

The House of Representatives

Second reading

What is second reading ?

The sixth Reform of the State has considerably modified the role of the Senate as co-legislator. The Senate was primarily responsible for examining the texts adopted by the House and thus the guardian of the quality of the legislation. Most of the Government bills and Private Member's bills are no longer sent to the Senate in order to be possibly examined a second time.

Because of the increased risk to pass flawed legislation, the House adapted its rules of procedure in order to make a thorough second "reading" (= examination) by the House itself possible. It is often useful to examine a text "passed in first reading" a second time, after a time for reflection, mainly to control the coherence and the quality of the articles passed in first reading.¹

Procedure

A second reading can take place in a committee as well as in the plenary meeting.

The procedure does not start automatically but only if at least one committee member² (in committee) or the president or a third of the members (in plenary meeting) so requests. If this request is done on time³, it should be granted.

The committee may only go on to second reading after at least ten days, starting from the time when the committee report is circulated together with the text passed in first reading. For an urgent Government or Private Member's bill the ten day period is reduced to five days.

During second reading, amendments can be tabled and legislative-technical improvements can be submitted, where applicable according to suggestions offered in a note from the House services, to the text passed in first reading. These amendments or improvements may not entail a third reading in the committee.

If the plenary assembly goes on to a second reading, the text of the Government bills or the Private Member's bill is sent back to the competent committee which examines the text once again in exactly the same way as if the committee had gone to a second reading. In this case, however, the committee can start examining the text immediately.

If the House amends during second reading a text it adopted in first reading or a text that was amended in committee, it can decide to submit them to a third reading and to adjourn the vote on the whole of the Government or Private Member's bill till a later sitting.

DOC 55 3969/005	DOC 55 3969/005
CHAMBRE DES REPRÉSENTANTS DE BELGIQUE	BELGISCHE KAMER VAN VOLKSVERTEGENWOORDIGERS
7 mai 2024	7 mei 2024
PROJET DE LOI restaurant un Service citoyen	WETSONTWERP tot invoering van een Samenlevingsdienst
Texte adopté en deuxième lecture par la commission des Affaires sociales, de l'Emploi et des Pensions	Tekst aangenomen in tweede lezing door de commissie voor Sociale Zaken, Werk en Pensioenen
Le texte adopté est identique aux articles adoptés en première lecture par la commission (DOC 55 3969/003, p. 3 à 18).	De tekst aangenomen is dezelfde als de artikelen aangenomen door de commissie in eerste lezing (DOC 55 3969/003, blz. 3 tot 18).
Voir: Doc 55 3969/ (2023/2024) 001: Projet de loi. 002: Rapport. 003: Articles adoptés en première lecture. 004: Rapport de la deuxième lecture.	Zie: Doc 55 3969/ (2023/2024): 001: Wetsontwerp. 002: Verslag. 003: Artikelen aangenomen in eerste lezing. 004: Verslag van de tweede lezing.
CHAMBRE - 6 ^{te} SESSION DE LA 51 ^{ste} LÉGISLATURE	KAMER - 6 ^{de} ZITTING VAN DE 51 ^{ste} ZITTINGSPERIODE (ingevorderde controle - Centrale drukkerij)
	12370

- 1 However, a second reading can not take place for Government bills relating to budgets, accounts, loans, domain operations and the military quota, nor for Government bills by which assent is given to a treaty, nor to proposals for naturalisation. In this case, one considers that a second reading is less justified considering the fact that the texts do not contain general rules of law.
- 2 Or, when the bill under consideration is a bill that the Senate has sent back to the House, if a third of the committee members so requests.
- 3 At the latest after the vote on the last article and before the vote on the whole of the text.

