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Dear Friends,

I offer you my warmest greetings on the occasion of your visit to the Chamber of Deputies.

If you are preparing to visit Palazzo Montecitorio, this leaflet will help you find your way around the main places of interest, namely, the Plenary Hall and the other rooms in which laws are made and the great debates on issues affecting the lives of Italian people are held.

If you have already visited the Chamber, on the other hand, this Guide may help you remember the salient moments of institutional life. You can consult it to satisfy a curiosity, answer a question more accurately or dispel a doubt regarding the law-making process that some detail of current political affairs may have raised. Democracy is strengthened by citizens' knowledge of how institutions are organized. Such knowledge is essential if everyone is to participate increasingly consciously and actively in the life of the Republic.

Welcome to the Chamber of Deputies



*The President of the Chamber of Deputies,
Gianfranco Fini*



PARLIAMENT

Under the Constitution of the Italian Republic, Parliament is the concrete expression of the people's sovereignty. It consists of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic. Although differing in the number of their members and the method by which they are elected, the two Houses have the same powers regarding the approval of laws, the voting of confidence in the Government and the activities of policy-setting and scrutiny in relation to the latter.

The Houses meet in joint session in Montecitorio's Plenary Hall for the purposes of electing the President of the Republic, five judges of the Constitutional Court and one third of the High Council of the Judiciary. The President of the Chamber of Deputies presides over Parliament in joint session.



Palazzo
Montecitorio

PARLIAMENT'S ROLE IN ITALIAN HISTORY

1861 The first Italian Parliament meets at Palazzo Carignano in Turin and proclaims the Kingdom of Italy on 14th March.



Enrico De Nicola signing the Constitution of the Italian Republic

1865 The Kingdom's capital is transferred from Turin to Florence and Palazzo Vecchio becomes the seat of the Chamber of Deputies.

1871 Rome is proclaimed the capital of Italy and Palazzo Montecitorio is chosen to house the Chamber of Deputies.

1918 Upon the liberation of Trento and Trieste and completion of the process of national unification, Montecitorio's new Plenary Hall is officially opened at the end of the First World War.

1924 Giacomo Matteotti denounces the illegitimacy of the elections won by Mussolini's "Great List" and reaffirms Parliament's prerogatives. After his assassination and despite the so-called 'Aventine protest', the Fascist regime consolidates its position and abolishes the autonomy and fully representative nature of the Chamber of Deputies. Finally, in 1939, it transforms it into the Chamber of Fasces and Corporations.



Election of Giorgio Napolitano as President of the Italian Republic

1946 After proclamation of the results of the institutional referendum held on 2nd June 1946, the Constituent Assembly meets for the first time at Montecitorio on 25th June.

1947 The new **Republican Constitution** is proclaimed on 27th December and comes into force on 1st January 1948.

1948 The new Houses meet on 8th May, thereby opening the 1st Republican Parliament.



THE HISTORY OF PALAZZO MONTECITORIO

The history of Palazzo Montecitorio is marked by three main periods, each characterized by its own architectural style and the allocation of a quite specific use.



Ordered by the Pamphili Pope Innocent X, the construction of the palace dates back to 1650. The initial project was entrusted to the architect Gian Lorenzo Bernini and involved the construction of a large Baroque aristocratic residence. It was not completed.

Bernini's original project in an illustration by M. De Rossi

The second period began in 1694, under the orders of Pope Innocent XII, who instructed the architect Carlo Fontana to complete Bernini's project and used the palace to house the Papal States' law courts.

The palace's last renovation began with the Unification of Italy in 1870. The building was chosen to house Parliament and, in November 1871, following initial works directed by the engineer Paolo Comotto, the House met in the new Plenary Hall. This was, however, found to be too small. In 1902, a wide-ranging renovation project was entrusted to the architect Ernesto Basile, who completed the building as it exists today.

Basile worked with important artists, including Davide Calandra (the author of the Chamber's bronze panel), Giulio Aristide Sartorio (who painted the great frieze) and Giovanni Beltrami (who executed the polychrome glass ceiling). The new Montecitorio Plenary Hall was officially opened on 20th November 1918.



