

- Good morning (good afternoon) everyone.
- Welcome to the Swedish Riksdag
- My name is .....and it is a pleasure for me to give you a tour of the building. The tour will last about xxx. Please feel free to interrupt at any time if you have any questions.
- It is important to stay with me. For security reasons, visitors are not permitted to leave the group.
- Please follow me

### **The History of the Buildings**

The Riksdag building consists of two main **sections (wings)** which are joined by **passages** both above and under the ground. Both sections were designed by the architect Aron Johansson and were built between 1894 and 1906. Between 1905 and 1971 the Riksdag was housed in the **East wing**, while the **West wing** belonged to the **Bank of Sweden**. In 1971, with the introduction of the **one-Chamber (unicameral)** reform, the Riksdag moved temporarily to Sergels torg while waiting for larger premises. The Bank of Sweden moved to new premises at Brunkebergstorg in 1976. In 1978 the members voted for a return to the original site here on Helgeandsholmen. The building of the old Bank of Sweden underwent extensive renovation before the Riksdag returned. Among other things two floors were added to make room for the new chamber, public gallery and the media. The Riksdag returned to this site during the summer of 1983 and the building was **inaugurated** on 4th October in connection with the opening of the Riksdag session. Today the Riksdag also makes use of several other buildings in the Old Town.

On the roof outside the windows you can see the "**Apples of the Realm**" - crowned **orbs** in Art Nouveau style. The originals in **granite** were removed in the 1930s and were taken care of by private individuals (one is in Gröndal in Stockholm). The apples that you see on the roof today are copies made of plastic, but two of the original granite apples have been restored to the Riksdag and they now stand on pedestals at Stallbron (Stable Bridge) and Riksbron (the Bridge of the Realm). One of the lions standing outside the new chamber had its tail removed when the chamber was added.

### **The Lobby of the Public Gallery**

From here we have a view of Riddarfjärden and Rosenbad, the **Prime Minister's Office**. The name Rosenbad (bath of roses) originates from a public baths from the 18th century, offering medicinal or perfumed baths. In the surrounding area are the 11 **ministries** (see page 13) . The **Sager House**, next to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, was bought by the State in 1989 and has been rebuilt as a residence for the Prime Minister and as reception suites for the Government.

### **The Public Gallery/The Chamber**

Measures have been taken to make the Chamber more accessible for people with disabilities. In order to create livelier debates, 50 special **debating benches** have been constructed in a semi-circle in front of the Speaker's **rostrum**. Previously members had to walk to and from their seats during debates.

Altogether there are 353 seats in the Chamber. The 349 members of the Riksdag have fixed places and sit in order of **constituency** and seniority. During debates they are free to sit where they want, and the intention is that they should use the new debating benches. Members of the Riksdag who are appointed as ministers have substitutes. Debates and votes in the Chamber are led by the **Speaker**, Per Westerberg, who is the Riksdag's principal representative. He is assisted by three **Deputy Speakers**.

**Universal suffrage** was introduced in Sweden in 1919-1921 and in 1922, five women entered the Riksdag. After the 2010 election, 45 per cent (or 157) of the representatives were women.

Ordinary **general elections** to the Riksdag are held every four years and **county council** and **municipal council** elections take place on the same date. Unlike countries such as Denmark and the UK who do not have to give long notice of an election, Sweden's election dates are set well in advance. The date for the next election is 14 September 2014. Elections are usually the third Sunday in September but the next one is in the second Sunday in September. The **turnout** at the latest general election in 2010 was 82.1 per cent. Elections are open to all Swedish citizens who are domiciled (*bosatta*) in Sweden and who have reached the age of 18 on or before election day. The electoral system is intended to distribute seats in the Riksdag between the parties as fairly as possible, in proportion to the number of votes cast. This is called a **proportional representation system**

A party must obtain at least 4 per cent of the votes in the entire country or 12 per cent in one **constituency** in order to participate in the allocation of seats and achieve representation in the Riksdag. This is called the **threshold rule**.

### **Subjects to discuss in the Chamber**

- The position of the Speaker and the officials on the platform.
- The role of the Speaker, who cannot vote or take part in the debates.
- The three Deputy Speakers who are also members of the Riksdag.
- The **debates** - what is debated and who debates. Debates between the party leaders, general political debates, financial debates, foreign policy debates and **scrutiny debates**. How members vote, and how the voting and text indicators work.

