

**CENTRE EUROPEEN DE RECHERCHE ET DE  
DOCUMENTATION PARLEMENTAIRES**



**EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR PARLIAMENTARY  
RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION**

**EUROPÄISCHES ZENTRUM FÜR PARLAMENTARISCHE  
WISSENSCHAFT UND DOKUMENTATION**

# **ECPRD ACTIVITY REPORT**

**MARCH 2006 TO MARCH 2008**

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## 1. Contacts

	<b>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</b>	<b>PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE</b>
<b>CO-DIRECTOR</b>	<b>MR PIOTR NOWINA-KONOPKA</b>	<b>MR WOJCIECH SAWICKI</b>
ADDRESS	European Parliament Rue Wiertz, 60 B-1047 BRUSSELS	Council of Europe Avenue de l'Europe F-67075 STRASBOURG CEDEX
TELEPHONE	(+32) 2 284 21 72	(+33) 388 41 36 30
FAX	(+32) 2 284 49 25	(+33) 388 41 37 95
E-MAIL	<a href="mailto:piotr.nowinakonopka@europarl.europa.eu">piotr.nowinakonopka@europarl.europa.eu</a>	<a href="mailto:wojciech.sawicki@coe.int">wojciech.sawicki@coe.int</a>
<b>CO-SECRETARY</b>	<b>MRS HANNEKE COPPOLECCHIA</b>	<b>MR MARIO HEINRICH</b>
ADDRESS	European Parliament Rue Wiertz, 60 B-1047 BRUSSELS	Council of Europe Avenue de l'Europe F-67075 STRASBOURG CEDEX
TELEPHONE	(+322) 284 45 60	(+33) 388 41 20 97
FAX	(+322) 284 90 05	(+33) 390 21 55 80
E-MAIL	<a href="mailto:johanna.coppolecchia@europarl.europa.eu">johanna.coppolecchia@europarl.europa.eu</a>	<a href="mailto:mario.heinrich@coe.int">mario.heinrich@coe.int</a>

ECPRD website: [www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu)

**MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
(OCTOBER 2006 - OCTOBER 2008)

	<b>MR PIOTR NOWINA-KONOPKA</b>	<b>MR WOJCIECH SAWICKI</b>
ADDRESS	European Parliament Rue Wiertz, 60 B-1047 BRUSSELS	Council of Europe Avenue de l'Europe F-67075 STRASBOURG CEDEX
TELEPHONE	(+32) 2 284 21 72	(+33) 388 41 36 30
FAX	(+32) 2 284 49 25	(+33) 388 41 37 95
E-MAIL	<a href="mailto:piotr.nowinakonopka@europarl.europa.eu">piotr.nowinakonopka@europarl.europa.eu</a>	<a href="mailto:wojciech.sawicki@coe.int">wojciech.sawicki@coe.int</a>
	<b>MR ROBERT CLEMENTS</b>	<b>MRS NATASA GLAVNIK</b>
ADDRESS	House of Commons  GB-LONDON SW1A 0AA	Državni Zbor Šubičeva 4 SI-1000 LJUBLJANA
TELEPHONE	(+4420) 7219 3622	(+3861) 478 97 30
FAX	(+4420) 7219 0185	(+3861) 478 98 64
E-MAIL	<a href="mailto:clements@parliament.uk">clements@parliament.uk</a>	<a href="mailto:natasa.glavnik@dz-rs.si">natasa.glavnik@dz-rs.si</a>
	<b>MRS SIIRI SILLAJOE</b>	<b>MR JEAN-PIERRE BLOCH</b>
ADDRESS	Chancellery of the Riigikogu Lossi Plats 1a EST-15165 TALLINN	Assemblée Nationale. Palais Bourbon F- 75355 PARIS 07 SP
TELEPHONE	(+372) 631 65 05	(+33) 1 40 63 43 11
FAX	(+372) 693 65 04	(+33) 1 40 63 43 44
E-MAIL	<a href="mailto:siiri.sillajoe@riigikogu.ee">siiri.sillajoe@riigikogu.ee</a>	<a href="mailto:jpbloch@assemblee-nationale.fr">jpbloch@assemblee-nationale.fr</a>
	<b>MR BORYS KOLISNYCHENKO</b>	
ADDRESS	Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 5 Hrushevskoho Str. KYIV-8 UKRAINE 01008	
TELEPHONE	(+38044) 255 27 92	
FAX	(+38044) 253 32 17	
E-MAIL	<a href="mailto:kolisnychenko@rada.gov.ua">kolisnychenko@rada.gov.ua</a>	

## AREAS OF INTERESTS

### ICT IN PARLIAMENTS

COORDINATOR **MR JOAO VIEGAS ABREU**  
ADDRESS Assembleia da República  
Palácio de S. Bento  
P-1249-068 LISBOA  
TELEPHONE (+351) 21 391 75 96  
FAX (+351) 21 396 74 39  
E-MAIL [joao.viegas@ar.parlamento.pt](mailto:joao.viegas@ar.parlamento.pt)

### MACROECONOMIC RESEARCH

COORDINATOR **MR KJELL TORBIÖRN**  
ADDRESS Council of Europe  
Avenue de l'Europe  
F-67075 STRASBOURG CEDEX  
TELEPHONE (+33) 388 41 21 20  
FAX (+33) 388 41 27 17  
E-MAIL [kjell.torbiorn@coe.int](mailto:kjell.torbiorn@coe.int)

### PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

COORDINATOR **MR MARC VAN DER HULST**  
ADDRESS Chambre des Représentants  
Palais de la Nation  
B-1008 BRUXELLES  
TELEPHONE (+32) 2 549 80 71  
FAX (+32) 2 549 82 89  
E-MAIL [marc.vanderhulst@dekamer.be](mailto:marc.vanderhulst@dekamer.be)

### PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES, RESEARCH AND ARCHIVES

COORDINATOR **MRS ELISABETH DIETRICH-SCHULZ**  
ADDRESS Austrian Parliament  
Parlamentsdirektion  
Dr.Karl Renner-Ring 3  
A-1017 WIEN  
TELEPHONE (+43-1) 401 10 28 19  
FAX (+43-1) 401 10 28 25  
E-MAIL [elisabeth.dietrich-schulz@parlament.gv.at](mailto:elisabeth.dietrich-schulz@parlament.gv.at)

**ECPRD OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND WEBMASTER**

ADDRESS

**MRS HANNEKE COPPOLECCHIA**

European Parliament  
Rue Wiertz, 60  
B-1047 BRUSSELS

TELEPHONE

(+322) 284 45 60

FAX

(+322) 284 90 05

E-MAIL

[johanna.coppolecchia@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:johanna.coppolecchia@europarl.europa.eu)



## **2. Introduction by the Co-directors**

In the 1968 period, an expression made the rounds among the young of the “flower-power–hippie–rebel” generation. It went: “Never trust anyone over 30!”

But then, as Bob Dylan also sang at the time: “The times, they are a-changin”.

And times have indeed changed - not only in the Europe and world we see around us, but also in how people, and institutions, have learnt to adapt to new times and circumstances.

The ECPRD is a case in point. It turned 30 in 2007, but reliance in it seems never to have been higher than now, if we are to judge by the number of questions and replies and other activities channelled through it to serve the needs of its 53 participating national parliaments and European parliamentary institutions.

This reliance presumably has many reasons. The growing complexity of our societies – and the ever-closer cooperation between the countries of Europe – may be one, as legislators have to shape ever more elaborate legislation, or to argue against it, as the case may be. The growing inquisitiveness and desire of parliamentarians to come up with new initiatives may be another, as they press parliamentary staff to supply more data. And, most decidedly, the unwavering support to the ECPRD given by the Secretaries General of parliaments and by our Correspondents has made an impact, as has no doubt the ECPRD’s constant readiness to lend assistance wherever needed.

Since the publication of our last ECPRD Activity Report, covering the period March 2004 – March 2006, the parliament of a new country, Montenegro, has joined our institution. Meanwhile, the two longstanding ECPRD members Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union in 2007, continuing the EU’s successful “Big Bang” enlargement of 2004.

The fresh wind of change brought by the 2004 and 2007 enlargements has not only benefited the EU and the entire European continent, but it has also resulted in new calls on the ECPRD and its member parliaments to assist in the major continental transformation under way.

And with the now distinct possibility that the EU’s new Treaty of Lisbon (Reform Treaty) may enter into force in 2009 – a treaty which gives national parliaments a greater say in the EU’s decision-making process - the ECPRD will most certainly have its work cut out for it in the years to come.

It was against the background of these developments that the ECPRD set about to revise its Statutes, a process finalised at the meeting of the ECPRD Secretaries General in Tallinn, Estonia, in May 2006. The changes to the statutes are meant to improve the inner functioning of, and interplay among, the various ECPRD organs, and ECPRD relations with its constituent member parliaments. These reforms – to which should be added the formalised mandates for Coordinators with their newly defined Areas of Interest, as well as a newly designed ECPRD website – will no doubt help preserve the ECPRD’s youthfulness well into its chronological ‘middle age’.

The period under review (March 2006 – March 2008) has seen many activities start up and reach fruition. A total of ten seminars were held in locations as varied as Brussels (European Parliament), Warsaw, Sarajevo, Vilnius, Warsaw, Paris, Stockholm, Prague, Ljubljana, Brussels (Belgian Federal Parliament). They benefited from a wide variety of speakers from within and without parliamentary life.

In addition, six Executive Committee meetings were held: in Ljubljana, Strasbourg (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), Paris, Kiev, Brussels (European Parliament) and Tallinn and two Annual Conferences of Correspondents were held, in London and Yerevan. Meantime, the number of questionnaires rose from 278 during the period 2004-2005 to 400 during the period 2006-2007, while the number of replies to these questionnaires increased from 5.709 in the first period to 8.606 in the second.

One of the undersigned - Piotr Nowina-Konopka - in December 2006 had the honour of succeeding the departing of Mr Alain Barrau as new ECPRD Co-Director. Mr Barrau had occupied that post since the beginning of 2006. We thank him for his contribution to the ECPRD's work during this time and wish him every possible success in his new functions within the European Parliament.

On a less cheerful note – not necessarily from the viewpoint of the person concerned but very much so from that of the ECPRD – we shall have to accept the fact Mrs Hanneke Coppolecchia-Somers, the ECPRD Office Manager and European Parliament Co-Secretary, will leave us for a well-deserved retirement after 30 years of outstanding ECPRD service (and since 2000 as Co-Secretary and Webmaster). The expression “Nobody is irreplaceable” will here be put to an unprecedented test, as we will try our outmost to find a worthy successor to fill the void that Hanneke will leave, not least in working closely with our esteemed ECPRD Co-Secretary on the Parliamentary Assembly side, Mr Mario Heinrich.

Such was the emotion felt over Hanneke's looming departure during the ECPRD Correspondents Meeting in Yerevan in October 2007, that the following verse (among several more) was spontaneously composed, and performed to music, in her honour:

*“Hanneke will be leaving soon. Retirement's near, we all wish her well  
Can someone ever fill her shoes, or are we heading for hell?  
Now we must try all the harder to keep our ship afloat  
All our energy and talent to its future we'll devote  
For in our hearts we will always be true to our ECPRD!”*

We again thank Hanneke for her excellent work over so many years.

The basic goal of the ECPRD has always been, and remains, to promote knowledge exchanges among participating parliaments. An additional, sometimes overlooked, ambition of the ECPRD lies in furthering personal contacts and friendship among staff of parliamentary administrations from all parts of Europe. Together these two missions make a tangible contribution to the continent's peace, prosperity and further development.

In trying to carry out its mission, the ECPRD has always laid great store by transparency. Thus, the minutes of all its meetings are available to member parliaments. The management structure is meant to be clear, straightforward and pragmatic, and to promote best practices and mutual assistance. The ECPRD is based on understanding and respect for different parliamentary traditions, while emphasising the need for a strong parliamentary presence in national and international arena.

It is in this spirit that the present Activity Report has been drafted, for presentation at the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments and Secretaries General to be held in Strasbourg on 22 and 23 May 2008. We hope it will meet with both your, and their, endorsement.

Piotr Nowina-Konopka  
Co-director  
European Parliament

Wojciech Sawicki  
Co-director  
Parliamentary Assembly  
of the Council of Europe

### **3. What is the ECPRD?**

#### **3.1. *How did it all start?***

The ECPRD was created in 1977 in Vienna by the Conference of Speakers of European Parliamentary Assemblies, which delegated to the Presidents of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe its formation and management. At its meeting in Madrid in 1980, the Conference expressed the desire that the ECPRD should work for and with all parliamentary assemblies and that national parliaments should authorise their services to participate actively in the activities of the Centre. The dramatic political events of 1989 in central and eastern Europe, combined with the information technology revolution, led to a period of rapid evolution which was reflected in the adoption of a new action programme for the Centre by the Conference in The Hague in 1994. The trend towards more interaction and greater reliance on cooperative organisations such as the ECPRD was amongst the subjects on the agenda at the meeting in Budapest in 1996, including the new Statutes and objectives of the Centre. The Conference in Stockholm in June 1998 confirmed the importance of the ECPRD in maintaining links between officials of national parliaments. Whereas the Conference in Strasbourg in May 2000 focused particularly on the use of new technologies to increase parliamentary cooperation, discussions between the Speakers of EU parliaments in Rome in September 2000 and subsequent meetings of the Secretaries-General in March and November 2001, highlighted the role which a strengthened ECPRD might play in the field of legislative cooperation on EU matters.

This initiative developed in the ensuing years into a formal project called IPEX (Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange) at which an increasing number of EU parliaments participated. The IPEX project benefited initially from the structure of the ECPRD, as it was hosted on ECPRD's website until its final official launch in 2007. However, ECPRD remains an associate member of the Board of IPEX.

At the Speakers' Conference and meeting of the Secretaries General of ECPRD parliaments which convened in Zagreb in May 2002, the overall mission of the Centre was reaffirmed and attention was drawn to the wide range of its activities. In fact it was deemed necessary to appoint Deputy-Correspondents for each parliament to increase the efficiency of the network.

At the May 2004 Conference of Speakers and Secretaries General, the decision was taken to modify the ECPRD's statute. This was deemed necessary because the existing statutes were the ones drawn up in 1996 and therefore in need of revision due to the "Big Bang" enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and the continuing enlargement over the years of the Council of Europe, which today has all of 47 member states. The new Statute was adopted by the meeting of Secretaries General in Tallinn on 31 May 2006. Its text can be found in Annex 1 to this report.

#### **3.2. *Who are the members?***

The European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Assembly of the Western European Union and all parliaments of member states or special guests at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe are members. For parliaments with two chambers, each chamber is a member in its own right.

Parliaments outside Europe which wish to cooperate in the work of the Centre are also welcome. At present the Centre has 47 member countries and four guest or observer countries, together with three international parliaments. This results in 70 parliamentary assemblies which may participate in the activities of the ECPRD.

### **3.3. *How is the ECPRD run?***

Each member assembly appoints a senior official to act as the *correspondent* for the assembly. The Correspondent is the privileged point of contact for the assembly and should thus have access to the Secretary General and must be in a position to coordinate the contribution of the officials of his or her chamber to the work of the Centre. The success of the centre largely depends on the input provided by the Correspondents. Correspondents are appointed by Secretaries General of their respective parliaments. Secretaries General may also appoint Deputy Correspondents. An overview of various tasks and responsibilities of Correspondents can be found in Annex 9 to this Report.

The European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments, consisting of the Presidents or Speakers of parliamentary assemblies of members and special guests of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, is the supreme authority for the ECPRD and meets every second year.

The Secretaries General have administrative responsibility for the activities of the Centre and these are discussed when they meet during the Conference of Speakers. As regards the two Co-Directors and the two Co-Secretaries - representing the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe - these are appointed by the respective Secretaries General of these institutions. The Co-Directors and Co-Secretaries, who carry out their functions for the Centre in addition to their normal duties, are responsible for the day-to-day running of the ECPRD. The Conference of Correspondents is the annual meeting of Correspondents, at which the activities of the ECPRD are discussed and broader policy decisions are taken.

The Executive Committee is composed of the Co-Directors and five Correspondents (appointed by the Conference of Correspondents). It ensures the continuity of work between the annual meetings. The Executive Committee meets at least twice a year. The Secretariat of the Centre, including the staff responsible for the Centre's website, is provided by an official of the European Parliament. The working languages of the Centre are English, French and German.

Currently, the Co-Directors are Mr Piotr Nowina-Konopka (European Parliament) and Mr Wojciech Sawicki (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe). The Co-Secretaries are Mrs Hanneke Coppolecchia (European Parliament) and Mr Mario Heinrich (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe).

### **3.4. *How is it financed?***

Direct financing of the ECPRD comes from a dedicated line of the European Parliament budget. This pays for certain meetings, publications, personnel, secretariat and computing expenses. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe also finances certain activities of the Centre.

Indirect financing takes the form of member parliaments hosting seminars and meetings of the Centre and providing meeting rooms and interpreters. Some publications are also financed in this way. All parliaments pay the travel and subsistence costs of their own officials attending seminars and meetings. A number of parliaments of countries in central and eastern Europe benefit from financial support from the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to ensure participation in seminars and meetings.

#### 4. Annual Programmes

##### 4.1. *ECPRD Programme 2006*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
Meeting of the Executive Committee	Ljubljana	10 March
Seminar on EUROVOC	Brussels, European Parliament	10 March
Seminar "Supranational Parliamentary and Inter-parliamentary Assemblies in the 21st Century"	Warsaw, Senate	8-9 May
Meeting of the Secretaries-General (in framework of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments)	Tallinn	31 May
Meeting of the Macroeconomic Research Working Group	Sarajevo	9-10 June
Meeting of the Executive Committee	Strasbourg, PACE	8 September
Meeting of the Information and Communication Technology Working Group	Vilnius	5-6 October
Annual Conference of Correspondents	London	13 October
Meeting of the Executive Committee	Paris, National Assembly	10 November

##### 4.2. *ECPRD Programme 2007*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
Meeting of the Executive Committee (with the Co-Ordinators)	Kiev	30 March
Seminar on "Legislative Observatory: Transparency of Legislative Process in Parliament"	Warsaw, Sejm	26-27 April
Seminar on "Specific Characteristics of Parliamentary Administration with regard to the Parliamentary Work Periods and Rhythms" ( <i>Area of Interest: Parliamentary Practice and Procedure</i> )	Paris, National Assembly	7-8 June

<b>Title</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
Seminar on "Parliaments and Central Banks: A Vital Relationship" <i>(Area of Interest: Macroeconomic Research)</i>	Stockholm	8-9 June
Seminar on "Parliamentary Transparency"	Prague, Chamber of Deputies and Senate	21-22 September
Meeting of the Executive Committee (with the Co-Ordinators)	Brussels, European Parliament	13 September
Annual Conference of Correspondents	Yerevan	12 October
Seminar on "Mobility for Representatives" <i>(Area of Interest: ICT in Parliaments)</i>	Ljubljana, National Assembly	18-19 October
Seminar on "Parliaments and Judiciary, Judicial Control of Parliamentary Acts" <i>(Area of Interest: Parliamentary Practice and Procedure)</i>	Brussels, Federal Parliament	8-9 November

### **4.3. ECPRD Programme 2008**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
Meeting of the Executive Committee (with the Coordinators)	Tallinn	7 March
Seminar on "Parliament, Independent Agencies and Public Sector Companies" <i>(Area of Interest: Parliamentary Practice and Procedure)</i>	Madrid, Senado	18-19 April
Meeting of the Secretaries-General (in the framework of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments)	Strasbourg, PACE	23 May
Seminar on "Parliamentary Libraries: Sharing Knowledge" <i>(Area of Interest: Parliamentary Libraries, Research and Archives)</i>	Vienna	29-30 May
Meeting of the Executive Committee (with the Coordinators)	Strasbourg, PACE	5 September
Seminar on "The European Central Bank in a New European and World Economy" <i>(Area of Interest: Macroeconomic Research)</i>	Strasbourg and Frankfurt	11-12 September
Annual Conference of Correspondents	Brussels, European Parliament	9-11 October
Seminar on the ICT in Parliaments (subject to be decided) <i>(Area of Interest: ICT in Parliaments)</i>	Copenhagen	29-31 October

#### 4.4. *ECPRD Draft Programme 2009*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
Seminar on "Press Services for MPs" <i>(Area of Interest: Parliamentary Libraries, Research and Archives)</i>	Bern	spring
Meeting of the Executive Committee (with the Co-Ordinators)	???	spring
Seminar on "State Budgets and Budgets of National Parliaments" <i>(Area of Interest: Macroeconomic Research)</i>	Ljubljana	March/April
Seminar on "Parliamentary Research Services" <i>(Area of Interest: Parliamentary Libraries, Research and Archives)</i>	London	June or September
Seminar on the ICT in Parliaments (subject to be decided) <i>(Area of Interest: ICT in Parliaments)</i>	Madrid (?)	to be decided
Meeting of the Executive Committee (with the Co-Ordinators)	Brussels, European Parliament	September
Annual Conference of Correspondents	Bratislava	October

## 5. ECPRD Activities 2006 – 2008

### 5.1. *General*

In 2007 the ECPRD celebrated its 30th Anniversary. At the Annual Conference of Correspondents held in Yerevan in October 2007, a commemorative brochure entitled "ECPRD 30 years 1977-2007: a summary of major events and achievements of the ECPRD" was presented to participants.

In the two-year period under review (March 2006 – March 2008), the activities of the ECPRD concentrated in three main areas:

- distribution of comparative requests and providing replies to them;
- establishing of newly created Areas of Interest;
- organisation of seminars proposed by member parliaments.

These activities could be described as follows:

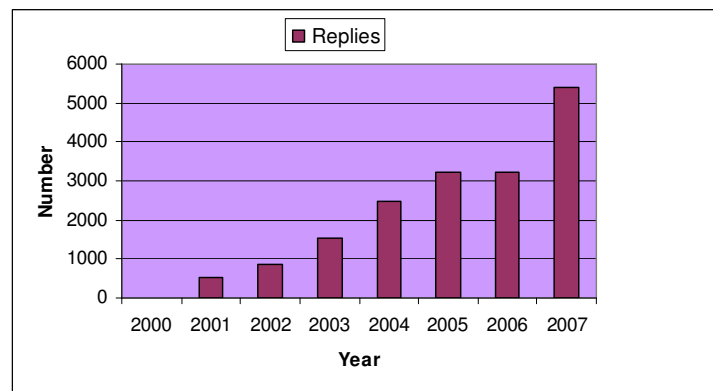
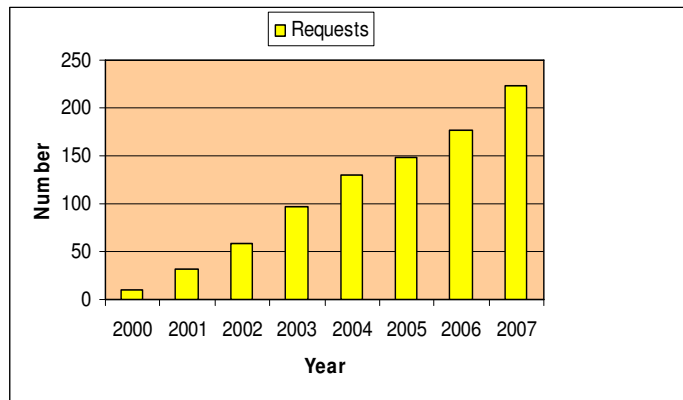
- the number of requests for comparative studies increased substantially, questions were better prepared and the deadlines for replies set by the requesting parliaments were more generous;
- replies to requests were given relatively quickly and their number increased substantially;
- 9 seminars were organised. They could be considered successful. They were well prepared, well attended and appreciated by those present. Questionnaires on the subjects dealt with at the seminars were circulated in advance by hosting parliaments;
- guidelines for studies and comparative requests (see Annex 6) and those for the organisation of ECPRD seminars (see Annex 7) were updated;
- four Areas of Interest started successfully their functioning;

- three publications were published: the ECPRD 30-year commemorative brochure and the two studies “*Beyond Transparency: New standards for legislative information Systems*”; and “*Elections and Mandate of MEPs*”.

## 5.2. The evolution of comparative requests

According to the ECPRD Statutes, its main objective is to promote the exchange of information. This is done by a well established procedure of comparative requests which can be presented by all member parliaments.

Since the adoption of the Guidelines for studies and comparative requests (2004, revised in 2006), there has been a growing number of requests, supplemented by background information and models suggested for replies. They were received by the ECPRD Secretariat via the electronic form that can be found on the webpage. The number of comparative requests has increased continuously, from 148 in 2005 to 177 in 2006 and 223 in 2007. (For the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 the numbers were 42, 96 and 130.)



The subject areas raised in the comparative requests were:

- a) parliamentary procedure and practice (60%);
- b) national legislation (35%);
- c) other issues (5%).

Unfortunately, the number of finalised comparative studies sent in by requesting chambers remains relatively low (21 in 2006 and 32 in 2007 - see the overview in Annex 3, which also contains statistics on requests and replies). However, a significant improvement has been observed in recent months. The availability of comparative studies – even when only in the language of the requesting parliament– is highly useful for all ECPRD members.



During the period 2006-2007, 160 requests (40% of the total) were sent to all Correspondents; 110 requests (27.5% of the total) to the Correspondents in EU countries, and 130 requests (32.5% of the total) to the Correspondents of individual countries only (the corresponding proportions for the 2004-2005 period were 50.5%, 25% and 19.5%).

The number of replies more than doubled over the period covered in this report - rising from 2.493 in 2004 to 3.216 in 2005, to 3.219 in 2006 and to 5.387 in 2007. In addition, most of replies came within the deadline. All requests and replies can be found on the ECPRD website. The website search-module also applies to both current and archived requests. The total number of comparative requests available on the website at the end of 2007 stood at 904. At the Annual Conference of Correspondents in Yerevan, participants underlined the value of comparative requests and asked that a more user-friendly website search module be installed.

Parliaments/chambers that make more comparative requests are also better at replying to requests from others. It must also be recognised, however, that some parliaments/chambers do not have sufficient staff to reply to all requests. It would therefore be wrong to equate a more limited number of replies from a given parliament, especially a smaller one, with a lack of interest in ECPRD comparative requests.

The titles of comparative requests for the years 2006 and 2007, together with more detailed statistics on requests and replies, can be found in Annexes 3 and 4 to this report.

### ***5.3. Seminars and meetings***

#### **Seminar on Supranational Parliamentary and Inter-parliamentary Assemblies in the 21st Century, Warsaw, Senate, 8-9 May 2006**

The aim of this seminar, hosted and organised by the Polish Senate, was to review current forms of permanent multilateral interparliamentary cooperation involving Council of Europe member state parliaments. There were 68 participants, representing 37 parliamentary chambers, 3 supranational parliaments, 5 inter-parliamentary organisations and external organisations.

A detailed questionnaire was distributed in advance and a summary of replies made available to participants.

The seminar did not manage to identify any universally applicable method for rationalizing interparliamentary cooperation in Europe, but many interesting points were made and can be found in the written conclusions. Indeed, the proceedings of the Seminar are given in a remarkable book published by the Polish Senate. It also contains a list of supranational and inter-parliamentary forums where national European parliaments participate.

#### **Meeting of the Macroeconomic Research Working Group, Sarajevo, 9-10 June 2006**

The parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina hosted this meeting, which allowed some 30 participants to familiarise themselves with the economic situation and prospects of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the prospects for continued economic integration and development of South-Eastern Europe, via presentations by experts from the host country, including its government and parliament, and numerous experts from international organisations active in the region. The meeting also took up Europe's new energy situation, both from the regional and continental perspective. Those interested in the full proceedings are referred to the ECPRD website.

## **Meeting of the Information and Communication Technology Working Group, Vilnius, 5-6 October 2006**

This Meeting brought together administrative and technical managers from IT departments of the ECPRD Parliaments for a two-day exchange of experiences and ideas. There were 51 participants from 26 countries. They represented 31 Parliaments/Chambers, one international organisation and one local government institution.

Since there had been no group meeting in 2005, participants were invited to suggest topics for presentations and discussion of this event.

Four main themes were identified: • e-Parliament – Services; • e-Parliament – Technologies; • Mobility for Representatives; • ICT for Interparliamentary Cooperation.