Comotto's Plenary Hall

THE MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

Election

The Chamber of Deputies is composed of 630 Members, twelve of whom are elected in a special constituency by Italian citizens residing abroad. Members remain in office for the life of Parliament (a period of five years, under the Constitution) and are elected from among citizens aged at least twenty-five. Non-eligibility and incompatibility with the office of Deputy or Senator are determined by law.

The Plenary Hall

Within the **Plenary Hall**, Members occupy the bench assigned to them within the sector reserved to their Parliamentary Group. According to a tradition shared by many democracies, the Groups' position on the Floor of the House (to the right, in line with or to the left of the President's desk) reflects their respective political orientation. Every Member of the House belongs to a Parliamentary Group. Save in certain exceptional cases, the Groups consist of at least 20 Members.

The Chamber's Activities

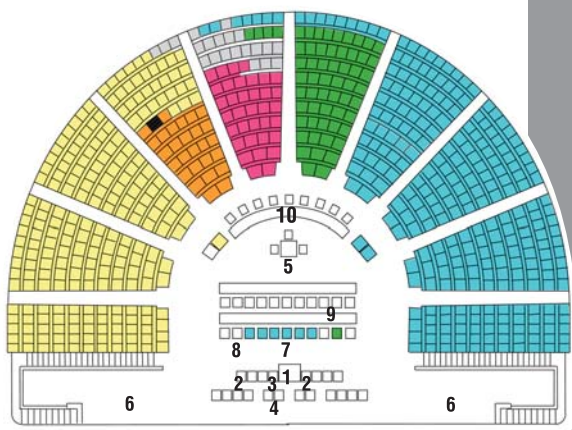
The Chamber of Deputies pursues its activities throughout the year, with recesses generally coinciding with the public holidays and the month of August. Deputies carry out their work both on the Floor of the House and in Committees. The House Floor is a plenary body in that all the Deputies participate in its sittings. Each Parliamentary Group appoints its own members to the various Standing Committees, assigning equal numbers to each Committee. Every Deputy is also eligible for nomination to participate on Committees appointed by the President, special Committees, Committees of Inquiry and other Joint Committees (i.e. composed of both Deputies and Senators).

Status







In accordance with the provisions of article 67 of the Constitution (which governs all Members of Parliament), every Deputy represents the Nation and performs his or her duties without a binding mandate. He or she enjoys maximum freedom to interpret the will of the nation as a whole rather than just that of the voters who elected him/her. This liberty finds its chief expression in freedom of speech and voting and is guaranteed by the constitutional principle that Members of Parliament cannot be called to account for the opinions they express or the votes they cast in the exercise of their duties; nor can they be submitted to searches or arrested or otherwise deprived of their personal freedom without the authorization of the House to which they belong. Under the Constitution, MPs receive an allowance set by law.

MAP OF THE PLENARY HALL

- 1 President
- 2 Bureau's Secretaries
- 3 Secretary General
- 4 Plenary Assembly Department
- 5 Parliamentary Reports Department
- 6 Parliamentary Ushers
- 7 President of the Council of Ministers
- 8 Ministers
- 9 Under-secretaries of State
- 10 Committee "of the Nine"



THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

-  POPOLO DELLA LIBERTÀ (THE PEOPLE OF FREEDOM)
-  PARTITO DEMOCRATICO (DEMOCRATIC PARTY)
-  LEGA NORD PADANIA (NORTHERN LEAGUE – PADANIA)
-  UNIONE DI CENTRO (UNION OF THE CENTRE)
-  ITALIA DEI VALORI (ITALY OF VALUES)
-  MIXED GROUP

HOW THE CHAMBER FUNCTIONS

The President of the Chamber

The President represents the Chamber and is elected during the opening sitting of Parliament. He is responsible for ensuring the proper conduct of the Chamber's proceedings and that the Rules of Procedure are observed. He gives the floor, directs and moderates the debate, maintains order, proposes questions, establishes the order of voting, clarifies the meaning of votes and announces the result thereof. The President is also responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of the Chamber's internal administration.