The **stenographers** work in 10-minute shifts, and then revise what they have written. A preliminary record (the so called 'quick minutes' is printed the next day)

### **Attendance rate.**

Attendance is compulsory when a vote takes place. At other times the Chamber is often rather empty. The members who attend a meeting of the Chamber usually represent the committee whose report is being dealt with. Most of the members' work takes place outside the Chamber, attending committee meetings, answering inquiries, attending receptions for various delegations and organisations etc. Besides reading and other preparations for their work in the party groups and the committees, the members also have extensive contacts with the voters. Members may also have tasks elsewhere, for example in the Nordic Council, the Council of Europe or the United Nations.

### **Show the Seats for the media.**

- Internal radio and television networks mean that the debates can be watched and listened to in all the buildings of the Riksdag.

The **Public Gallery** seats about 450 persons. All debates and votes in the Chamber are open to the public. The walls of the Chamber are decorated with **birch** panels. The **woven fabric** in the middle is the result of a competition that was won by Elisabet Hasselberg Olsson. The **tapestry** is called Memory of a Landscape and is a fantasy landscape which could be found anywhere in Sweden. It contains flax collected from the whole of Sweden in several hundred shades of grey. It is 54 square metres large and was woven in three sections at the workshop of the Friends of Craftsmanship in Stockholm.

The exact age of the Swedish Flag is not known, but one theory is that it dates back to the mid-15th century. A royal seal from 1449 shows what looks like a golden cross on a blue background. The design of the Swedish flag is probably taken from the Danish flag, and its blue and yellow colours possibly come from the National Coat of Arms. Also hanging in the Chamber is the **EU flag – the circle of golden stars represents solidarity and harmony and the twelve stars represent perfection, completeness and unity. The EU flag dates back to 1955.**

The National Coat of Arms decorating the **rostrum** is the result of an artistic project led by the designer Ingegerd Råman and the artist Per B Sundberg.

### **The Bank Hall**

The old **Bank Hall** had an enormous barrel-vault ceiling with lanterns and a large glass section in the middle. The Chamber is situated directly above the **Bank Hall.**

The rose-coloured stucco-marble on the walls is presumably an imitation of Istrian marble, and the pale yellow parts Sienna marble.

The **frescos** by Georg Pauli from 1906 previously decorated the walls above the cornice of the vaulted ceiling and represent two of the pillars of the Swedish

economy at the beginning of the century: "Mining in Lappland" and "Farming in Scania". During renovations, the frescos were saved at the last minute when the ceiling had already been removed and demolition had begun. They were transferred to plaster boards and assembled on the ceiling, horizontally. Previously they were vertical.

The **columns** of polished granite come from the county of Bohuslän in Western Sweden and have capitals of bronze. The garlands shaped like sprays of pine are characteristic of the National-Romantic period.

The curved **bank counter** used to stand at the junction of the marble floor and the fitted carpet in the western part of the hall. The benches and the mahogany telephone boxes were designed by Carl Westman and have stood here since the time of the Bank of Sweden.

The small statue of Mother Svea sleeping was the result of a competition.

### **The Southern Connecting Room**

The extension to the old Riksdag building begins on this floor. The inner wall at the entrance to the lobby of the Chamber is made up in part of the granite **facade** of the old building.

The rose-coloured walls are the original walls, while the yellow toned walls were built during the renovations in the early 1980s. The plum-coloured stripe in the carpet always runs parallel with Riksgatan. The Southern Connecting Room contains portraits of the Speakers of the **Four Estates** (the two higher estates nobility, clergy and the two lower estates burghers and land-owning peasants) in the Riksdag of 1810, who chose Jean Baptiste Bernadotte as heir to the throne. As a mark of respect to Sweden's Estates, Karl XIV Johan paid for the portraits which were painted by Carl Fredric von Breda. The same model posed for all four of the paintings which are on loan from the National Gallery.

