OVERVIEW

Country: Spain (population: 47.1 million people; surface area: 504,645 square kilometres).
Region: Cantabria (population: 0.593 million people; surface area: 5,221 square kilometres).

The Parliament of Cantabria is the legislative body of the Autonomous Region of Cantabria.
Head office: Santander (Address: Calle Alta, 31)
Language: Spanish
The Parliament of Cantabria was founded on February 1, 1982.
Parliament of Cantabria Budget € 8.1 million (2012 period)
Website: www.parlamento-cantabria.es

PARLIAMENT OF CANTABRIA FUNCTIONS

The Parliament of Cantabria is the body that represents the people of Cantabria and is currently constituted by 39 Representatives elected by universal and equal suffrage, at free and direct elections, by secret ballot.
It is one of the main self-governing entities in our Autonomous Region, together with the Government and President, who is elected by Parliament, from among its members and appointed by the King.
Its main functions are: to exercise legislative power, approve budgets for the Autonomous Region, as well as boost and control Government action and perform any other duties conferred under the Constitution, the Autonomy Statute of Cantabria and all other laws under the legal system.
PARLIAMENT OF CANTABRIA MEMBERS

The Cantabrian Parliament has 39 members. Out of these, 22 are male and 17 female.

The average representative age is 51.

The parliamentary seats are split proportionally, by applying the D'Hont method.

In order to win representation in the Parliament of Cantabria, candidates must obtain at least 5% of votes.

Representatives must be elected every four years, which is the length of each Legislative Term. Elections are held at the same time as those in most other autonomous regions in Spain.

Conditions to vote:
To be a Spanish national
- To be over 18 years old
- To be a registered resident of Cantabria

Conditions to be voted:
- To be a Spanish national
- To be over 18 years old
- To have legal status as a Cantabrian candidate
- To be in full enjoyment of all civil and political rights
To not be unelectable, pursuant to the provisions set forth in Cantabria’s Electoral Act
COMPOSITION OF THE PARLIAMENT OF CANTABRIA FOLLOWING THE AUTONOMOUS REGIONAL ELECTIONS OF MAY 22, 2011


POLITICAL GROUPS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF CANTABRIA

The parties may form parliamentary groups with a minimum of three representatives. Each parliamentary group has a spokesperson. Parliament is in charge of making economic and administrative allocations to each parliamentary group towards the running thereof.

People’s Party Parliamentary Group [in Spanish: Grupo Parlamentario Popular, or PP]
Spokesperson: Eduardo Van den Eynde
Seats: 20
Contact: grupo-popular@parlamento-cantabria.es
+34 942 24 10 66

Regionalist Party Parliamentary Group [in Spanish: Grupo Parlamentario Regionalista, or PRC]
Spokesperson: Rafael de la Sierra
Seats: 12
Contact: grupo-regionalista@parlamento-cantabria.es
+34 942 24 10 64

Socialist Party Parliamentary Group [in Spanish: Grupo Parlamentario Socialista, or PSOE]
Spokesperson: Rosa Eva Díaz Tezanos
Seats: 7
Contact: grupo-socialista@parlamento-cantabria.es
+34 942 24 10 65
PARLIAMENT FUNCTIONS

The Parliament of Cantabria has three functions: Legislative, Government Control and Budgetary.

Legislative

Passing Autonomous Region’s laws. The Parliament exercises its legislative power with regards to its jurisdiction, and can request the National Government to adopt certain draft bills.
Approving regular and cooperation agreements with other Autonomous Regions, concerning the management and provision of services inherent to its jurisdiction.
E lecting the Autonomous Region’s President from among its representatives, as well as the senator who is to represent such Regional authority before the General Courts.

Control

Boosting and controlling the Government of Cantabria’s activity.
Demanding, where appropriate, political accountability to the Government and its President.
Lodging appeals on grounds of unconstitutionality and appearing before the Constitutional Court.
Receiving information from the National Government on international treaties and other projects that may affect the Autonomous Region’s interests.
Participating in public control of the social media that are owned by the autonomous regional authority.

