

# Parliamentary Voting Procedures in Comparison\*

Simon Hug<sup>†</sup>, Simone Wegmann<sup>‡</sup>, and Reto Wüest<sup>§</sup>

Département de science politique et relations internationales  
Université de Genève

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<sup>†</sup> Département de science politique et relations internationales, Faculté des sciences économiques et sociales; Université de Genève; 40 Bd du Pont d'Arve; 1211 Genève 4; Switzerland; phone ++41 22 379 83 78; email: simon.hug@unige.ch

<sup>‡</sup> Département de science politique et relations internationales, Faculté des sciences économiques et sociales; Université de Genève; 40 Bd du Pont d'Arve; 1211 Genève 4; Switzerland; email: simone.wegmann@unige.ch

<sup>§</sup> Département de science politique et relations internationales, Faculté des sciences économiques et sociales; Université de Genève; 40, Bd du Pont d'Arve; 1211 Genève 4; Switzerland; phone: ++41 22 379 88 86; email: reto.wuest@unige.ch

## **Abstract**

Increasingly, scholars of legislative politics propose comparative analyses of parliamentary voting behavior across different countries and parliaments. Yet parliamentary voting procedures differ dramatically across parliamentary chambers and ignoring these differences may, in the extreme, lead to meaningless comparisons. In this paper we present a first glimpse at a comprehensive data collection effort covering more than 250 parliamentary chambers in 176 countries. A first look at our data, focusing on the standard operating procedures for final passage votes, shows some notable differences as compared to previous studies on parliamentary voting procedures.

# 1 Introduction

In recent years studies on parliamentary voting have flourished both in terms of methodological innovations and geographical coverage. From the early work by Lowell (1901) and Rice (1925) on various aspects of cohesion scholars have developed sophisticated tools to deal with parliamentary voting data (see for instance for a survey Poole 2005) and gone beyond the British and US parliaments to cover a wide range of legislative chambers (for some comparative work see Carey 2007*a*; Hix and Noury 2007; Carey 2009; Depauw and Martin 2009; Coman 2012). At the same time both in terms of theoretical insights and methodological innovations work on the US Congress has largely dominated the field. This domination in conjunction with a preconception that in Congress practically all business was conducted in roll call votes (see for instance Poole and Rosenthal 1997, 56 and below) has led to a considerable lack of attention paid to the exact voting procedures<sup>1</sup> used in parliaments.

As these voting procedures vary considerably across parliamentary chambers (see for instance Interparliamentary Union 1986; Saalfeld 1995; Carrubba, Gabel and Hug 2008; Carey 2009; Hug 2010; Crisp and Driscoll 2012) the data-generating process that leads to roll call data inevitably varies. Nevertheless, scholars have relied on roll call data from different contexts without taking these differences into account (see for instance Carey 2007*a*; Hix and Noury 2007; Depauw and Martin 2009; Coman 2012). Except under rather optimistic assumptions, such comparative work is fraught with considerable problems.

One reason why scholars proceed this way might be linked to a scarcity of comprehensive information on parliamentary voting procedures. While the Interparliamentary Union (1986) (see also Union Interparlementaire 1966), Saalfeld (1995), Carey (2009) and Crisp and Driscoll (2012) provided such information, it is either dated (first two sources) or offers only partial coverage (the latter three sources). Consequently, in this paper we present a first glimpse at a comprehensive data collection effort, which aims at providing detailed and time-informative data on parliamentary voting procedures. The data collection relies on an expert survey carried out in the spring of 2012, with experts responding from an aca-

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<sup>1</sup>We will use the terms ‘voting procedures’ and ‘voting methods’ as synonymous in this paper even though Rasch (1995, 489; 2000, 5) considers the former as consisting of “[...] a balloting method and [...] of more or less complex decision rules.”

democratic background, but also members of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments and other experts.

In the present paper we provide information on a first set of important aspects of parliamentary voting procedures for European parliaments and compare it with other data.<sup>2</sup> In the next section we briefly motivate the importance of considering the exact voting procedures used when doing research on parliamentary votes. Section three is devoted to a short description of our data source, namely the expert survey. In section four we report on essential features of parliamentary voting procedures in European parliaments as of today. Section five concludes and sketches our future research.

## 2 Parliamentary Voting Procedures

Recent work has alerted legislative scholars to the importance of institutional minutiae to understand parliaments. In a survey article Cox (2006, 141f) states that “important bills can only pass pursuant motions formally stated and voted upon in the plenary session” and that in the absence of constraining rules the “legislative state of nature” would result in an almost impassable bottleneck. Parliaments have surmounted these problems to make themselves “efficient” (Cox 1987) by resorting to the “mirroring principle” (McCubbins 2005), namely that the constraining rules adopted to confront the bottleneck “mirror” largely features of the polity concerned.

Central in these arguments are two features. First, without voting<sup>3</sup> on the floor of a parliamentary chamber few if any things would be done (see also Saalfeld 1995, 529; Aydelotte 1977, 13). Second, political parties play in most legislatures the central role in surmounting the “legislative state of nature” (Cox 2006, 141f). These two elements combine, however, in an important feature that is often neglected. While an individual casting a vote electing a member of parliament (MP) may well argue that her vote should remain secret, her MP could face a more difficult time arguing for such secrecy.<sup>4</sup> Carey (2009) nicely argues that

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<sup>2</sup>Saalfeld (1995) provided similar (now dated) data on a much smaller set of European parliaments, while Crisp and Driscoll (2012) offer information on Latin American parliaments.

<sup>3</sup>Voting, defined as the “act of indicating one’s preferences among competing policies or candidates” (Finer 1987, 631).