From the window you can see the Members' Building. It contains rooms for the members of the Riksdag (offices and overnight accommodation). Some of the party **secretariats** are also found in the Members' Building. The building, which formerly housed the Chancellery (Prime Minister-s Office), is situated at Mynttorget. It stands partly on the site of the Swedish Mint and partly on the site of a former prison. The inner courtyard is dominated by a bronze sculpture 'Mother and Child' by Bror Marklund from 1956. The Chancellery moved from this building at the beginning of the 1980s to Rosenbad and other premises. The quay outside the Members' Building is a popular place for the city's anglers. Fishing in the waters of Stockholm has been free since 1450. This is where the Lake Mälaren and the Baltic Sea meet. Legend has it that anglers' **sinkers** used to break the windows of the East Wing of the Riksdag so the glass of the rooms facing the water is reinforced.

In addition to the Members' Building, two of the Riksdag's other buildings can be seen from the window. The oldest parts of the Neptunus block date back to the 17th century. Parts of the Riksdag moved to this block in 1995, for example the Secretariat of the Moderate Party and the Riksdag's telephone switchboard. The Democracy Workshop is also located here, where secondary school pupils have the opportunity to work with 'real' items of parliamentary business and get a feel for what it is like to be a member of parliament.

The Mercurius block at Storkyrkobrinken has been taken over and renovated by the Riksdag and now houses the Riksdag Library, which holds one of the largest collections of social science literature in Sweden. It is open to the public at certain times.

The Chancellery's Annex was previously situated in the Cephalus block (Riddarhustorget 7-9) in the Old Town. The same complex contains a large number of buildings from older periods. The facade facing Storkyrkobrinken shows examples of this. Certain rooms in Cephalus have unique fresco paintings from the early Wasa Renaissance period and the 17th century. The different buildings have been joined together skilfully around an inner courtyard with a fountain which is embellished with a girl in bronze made by Ivar Johansson in 1962. The pedestrian street Västerlånggatan can be reached from the inner courtyard by the three alleys that were preserved during the renovations.

All the buildings of the Riksdag are connected by **underground passages**. The artist Kerstin Rydh designed the **underground passage** to the Neptunus block, which passes through an interesting archaeological area. She has also decorated parts of the passage to Cephalus. The passage to Mercurius was designed by the artist Gösta Sillén who has playfully used perspective, shadow and light. Acoustics are also very interesting in this part of the Riksdag.

### **The East Wing of the Riksdag**

The fifth floor is the main floor of the building. This floor contains the old First and Second Chambers and the **Grand Gallery** (sammanbindningsbanan).

Along the corridor are the former offices of the Ministers and the Speakers of the First and Second Chambers, the Deputy Speakers, the Secretariats of the Chambers, as well as a library.

Today this floor houses the offices and assembly rooms of the committees on Finance, Labour Market, Foreign Affairs and Defence.

The Finance Committee's assembly room is situated in the former library, which has been restored to its original appearance from the early 20th century. The style is Art Nouveau. The books are a donation from Gustav V. There is a dark spot on the wall where the committee room was renovated and the smoke-darkened

panelling was cleaned – one small dark spot was left behind to show how dark the walls had become from the smoke.

There are 15 **Committees** with 17 members each. The present general composition is

Social Democrat 6  
Moderate Party 5  
Liberal Party 1  
Christian Democrat 1  
Centre Party 1  
Green Party 1  
Left Party 1  
Sweden Democrat 1

There are at least 17 deputy members in every committee. The parties decide themselves which members will sit on the various committees and the members become specialists in their various fields.

### **Parliament by Numbers**

- 349 Members
- 1 chamber since 1971
- 8 parties
- 4 percent threshold rule
- 4 year electoral periods
- 15 Committees with 17 Members in each
- 1 speaker, three deputy speakers
- 2 wings – east and west

### **The Committees**

- The Committee on Civil Affairs
- The Committee on the Constitution
- The Committee on Cultural Affairs
- The Committee on Defence
- The Committee on Education
- The Committee on Environment and Agriculture
- The Committee on Finance
- The Committee on Foreign Affairs

- The Committee on Health and Welfare
- The Committee on Industry and Trade
- The Committee on Justice
- The Committee on the Labour Market
- The Committee on Social Insurance
- The Committee on Taxation
- The Committee on Transport and Communications

And The Advisory Committee on European Union Affairs.