One of the Vice-Presidents stands in for the President in cases where the latter is absent or unable to discharge his duties. The Bureau's Secretaries also work with the President to ensure that sittings and voting are carried out in the correct manner.

Composition of the Chamber's Bureau

President

Gianfranco Fini

Vice-Presidents

Antonio Leone

Rosy Bindi

Maurizio Lupi

Rocco Buttiglione

Quaestors

Francesco Colucci

Antonio Mazzocchi

Gabriele Albonetti

Secretaries

Giuseppe Fallica

Gregorio Fontana

Donato Lamorte

Lorena Milanato

Mimmo Lucà

Renzo Lusetti

Emilia Grazia De Biasi

Gianpiero Bocci

Silvana Mura

Giacomo Stucchi

Angelo Salvatore Lombardo



The **Bureau** is presided over by the President of the Chamber of Deputies and is vested with the wide-ranging authority essential to the Chamber's proper functioning.



The Bureau

The **Conference of Group Chairpersons** decides on the House's Programme of Business and Order of Business. It is composed of the various Parliamentary Groups' Chairpersons and is presided over by the President of the Chamber. The Government is always informed of the Conference's meetings so that one of its representatives may participate.



The Conference of Group Chairpersons

The three **Quaestors** collectively oversee the Administration's proper functioning, draw up the Chamber's internal budget, monitor expenditure, and are responsible for the protocol and the preservation of order in the Chamber's premises, in accordance with the President's instructions.



The Quaestors

THE CHAMBER'S ADMINISTRATION

The Chamber of Deputies has its own Administration. This provides the services required to ensure the proper conduct of parliamentary proceedings and is divided into Departments and General Secretariat Offices. The Administration is managed by the **Secretary General** who is in charge of all the Chamber's Departments and Offices and is answerable for them to the President. He sets policies for the entire administrative structure and monitors its performance. He assists the President of the Chamber during sittings and supervises how the House's business is organized. The current Secretary General is Mr. Ugo Zampetti.

The Legislative Departments

These are responsible for organizing the sittings both on the Floor of the House and in Committees and for drawing up the related reports.

The Documentation Departments

These prepare the documentation for the Parliamentary Committees, the Parliamentary Groups and for individual deputies.

The Administrative and Technical Departments

The Administrative and Technical Departments ensure that all the structures within the Chamber of Deputies function properly. They are responsible for administrative, technical and logistical aspects, as well as personnel management.

The President
of the Chamber
of Deputies
with the
Secretary
General





THE COMMITTEES

Resolutions passed by the Floor of the House are usually preceded by preparatory work carried out by the Parliamentary Committees. There are 14 Standing Committees reflecting the political composition of the House and specializing in different subjects corresponding to the broad areas of State activity. As well as enjoying a decisive role in the legislative process, the Committees also have a scrutiny and policy-setting function vis-à-vis Government. They also conduct hearings and fact-finding investigations, during which they may hear any person in a position to provide information of use to the Chamber of Deputies and its bodies. Such fact-finding investigations end with the approval of a document giving an account of the results obtained. Each House may, moreover, call for inquiries into topics of public interest by setting up ad-hoc Committees that enjoy the same powers as the judiciary when proceeding with their investigations. The Chamber of Deputies and the Senate can also decide to conduct inquiries by way of special joint committees (i.e. composed of an equal number of deputies and senators).

The Chamber's Standing Committees

- I** Constitutional, Presidency of the Council of Ministers and Interior Affairs
- II** Justice
- III** Foreign and European Community Affairs
- IV** Defence
- V** Budget, Treasury and Planning
- VI** Finance
- VII** Culture, Science and Education
- VIII** Environment, Territory and Public Works
- IX** Transport, Posts and Telecommunications
- X** Economic Activities, Trade and Tourism
- XI** Public and Private Sector Employment
- XII** Social Affairs
- XIII** Agriculture
- XIV** European Union Policies

LAW-MAKING

The Legislative Process

Bills may be introduced by any Member of Parliament, by the Government, by the Regional Councils, by the National Council of Economy and Labour or by at least 50,000 citizens with voting rights. Acting in a reporting capacity, the relevant Standing Committees proceed with the pre-legislative scrutiny and consultation, modifying or redrafting the text where necessary and preparing a report to be submitted to the House.