<sup>4</sup>Many of the mechanisms that allow political parties to surmount Cox’s (2006) bottleneck are only viable if party leaders can at least partially observe the voting behavior of their members.

MPs as agents are carrying out tasks for various principals (voters, parties, etc.) and that in such principal-agent relationships accountability plays a central role.

In terms of an MP's voting behavior, accountability hinges to a considerable extent on the exact voting procedures used in a parliament. In Carey's (2009) perspective different types of voting methods allow particular principals to monitor their agents' behavior. If votes are cast in secret, as done by the voter casting a vote for an MP, monitoring is strictly not possible. In signal voting, e.g., by show of hands etc., only individuals present (e.g., party leaders) may monitor MPs. Finally, in what Carey (2009, 49) calls "public voting" (e.g., roll call votes) both individuals present in the chamber and actors outside (e.g., interest groups and voters) can monitor the behavior of their MPs.

As much of the theoretical and methodological innovations stem from research on the US Congress, and that for the latter it was commonly assumed that practically all business was conducted by roll call votes (e.g., Poole and Rosenthal 1997, 56),<sup>5</sup> the importance of voting methods was considerably downplayed. Thus, it cannot surprise that the issue of partial observability of MPs' voting behavior was raised by comparativists at first, for instance by Fennell (1974), who tried to understand why some decisions in the Argentinian parliament were reached by roll call votes, while others were not.<sup>6</sup> Saalfeld (1995) provided a cursory glimpse at how voting rules differed across a set of western parliaments. The compendia published by Interparliamentary Union (1986) (see also Union Interparlementaire 1966) provided similarly some cursory information on the voting rules that were used by Carrubba, Gabel and Hug (2008) and Hug (2010) to alert scholars to the wide variety of voting methods in use. Similar, though more partial summaries appear in Carey's (2007*b*) work focusing mostly on Latin American parliaments (see also Carey 2009; Crisp and Driscoll 2012) and in Middlebrook's (2003*a*) study (see also Middlebrook 2003*b*), which covers mostly newly democratized Central and East European countries.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Both Roberts (2007) and Clinton and Lapinski (2008) demonstrate that this assumption is quite erroneous.

<sup>6</sup>Snyder and Ting (2005) offer a theoretical model motivating the use of roll call votes in the US Congress.

<sup>7</sup>Many of these countries introduced electronic voting systems in their new parliaments, which explain the considerable focus of these studies on these voting methods. Additional aggregate information may be gleaned from the 2008 and 2010 "Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments" carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations (see <http://www.ictparliament.org/globalsurvey>).

One may obviously wonder whether these voting methods matter for the typical information that scholars wish to extract from parliamentary voting records. The studies by Roberts (2007) and Hug (2010) provide quite solid proof that in the two chambers of the US Congress and the Swiss lower house voting procedures affect the voting behavior of MPs. In the former study procedural changes allow for such an assessment, while in the latter access to recorded (though not published) votes permits to draw such inferences.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, scholars would be well advised to consider more in detail the data-generating process when dealing with parliamentary voting data. Doing so requires on the one hand the appropriate data that we wish to make available (at least for European parliaments in this paper) and theoretical guidance to assess the consequences of the specific data-generating process (for a first attempt see Carrubba, Gabel and Hug 2008).

### 3 Expert Survey

In order to generate information on the institutional rules of national parliaments we carried out an internet-based survey among experts of these various parliaments. The questionnaire comprises questions dealing with the main methods of voting in parliaments as well as questions concerning the initiation of bills and the role of parliamentary committees.

More specifically, the questionnaire includes five parts. (i) The first part deals with final passage votes. Here, we first assess the standard operating procedure (SOP), which is the method used unless another voting method is explicitly selected. As in some parliaments the SOP can be set aside in favor of alternative voting methods, we included a second part that deals with the rules of such alternative voting methods, as for example which actors are entitled to request some specific alternative voting method. (ii) In some parliaments other rules than the one used for final passage votes are applied if voting is on the adoption of individual articles of bills, amendments to bills, budget motions or no-confidence motions. Hence, the second part of the questionnaire covers the rules for non-final passage votes. Again, questions concerning the SOP as well as alternative voting

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<sup>8</sup>Related studies by Carrubba et al. (2006) and Thiem (2009) on the European parliament and by Clinton and Lapinski (2008) on the US Congress show that roll call votes relate to a quite specific and different subset of all decisions reached on the floor of the respective parliaments (for a study assessing what proposals reach the floor in Chile, see Londregan 2000).

methods are included. (iii) As the forms of legislative organization differ in terms of actors that are endowed with the power to initiate legislation, the third part of the questionnaire includes questions dealing with the formal power to initiate bills, set the plenary agenda and initiate amendments to bills. Furthermore, five categories of restrictions that constrain the actors' rights of initiating legislation are assessed. These restrictions include numerical limits, time limits, technical requirements, limitations on the contents as well as other limitations which may be specified by the experts themselves. (iv) Moreover, as legislatures differ considerably with respect to the degree of authority committees are granted to redraft legislative bills, the fourth part of the questionnaire includes questions on the rewriting authority, agenda-setting and voting rules in legislative committees. (v) The last part of the questionnaire, finally, includes questions on voting rules, procedures and orders at the final floor stage. This part, for example, includes questions on the rules of voting on multiple alternatives as well as questions on abstention and blank votes. All of this information is collected with a clear time dimension from 1980 until the present. This is to say that experts are requested to indicate the current rules as well as to document changes in the past.