A meeting website (<http://www.lrs.lt/ecprd-ict>) to permit publication of new information has been opened. Following the meeting a DVD was published containing video presentations and pictures from the seminar, and sent to all participants.

## **Seminar "Legislative Observatory: Transparency of Legislative Process in Parliament", Warsaw, Sejm 26-27 April 2007**

The seminar, the proceedings of which will be published shortly, aimed at finding answers to two questions:

- what needs do parliaments experience in relation to the legislative process?
- what needs do citizens experience in this regard?

The seminar, attended by 75 participants, dealt with many technical aspects and problems typical of computer centres. But it also raised wider issues of philosophy and sociology, e-information to citizens, hearings, trends, 'white books' and transparency in the legislative process.

The participants also discussed the role of lobbies, interest groups and experts in the legislative process. And they debated, on the basis of an Austrian presentation, the use of private and official legal data bases in the legislative process, and how these related to various traditions and practical experiences.

## **Seminar "Particularities of Parliamentary Administration relating to a Parliaments' work schedule", Paris, National Assembly, 7-8 June 2007**

Over 50 participants, representing 39 parliamentary chambers and 3 international assemblies, attended the Seminar on the specific characteristics of parliamentary administrations in relation to parliamentary work, held in Paris on 7 and 8 June 2007 (National Assembly).

Speakers opened the discussions using procedures from the French, Italian and Belgian Parliaments as examples. Shared difficulties were identified. It appears, for instance, that both scrutiny activities and international activities tend to develop, adding new aspects to the global problem of time management in parliamentary business. Is each Parliament the master of its own time? How does it manage to establish its agenda and fulfil its many activities? The participants exchanged views and compared practices on time management in parliamentary legislative and scrutiny services; on the adaptation of administrative services to the particularities of parliamentary activity; and on time management at the level of international Assemblies – such as the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – as well as in national parliamentary chambers. The work in parliamentary committees and in plenary sittings was considered.

Beforehand, a detailed questionnaire had been sent to national Parliaments, to the European Parliament, to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and to the Assembly of WEU on the following topics: managing the parliamentary agenda (length of parliamentary sessions, number of plenary sitting days, frequency and length of committee meetings...), time in parliamentary procedure (time limits for debates, deadlines for tabling amendments, urgency procedures...), scrutiny activities, European and international activities, and organisation of administrative departments.

### **Seminar "Parliaments and Central Banks, a Vital Relationship", Stockholm, Riksdag 8 – 9 June 2007**

The seminar “Parliaments and Central Banks: a Vital Relationship” was held in Stockholm on 8 and 9 June 2007, with many distinguished personalities participating. It focused on current monetary policies in practice and theory, including the issue of central bank independence.

One trend identified at the seminar was the growing recognition of the need for central bank independence, though needless to say under democratic control and with due account paid to national differences and traditions. A second trend perceived was greater accountability of central banks before national parliaments - or before the European Parliament in the case of the European Central Bank. A third trend observed was that of greater transparency and openness on the part of central banks vis-à-vis the public, and a fourth was the intensifying mutual learning taking place between central banks.

The conclusions of the seminar were published and circulated widely, including to participants, and it was hoped that the conclusions would assist the public debate on a subject of vital importance to economic development.

### **Seminar on "Parliamentary Transparency" Prague, Chamber of Deputies and Senate, 19-20 September 2007**

The seminar on transparency in Parliaments was held on 19 and 20 September 2007 under the auspices of the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament.

There were 42 participants from 24 European countries. Twelve participants representing 6 parliaments – the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Estonia, Italy and the United Kingdom - addressed the seminar, which addressed the following themes:

- Why is transparency in parliaments important?
- Models of parliamentary public relations;
- What are the most effective practices of parliamentary communication with the general public?

The seminar had tried to define the notion of transparency in parliaments, including whether it was perhaps as much myth as reality, seeing that many political decisions were taken behind closed doors. Other questions dealt with were to what extent, and if so how, transparency should involve parliamentary officials and legislators.

### **Seminar on "Mobility for Representatives", Ljubljana, National Assembly, 18-19 October 2007**

The seminar, held in Ljubljana on 18-19 October 2007, was attended by 58 participants from 31 countries representing 34 parliaments, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of the WEU. Debates on three main subjects were held:

- mobility for Representatives – support to parliamentary procedures;
- mobility for Representatives – Digital identity;
- examples of good practices.

The seminar themes were presented by speakers from the parliaments of Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Portugal and Slovenia, and from the European Parliament.

The discussions showed that the theme chosen was highly topical. Based on the presentations, participants were able to understand the current state of working mobility for parliamentarians and prospects for the future. The practical examples given showed that the objective "mobility for representatives" can indeed be reached, even as parliaments apply different methods.

Parliamentarians require ever increasing IT support for their mobility, which is why ICT units must see the task of equipping them properly as a long-term, ongoing process.

**Seminar "Parliaments and Judiciary, Juridical Control of Parliamentary Acts", Brussels, Federal Parliament, 8-9 November 2007**

The Seminar on "Parliaments and Judiciary, Judicial Control of Parliamentary Acts" was held on 8-9 November 2007 in Brussels under the auspices of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Belgian Parliament. Mr Robert Myttenaere, Secretary General of the House of Representatives - who was long an ECPRD Correspondent - opened the proceedings together with Mr Luc Blondeel, Secretary-General of the Senate.

Sixty-two participants from 34 parliamentary Chambers, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe attended this very well prepared Seminar, which addressed the following themes:

- General Introduction: the sensitive relations between Parliament and Judiciary;
- Theme 1 - Case-study of an area of tension between the autonomy of parliamentary assemblies and general legal principles: search and seizure on parliamentary premises;
- Theme 2 - The representation at law of a parliamentary assembly;
- Theme 3 - The judicial review of acts accomplished by parliament in the exercise of key parliamentary functions;
- Theme 4 - The judicial review of acts accomplished by parliament outside the scope of key parliamentary functions.

Each theme was addressed by speakers coming from the Belgian Federal Parliament, who gave a general overview of the topic and summed up the replies to the questionnaire, and by speakers from other parliaments including the Danish Folketing, the Italian Camera dei Deputati, the European Parliament, the British House of Commons, the German Bundestag, the Austrian Parliament, the Polish Sejm, the Albanian Parliament. Representatives of academic life also addressed the seminar. At the end of each session a summary of was given by Mrs. Dr. Suzie Navot, Head of Public Law Division of the Colman Law School in Israel, a specialist on the subject.

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Full reports on all the above meetings are available on the ECPRD website. Some of the seminars follow a pattern in which, following introductory speeches, the plenary session is broken up into smaller working groups allowing for more in-depth exchanges, in line with the guidelines for the organisation of Seminars.

A number of host parliaments have also produced full reports of seminar proceedings in book format. On nearly all occasions an extensive questionnaire was sent out prior to the seminar, the results of which were then used as a basis for discussion and published in the final report.

Annual Conferences of Correspondents were held in London in 2006 and Yerevan 2007. Detailed reports of these conferences can be found under Sections 10.2 and 10.3 of Annex 10 in this report. The Executive Committee is most grateful to all parliaments that hosted ECPRD events over the period. Our special thanks go to the Secretaries General of the parliaments concerned and to their staff.

All in all, events over the years 2006 – 2007 attracted 666 participants from practically all ECPRD member parliaments (and from Israel and the American CRS). The details of attendance at ECPRD events are included in the Annex 5 to this report.

The European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe continued to cover the travel and accommodation costs of representatives from central and eastern European countries that are not members of the EU.

The following parliaments may request financial assistance from the European Parliament for the participation of one person to each seminar: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Serbia, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, and Turkey. The same will hold for Montenegro as soon as that country’s parliament appoints a Correspondent.

Similarly, the following parliaments may request financial assistance from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for the participation of one person to each seminar: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

#### ***5.4. Areas of Interest***

The Conference of Correspondents at its meeting in London in October 2006 decided – in the wake of the adoption of new ECPRD Statutes - to create four ‘Areas of Interest’. These are:

- Parliamentary Libraries, Research and Archives, (Co-ordinator: Mrs Elisabeth Dietrich-Schulz, Austria);
- Information and Communication Technology in Parliaments, (Co-ordinator: Mr Joao Viegas Abreu, Portugal);
- Parliamentary Practice and Procedure, (Co-ordinator: Mr Marc Van der Hulst, Belgium);
- Macroeconomic Research, (Co-ordinator: Mr Kjell Torbiörn, Council of Europe).

The Co-ordinators for these areas were appointed by the Executive Committee at its meeting in Paris on 10 November 2006. In accordance with the new Statutes they now participate in Executive Committee meetings so as to be able to report on activities in their respective areas of interest. The new ECPRD website provides them with a tool (Forum) for communicating with those interested in their particular area of responsibility.

In June 2007, the Executive Committee approved a document indicating tasks and duties of Co-ordinators. This document (see Annex 8) also includes a more detailed list of subjects covered by the ECPRD Areas of Interest.

## **Area of Interest “Parliamentary Libraries, Research and Archives”**

### **1. Activities in 2007: taking stock and preparing the future**

Work in the *Libraries, Research and Archives* Area of Interest has revealed a lack of up-to-date, comparative data. However, those active in this Area have pointed to the considerable groundwork which has been done. Thus, in the 1990s Ernst Kohl of the German Bundestag compiled a worldwide directory of national and federal parliamentary libraries, which is available on the Bundestag server. In 2000 Jennifer Tanfield of the United Kingdom House of Commons published the study „Parliamentary library, research and information services of Western Europe“. And in 2003 Karel Sosna of the Czech Chamber of Deputies edited “Parliamentary library, research and information services of Central Europe”.

On this basis, and in preparation for the Area’s Seminar to be held in Vienna on 29 and 30 May 2008, three questionnaires were sent to Correspondents in December 2007:

- Part A enquired whether more attractive and narrative entries for on-line publication were considered by participating parliaments, following the examples in the above-mentioned Tanfield and Sosna publications
- Part B sought more data on Parliamentary Libraries to update the information available
- Part C sought the same as regards Parliamentary Archives

In September 2007 a request regarding Rulebooks for Parliamentary Libraries was forwarded to Correspondents by the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, yielding close to 40 replies.

Following the jubilee publication ECPRD 30 YEARS 1977-2007, the first article on the ECPRD in the German language was published in Wikipedia: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/EZPWD>.

### **2. Activities in 2008 - 2009**

On 29-30 May 2008 a seminar on Parliamentary Libraries: “Sharing knowledge = Partager le savoir = Wissen gemeinsam nutzen” will be organised in Vienna by the Austrian Parliament.

The meeting will inaugurate the ECPRD Forum “European parliamentary libraries on the Web”, via a presentation by Gerald HILBERT of the European Parliament. In the following months a considerable effort will be devoted to developing the Forum and to creating a real network of parliamentary librarians.

Under the Seminar’s general theme of “Sharing knowledge”, the meeting will focus on three themes:

- comparative data: staff, budget, premises, holdings, catalogues, activities
- co-operation at national and international level. Possible use of consortia. Creating benefits for all
- digitisation programmes for catalogues, parliamentary papers, newspapers/journals.

In 2009 (June or September) the House of Commons will host a seminar on Parliamentary Research Services.

## **Area of Interest “Information and Communication Technology in Parliaments”**

### **1. Activities developed in 2006**

The 2006 ICT Seminar was held in Vilnius – Lithuania, on 5 - 6 October. The 15 presentations made during the two days, covered the following topics:

- e-Parliament – Services;
- e-Parliament – Technologies;
- Mobility for Representatives;
- ICT for Interparliamentary Cooperation.

From the post-event evaluation it is clear that the meeting fully reached its objectives, with “e-parliament” and “mobility” being the areas that aroused the greatest interest. The ECPRD Correspondent network is the preferred way for promoting ICT Seminars. Participants indicated that the main reason for their attending the meeting was to gain new insights and establish contacts with colleagues from other parliaments. The themes most frequently proposed for seminars in 2007 were: Mobility, Disaster Recovery and IT Security.

## **2. Activities developed in 2007**

The main activities in the ICT Area in 2007 were 1) the questionnaire on the use of mobile technology in ECPRD Parliaments and 2) the ICT Annual Seminar in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The replies to the questionnaire on the use of mobile technology in ECPRD Parliaments yielded the following conclusions:

- a) All ECPRD parliaments accorded high priority to equipping MPs with mobile technology;
- b) In 50% of ECPRD parliaments, a large majority of MPs use laptop computers;
- c) Only 20% of ECPRD parliaments use wireless network and remote access (VPN)
- d) More than 80% of ECPRD parliaments have implemented remote access to legislative documents;
- e) More than 90% of ECPRD parliaments have implemented webmail for MPs;
- f) There is not yet any remote electronic voting in ECPRD parliaments.

Another ICT Seminar was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 18 and 19 October 2007. The altogether 15 presentations and ensuing discussions made in the course of the seminar dealt with Mobility for MP’s and Support to Parliamentary Procedures.

The themes most frequently proposed for seminars in 2008 were 1) digital signature (from the technical and legal points of view) 2) IT security 3) mobile offices for MPs and 4) open standards (XML).

## **3. Activities planned for 2008**

In 2008, the ICT Area of Interest wishes to develop the following activities:

- An ICT Seminar in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 29 to 31 October;
- Promotion of a discussion forum on the most proposed topics to be presented in 2008 ICT Seminar in Copenhagen;
- Promotion of a discussion forum on subjects related to the contents of web sites of members of ECPRD parliaments;
- A questionnaire on the extent of usage of Open Source Software in ECPRD Parliaments, and the types of Open Source Software most widely used.

## **Area of interest “Parliamentary Practice and Procedure”**

### **1. Seminars**

In 2007, two seminars related to the area of interest “Parliamentary Practice and Procedure” took place. They were:

- “Specific characteristics of parliamentary administration with regard to parliamentary work periods and rhythms”, held in Paris on 7 and 8 June 2007. Cooperation between the organising French National Assembly and the Co-ordinator was very close and the Co-ordinator participated in the seminar, which was very successful.
- “Parliaments and the Judiciary”, held in Brussels on 8 and 9 November 2007. The quality of the participants and the speakers was very high. The report of the seminar will be published as a book (in the first half of 2008).

For 2008 a seminar is planned on “Parliament, Independent Authorities and Public Sector Companies” (Madrid, Senate, 18-19 April 2008). A questionnaire has been drawn up jointly by the organisers and the Coordinator.

## **2. Forum**

At the seminars in Paris and Brussels (see above), the planned opening of Forums related to the different areas of activities was announced. At the Brussels seminar, Mr Jerry Hilbert, manager of the website and its Forums, presented the “Parliamentary Practice and Procedure” Forum. E-mails were subsequently sent to those having shown an interest in participating in the Forum, with about twenty people creating an account.

The forum is now functioning with two “threads”. Although the quality of the exchanges is very high, it is difficult for only about 20 participants to create a real and ongoing discussion that is different from an ordinary exchange of e-mails. New ‘marketing actions’ will therefore have to be undertaken to recruit more members.

## **3. Thesaurus**

At the Yerevan Conference of Correspondents the idea of a ‘thesaurus’, or list of ‘keywords’, on parliamentary procedure and practice was welcomed. Such a thesaurus would be useful for two reasons. Firstly, it would allow more recently established parliaments to set up a limited documentation system, using what had already been done and adapting it to their own situation. Secondly, it might be possible to attach to ECPRD questionnaires certain words in a specific thesaurus that would permit a more intelligent consultation of the database.

The Coordinator received examples of lists of keywords used in several parliaments and a first test version is currently being prepared. It is hoped that it may be presented in time for the 2008 Annual Conference of Correspondents.

## **Area of Interest “Macroeconomic Research”**

### **Follow-up to the 2006 and 2007 Seminars**

The two Macroeconomic Research Seminars mentioned in the preceding section – the one in Sarajevo in June 2006 on “Economic Prospects of Bosnia and Herzegovina within the context of South-East European Development” and the seminar in Stockholm in June 2007 on “Parliaments and Central Banks: a Vital Relationship” – will both enjoy follow-ups, but in different ways.

A “geographic” follow-up will be given to the Sarajevo exercise in the sense that the Slovenian parliament will host a meeting under this Area of Interest in the Spring of 2009 (the exact date remains to be determined) dedicated to the subject of “State Budgets and Budgets of National Parliaments” (provisional title). This will not only give participants an insight into the budgetary issues to be raised, but will also permit them to hold exchanges of views on South-East European economic development more generally, with Slovenia as a by now well-established EU (and Council of Europe) member state and with other countries in the region approaching the EU in various ways.

Even before this, the 2007 Stockholm Seminar will be given a more thematic follow-up, via a Seminar to be held in September 2008 (exact date to be determined) in Strasbourg and Frankfurt (one meeting day in each location, that is, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and the European Central Bank headquarters in Frankfurt). The theme will be “The European Central Bank in a New European and World Economy” (provisional title) and the meeting will very much build on the Stockholm results as these must now be adapted to a new European and world economic environment greatly impacted by the so-called ‘sub-prime’ financial crisis, an accelerating inflation due to the rising competition for raw materials (including oil and gas) and food in particular.



### **Establishment of a ‘Forum’ on the ECPRD website**

Elsewhere in this report is mentioned the creation of “Forums” on the ECPRD website. Such a Forum also exists since March 2008 for the Macroeconomic Research Area of Interest, with two themes to start with.

The first theme is “*Organisation of macroeconomic research in ECPRD parliaments: room for mutual learning?*” The purpose here is to permit interested parliamentary staff dealing with macroeconomic research to inform the website, and through it their colleagues in other ECPRD parliaments, how that research is organised internally, in terms of both research areas handled and the organisational structure chosen for that research.

For instance, do individual researchers deal directly with parliamentarians without hierarchical intermediaries, or do such intermediaries, normally superiors, exist? Furthermore, to what extent is research “parliamentarian-driven” as opposed to “staff-driven”, and to what extent is it forward-looking and anticipatory as opposed to analysing and summarising past developments (such as via statistics).

It should be underlined that the purpose is not to suggest that one or the other practice or organisational solution is better than any other, but rather to spread knowledge about how different parliaments organise their work in this field, so as to permit those interested to rethink their own methods.

A second initial theme launched under the Forum is “*The current world financial crisis: origins and possible legislative and regulatory responses, nationally and internationally*”. A discussion on this topic could be useful, since it is clear that there will be one form of legislative response or other to the crisis, both internationally (also at EU level) and nationally. And better informed parliamentary research staff would be in a better position to assist lawmakers as they go about their work in this field.

## **5.5. The Executive Committee**

During the period under review the Executive Committee was composed of the two Co-Directors (Mr Piotr Nowina-Konopka – succeeding Mr Alain Barrau as from December 2006 – and Mr Wojciech Sawicki) and five representatives of different ECPRD parliaments. These were Mrs Natasa Glavnik (Slovenia), Mr Robert Clements (United Kingdom), Mr Jean-Pierre Bloch (France), Mr Borys Kolisnychenko (Ukraine) and Mrs Siiri Sillajoe (Estonia).

The new ECPRD Statute adopted in 2006 foresaw an increase in the number of members of the Executive Committee to five. At the Conference of Correspondents in London in October 2006 Mr Palanza from the Italian Camera dei Deputati (elected to the Executive Committee in October 2003) was succeeded by Mr Jean-Pierre Bloch (French National Assembly). Mrs Siiri Sillajoe (Estonian Riigikogu) was elected as the fifth member of the Executive Committee.

At the Conference of Correspondents in Yerevan in 2007, Mr Robert Clements was re-elected for another period of three years.

The Executive Committee meets twice a year and - according to tradition - the spring meeting takes place in one of the parliaments of Executive Committee members, while that in the autumn is held in Brussels and Strasbourg alternatively. Since 2007, the Co-ordinators are regularly invited to attend these meetings.

Over the period the Executive Committee took up such issues as the annual programme of activities, the website, legislative cooperation and exchanges, the Areas of Interest, the implications of the new Statutes, the updating of the existing Guidelines and the preparation of the annual Conferences of Correspondents.

The Executive Committee devoted considerable effort to improving the structure for managing requests for comparative studies and surveys, including via a revision of the guidelines. There was agreement that the ECPRD network provides a unique forum for requests and replies, and that all correspondents should do their utmost to contribute to it.

The Executive also examined the usefulness of the seminars held or planned with regard to their contents and importance to parliaments. As in previous years, it noted with satisfaction that the themes proposed had been appreciated and had led to active and lively debates.

The minutes of the Executive Committee meetings were published in the ECPRD Newsletter and can be found on the ECPRD website.

## **5.6 *Correspondents and Deputy Correspondents***

Serbia appointed a Correspondent and a Deputy-Correspondent in June 2006, but Monaco and the Assembly of Montenegro have yet to do the same. The updated list of sixty-two Correspondents appears in Annex 2 to this report. In addition, thirty-four Parliaments nominated Deputy Correspondents, illustrating their growing involvement the ECPRD's work. New nominations and changes in the list of Correspondents and their Deputies are indicated in the News section of the ECPRD website, and an overview is published every semester in the ECPRD Newsletter.

At its meeting in Tallinn on 7 March 2008, the Executive Committee discussed the duties of ECPRD Correspondents in national parliaments and decided to prepare a document indicating their tasks and responsibilities. This document (see Annex 9) has been prepared with a view to its being endorsed by Secretaries General at their meeting in Strasbourg on 23 May 2008. It could, in addition, be used by Secretaries General as a basis for any job description they might wish to draw up for ECPRD Correspondents.

In accordance with Article 3 of the Statute, parliaments possessing observer or Special Guest status with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe "*may participate*" in the different activities of the ECPRD, but without the right to vote. The parliaments in question are those of Israel, Canada and Mexico. The ECPRD may also co-operate with non-European parliamentary chambers. The American Congressional Research Service (of the US Congress) has been granted a special guest status, with a Correspondent and a Deputy Correspondent.

The question as to whether the expression "*may participate*" should be interpreted as implying a right of full access to the ECPRD (nomination of Correspondent, comparative requests, other questions, etc.) was discussed by the Executive several years ago. It was agreed that the only restriction should be the right to vote in the Annual Conference of Correspondents and other ECPRD bodies.

## **5.7. *EUROVOC***

The Eurovoc version 4.2 was launched at the Eurovoc conference in Brussels in March 2006 (European Parliament), with 62 participants coming from 24 countries/national parliaments and various EU institutions. At this conference (all presentations and speeches are available on ECPRD's webpage), the most recent developments and experience of parliamentary users were discussed in relation to the activities of the Eurovoc Maintenance Committee.

Since 2005, the Publications Office of the European Communities is in charge of the maintenance and translation of all linguistic versions. Licence to use the thesaurus is freely available to all ECPRD parliaments. The European Parliament's Library remains the contact-point for national parliamentary libraries which are involved in the maintenance of the Eurovoc Thesaurus.

## **6. The ECPRD website**

The ECPRD's website ([www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu)) is hosted by the European Parliament and is *the* focal point of communication for the whole ECPRD-network. Whereas some pages are available to all internet users, most of the website is restricted to registered users (ECPRD members, Parliamentary Documentation Centres, etc.).

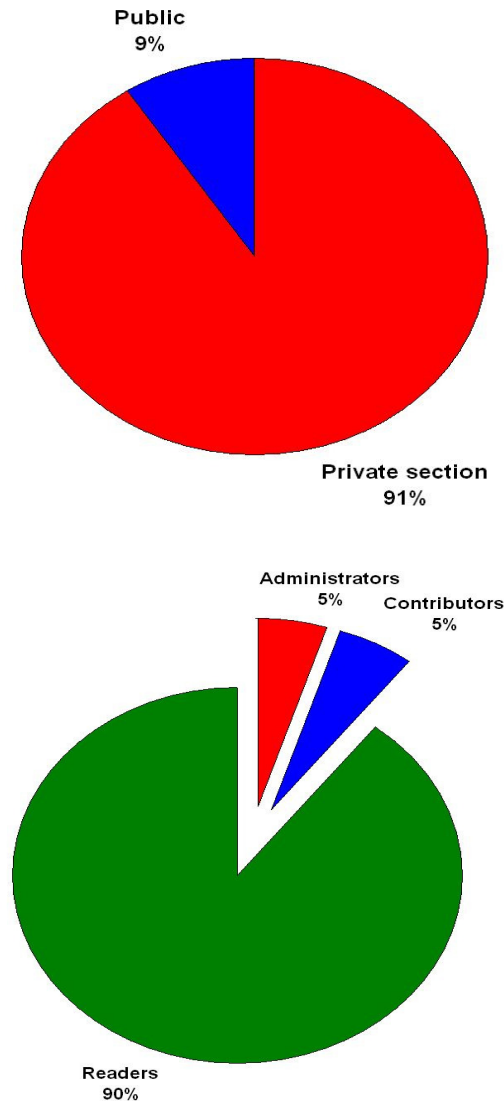
The website offers three main sections:

- a *public section*, which is open to the general public (providing a short introduction to the Centre's work, including the statutes and a list of publications);
- a *private section*, which can be reached via a login and a password provided by the secretariat to all ECPRD Correspondents and Deputy Correspondents. This section gives exhaustive information about the activities of the Centre with subsections for:
  - o news,
  - o a directory of members, grouped by their different roles,
  - o a calendar of past and future events (conferences and seminars), with information about related documents,
  - o a repository containing all comparative requests and replies handled by the Centre,
  - o links to parliamentary and other websites, constitutions, parliamentary rules of procedure, legislative databases, whether at European or national level;
- *the discussion forums* for each Area of Interest, managed by the Co-ordinators. Access to these discussions can also be gained by people from outside the ECPRD network following approval by the Co-ordinator.

In order to provide a platform to support all these activities of the ECPRD, the IT section of the European Parliament decided in 2007 to modernize the website. The new lay-out and tools of the ECPRD's website were presented at the Annual Conference of Correspondents in Yerevan and were warmly welcomed.

In the period following the Annual Conference of Correspondents, first exchanges were prepared or started in the discussion forums of the four areas of interest. In November 2007, on the occasion of the Seminar "Parliaments and Judiciary" in Brussels, the Co-ordinator for the Area of Interest "Parliamentary Practice and Procedure" opened that particular forum, which is to be followed by other forums in the course of 2008.

## Usage of the website



While close to 10 % of the visits are by anonymous internet users, more than 90 % are by registered users. The website can therefore be said to serve its purpose well. The information flow is also well balanced, with 10% of ECPRD members contributing and administrating the website, and the remaining 90% of users reading it.

## Ongoing improvements to the website

Whereas the modernization undertaken in 2007 focussed on existing pages available to registered and public users alike, further improvements are underway. They will focus on an enhanced administration of the website making it easier for people to contribute and thereby further improve the contents. Furthermore, following a request by Correspondents, areas of interest will enjoy better visibility in the private site and thematic sub-sections will be directly managed by the Co-ordinators.

## **7. ECPRD Publications**

The ECPRD publishes its Newsletter in July and in December each year. It contains the minutes of meetings and seminars, updates on Correspondents and Deputy Correspondents and information on current debates and publications..

A new edition of the Directory was published in early 2008, including new sectors and addresses in national parliaments with links to constitutions, rules of procedure, parliamentary committees, parliamentary libraries and various services and documents (with links, where available, to official translations ).

Special publications issued during the period March 2006 - March 2008 were:

- Beyond Transparency: New Standards for Legislative Information Systems, by Jeffrey C. Griffith. ECPRD/European Parliament, July 2006. This publication is available in paper-form (only in EN) and is also electronically available via the website
- Election and Mandate of MEPs, red. by Denis Batta. ECPRD/European Parliament, Luxembourg, April 2007. This publication is also available in French.
- ECPRD 30 Years 1977-2007, a Summary of major events and achievements of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation, by Hanneke Coppolecchia and Mario Heinrich, October 2007. This publication is available in paper-form in EN, FR and DE and is also electronically available via the website.



# **A N N E X E S**





# ANNEX 1

## STATUTES OF THE ECPRD - AS ADOPTED BY THE SECRETARIES GENERAL ON 31ST MAY 2006

*The Statutes of the ECPRD were adopted by the ECPRD Secretaries General meeting at the Conference of Speakers in Budapest on 7 June 1996 and subsequently amended in Tallinn on 31 May 2006.*

### PREAMBLE

The European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) was created in 1977 at the request of the Conference of Speakers of European Parliamentary Assemblies (as from 2004: the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments).