Budgetary

Approving budgets and financial statements of the Autonomous Region.
Setting political social and economic forecasts for the Autonomous Region to supply to the National Government in order to draft planning projects.
Approving the development plans of general interest to Cantabria.
PARLIAMENT OF CANTABRIA SPHERES

- Education
- Health
- Justice
- Culture
- Sports
- Tourism
- Industry
- Technological Innovation
- Employment
- Social Services
- The Environment
- Territorial Planning
- Livestock
- Trade
- Food
- Taxes
- Public Works
- Housing

GOVERNMENT OF CANTABRIA

The Government of Cantabria consists of those parties constituting the parliamentary majority. In this legislative term, the government comprises the People's Party, since it reached absolute majority in the latest autonomous regional elections.
GOVERNMENT BODIES OF THE PARLIAMENT OF CANTABRIA

President

The Parliament of Cantabria has a President, who is elected in the House by absolute majority vote. Although in this legislative term, he/she is a member of the majority party, it is not always so.

The President holds a seat in Parliament, ensures the proper running of parliamentary actions, and manages and organises plenary debates. The President’s duty is to comply and ensure compliance with the Regulation, and must provide an interpretation thereof in the event of doubt and provide a decision in the event of omission. Said party also performs other duties conferred thereto by the Autonomy Statute, the laws and the House Regulation.

The President does not partake in debates as an active party, presides over it and holds an institutional seat in Parliament.

At present, the Parliament of Cantabria’s President is José Antonio Cagigas Rodriguez (Escalante, 14 November 1952). Cagigas is member of the People’s Party. He holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Exact Sciences from the University of Valladolid. He was province Director for Education, and Head of the Department of Culture of Cantabria. He is a parliamentary representative and Parliament Bureau member since 2003.

Contact: jacagigas@parlamento-cantabria.es
+34 942 24 10 66
**Parliament Bureau**

The Parliament Bureau, presided by its President, is the body in charge of organising the work to be done and the internal governing system of the House. All written notices and documents relating to parliament are classified by the Bureau to be subsequently processed, in accordance with the provisions set forth for each specific case under the Assembly’s Regulation.

The Bureau’s duties also include setting the agendas for parliamentary sessions and the activity calendar of the Plenary and the Commissions. It also coordinates the duties of other bodies, prior meeting with the Spokespersons Board.

The Bureau is responsible for preparing the draft budget for Parliament to be included in the General Budget Plans of the Autonomous Region of Cantabria.

**Spokespersons Board**

The Spokespersons Board consists of the Parliamentary Groups’ spokespersons, who shall hold a meeting presided by the President of Parliament. A Government delegate may attend these meetings.

Any decisions on the calendar for Plenary sessions and Commissions, setting the agenda for such Plenary sessions and coordinating the duties of various parliamentary bodies are incumbent upon said board.
The Plenary is the highest body of Parliament. It is convened by the President of Parliament, whether at his own request or at the request of at least two Parliamentary Groups or a fifth of all House members.

The Plenary comprises all of the Representatives, who meet through Plenary sessions in order to decide upon and approve matters that are incumbent upon Parliament.

The Representatives take their seats at the Plenary Sessions Hall, or plenary chamber, according to their Parliamentary Group affiliation, which are always the same seats. At the beginning of the Term, the Parliamentary Groups were allocated their seats. To the left of the President is the Socialist Party Group, in the centre is the People’s Party Group and to the right is the Regionalist Party Group.

The first row of seats of the plenary chamber is reserved for the members of the Government, since plenary sessions are attended not only by Representatives but also by members of the Government.

The Plenary Sessions Hall is also open to acting Parliament Officials as well as those authorised to do so by the President: accredited media and any citizens who have so requested.

In the 8th Term, plenary sessions shall be generally held on Mondays as of 5.00 pm on, even though the Regulation authorises such to be held on any other day between Monday and Friday, including such days. To hold a plenary session on a day other than these, a series of conditions must be met.

The plenary session items must be previously approved, ten days prior to such session, by the Parliament Bureau. Thus, the agenda and each group’s times shall be set, always referring to the Regulation of the Parliament of Cantabria.