In order to collect this information, we considered all national parliaments included by Fish and Kroenig (2008), a recent handbook on national legislatures focusing on parliamentary power.<sup>9</sup> By including as well some additional parliaments not considered by Fish and Kroenig (2008)<sup>10</sup> we have a final sample of 256 parliamentary chambers in 176 countries. In addition to these 176 countries, the European Parliament (EP) is included in the sample.<sup>11</sup>

As we added some additional experts for the various parliaments to the list of experts provided by Fish and Kroenig (2008), 1222 experts were contacted and asked to answer the questionnaire. Among them, there are 207 experts who are member of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments and 11 experts on the European Parliament.

At the time of writing the data collection is in the process of being completed.

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<sup>9</sup>The authors of this volume have given us permission to contact the experts they have consulted in their expert survey (see Fish and Kroenig 2008, list of experts consulted).

<sup>10</sup>The following countries in our survey: Andorra, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Iceland, Isle of Man, Maldives, Monaco, Montenegro, Palau, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, and Suriname.

<sup>11</sup>Contrary to the "Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments" (<http://www.ictparliament.org/globalsurvey>) we did not include the Pan-African Parliament, as its legislative mandate is still quite limited.

While some data checking has already been carried out, some conflicting information from our experts have not been completely addressed yet. Consequently, some of the initial analyses that we provide in this paper might not yet be the definite information.

## 4 Empirics

So far, we have systematic data for 55 chambers of unicameral and bicameral parliaments in 42 countries and one regional parliament, the EP. In each chamber, cameral rules define a method of voting as the standard operating procedure (SOP), which is the method that will be used unless another voting method is explicitly selected (Crisp and Driscoll 2012, 92, fn. 5). Voting procedures can be distinguished according to the degree of information they disclose on the positions taken by individual members of parliament (MPs) (Saalfeld 1995; Crisp and Driscoll 2012). We distinguish three broad categories of voting methods: (i) secret voting, (ii) signal voting and (iii) open voting (see also Interparliamentary Union 1986; Saalfeld 1995). When a vote is secret, virtually no information about the voting behavior of individual MPs is disclosed. At most, the MPs' names may be checked in order to ensure that they have voted only once (Interparliamentary Union 1986, 476). Signal voting, by contrast, takes place in the presence of those people who have come to attend a parliamentary sitting. However, since individual voting positions are not recorded and published, the voting behavior of individual MPs is not revealed to the wider public. In open voting, finally, the individual positions of legislators are recorded and disclosed to the public (e.g., votes may be recorded in the official report or the minutes of proceedings of a chamber).

Standard operating procedures for votes taken on the parliamentary floor may vary depending on whether voting is on final passage of bills, the adoption of individual articles of some bill, amendments, budget motions or, where they exist, no-confidence motions. In this paper we confine ourselves to examine the case of final passage voting (which, in our future research, we will compare to the rules and methods of the other types of votes).

Table 4 shows how often each of the three methods of voting is used as SOP for final passage votes in the 56 parliamentary chambers we cover in this paper. Only in one out of our 56 chambers is secret voting defined as SOP for votes

on final passage, while 10 use the signal vote and 41 the open vote as their standard method when voting is on final passage of bills (as some responses from our experts are inconsistent, further research is needed to determine the SOP for final passage votes in the remaining four chambers). Following Saalfeld (1995, 531-534), these three broad categories of voting procedures may be further distinguished into subtypes of parliamentary voting. Distinguishable subtypes of secret voting are voting by (i) ballot papers, (ii) ballot balls or tokens and (iii) an electronic voting machine (EVM). Signal voting includes voting by (i) assent, (ii) voice, (iii) show of hands, (iv) rising in places, (v) ballot papers, (vi) ballot balls or tokens, (vii) division and (viii) an electronic voting machine (EVM). Finally, the precise methods of open voting may be voting by (i) division, (ii) roll call, (iii) ballot paper and (iv) an electronic voting machine (EVM). In addition to the disclosed information on the behavior of individual MPs, the various subtypes of voting mainly differ with respect to how time-consuming they are and how accurate the decision outcomes they produce will be. Consequently, the frequent use of time-consuming voting procedures, such as voting by division, has been criticized due to its limited efficiency, especially when applied to uncontested votes (e.g., Wheare 1963, 31). Table 1 reports how often, in our sample of European parliamentary chambers, each subtype of voting is used as SOP when voting is on final passage of bills. Voting by an electronic device is the method most frequently used among chambers that use open voting as SOP. By contrast, signal votes are usually cast by show of hands.

In some chambers multiple methods of voting are available when voting is on final passage of a bill. This opens the possibility of strategically selecting among voting procedures (see for instance Hug 2010; Crisp and Driscoll 2012). Table 2 summarizes for each standard method of voting how frequently alternative voting procedures may be invoked. Among the nine chambers that use a signal method of voting as SOP (and for which we have data), switching to open voting is possible in six cases, while a secret vote may be selected in three chambers. Interestingly, no chamber that uses secret voting or another relatively anonymous form of voting does not allow actors to invoke a more open method of voting. By contrast, among the chambers that have an open method of voting as SOP (and for which we have data), 24 do not allow any choice to be made. Only in three instances legislators may switch to a secret vote and in just one chamber signal

voting may be chosen.