### I. AIMS

#### *Article 1*

1. The objectives of the ECPRD are to promote the exchange of information, ideas, experience and good practice among the administrations of parliaments in Europe on subjects of common interest; to strengthen close co-operation among parliamentary services in all fields of parliamentary administration, legislation, information, research and documentation; and to collect, exchange and publicise studies produced by parliamentary services.
2. In the exchange of information the ECPRD shall promote, wherever possible, the use and development of Information and Communication Technology.
3. The ECPRD shall co-operate with other networks dealing with the exchange of information among parliaments in Europe.

### II. COMPOSITION OF THE ECPRD

#### *Article 2*

The ECPRD's members are: the European Parliament; the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; the Assembly of Western European Union\*, and parliamentary chambers where the President is a member of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments.

#### *Article 3*

1. A parliament possessing special guest or observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe may participate in the different activities of the ECPRD but may not vote in its bodies.
2. The ECPRD may co-operate with non-European parliamentary chambers.

### III. GOVERNING BODIES OF THE ECPRD

#### *i. THE MEETING OF THE SECRETARIES GENERAL*

#### *Article 4*

The ECPRD operates under the authority of the Secretaries General of member chambers. At their meetings held every two years on the occasion of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments, they approve the activity report and action programme of the ECPRD and establish priorities for its functioning.

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\* the Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly

## *ii. THE CONFERENCE OF CORRESPONDENTS*

### *Article 5*

1. The Secretary General of each parliamentary chamber appoints a senior official (Correspondent) to represent the chamber within the Conference of Correspondents of the ECPRD. Secretaries General may also appoint Deputy Correspondents.
2. The Correspondent is selected from officials whose activities bring them into close contact with the ECPRD and who have direct access to the Secretary General of the chamber. He/she can thereby co-ordinate the activities of those officials of his/her chamber who are asked to play an active role in the ECPRD.

### *Article 6*

1. The Conference of Correspondents is responsible, in co-operation with the Co-Directors (see Article 8), for the organisation of the activities of the ECPRD. It examines the draft report on the activities of the ECPRD, drafted and presented by the Co-Directors, which includes the action programme of the ECPRD for the following two years.
2. The report, together with the action programme, is then submitted for approval to the Secretaries General and subsequently to the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments which is invited to take note of it.
3. Meetings of the Conference of Correspondents, chaired by the Co-Directors, take place at least every twelve months.
4. Decisions of the Conference of Correspondents are reached, in principle, by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, issues will be decided by a vote with a necessary majority of at least two-thirds of the votes cast, representing a majority of members of the ECPRD (see Article 2).

## *iii. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE*

### *Article 7*

1. The Executive Committee is composed of the two Co-Directors and five Correspondents elected by the Conference of Correspondents. The Committee will meet as often as necessary, at the request of at least two of its members or five Correspondents.
2. The members of the Executive Committee, other than the Co-Directors, shall be elected for a period of three years. They may be re-elected. Elections will take place at the Correspondents' annual meeting, with due consideration being paid to the need to maintain geographical balance in the membership of the Executive Committee.
3. The Executive Committee may take decisions when a majority of its members is present. Decisions shall be taken by a majority of the votes cast.

## *iv. THE CO-DIRECTORS*

### *Article 8*

1. The Secretaries General of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe each nominate a senior official as a Co-Director of the ECPRD.
2. The two Co-Directors are responsible for the management of all activities of the ECPRD and are assisted by the two Co-Secretaries of the ECPRD and by other officials of their respective institutions.
3. The Co-Directors may at the same time be the Correspondents for their assemblies.

## **IV. WORKING METHODS**

### ***Article 9***

1. The ECPRD promotes co-operation between member chambers through the exchange of information, compilation of documentation and studies and the organisation of seminars; and by the sharing of knowledge of parliamentary ICT applications. On a proposal from the Executive Committee, the Conference of Correspondents shall establish detailed guidelines for studies and comparative requests and for the organisation of ECPRD seminars.
2. The ECPRD may also participate in or initiate other activities organised within its fields of interest.
3. When it considers that a given area requires a continuity of activity, the Conference of Correspondents may decide on the appointment of a Co-ordinator responsible for promoting close co-operation between the member chambers in that area. The Co-ordinator shall be appointed by the Executive Committee from among the competent staff of member chambers, with the consent of the chamber concerned, for a renewable term of three years.
4. On a proposal from the Executive Committee, and to meet specific terms of reference, the Conference of Correspondents may also decide to set up ad hoc working groups composed of staff of member chambers. The Executive Committee shall determine their duration, which must not exceed three years.

## **V. FINANCING OF THE ECPRD**

### ***Article 10***

1. Member chambers of the ECPRD meet the cost of participation of their officials in ECPRD activities as well as the costs of communication with the ECPRD.
2. Member chambers may organise activities of the ECPRD, such as meetings, seminars etc., and bear the costs of such events. They may also make voluntary financial contributions to the ECPRD.
3. The operating costs of the ECPRD are covered by the budgets of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in conformity with current practice.
4. The ECPRD may accept outside donations following a favourable opinion from the Conference of Correspondents.

## **VI. REVISION OF THE STATUTES**

### ***Article 11***

The revision of these Statutes is the responsibility of the Secretaries General of the member chambers gathered at their meeting on the occasion of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments.

## ANNEX 2

### LIST OF CORRESPONDENTS AND DEPUTY-CORRESPONDENTS (and Co-ordinators) (13 February 2008)

COUNTRY / PAYS / LAND	CORRESPONDENT / CORRESPONDANT / KORRESPONDENT	E-MAIL
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY COUNCIL OF EUROPE	Mr Wojciech SAWICKI (Co-Director and Correspondent)	<a href="mailto:wojciech.sawicki@coe.int">wojciech.sawicki@coe.int</a>
	Mr Mario HEINRICH (Co-Secretary and Deputy- Correspondent)	<a href="mailto:mario.heinrich@coe.int">mario.heinrich@coe.int</a>
	Mr Kjell TORBIORN (Co-ordinator ME Research)	<a href="mailto:kiell.torbiorn@coe.int">kiell.torbiorn@coe.int</a>
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	Mr Piotr NOWINA-KONOPKA (Co-Director)	<a href="mailto:piotr.nowinakonopka@europarl.europa.eu">piotr.nowinakonopka@europarl.europa.eu</a>
	Josep Maria RIBOT (Correspondent)	<a href="mailto:josep.ribot@europarl.europa.eu">josep.ribot@europarl.europa.eu</a>
	Mrs Hanneke COPPOLECCHIA (Co-Secretary and Deputy-Correspondent))	<a href="mailto:johanna.coppolecchia@europarl.europa.eu">johanna.coppolecchia@europarl.europa.eu</a>
ASSEMBLY OF THE WEU	Mr Floris DE GOU	<a href="mailto:fdegou@assembly.weu.int">fdegou@assembly.weu.int</a>
ALBANIA	Mrs Zana BUFI (Deputy Corr) Mrs Aida SHURDHA	<a href="mailto:zbufi@parlament.al">zbufi@parlament.al</a> <a href="mailto:ashurdha@parlament.al">ashurdha@parlament.al</a>
ANDORRA	Mr Josep HINOJOSA BESOLI	<a href="mailto:Josep_Hinojosa@parlament.ad">Josep_Hinojosa@parlament.ad</a>
ARMENIA	Mrs Arpi ARAKELYAN (Deputy Corr) Mrs Adelina GHARIBYAN	<a href="mailto:arpi.arakelian@parliament.am">arpi.arakelian@parliament.am</a> <a href="mailto:adelina.gharibian@parliament.am">adelina.gharibian@parliament.am</a>
AUSTRIA	Mrs Ingrid SIESS-SCHERZ (Deputy Corr) Mrs Elisabeth DIETRICH-SCHULZ	<a href="mailto:Ingrid.siess-scherz@parlament.gv.at">Ingrid.siess-scherz@parlament.gv.at</a> <a href="mailto:elisabeth.dietrich-schulz@parlament.gv.at">elisabeth.dietrich-schulz@parlament.gv.at</a>
AZERBAIJAN	Mr Mehman NAMAZOV	<a href="mailto:mehman.namazov@meclis.gov.az">mehman.namazov@meclis.gov.az</a> <a href="mailto:international@meclis.gov.az">international@meclis.gov.az</a>
BELGIUM	Mr Marc VAN DER HULST (Deputy Corr) Mr. Alberik GORIS	<a href="mailto:marc.vanderhulst@dekamer.be">marc.vanderhulst@dekamer.be</a> <a href="mailto:alberik.goris@dekamer.be">alberik.goris@dekamer.be</a>
	Mr André REZSOHAZY (Deputy Corr) Mr Gert Van der BIESEN	<a href="mailto:ar@senate.be">ar@senate.be</a> <a href="mailto:gvdb@senate.be">gvdb@senate.be</a>
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	Mrs Sena BAJRAKTAREVIC (Deputy Corr) Mrs Zaklina ANDRIJEVIC-KARIC	<a href="mailto:sena.bajraktarevic@parlament.ba">sena.bajraktarevic@parlament.ba</a> <a href="mailto:zaklina.karic@parlament.ba">zaklina.karic@parlament.ba</a>
BULGARIA	(Mrs Venetta TRIFONOVA - temporary absent) Mrs Elena KAMENOVA	<a href="mailto:vtrifonova@parliament.bg">vtrifonova@parliament.bg</a> <a href="mailto:ekamenova@parliament.bg">ekamenova@parliament.bg</a>
(CANADA)	xxxx	xxxx
CROATIA	Mrs Branka MARTINCIC	<a href="mailto:bmartin@sabor.hr">bmartin@sabor.hr</a>
CYPRUS	Mr Socrates SOCRATOUS (Deputy Corr) Mrs Christiana SOLOMONIDOU	<a href="mailto:International-relations@parliament.cy">International-relations@parliament.cy</a> <a href="mailto:christianas@cytanet.com.cy">christianas@cytanet.com.cy</a>
CZECH REPUBLIC	Mr Karel SOSNA (Deputy Corr) Mr Robert VYKLICKY	<a href="mailto:sosna@psp.cz">sosna@psp.cz</a> <a href="mailto:vyklicky@psp.cz">vyklicky@psp.cz</a>
	Mr Jiri GEORGIEV (Deputy Corr) Mr Jan KYSELA	<a href="mailto:georgievj@senat.cz">georgievj@senat.cz</a> <a href="mailto:kyselaj@senat.cz">kyselaj@senat.cz</a>
DENMARK	Mrs Hanne RASMUSSEN (Deputy Corr) Mrs Christina RINGVARD	<a href="mailto:hanne.rasmussen@ft.dk">hanne.rasmussen@ft.dk</a> <a href="mailto:Christina.Ringvard@ft.dk">Christina.Ringvard@ft.dk</a>
ESTONIA	Mrs Siiri SILLAJOE (Deputy Corr) Mrs Margit MUUL	<a href="mailto:siiri.sillajoe@riigikogu.ee">siiri.sillajoe@riigikogu.ee</a> <a href="mailto:margit.muul@riigikogu.ee">margit.muul@riigikogu.ee</a>

COUNTRY / PAYS / LAND	CORRESPONDENT / CORRESPONDANT / KORRESPONDENT	E-MAIL
FINLAND	Mr Antti RAUTAVA	<a href="mailto:antti.rautava@eduskunta.fi">antti.rautava@eduskunta.fi</a>
FRANCE	Mr Jean-Pierre BLOCH (Deputy-Corr) Mr Thierry DEILHES	<a href="mailto:jpbloch@assemblee-nationale.fr">jpbloch@assemblee-nationale.fr</a> <a href="mailto:tdeilhes@assemblee-nationale.fr">tdeilhes@assemblee-nationale.fr</a>
	Mr Jean LAPORTE	<a href="mailto:j.laporte@senat.fr">j.laporte@senat.fr</a>
GEORGIA	Mr Irakli IAKOBASHVILI (Deputy Corr) Mrs Marika MESKHISHVILI	<a href="mailto:iiakobashvili@parliament.ge">iiakobashvili@parliament.ge</a> <a href="mailto:marikame@parliament.ge">marikame@parliament.ge</a>
GERMANY	Dr Hans Peter BLATT (Deputy Corr) Kolja BARTSCH	<a href="mailto:hanspeter.blatt@bundestag.de">hanspeter.blatt@bundestag.de</a> <a href="mailto:kolja.bartsch@bundestag.de">kolja.bartsch@bundestag.de</a>
	Mrs Regine GAUTSCHE (Deputy Corr) Mrs Sonja DIEZ	<a href="mailto:490.gautsche@bundesrat.de">490.gautsche@bundesrat.de</a> <a href="mailto:494.diez@bundesrat.de">494.diez@bundesrat.de</a>
GREECE	Mr Nikolas STEFANOY (Deputy Corr) Mr. Antonis PANTELIS	<a href="mailto:secretarygeneral@parliament.gr">secretarygeneral@parliament.gr</a> <a href="mailto:meleton@parliament.gr">meleton@parliament.gr</a>
HUNGARY	Mrs Eva SZEKRENYES	<a href="mailto:eva.szekrenyes@parlament.hu">eva.szekrenyes@parlament.hu</a>
ICELAND	Mr Viggó GÍSLASON	<a href="mailto:viggo@althingi.is">viggo@althingi.is</a>
IRELAND	Mrs Madelaine DENNISON (Deputy Corr) Mrs Maria FITZSIMONS	<a href="mailto:madelaine.dennison@oireachtas.ie">madelaine.dennison@oireachtas.ie</a> <a href="mailto:maria.fitzsimons@oireachtas.ie">maria.fitzsimons@oireachtas.ie</a>
ISRAEL	Mrs Shirley AVRAMI (Deputy Corr) Mrs Susan HATTIS ROLEF	<a href="mailto:avrami@knesset.gov.il">avrami@knesset.gov.il</a> <a href="mailto:sheilamm@knesset.gov.il">sheilamm@knesset.gov.il</a>
ITALY	Dr. Italo SCOTTI (Deputy Corr) Mr Enrico SETA	<a href="mailto:scotti_i@camera.it">scotti_i@camera.it</a> <a href="mailto:seta_e@camera.it">seta_e@camera.it</a> <a href="mailto:st_affari_esteri@camera.it">st_affari_esteri@camera.it</a>
	Mr. Francesco MARCELLI	<a href="mailto:f.marcelli@senato.it">f.marcelli@senato.it</a>
LATVIA	Mrs Ineta LUKA-INDANE (Deputy Corr) Mr Janis KAPENIEKS	<a href="mailto:iluka@saeima.lv">iluka@saeima.lv</a> <a href="mailto:jkapenie@saeima.lv">jkapenie@saeima.lv</a>
LIECHTENSTEIN	Mr Josef HILTI	<a href="mailto:josef.hilti@lts.li">josef.hilti@lts.li</a>
LITHUANIA	Mrs Danute VABALAITĖ (Deputy Corr) Mr. Rimantas GRIKIENIS	<a href="mailto:davaba@lrs.lt">davaba@lrs.lt</a> <a href="mailto:rigrik@lrs.lt">rigrik@lrs.lt</a>
LUXEMBOURG	Mr. Carlo LINDEN (Deputy Corr) Mrs Marie France KREMER	<a href="mailto:clinden@chd.lu">clinden@chd.lu</a> <a href="mailto:mfkremer@chd.lu">mfkremer@chd.lu</a>
MALTA	xxxx	xxxx
MOLDOVA	Mrs Irina SEREBREANSCHI	<a href="mailto:irina.serebreanschi@parlament.md">irina.serebreanschi@parlament.md</a>
MONTENEGRO	xxxx	xxxx
MONACO	xxxx	xxxxx
NETHERLANDS	Mr Giel WIJGERGANGS	<a href="mailto:giel.wijgergangs@eerstekamer.nl">giel.wijgergangs@eerstekamer.nl</a>
	Mr Piet VAN RIJN (Deputy Corr) Mr Nico BAL	<a href="mailto:p.vrijn@tweedekamer.nl">p.vrijn@tweedekamer.nl</a> <a href="mailto:n.bal@tweedekamer.nl">n.bal@tweedekamer.nl</a>
NORWAY	Mr Jarle SKJØRESTAD	<a href="mailto:jarle.skjorestad@stortinget.no">jarle.skjorestad@stortinget.no</a>
POLAND	Mr Wiesław STASKIEWICZ	<a href="mailto:wstas@sejm.gov.pl">wstas@sejm.gov.pl</a>
	Mrs Ewa NAWROCKA (temporary absent) Mrs Danuta M. KORZENIOWSKA	<a href="mailto:nawrocka@nw.senat.gov.pl">nawrocka@nw.senat.gov.pl</a> <a href="mailto:korzenio@nw.senat.gov.pl">korzenio@nw.senat.gov.pl</a>

COUNTRY / PAYS / LAND	CORRESPONDENT / CORRESPONDANT / KORRESPONDENT	E-MAIL
PORTUGAL	Mr. Pedro VALENTE (Deputy Corr) Maria Paula FARIA (Coord. ICT Mr João VIEGAS ABREU)	<a href="mailto:pedro.valente@ar.parlamento.pt">pedro.valente@ar.parlamento.pt</a> <a href="mailto:paula.faria@ar.parlamento.pt">paula.faria@ar.parlamento.pt</a> <a href="mailto:Joao.Viegas@ar.parlamento.pt">Joao.Viegas@ar.parlamento.pt</a>
ROMANIA	Mrs. Paunita TURCU (Deputy Corr) Lucretia IORDACHE	<a href="mailto:paula.turcu@cdep.ro">paula.turcu@cdep.ro</a> <a href="mailto:liordache@cdep.ro">liordache@cdep.ro</a>
RUSSIA	Mrs Constanta CALINOIU (Deputy Corr) Mr Eugen GASNAS	<a href="mailto:calinoiu@senat.ro">calinoiu@senat.ro</a> <a href="mailto:egasnas@senat.ro">egasnas@senat.ro</a>
	Mr Yury E. SHUVALOV (Deputy Corr) Mrs. Irina ANDREEVA	<a href="mailto:j_shuvalov@mail.ru">j_shuvalov@mail.ru</a> <a href="mailto:andreeva@duma.gov.ru">andreeva@duma.gov.ru</a>
	Mr Victor KRIVOV (Deputy Corr) Mr Vladimir MAKARYCHEV	<a href="mailto:USLeonov@council.gov.ru">USLeonov@council.gov.ru</a> <a href="mailto:gobrickiy@council.gov.ru">gobrickiy@council.gov.ru</a>
SAN MARINO	Mrs Antonella GIARDI	<a href="mailto:antonella.giardi.segristituzionale@pa.sm">antonella.giardi.segristituzionale@pa.sm</a>
SERBIA	Mrs Jelena ARSENIJEVIC (Deputy Corr) Mrs Tanja OSTOJIC	<a href="mailto:j.arsenijevic@parlament.sr.gov.yu">j.arsenijevic@parlament.sr.gov.yu</a> <a href="mailto:tanja.ostovic@parlament.sr.gov.yu">tanja.ostovic@parlament.sr.gov.yu</a>
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	Mrs Anna OKRUHLICOVA (Deputy Corr) Mrs. Eva ZAHRADNIKOVA	<a href="mailto:Anna.Okruhlicova@nrsr.sk">Anna.Okruhlicova@nrsr.sk</a> <a href="mailto:Eva.Zahradnikova@nrsr.sk">Eva.Zahradnikova@nrsr.sk</a>
SLOVENIA	Mrs Natasa GLAVNIK (Deputy Corr) Mr Branko DEKLEVA	<a href="mailto:natasa.glavnik@dz-rs.si">natasa.glavnik@dz-rs.si</a> <a href="mailto:branko.dekleva@dz-rs.si">branko.dekleva@dz-rs.si</a>
	Mr. Dusan STRUS (Deputy Corr) Mrs. Ana IVAS	<a href="mailto:dusan.strus@ds-rs.si">dusan.strus@ds-rs.si</a> <a href="mailto:ana.ivas@ds-rs.si">ana.ivas@ds-rs.si</a>
SPAIN	Mrs Maria Rosa RIPOLLES SERRANO	<a href="mailto:mrr@sgral.congreso.es">mrr@sgral.congreso.es</a> <a href="mailto:secretaria.estudios@sgral.congreso.es">secretaria.estudios@sgral.congreso.es</a>
	Mr. Fernando SANTAOLALLA LOPEZ	<a href="mailto:fernando.santaolalla@senado.es">fernando.santaolalla@senado.es</a> <a href="mailto:dired@senado.es">dired@senado.es</a>
SWEDEN	Mr Gunnar FORS (Deputy Corr) Mr Ingvar MATTSON	<a href="mailto:gunnar.fors@riksdagen.se">gunnar.fors@riksdagen.se</a> <a href="mailto:ingvar.mattson@riksdagen.se">ingvar.mattson@riksdagen.se</a> ( <a href="mailto:rut@riksdagen.se">rut@riksdagen.se</a> )
SWITZERLAND	Mr Ernst FRISCHKNECHT (Deputy Corr) Mr Jean-Claude HAYOZ	<a href="mailto:ernst.frischknecht@pd.admin.ch">ernst.frischknecht@pd.admin.ch</a> <a href="mailto:jean-claude.hayoz@pd.admin.ch">jean-claude.hayoz@pd.admin.ch</a>
"THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA"	Mrs Ankica KRSTEVSKA (Deputy Corr) Mrs Jadranka LAZAREVSKA	<a href="mailto:a.krstevska@sobranie.mk">a.krstevska@sobranie.mk</a> <a href="mailto:j.lazarevska@sobranie.mk">j.lazarevska@sobranie.mk</a>
TURKEY	Mr Ahmet YILDIZ	<a href="mailto:armer@tbmm.gov.tr">armer@tbmm.gov.tr</a>
UKRAINE	Mr Borys M. KOLISNYCHENKO	<a href="mailto:kolisnychenko@rada.gov.ua">kolisnychenko@rada.gov.ua</a>
UNITED KINGDOM	Mr Robert CLEMENTS (Deputy Corr) Mr Richard CRACKNELL	<a href="mailto:clements@parliament.uk">clements@parliament.uk</a> <a href="mailto:cracknellrj@parliament.uk">cracknellrj@parliament.uk</a>
	Dr. Peter DAVIS (Deputy Corr) Dr. Isolde VICTORY	<a href="mailto:davispg@parliament.uk">davispg@parliament.uk</a> <a href="mailto:victoryi@parliament.uk">victoryi@parliament.uk</a>
UNITED STATES	Mrs Jennifer MANNING (Deputy Corr) Mr Jerry MANSFIELD	<a href="mailto:jmanning@crs.loc.gov">jmanning@crs.loc.gov</a> <a href="mailto:jmansfield@crs.loc.gov">jmansfield@crs.loc.gov</a>

## ANNEX 3

### REQUESTS FOR COMPARATIVE STUDIES by Parliaments, 2003 - 2007

Countries	Chambers	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	PARL. ASS.COUNCIL OF EUROPE		1		2	1
	EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	9	10	13	5	8
ALBANIA	KUVENDI			1	4	
ANDORRA	CONSELL GENERAL					
ARMENIA	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY		3	5	1	5
AUSTRIA	PARLAMENT	3			2	4
AZERBAIJAN	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY				1	
BELGIUM	CHAMBRE	2	2	1	1	1
	SENAT				1	
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	ASSEMBLY	2	3	3	3	5
BULGARIA	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	5	3	1		4
CANADA	No Correspondent since 2004					
CROATIA	HRVATSKI SABOR		2		1	
CYPRUS	HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES	1	2	3	1	
CZECH REPUBLIC	CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES	3	19	16	5	10
	SENAT					
DENMARK	FOLKETINGET	3	2	2	1	3
ESTONIA	RIIGIKOGU	1	8	4	5	3
FINLAND	EDUSKUNTA	3		5	2	2
FRANCE	ASSEMBLEE NATIONALE	1	3	5	7	10
	SENAT				1	
GEORGIA	PARLIAMENT	2	6	11	17	13
GERMANY	BUNDESRAT					
	BUNDESTAG	11	4	4	22	28
GREECE	VOULI TON ELLINON		1	1	1	2
HUNGARY	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY		2	4	1	5
ICELAND	ALTHINGI		1	2		
IRELAND	HOUSES OF OIREACHTAS				1	4
ISRAEL	KNESSET			4	8	9
ITALY	CAMERA DEI DEPUTATI	3		1	1	1
	SENATO		1	1	3	2
LATVIA	SAEIMA	1	1		3	2
LIECHTENSTEIN	LANDTAG					
LITHUANIA	SEIMAS	2	1	6	2	3
LUXEMBOURG	CHAMBRE DES DEPUTES					
MALTA	HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES					
MONACO	(No Correspondent yet)	*	*	*	*	*
MONTENEGRO	(No Correspondent yet)	*	*	*	*	*
MOLDOVA	ASSEMBLY		2		4	1
NETHERLANDS	EERSTE KAMER				1	
	TWEEDE KAMER	4	9	10	9	6
NORWAY	STORTINGET			2	3	11
POLAND	SEJM	4	4	4	7	14
	SENATE	3	2	2	5	8
PORTUGAL	ASSEMBLEIA	4	2	1	4	5
ROMANIA	CAMERA DEPUTATILOR			2	1	3
	SENAT					1
RUSSIA	DUMA		1	2		
	FEDERAL ASSEMBLY	3	4	1	1	
SAN MARINO	CONSIGLIO GRANDE GEN.					
SERBIA	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY					3
SLOVAKIA	NATIONAL COUNCIL	9			7	5
SLOVENIA	NATIONAL COUNCIL	1		1	1	3
	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	1	1	5	1	3
SPAIN	CONGRESO		1	2	1	1
	SENADO	1	2	1	2	3
SWEDEN	RIKSDAG	8	17	11	11	13
SWITZERLAND	ASSEMBLEE FEDERALE		2	1	2	1
"THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA"	ASSEMBLY	1		3	3	5
TURKEY	GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	2	4	4	7	5
UKRAINE	VERKOVNA RADA	2	1			
UNITED KINGDOM	HOUSE OF COMMONS		3	2	4	5
	HOUSE OF LORDS	1		1	1	1
USA	CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE					1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>96</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>223</b>

