

Directorate-General for the Presidency  
 Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments

## Factsheet: The French Senate









### 1. At a glance

France is a semi-presidential Republic and a parliamentary democracy. The Senate is the upper House of the French Parliament, according to the bicameralism system, and it holds the legislative power together with the National Assembly. Under article 24 of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, it represents the local and regional authorities. Its premises are the Luxembourg Palace in Paris.



When passing a law and in the event of divergent positions between the Senate and the National Assembly, the Prime Minister may give the last say to the Assembly. The latter can therefore legislate only with the agreement of the Senate or the Prime Minister, but never alone. The Senate, which has 348 Senators since the renewal of 2011, has undergone several reforms in its mode of election. Since the adoption of the Act 2003-697 of 30 July 2003, the mandate of the Senate is for six years, and renewal is done by half every three years. Senators are elected on the basis of indirect universal suffrage by 150 000 grand electors. The scrutiny is proportional (52 %), or uninominal in two rounds (48 %) at French departments' level.

The upper chamber is dominated by the right and centre since the beginning of the Fifth Republic with the exception of the 2011-2014 period.

### 2. Composition

Party	EP affiliation	Seats
<b>Groupe Les Républicains</b> Group The Republicans		144
<b>Groupe Socialiste et Apparentés</b> Socialist and related group		110
<b>Groupe Union des Démocrates et Indépendants</b> Group Union of Democrats and Independents		41
<b>Groupe communiste, républicain et citoyen</b> Communist, republican and citizens group		19
<b>Groupe du Rassemblement Démocratique et Social européen</b> Group European Democratic and Social Rally		13
<b>Groupe écologiste</b> Ecologist group		10
Non-attached		9
<b>TOTAL</b>		348
<i>The next elections will take place in fall 2017.</i>		

### 3. Officeholders

<p><b>President of the Senate</b></p>  <p>Gérard Larcher (UMP/EPP), since 1 October 2014 (and 2008-2011)</p>	<p><b>Chairperson of the European affairs committee</b></p>  <p>Mr Jean Bizet (UMP/EPP)</p>
<p><b>Secretary General of the Senate Presidency:</b> Mr Jean-Louis Hérin</p>	

### 4. Relations with Members of the European Parliament

<b>Participation rights for French MEPs in plenary sittings</b>	No
<b>Participation rights for French MEPs in committee meetings</b>	No
<b>Availability of videoconferencing system in French Senate</b>	Yes

### 5. Information links

- Official website <http://www.senat.fr/>
- [Rules of procedure in English and French](#)
- [List of committees](#)
- [Recent documents submitted by the French Senate to the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange \(IPEX\)](#)
- [European Parliament Information Office in Paris](#)

### 6. Contacts

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