Table 1: Precise Voting Method (under the SOP) for Final Passage Votes

Precise Method	SOP for final passage votes		
	Secret voting	Signal voting	Open voting
Ballot papers	0	0	0
Ballot balls/tokens	0	0	-
Electronic voting machine	1	1	28
Voting by assent	-	0	-
Voting by voice	-	0	-
Show of hands	-	6	-
Rising in places	-	1	-
Division	-	0	2
Roll call	-	-	2
<i>Not specified</i>	0	2	9
Total	1	10	41

*Note:* In case of four chambers, the expert’s responses were inconsistent with regard to the SOP for final passage votes. These cases are not included in the table and further research is necessary in order to determine the SOP in these chambers (Assemblée nationale of France, Saeima of Latvia, Assembleia da Republica of Portugal and Soviet Federatsii of Russia). Moreover, for some chambers we have inconsistent responses with respect to the precise method of voting. These cases appear in the category *Not specified* in the table.

Of course, when a single voting method is not mandated, the institutional requirements for invoking alternative voting procedures differ across chambers. For our sample of European parliamentary chambers, Table 3 provides an overview of the various actors that are entitled to request alternative methods of voting and to set aside the SOP (a more detailed description is given in Table 5). Overall, it is usually the individual MPs who are eligible to request some alternative vote procedure. However, there are also some chambers that allow their chairmen or parliamentary parties discretion over how to vote.

Table 2: Alternative Voting Methods for Final Passage Votes

<b>SOP may be set aside in favor of ...</b>	<b>SOP for final passage votes</b>		
	Secret voting	Signal voting	Open voting
secret voting	-	3	3
signal voting	0	-	1
open voting	1	6	-
no other voting method	0	0	24
<b>Total</b>	1	9	28

*Note:* A chamber may appear two times in this table (e.g., if signal voting is the SOP and both secret and open voting may be requested). In case of 25 chambers, it is either not yet clear what the SOP is for final passage votes or the experts' answers were (partly) inconsistent with regard to what alternative voting methods may be requested to set aside the SOP.

Table 3: Actors that are Entitled to Request Alternative Voting Methods for Final Passage Votes

Actors entitled to request an alternative voting method	SOP for final passage votes					
	Secret voting		Signal voting		Open voting	
	Signal vote	Open vote	Secret vote	Open vote	Secret vote	Signal vote
Individual MPs	0	1	3	5	2	1
Parliamentary parties	0	1	0	1	1	0
Chairman of the chamber	0	0	1	2	0	0
Government / ministers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parliamentary committees	0	0	0	0	1	0

*Note:* In the Assemblée nationale of France, both the chairman of the chamber and the Conférence des présidents (which includes the chairman of the chamber and the chairmen of various committees) are entitled to request a secret vote on final passage of a bill. However, since our expert's answers are inconsistent with respect to the SOP in the Assemblée nationale, this case does not appear in the table.

If we compare our results with previous studies on voting procedures we arrive at some notable differences. While Saalfeld (1995, 541) noted for the period between 1970 and 1994 that “[i]n some parliaments, such as the British House of Commons, the Danish Folketing, the Irish Dáil or the Swedish Riksdag, recorded votes are the standard way of voting” we find a much larger number (and share) of parliaments employing open voting as their SOP.<sup>12</sup> This change obviously has to do mostly with two things. First, our data covers a larger set of countries, and among those not covered by Saalfeld (1995, 536) we find many new democracies that have introduced electronic voting systems and make the voting record available to the public (Middlebrook 2003*a,b*). Second, even among the older democracies several have adopted recently more open voting systems (for instance in Switzerland, see Hug 2010).

If we consider the information on the Latin American legislatures provided by Crisp and Driscoll (2012),<sup>13</sup> we also find some marked differences. While in the European parliamentary chambers the frequent use of electronic voting machines has led to a situation where a large majority of parliaments carry out final passage votes by open voting, this is, among the some twenty chambers analyzed by Crisp and Driscoll (2012, 77) only the case in about half of them. In addition Crisp and Driscoll (2012, 77) report that in most chambers where open voting is not the SOP a certain percentage of MPs may request open final passage votes. This is also the case in the European chambers, where almost all allow for setting aside signal or secret voting (if these are the SOP for final passage votes) for on open vote.<sup>14</sup> Compared to the Latin American parliamentary chambers the European ones give this power, however, also in some instances to political parties or chamber chairmen.

## 5 Conclusion

The dominance of research on the US Congress and a rather flagrant misconception of the voting procedures in these chambers has lead to a situation where the

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<sup>12</sup>The comparison with Saalfeld’s (1995) data is rendered difficult as the author only provides information on whether a particular voting procedure can be used, but not whether it is the SOP or to be used in particular circumstances.

<sup>13</sup>We refrain from presenting a similar comparison with the data provided by Carey (2009), as it is less complete and not as up-to-date.

<sup>14</sup>The only exception are chambers for which we have not finished our data collection.

minutiae of how votes are carried out in parliamentary chambers is considerably neglected. If we believe, however, that MPs are the agents of one or possibly several principals (e.g., Levitt 1996; Hix 2002; Snyder and Ting 2005; Carey 2009) we might well expect that different monitoring possibilities will affect MPs' voting behavior. If this is the case any analysis of voting data from a parliamentary chamber, and especially comparative work drawing on data generated in different contexts, is fraught with difficulties. More specifically, as the work by Roberts (2007) and Hug (2010) shows, depending on the monitoring possibilities the behavior of MPs changes.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, we should be very wary of (especially comparative) work that fails to acknowledge the exact data-generating process, i.e., the voting procedures in place.<sup>16</sup>

One might excuse the neglect that voting procedures had to endure due to a lack of systematic information on voting procedures. While some compendia (see our discussion above) offered a glimpse at the variation existing in terms of voting methods across parliamentary chamber, no source provides comparable, systematic and time-sensitive data on this central element of parliamentary rules. In the present paper we have offered a first glimpse at a dataset in the process of being constructed on the basis of an expert survey. The data on European parliamentary chambers showed considerable variation and also changes across time. While the data presented in this paper are not yet completely validated and controlled, it shows at least the usefulness of our endeavor.