## REPLIES TO REQUESTS FOR COMPARATIVE STUDIES by Parliaments, 2004 - 2007

Countries	Chambers	2004	2005	2006	2007
	PARL. ASS. COUNCIL OF EUROPE	9	9	3	26
	WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION PAR.ASS			1	11
	EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	14	16	24	49
ALBANIA	KUVENDI	13	29	22	40
ANDORRA	CONSELL GENERAL			22	70
ARMENIA	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	19	35	26	34
AUSTRIA	PARLAMENT	98	112	126	204
AZERBAIJAN	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY		3		7
BELGIUM	CHAMBRE	81	109	103	163
	SENAT	72	104	101	141
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	ASSEMBLY	13	49	52	56
BULGARIA	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	50	57	6	81
CANADA	No Correspondent since 2004	1	*	*	*
CROATIA	HRVATSKI SABOR	56	65	61	101
CYPRUS	HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES	47	35	43	115
CZECH REPUBLIC	CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES	57	81	49	130
	SENAT	35	41	34	49
DENMARK	FOLKETINGET	81	124	124	219
ESTONIA	RIIGIKOGU	91	115	112	156
FINLAND	EDUSKUNTA	107	116	125	198
FRANCE	ASSEMBLEE NATIONALE	72	66	21	82
	SENAT	12	17	11	32
GEORGIA	PARLIAMENT	51	57	51	74
GERMANY	BUNDESRAT	43	70	46	60
	BUNDESTAG	57	35	128	238
GREECE	VOULI TON ELLINON	57	87	80	108
HUNGARY	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	15	20	22	29
ICELAND	ALTHINGI	26	60	34	58
IRELAND	HOUSES OF OIREACTHAS	5	12	21	66
ISRAEL	KNESSET		48	47	42
ITALY	CAMERA DEI DEPUTATI	61	92	104	180
	SENATO	80	86	106	165
LATVIA	SAEIMA	70	93	79	86
LIECHTENSTEIN	LANDTAG	1		8	9
LITHUANIA	SEIMAS	62	87	89	103
LUXEMBOURG	CHAMBRE DES DEPUTES	23	20	13	47
MALTA	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES				
MOLDOVA	ASSEMBLY	17	1	16	19
MONACO	(No correspondent yet)	*	*	*	*
MONTENEGRO	(No correspondent yet)	*	*	*	*
NETHERLANDS	EERSTE KAMER	14	17	5	40
	TWEEDE KAMER	22	56	77	167
NORWAY	STORTINGET	35	60	61	87
POLAND	SEJM	85	112	117	151
	SENATE	26	63	41	62
PORTUGAL	ASSEMBLEIA	83	92	93	133
ROMANIA	CAMERA DEPUTATILOR	18	18	46	114
	SENAT	1		10	63
RUSSIA	DUMA	31	33	47	55
	FEDERAL ASSEMBLY	26	20	6	40
SAN MARINO	CONSIGLIO GRANDE GENERALE				
SERBIA	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY			29	85
SLOVAKIA	NATIONAL COUNCIL	90	103	106	140
SLOVENIA	NATIONAL COUNCIL	15	15	8	12
	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	60	79	82	87
SPAIN	CONGRESO DE LOS DIPUTADOS	51	50	59	83
	SENADO	86	53	46	65
SWEDEN	RIKSDAG	88	111	119	170
SWITZERLAND	ASSEMBLEE FEDERALE	54	71	69	97
"THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA"	ASSEMBLY	54	66	55	82
TURKEY	GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	2	11	37	40
UKRAINE	VERKOVNA RADA	15	15	7	24
UNITED KINGDOM	HOUSE OF COMMONS	99	129	140	220
	HOUSE OF LORDS	40	47	16	52
USA	CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE	2	44	33	70
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,493</b>	<b>3,216</b>	<b>3,219</b>	<b>5,387</b>



**FINAL SUMMARIES OF COMPARATIVE REQUESTS  
SUBMITTED BY PARLIAMENTARY CHAMBERS**

**2006 - 2007**

<b>Parliamentary Chamber</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe	1	2
European Parliament	2	3
Austria	1	
Belgium - Senat	1	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	
Czech Republic - Chamber		3
Estonia		2
France - National Assembly	1	
Israel - Knesset		4
Italy – Senato	2	1
Latvia		1
Moldova	1	
Poland - Sejm	2	4
Romania - Chamber	1	2
Slovenia - National Assembly	2	1
Sweden		1
Switzerland	1	
Turkey	1	1
UK - House of Commons	4	6
USA - CRS		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>32</b>

## ANNEX 4

### TITLES OF COMPARATIVE REQUESTS 2006-- 2007

*Number 501 - 904*

904	Laws Administrative Procedure	2007/12/20
903	Reimbursement of Expenses Concerning Parliamentary Assistants	2007/12/18
902	Parliamentary Libraries, Research and Archives - Comparative Data	2007/12/17
901	State Money paid to natural or juristic Persons on basis of Fraud or Deceit	2007/12/17
900	VAT Treatment of Voluntary Services	2007/12/17
899	Public access to docs concerning Payments made by a Parliamentary Chamber to Members or Co-Workers	2007/12/13
898	Transport Services in Parliamentary Administration - Supplementary questions.	2007/12/13
897	Publication of Financial Results of Small Companies	2007/12/11
896	Suspension Passport (Prevention Suspected People to leave Country)	2007/12/11
895	Municipal Assemblies/City Councils and the Local Agenda 21 Process	2007/12/10
894	Constitution and European Union	2007/12/10
893	Judicial Review of Judgments in criminal and civil Cases	2007/12/05
892	Relations Parliamentary/Political Groups and Political Parties/Movements	2007/12/05
890	Activities of Parliamentary Environmental Committees	2007/12/04
889	Working Licenses of Physicians, Dentists, and Pharmacists	2007/12/04
888	Commerce and Gathering of Non-ferrous Metal Waste	2007/12/03
887	Inheritance and Donation Taxation	2007/12/03
886	Routine Report for Asylum Seekers (with Rejected Application)	2007/12/03
885	Abortion / Termination of Pregnancies	2007/11/29
884	Parliamentary Debate on Kosovo Status	2007/11/28
883	Ownership and management of the Parliament building	2007/11/27
882	Car Parking Facilities in Parliamentary Precincts	2007/11/23
881	Regulation of Remote Gambling	2007/11/23
880	Aspects of Diplomatic Service Regulation	2007/11/22
879	Regular Duties and/or Activities of Outgoing Government	2007/11/22
878	Special Sessions during Parliamentary Recess	2007/11/22
877	Control and Analysis Office in Parliament	2007/11/20
876	Parliament, Independent Authorities and Public Sector Companies	2007/11/20
875	Legal Provisions of the Acquisition and Leasehold of Arable Land	2007/11/16
874	Rules on the Execution of Court Budget	2007/11/15
873	Surpassing the Decisions of the Constitutional Court by Parliaments	2007/11/14
872	Parliamentary Votes of Confidence	2007/11/14
871	Use of Open Source Software	2007/11/14
870	Parliamentary Souvenirs Shops for Visitors	2007/11/14
869	Parliament's Public Periodicals of Non-Legislative Nature	2007/11/09
868	Salaries and other benefits of parliamentary staff (Legislative texts)	2007/11/06
867	Enforcement of Sentences passed on Adults and on Minors	2007/10/25
866	Law on Youth	2007/10/23
865	Compulsory Service in the social field or other areas of Society	2007/10/22
864	Plenary Sessions - Time Organisation and Broadcasting	2007/10/22
863	Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Rights	2007/10/22
862	Parliamentary TV (sent out directly)	2007/10/18
861	Institutional Custody of Children after Divorce (reintegration centres?)	2007/10/18
860	Right to be released from the Duty to serve as a MP, statistical follow-up (sent out directly)	2007/10/10
859	Broadcasting of Supreme Court proceedings--what is permitted?	2007/10/17
858	Travel Regulations MPs: Air Miles and Accompanying Persons	2007/10/17
857	Resources of Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committees	2007/10/09
856	The Right of Minority Shareholders to challenge decisions taken at general shareholders' meetings of their firms	2007/10/09
855	Accessibility of Persons with Developmental Disabilities	2007/10/08
854	Practice of the Waiver of Parliamentary Immunity	2007/10/03
853	Migration Policy	2007/10/02
852	European Flag in Parliamentary Chambers	2007/10/01
851	Protection of Whistleblowers	2007/09/26
850	Data Processing Equipment for MPs in Plenary Sitings	2007/09/25
849	Commercial Industrial Espionage	2007/09/24
848	Political and Legal Mechanisms to allow the Political Minority	2007/09/24
847	Law on Parliament and Regulation of Organization and Functioning of Parliamentary Staff	2007/09/24
846	Cohabitation/Family Law and Property Regulations	2007/09/17
845	Expenses and Budget of Parliament	2007/09/14
844	Rulebook of the Work of Parliamentary Library	2007/09/14
843	Can a MP become member of Government and later restart his work as a MP	2007/09/13
842	Relations between the European Parliament and the national parliaments (administrative aspects)	2007/09/12
841	Financing of Property of Armed Forces	2007/09/10
840	Law on Diaspora	2007/09/07
839	Use of Mobile Technology in Parliament	2007/09/06

838	Regulations of Records for Non-payment of Debts	2007/09/06
837	Bringing Animals into Parliamentary/Governmental Buildings	2007/09/06
836	Compulsory Military Service and Old-age Pension Insurance	2007/09/05
835	Organization of Defence and Security in Legislation	2007/09/05
834	Contacts between MPs and Civil Servants (Government and Ministries)	2007/09/03
833	Environmental Management Schemes at national Parliaments	2007/08/30
832	Spin-Off Company - Own Resources of Universities	2007/08/30
831	Parliamentary Control over EU-Policy	2007/08/30
830	Medical Education Costs and Practices (sent out directly)	2007/08/10
829	Road Safety Regulations: Trees along the Roads (sent out directly)	2007/08/15
828	Fiscalisation of the Green Markets (sent out directly)	2007/08/01
827	Mental Health Services (sent out directly)	2007/08/10
826	Conspiracy (sent out directly)	2007/08/09
825	Regulations for MPs to be Released (sent out directly)	2007/08/22
824	Indication of Addresses of Election Candidates on Ballot Paper (sent out directly)	2007/08/22
823	Reading out Documents to the Plenary (sent out directly)	2007/08/22
822	Family Therapists in Schools (sent out directly)	2007/08/08
821	Lobbying (sent out directly)	2007/08/01
820	Experiments on Animals (sent out directly)	2007/07/30
819	Legal Protection of Human Remains (sent out directly)	2007/07/30
818	Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights	2007/07/25
817	Compensation for Former Political Prisoners	2007/07/24
816	Support Staff for the Speaker	2007/07/23
815	Foreign Investment	2007/07/20
814	Tax Relief for Investments in Equipment for Economic Operators in Border Regions	2007/07/20
813	Caravan Holiday Homes	2007/07/18
812	Ratification Procedure for the EU Reform Treaty	2007/07/16
811	Climate Change: National Legislation and National Initiatives (since 2004)	2007/07/13
810	Collective Disputes and Right to Strike in the Passenger Transport Sector	2007/07/12
809	Duty of Juvenile not to consume Alcohol	2007/07/12
808	Cost of the Parliament per Citizen	2007/07/12
807	Support for families with chronically ill and disabled children	2007/07/12
806	Liaison Person in charge of Coordinating the Work of the Government and the Parliament	2007/07/12
805	Update: Pension Schemes for MPs	2007/07/06
804	Democracy Museums/Exhibitions in or outside the Parliaments	2007/07/06
803	Taxes and Subsidies for Film Production/Industry	2007/07/06
802	Personal Data Protection during Parliamentary Debates	2007/07/05
801	Legislation conc. Public Nudity/Undressing in Public	2007/07/03
800	Legal Protection of the Designation of the Ombudsman	2007/07/03
799	Budget of National Audit Offices	2007/07/02
798	Defence of the Prerogatives of Parliaments before National Courts	2007/07/02
797	Participation of the Press Representatives in the Plenary Sessions	2007/06/29
796	Real-Estate Credits	2007/06/28
795	Elite Student Sport and Universiades	2007/06/25
794	Criminal Justice for Juvenile Offenders	2007/06/22
793	Fees and payments, which are paid by Prisoners (A- in prison B- during electronic monitoring)	2007/06/20
792	Procedure and Responsibility for Drafting the State Closing Account.	2007/06/20
791	Legal Responsibility of Officers of Former Communist Security Agencies	2007/06/20
790	Suspension/Forced Resignation of Police Officers	2007/06/15
789	Social Housing	2007/06/15
788	Law on Registration of Vehicles	2007/06/14
787	Who has to pay the fine applied to a Minor (juvenile) charged in criminal offence?	2007/06/13
786	Parliamentary (Standing) Committee on Defence: Title, functions ...	2007/06/12
785	Making Licences "Dynamic" and General Conditions for Voluntary Commitments by Businesses	2007/06/11
784	Ranks (Titles) of Officials of the Main Controlling Body of the State Budget Implementation	2007/06/11
783	The Use of Tender in the Child Welfare Sector	2007/06/11
782	Parliamentary Services provided to Members and their Staff	2007/06/04
781	Democratic and Civic Education in Parliaments: targeted age group 8-14 year olds (sent out directly)	2007/05/31
780	Court Decisions relating to Discrimination against Homosexuals (sent out directly)	2007/05/31
779	Minimum Service in Public Services	2007/05/30
778	Euthanasia	2007/05/30
777	Civilian (Voluntary) Service	2007/05/30
776	Security Concept for Visitors Area of Parliaments (sent out directly)	2007/05/22
775	Opinion Polls (sent out directly)	2007/05/22
774	Preventive Constitutional Control (sent out directly)	2007/05/29
773	Statistics relating to the Crime of Rape (sent out directly)	2007/05/25
772	Legal Aspects of Transsexualism (sent out directly)	2007/05/24
771	Act regarding Museum (sent out directly)	2007/05/22
770	Legal Provisions concerning Defamation (sent out directly)	2007/05/21
769	Relations between national Parliaments and Civil Society: Foundations, NGOs, other (sent out directly)	2007/05/17
768	Parliamentarians Rights to Ask Questions and to Obtain Information (sent out directly)	2007/05/16
767	ICT-Equipment provided to Members in Legislative Committees (sent out directly)	2007/05/15
766	Staffing of Parliaments - update (sent out directly)	2007/05/10

765	Principles of Financing MPs Operations: Remuneration and other (sent out directly)	2007/05/09
764	Political Supervision Body of the Parliamentary Research Service	2007/05/08
763	Number of Dismissed Supreme Court Judges	2007/05/08
762	Parliamentary Control of Budget Implementation	2007/04/30
761	National Ratification Procedures in the EU Member States	2007/04/30
760	Rights of Opposition Parliamentary Groups in Parliament	2007/04/25
759	The Right to Silence of MPs and Government Ministers	2007/04/25
758	Road Traffic Act - Competence for Removing Vehicles	2007/04/24
757	Parliamentary Minority Rights	2007/04/24
756	Bioengineering and Vivisection	2007/04/23
755	Christian Democratic Ideology in Textbooks for Compulsory Secondary and Upper-Secondary School	2007/04/23
754	Relation between Parliament and Judiciary	2007/04/20
753	Parliamentary Recesses, Evening Sessions and Meeting Schedules	2007/04/20
751	Laws on Official Languages	2007/04/17
750	Legal Status of Professionals in Real-Estate Business	2007/04/17
749	Funding of Fire Brigades (Functioning and Equipment)	2007/04/12
748	Parliamentary Bodies dealing with the subjects of Globalisation and Foreign Trade	2007/04/12
747	Data Protection Audits	2007/04/11
746	Private Judicial Execution Service	2007/04/04
745	Ear-Marking Revenue from Fines for Charitable Organisations that assist Victims (law on penalties for crime)	2007/04/02
744	Use of Esperanto in Parliamentary Websites	2007/04/02
743	Parliaments and Central Banks, a Vital Relationship	2007/03/27
742	Specific Characteristics of the Parliamentary Administration (Parliamentary Work Periods and Rhythms)	2007/03/27
741	Bibliographic References Titles conc. the European and National Parliaments	2007/03/26
740	Green Parliaments (Environmentally friendly Measures in Parliaments)	2007/03/21
739	Drafting of Parliamentary Budget	2007/03/20
738	Working Hours of Parliamentary Staff and Parliamentary Assistants	2007/03/19
737	Role of Internet in the Trafficking of Human Beings in Europe	2007/03/16
736	Voting of Amendments and Allocation of Speaking Time	2007/03/14
735	Marriage and Immigration (Forced Marriage)	2007/03/13
734	Enforcement of a Warrant of Execution by Bailiff on Small Agricultural Farms	2007/03/13
733	North European Gas Pipeline - Nord Stream Pipeline	2007/03/13
732	Reporting Crimes via Internet	2007/03/09
731	Custody Awaiting Deportation	2007/03/08
730	Central Electoral Commission or Board	2007/03/07
729	Transport Services in Parliamentary Administration	2007/03/07
728	Quorum at Plenary Sitings and Voting Dates	2007/03/06
727	Municipal Elections	2007/03/02
726	Diplomatic Passports for Senators	2007/03/01
725	Court Fees for Divorces and Marital Separations	2007/02/28
724	Extra Allowances for Interparliamentary Activities on Saturdays and Sundays	2007/02/28
723	Prosecutors Office	2007/02/27
722	Citizen-Deputy Relationship	2007/02/26
721	Rules of Banking Confidentiality	2007/02/26
720	Educational Units inside Parliaments	2007/02/22
719	Transparency of Legislative Process and Role of Parliamentary Web Sites	2007/02/21
718	Household Waste Management	2007/02/20
717	Killer Games - Computer Games glorifying Violence	2007/02/20
716	Character Description of Parliamentary Staff Members	2007/02/19
715	Deaf Children Education	2007/02/19
714	Translation and Terminology in Parliaments	2007/02/19
713	Procedure of Suspension of MPs (Criminal Proceedings or Indictment)	2007/02/15
712	Legal Profession and Legal Education	2007/02/15
711	Retirement Benefits for MEPs	2007/02/15
710	Legislative Legal Advice in Parliaments	2007/02/13
709	Nomination of EU-Officials	2007/02/13
708	EU-wide Practice for Revocation of Refugee Status (Asylum Status)	2007/02/13
707	Organisation of the State Nature Protection	2007/02/09
706	Privileges of Former Agents Secret services	2007/02/06
705	Game Management Act - Hunting Regulations	2007/02/05
704	Housing Allowances	2007/02/05
703	Committees on defence, security and intelligence	2007/02/02
702	Parliamentary Websites	2007/02/01
701	Usage of Mobile Phones in Parliament	2007/02/01
700	Status of Former Regular Soldiers	2007/01/30
699	Organisations affiliated to the Parliaments	2007/01/26
698	Procedure for Reimbursement of Various Costs/Expenses MPs	2007/01/24
697	Ineligibility and Disqualification of MPs due to Conviction	2007/01/24
696	Discontinuity Principle	2007/01/24
695	Violence at School	2007/01/24
694	Record of Committee Discussions/Meetings	2007/01/18
693	MPs and Transfugism	2007/01/18
692	Judicial Procedures to ban Political Parties	2007/01/17

691	Explanatory Statements on Amendments to Bills	2007/01/17
690	Legislation on Adoption of frozen (leftover) Embryos	2007/01/16
689	Transposition of EU Law	2007/01/16
688	Security Screening Routines for Incoming Post to Parliament	2007/01/15
687	Total Numbers Parliamentary Civil Service and MEPs (sent out directly)	2007/01/12
686	Security in Parliament and Location in Emergency Situation	2007/01/12
685	Law on Insurance Contracts	2007/01/11
684	Social Guarantees granted to the Military	2007/01/11
683	Party Financing by the State and Party Debts	2007/01/10
682	External Relations and Interpretation Departments in Parliaments	2007/01/10
681	Salaries, Travel Allowances ... of MPs, Update	2007/01/09
680	Rules on Parliamentary Immunity - changes since 2001	2007/01/09
679	Development Aid/Assistance (sent out directly)	2006/12/28
678	VAT on Donations of Goods on behalf of the Public Welfare Organisations	2007/01/04
677	Public Information Service in Parliament	2006/12/22
676	Conduct of Public Servants (sent out directly)	2006/12/22
675	Student Loans (Higher Education)	2006/12/21
674	Central Banks	2006/12/18
673	Requirements for and Hiring of Parliamentary Assistants, and more	2006/12/15
672	Definition of Capacity and Incapacity of Work	2006/12/11
671	Evaluation of performance, general attitude and behaviours of civil servants	2006/12/11
670	Incompatibility of Functions (the Conflict of Interests)	2006/12/08
669	Activities of Prison Enterprises	2006/12/07
668	Organisation, Funding and Economic Impact of Sport	2006/12/07
667	Benefits to Senior Public Officials	2006/12/04
666	Prohibition of Public Gathering near Court Buildings	2006/12/04
665	Parliamentary Body on Defence Related Matters	2006/11/29
664	Regulations on Signals Intelligence	2006/11/24
663	Legal Concept of Adoption and Fosterage of Children	2006/11/23
662	Links between Ministries and Parliament	2006/11/21
661	Benefits for MPs with Temporary Mandate	2006/11/21
660	Memorials and Monuments	2006/11/21
659	Presence of the MPs from the Opposition as a Quorum at the Plenary Session when the Voting takes place.	2006/11/15
658	Qualifications of MPs and Parliamentary Staff	2006/11/14
657	Use of Logframes for Annual Parliamentary Budgetary Procedure	2006/11/09
656	Legal Aspects of Prenatal Mortality and Miscarriage	2006/11/09
655	Foreign Affairs Committees and Accountability	2006/11/07
654	Holding and Participation in Parliamentary Briefings	2006/11/07
653	Medical Records of Senior Political Figures	2006/11/06
652	Horse Breeding, Horse Nursing, Dressage and Horse Riders Training	2006/11/06
651	Transactions of Ownership	2006/11/06
650	Strategy for Human Resources Strategy in Parliaments (sent out directly)	2006/10/27
649	Fines for Infringing the Rules on Driving and Rest Periods for HGV and Bus Drivers	2006/10/23
648	Gifts to Non-Profit Associations	2006/10/20
647	Life Sentence Prisoners	2006/10/20
646	Political Foundations	2006/10/17
645	Omnibus Legislation	2006/10/17
644	Live Broadcast of Parliamentary Activity by Private TV Channels	2006/10/16
643	Protocol Rules	2006/10/16
642	Participation of European national Parliaments in International Parliamentary Forums	2006/10/09
641	Basic Salaries and Allowances of Parliamentary Staff - MPs	2006/10/09
640	Committee on Petitions	2006/10/09
639	Public Services in Local Government	2006/10/15
638	Legal Status of Sectarian Movements	2006/10/02
637	Cooperation between Parliament and Youth/Students	2006/09/27
636	Information to Parliament on Immigration Policy	2006/09/26
635	MPs Loss of Mandate	2006/09/26
634	Vetting process for Selecting the Council of Ministers	2006/09/26
633	Phosphates in Washing Agents	2006/09/22
632	How to Improve Turnout at Elections - Technical Measures and Experiences	2006/09/18
631	Compensatory Levy for Firms Relocating Abroad	2006/09/14
630	Relationship Citizens and State Bodies (Code of Ethics)	2006/09/06
629	Confirmation Hearings in Parliament	2006/09/04
628	MEPs Family Allowances	2006/09/01
627	Financial Support for Degree Course Abroad	2006/08/31
626	Parliamentary Mandatory Office	2006/08/30
624	Doping in Sport as Criminal Offence	2006/08/29
623	Committees Secretariats - Organisation and Staffing (sent out directly)	2006/08/28
622	Support Services for EU-Affairs (sent out directly)	2006/08/28
621	Expropriation of Private Investment (Nationalisation)	2006/08/28
620	Disclosure of Financial Interests of Persons Performing Public Function	2006/08/28
619	Successful Policy Measures of Integration of Immigrants	2006/08/28
618	Reimbursement of MPs Travel Expenses (sent out directly)	2006/08/28

617	Missions of National Armed Forces	2006/08/28
616	Parliamentary Libraries and Documentation Centres (sent out directly)	2006/08/28
615	Implementation of Community Law in Specific Sectors	2006/07/25
614	(Service for) Registration of Presence of MPs; Quorum	2006/07/24
613	Preservation and Maintenance of Historical and Cultural Heritage	2006/07/24
612	Legal Aid	2006/07/24
611	Monitoring of Political Parties by Internal Intelligence Services	2006/07/19
610	Schooling for Children of Third-Country Nationals	2006/07/19
609	Carbon Emissions Targets	2006/07/18
608	Medical Treatment for Veterans	2006/07/17
607	Laws on Freedom of Information	2006/07/13
605	Seamen - Income Tax System	2006/07/10
604	Dog Transportation (non-commercial)	2006/07/05
603	Citizenship as Requirement for Employment in the State Administration	2006/07/04
602	Language Skills as Prerequisite for Immigration	2006/07/03
601	Ritual Slaughter	2006/07/03
600	Funds and Rules of Parliamentary Libraries (copy of 582)	2006/06/07
599	Employees Representative	2006/06/28
598	Opinion Polls - Rules and Principles	2006/06/26
597	Legislative Authority of Parliamentary Committees	2006/06/26
596	Code on Administrative Violation	2006/06/23
595	Prohibition of the Purchase of Sexual Services	2006/06/23
594	MPs Presence and Absence Motivation	2006/06/20
593	Fair Trial Issues in Espionage Cases	2006/06/19
592	Breaking Glass Ceiling (Percentage Women in Enterprises)	2006/06/19
591	Veterans of Anti-Communist Resistance - Legal Provisions	2006/06/15
590	Subsidies for /Financing of Parliamentary Groups	2006/06/09
589	Parliamentary Committee for Construction Policy and Town Planning	2006/06/09
588	Laws on Self-Government (sent out directly 19.05.2006)	2006/06/08
587	Law on International Treaties - Texts or Links (EN or RU)	2006/06/08
586	Non-Smoke Protection in Parliament and Public Spaces	2006/06/08
585	Legislation concerning Leave Granted for Further Training in European Countries	2006/06/08
584	Quality Management Systems in Parliaments	2006/06/08
583	Fundamental Rights Agency	2006/06/08
581	Legal Services in Parliaments (sent out directly)	2006/06/06
580	Legitimate Defence (sent out directly)	2006/05/19
579	Internet Access in Plenaries (sent out directly)	2006/05/22
578	Citizenship and Knowledge of Language (sent out directly)	2006/05/31
577	Monthly Salaries MPs - Update (sent out directly)	2006/05/22
576	General Prosecutors Office (sent out directly)	2006/05/29
575	Public Use of Communist Symbols (sent out directly)	2006/05/23
574	Student Self-Administration at the Universities (sent out directly)	2005/05/29
573	Staff Performance Management Systems (sent out directly)	2006/05/31
572	Ageing of Population (sent out directly)	2006/05/22
571	Parliamentary and Committee Hearings for Ministers and Senior Public Servants (sent out directly)	2006/05/25
570	Rules of Suspension of Business Activity	2006/05/18
569	Software and IT Equipment to Members of Senate	2006/05/19
568	Public Procurement in Health and Social Services	2006/05/15
567	Disabled MPs	2006/05/11
566	Procedure for Nomination or Election of President	2006/05/11
565	Guidelines or Norms for Legislative Drafting	2006/05/05
564	Government Annual Budget Subsidies for the Agricultural Sector -2005 and 2006	2006/05/03
563	Public at Court Hearings	2006/05/02
562	Audiovisual Broadcasting of Parl Activities - Control and Rules (Comparative Study prepared by EP Library)	2006/04/26
561	National Long Term Strategies - Parliamentary Debate	2006/04/25
560	Academy of Sciences: Financing and Members	2006/04/25
559	Age Discrimination (sent out directly)	2006/04/19
558	Humoristic Books on Parliament (sent out directly)	2006/04/13
557	Parliamentary Working Methods (sent out directly)	2006/04/04
556	Bodyguards (sent out directly)	2006/04/21
555	Long Range Plans of Parliaments/ Chambers	2006/04/03
554	Public Procurement Procedures	2006/04/03
553	Embargo on Budget	2006/03/31
552	Parliamentary Diplomacy	2006/03/29
551	State Rescue Emergency Services	2006/03/29
550	Registration and Storage of National Symbols.	2006/03/28
549	Size and Organization of Parliamentary Services	2006/03/28
548	Regulations on Internet-Poker	2006/03/24
547	Maternity Leave for MPs	2006/03/24
546	Trade Unions for Professional Sport Players	2006/03/23
545	Protection of Family in Legislative Texts	2006/03/23
544	Status of Subject Specialists, Researchers, Experts	2006/03/20
543	List of Presence MPs for Sessions and Committee Meetings	2006/03/16



542	Legal Situation on Deployment of Armed Forces on Domestic Territory	2006/03/14
541	Financing of BSE Tests	2006/03/13
540	Implementation of the Energy Performance Directive	2006/03/07
539	Job Application Forms Anti Discrimination	2006/03/07
538	Status of Homeless People	2006/03/06
537	Rules Compatibility Parliamentary Activities and Private or Family Life	2006/03/02
536	Use of Digital Signature and Digital Archiving	2006/03/01
535	Sitting Hours	2006/02/28
534	Travel Reimbursement MPs and Senators elected outside national territory	2006/02/28
533	Destruction of Explosives in the Civil Sector	2006/02/20
532	Constitutional Provisions for EU Accession	2006/02/17
531	Implementation EU Act on Equal Treatment	2006/02/14
530	Right Left Traffic Police Rules	2006/02/14
529	Land Payment	2006/02/10
528	Upper Age Limit for Judges	2006/02/10
527	Right to Strike in Public Services	2006/02/08
526	Special Electricity Prices for Energy-Intensive Industries	2006/02/07
525	Interference in Judicial Matters - Regulations	2006/02/07
524	Theatre Act or Regulations	2006/02/03
523	Court Experts in Penal and Civil Process	2006/02/03
522	Legal Position of Rockhounds	2006/02/02
521	Diplomatic/Foreign Service	2006/02/02
520	Judicial Investigation	2006/02/01
519	Identity Cards / Passports (new EU rules)	2006/02/01
518	Law of Restitution and Compensation of land properties after the fall of the Communist Regime	2006/01/30
517	Organisation of Emergency Services	2006/01/27
516	Inclusion of MPs Written Draft Speeches in Minutes of Plenary (sent out directly)	2006/01/26
515	Higher Education Regulations	2006/01/25
514	Parliamentary Control of Secret Services	2006/01/23
513	Land Ownership Law	2006/01/23
512	Civil Servants	2006/01/20
511	Legal Framework for Current Accounts	2006/01/20
510	Committee on Interethnic Relations	2006/01/20
509	Protection of Employees Social Insurance Contributions in the Event of Employer Insolvency	2006/01/20
508	Recruitment of European Nationals	2006/01/17
507	Journalists Accreditation in Parliament	2006/01/16
506	Collaborators in Communist Era with Repressive and Intelligence Services	2006/01/16
505	Interests on Bank Deposits	2006/01/16
504	Chapels in Parliaments	2006/01/16
503	Winter Sport Schools	2006/01/11
502	Financing of Extra-Curriculum Education	2006/01/06
501	Cost of Justice System (sent out directly)	2006/01/03

## ANNEX 5

### ATTENDANCE AT ECPRD SEMINARS

EVENT	VENUE	DATE	ATTENDING
Seminar on Eurovoc	Brussels/European Parliament	25-26 March 2006	62
Seminar Supranational Parliamentary and Inter-parliamentary Assemblies in 21st Century	Warsaw, Senate	8-9 May 2006	68
Meeting of the Macroeconomic Research Working Group	Sarajevo	9-10 June 2006	30
Meeting of the Information and Communication Technology Working Group	Vilnius	5-6 October 2006	51
Annual Conference of Correspondents	London	12-13 October 2006	65
Seminar "Legislative Observatory: Transparency of Legislative Process in Parliament"	Warsaw, Sejm	26-27 April 2007	73
Seminar "Specific Characteristics of Parliamentary Administration with regard to the Parliamentary Work Periods and Rhythms"	Paris, National Assembly	7-8 June 2007	54
Seminar "Parliaments and Central Banks: a Vital Relationship"	Stockholm	8-9 June 2007	47
Seminar on "Parliamentary Transparency"	Prague, Chamber of Deputies and Senate	21-22 September 2007	42
Annual Conference of Correspondents	Yerevan	11-12 October 2007	54
Seminar "Mobility for Representatives"	Ljubljana, National Assembly	18-19 October 2007	58
Seminar "Parliaments and Judiciary, Juridical Control of Parliamentary Acts"	Brussels, Federal Parliament	8-9 November 2007	62
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>666</b>



## ANNEX 6

### GUIDELINES FOR COMPARATIVE REQUESTS AND STUDIES (13 November 2006)

Comparative requests are one of the most important functions of the ECPRD network. These guidelines provide a framework for submitting comparative requests with the aim of helping both those chambers that make requests and those that answer them. All individual replies, and the comparative studies resulting from them, will be put on the ECPRD website.

