

Dear Mr Müller,

Thank you for your email and for your interest in the Riigikogu and its parliamentary history.

First, some information on the allocation of seats in the plenary chamber at the beginning of each Riigikogu composition.

After all parliamentary groups have been formed, the Board of the Riigikogu assigns seats in the plenary chamber to them, meaning that the seats of Riigikogu members in the chamber are arranged by parliamentary group. Traditionally, the allocation of seats is based on the ideological positioning of the parties represented by the parliamentary groups on the left-right spectrum. Accordingly, the seats of the members of the parliamentary group representing the most right-wing party should be located, from the perspective of the chair, furthest to the right in the plenary chamber, while those of the most left-wing party should be located furthest to the left.

When assigning seats, efforts are made to ensure that members of the same parliamentary group are seated together in a compact arrangement. The distribution of the seats assigned to a parliamentary group among its members is decided by the parliamentary group itself.

The seats of Riigikogu members who do not belong to a parliamentary group are usually located, from the perspective of the chair, at the end of the leftmost row of benches, that is, the row closest to the windows (highlighted in grey). This is the origin of the expression “aknaalused” — literally “those by the windows” — which is used to refer to Riigikogu members who do not belong to any parliamentary group.

With the consent of a parliamentary group, a Riigikogu member who does not belong to that group may sit together with the members of the group.

Regarding your second question — the seating arrangement of parliamentary groups in the plenary chamber for each legislative period since 2003 — we unfortunately do not have comprehensive archival material, but we have gathered everything available to us. Please find attached pictures of relevant leaflets, as well as a PDF excerpt from the 2012 annotated edition of the Riigikogu Rules of Procedure.

These seating plans are the closest available records we have to the initial seating arrangement of each Riigikogu composition.

Should you require any further assistance or clarification, please feel free to contact me directly.

We hope this information is helpful for your bachelor thesis and wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Anita Möldre

*Chancellery of the Riigikogu*

*Adviser of the Sittings Department*