Our next steps will be to validate the data we have presented in the present paper and to do the same for data covering the non-European parliaments. This data will be made available in a first step to our experts, who proved to be an invaluable source for our research, and in a second step to the whole academic community.

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<sup>15</sup>Relatedly, a series of authors show that MP behavior varies over the electoral cycle, which is very likely to be related to the pertinence of the monitoring of various principals (see for instance Levitt 1996; Skjaeveland 1999; Lindstädt, Slapin and Wielen 2011; Traber, Hug and Sciarini 2011; Carroll and Nalepa 2012).

<sup>16</sup>As work by Londregan (2000), Clinton and Meirowitz (2004), Cox and McCubbins (2005) and Clinton (2012) among others show, we should also consider the larger "legislative game."

# Appendix

Table 4: Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Final Passage Votes

Country	Chamber	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Chamber	Current SOP	1 <sup>st</sup> Year SOP	Precise Method	Previous SOP	Time Period Previous SOP
Armenia Austria	Azgayin Zhoghov	1995	Open voting	1995	EVM	-	-
	Nationalrat	1920	Signal voting <sup>1</sup>	1980	Rising in places	-	-
	Bundesrat	1920	Signal voting	1980	Rising in places/ Show of hands <sup>2</sup>	-	-
Belarus	Palata Predstavitelei	1996	Open voting	1996	EVM	-	-
Belgium	Sovet Respubliki	1996	Signal voting	1996	EVM	-	-
	Chambre des representants	1831	Open voting	1980	EVM/Roll Call <sup>3</sup>	-	-
	Senat	1831	Open voting	1980	EVM/Division <sup>4</sup>	-	-
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Predstavnicki dom	1995	Open voting	2006	EVM	Signal voting	1998-2006
	Dom naroda	1995	Open voting	2006	EVM	Signal voting	1998-2006
Bulgaria	Narodno sabranie	1878	Open voting <sup>5</sup>	1980	EVM	-	-

<sup>1</sup> Two experts reported that signal voting by rising in places is the SOP used in the Nationalrat of Austria, whereas two other experts claimed that open voting is the SOP. However, since the latter two specified that voting is by rising in places, we code the Nationalrat as having signal voting as SOP.

<sup>2</sup> Of the two experts who answered the survey for the Bundesrat, one stated that the standard method of voting is by rising in places, while according to the other it is voting by show of hands.

<sup>3</sup> For the Chambre des representants of Belgium, three experts filled in our survey. Two of them indicated that voting by electronic machine is the standard method, while one claimed it to be voting by roll call.

<sup>4</sup> Two experts answered for the Senat of Belgium. According to one expert, the precise method is voting by electronic machine. The other expert, however, stated that it is voting by division.

<sup>5</sup> Five experts responded for the Narodno sabranie of Bulgaria. While they all agreed that voting by electronic machine is the precise method of voting, they disagreed with regard to the question of what the SOP is: secret and signal voting was each mentioned by one person, two experts stated that open voting is the SOP. Therefore, for the time being, the SOP is here coded as open voting.

*continued*

Country	Chamber	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Chamber	Current SOP	1 <sup>st</sup> Year SOP	Precise Method	Previous SOP	Time Period Previous SOP
Croatia	Hrvatski Sabor	1990	Open voting	1990	Show of hands/ Roll call/EVM <sup>6</sup>	-	-
Cyprus	Vouli Antiproponon	1960	Open voting	1980	Roll call	-	-
Czech Republic	Poslanecka Snemovna	1920	Open voting	1993 <sup>7</sup>	EVM	NA	NA
	Senat				NA		
Denmark	Folketinget	1849	Open voting	1980	EVM	-	-
Estonia	Riigikogu	1920	Open voting	1990	EVM	NA	NA
European Union	European Parliament	1952	Open voting <sup>8</sup>	2009 <sup>9</sup>	Roll call/EVM <sup>10</sup>	Signal voting	1980-2009
Finland	Eduskunta	1906	Open voting <sup>11</sup>	1980	EVM	-	-
France	Assemblée nationale	1789	Signal voting/ Open voting <sup>12</sup>	NA	Show of hands/ Roll call	NA	NA
	Senat				NA		

<sup>6</sup> Our data for Croatia is based on the responses of a single expert. According to this expert, the following three voting methods are used: voting by show of hands, roll call and an electronic voting machine. Hence, we need to do more research on what the standard method of voting is.

<sup>7</sup> In total, we have data from five experts for the Poslanecka Snemovna of the Czech Republic. 1993 was mentioned by three of them as the first year of the period for which open voting is the SOP. One person, however, stated that 1993 is the first year of this period (moreover, there is one *NA*). Further research thus is necessary, but for the time being we assume 1990 to be the correct date.

<sup>8</sup> One expert chose signal voting as the current SOP.

<sup>9</sup> Two experts reported 2004 and 1990, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> Of the five experts who agreed that open voting is the SOP, four indicated that voting by roll call is the precise method and one person stated that voting by electronic voting machine is the exact method of voting.

<sup>11</sup> Data are from six experts who responded for the Eduskunta of Finland. Five chose open voting and one chose signal voting as the SOP.

<sup>12</sup> Data for the Assemblée nationale of France comes from two experts. According to one expert the SOP is signal voting (whereas voting is by show of hands), while the other states that open voting (by roll call) is the SOP.