### **The parties**

- The Social Democrat Party
- The Moderate Party
- The Green Party
- The Sweden Democrat Party
- The Christian Democrat Party
- The Centre Party
- The Left Party

### **Housing**

Members who are not from Stockholm receive a parliament furnished apartment. The size and location of the apartment tends to depend on how many years you have been in Parliament. Family members (except for small children) have to pay to stay overnight. Parliament also has a laundry room, a travel agency, a multi-faith room, a swimming pool, a doctor, and a daycare centre.

### **Pairing system**

If a member of parliament cannot attend a vote, he or she is '**paired out**' which means that a member from the opposing bloc does not attend voting. Each party has several members responsible for pairing.

### **The passage of parliamentary business**

One of the central functions of the members of the Riksdag is to make decisions of various kinds, for example on legislation, public revenue and expenditure, and policy guidelines. Most parliamentary business is based on **proposals** from the Government (Government bills) or from members of the Riksdag (**private members' motions**). Before proposals are decided on in the Chamber, they are referred to one of the Riksdag's 15 **committees** for thorough consideration. The committee concerned can obtain opinions and information from authorities and organisations, from another committee or from the Council on Legislation in order to assist its consideration of a proposal. The committee presents its standpoint in a printed report which reflects the majority opinion within the committee. This report includes a proposal for a decision to be made by the Riksdag. Decisions on

proposals are usually taken after debate in the Chamber. If the parties are in disagreement the matter is put to a vote.

There are about 200 Government bills a year, and about 3000 motions, most of which are presented during the **general private members' motions period**.

The Committee on EU Affairs has 17 members and meets every Friday throughout the year (except in August). The meetings are held in an assembly room on the ninth floor of the Riksdag's East wing. The Committee is informed by the Government as to what decisions are to be taken in the EU Council of Ministers. The Government is also obliged to consult with the Committee about the policies it intends to pursue in the Council of Ministers.

### **The Main Staircase**

The staircase is in Art Nouveau style. The two former Chambers are located on either side of the staircase. The walls, pedestals, borders etc. are made of light-green stucco lustre (which is made of colour pigment, liquefied lime and silk soap, and the surface is then polished with a hot iron) and white stucco marble (lime, plaster, powdered marble and alabaster and colour). On the right hand wall is a caricature of Ingvar Carlsson left by the painters. On the top floor pillars there are two more – one of Olof Palme and one of Tage Erlander.

The green colour of the Main Staircase has been the guiding theme for the choice of colours in the rest of the building. The 8 columns on each side are made of Carrara marble. The steps and the landings are made of white Mölnbo marble with sections of grey-green Kolmårds marble. There are orbs adorned with acorn beetles at the bottom of each staircase.

The **busts** represent former Prime Ministers. Karl Staaff, Arvid Lindman and Hjalmar Branting were made by Carl Eldh. Axel Pehrsson-Bramstorp and Per-Albin Hansson were made by Ture Johansson. Tage Erlander was sculptured by Anders Jansson 2002. The bronze bust of Olof Palme by Thomas Quarsebo and the medallion by Ernst Nordin representing Thorbjörn Fälldin were installed in 1994. The **medallion** of Ingvar Carlsson by Liss Eriksson is from 1998.

### **Guidelines for memorials of earlier Prime Ministers**

1. A memorial in the form of a small bust for placement in the Riksdag will be granted to those who have been prime minister for a total of at least ten years.
2. A memorial in the form of a relief medallion or similar will be granted to those who have been Prime Minister for a total number of years corresponding to an entire electoral period.



3. The **Parliament Administration** will be responsible for financing and the carrying out of memorials in Parliament of earlier prime ministers
4. The memorial will be placed in Riksdagen after the person has ended his or her active political career.

### **The former Chambers**

Both chambers have retained their original **beech** decoration and the upholstery has its original colour. The construction of the seats makes it easy to stand up when voting.

The **Second Chamber** is used as the assembly room for the largest party in the Riksdag and the **First Chamber** for the next largest. The Riksdag political party groups meet on Tuesday afternoons. These rooms are also used for public hearings.

