces, adopting innovative architectural solutions which successfully combine sober elegance and state-of-the-art functionality.









Palazzo Giustiniani

The original core of Palazzo Giustiniani was built at the end of the 16th century by Monsignor Francesco Vento. On 4th July 1590, the building was sold to Giuseppe Giustiniani, a member of one of the richest and most powerful families in Genoa.

The Giustiniani family, former governors of their native island of Chios on behalf of Genoa, was forced to abandon the island because of the Turkish aggression of 1566. They moved to Via della Dogana, the financial and administrative heart of papal Rome. In 1590, they bought the building, which took their name, and purchased other adjacent buildings in the following years. Due to the subsequent mergers, it would actually be more correct to talk in terms of a kind of *Giustiniani block* created near the Pantheon rather than the construction of a single building.

The family's art collection was housed in this building, which was sometimes fully or partially rented to prelates and other eminent figures seeking prestigious accommodation.

In the course of later extension works, the main façade overlooking Via della Dogana Vecchia was completed and the interior of the building renovated.

The Great Gallery of Palazzo Giustiniani, now known as Zuccari Hall having been named after the artist who painted the ceiling, Federico Zuccari (1539-1609), is entirely decorated with frescoes: the ceiling depicts five episodes from the stories of Solomon (*Solomon anointed king, the construction of the Temple, Solomon's Judgment, the children forced to stab their father's corpse and, in the centre, Solomon meeting the Queen of Sheba*) and his four virtues, *Religion, Industriousness, Watchfulness and Eloquence*. Near the corners of the ceiling there are some small landscapes in round frames. The walls were graced with female figures representing the virtues, but the only whole-length figure left today is *Temperance*, although remaining fragments of the others can also be seen. All decorations are arranged on a surface painted with grotesques, creating a magnificent overall effect, which is further enhanced by the presence of 17th-century tapestries.

From 1844 to 1870 Palazzo Giustiniani housed the Embassy of the Russian Empire to the Holy See. In 1845

the building accommodated Tsar Nicholas I for five days during his official visit to Pope Gregory XVI. The Giustiniani family line died out at the end of the 19th century and, consequently, their rich art collection broke up. In the early 20th century, the Ministry of Education took action to stop the dispersion by transferring the most valuable pieces to the State. In that period, part of the collection was acquired by the Savings Bank of Rome and part was rented to the Grand Orient of Italy. At the beginning of 1926, Mussolini accepted the request by Senate President Tommaso Tittoni to use Palazzo Giustiniani for the Senate of the Kingdom, but only in 1988 did the Senate have almost the whole building at its disposal. In this very building, and, to be more precise, in its Library, Interim President of the Republic Enrico De Nicola signed the Constitution of the Italian Republic. Palazzo Giustiniani houses, in addition to the Senate President's official residence, Life Senators' offices and the Historical Archives.









Palazzo Cenci

The first work by Giulio Romano as an architect, its façade is divided vertically forming five sections. The central section has a gabled entrance door, while the four windows are surmounted by imposing rusticated wedge-shaped ashlar slabs that give a powerful upward thrust to the building. The tension of the ashlar-work is tempered by the composed architectural layout of the first floor and becomes a sheer rhythmic element in relation to the linear order of the second floor.

In the courtyard, harmony of design is provided by the flat ashlar-work at ground level and the high two-storey trabeated loggia corresponding to the back of the upper part of the façade. Here again, Giulio Romano interpreted the sequence of orders with an abstraction approach.

Recent restoration work revealed false windows in the vaulted ceiling of the Blue Room and original frescoes in the ground floor lobby, where the grotesques and vine bowers frescoed on the ceiling are dominated by the coat of arms of the Stati family, the original owners of the building.

The rooms on the first floor are decorated with fine frescoes by artists of Raphael's school. A small room houses the sequence *The Gods' Preferred Lovers*, a traditional motif of the time, while another room is decorated with a continuous frieze divided into false frames separated by putti and female caryatides that depict episodes from the life of Julius Caesar.

At present, Palazzo Cenci houses the offices of the EU Policies Standing Committee, as well as Senators' and Administration offices.

Palazzo della Minerva

It was erected in the square that bears the same name, adjacent to the old convent of the Dominican friars.

We can appreciate to what extent the building has changed over time looking at pictures of the square in the 17th and 18th centuries. Only the obelisk in the middle of the square that rests on a marble elephant designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini - a symbol of intelligence and strength also known as *Minerva's Chick* - has remained unchanged. From 1849 to 1867, the French troops defending the independence of the Papal States after the fall of the Roman Republic were quartered in the building. It was subsequently reorganised under the supervision of architect Andrea Busiri Vici Sr. to house the Pontifical Latin-American College. When Rome became the capital of the Kingdom of Italy, the Ministry of Education was located here, until the mid-1920s, when it was moved to Viale del Re (*King's Avenue*, now Viale di Trastevere). Then it housed the offices of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and, later, the Scientific Research Ministry. In 1991, Palazzo della Minerva was transferred to the Senate and President Giovanni Spadolini decided to move the Senate Library there. Named after him, it was opened to the public in spring 2003, after long renovation works.

The main features of the Atti Parlamentari Hall on the Library first floor (the room that houses the collections of parliamentary records and papers) are a roof in plexiglas and steel and a copper, bronze, white and gold nickel female figure cast by Giuliano Vangi in 2003. According to the artist's explanation, the woman's downward look means disposition to silence and meditation.

A bronze statue cast in 2003 by Sandro Chia stands in the garden of the cloister adjacent to the church: it is a single-winged angel raising a golden heart towards the sky. The artist reminds humankind that they must keep united and sympathetic to be able to make their age-old aspiration to flight and freedom come true.









Palazzo della Sapienza

The result of a number of subsequent renovation works, it owes its name, meaning *knowledge*, to the Studium Urbis (*Study Town*), the prestigious Rome University founded by Pope Boniface VIII in 1303. The University was based here until the early 1900s, when the State Archives were transferred to this building.

A number of renowned architects took part in the construction, including Giacomo Della Porta and Dominichino, but its distinctive feature, the church with its majestic spiralling spire, was added by Francesco Borromini in 1643.

At present, in addition to the State Archives, the Elections and Parliamentary Immunity Committee and the Research and Documentation Department of the Senate are located here.

Building at Piazza delle Coppelle

The building overlooks Piazza delle Coppelle on one side and Via della Maddalena on the other and houses Senators' offices, logistic services and storage spaces. Since July 2003, the Senate *InformEduc@tion* Centre and Multimedia Bookshop has been located here, with access from the entrance at number 27 of Via della Maddalena. The Centre was created with the purpose to draw citizens closer to the Senate, disseminate information on its activities and make documentation on parliamentary business and Senate publications available.



Former Spanish Property Building

Built on the ruins of Nero's and Alexander's baths, probably in the late 16th century, it was radically altered by its Spanish owners who heightened the building and made other renovation works in the course of the two following centuries. In 1933, after a long series of changes of ownership and consequent further reorganisation works, it became the barracks of the policemen detailed to the Senate. Eventually, it was purchased by the State in 1980 and transferred to the Senate. Senators' offices are now located there.



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