The members of the Government may intervene, whether at their own request or at the groups’ request, who could formally question them or simply ask questions.

The sessions have been broadcast live online for many years. In addition, Parliament has provided an institutional signal for regional TV channels.
**Commissions**

The Representatives meet in Plenary sessions and also in Commission sessions, which are working bodies that perform supplementary or preparatory functions with regards to Plenary decisions.

Parliamentary Groups are in charge of deciding which members will become part of each commission. In fact, Commissions are somehow smaller-scale versions of a Plenary.

In performing their steering and control functions concerning the Government, they may make and debate non-law proposals and question sessions, as well as appearances.

The members of the Government may attend the Commission meetings with speaking rights, but may only vote in those of which they are members if they are Department Heads in addition to being Representatives.

Similarly to the Plenary’s composition, Commissions also elect a Bureau from among their members, which must consist of a President, a Vice-President and a Secretary. This is its executive body.

The Commissions are convened by their President, whether at his own request or at the request of two Parliamentary Groups, or at the request of a third of Commission members with a minimum of three.

There are two types of Commission: Permanent and Non-permanent. Permanent Commissions are expressly set forth in the Parliament Regulation. These are, in turn, classified into Permanent Legislative Commissions and Permanent Non-legislative Commissions. It is worth mentioning that the generally accepted criteria state that each and every Government section must correspond with each of the Legislative commissions. There are three Permanent Non-legislative Commissions which are: Regulation, Statute of Representatives and Petitions Commission.

Non-permanent Commissions are created to take on specific tasks. They are terminated upon completion of the task commissioned and, in any case, at the end of term.
The following is a list of the *permanent commissions* of the Parliament of Cantabria:

- Regulation Commission;
- Statute of Representatives Commission;
- Petitions Commission;
- President and Justice Commission;
- Innovation, Industry, Tourism and Trade Commission;
- Public Works and Housing Commission;
- Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development Commission;
- Economy, Tax and Employment Commission;
- Environment, Territorial and Urban Planning Commission;
- Education, Culture and Sports Commission;
- Health and Social Services Commission.
PARLIAMENT ADMINISTRATION

The Parliament of Cantabria’s staff consists of 41 employees and five temporary staff.

The employees must have at least the qualification required by law, namely, A Group Officials: Bachelor’s Degree holders (Senior Legal staff of the Parliament of Cantabria and Other Legal staff of the Parliament of Cantabria); B Group: Diploma holders (Senior Administrative staff of the Parliament of Cantabria); C Group: Pre-university Studies Diploma holder (Administrative staff of the Parliament of Cantabria); D Group: Compulsory Secondary Education Studies Certificate holder (Junior staff of the Parliament of Cantabria).

The Groups’ functions are the following:

1. The Senior Legal staff’s functions include providing legal and expert advice to the Parliament Bureau, the Commissions Bureau and Committees, as well as drafting, in accordance with the agreements adopted by said bodies, the appropriate resolutions, reports, decisions and minute-taking; representing and advocating for the Parliament of Cantabria, before any jurisdictional bodies and before the Constitutional Tribunal; other functions include high-level study and proposal tasks as well as managing parliamentary Administration, taking office of the respective bodies.

2. The Other Senior staff’s functions include those inherent to their field of expertise depending on the nature of their positions, as well as those inherent to management positions of the respective services, as specified by the body’s staff list.

3. The Senior Administrative staff’s functions include coordination, study and proposal-making with regards to administrative and management positions of the respective services, as specified by the body’s staff list.

4. The Administrative staff’s functions include applications, shorthand and other forms of typing, filing, basic calculations, accounting book-keeping and other duties of similar nature.

5. The Parliamentary Usher Scale staff’s functions include surveillance and security inside Parliament, reproduction, transport and distribution of print-outs, documents, items and other of similar nature, in addition to the provision of services that are appropriate to the nature of the duties concerning filing, book and storage sorting, as well as collaborating with official events organised at Parliament.
The Senior Legal Secretariat General is the Body in charge of managing staff and all sections and offices, as well as House services, pursuant to the President’s instructions.