The House then debates and votes on the bill, first section by section and then in its entirety. In cases specifically provided for by the Constitution or the Rules of Procedure, Committees may proceed not only with the pre-legislative scrutiny and consultation regarding a bill but also with the section-by-section voting and the final resolution (thereby acting in a legislative capacity). Alternatively, they can formulate the sections, reserving only the voting and the final approval to the House (thereby acting in a drafting capacity). Bills must be approved in an identical wording by both the Chamber and the Senate.

If one House modifies a text that has been approved by the other, then the latter has to reconsider the amended section and re-approve the bill as a whole (this is known as the “*navette*” or “shuttle” process). Bills approved by both Houses must be promulgated by the President of the Republic before they can become law. Under article 74 of the Constitution, the President of the Republic, before promulgating a law, may request the Houses, with a reasoned message, to deliberate again. Laws come into effect after publication in the *Official Journal*.

The Plenary
Hall
seen
from the
Galleries





PRESENTI	563
VOTANTI	562
ASTENUTI	1
MAGGIORANZA	282
FAVOREVOLI	311
CONTRARI	251
APPROVATO	

Detail
of display
panel
showing
the result
of a vote

Voting

Voting on the Floor of the House is public except in certain cases where the Rules of Procedure provide that a secret ballot may be requested. Public voting is normally carried out:

- by a show of hands or an electronic procedure without the recording of names (in this case, the parliamentary records do not show how individual Members voted);
- by an electronic procedure with the recording of names (the so-called “roll-call vote”; in this case, the parliamentary records show how every individual Member voted).

Votes of confidence in the Government are conducted in a particularly solemn manner by way of a roll-call naming every Member.

Secret voting is also usually carried out electronically. In this case, the parliamentary records only report the names of those who voted and the total number of votes in favour, against, and abstentions. During elections, secret voting is carried out by ballot.

SCRUTINY OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

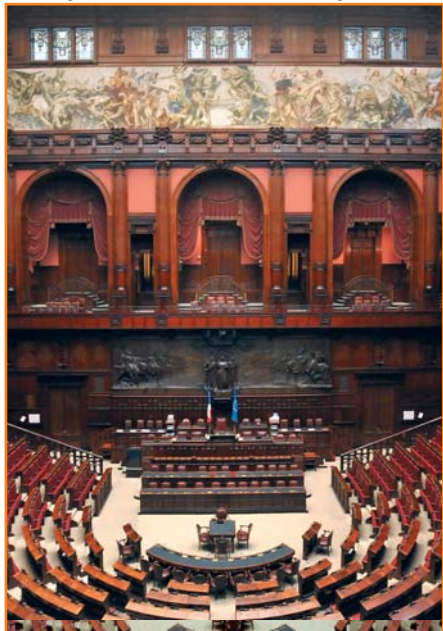


Presidency
and
Government
Benches

Both on the Floor of the House and through its Committees, the Chamber carries out a scrutiny and policy-setting function vis-à-vis the Government. Policy-setting is effected mainly by way of motions (including those of confidence or no confidence) and

resolutions whereas Government action is scrutinised primarily by way of interpellations and Parliamentary questions.

Of the various types of Questions, those receiving an immediate reply on the Floor of the House are particularly important. They are usually conducted every Wednesday, during what is known as 'Question Time' (broadcast live on television). The two Houses also exercise control over the Government's law-making activities. In the cases provided for by law, the Committees express their opinion on its draft legislative decrees implementing enabling laws as well as on other draft legislative acts.