The following guidelines, which were approved by the Conference of Correspondents in October 2006, apply from January 2007.

In these guidelines:

- a 'comparative request' is a request for information sent to three or more member chambers via the ECPRD network.
- a 'comparative study' is a summary of the responses to a comparative request, prepared initially for the requesting chamber and subsequently made available to all Correspondents via the ECPRD website.

1. Article 9.1 of the ECPRD Statutes says that "the ECPRD promotes *co-operation between member chambers through the exchange of information, compilation of documentation and studies and the organisation of seminars...*".
2. Information is exchanged and documentation (comparative studies) prepared at the request of and by the staff of member chambers. Once prepared, this information is made available to all ECPRD Correspondents.
3. If a member chamber wishes to undertake a comparative study, its Correspondent (or Deputy Correspondent) should arrange for the preparation of a questionnaire and subsequently request its dispatch to all or to a group of Correspondents.
4. The ECPRD Secretariat is responsible for sending out questionnaires to Correspondents. Hence, all draft questionnaires should be sent by chambers making requests to the Secretariat in electronic form (see: [www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu/Private/Help/ask\\_req.asp](http://www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu/Private/Help/ask_req.asp) on the ECPRD website). The Secretariat will verify questionnaires in order to avoid duplication, number each request and subsequently dispatch them to both the Correspondents and Deputy Correspondents for reply.

#### GUIDANCE ON COMPARATIVE REQUESTS

5. Before forwarding the draft questionnaire to the ECPRD Secretariat Correspondents should ensure:
  - that the information they are looking for is not already available (e.g. via earlier comparative studies, websites such as those of national parliaments, ASGP, IPU etc.);
  - that requests are formulated in such a way that they do not lead to any confusion and that answers can be provided relatively easily.
6. There is no limit on the number of requests that each chamber may put. However, all Correspondents should take into account the burden they put on their colleagues from other parliaments when asking them to answer questionnaires, and wherever possible seek alternative ways of finding the information they need.
7. In all cases, comparative requests should:
  - be as short and as simple as possible. *Short and simple questions will encourage more replies.*
  - give as long a deadline as possible. *Unnecessarily short deadlines will lead to fewer replies.*
  - be accompanied by a 'model' answer from the Chamber making the request. *Legal systems and policies vary considerably from country to country and, as a result, requests framed in one country are often difficult to understand in others. A model answer will always help countries answering comparative requests to understand what is required.*

8. A request for the distribution of questionnaires should be made using the template on the ECPRD website, and include:
  - the full name of the requesting chamber;
  - the name, title and contact details (telephone, fax, e-mail address) of the person responsible in the requesting chamber;
  - a clear and, if possible, self-explanatory title for the questionnaire (*this will make it easier to find comparative requests on the ECPRD website, as the site's search engine searches on words in titles*);
  - detailed background information including the reason for the questionnaire and the intended use of the results;
  - an indication as to which group of Correspondents the questionnaire should be addressed (e.g. all Correspondents, EU Correspondents, etc.);
  - a deadline for answers;
  - a model answer drafted by the requesting chamber using their own situation as a basis
9. In principle, comparative requests can be drafted in any of the three ECPRD working languages, but an accompanying translation in English would expedite the replies.

### **GUIDANCE ON REPLYING**

10. Answers to questionnaires should be provided by appropriate parliamentary staff and should be addressed to the person indicated by the requesting chamber within the specific deadline. A copy should also be sent to the ECPRD Secretariat in Brussels. Answers should be drafted in one of the ECPRD languages, but preferably in English. Wherever possible they should be sent by email.
11. Replies may be provided by one chamber or by both (in bicameral legislatures) depending on the nature of the request. Where the reply of each chamber would be the same, the two chambers should agree which should reply on behalf of them both and state that they are doing so in their reply.

### **GUIDANCE ON COMPARATIVE STUDIES**

12. The requesting chamber will be responsible for preparing a comparative study on the basis of answers received to requests. If it anticipates that it will not be able to produce a comparative study, it should state this clearly when it makes its initial request.
13. This comparative study should be made available to all ECPRD Correspondents, as soon as possible after it is completed. It should be sent in electronic format to the ECPRD Secretariat (see the ECPRD website: [www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu/Private/Help/send\\_stud.asp](http://www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu/Private/Help/send_stud.asp)) as soon as possible after completion. The Secretariat will send confirmation of receipt. A comparative study prepared for an ECPRD seminar should initially be made available to the conference participants (on paper in the conference file and on the conference website) and subsequently to all ECPRD Correspondents, along with the seminar proceedings and other relevant documents.
14. A study will ideally be produced in one of the three ECPRD working languages but may be produced in the requesting chamber's mother tongue.
15. All comparative studies will be available to ECPRD Correspondents via the ECPRD website ([www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu)), alongside the initial replies provided by the parliaments.
16. Two or more member chambers may cooperate in preparing or updating a comparative study on an issue, or to create an electronic dossier. Such cooperation may be informal or as an ad hoc working group established under Article 9.4 of the ECPRD's statutes.

## Flow chart of action to undertake an ECPRD comparative study

<b>1</b>	Requesting Correspondent
	Arranges for the preparation of a request in accordance with the guidelines, using the template on the ECPRD website; and includes a model answer.
<b>2</b>	Requesting Correspondent
	Sends the request to the ECPRD Secretariat for dispatching
<b>3</b>	ECPRD Secretariat
	Verifies the request to avoid duplication and sends it to the requested Correspondents and Deputy Correspondents
<b>4</b>	Correspondents
	Arranges for replies to the request, within the deadline specified, to the requesting Chamber and the ECPRD Secretariat
<b>5</b>	Requesting Correspondent
	Ensures that a comparative study on the basis of answers received is submitted to the ECPRD Secretariat
<b>6</b>	ECPRD Secretariat
	Ensures the timely publication of requests, replies and comparative studies on the ECPRD website

## ANNEX 7

### GUIDELINES FOR THE ORGANISATION OF SEMINARS

12 October 2007

#### *Preface*

In response to requests by Correspondents, the Executive Committee of the ECPRD in 1998 drafted a brochure to assist parliaments in organising ECPRD sponsored events.

This new and revised version takes into account suggestions made over the last few years. It was approved by the Conference of Correspondents at its meeting in Yerevan on 12 October 2007.

The guidelines are intended to help in the practical organisation of ECPRD seminars.

These guidelines are also available on the website of the ECPRD ([www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu)), together with the logo files, which can be downloaded. The files are also available via e-mail from the ECPRD Secretariat.

Any comments on this publication should be addressed to the ECPRD Co-Secretary ([johanna.coppolecchia@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:johanna.coppolecchia@europarl.europa.eu)).

Piotr NOWINA-KONOPKA  
Co-Director  
European Parliament

Wojciech SAWICKI  
Co-Director  
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

\*\_\*\_\*

## ***Introduction***

Seminars constitute one of the working methods of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (article 9.1 of the Statutes of the ECPRD). They are usually organised by national parliaments in cooperation with the ECPRD Secretariat. This paper outlines the procedure which should be followed when organising an ECPRD seminar.

- a. A **proposal to organise a seminar** should be submitted by the ECPRD Correspondent to the ECPRD Secretariat, not later than September of the preceding year, in order to allow the Executive Committee to present the proposal to the annual Conference of Correspondents of the ECPRD (which usually takes place in October) for approval.
- b. If the subject of a proposed seminar is considered as falling within a field of activity for which an ECPRD Coordinator has been appointed, the Executive Committee will consult the Coordinator concerned on the organisation of the seminar in question. The Coordinator will – together with the ECPRD Correspondent of the host parliament – subsequently be responsible for the coordination of the preparations for the seminar.
- c. In the light of the proposals received, the Executive Committee will endeavour to draw up a well-balanced list of seminars as regards their location, timing in the year and proposed topics.
- d. The proposal should contain a proposed subject, a preliminary agenda and a proposed date. The proposed subject should be of common interest to national parliaments and should be in line with the statutes of the Centre.
- e. The seminar should also, where possible, take into account previous ECPRD conferences organised on the same subject, in order to ensure continuity in parliamentary debate.
- f. The **agenda of the seminar** should be drafted in such a way that the subject to be discussed is presented on the basis of the experience of several national parliaments or countries. The seminars should give participants a wider, European perspective rather than concentrate on the experience of one country only. It is therefore recommended that colleagues from other parliaments or outside experts should be invited as keynote speakers.
- g. If an outside sponsor is involved, the host parliament should inform the Executive Committee.
- h. If the organising Parliament is seeking financial support from the ECPRD, a preliminary budget should be included.
- i. The agenda should encourage active participation (enough time for debate, simultaneous discussion groups (working groups), etc.).
- j. The agenda should include - if possible - a welcoming address by the Secretary General of the host parliament and a statement by a representative of the Executive Committee of the ECPRD.
- k. A draft agenda should be sent to the ECPRD Secretariat not later than 9 weeks before the seminar, for approval by the Co-Directors.
- l. The seminar should be geared to parliamentary staff. The proposal should clearly specify whether it is addressed to some specific group (e.g. librarians, committee secretaries, legal staff, administration, information technology staff, etc.).
- m. The days of the seminar should preferably be Thursday/Friday, Friday/Saturday or Monday/Tuesday to enable participants to obtain cheaper air fares (APEX, PEX).
- n. The initial proposal should clearly indicate a set of objectives to be achieved during the seminar.

## ***Invitations***

Invitations to attend the seminar should – if possible - be prepared not later than 12 weeks beforehand. They should be sent by e-mail to the ECPRD Secretariat for onward transmission to all Correspondents of the Centre. In the invitation letter, Correspondents will be asked to nominate participants from their respective parliaments. No invitations should be sent directly to members of staff of member parliaments.

The invitation should include:

- an invitation letter containing general information on the seminar (subject, date, to whom it is addressed, what are the objectives etc.);
- the proposed agenda of the seminar;
- a questionnaire (if appropriate) to be returned to the organisers before the seminar in order to allow them to prepare a comparative study on the subject of the seminar;
- a list of suggested (pre-booked) hotels;
- a registration form (where applicable, with an indication as regards discussion group preference).

Registration forms should be returned to the organisers not later than three weeks before the event.

## ***ECPRD website / host website***

In order to permit Correspondents properly to prepare their contribution and participation, all relevant information regarding seminars is also to be available on the ECPRD website (<http://www.ecprd.europarl.europa.eu>) and/or host website.

These sites can also be used to edit final reports, questionnaires and comparative studies resulting from the seminars.

## ***Meeting place***

It is recommended that ECPRD seminars be held in one of the conference rooms of the national Parliament hosting the event. The programme may include a short visit to the Parliament building.

The room must be equipped with interpreters' booths, microphones and headphones. Water, glasses, pencils and paper should be available to the participants. Information documents on the ECPRD (as provided by the ECPRD Secretariat) should also be available. An information file on the host parliament, city and country is always welcome. The ECPRD logo (provided by the ECPRD Secretariat) should be placed visibly in the room.

Notices (in English and French) must be posted in easily visible locations to enable participants to find the meeting room. Identification badges for participants should be prepared.

## ***Hotel reservation***

An initial pre-booking of hotel rooms by the organisers in hotels in the vicinity of the meeting place would be welcomed. This pre-booking should take into account that some participants may prefer to stay over the weekend in order to benefit from cheaper air fares. The opportunity to choose between two or three hotels in different categories (2, 3, 4 stars) is always appreciated. The list of suggested hotels appended to the invitation letter should include their addresses, telephone and fax numbers and, where relevant, a reservation code if a special rate has been negotiated.

## ***Interpretation for seminars***

Simultaneous interpretation in the usual working languages of the ECPRD is very much appreciated. The host parliament should meet the cost associated with interpretation and with the use of interpretation equipment (booths, microphones, headphones etc.).

Simultaneous interpretation should also - if possible - be available in the discussion groups. If this is not the case, the registration form should indicate the languages to be used in these groups.

## ***Sponsoring***

In principle, the cost of the seminar should be covered by the host parliament. The cost of participation of representatives of certain parliaments may be covered by the European Parliament or by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Correspondents of the countries concerned will be directly informed about this possibility by the ECPRD Secretariat.

It may happen that the host parliament seeks additional sources of financing (e.g. to cover the cost of interpretation, participation of experts, official meals etc.). Any sponsoring should be carried out in line with the national rules applicable for events organised by or in the national parliament. If the host parliament decides to accept outside sponsors, the ECPRD Executive Committee should be informed beforehand about the proposal and about the national rules on sponsoring. The Executive Committee may raise an objection to the proposed sponsoring if it finds it inappropriate. Special attention should be given to commercial sponsoring – in which case the Executive Committee may ask the host parliament to provide a detailed explanation demonstrating the need for this particular sponsorship.

## ***ECPRD Secretariat assistance***

The host parliament will receive from the ECPRD Secretariat a package of ECPRD materials for distribution during the seminar. The Secretariat can also provide technical and graphical data on the ECPRD layout which can be used when printing seminar documents.

Host parliaments are encouraged to contact the ECPRD secretariat in order to be able to benefit from its wide expertise, so that they can be briefed and assisted in practical and technical matters in the organisation of seminars. This is essential when financial support is requested from the ECPRD.

## ***Evaluation form***

Before the end of the seminar, each participant should receive and complete an evaluation form. This form should be prepared by the host parliament on the basis of the model appended (see Annex). After being examined by the host parliament, an analysis/summary of these forms should be forwarded to the ECPRD Secretariat.

## ***Report***

The ECPRD Correspondent of the host parliament is requested to prepare a report on the seminar for publication on the ECPRD website and in the ECPRD Newsletter. The report should briefly describe the seminar (subject, objectives, date, place, agenda, participants and results reached) and should also present the results of the above-mentioned evaluation. The report should be sent to the ECPRD Secretariat no later than one month following the seminar. A single publication of seminar documents (papers presented by speakers, a comparative study based on the questionnaire distributed before the seminar, minutes of discussions, etc.) would be greatly appreciated.

**ECPRD SEMINAR - EVALUATION FORM**

**1. Why did you wish to participate in this seminar?  
Please pick one or more of the following options:**

To obtain information – update my knowledge – on the seminar’s theme	
To establish contacts with speakers	
To establish contacts with other parliaments	
Other reasons [please explain]:	

**2. Has the seminar contributed to attaining your objectives?**

Considerably	Adequately	A little	Not at all

**3. (a) I would have liked to receive more information on the following topics:**

*(b) for the following reasons:*

**4. (a) I propose the following topics for a future seminar:**

*(b) for the following reasons:*



**5. How do you evaluate the overall organisation of the seminar, in terms of:**

	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not Satisfactory	Not at all Satisfactory
Administrative arrangements				
Conference room and interpretation				
Time schedule				
Quality of speakers				
Overall organisation				

**6. How did you learn about this seminar?  
Please pick one or more of the following:**

Via ECPRD website	
Via direct e-mail	
From ECPRD Correspondent	
Other: [please indicate]	

**7. Any remarks/suggestions (on practical matters):**

## ANNEX 8

### ECPRD CO-ORDINATOR TASKS AND DUTIES

ECPRD coordinators are appointed by the ECPRD Executive Committee in accordance with Article 9.3 of the ECPRD Statutes. They are appointed from among the competent staff of member chambers, with the consent of the chamber concerned, for a renewable term of three years.

The ECPRD coordinator shall be responsible for:

- coordinating ECPRD activities in his/her area of responsibility;
- promoting close cooperation, exchange of experience and best practices between the ECPRD member chambers in the area he/she is responsible for;
- following developments and keeping abreast of new ideas and concepts in his/her area of responsibility;
- analysing the information obtained and transforming it into new ideas and proposals for future ECPRD programmes;
- creating a network of, and keeping contacts with, staff of member chambers and other inter-parliamentary networks who are active in his/her area of responsibility (e.g. email groups, via websites etc.) with a view to facilitating a rapid exchange of information;
- liaising with the ECPRD Correspondents and with those civil servants in the member chambers who are active in his/her area of responsibility with a view to discussing with them the possible interest of their chambers in organising an ECPRD activity;
- assisting member chambers in organising an activity in his/her area of responsibility;
- contributing to the establishment of a detailed programme of activities organised by member chambers in his/her area of responsibility, taking account of past events in order to avoid unnecessary duplication;
- regularly reporting to the ECPRD Executive Committee and to the Conference of Correspondents on his/her activities;
- co-operating with other ECPRD coordinators in order to promote synergies and to avoid duplication.

#### **ECPRD Areas of Interest and subjects covered by them**

##### **Parliamentary Libraries, Research and Archives:**

- General questions:
  - organisation;
  - staffing;
  - policies;
  - services;
  - budgets and resources;
  - client relations and marketing;
  - performance criteria.
- Libraries:
  - collection development;
  - space considerations;
  - use of databases;
  - reference sources;
  - current awareness services;
  - electronic libraries.
- Research services:
  - analysis and support for Members, party groups and committees;
  - new products;
  - dissemination and availability;
  - legislative analysis.
- Archives:
  - paper and digital;
  - availability to the public.

### **Information and Communication Technology in Parliaments:**

- ICT developments in parliaments:
  - e-Parliament (services & technologies);
  - Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) and Web Services;
  - Digital signature;
  - Electronic voting system;
  - Digital information archiving;
- ICT strategies in parliaments:
  - Security & Business continuity;
  - Open source versus licence-based systems;
- ICT knowledge database (structure and functioning of ICT in Parliaments);
- E-Representative Project to support the mobile elected Representative.

### **Parliamentary Practice and Procedure:**

- Parliament and Constitution/ Parliamentary regime/ Representative democracy;
- Composition and dissolution of parliamentary assemblies;
- Bodies of parliamentary assemblies;
- Functions of parliamentary assemblies:
  - law making;
  - control of the government;
  - budgetary power;
  - specific powers;
  - international dimension;
  - incidents and security;
- Status of the MPs:
  - material status;
  - parliamentary immunities;
  - declaration of interests and/or assets;
  - incompatibilities;
  - deontology;
- Internal organization of parliamentary assemblies:
  - personnel;
  - departments;
  - logistics and buildings;
  - legal personality and lawsuits;
  - press relations;
  - protocol;
  - public relations, publications and visitors.

### **Macroeconomic Research:**

- General macroeconomic developments in Europe;
- The organisation of macroeconomic research in parliaments;
- Europe and globalisation - including economic reform; intra-European trade and investment; and the WTO process;
- The relationship between economic development on the one hand, and democracy, human rights and the rule of law on the other (including the fight against economic crime and corruption);
- The parliamentary budgetary process;
- European monetary affairs, including the Economic and Monetary Union and other currency developments;
- Energy and economic development;
- Europe and development cooperation.

## ANNEX 9

### TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CORRESPONDENTS

The Statutes of the ECPRD (Article 5) state:

3. The Secretary General of each parliamentary chamber appoints a senior official (Correspondent) to represent the chamber within the Conference of Correspondents of the ECPRD. Secretaries General may also appoint Deputy Correspondents.
4. The Correspondent is selected from officials whose activities bring them into close contact with the ECPRD and who have direct access to the Secretary General of the chamber. He/she can thereby co-ordinate the activities of those officials of his/her chamber who are asked to play an active role in the ECPRD.

Correspondents are central to the successful functioning of the ECPRD and should develop and lead an active network of colleagues who will co-operate effectively with others in the various fields of ECPRD activity. In doing this they may be assisted by a Deputy Correspondent.

Correspondents should, therefore, ideally be senior and experienced officials who have the capacity to be **pro-active in leading the range of ECPRD activities** in their chamber. They should have good working relationships with colleagues in their chambers, in particular with those in information and research services and elsewhere who are most likely to answer comparative requests.

Correspondents should :

- Regularly publicise the work of ECPRD among officials in their chamber: especially the ECPRD website, including ECPRD discussion forums, the newsletter and other ECPRD publications.
- Do their best to ensure that comparative requests sent to their chamber are answered by the deadline; or, if this is not possible, inform the chamber making the request, at an early stage, that this will not be possible.
- Ensure that comparative requests made by their chamber meet the guidelines on requests<sup>1</sup> (particular attention is drawn to paragraphs 5, 6 and 7).
- Following a comparative request from their chamber, ensure that a comparative study is prepared and sent to the ECPRD Secretariat.<sup>2</sup>
- Encourage colleagues to attend ECPRD seminars.
- Consider whether their chamber could host an ECPRD seminar and discuss this with their Secretary General and other senior officials.
- Send information that is likely to be of wider interest to the ECPRD Secretariat, which will make it available on the ECPRD website.
- Regularly update the ECPRD Secretariat with changes in names and contact details for officials included in the ECPRD Directory.
- Liaise with the IPEX and Eurovoc Correspondents in their Parliaments, and with colleagues involved in other information networks (for example IFLA), to promote synergies and minimise duplication.
- Come to the annual Conference of Correspondents prepared to contribute, having discussed the agenda with colleagues in their chamber.
- Report periodically on ECPRD activities to their Secretary General and other senior officials, for example to brief them before their meetings held on the occasion of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments at which they approve the activity report and action programme of the ECPRD.

<sup>1</sup> <https://ecprd.secure.europarl.europa.eu/ecprd/getfile.do?id=25>

<sup>2</sup> see paragraphs 12 to 16 of guidelines for comparative requests

## ANNEX 10

### MINUTES OF MEETINGS

#### **10.1. *Report on the meeting of the Secretaries-General of Parliaments, Members of the ECPRD, Tallinn, 31 May 2006***

**Mr Heiki Sibul**, Secretary General of the Estonian Riigikogu declared the meeting open at 8.30 a.m. and extended a warm welcome to the participants.

He congratulated Mr Sorinas and Mr Sawicki to their appointments as respectively Secretary General and Director General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

#### **1. DRAFT AGENDA**

The draft agenda was **adopted**

#### **2. MINUTES**

**Mr Sibul** asked if there were any comments on the draft minutes of the meeting held in Strasbourg on 19 May 2004.

**Mr Cameron** (Assembly of the WEU) referred to his proposal made during the latter meeting that the Secretaries General of parliament should not only meet every second year on the occasion of the European Conference of Presidents of parliament but also in the intervening year. He wondered if this was the appropriate moment to follow it up.

**Mr Sawicki** (Co-Director of the ECPRD, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) said that the present meeting of Secretaries General was different in its composition from meetings held by the Secretaries General in the framework of other forums like the European Union (meeting of Secretaries General of parliaments of the EU) and the IPU (Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments).

It was up to the Secretaries General to discuss if it was useful to hold another meeting in the intervening year on different subjects and, if appropriate, to take a decision.

**Mr Clerc** (Switzerland, Federal Assembly) said that according to the draft minutes of the meeting in Strasbourg a contribution by Mr Petricu, Secretary General of the Romanian parliament would be appended to the minutes of that meeting. However, this was not the case.

**Mr Sawicki** said that currently the ECPRD had no copy of that text. He would make the necessary inquiries.

The draft minutes were **approved**.

#### **3. ACTIVITY REPORT 2004-2006**

**Mr Sawicki** thanked the Estonian Parliament for organising the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments in Tallinn.

He underlined the following points from the ECPRD activity report.

ECPRD's membership was based on that of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments and included also the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of Western European Union. Currently, 62 parliaments/chambers had appointed a correspondent to the ECPRD and 34 a deputy correspondent.

The appointment by the National Council of Monaco of a correspondent was expected for the near future

Following the referendum in Montenegro, it was likely that the Serbian Parliament would appoint a correspondent quite soon and that the Montenegrin parliament would follow later, after an expected accession of Montenegro to the Council of Europe.

The ECPRD's main activity was to exchange, store and provide information on different elements of parliamentary activities. It was for this purpose that it had been created. This exchange of information was done by a well established procedure of comparative requests which could be presented by all member parliaments. Section 5.2 of the activity report described the evolution of requests for comparative studies. For the first time the titles of the comparative requests covering the years 2004 and 2005 had been reproduced in the appendix of an activity report. The Centre was proud of the significant increase in the number of requests from less than hundred in 2003 to about 140 in 2004 and about 160 in 2005. The increasing tendency of these requests was also shown last week when four parliaments had made four different requests.

Admittedly, it was a considerable burden to answer to 160 requests which generally were distributed for reply to the colleagues concerned in the parliaments. The ECPRD was also aware of the limits of sending comparative requests to national parliaments as they had in the first place to reply to questions and demands of their own members. Parliaments which had nonetheless replied to many comparative requests deserved the thanks of the ECPRD for providing information to others.

The appendices to the activity report showed also statistics concerning requests for comparative studies and replies to them. It was up to the participants to look on these statistics and to draw appropriate conclusions.

For special topics seminars were held within the ECPRD, normally 8 or 9 per year. Between 2004 and 2006 fewer seminars had been organized by national parliaments, namely ten. This was because of the fewer number of proposals for seminars coming from national parliaments and because of organisational changes within the EP. The holding of seminars was based on voluntarism and on suggestions and wishes expressed by national parliaments and never "imposed" by the ECPRD's executive. Seminars facilitated deepening certain matters, provided fuller information and brought interested people together.