The Senior Legal Secretary General shall be appointed by the House Bureau, at the request of the President, from among Parliament’s Senior Legal Staff. The Senior Legal Secretary General’s office may end due to resignation, termination of public servant status, change of active status, inability to perform office duties, or if so decided by the appointing body.

In the event of a vacancy, absence or inability, the Senior Legal Secretary General shall be provisionally replaced by the highest ranked Senior Legal Staff in the House.

Particularly, the Senior Legal Secretary General’s functions include preparing proposals to approve and modify the positions lists and the assessment thereof, budget templates, remuneration system and collective bargaining; ensuring a proper coordination with Bodies under other Administrations with jurisdiction; appointing staff to positions on a temporary basis; authorising staff meetings throughout the working day; imposing sanctions for minor incidents or grant leaves and permissions.

The Secretariat General comprises the following:

1. **Department of Legal Procedures and Parliamentary Studies**, which, in turn, comprises:

   1.1. **Studies and Publications Service**: preparation of activity reports to be drafted by Parliament; creation and implementation of studies and research on parliamentary activity and duties; promotion and running of Parliament publications.

   1.2. **Library, Documentation and Archive Service**: Its functions include organising and proposing the purchasing, sorting and maintenance of the bibliographical repository; organising a parliamentary documentation service; organising and filing gazettes and documents created by Parliament and received from other Parliamentary Houses, public Administrations, study institutes and centres; determining, in accordance with the relevant instructions, of any relevant documentation and publication exchanges with other national or foreign Houses or Chambers, and with public Administrations, study institutes and centres.
2. Department of Parliamentary Affairs.

2.1. High Body and Commission Service. Its functions include acting as General Archive of Parliament’s incoming and outgoing documents; organising, safeguarding and filing of documentation; providing administrative assistance with and preparation of documentation needed for Plenary, Bureau, Spokespersons Board, Committee and Commission sessions and meetings, as well as drafting documentation material arisen therefrom; delivery to the Studies and Publications Service of any documents that the President requests to have published in the Official Gazette of the Parliament of Cantabria. Generally speaking, all functions concerning the proper running of the Plenary, Bureau, Spokespersons Board, Committees and Commissions.

2.2. Protocol and Institutional Relations Service. Its functions include organising official events and applying official protocol rules; requesting all manner of accreditations sand access passes; coordinating relations with public and private bodies and entities outside Parliament. Last, Its functions include providing administrative assistance and support to the House Bureau and any others that, under the jurisdiction thereof, may be commissioned by the Parliament Bureau, the President, the Senior Legal Secretary General or respective Director.

3. Department of Internal Governance.

3.1. The Administration, Staff and General Affairs Service’s functions include preparing and drawing-up of draft Budgets to Parliament, monitoring and control of the House Budget’s implementation status, writing-up of the annual report at the end of each period, on compliance and preparation of the Budget’s settlement. Further duties include preparation of proposals and budgets concerning works, services, purchase of goods or supplies subject to approval by the appropriate body and management of as many administrative files or proceedings as may arise as a result thereof; making and collecting payments, monitoring Cash and current accounts, as well as safeguarding funds and effects in Savings Accounts, management of statutory remuneration allocated to Representatives and Parliamentary Groups, handling and managing Parliament staff payroll and all Social Security matters and, generally, processing all expenses and payments of Parliament overseeing all accounting stages. In addition, its duties also include administrative proceedings concerning all staff-related matters.

3.2. Internal Affairs Service: it is in charge of organising and managing junior staff; maintenance and conservation of facilities and offices of the House; internal organisation and security; creating the inventory assets belonging to the Parliament of Cantabria; maintenance of IT equipment and resources, as well as implementing and adapting IT applications and new technologies.

Last, the House Intervention, under the Senior Legal Secretary General, is in charge of ensuring internal control, accounting management and financial control, seeking to subject all acts, events, documents and files to audits and controls giving rise to recognition of rights and obligations relating to economic content, as well as income and payments arising thereof, and general investment or application of the channels available to the Parliament of Cantabria.
Parliament of Cantabria budget
€ 8.1 million (2012).