Montecitorio
Plenary Hall



INFORMATION ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary proceedings are publicized by various vehicles of information.

The House's sittings are public and are broadcast live on the radio, on the Chamber's satellite television channel and on its Website. Members of the public can watch proceedings from the House's galleries. Verbatim reports of the sittings (available in draft form on the Chamber's website during sittings and published the following day in their definitive version) allow everything said in the House to be known.

Reports on Committee proceedings are published both in printed form and on the website. The most important hearings are broadcast on the website and on the satellite channel.

The Chamber's website (www.camera.it) further provides full information on the progress of bills and the proceedings both on the Floor of House and in Committee, as well as information about the way the Chamber is organized, its premises, services to the public, events and cultural initiatives. A direct line of dialogue between the President of the Chamber and citizens has been set up during the course of the 16th Parliament, as has a channel for the Chamber on YouTube.

Over 400 accredited journalists at Montecitorio play a fundamental part in providing information about Parliament. Two annual meetings with the Parliamentary Press Association (before the summer and the Christmas recesses) offer the President of the Chamber an opportunity to reflect on the parliamentary work achieved.

The Website
of the
Chamber
of Deputies

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Italian Parliament contributes to the formulation of European Union policy by indicating policies that the Government should take into account when participating in European decision-making process. Furthermore, every year, both Houses ensure that the Italian legal system conforms to that of the EU by enacting a special law known as the *Community Act*. The Chamber also appoints deputies to sit (together with an equal number of senators) as permanent members of the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe, NATO, the Western European Union (WEU), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Central European Initiative (CEI). The Chamber of Deputies also cultivates a dense network of international relations within the framework of its relationships with European and non-European Parliaments. In this context, the President of the Chamber periodically attends meetings of the Conference of the European Union Speakers, the Council of Europe, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. He also frequently meets Speakers from other Parliaments and representatives of foreign States at Palazzo Montecitorio.

The President
of the
Chamber,
Gianfranco Fini,
receives Ingrid
Betancourt





The Plenary
Hall
of the
European
Parliament
in Strasbourg

Numerous Parliamentary delegations from European and non-European countries are received at the Chamber of Deputies; during these visits, meetings are held with the Standing Committees and with the other bodies of the Chamber on matters of mutual interest.

THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES FOUNDATION

The Foundation publicises parliamentary culture and develops relations with the public by promoting the institutional role, image and historical heritage of the Chamber of Deputies. In this context, it organizes conferences, seminars and exhibitions on topics of interest to the Chamber.

The Foundation's President is Fausto Bertinotti.

SERVICES OFFERED TO THE PUBLIC

The Library

The Chamber's Library is open to the public and anyone over the age of sixteen is admitted. It boasts a collection of over 1,000,000 volumes and numerous reading rooms specializing in specific subjects.

The Library's complete automation allows users to access bibliographic information on any available terminal. Photocopying of texts is allowed in accordance with current regulations. The Chamber's Library and the Senate's Library together constitute the Joint Library of Parliament.

The Historical Archives

The Historical Archives are open to the public and anyone over the age of eighteen is admitted. They house the documents produced by the Chamber of Deputies as well as holdings of political and parliamentary importance. The Archives have a catalogue room, a study room for consulting documents and an audiovisual room.

“Montecitorio Opens Its Doors”

This is an initiative allowing the public to visit the premises of the Chamber of Deputies accompanied by parliamentary ushers. Open day is normally the first Sunday of every month and the Chamber is open from 10.00 a.m. until 5.30 p.m. Admission is free and booking is not necessary.

The Truss
Room





Training Days

Training days are designed specifically for students attending the final two years of high school. They consist of a one-day visit to the Chamber during which students attend sittings of the House and a Committee's proceedings and are given information on how the Chamber of Deputies functions.

School Visits

School groups may visit Palazzo Montecitorio with parliamentary ushers as guides every week from Mondays to Fridays. In order to organize a visit, it is necessary to contact the Security Department of the Chamber of Deputies (tel. 06/6760 4565, fax 06 6760 9950; sic_visite@camera.it).