### **The First Chamber**

During the time of the **bicameral** system the First Chamber could seat 151 members who were indirectly elected by the county councils for a period of 8 years. One-eighth of the members were elected every year. The fresco painting by Otte Sköld in the gallery was completed in 1958. The three themes are prehistoric Stockholm, medieval Stockholm and present-day Stockholm.

### **The Second Chamber**

This is the larger of the two Chambers and has approximately 233 seats. The members of the Second Chamber were elected through direct elections every four years.

The walls of the gallery are decorated with fresco paintings inspired by the National Romantic movement and the themes are taken from Swedish history. Axel Törneman painted the three frescos above and on either side of the platform. These represent "Torgny Lagman before Olof Skötkonung", "The Beacons" and "Engelbrekt at the Arboga meeting". These three frescos were completed in 1913. Axel Törneman died in 1925 and the entire task was completed in 1926 by Georg Pauli.

### **The Grand Gallery (Sammanbindningsbanan)**

This 45-metre long corridor formerly served as a place where the members of both Chambers could work, meet, or enjoy a break. The members had no private offices at the time of the two-Chamber Riksdag. Their only "residence" was by the hangers for their hats and coats and the shelf for their galoshes, which was in the corridor outside the Chamber.

Today, the **Grand Gallery** is used mainly for exhibitions and receptions.

The Grand Gallery, which was decorated by the architect Aron Johansson, has been renovated under the supervision of the National Heritage Board with the aim of restoring its original appearance. The walls and ceiling have been painted with linseed oil paint and the mouldings have been gilded with brass. Portraits of former Speakers decorate the walls. The Riksdag funds the paintings of former speakers. The original **linoleum** floor with its pattern of oak leaves was manufactured by Deutsche Linoleum Werke. It is now protected by carpets with the same pattern. The lantern in the centre is surrounded by the **county coats of arms**. The open fireplace has only been used once because, after its installation, it was discovered that the smoke from the chimney rose directly behind the statue of Mother Svea which crowned the facade of the Riksdag, giving the impression that the Riksdag had set fire to her. The furniture has silk upholstery that was woven in Lyon and which has been reconstructed from old photographs.

Helgeandsholmen, on which the Riksdag stands, originally consisted of three islands. The island derives its name from the helgeandshus or house of sanctuary, which stood here in the 14th century. Helgeandshuset was a religious charitable institution that took care of the sick and the elderly. Since then the island has been occupied by palaces, royal stables and shops. While digging for an underground garage for the Riksdag in 1978 a number of interesting finds were made, including some 40,000 ancient items, a defensive wall, the city wall and a secret tunnel that used to connect the old palace and stables.

The garage now has 25 parking places for service cars and disabled vehicles. The rest of the space beneath the Riksdag is used for the Medieval Museum of Stockholm, which was inaugurated in 1986.

### **The Northern Connecting Rooms, R5 and RV5**

A wooden **model**, constructed by Bengt Norling, shows the premises that house the Riksdag. This model was designed to be touched. On the opposite wall there is a tapestry 'Proud City' (Stolta Stad), based on Peter Dahl's painting, which was woven at the workshop of the Friends of Craftsmanship in Stockholm.

Eva Ek-Schaeffer has made the tapestry 'The Flight' (Flykten) 2002 , and the oil-painting is by Philip von Schantz (1998).

Thank you very much everyone. That brings us to the end of the tour. I hope you have enjoyed your visit and I have really enjoyed meeting you. Further information can be obtained from our Information Centre, where you will also find a souvenir shop. Fact sheets in English are also available at the visitors' entrance.

1:a kammaren	First Chamber (Upper House)
2:a kammaren	Second Chamber (Lower House)
allmän rösträtt	universal suffrage
allmänna motionstid	general private members motions period
allmänna val	general elections
allmänpolitisk debatt	general policy debate
bankhallen	The Bank Hall
beslutsgång	decision-making process
besöksentr, (allmänhetens)	visitors' entrance
bok	beech
borgerlig majoritet	centre-right majority
borgerliga partierna	non-socialist parties
budgetproposition	Budget bill
byst	bust
centerpartiet	Centre Party
dagordning	agenda
de fyra stånden	the four estates
departement	Ministry
enkammarriksdag	one-chamber (unicameral) system
ersättare (för ledamot)	alternate
EU-nämnden	Advisory Committee on EU Affairs
EU-upplysningen	EU Information Centre
fasad	facade
fiskedrag	sinkers
folkomröstning	referendum
folkpartiet	Liberal Party
fresker	frescoes
frågestund	question time
föredragande (utskott osv.)	Committee Secretary
föredragningslista	
agenda	
förslag	proposal
granskningsdebatt	scrutiny debate
inviga	inaugurate
kammaren	The chamber
kammarkansliet	Secretariat of the Chamber
kammarsammanträde	meeting of the Chamber
kansli	secretariat
kanslichef	Secretariat of the Chamber
kommun	municipality
kommunfullmäktige	municipal council