*continued*

Country	Chamber	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Chamber	Current SOP	1 <sup>st</sup> Year SOP	Precise Method	Previous SOP	Time Period Previous SOP
Georgia	Sakartvelos Parlamenti	1921	Open voting	1995/1997 <sup>13</sup>	EVM	NA	NA
Germany	Bundestag	1949	Signal voting <sup>14</sup>	1980	Rising in places/ Show of hands	-	-
Greece	Bundesrat	1949	Signal voting <sup>15</sup>	1980	Show of hands	-	-
	Vouli Ton Ellinon	1830	Open voting	1980	Roll call/Division <sup>16</sup>	-	-
Hungary	Orszaggyules	1949	Open voting	NA	EVM	NA	NA
Iceland	Althingi	930	Open voting	1991 <sup>17</sup>	EVM	Signal voting	1980-1991 <sup>18</sup>
Ireland	Dail Eireann	1920	Open voting	1980	EVM/Division <sup>19</sup>	-	-
	Seanad Eireann	1920	Open voting	1980	EVM/Division <sup>20</sup>	-	-

<sup>13</sup> Needs further research since experts disagree.

<sup>14</sup> Our data is based on the responses of three experts. Two reported that signal voting is the SOP, according to the third expert the SOP is open voting. However, the latter expert specified that voting takes place by show of hands. We therefore retain signal voting as the SOP.

<sup>15</sup> The expert for the Bundesrat of Germany described the SOP as open voting. He however specified that voting is by show of hands. Therefore, we code the SOP as signal voting.

<sup>16</sup> Of the four experts for the Vouli Ton Ellinon of Greece, three claimed that roll call voting is the specific method of voting used as SOP, while one person mentioned voting by division.

<sup>17</sup> One of four experts for the Althingi of Iceland stated, however, that 1980 is the first year of the period for which open voting is the SOP.

<sup>18</sup> According to one expert, this period started in 1981 (and ended in 1991).

<sup>19</sup> The two experts who answered for the Dail Eireann of Ireland disagreed with respect to the precise standard method of voting: one indicated that it is voting by electronic voting machine, according to the other it is voting by division.

<sup>20</sup> Data for the Seanad Eireann of Ireland is based on the answers of two experts. Due to disagreement between these experts, it is unclear whether the precise voting method is voting by electronic voting machine or division.

*continued*

Country	Chamber	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Chamber	Current SOP	1 <sup>st</sup> Year SOP	Precise Method	Previous SOP	Time Period Previous SOP
Isle of Man	House of Keys	979	Open voting	NA	EVM	NA	NA
	Legislative Council				NA		
Israel	Knesset	1948	Open voting	1980	EVM and Roll call	-	-
Italy	Camera dei Deputati	1861	Open voting <sup>21</sup>	1988	EVM	Secret voting	1980-1988
	Senato della Repubblica	1861	Signal voting	NA	Show of hands	NA	NA
Latvia	Saeima	1922	?? <sup>22</sup>	1990	EVM	NA	NA
Lithuania	Seimas	1922	Open voting	1990	EVM	Secret voting & Signal voting	NA
Luxembourg	Chambre des Deputes	1848	Open voting	1984	EVM	Signal voting	1984-2002 <sup>23</sup>
Macedonia	Sobranie	1991	Open voting <sup>24</sup>	1991	EVM	-	-
Moldova	Parlamentul	1994	Signal voting	1994	Show of hands	-	-
Montenegro	Skupstina	1905	Open voting	1980	EVM, roll call & show of hands <sup>25</sup>	-	-
Netherlands	Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal	1581	Signal voting <sup>26</sup>	1980	Show of hands	-	-
	Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal	1815	Open voting	NA	Roll call <sup>27</sup>	NA	NA

<sup>21</sup> Five experts report that the SOP is open voting. Three other experts, however, mention either signal voting or secret voting.

<sup>22</sup> We have three experts for the Saeima of Latvia and secret, signal and open voting is each described one time as SOP.

<sup>23</sup> One of the dates cannot be true, needs further research to be corrected.

<sup>24</sup> However, one of the three experts for the Sobranie of Macedonia reported that signal voting is the SOP.

<sup>25</sup> The expert who answered the survey for the Skupstina of Montenegro noted that open voting is performed by use of an electronic voting system, roll call or show of hands.

<sup>26</sup> Six experts responded for the Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal of the Netherlands. According to four of them, the SOP is signal voting by show of hands. Two however reported that open voting is the SOP. We need to do further research but for the time being, we code signal voting as the SOP.

<sup>27</sup> One of the two experts for the Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal of the Netherlands mentioned that laws are assumed to be passed and individual factions may be noted to be opposed to the law.

*continued*

Country	Chamber	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Chamber	Current SOP	1 <sup>st</sup> Year SOP	Precise Method	Previous SOP	Time Period Previous SOP
Norway	Stortinget	1814	Open voting	1980	EVM <sup>28</sup>	-	-
Poland	Sejm	1918	Open voting	1989	EVM	Secret voting	1980-1989
	Senat	1992	Open voting	1992 <sup>29</sup>	EVM	-	-
Portugal	Assembleia da Republica	1976	???	1980	???	-	-
Romania	Camera Deputatilor				NA		
Russia	Senat	1991	Open voting	1991 <sup>31</sup>	EVM	-	-
	Gossoudarstvennaya Duma	1905	Secret voting	1994	EVM	NA	NA
	Soviet Federatsii	1993	???	1994	EVM	NA	NA
Serbia	Narodna skupstina	2006	Open voting	2006 <sup>33</sup>	EVM	-	-
Slovakia	Narodna rada	1994	Open voting	1996	EVM	Secret voting & Signal voting	NA

<sup>28</sup> One of the three experts for the Stortinget of Norway noted that electronic voting is used since 1979 but that the votes used to be not easily accessible. Nowadays journalists may check the vote records and make them publicly available.