How to attend a Sitting of the House

Members of the public who wish to attend a sitting of the Chamber of Deputies can present themselves with a valid ID document at the entrance of Palazzo Montecitorio situated at no. 24, Piazza del Parlamento. Visitors are given all the directions they need to get to the public gallery when the visiting permit is issued (issue is subject to the number of places available).



Students
visiting
the Chamber
of Deputies
Library

VISITING MONTECITORIO

The “Aldo Moro” Room

On 13th May 2008, the historic “Yellow Room” was re-named the “Aldo Moro Room” to commemorate the assassinated statesman and his security officers. The room is full of works of art, including the canvas depicting the *Wedding at Cana* (attributed to the painter Veronese and his school) and a portrait of Napoleon by Appiani.



The Horseman's Room

This large reception room adjacent to the Aldo Moro Room is customarily used to welcome foreign delegations. It takes its name from an eighteenth-century painting from the Modenese School depicting the marquis Bonifacio Rangoni on horseback.



The Presidents' Gallery

This wide corridor has furnishings designed by Ernesto Basile. It displays portraits of the Speakers of the pre-unification Parliaments as well as the Presidents of the Chamber under the Kingdom of Italy and the Italian Republic.



The Courtyard of Honour

The original semi-circular Courtyard was built by Carlo Fontana to complete Bernini's project. It was redesigned in its present square shape by the architect Ernesto Basile when the building was extended and the Plenary Hall was built.



The Corridor of the Busts

Winding round three sides of the Courtyard of Honour, the corridor displays busts of the most famous political figures in the history of the Risorgimento and post-unification Italy. These include Garibaldi, Mazzini, Cavour and Cattaneo. Another neighbouring corridor hosts busts of the main figures in the history of the Republic.





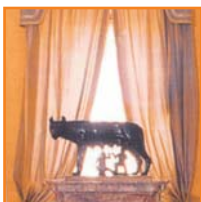
The Globe Room

The room takes its name from the ancient globe of the world overlooking the room. Formerly housing the Chamber's Library (now situated in the "Santa Maria sopra Minerva" Complex), it has been restored and equipped with the latest multimedia and information technology.



Legislative Archives

These are situated on the same floor as the Plenary Hall and house all the parliamentary documents and reports.



The Hall of the She-Wolf

Characterized by a bronze sculpture constituting a copy of the Capitoline She-Wolf (the original is kept in the Capitoline Museums), this is the room in which the result of the institutional referendum marking the birth of the Republic was announced on 10th June 1946.



The Queen's Hall

When Italy was a Kingdom, the room accommodated the Queen and her retinue while they waited for the King to finish making the Crown Speech opening a new Parliamentary session. Decorated with very fine tapestries, it is usually used today for cultural initiatives organised by the Chamber of Deputies.