kristdemokraterna	Christian Democrats
kulvert	underground passage
kvitta ut	to be paired out
kvittningssystem	the pairing system
lagstiftning	legislation
landsting	county council
län	county
länsvapensskölder	county coats of arms
mandat	seat
mandatperiod	electoral period
medaljong/relief	medallion
miljöpartiet	Green Party
minister	Minister
moderata samlingspartiet	Moderate Party
motion	private members' motion
ordinarie	permanent, deputy
pelare	columns
plenisal	the Chamber
proposition	bill
proposition	Government bill
protokoll	minutes/record
regeringskansliet	Government Offices
Riksbanken	Bank of Sweden
riksdagsdebatt	parliamentary debate/debate in the Chamber
riksdagsförvaltningen	Riksdag Administration
riksdagshuset	Riksdag (building)
riksdagsledamot	member of parliament/the Riksdag
riksdagstryck	parliamentary documents
riksmöte	Riksdag session
riksäpple	apples of the realm
rostrum	talorstol
rösträtt	right to vote
Sagerska huset	The Sager House
sammanbindningsbanan	The Grand Gallery
sessionssal	assembly room
socialdemokraterna	Social Democratic Party
sommaruppehåll	summer recess
spärregel	threshold rule
statsråd	minister
statsrådsberedningen	Prime Minister's Office
stuckatur	stucco
suppleant	alternate, stand-in
talorstol	rostrum
talmannen	the Speaker
tvåkamarsriksdag	bicameral parliament
uppehåll	recess

utfrågning	hearing (public)
utrikesnämnden	Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs
utskott	committee
utskottsbetänkande	committee report
utskottskansli	committee secretariat
utskrift	transcript
valdeltagande	election turnout
valkrets	constituency
valperiod/mandatperiod	electoral period
valsystem	electoral system
vice talman	deputy speaker
votering	vote
voteringstavla	display panel/vote indicator
vänsterpartiet	Left Party
vävnad	tapestry
åhörläktaren	Public Gallery
åskådarläktare	the public gallery
äpple	orb
ärende (i riksdagen)	(item of parliamentary) business, matter

## Government and ministries

- Prime Minister's Office
- 1. Ministry of Culture
- 2. Ministry of Defence
- 3. Ministry of Education and Research
- 4. Ministry of Employment
- 5. Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications
- 6. Ministry of the Environment
- 7. Ministry of Finance
- 8. Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- 9. Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
- 10. Ministry of Justice
- 11. Ministry for Rural Affairs
- Office for Administrative Affairs

## Questions from visitors

- 1) When did you abolish your second chamber? Why?
- 2) How often are elections held?
- 3) How does your proportional representation system work?
- 4) Which parties are represented in the Riksdag? What are their profiles?
- 5) How are political parties funded?
- 6) Is there a "typical" type of person that becomes an MP ?
- 7) How are:
  - women
  - immigrants
  - young people and
  - older persons represented in the Riksdag?
- 8) What is the relationship between central, county and local government? Who is responsible for what?
- 9) How does an idea become a law?
- 10) How successful are pressure groups?
- 11) How much power do individual MPs have?
- 12) How much access to parliamentary information does the public have?
- 13) How computerized is the Riksdag?
- 14) How is the parliamentary year planned?
- 15) Is the style in the Riksdag based on consensus or conflict?
- 16) How well are MPs paid? What support do they get from the Riksdag and their own party?
- 17) Think of four difficult questions that you might face about your own area of responsibility and try to answer them.

- a)
- b)
- c)