The fact that fewer seminars had been organised when compared with previous periods, did not constitute a problem, as the ECPRD's core activity were comparative requests. The seminars held between 2004 and 2006 were listed in sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the activity report. Mr Sawicki expressed the ECPRD's thanks to the Parliaments of Armenia, Bulgaria, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the Polish Sejm and Senate and the UK House of Commons and Lords for having hosted seminars.

During the period under review annual conferences of correspondents to the ECPRD had taken place in Berlin (2004) and in Bucharest (2005). The next conference would be held in London in October 2006. Armenia had invited the ECPRD to hold the 2007 Conference in Yerevan.

Comments and statistics on the ECPRD's website, the main tool of communication with the correspondents, were also included in the activity report. This website, which was hosted by the EP was under complete review to make it more user-friendly.

Changes had taken place at the level of the Executive Committee and of the ECPRD Co-directors. Mr Dick Toornstra, the Co-director for the European Parliament, had been replaced by Bo Menderup Jensen from 1 January 2005 and subsequently by Alain Barrau as from 16 January 2006. Mr Sawicki paid tribute to the work of MM Toornstra and Jensen and was happy to welcome Mr Barrau to his first meeting of Secretaries General of ECPRD member parliaments. His cooperation with Mr Barrau was very promising. The stability of the composition of the ECPRD's Executive Committee was most important.

**Mr Barrau**, Co-Director of the ECPRD thanked Mr Sawicki for his kind words of welcome.

In his different capacities he had always considered that the relations between the Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament were important for the future of Europe.

After having paid tribute to the work of his predecessors Dirk Toornstra and Bo Jensen, Mr Barrau said that he would endeavour to discharge himself of his duties in the ECPRD to the best with the assistance of several colleagues and, in particular Mr Bernacki.

He presented his thanks to the Estonian parliament and to Mr Sawicki who was the cornerstone of the ECPRD's co-direction and to the two co-secretaries of the ECPRD.

Mr Barrau referred to the statement made by President Borrell during the Conference of Presidents yesterday and in which he had expressed a clear political will to enhance cooperation between the EP and PACE. The ECPRD had been borne out of this will to cooperate.

He fully supported Mr Sawicki's clear and precise statement on the ECPRD's activity report. One of the main strengths of the Centre was its flexibility. It had a very limited infrastructure but it was permanently in connection with those concerned and constituted a very efficient network. It was most important to obtain within the ECPRD that comparative requests were answered rapidly. The Centre should also ask itself what it wanted to achieve with the holding of seminars in the next years. Those organised by the ECPRD should meet the needs of national parliaments. While trying to limit the seminars to a reasonable number, the mechanism should be preserved according to which the holding of seminars may be proposed by national parliaments, the European Parliament or the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. It should also be tried to find themes for seminars which had a certain priority and inspired national parliaments.

The present meeting was not the appropriate place for talking about the ECPRD's concrete projects. Therefore, with a view to the ECPRD's programme for 2007, the EP would submit proposals at the London Conference of ECPRD Correspondents (October 2006).

It would be useful to refocus the presently somewhat fragmentary seminars on subjects which could be used by national parliaments.

The system of correspondents of the ECPRD and other internal working mechanisms were efficient. The ECPRD's website would be improved and new ECPRD publications be prepared.

It was important to achieve a strong identity for the ECPRD by 2007.

**Mr Forsberg** (Sweden, Riksdag) highlighted the usefulness of the ECPRD as a means for effective informal exchange of information among parliaments.

Concerning seminars it was necessary to fix priorities. Perhaps the Secretaries General of parliaments should be more involved in the ECPRD and have more contacts with correspondents on the need and subjects of seminars.

The activity report mentioned IPEX, the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange. On 29 June 2006 IPEX would be launched officially at the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliament in Copenhagen. It would be useful also for parliaments which were not in the EU.

**Mr Hayter** (UK, House of Lords) referred to the document on ECPRD priorities 2006 and 2007 and supported what had been said with respect to the need not to add to the infrastructure. The information exchange within the ECPRD met the requirements of parliaments and was most effective. This had been witnessed by the latest comparative request of the House of Lords which had received most useful replies.

He discouraged too much continuity of activities within the ECPRD as foreseen in the new statutes.

**Mr Bloch** (France, National Assembly) said that it was impossible to reply to all requests received in the framework of the ECPRD. Therefore it was necessary to sort out questions and to concentrate on certain types of them e.g. those related to the organisation of parliaments or to parliamentary functions.

He was aware of the fact that the Executive Committee was reviewing the guidelines for comparative request and that the matter would be raised at the next Conference of Correspondents. However until now the reforms had not achieved major results.

**Mr. Myttenaere** (Belgium, House of Representatives) agreed with Mr Bloch. For each comparative request the authors should say clearly what the objective was, when the replies would be published and if this was in the context of a public official document.

Whereas the number of requests had increased significantly, few final comparative studies had been published by the requesting chambers. It would therefore appear necessary to press the authors of questions to prepare such studies.

Referring to the seminars organised within the framework of the ECPRD, Mr Myttenaere wondered how many reports had been prepared on their outcome.

**Mr Sawicki** confirmed that the ECPRD was in the middle of a process of reviewing the guidelines for comparative requests adopted in 2003 which had been found to be too complicate and ambitious, It had therefore been decided to review the current system and Rob Clements had been asked to prepare simplified guidelines. They would first be discussed by the Executive Committee and then possibly be adopted by the Conference of Correspondents in London. Concerning comparative requests it should always be specified by their authors what the reason was for the request and how the answers would be used.

The Co-Directors believed that the requesting countries prepare summaries of the replies in their own language. However, sometimes they had problems to prepare translation into the ECPRD languages. Probably the current practice should be modified and requesting authorities be invited to send summaries even in their mother languages, Admittedly, all this functioned on a voluntary basis, The ECPRD could not order the parliamentary services concerned to send summaries.

Reports on seminars existed, but their preparation took time. Sometimes they were very detailed and even published in the form of a book.

The new draft revised statutes of the EPCRD proposed the replacement of the ECPRD working groups by a structure of Co-ordinators responsible for given fields of activities, such as ICT and macroeconomics.

The programme and priorities of the ECPRD suggested which possible areas could require some continuity. It was important that the Secretaries General gave instructions to their correspondents concerning the priorities to be adopted.

Proposals for seminars had to come from correspondents and were then discussed at the conferences of correspondents. Therefore correspondents should be well briefed before the next conference in London.

The Secretaries General **endorsed** the ECPRD activity report 2004-2006.

#### **4. FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF ECPRD**

**Mr Sawicki** presented a document on the ECPRD priorities 2006-2007 and the programme of seminars and meetings. This was a first and done in anticipation of the adoption of the ECPRD's revised statutes which gave a clear role to the Secretaries General for establishing priorities for the Centre's functioning.

In the reminder of 2006 a limited number of seminars would take place. The Macroeconomic Research Working Group would meet in Sarajevo on 9 June and the Information and Communication Technology Working Group in Vilnius on 5 and 6 October. It was not sure if the Seminar on the role of parliamentary administration could be held in Paris already in November 2006. The seminar programmed in Rome in July on Exchange of national legislative information would have to be postponed.



The programme of seminars and meetings scheduled for 2007 was based on indications given at the correspondents' conference in Bucharest in October 2005 and would be reviewed at the London Conference in October 2006.

The document tried to define the ECPRD priorities for 2006/2007 as follows:

- to simplify the guidelines on studies and comparative requests
- to assure a timely publication of replies and summary reports on the ECPRD website
- to consider areas which may require continuity of activity with a view to the possible appointment of a co-ordinator.

Four such fields were indicated in the document. However, this was not an inclusive list and the Secretaries General were invited to look on this and give adequate instructions to their correspondents.

Further priorities were

- the development of the ECPRD website
- to improve the level of involvement of the ECPRD correspondents and their deputies in the ECPRD structures
- to cooperate with other networks dealing with the exchange of parliamentary information (e.g. IPEX, EUROVOC) with a view to avoiding duplication of activities.

**Mr Barrau** considered that it was important

- to keep the programme of meetings and seminars for 2006 as it was and as national parliaments could realise them
- to hold a discussion on priorities for 2007 to avoid duplication with other bodies which also projected seminars
- to achieve a stronger visibility for seminars taking place in the framework of national parliaments.

This should be discussed at the London Conference of Correspondents and he was sure that the Secretaries General would brief their correspondents appropriately. He looked forward to having lesser but more efficient seminars in the ECPRD framework in 2007.

**Mr Sands** (UK, House of Commons) supported what Mr Sawicki had said about the core activities of ECPRD which was a success. However the Centre should not grow further so that it would not be taken away from its basic activities which were parliamentary research and documentation. In the UK these were carried out by the library department. The areas identified in paragraph 2 of the proposed priorities for the ECPRD in 2007 were the right ones as they were so closely linked with the Centre's core activities.

Referring to Mr Cameron's proposal for a possible annual meeting of the Secretaries General (SGs), Mr Sands felt that there was no such need. What mattered was that the SGs should keep in touch with their correspondents. He announced that he would not be able to come to the annual Conference of Correspondents in London, as he would have retired by then.

**Mr Bloch** (France, National Assembly) said that he was obliged to postpone the seminar envisaged in November 2006 until mid-January 2007. Furthermore, the theme of the seminar which was too vast would have to be focused to deal with the specific features of parliamentary administration with respect to parliamentary work.

**Mr Palanza** (Italy, Senate) confirmed that he would have to postpone the seminar on the exchange of national legislative information planned in Rome in July 2006 as the political bodies of parliament had changed. The seminar could consider how functioned the national and local legal standards and the different legal systems of the 25 EU member states. He envisaged preparing a comparative request and study about this.

**Mr Sawicki** thanked participants for their comments and Roger Sands for his appreciation of the Centre's work. He would be missed in London.

**Mr Sibul** noted that the document on the future activities of ECPRD was approved.

**Mr Barrau** recalled that the details of the ECPRD's 2007 programme would be determined at the Conference of Correspondents in London in October 2006.

## **5. NEW STATUTES OF ECPRD**

**Mr Sawicki** recalled that during the last meeting of SGs held on the occasion of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments in Strasbourg on 19 May 2004 it had been agreed to convene a small working group of SGs in order to discuss and if need be, to prepare changes to the current statutes of the ECPRD. The SGs of the EP and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe had been asked to propose the composition and mandate of that group.

Mr Sawicki said that he had acted as rapporteur for the working group which had met three times. The first draft new statutes had been agreed by the working group in May 2005 and been followed by an in-depth discussion at the conference of correspondents in Bucharest in October of the same year. In January 2006 the WG had adopted the final draft, dated 13.1.2006, which was in the files. It showed the current statutes with amendments in bold. The files also included a consolidated clear version of the draft revised statutes and explanatory comments which had been prepared indicating why the various changes had been proposed.

Finally, a letter of 12 May 2006 addressed to the Secretaries General including the four amendments to the last version of the draft revised statutes and which had been tabled within the fixed deadlines were in the files.

Mr Sawicki proposed that the present meeting discusses these four amendments and then proceeds to a vote on the draft statutes.

The changes envisaged in the current ECPRD Statutes appeared on p. 23 of the activity report and were the following:

- widening the EPRD objectives and fields of activity by adding parliamentary administration and legislation to the existing ones (article 1 of the statutes)
- clarifying the role of Secretaries General of parliaments within the ECPRD (article 4)
- defining better the respective roles of the Executive Committee and the Conference of Correspondents (articles 5 to 7)
- replacing the current structure of working groups by a more flexible structure of coordinators responsible for a given area of interest ; the term working group was misleading as there was no permanent emberships of these groups (article 9)
- introducing the possibility of creating ad hoc working groups with specific terms of reference and a limited composition and duration underlining theimportance of information and communication technology in theexchange of information (article 9)
- formally introducing the possibility of a Deputy Correspondent (article 5).

**Mr Tvarno** (Denmark, Folketing) said that he supported most proposals. He wondered what the reason was for including the word legislation among the ECPRD's fields of activity which in his view was not appropriate.

**Mr Sawicki** replied that this had been discussed in the Conference of Correspondents in Bucharest and it had been agreed to keep legislation among the fields of activity as it was related to a great number of questions and ECPRD seminars. The ECPRD only exchanged information about legislation and the inclusion of this word in article 1 was intended to meet better with reality. It was obvious that legislation itself was a matter for members of parliament and not for staff.

**Mr Tvarno** (Denmark, Folketing) agreed with this explanation but would prefer if the word legislation was replaced by "legislative process" or something similar.

**Mr Sawicki** said that this would be acceptable.

**Mr Myttenaere** (Belgium, House of Representatives) wondered which term was more exact, law or legislative process.

**Mr Sawicki** preferred legislative process.

**Mr Palanza** (Italy, Senate) wondered if it was appropriate to keep the term legislation in a wide sense. He supported Mr Tvarno.

**Mr Laporte** (France, Senate) considered that one should either speak of legislative process or of the norms or laws in force.

**Mr Sibul** said that as Mr Tvarno's amendment had been proposed after the fixed deadline, it could not be put to the vote.

**Agreed.**

**Mr Sibul** read out amendment No.1 to the draft Statutes, tabled by the Assembly of WEU, in Article 2 after the words "Assembly of Western European Union", to add the following footnote: "the Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly".

**Mr Cameron** (Clerk of the Assembly of WEU) spoke in favour of this amendment which aimed at bringing the ECPRD Statutes in line with the proper title of the Assembly of WEU which was a founder member of the ECPRD. It was also worthwhile to mention the up-date of the WEU Assembly's title as the ten member states which were parties to the WEU Treaty had decided in 2005 not to denounce this Treaty but to keep it.

**Mrs Sa-Carvalho** (Portugal, Assembly of the Republic) spoke against the amendment.

**Mr Sibul** put to the vote amendment No.1

**Adopted.**

**Mr Sibul** read out amendment No.2, tabled jointly by the German Bundestag and Bundesrat, in Article 9.1 second sentence, to replace the words "The Executive Committee, with due consideration being paid to recommendations from the Conference of Correspondents", by the following words, "On a proposal from the Executive Committee, the Conference of Correspondents".

**Mr Sibul** put to the vote amendment No.2.

**Adopted.**

**Mr Sibul** read out amendment No.3 tabled by the Belgian House of Representatives, in Article 9.3 after the words "competent staff of member states", to add the following words: "with the consent of the chamber concerned."

**Mr Sibul** put to the vote Amendment No.3

**Adopted.**

**Mr Sibul** read out amendment No.4, tabled by the Belgian House of Representatives, in Article 4 to delete the words "composition and".

**Adopted.**

**Mr Sibul** put to the vote the final draft revised Statutes of the ECPRD as amended.

They were **agreed** to with one abstention.

**Mr Sibul** thanked the working group on revision of the statutes for its efforts.

## 6. OTHER BUSINESS

### ASGP (Association of Secretaries General of Parliament)

**Mr Forsberg** (Sweden, Riksdag) said that it would be useful to inform the next meeting of ASGP to be held in Geneva from 16 to 18 October 2006 about the ECPRD. The Association would then hold a seminar on parliament and television and was about to develop its website.

The meeting rose at 10.05.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 10.2. *Report on the Annual Conference of Correspondents, London, 13 October 2006*

### Opening of the meeting

**Mr Sawicki**, Co-Director of the ECPRD opened the meeting at 9.35 a.m. He welcomed participants to London and thanked Rob Clements and Peter Davis most warmly for inviting the Conference to meet in London, for the excellent preparation of the meeting and for the valuable seminar on the subject "Do referendums strengthen or weaken representative democracy" held the day before. This was the first Conference of Correspondents to benefit from the participation of a new ECPRD Co-Director Alain Barrau, who had recently been appointed by the Secretary General of the European Parliament (EP). On behalf of colleagues he welcomed Mr Barrau and hoped he would enjoy the Conference.

Mr Sawicki went on to ask new colleagues to introduce themselves.

**Mr Barrau** thanked Mr Sawicki for his welcome. He had already had the pleasure of attending meetings of the ECPRD's Executive Committee and had very much enjoyed its friendly and constructive atmosphere. On behalf of the Secretary General of the EP he thanked the team of the UK parliament and, in particular, Rob Clements for the invitation to meet in London and for the excellent preparation. The entire ECPRD team of the EP – Mrs Hanneke Coppolecchia, Mr Krzysztof Bernacki, Mr Josep Ribot Igualada and himself - attached the greatest importance to the Centre and its contribution to parliamentary co-operation.

**Mr Marcelli** introduced himself in his capacity as the Correspondent of the Italian Senate. He underlined the importance of the ECPRD and the excellent organisation of the present meeting.

**Mr Yildiz** introduced himself as the Turkish Correspondent. The ECPRD provided a unique setting for sharing information.

**Mr Mocanu** introduced himself as the Moldovan Correspondent. The Centre was an exciting experience and it was a privilege to be a member of it.

**Mrs Rasmussen** introduced herself as the Danish Correspondent, succeeding Mrs Holt in this capacity. She had already attended a number of ECPRD seminars which had proved most useful.

**Mrs Muull** said that she had served as the Deputy Correspondent from Estonia since March 2006.

**Mr Hajek** introduced himself as the Correspondent of the Austrian National Council. Since the 1970s he had followed the work of the Conferences of Speakers of European Parliamentary Assemblies. He was pleased that the ECPRD had developed so successfully over the years. Nobody had imagined this when the Centre had been created in 1977.

**Mrs Szekrényes** introduced herself as the Hungarian Coordinator working in her parliament's EU Office. She was very happy to join the ECPRD.

**Mr Bartsch** introduced himself as the Deputy Correspondent of the German Bundestag, working in the same service as Mr Blatt. The ECPRD was a highly efficient institution and the services of the Bundestag had put it to much use in recent times. He took this occasion to thank his colleagues for the valuable help they had extended.

**Mr Fors** introduced himself as the Correspondent of the Swedish Riksdag and the Head of its research service, also handling ECPRD affairs. The Centre was an important and efficient institution and a valuable vehicle for information.

**Mrs Arsenijevic** introduced herself as the Serbian Correspondent. This was her first Conference of Correspondents and she was honoured to be part of it.

**Mrs Krstevska** introduced herself as the Correspondent of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and also Head of its parliament’s international co-operation section.

**Mrs Avrami** said she worked in the research department of the Israeli Knesset. The comparative requests and studies of the ECPRD were most important for her work.

**Mr Sawicki** thanked the new colleagues for their statements and hoped they would find the ECPRD’s work useful and interesting.

### **1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA**

Referring to agenda item No.4, **Mr Sawicki** said that, in addition to the names of the three colleagues proposed by the outgoing Executive Committee - MM Borys Kolisnychenko (Ukraine), Jean-Pierre Bloch (France) and Mrs. Siiri Sillajoe (Estonia) - two further candidatures had been received, namely for Mr van der Hulst (Belgium) and Mr Rautava from Finland. He would propose to the Conference to vote with ballot papers containing five names. Voters would be invited to mark their preferences with three crosses at most.

The draft agenda was **adopted**.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF CORRESPONDENTS** **(Bucharest, 14 October 2005)**

**Mr Sawicki** said that he had received a minor comment from the Polish delegation. Taking note of this comment, the draft minutes of the annual conference of correspondents held in Bucharest on 14 October 2005 were **approved**.

### **3. DRAFT ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE ECPRD (March - October 2006)**

**Mr Sawicki** said that the Secretaries General (SGs) of the ECPRD’s member chambers at their meeting in Tallinn had considered and approved the report on the Centre’s activities from March 2004 to March 2006. The report was in the files of the present meeting for information rather than for discussion.

The Executive Committee had prepared an addendum covering ECPRD activities from March 2006 to the present time. This was for information and discussion though not for adoption. Its purpose was also to enable colleagues to see what had happened in the ECPRD over the past few months.

Mr Sawicki said that Mr Barrau and himself had found the discussions of Secretaries General (SGs) of parliament most interesting. The SGs had shown great interest in ECPRD activities and had been satisfied with results. A summary record of the SGs’ meeting was available and would soon be published on the website.

The great majority of those who had spoken had stressed the value of comparative requests and studies. Some had also recommended careful scrutiny of subjects chosen for seminars to ensure they were useful and needed. SGs were aware that the bulk of ECPRD work was carried out by Correspondents.

Furthermore, the SGs had been impressed with the number and range of subjects for comparative requests, as well as with the number of answers produced.

**Mr Barrau** had little to add to Mr Sawicki's report, which was balanced and encouraging. All those who had spoken in Tallinn had a positive opinion of the ECPRD, saying that it was an efficient and flexible network built on everybody's good will and worthy of continued operation. However, the views of SGs on the seminars had been more varied. It was important to find subjects which corresponded more to the specificities of the ECPRD network.

**Mr Sawicki** said that the Executive Committee had met twice in 2006, once in Ljubljana in March and again in Strasbourg in September. The Ljubljana meeting had been held during the preliminary negotiations for the new ECPRD statutes and had mainly been devoted to preparing the input to SG conference in Tallinn, which would have to adopt these Statutes. Furthermore, the meeting had dealt with ways of improving the guidelines for comparative studies

The Strasbourg meeting had dealt with the follow-up to the Tallinn meeting and the implementation of the new Statutes. Moreover, there had been a long discussion on the selection of subjects for seminars and on ways of making them better adapted to the ECPRD's new priorities as adopted in Tallinn.

The SGs had not discussed the details of the seminar issue but had only approved the ECPRD's future orientations and priorities, as proposed by the Executive Committee.

Under current practice the Executive Committee welcomed it when national parliaments expressed the wish to organise a seminar and to bear certain accompanying costs. Such seminars often took up an arising problem or one which illustrated an achievement realised by a parliament in an ECPRD area. It was quite rare that a proposal to host a seminar had led to an in-depth discussion in the Executive Committee on whether it was needed or not. Perhaps the Executive Committee should in future be more selective. This would be discussed later during the present meeting under agenda item 6.

The Strasbourg meeting had also discussed the financing of the participation of some parliaments in ECPRD activities. The Parliamentary Assembly at present shared with the EP this cost on behalf of parliaments that found themselves in a less favourable budgetary situation.

Some rules had been established on this issue by both the EP and the Assembly, but they did not exist in written form. Furthermore, they were more a matter for the two co-Directors than the Executive Committee. They were currently under review in connection with the budgetary discussions and constraints in the EP and the Assembly. There might be some limitations in 2007 when it came to defraying the costs for a few ECPRD parliaments but it was hoped that this would not negatively affect participation.

For the time being it was sufficient that correspondents knew that difficulties in financing the participation of some parliaments at ECPRD meetings could arise. As soon as the situation was clearer, Co-Directors would raise it directly with the Correspondents of parliaments concerned.

Since March 2006 an ECPRD seminar had been held in the Polish Parliament in Warsaw, while the ICT and Macroeconomic Research Working Groups had met, respectively, in Vilnius and in Sarajevo. Mr Sawicki thanked the hosts of the three meetings. The summary of the Vilnius meeting, which had taken place only last week, was not yet available. Information on the two other meetings was included in the addendum to the Activity Report. The addendum also gave information on comparative requests (see agenda item 8).

**Mrs Nawrocka** (Poland, Senate) said there had been 97 participants at the ECPRD Seminar in Warsaw (Senate) on Supranational Parliamentary and Interparliamentary Assemblies in the 21st century held on 8 and 9 May 2006. She thanked all those who had replied to the questionnaire. The study would be continued and a comprehensive report was planned. To this end an additional questionnaire would be sent out.

**Mr Torbiörn** (Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe) thanked the parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the excellent hosting of the meeting of the ECPRD's Working Group on

Macroeconomic Research, held in Sarajevo on 9-10 June 2006. The meeting had allowed some 30 participants to familiarise themselves with the economic situation and prospects of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the prospects for continued economic integration and development of South-Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the meeting had discussed Europe's new energy situation with the participation of several expert speakers.

**Mrs Brankovic** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said her parliament had been very pleased to organise this seminar. It had also been attended by government and parliamentary representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina and had created awareness about the ECPRD in the country.

#### **4. NEW ECPRD STATUTES**

**Mr Sawicki** recalled the various stages in the preparation of the new Statutes, the long discussions on the distribution of competences between the Executive Committee and Correspondents and, finally, the adoption of the Statutes in Tallinn.

Article 9.3 of the new Statutes stipulated: "When it considers that a given area requires a continuity of activity, the Conference of Correspondents may decide on the appointment of a Coordinator responsible for promoting close cooperation between the member chambers in that area."

The correspondents were first invited to consider whether the areas of ICT and Macroeconomic Research required a continuation of activities and whether the appointment of Coordinators should be proposed. The appointment itself would be made by the Executive Committee for a term of three years. There was no need yet to discuss persons considered. If Coordinators were to be proposed, they would to a certain extent replace the working parties on ICT and Macroeconomic Research which no longer existed and which never had had a permanent composition. The idea behind this change was to have activities within the ECPRD better reflect its priorities.

Secondly, the correspondents should consider whether other areas warranted a continuity of activities and whether, if so, Coordinators should be proposed.

The third task of Correspondents was to complete the composition of the new Executive Committee. So far, the Committee comprised the two Co-Directors and three elected members, and in future there would be five elected members. Under the Statutes, the Correspondents elected members of the Executive Committee for a term of office of three years. They were re-eligible.

##### ***i. Elections to the Executive Committee***

**Mr Sawicki** said that, among the current members of the Executive Committee, Sandro Palanza's term of office had come to an end. When this had been discussed in the Executive Committee in Strasbourg, he had clearly indicated that he would not stand for re-election, an affirmation very much regretted by the Committee.

Mr Sawicki thanked Mr Palanza - who would not leave the ECPRD even though he had chosen to leave his seat on the Executive Committee - for his work on that body. He had presented numerous proposals to the Executive Committee and had made many constructive proposals toward the revised guidelines for comparative requests and toward the revised ECPRD Statutes.

**Mr Palanza** (Italy, Chamber of Deputies) thanked Mr Sawicki for his kind words. It had been a most enjoyable experience for him to sit on the Executive Committee. It was not in any way that he was 'tired' of the function in question but rather that he believed it should be open to change. It was important that as many Correspondents as possible had the chance to sit on the Executive Committee.

**Mr Sawicki** recalled that Natasa Glavnik and Rob Clements would continue as members of the Executive Committee. Article 7.2 of the Statutes stated that the Executive Committee was to have five members elected for three years. The outgoing Executive Committee had proposed three candidatures for the vacant posts in the new Executive, namely: Ms Siiri Sillajoe (Estonia), Mr Jean-Pierre Bloch (France) and Mr Borys Kolisnychenko (Ukraine). The candidatures of Mr Marc van der Hulst (Belgium) and of

Mr Antii Rautava (Finland) had also been tabled. The ECPRD Statutes said nothing about the modalities of the election. Therefore, Mr Sawicki proposed the following procedure:

- As the new members of the Executive Committee would be elected by secret ballot and as counting would not be easy, three or five tellers, who should not be candidates, should be appointed.
- The ECPRD acted under the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments. The Rules of that Conference said that in all matters not governed by these Rules, those of the Parliamentary Assembly should apply.
- In these circumstances, the Parliamentary Assembly's Rules could be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the election of members of the Executive Committee.
- The Parliamentary Assembly's Rules concerning elections were simple. A secret ballot was required. An absolute majority was needed in the first ballot and a simple majority in the second.
- In the event of a tie in the second ballot, a third ballot would take place.
- The ballot papers would contain the names of candidates and only papers correctly filled out would count.

He invited members to comment on these proposals and said an agreement was necessary on the election modalities.

**Mr Bloch** (France, National Assembly) said that this procedure would not guarantee a regional distribution of the seats on the Executive Committee. There should therefore either be a geographically balanced list of candidates such as in the UN or a consensus.

**Mr Palanza** (Italy, Chamber of Deputies) said that he was not in favour of contested elections and preferred a rotation system for appointments to the Executive committee. He suggested the present discussion be postponed and that a better solution be found in the meantime.

**Mr Clements** (United Kingdom, House of Commons) referred to the discussions of Correspondents in Bucharest and said that elections were democratic. All candidates were excellent. A secret ballot was embarrassing but nevertheless offered a democratic way for correspondents to vote for those they preferred. Correspondents knew that Article 7.2 of the Statutes referred to the need to maintain geographical balance in the membership of the Executive Committee and would bear this in mind when casting their vote.