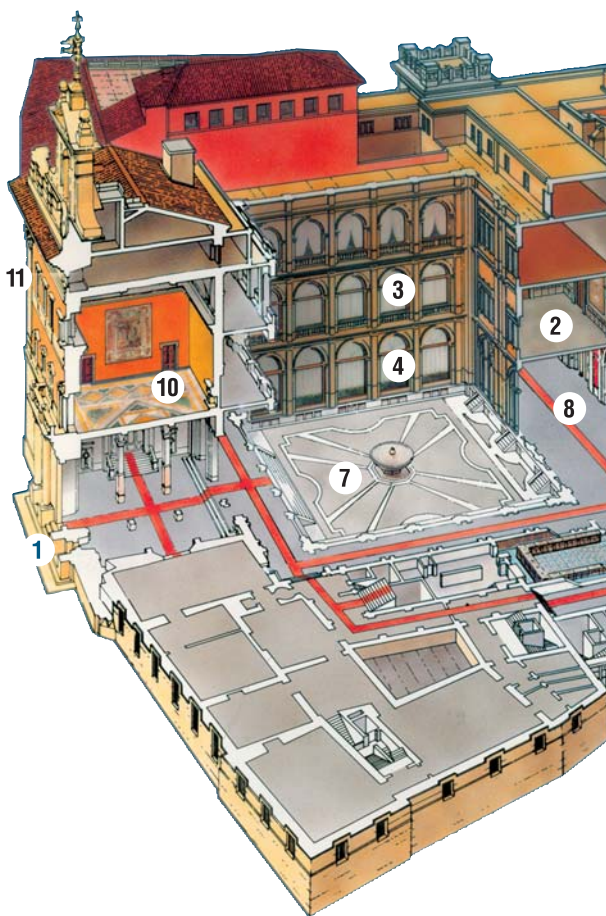
Works of Art

(Painted frieze by G.A. Sartorio - detail)

The Chamber of Deputies has over one thousand paintings and sculptures, several thousand engravings and prints, numerous archaeological finds and other treasures such as clocks, period furniture and fine sixteenth-century tapestries.

The Transatlantic Lobby

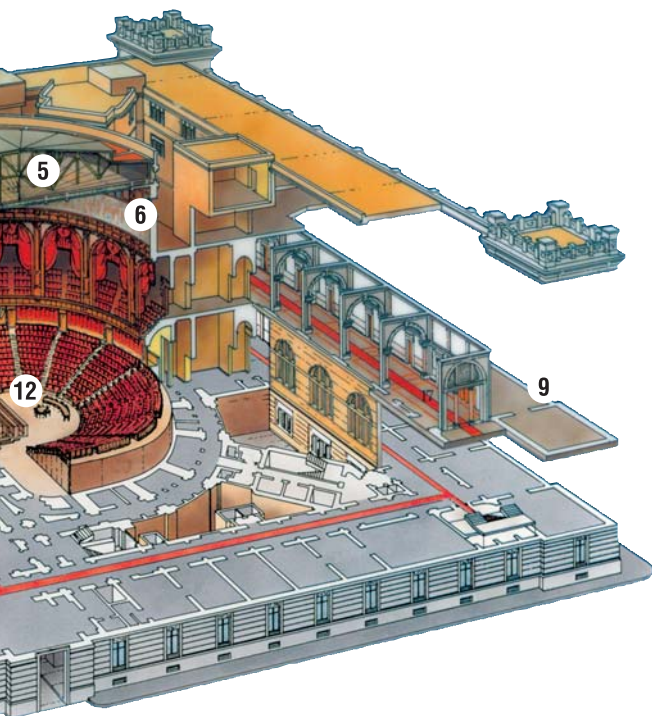
This spacious hall next to the Plenary Hall has a polychrome Sicilian marble floor and furnishings designed by Ernesto Basile. The ceiling was executed by the Ducrot company of Palermo (specialists in maritime decoration) and evokes the decoration of the great transoceanic liners. Also known as the “Corridor of the Lost Steps”, it is the place where Members of Parliament take a break between one sitting and another and can meet the accredited journalists.





The Plenary Hall

The Plenary Hall is where the House of the Chamber of Deputies meets and is the highest expression of Ernesto Basile's work at Montecitorio. Designed in the early twentieth century, it is fully panelled in oak and surmounted by Giovanni Beltrami's lofty Art Nouveau stained-glass *velarium*. It is adorned by two famous works of art: the large bronze panel by Davide Calandra depicting the glorification of the Savoyard dynasty and the great painted frieze by Giulio Aristide Sartorio dedicated to the history of the Italian people.



PALAZZO MONTECITORIO:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Entrance in Piazza Montecitorio | 8 The Transatlantic Lobby |
| 2 The Queen's Hall | 9 Entrance in Piazza del Parlamento |
| 3 The Corridor of the Busts | 10 The Hall of the She-Wolf |
| 4 The Fontana portico | 11 The Aldo Moro Room |
| 5 Stained-glass <i>velarium</i> and ceiling of the Plenary Hall | 12 The Plenary Hall |
| 6 Painted frieze by G.A. Sartorio | |
| 7 The Courtyard of Honour | |