Distribution:

Members of Parliament expenses: € 1.75 M
Parliament group running expenses: € 2.3 M
Staff expenses: € 2.25 M
Sundry expenses: € 1.8 M

CONTACT THE PARLIAMENT OF CANTABRIA

Email: presidencia@parlamento-cantabria.es

Postal address:
C/ Alta, 31-33
39008 – Santander, (Cantabria)

Tel. no- +34 942 241 060
The old San Rafael Hospital, currently the seat of the Cantabrian Parliament, is a building with two hundred years of history behind it. It was founded in 1791 at the request of the then diocesan bishop Rafael Menéndez de Luarca. The San Rafael Hospital replaced the so-called Misericordia hospital, an ancient manor house that prior to being used as a 15-bed hospital had been used as an old shelter home and barracks.

The costs of the new hospital arisen from both the construction, which spanned many years, and patient care, which also began in 1791, were borne by the Santander Cathedral Chapter to care for the city’s sick poor.

The Bishop commissioned the project and management of the works to José Alday, city council architect of the city of Santander. Located at the top of the city, the San Rafael Hospital was a splendid, functional building for its time. The main façade is made of cut-stone masonry, with nine arches forming a portico. The original façade was scrupulously maintained throughout the remodelling of the building.

In the first third of the 19th century, San Rafael Hospital’s activity intensified. During the Independence War, it provided care to the wounded and yellow fever sufferers, an illness which ravaged the city in 1814, which coincided with the arrival of ally forces in Santander who were fighting the French. After the end of the war and once the Bourbon Monarchy was restored through Ferdinand VII, the San Rafael Hospital’s activity went back to normal, holding a maximum capacity of 200 beds and an average of 80-90 patients admitted by it. The fight against the cholera epidemic -which wreaked havoc in Europe throughout the 20th century and which also affected Cantabria- and the Cabo Machichaco steamer explosion in November 1893 -causing 200 deaths and hundreds of serious injuries and mutilations- were two major landmark events in the Hospital’s history.

At the beginning of the 20th century, San Rafael Hospital was no longer only a charitable entity, but it began admitting private patients. Therefore, a second floor was built, which meant more beds could be made available. Construction of a new hospital in Valdecilla, forerunner to the present homonymous University Hospital, began in 1928 and meant that San Rafael Hospital became obsolete, which quietly closed its doors, practically slipping into oblivion.
Subsequent use of the building was diverse and varied, especially from 1941 on: It was seat of the Menéndez Pelayo International University’s School of Arts and Crafts, Nautical School and Conservatory, always halfway between total ruin and potential restoration. In 1962, it was once again owned by the Santander Provincial Council, which considered the possibility of a renovation, but ended up dismissing it due to its high cost.

When, in 1982, it was decided that the old San Rafael Hospital should be renovated to be used as the seat of the Regional Assembly (presently known as Parliament), the building was abandoned and virtually in ruins. The only structures still in place were the external facades facing calle Alta, as well as the courtyard and internal wall facades defining the back of the portico-gallery.

The renovation was subjected to a national public tender for draft projects, out of which the one submitted by architects José Manuel Sanz Sanz and Juan López Riboo was chosen. In renovating it, the aim was to maintain the main and most unique feature of the building, the Courtyard, around which all Parliament services are located. In turn, for the courtyard to continue to be the main feature of the building, it was necessary to relieve it from the harsh northern weather, which is why it was covered with a large crystal dome. This has meant that Parliament has a large reception area, which is also used as a stage for institutional events and occasions.

Some of the other locations and spaces designed in the old building structure, such as the semi-cylindrical structure where the Plenary Chamber or the Plenary Sessions Hall are, harmoniously contrast with the straight-line style of the rest of the building. In conclusion, the building where the Parliament of Cantabria is presently located, the reconstruction of which was launched on April 6, 1987, sums up the last two hundred years of Cantabrian History and constitutes a perfect concoction of Neo-classicism and Modernity.