**Mr Rautava** (Finland) said he had not campaigned for a seat on the Executive Committee but still appreciated that colleagues had proposed him. However, he had already said no, and this for personal reasons. He felt sympathy for the idea of a rotating membership.

**Mr Sawicki** said he had not been informed that Mr Rautava did not wish to stand. His understanding had been that he had agreed to his candidature's being put forward.

**Mr van der Hulst** (Belgium, Chamber of Representatives) said that he had been asked and proposed as candidate for membership of the Executive Committee, and that he had accepted. However, if this created embarrassment he would not insist.

**Mr Palanza** (Italy, Chamber of Deputies) did not think that the Executive Committee had the power to propose candidates. If there was talk of candidates and collective proposals, they should rather come from the Conference of Correspondents

**Mrs Glavnik** (Slovenia) recalled that at the Bucharest Conference of Correspondents some participants had not been very happy with the fact that no new candidates for the Executive Committee could be proposed. In the present situation of more candidates than vacant seats, it would seem democratic to be able to vote.

**Mr Barrau** said that he would prefer a consensus among Correspondents on candidates for the Executive Committee. All current candidates were good and valuable. The only really important parameter to be borne in mind for membership of the Executive Committee was gender balance. It was necessary to have more women in the Executive Committee than at present. As Mr Sawicki and himself



were appointed by their respective Secretaries General, their nationalities should not be taken into account. All those who wanted to be active in the ECPRD could also envisage being Coordinators.

In reply to a question from **Mrs Ripolles Serrano** (Spain, Congress of Deputies), **Mr Sawicki** confirmed that regional balance did not apply at the level of the Co-Directors, as these were appointed and not elected. He recalled that in the past the Executive Committee had had as a member an official from the Polish Parliament.

**Mr Marcelli** (Italy, Senate) said that he could not recall there ever having been a vote for members of the Executive Committee. Three seats had to be filled. If there were more candidates than places it was evident that a vote would have to be taken. In the past there had been as many candidates as vacant seats and so no vote had been necessary. The Conference of Correspondents met only once a year and it was hard to vote for one colleague rather than another. Furthermore, Mr Marcelli said that he did not know on what basis he should vote. If a vote was made the result could go against a geographical balance. Some lessons should be drawn from what had happened. In future, candidates should be known before the Executive Committee started its discussions.

**Mr Sawicki** noted that the majority of the correspondents wanted to find a consensus concerning candidates for the Executive Committee.

The discussion was postponed to the afternoon sitting.

## *ii. Co-ordinators*

**Mr Sawicki** said that until now the ECPRD had had the ICT and Macroeconomic Research Working Groups. Under the revised ECPRD Statutes working groups no longer existed. The conference was invited to consider and decide if both areas called for continued activity. If this was the case the conference should decide on the appointment of coordinators. Furthermore, there should be agreement on other areas where Correspondents believed that a continuity of activity and the appointment of a Coordinator were required. Mr Sawicki drew the attention of members to the document on ECPRD priorities which had been approved by the SGs in Tallinn. On page 3 were possible areas for the appointment of Co-ordinators. They included Mr van der Hulst's proposal on parliamentary practice and procedure, but also the field of libraries, research and archives.

**Mr van der Hulst** (Belgium, Chamber of Representatives) said comparative requests had at first related to parliamentary procedure. At a later stage requests increasingly took up legal issues. He expressed concern that parliamentary procedure and practice might lose in importance within the ECPRD. This deserved special attention also because many of the ECPRD participants came from the legal and research services. He agreed on the need for continuity of activities in the areas ICT and Macroeconomic Research, and on the appointment of Coordinators.

**Mr Barrau** said the question of coordinators and the end of working groups was closely related to refocusing ECPRD activities. These were the remit of Correspondents. The proposal of Marc van der Hulst and ICT activities were entirely in line with ECPRD priorities agreed in Tallinn. However, he wondered what originality and added value lay in macroeconomic research activities. It would be necessary to establish working methods for Coordinators.

**Mrs Ripolles Serrano** (Spain, Chamber of Deputies) said that the Swedish Parliament had just asked for a criminal law question to be answered and that other requests concerned the standing orders of parliaments. This confirmed the relevance of what Mr van der Hulst had proposed.

**Mr Marcelli** (Italy, Senate) wondered if parliamentary procedure and practice only related to standing orders or also included the internal organisation of parliamentary Assemblies and the status of members. He could not see among the priorities of the ECPRD the administration of parliament. However, many comparative requests related to this matter, which was wider than just procedure.

**Mr van der Hulst** (Belgium, Chamber of Representatives) said that this subject could be said to be included in that of parliamentary practice and procedure. The status of members had a direct influence on the functioning and organisation of parliaments.

**Mrs Nawrocka** (Poland) agreed. However, even though the organisation of parliamentary services, staff and status of members was included in parliamentary practice and procedure, it nevertheless merited separate attention.

**Mr Santaolalla Lopez** (Spain, Senate) also agreed with Mr van der Hulst. However, he would prefer it if parliamentary administration could be separated from parliamentary practice and rules. Otherwise the latter field would cover almost everything.

**Mrs Glavnik** (Slovenia) proposed to combine all research activities followed by the ECPRD – whether macroeconomic research or general research in connection with libraries and archives - under one Coordinator.

**Mrs Sillajoe** (Estonia) said that macroeconomic research deserved a more integrated approach and could also include policy research. It should be held separate from general research. Macroeconomic research should be followed by a special Coordinator.

**Mrs Rasmussen** (Denmark) said that the correspondents should not invent too many areas requiring Coordinators.

**Mr Sawicki** agreed that one had to be careful with the appointment of Coordinators, especially since the general desire of SGs in Tallinn had been to try to reduce any seemingly unnecessary ECPRD bureaucracy. There was no need to hurry on this and the present meeting would not be the last to appoint Coordinators.

**Mr Clements** (United Kingdom, House of Commons) said he broadly agreed with Mr Sawicki. Coordinators should be dedicated people and have the will, time and means to do their job properly. The success of an activity requiring continuity depended on them. A Coordinator for macroeconomic research would be a good idea. The former Working Group on macroeconomic research had held numerous successful meetings and officials had reported accordingly. He doubted whether macroeconomic research ought to be combined with general research, as this would dilute the activities in question. It would be useful if some principles on tasks and duties of coordinators could be adopted.

**Mr Davis** (United Kingdom, House of Lords) said that when considering the appointment of a coordinator, the correspondents should look at the continuity of activity. Furthermore, any subject areas to be followed by coordinators should be defined carefully. If they were too large, it was difficult to get continuity.

**Mr Ribot Igualada** (European Parliament) said he had participated in the Vilnius meeting of the ICT Group. Participants had witnessed many presentations but there had not been much discussion. Concerning the evaluation of results of meetings and seminars, he had noted that sometimes there were no formal conclusions, which would have been most useful. He was in favour of having concrete areas for continued activities with precise guiding principles that could also be consulted by correspondents. The Macroeconomic Research Working Group had been rather general in its study areas, which did not always correspond to those the EP felt directly useful for the ECPRD. The ICT Working Group had been more concrete and therefore useful.

**Mr Palanza** (Italy, Chamber of Deputies) agreed with Mr Davis and Mr Ribot Igualada. Coordinators would be responsible for taking initiatives such as seminars, launching questionnaires and, where appropriate, making proposals for ad hoc working groups. Parliamentary practice and rules formed a good subject for information exchange on the websites of parliaments. Each chamber/parliament should have on its website its Rules translated into one of the languages of the ECPRD. The site should be regularly up-dated when Rules were changed. A Coordinator could promote this and other related exchanges.

**Mrs Okruhlicova** (Slovakia) agreed with the importance of a continuous ECPRD activity concerning parliamentary practice and rules, which were her daily fare.

**Mrs Brankovic** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) felt that the subject and activities pursued so far within the Macroeconomic Research had been most valuable, not least for parliaments in south-eastern Europe.

**Mr Sawicki** said that there was no suggestion to abolish these activities. The idea behind the appointment of Coordinators for areas requiring a continuity of activity was not only to hold seminars. Coordinators should be persons who also felt responsible for an area, knew of past activities there by the ECPRD and other bodies, had a proactive attitude and came up with new ideas for action by the Executive Committee. Concerning Mr van der Hulst's proposal, which concerned the fourth item on the list of ECPRD priorities, Mr Sawicki agreed that this could also cover administrative practice including parliamentary staff.

On the basis of the discussion, Mr Sawicki felt four fields of activity might require continuity:

- (1) ICT, including parliament on the net, e-Parliament (services and technologies) and technical development in general;
- (2) macroeconomic research, as the former Working Group had been successful and its work appreciated;
- (3) parliamentary practice and procedure; and
- (4) libraries, research and archives, which lay at the heart of ECPRD concerns. Over the past few years useful seminars had been held on these issues in London, Brussels and The Hague.

Mr Sawicki asked whether Correspondents could agree on these areas and, if so, instruct the Executive Committee to appoint Coordinators.

**Mr Bernacki** (European Parliament) said that the SGs in Tallinn had endorsed ECPRD priorities and that these should therefore in general be followed. The appointment of four Coordinators had been proposed. However, it was doubtful whether the ECPRD would be well advised to have a Coordinator for macroeconomic research. Many parliaments attached great importance to research on other matters, such as social and environmental matters. He could not understand why the ECPRD concentrated only on macroeconomic research. He asked whether ECPRD working groups that had ceased to exist were to be replaced by Coordinators.

**Mr Sawicki** said that if one followed the Statutes the Working Groups disappeared. If the conditions were fulfilled it was for Correspondents to decide on the principle whether Coordinators should be appointed. The Executive Committee would choose them from among competent staff of member chambers, with the consent of the chamber concerned. There had never been a formal membership of the ICT working group, so its meetings had to a certain extent been seminars.

**Mr Marcelli** (Italy, Senate) said that his bread and butter activity was research service. Libraries often formed part organisationally of research services, or the reverse was the case. IFLA had a section on library and research services for parliaments that held an annual conference, a workshop and sometimes preparatory meetings.

**Mr Sawicki** believed that colleagues who followed IFLA could testify to there being no duplication of work here. The ECPRD did not discuss "slices" of research, such as on social or environmental matters, but rather the substantive quality, organisation and functioning of research services. For historical reasons macroeconomic research should be maintained and a Coordinator be appointed.

**Mr van der Meer** (Netherlands, second chamber) said that it was good to occasionally hold seminars that went more deeply into a given subject. The ICT group was well connected to the requirements of parliaments. He supported Marc van der Hulst's proposal. As regards the activity libraries, research and archives, he suggested that more specific aspects of parliamentary libraries, such as library research developments in individual areas, also be raised.

**Mr Barrau** recalled that no more meetings of ECPRD working groups would be held in 2007. However Coordinators for different sectors would be appointed. There was no doubt that the ICT sector was a priority and that its work called for the appointment of a Coordinator. Furthermore, a new interesting proposal had been made to have a Coordinator for parliamentary practice and procedure. While some might have preferred to deal exclusively with parliamentary procedure, for others parliamentary practice and organisation were perhaps even more important. Two other themes had been proposed for continuous activities: macroeconomic research; and libraries, research and archives. Discussions had shown that some Correspondents had not yet made up their minds. Perhaps one could have both activities serve under one Coordinator.

**Mr Torbiörn** (Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe) said that in 2001 he had taken over the post of Coordinator of the Working Group on Macroeconomic Research. Until 2004 the group had held two yearly meetings, and since 2005 only one in accordance with ECPRD wishes. Cooperation with parliaments hosting the group's various meetings had been truly excellent. He had been happy to serve as Coordinator for the group in a field which directly related to his former work in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Even though he now had taken on new functions within the Assembly, he was still an economist, with great interest in macroeconomics.

**Mr Sawicki** said that when one spoke about different types of research and referred to a Coordinator for it, it rather meant libraries, research and archives of parliament, how all this functioned, what was needed, what contacts should be made with outside experts and the like. There was no question of dealing with, say, social or environmental research as such. Macroeconomic research was a very specific activity which did not fit 100 per cent into the ECPRD framework. Activities in this area were rather addressed to people working in economic research departments and secretariats of committees dealing with economic and financial matters and others not exclusively active in research proper. Macroeconomic research was in this sense an exception and the question was whether the ECPRD was of the opinion that it should be continued, in a decision that would be taken after the lunch break.

**Mr Barrau**, to clarify, said he was in favour of three sectors where Coordinators should be appointed: ICT; parliamentary practice and procedure; and organisation of research services in parliaments, including macroeconomic research.

**Mr van der Hulst** (Belgium, Chamber of Representatives) said that the SGs in Tallinn had approved the priorities of the ECPRD, including four areas of activities. He wondered if the conference of Correspondents should limit itself more than the SGs had.

**Mr Sawicki** said SGs had agreed on priorities but had left it to Correspondents to implement them.

**Mr Valente** (Portugal) approved of the appointment of Coordinators for ICT and parliamentary practice and procedure. Concerning macroeconomic research he agreed with Mr Sawicki that this subject was an exception and had long ECPRD antecedents. If it did not exist, perhaps nobody would ask for activities in this area. He was not sure if there was enough substance for a Coordinator on macroeconomic research. Whereas ICT and macroeconomic research had been main ECPRD activities in recent years, there had been a smaller number of events in the libraries, research and archives sector. He could agree to appointing two further Coordinators if there were appropriate activities.

**Mr Sawicki** noted that there was agreement that the Executive Committee should appoint Coordinators for ICT and parliamentary practice and procedure.

Referring to the ECPRD priorities, he said that for the ECPRD and its members the aims were to:

- achieve a better responsiveness to requests for comparative studies;
- increase the number of summary reports/analyses of replies following requests, even in the national language;
- be more active.

Further ECPRD priorities would be the development of its website and increasing the number of Correspondents. Monaco had not yet appointed one and Montenegro would do so once it was a member of the COE.

**Mr Barrau** said the list of ECPRD meetings and seminars in 2007 was important and should be examined by Correspondents on the basis of proposals by parliaments.

**Mr Sawicki** added that it was up to Correspondents to approve the annual programme of meetings and seminars.

*(end of the morning sitting)*

*(afternoon sitting)*

**Mr Sawicki** informed the meeting that Mr Van Der Hulst had withdrawn his candidature in order to facilitate the procedure for electing the remaining candidates.

Correspondents elected the three following new members of the Executive Committee: Mrs. Siiri Sillajoe (Estonia, Riigikogu), Mr Jean-Pierre Bloch (France, National Assembly) and Mr Borys Kolisnychenko (Ukraine, Verkhovna Rada).

**Mr Sawicki** asked the meeting if it could approve the following subject areas for which a continuity of activity would be recommended:

- Research Services/Libraries/Archives;
- Parliamentary Practice and Procedure;
- Macroeconomic Research;
- Information and Communication Technology in Parliaments.

Following the Conference's approval of these areas, it was agreed that the Executive Committee would proceed to nominate coordinators for each one of them.

**Mr Barrau** said he fully agreed on the advisability of creating the first, second and fourth of the above areas, but that he had doubts about the third, Macroeconomic Research, for which he would prefer a more temporary trial period.

**Mr Sawicki** recalled the historical background to the Macroeconomic Research Working group in the ECPRD context. He added that, although Coordinators for all the subject areas were nominated for a renewable term of three years, there would every year be an evaluation of the activities pursued within each so that a decision could be taken whether to continue them or not. He would ask the Executive Committee to invite Coordinators to all meetings of the Executive Committee.

The Conference of Correspondents approved the four subject areas mentioned above.

## **6. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2007**

**Mr Sawicki** listed the seminars foreseen for 2007:

### ***- Rome, Camera dei Deputati - Seminar on Exchange of National Legislative Information***

**Mr Palanza** said a questionnaire regarding the perceived interest in this seminar had recently been sent out, and whether it would be held would depend on the replies received. The subject of this seminar differed sufficiently from that of the seminar foreseen on a Legislative Observatory to allay any fears of duplication.

It was decided not to include this seminar in the Calendar of 2007 activities.

### ***- Paris, National Assembly, end of March or beginning of May 2007 - Seminar on Particularities of Parliamentary Administration relating to a Parliament's work schedule***

**Mr Bloch** confirmed the plans for this seminar, for which an exact date had not, however, been set. A questionnaire would be sent out in due course.

### ***- Warsaw, Sejm, End April 2007 - Seminar on a Legislative Observatory***

**Mr Staskiewicz** confirmed the plans for this seminar, the fourth to be organised by the Polish Sejm in the last few years. An exact date remained to be set.

**- Luxembourg, Chamber of Deputies – Seminar on “E-enablement to Parliamentarians; how to provide best access to Parliament on Internet to the MPs”**

**Mr Linden** said that the Parliament of Luxembourg had certain difficulties in organising this seminar in 2007 and preferred at this stage to withdraw it. Perhaps it could be organised in 2008.

It was decided not to include this seminar in the Calendar of 2007 activities.

**- Brussels, Federal Parliament, 8-9 November 2007 (date to be confirmed) - Seminar on relations between Parliaments and Judiciary**

**Mr Rezsöházy and Mr Van Der Hulst** explained that the proposed subject would not include control of the constitutionality of legislation, parliamentary immunities or inquiry committees. It would be focused on the jurisdictional control of the way the Parliament is working (especially the control, if any, of the compliance with the Rules of Procedure and other legal rules applying to the Parliament), on the jurisdictional control of the non-legislative acts of the Parliament (challengeable v. non-challengeable acts), and on the interactions between legal proceedings and the workings of the Parliament (ex.: seizures on the Parliament premises, requests to consult documents held by the Parliament). A questionnaire would be prepared and sent out in due course.

**- Prague, both Chambers, end September/beginning of October 2007 - Seminar on Transparency in Parliament (Openness of Parliament to the Public)**

**Mr Sosna** said a questionnaire would be sent out in the first half of 2007.

**- Berne, Federal Parliament - Seminar on Press Services**

**Mr Frischknecht** said that this Seminar would discuss important sources of information for MPs, audiovisual techniques and various technical possibilities in this area. However, the Seminar could take place only in 2008 as the parliamentary buildings foreseen were currently undergoing renovation. He would send out a questionnaire by the end of the summer of 2007.

**- Stockholm, Riksdag, 15-16 June 2007 - Meeting of Macroeconomic Research**

**Mr Fors** said that the topic of the meeting was about relations between a country's parliament and its central bank, including parliamentary monitoring central bank policies. This subject was at present highly topical in anticipation of a study to be published in November on Swedish monetary policy between 1995 and 2002 by Professor Francesco Giavazzi of the Bocconi University and Professor Frederic Mishkin, of Columbia University and currently member of the Board of Governors of the US Federal Reserve. He would prepare a background document and questionnaire in cooperation with the future Coordinator of the Macroeconomic Research Working Group.

**- Ljubljana, National Assembly, 18-19 October 2007 - Seminar ICT in Parliaments**

**Mrs Glavnik** said that a number of themes for this seminar had been proposed at the recent ICT meeting in Vilnius. They included Technical Security, Mobility and Disaster Recovery. Another could be ways of archiving and preserving parliamentary documents for the future. The programme would be prepared in cooperation with the future Coordinator of the Working Group in question.

**Mr Sawicki** recalled the past holding of two ECPRD seminars on Parliamentary Archives, in Brussels and The Hague, respectively.

Proposals for 2008:

**- Madrid, Senado, 2008 - Seminar on Parliament and Public Agencies**

**Mr Santaolalla** would send his proposal for this seminar to Mr. Sawicki.

**Mrs Rasmussen**, Danish Folketing, asked for more information about the proposed seminar on Parli@ments on the Net in 2008. This issue should first be discussed with the ICT Coordinator.

**Mrs Okruhlicova**, Slovak Parliament, said a Seminar on parliamentary research services would be most welcome.

The for 2007 were summarised as follows:

Paris	<i>Particularities of Parliamentary Administration relating to a Parliament's work schedule</i>	March-May 2007
Warsaw	<i>Legislative Observatory</i>	April 2007
Stockholm	<i>Parliaments and Central Banks</i>	15-16 June 2007
Prague	<i>Transparency in Parliaments</i>	End September/first week October 2007
Ljubljana	<i>ICT</i>	18-19 October 2007
Brussels	<i>Parliaments and the Judiciary</i>	8-9 November 2007

and

Annual Conference of Correspondents, Yerevan [11-12 October 2007]

Meetings of the Executive Committee (Spring and Autumn) [March/September 2007]

and for 2008:

Berne, *Press Services for MPs*

Madrid, Senado, *Parliaments and Public Agencies*

Luxembourg, *E-enablement to Parliamentarians; how to provide best access to Parliament on Internet to MPs*

Rome, Camera dei Deputati, *Exchange of National Legislative Information*

**Mr Barrau** said that the European Parliament was likely to encounter problems in continuing to reimburse some participants if seminars continued to be as numerous as suggested and that restrictions were probable as from 2007. He promised to inform participants about further details as soon as they became available.

## **7. STATISTICS OVER ECPRD COMPARATIVE REQUESTS**

**Mrs Coppolecchia** gave a brief account of the statistics for comparative requests and replies in 2004, 2005 and between January and September 2006. Requests were growing steadily in number but, much more importantly, the number of replies given by almost all the parliaments had also shown a great increase. Unfortunately, the ECPRD Secretariat received very few retrospective comparative overviews and analyses. She informed Correspondents, should a given parliament encounter difficulties in preparing an overview in English, it could be sent in that parliament's own language to the ECPRD for translation into English. She nevertheless asked Correspondents not to send an inordinate number of comparative or other requests, as this could overburden recipients.

## **8. WEBSITE**

**Mr Barrau** said that the creation of the new ECPRD website had taken longer than foreseen, but that it would be operational at the end of October. The European Parliament accorded high importance to the ECPRD, as shown in its sponsoring both the ECPRD secretariat since its beginning and its website since its establishment ten years earlier. Indeed, a special budget for the new website had been set up. He then gave the floor to **Mr François**, a member of the specialist team responsible for the new website, for a brief presentation.

**Mrs Coppolecchia** illustrated the different changes and stressed that the test-website now shown to the participants did not contain all the data available in the existing, "official" one but only aimed to demonstrate its 'look and feel'. For almost two years, no important changes to the website had been undertaken due to lack of technical support, with only updating functions in the website available. The new website was created in conformity with the rules of EUROPARL, the internet of the European Parliament. The DIT-services of the European Parliament had agreed to take complete responsibility for the technical support also in future years. The search-module remained the same, that is, "by words in titles". However, if and when the European Parliament adopted some sort of "limited Google-search" for its EUROPARL website, this would be adopted also for the ECPRD's website.

The new website was welcomed by the participants and Mrs Coppolecchia was warmly thanked for all her work on its behalf.

## **9. GUIDELINES FOR COMPARATIVE REQUESTS AND STUDIES**

**Mr Clements** introduced the updated version of the guidelines, which were also available in French. The Conference of Correspondents in 2005 had agreed to review the existing guidelines with a view to simplifying the procedure. As it was difficult to limit the number of requests, the procedure for reacting to them had to become more practical. Mr Palanza had prepared a first draft some time ago, and in 2005 a team of both Chambers of the Slovenian Parliament had made a case-study based on several requests (requests 400-481). A model reply for requests had proved extremely useful, as had a requirement to provide basic reasons why a given request was justified.

**Mrs Glavnik** and several other participants thanked Mr Clements for the drafting of the new Guidelines.

**Mr Sawicki** joined them wholeheartedly in expressing his gratitude to Mr Clements and widened his thanks also to all others who had been involved in their preparation.

**Mr Marcelli** also had only praise for the new guidelines. Since the words in the title provided the only clue to search the website for relevant information, it was important to formulate proper titles for each request so as to facilitate later searches.

**Mrs Dietrich-Schulz** said that, in the event the ECPRD Secretariat could not be reached, it should still be allowed for a given request to be sent out directly by the Correspondent or Deputy-Correspondent, with a copy to the ECPRD Secretariat so that it could be included in the web at a later stage.

**Mrs Coppolecchia** asked participants – if ever they sent out a comparative request directly - to use the existing lists of names and e-mails of Correspondents and Deputy-Correspondents as they appeared on the website, as these lists were continuously updated.

**Mr Bloch** added that requests from the French National Assembly were often intended for a parliamentary committee or for a member of that Assembly, with the result that replies were sent directly to the person requesting the information, without a comparative study being prepared.

**Mr Sawicki** said comparative overviews were made only for some 10 per cent of requests. He therefore wondered whether the person requesting the information could, already when making the request, indicate that he or she would not prepare a summary.

**Mrs Sillajoe** asked that terms such as comparative request and comparative question be harmonised to avoid confusion.

**Mr Sawicki** said that the final draft of the guidelines would be sent to all Correspondents, with reactions expected within a week, so that the adopted version could enter into force on 1 January 2007. Secretaries-General had been most impressed with the statistics included in the “ECPRD Activities Report March 2004 - March 2006”, including the diversity of subjects forming the object of comparative requests. (For the first time a list of titles had been included.). More attention should be given to preliminary work before forwarding a comparative request, and to trying to find existing comparative studies via other inter-parliamentary websites such as those of the IPU, the ASGP, and other international bodies. It was not only the number of requests that mattered, but the quality of replies and the final overviews.

## **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

### ***- Opening of the ECPRD to parliaments outside Europe***

**Mr Sawicki** informed the Conference that the Afghan Parliament had expressed an interest in attending future Conferences of Correspondents and that the Executive Committee at its meeting in September 2006 had expressed a preliminary and cautiously positive reaction. He suggested that the Conference engage in a discussion on whether the ECPRD should also welcome parliaments outside Europe, in the first instance by giving them access to its database.



**Mr Barrau** said he had been presenting the ECPRD as a model for inter-parliamentary cooperation at a recent visit to Beirut. He was on the whole in favour of its opening its data base to other parliaments, although not to the general public.

**Mrs Rumpe** recalled that regional parliaments did not have access to the ECPRD, so why should parliaments outside Europe?

**Mr Van Der Meer** said that, even though the Dutch parliament had a very open policy on openness, he had doubts whether it should be open to parliaments outside Europe. The Afghan parliament had numerous contacts with the Dutch parliament and therefore had many possibilities to find useful information already.

**Mr Marcelli** stated that paragraph 3 in the Statutes talked about cooperation with other parliaments, but within the context of parliamentary networks.

**Mr Fors** and **Mr Santaolalla** were in favour of authorising parliaments outside Europe to have 'passive access' to the website.

**Mr Clements** saw a difference between a) regional parliaments in Europe and b) national parliaments outside Europe. He favoured openness, but acknowledged that there was a risk of encouraging more bilateral requests for information if the database was opened up.

**Mr Hajek** thought Austrian citizens would not accept that they could not access the ECPRD website whilst parliaments outside Europe did. The choice was rather between of opening up to the general public or restricting access to the ECPRD network.

**Mr Bloch** felt it was highly risky to open up to others than ECPRD members.

**Mr Bartsch** said that giving access to limited outside groups would always give rise to questions as to where the line was drawn, and was therefore against, too.

**Mr Sawicki** felt that giving access to parliaments outside Europe would be good publicity for the ECPRD.

**Mr Van Der Hulst** proposed giving the Afghan parliament limited access for one year and that a decision could be made after that.

**Mrs Rumpe** proposed to submit this question to the Secretaries General.

**Mr Sawicki** said he would, the following week, give a presentation on the ECPRD before an Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting in Geneva. He could on this occasion approach the Secretaries General of ECPRD member states present to ascertain their views on the subject of opening the ECPRD to parliaments outside Europe. This was **agreed**.

#### **- ECPRD/IPEX relations**

**Mr Palanza** said a paper entitled Relationship ECPRD/IPEX was available in the meeting room. He also said that the cooperation between the IPU and the ECPRD had been raised at a recent EU Conference of Speakers. The ECPRD should be not only a model for others but also a partner. It should be part and parcel of all inter-parliamentary cooperation, so as to avoid any form of duplication of work with others to be in a better position to make full use of all existing parliamentary and inter-parliamentary networks.

#### **- Support to the Russian Duma**

**Mr Laurence Smyth**, Clerk of the British Overseas Office, presented a European Commission project to support and strengthen the Parliamentary Library and Research Services of the Russian Duma. The assistance given by the Belgian, Polish and Italian parliaments had been very useful in this regard.