<sup>29</sup> The two experts who responded for the Senat of Poland reported that the first year of the period for which open voting is used as SOP is 1989 and 1990, respectively. According to our records, the Senat was established in 1992 and we therefore code 1992 as the first year in which open voting is the SOP.

<sup>30</sup> Although three of the four experts for the Assembleia da Republica of Portugal stated that open voting is the SOP, their subsequent responses seem to be inconsistent: one person reported that voting is by rising in places (which is an indication of signal voting), while the other two stated that voting is by division and using an electronic voting machine, respectively (which both may be a method of open voting).

<sup>31</sup> The expert for the Senat of Romania reported 1990 as the first year in which open voting is used as SOP. Since, according to our records, the Senat was established in 1991, we code 1991 as the first year.

<sup>32</sup> Two people served as experts for the Soviet Federatsii of Russia. They defined the SOP as secret and open voting, respectively.

<sup>33</sup> According to one of the experts for the Narodna skupstina of Serbia, 1980 was the first year in which open voting was used as SOP, according to another expert the first year was 1990. Our records show that the Narodna skupstina was established in 2006 and we therefore code 2006 as the first year.

*continued*

Country	Chamber	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Chamber	Current SOP	1 <sup>st</sup> Year SOP	Precise Method	Previous SOP	Time Period Previous SOP
Slovenia	Drzavni Zbor	1991	Open voting	?? <sup>34</sup>	EVM	?? <sup>35</sup>	?? <sup>36</sup>
	Drzavni Svet	1991	Open voting	1992	EVM	NA	NA
Spain	Congreso de los Diputados				NA		
	Senado	1978	Open voting	1982	EVM	Signal voting	1980-1982 <sup>37</sup>
Sweden	Riksdag	1719	Open voting <sup>38</sup>	1980	EVM	-	-
Switzerland	Nationalrat	1815	Open voting	?? <sup>39</sup>	EVM	?? <sup>40</sup>	?? <sup>41</sup>
	Standerat	1815	Signal voting <sup>42</sup>	1980	Show of hands	-	-
Turkey	Buyuk Millet Meclisi	1920	Signal voting	1980	Show of hands	-	-
United Kingdom	House of Commons	1295	Open voting	?? <sup>43</sup>	Division	?? <sup>44</sup>	?? <sup>45</sup>
	House of Lords	1295	Open voting	1980	Division	-	-

*Note:* EVM = Electronic voting machine.

<sup>34</sup> The two experts for the Drzavni Zbor of Slovenia do not agree on the first year in which open voting was the SOP: one reports 1991 and the other 1992.

<sup>35</sup> According to one expert, signal voting was the SOP before open voting became the standard method of voting.

<sup>36</sup> Signal voting may have been the SOP (before open voting) from 1990 (sic!) to 1992. However, as our experts disagree, this has to be validated.

<sup>37</sup> These dates need to be validated because one expert claims that signal voting was the SOP until 1985.

<sup>38</sup> This is validated by secondary sources. However, one of our experts noted that the SOP is voting by acclamation (signal voting) and voting by using an electronic voting machine takes place if it is requested by an MP.

<sup>39</sup> According to one expert for the Nationalrat of Switzerland, open voting is the SOP since 1980. According to the other expert, the first year of the period for which open voting is the SOP was 1995.

<sup>40</sup> Either “\_” or signal voting; needs to be validated.

<sup>41</sup> Either “\_” or 1980-1995; needs to be validated.

<sup>42</sup> The expert for the Standerat of Switzerland defined the SOP as open voting but noted that voting is by show of hands. We therefore code signal voting as SOP.

<sup>43</sup> The dates given by the two experts for the UK House of Commons, 1980 and 1983, differ from each other. This needs further research.

<sup>44</sup> Either “\_” or NA; needs to be validated.

<sup>45</sup> Either “\_” or NA; needs to be validated.

Table 5: Alternative Voting Methods for Final Passage Votes

Country	Chamber	Final passage votes		
		To request a secret vote	To request a signal vote	To request an open vote
Armenia	Azgayin Zhoghov	-	-	SOP
Austria	Nationalrat	20 MPs	SOP	20 MPs
	Bundesrat	5 MPs	SOP	5 MPs, Chairman of the chamber
Belarus	Palata Predstavitelei	-	-	SOP
Belgium	Sovet Respubliki	NA	SOP	NA
	Chambre des representants	-	-	SOP
	Senat	-	-	SOP
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Predstavnicki dom	-	-	SOP
	Dom naroda	NA	NA	SOP
Bulgaria	Narodno sabranie	?? <sup>1</sup>	-	SOP
Croatia	Hrvatski Sabor	-	-	SOP
Cyprus	Vouli Antiprosopon	NA	NA	SOP
Czech Republic	Poslanecka Snemovna	-	-	SOP
	Senat	-	NA	-
Denmark	Folketinget	-	-	SOP
Estonia	Riigikogu	-	-	SOP
European Union	European Parliament	?? <sup>2</sup>	-	SOP
	Eduskunta	-	?? <sup>3</sup>	SOP

<sup>1</sup> According to one of our experts, 10% of all MPs or a parliamentary party may request a secret vote. However, an other expert reported that secret votes can not be requested in the Narodno sabranie of Bulgaria. Hence, further research is needed in order to determine whether a secret vote may be requested when voting is on final passage of a bill.

<sup>2</sup> Two experts reported that a secret vote can not be invoked. One expert, however, indicated that a secret vote may be requested by 20% of all MPs.

<sup>3</sup> Two experts stated that requesting a signal vote is not possible when voting is on final passage in the Eduskunta of Finland. By contrast, a third expert noted that the chairman of the chamber is entitled to request a signal vote.

*continued*

Country	Chamber	Final passage votes		
		To request a secret vote	To request a signal vote	To request an open vote
France	Assemblée nationale	Chairman of the chamber, Conférence des présidents <sup>5</sup>	???	?? <sup>4</sup>
Senat				
Georgia	Sakartvelos Parlamenti	-	-	SOP
Germany	Bundestag	-	SOP	5% of all MPs, parliamentary party
Bundesrat				
Greece	Vouli Ton Ellinon	-	SOP	NA
Hungary	Országgyűlés	?? <sup>6</sup>	?? <sup>7</sup>	SOP
Iceland	Althingi	?? <sup>8</sup>	-	SOP
Ireland	Dail Eireann	-	-	SOP
Seanad Eireann				
Isle of Man	House of Keys	-	-	SOP
Legislative Council				
Israel	Knesset	NA	NA	SOP

<sup>4</sup> Data for the Assemblée nationale of France comes from two experts. According to one expert the SOP is signal voting (whereas voting is by show of hands), while the other states that open voting (by roll call) is the SOP.

<sup>5</sup> The Conférence des présidents includes the chairman of the chamber and the chairmen of various committees.

<sup>6</sup> According to two experts, secret voting may be requested to vote on the final passage of a bill in the Vouli Ton Ellinon of Greece. The experts' answers differ however with respect to what actors are entitled to request such a vote.

<sup>7</sup> Of four experts, one reported that signal voting may be requested.

<sup>8</sup> Our data for the Országgyűlés of Hungary is based on the responses from a single expert. The expert indicated that a secret vote may be requested but no information was provided concerning the actors that are entitled to request such a secret vote.

*continued*

Country	Chamber	Final passage votes		
		To request a secret vote	To request a signal vote	To request an open vote
Italy	Camera dei Deputati	20 MPs, parliamentary party	-	SOP
	Senato della Repubblica	NA	SOP	NA
Latvia	Saeima	???	???	???
Lithuania	Seimas	-	???	SOP
Luxembourg	Chambre des Deputes	10 MPs, parliamentary committees	10 MPs	SOP
Macedonia	Sobranie	???	-	SOP
Moldova	Parlamentul	1 MP, Chairman of the chamber	SOP	1 MP, Chairman of the chamber
Montenegro	Skupstina	NA	NA	SOP
Netherlands	Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal	-	SOP	???
	Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal	-	-	SOP
Norway	Stortinget	-	-	SOP
Poland	Sejm	-	-	SOP
	Senat	NA	NA	SOP

<sup>9</sup> We have three experts for the Saeima of Latvia and each describes a different voting method as SOP.

<sup>10</sup> According to one out of three experts, a signal vote may be requested by a parliamentary party. This needs further validation.

<sup>11</sup> The experts' responses are inconsistent: one out of three reported that secret voting may be requested by 10 MPs or the chairman of the chamber.

<sup>12</sup> Four experts agreed that open voting may be requested but their data differs with respect to who is entitled to do so. Three experts claimed that one MP suffices, whereas according to a fourth expert, 76 MPs are necessary. Moreover, three experts indicated that the chairman of the chamber is entitled as well.

*continued*

Country	Chamber	Final passage votes		
		To request a secret vote	To request a signal vote	To request an open vote
Portugal	Assembleia da Republica	-	???	?? <sup>13</sup>
Romania	Camera Deputatilor	NA	NA	SOP
	Senat	NA	NA	SOP
Russia	Gossoudarstvennaya Duma	SOP	-	20% of all MPs, parliamentary parties
Russia	Soviet Federatsii	???	-	?? <sup>14</sup>
Serbia	Narodna skupstina	NA	NA	SOP
Slovakia	Narodna rada	-	-	SOP
Slovenia	Drzavni Zbor	-	-	SOP
	Drzavni Svet	NA	NA	SOP
Spain	Congreso de los Diputados	NA	NA	SOP
	Senado	?? <sup>15</sup>	?? <sup>16</sup>	SOP
Sweden	Riksdag	-	-	SOP

<sup>13</sup> Although three of the four experts for the Assembleia da Republica of Portugal stated that open voting is the SOP, their subsequent responses seem to be inconsistent: one person reported that voting is by rising in places (which is an indication of signal voting), while the other two stated that voting is by division and using an electronic voting machine, respectively (which both may be a method of open voting).

<sup>14</sup> Two people served as experts for the Soviet Federatsii of Russia. As they defined the SOP as secret and open voting, respectively, further research needs to be done.

<sup>15</sup> According to one out of two experts, only secret voting can be invoked: 50 senators may request a secret vote on final passage of a bill in the Senado of Spain.

<sup>16</sup> According to the other expert, only signal voting can be requested. This may be done by either three parliamentary parties or the chairman of the chamber.

*continued*

Country	Chamber	Final passage votes		
		To request a secret vote	To request a signal vote	To request an open vote
Switzerland	Nationalrat	-	-	SOP
	Ständerat	-	SOP	NA
Turkey	Buyuk Millet Meclisi	-	SOP	20 MPs
United Kingdom	House of Commons	-	-	SOP
	House of Lords	NA	NA	SOP

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