**Mr Sawicki**, in closing the Conference, felt he spoke on behalf of all participants in extending warm thanks in particular to Mr Clements of the House of Commons, Mr Davis of the House of Lords and their respective staff for all their hospitality and their excellent organisation of this highly successful Conference. The next Conference would be hosted by the Armenian Parliament and would take place in Yerevan on 11 and 12 October 2007.

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### **10.3. *Report on the Annual Conference of ECPRD Correspondents, Yerevan, 12 October 2007***

**Mr Sawicki** (ECPRD Co-Director) opened the meeting at 9.30. He welcomed participants and warmly thanked the Armenian colleagues for hosting the present ECPRD Conference of Correspondents and for the excellent programme foreseen.

He went on to introduce Mr Piotr Nowina-Konopka, who had been nominated ECPRD Co-Director on behalf of the European Parliament in December 2006, welcoming him to the ECPRD and to his first meeting of this kind.

Mr Nowina-Konopka had been an active member of the opposition movement in Poland in the 1970s and 1980s and had played an important role in the Solidarity Movement. For a number of years he had been Secretary and spokesperson of Lech Walesa. For several years he had also been a member of the Polish parliament, Director of the prestigious Natolin College and Chairman of the Board of the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation. In 2006 he had been appointed Director in the European Parliament.

**Mr Nowina-Konopka** (ECPRD Co-Director) thanked Mr Sawicki for his kind words and said how happy he was to be joining the Centre, which formed a real community of officials devoted to the improvement of parliamentary services. Close cooperation between them was crucial to the smooth functioning of the ECPRD. He looked greatly forward to working with Correspondents and would do his utmost to meet expectations, in close teamwork with his long-standing friend and fellow Co-Director Wojciech Sawicki.

**Mr Sawicki** then invited any new or other colleagues who might wish to introduce themselves to do so. There followed brief presentations by Mrs Kamenova, Mrs Gautsche, Mr Galanis, Mrs Dennison, Mrs Fitzsimons, Mrs Rolef, Mr Scotti, Mrs Serebreanschi, Mr Bal, Mr van Rijn, Mr Wijgergangs, Mr Skjoerestad, Mrs Korzeniowska, Mrs Andreeva, Mr Makarychev, Mr de Gou, Mr Hilbert and Mr Mattson.

**Mr Sawicki** thanked colleagues for their statements and in particular asked Mr Scotti and Mr Skjoerestad to convey the ECPRD's best wishes to their respective predecessors and long-standing ECPRD Correspondents Mr Palanza and Mr Overa; welcomed Mr van Rijn back into the ECPRD's midst; and asked Mrs Korzeniowska to present the meeting's greetings to Mrs Nawrocka, who was on assignment to Azerbaijan.

#### **1. AGENDA**

**Mr Sawicki** asked if the annotated agenda could be agreed. The draft agenda was **adopted**.

#### **2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF CORRESPONDENTS (LONDON, 12 and 13 October 2006)**

The draft minutes of the conference of correspondents held in London were **approved**.

**Mr Sawicki** reiterated the ECPRD's thanks to Rob Clements and Peter Davis for the excellent programme and organisation of the London Conference.

### 3. 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE ECPRD

**Mr Sawicki** recalled that the ECPRD had been set up by a decision of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments in Vienna in June 1977 and had become operational in September of that year, hence this year's anniversary celebrations.

It had been a wise decision of the 1977 Conference to promote, via the establishment of the ECPRD, information exchanges among participating parliaments. During its thirty years of existence, the ECPRD had fulfilled its mission very well. Mr Sawicki thanked Correspondents and all others concerned for their great commitment.

**Mr Sawicki** paid particular tribute to a person who could rightly be called the ECPRD's "founding father", the late Mr Klaus Pöhle. Mr Pöhle had pleaded with the Speakers/Presidents to create the ECPRD. He had stayed at its helm on behalf of the European Parliament from 1977 to 1994. He had passed away in March 2007 at the age of 76.

Already thirty years earlier Mr Pöhle had become convinced of the need for a network of parliamentary administrations in Europe. He had been a man of great energy, enthusiasm, knowledge and humanism.

The meeting observed a minute of silence in remembrance of Mr Pöhle, but also in memory of all departed former ECPRD correspondents. Mr Sawicki in this context made particular reference to Mr Jean-Luc François.

For the Centre's present anniversary a special publication, "ECPRD 30 Years", had been prepared. He expressed particular gratitude to Mrs Coppolecchia, who had been the *primus motor* in the preparation of the booklet and to all colleagues who had equally contributed to it. German and French versions were under preparation. The publication also contained a most interesting contribution by the late Mr Pöhle on the negotiations that had led to the creation of the Centre.

**Mr Marcelli** (Italy, Senate) said that the statistics relating to the Centre, such as the impressive growth in the number of comparative requests, spoke volumes about its contribution. Joined by **Mrs Korzeniowska** (Poland, Senate), Mr Marcelli associated himself fully with Mr Sawicki's words in memory of Mr Pöhle. The Centre had both contributed to and benefited from Europe's startling evolution. Mr Marcelli also thanked Mrs Coppolecchia for all she had done and continued to do on the Centre's behalf.

**Mr Frischknecht** (Switzerland, Federal Assembly) said he was one of those who had had the privilege of participating for a long time in the Centre's activities. When, in 1989, he had attended a EUROVOC meeting for the first time, he had been struck by the high quality of the ECPRD's work. The spread of the EUROVOC thesaurus was one of the major contributions of the Centre. It was now an important tool for the EU and national parliaments in Europe, not least in facilitating access to the EU *acquis*. Mr Pöhle had been a true founding father of the ECPRD. He had always been ready to help his younger ECPRD colleagues. He wished the Centre every success in the years to come.

**Mr Clements** (United Kingdom, House of Common) said that he brought the best wishes for the ECPRD's anniversary from Mr Peter Davis, the House of Lords ECPRD Correspondent, who was unfortunately prevented from attending the present meeting. An additional, sometimes overlooked, benefit of the ECPRD lay in furthering personal contacts and friendship among the staff of parliamentary administrations from all parts of Europe. Prospects for the Centre were excellent in many ways, not least through the future expanded work of Coordinators, especially if properly assisted and encouraged by Correspondents. Finally, Mr Clements paid tribute to the work and commitment of ECPRD Co-Directors and Co-secretaries.

**Mr van Rijn** (Netherlands, second chamber) said that the ECPRD's greatest achievement lay in having created an impressive network of parliamentary staff in Europe. While not wishing to reopen a discussion on possible ECPRD contacts with regional parliaments, he nevertheless foresaw a need to consider that possibility in due course.

**Mr Sawicki** recalled that the question of the ECPRD's relations with regional parliaments was in the hands of the Secretaries General. They had formally opposed it when last raised.

**Mr Santaolalla** (Spain, Senate) felt that the Centre provided a highly important service to parliaments and thereby helped build a freer and more democratic Europe.

**Mr Sawicki** thanked the speakers for their statements and all concerned for their valuable work on behalf of the ECPRD, now and in future.

#### **4. DRAFT ACTIVITY REPORT (October 2006 – October 2007)**

**Mr Sawicki**, in introducing the Executive Committee's draft report summarising the Centre's activities over the past year, said it formed part of a larger report to be submitted for approval by Secretaries General during the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament, to be held in Strasbourg on 22 and 23 May 2008. The draft report should therefore be considered more as an information document suited, at the present stage, as a basis for an exchange of views with a view to improving it. One important part was the appendix, which contained a summary on questionnaires, questions and answers.

Another part dealt with seminars. Following the conference of correspondents in London in October 2006, four seminars had taken place: in Warsaw on legislative observatory; in Paris on parliamentary administration; in Stockholm on relations between parliaments and central banks; and in Prague on transparency in parliaments. Two more seminars would be held in 2007: in Ljubljana on ICT issues and in Brussels on parliaments and the judiciary. Mr Sawicki thanked the parliaments concerned and invited Correspondents representing parliaments which had hosted seminars over the last twelve months to report briefly on them, if possible corroborated by written reports in due course.

The year 2006 had been important for the Centre in that, following adoption of the ECPRD's revised Statutes, the London Conference of Correspondents had decided to create areas of activities, replacing the previous structure of working groups. Coordinators for these areas of activities had been appointed at an extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee in Paris in November 2006.

**Mr Staskiewicz** (Poland, Sejm) reported on the seminar held in Warsaw on 26 and 27 April 2007 with the title: Legislative Observatory: Transparency of legislative process in Parliament. The seminar, whose proceedings would be published shortly, had aimed at finding answers to two questions:

- What needs did parliaments experience in relation to the legislative process?
- What needs did citizens experience in this regard?

The seminar, attended by some 75 participants, had dealt with many technical aspects and problems typical of computer centres. But it had also raised wider issues of philosophy and sociology, e-information to citizens, hearings, trends, 'white books' and transparency in the legislative process. The participants had also discussed the role of lobbies, interest groups and experts in the legislative process. They had also debated, on the basis of an Austrian presentation, the use of private and official legal databases in the legislative process, and how these related to various traditions and practical experiences.

**Mr Sawicki** said he had highly enjoyed his participation in the seminar.

**Mr Mattson** (Sweden, Riksdag), reporting on the seminar "Parliaments and Central Banks: a Vital Relationship" held in Stockholm on 8 and 9 June 2007, had been most fruitful and interesting, with many distinguished personalities participating. It had focused on current monetary policies in practice and theory, including the issue of central bank independence. The conclusions of the seminar had been published and circulated widely, including to participants, and it was hoped that the conclusions would assist the public debate on a subject of vital importance to economic development.

**Mr Torbiörn** (Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe), ECPRD Coordinator for the macroeconomic research area of activity and hence for the seminar in question, thanked the Swedish hosts for their excellent organisation of the seminar. One trend that he thought he had identified at the seminar was the growing recognition of the need for central bank independence, though needless to say under democratic control and with due account paid to national differences and traditions. A second trend was greater accountability of central banks before national parliaments, or before the European

Parliament in the case of the European Central Bank.. A third trend was that of greater transparency and openness on the part of central banks vis-à-vis the public, and a fourth was the intensifying mutual learning taking place between central banks.

**Mr Bloch** (France, National Assembly) said that the seminar on the specific characteristics of parliamentary administrations in relation to parliamentary work had been held in Paris on 7 and 8 June 2007. It had allowed parliamentary officials of various countries to exchange views on time management in parliamentary legislative and scrutiny services; on the adaptation of administrative services to the particularities of parliamentary activity; and time management at the level of international Assemblies such as the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. He in this context expressed particular thanks to Mr van der Hulst, ECPRD Coordinator, for his close involvement in the preparation of the seminar. Various papers relating to the seminar, as well as an evaluation report, had been sent to Mrs Coppolecchia.

**Mr Nowina-Konopka** said that the Paris seminar, which he had himself attended, had usefully raised a host of practical issues relating to parliamentary life. In the European Parliament work was under way to improve day-to-day functioning, including at plenary sessions and committee meetings.

**Mr Sawicki** wondered if there was also anything less than fully positive to report from seminars, so that the present meeting might propose improvements.

**Mr Sosna** (Czech Republic, Chamber of Deputies) gave an account of the seminar on transparency in parliaments held in Prague on 19 and 20 September 2007 under the auspices of the Speakers of the Czech Senate and Chamber of Deputies. The Speaker of the Chamber and the Secretaries General of both houses had opened the proceedings. Representatives of Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom had made presentations of their parliaments' experiences as regards transparency.

The seminar had tried to define the notion of transparency in parliaments, including whether it was perhaps as much myth as reality, seeing that many political decisions were taken behind closed doors. Other questions dealt with were to what extent, and if so how, transparency should involve parliamentary officials and legislators. He thanked in particular those colleagues who had made presentations in Prague. The report from the seminar would soon be sent in.

**Mr Strus** (Slovenia, National Council) said that preparations for the seminar "ICT in parliaments, mobility for representatives" that would be held in Ljubljana on 18 and 19 October 2007 were well under way.

**Mr van der Hulst** (Belgium, Chamber of Deputies) said that on 8 and 9 November 2007 a seminar on parliament and the judiciary would take place in Brussels. An extensive questionnaire had been sent to correspondents and the replies were now being analysed. Over fifty participants had already been registered and more were welcome.

**Mr Sawicki** thanked all those, whether hosts or correspondents, who had contributed to the seminars raised.

## **5. STATEMENTS BY COORDINATORS ON THEIR AREAS OF INTEREST**

**Mr Sawicki** said that the files contained a written statement by Mr Viegas, Coordinator for the ICT area, who was prevented from attending the present meeting. He invited the three other coordinators, Mrs Dietrich-Schulz, Mr van der Hulst and Mr Torbiörn to inform participants about their plans for the coming year.

**Mrs Dietrich-Schulz** (Austria, Parliament), ECPRD Coordinator for the Parliamentary Libraries, Research and Archives area of interest, thanked the ECPRD for the confidence it had placed in her when appointing her to this function. She had served as Director of the Library of the Austrian Parliament since 1992. It was one of the oldest and smallest parliamentary libraries in Europe, with a limited staff. In addition to managing the library it also fell to her to reply to most of the comparative requests sent out

via the ECPRD. She was happy to note that Austria was among the top five parliaments as regards the number of replies submitted.

A seminar on “Parliamentary libraries: sharing knowledge” would be held in Vienna on 29 and 30 May 2008.

An analysis of parliamentary libraries, research services and parliamentary archives showed that comparative data were lacking for more recent periods. At the beginning of the 1990s, Mr Ernst Kohl had compiled a worldwide bibliography of national and federal libraries. It was still accessible on the server of the German Bundestag. In 2000 Ms Jennifer Tanfield had published a study of the parliamentary libraries, research and information services of 18 Western European countries. In 2003 Mr Karel Sosna had issued a survey of parliamentary libraries, research and information services of Central Europe.

However, more recent data were needed, such as on cooperation, digitalisation and virtual networks. It was to be hoped that the new ECPRD homepage would help remedy the situation. In this connection Mr van Rijn had proposed to replace the term ‘forum’ with ‘discussion’ to make it more inviting for people to contribute.

Together with her colleague Peter Voss from the Austrian Parliament she had summarised the homepages contained in the directory of the ECPRD, and particularly, those on parliamentary libraries. The result was promising, not least in showing the wide diversity between different parliamentary library services and archives. Furthermore, together with Mr Schefbeck from the Austrian Parliament she was preparing a comparative request, to be sent out in November or December 2007.

The Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina had sent a comparative request (No.844) on a rulebook for the work of a parliamentary library. In this connection the regulations on the Austrian parliamentary library had been translated into English, an example that might be followed by other parliamentary libraries.

Finally, she expressed the hope that there would be good cooperation on the library forum page on the ECPRD website.

**Mr van der Hulst**, ECPRD coordinator, said that in the area of interest “Parliamentary practice and procedure”, a seminar on “Specific characteristics of parliamentary administration with regard to parliamentary work periods and rhythms” had been held in Paris on 7 and 8 June 2007. He had greatly appreciated his close cooperation with the organising French National Assembly. In November 2007 another seminar would be held in Brussels on “Parliaments and the judiciary, judicial control of parliamentary acts”. So far, no seminar in this area of interest had been confirmed for 2008.

The forum page of his area of interest would shortly be functioning and permit a discussion to commence on parliamentary procedure and practice. The first test would be the discussion of the results of the seminar to be held in Brussels in November 2007.

He went on to present a number of ideas for the webpages devoted to areas of interest. A kind of newsflash could be provided which could take up new developments in parliaments, important changes to rules of procedure etc. Furthermore, as suggested by Mr Hajek, a kind of newsflash could be established reporting on the conclusions of ECPRD seminars or the results of questionnaires. He would need the help of correspondents to provide him with the relevant material. There could also be web links on parliamentary law, provided they did not overlap which existing links.

Another idea was the preparation of a thesaurus on parliamentary procedure and practice. He knew that ways to allow for search in ECPRD questionnaires were being examined. But full text research would be limited because of different languages etc. A thesaurus for parliamentary procedure and practice would be useful for two reasons. Firstly, it would allow more recently established parliaments to set up a limited documentation system using what had already been done and adapting it to their own reality. Secondly, it might be possible to attach to ECPRD questionnaires some words of the specific thesaurus which would allow for more intelligent consultation of the database.

Another idea was to identify a number of topics for which summaries of the replies to comparative requests had been made but which deserved to be updated from time to time. It was not sufficient to send out questionnaires and then sometimes make summaries of the replies. If such summaries were not updated they would soon become obsolete. This should be done selectively, if possible with the help of correspondents.

A last idea was to make a list of sub-questions and sub-topics, for parliaments to consult if they wanted to organise a seminar or other event.

If the meeting so desired, he was ready to prepare a note on the ideas he had raised, for discussion at a future meeting.

**Mr Torbiörn**, ECPRD Coordinator for macroeconomic research, said that, following the very positive experiment of the Stockholm seminar on central banks and parliaments, the Slovenian parliament had held out the possibility of hosting a macroeconomic seminar in Ljubljana in 2008. However, it was now clear that such a seminar could, for practical reasons, only be held in the spring of 2009, and he thanked the Slovenian authorities for their recent invitation to this effect. The theme would be the relationship between the state budget and the budget of the national parliament.

If, in light of the above, another parliament represented at the present meeting wished to host a seminar on a subject in the area of macroeconomic research in 2008, then this would be most welcome.

As far as a Forum website for macroeconomic research was concerned, it was likely to be somewhat different from the others. He would very much like to take up larger topical issues, such as the present so-called “sub-prime” financial crisis, the recent hike in the prices of various commodities, and globalisation. He was sure many people engaged in parliamentary economic research field would be interested.

**Mr Sawicki** took this occasion to thank Mr Torbiörn for his musical contribution the previous evening, and in particular his song in honour of Ms Coppolecchia.

**Mrs Korzeniowska** (Poland, Senate) asked if Mr van der Hulst intended to build on the existing EUROVOC thesaurus or if he was considering starting from scratch. It might be worth asking various parliaments if they had built up additional thesauri in addition to the EUROVOC one.

**Mr van der Rijn** was glad to read in Mr Viegas’ report that he was planning to take up what had been previously called parliaments on the net. However, this subject should not be dealt with by ICT colleagues alone, as it was very important also for library researchers and others. Co-directors and Coordinators should be asked to bear this in mind because the issue had not been discussed for a number of years and much was happening in this area.

**Mr Santaolalla** referred to Mr van der Hulst’s remarks on seminars in 2008 in the field of activities of parliamentary procedure and practice and confirmed that a seminar on independent agencies and parliament would be held in Madrid in April 2008. This seminar was in the field for which Mr van der Hulst was Coordinator and his contribution to its organisation would be most welcome.

**Mr Marcelli**, joined by **Mr Valente** (Portugal, Assembly of the Republic), referred to the rapidly increasing number of comparative requests and replies. They were included in a list which had been considerably improved but did not yet constitute a true website. He wondered if cooperation could be established between the colleagues involved in the ICT activities and the person responsible for the ECPRD website.

**Mr Sawicki** thought that this question - which included important aspects of access security measures taken at the level of the European Parliament - could usefully be discussed under agenda item 11 “ECPRD website developments”.

Referring to Mr van Rijn’s statement on “parliaments on the net”, Mr Sawicki said that, at the time when the different ECPRD areas of activity had been discussed and the ICT working group had been replaced by the ICT area of interest, the idea had been to group in this area subjects which had so far been treated

separately. These included ICT technology, ICT developments in parliaments and “parliaments on the net”, but also visibility, access to information by members and by staff from outside. It had been thought that all these matters could be grouped together and coordinated by one person because of their inter-linkage. This was also reflected in the terms of reference of the ECPRD Coordinators. It was for the Coordinator to develop activities, present the emphases for the coming year as regards the website, parliaments on the net, etc. Colleagues from national parliaments should be encouraged to contribute important subjects and propose seminars.

**Mr van Rijn** agreed, but said that internet technology was much wider than its technical ICT aspects and that the audience of a seminar in that field would have to be different from one addressing strictly ICT matters.

**Mr van der Hulst** said the existing databases at any rate cover much more than only parliamentary procedure and practice. He proposed to create a more specific thesaurus to allow for better comparative studies. When the legal department in the Belgian parliament started its work in this field, EUROVOC appeared not to be sufficiently detailed for a database on parliamentary law. Therefore something specific was developed that more resembles to the table of contents of manual on parliamentary law than to a thesaurus

In reply to Mrs Korzeniowska’s question whether he had checked for specific thesauri in other parliaments, Mr van der Hulst said he had first wanted to know the reaction of correspondents to his proposals. He would therefore be most grateful if colleagues could let him know if they had, in their research department or in other departments, thesauri on the functioning of parliaments,

**Mr Nowina-Konopka** said that the Polish parliament did not have any specific thesaurus. However, a multilingual vocabulary of parliamentary terms was available and provided a good basis.

**Mr Sosna** said he supported the offer of Mr van der Hulst to prepare a vocabulary or thesaurus of parliamentary terms. The Czech parliament had a similar vocabulary which he would be happy to send to Mr van der Hulst.

**Mrs Rolef** (Israel, Knesset) said she had over the past few years collected parliamentary terms in different languages. Thus, for instance, French parliamentary terms used in Quebec were often quite different from those employed in Belgium. The same held for Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. It would be interesting to make all this available on a website.

**Mr Valente** said that similar problems had been experienced for Portuguese terms in the various Portuguese-speaking countries. A glossary of parliamentary terms of all seven countries was accessible on the website of the Association of Secretaries General of parliaments of Portuguese-speaking countries.

**Mrs Andreeva** (Russia, Duma) said that EUROVOC had been translated into Russian in 1994. About 6000 terms relating to the Russian law-making process had been added.

**Mr Sawicki** thanked Mr van der Hulst’s for his kind offer, while recalling the continued value of EUROVOC.

**Mr van der Hulst** said that he was ready to take as a basis words already contained in EUROVOC and try to define them more precisely. His proposal was not directed at EUROVOC and he did not wish to replace it. The specific thesaurus should start where EUROVOC ended. It was important to agree on a vocabulary because it formed the basis for a table of contents and a thesaurus. At the same time a thesaurus or a table of contents were more than a vocabulary, as they required added intellectual discipline.

**Mrs Korzeniowska** said that already at the time when she had been a member of the Centre’s former working group on the thesaurus, it had been obvious that EUROVOC was insufficient for parliamentary use, forcing various parliaments to create supplements.



**Mr Sawicki** said that one conclusion from the discussion could be the need to organise a seminar on the thesaurus theme, EUROVOC, dictionaries and vocabularies of parliamentary work. It should be of a rather general character, unlike the traditional EUROVOC seminars.

**Mr Hajek** (Austria, Parliament) supported this proposal. The seminar should also evaluate work already done in national parliaments with a view to implementing EUROVOC.

**Mr Sawicki** wished the Coordinators every success in their work.

## **6. ELECTION TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Mr Sawicki** said that the three-year term of Mr Rob Clements, member of the Executive Committee, had now come to an end. The Executive Committee was very grateful to Rob for his many useful proposals and hard work, not least in improving the English versions of various ECPRD texts.

By the expiry of the deadline for candidatures the previous evening at 6 p.m. only one candidature had been submitted, and this by several colleagues. The candidate proposed was Mr Clements.

**Mr Clements was re-elected** member of the Executive Committee for a further term of three years **by acclamation**.

## **7. PREPARATION OF THE MEETING OF SECRETARIES GENERAL IN MAY 2008 - PROPOSAL FOR ECPRD PRIORITIES FOR THE YEARS 2008 AND 2009**

**Mr Sawicki** recalled that the Secretaries General (SGs) of parliaments met once every two years within the framework of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments. The next conference would take place in Strasbourg on 22 and 23 May 2008. At the meeting the SGs would evaluate the ECPRD's work, in accordance with the mandate given to them by the Speakers and Presidents of parliaments.

The document in members' files was similar to that given to the SGs at their meeting in Tallinn in the spring of 2006, containing as it did a set of tasks, objectives and priorities for the Centre. The Co-Directors had added to the document a list of suggested priorities for the ECPRD and they would appreciate reactions from Correspondents so that the whole might be improved before it was submitted by the Executive Committee to the SG Conference.

**Mr Nowina-Konopka** added that suggestions would be welcome up until the Executive Committee meeting in Tallinn in March 2008.

**Mr van Rijn** referred to section 5 of the document which argued that there was insufficient involvement on the part of ECPRD correspondents and wondered whether this really held true. **Mr Sawicki** replied that this should not be understood as criticism but rather that there was room for improvement.

**Mr Clements** agreed with introductory paragraphs which stressed that an active input by all parliaments was essential for the Centre's ability to carry out its mission. For example, the website could be a real platform for parliamentary information only if correspondents and deputy correspondents made spontaneous contributions.

**Mr Sawicki** asked participants to study the paper and send him any comments.

## **8. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE 2008-2009 PERIOD**

**Mr Sawicki** said that the draft programme of activities was based on information received by the Executive Committee in time for the preparation of the present meeting. Two more seminars would be held before the end of 2007, in Ljubljana and Brussels. For 2008 the organisation of a seminar in Vienna (end of May) on parliamentary libraries had been confirmed. Furthermore, Mr Santaolalla had proposed a seminar in Madrid on parliaments and independent executive agencies.

**Mr Santaolalla** confirmed that the seminar would take place in April 2008. He would shortly provide an invitation, a programme and a questionnaire.

**Mr Sawicki** said that the Danish parliament had confirmed the holding of an ICT meeting in Copenhagen in the late autumn of 2008. The draft ECPRD programme also mentioned a seminar on Macroeconomic Research in Ljubljana in 2008 which however, as had been mentioned, would now take place only in 2009. Furthermore, a seminar in Bern on press services for parliamentarians was foreseen for April or May 2009. The next conference of correspondents would take place in Brussels at the invitation of the European Parliament from 9 to 11 October 2008. Finally, the Slovak correspondent had just announced that her country's parliament would be ready to host the 2009 conference of correspondents in Bratislava. A formal invitation by the parliament's Secretary General would be forthcoming.

**Mr Clements** said he had tried to encourage colleagues from other countries to host a seminar on parliamentary research services in 2009, with the last such seminar having been held in Kyiv in 1998. In the absence of any subsequent offer, he proposed to organise the seminar in London in 2009.

**Mr Sawicki** welcomed Mr Clements' proposal and recalled that every proposal for a seminar required the approval of the Secretary General of the parliament or chamber concerned. Correspondents should remember that both the EP and the Parliamentary Assembly were ready to assist hosts as far as they could, such as with interpretation. Correspondents should therefore let Co-Directors know of any such needs

Moreover, the EP and the Parliamentary Assembly would continue their practice of several years to support participation in the ECPRD seminars of colleagues from certain parliaments, as indicated in documentation provided at the beginning of 2007.

## **9. ECPRD GUIDELINES FOR THE ORGANISATION OF ECPRD SEMINARS**

**Mr Nowina-Konopka** at this stage took over the chair and informed the meeting that a new set of guidelines for the organisation ECPRD seminars had been prepared by the Executive Committee in the context of the adoption of the new ECPRD Statutes. The text has been sent to Correspondents in May 2007. Only one amendment had been received, suggesting the deletion of the following sentence in section "Interpretation for seminars": *This has clearly become the practice over the past few years as more and more seminars have been conducted in English only.* He wondered if the Conference could approve the proposal to delete this sentence and subsequently approve the thus amended guidelines themselves.

**Mr Bartsch** (Germany, Bundestag) felt that languages other than English and French should also be considered for interpretation when needed.

**Mr Sawicki** said that, in conformity with the Statutes, three working languages - and sometimes also the language of the host country - were used in major meetings. For seminars sometimes only English and French were used in agreement with national parliaments, since it frequently happened that German speakers also knew English or French. In the event that German speakers asked for interpretation beforehand into and from their language, then this was of course done. The host country language was also often used at seminars. A pragmatic approach was needed, not least for cost reasons.

**Ms Gautsche** (Germany, Bundesrat) said she was happy to find that most documents existed also in German. This was all the more called for since many people in Europe were most at ease with German as a foreign language. It had also to be borne in mind that certain participants were not used to working in the international framework. There was no reason why German should be overlooked in this context.

**Mr Hajek** said that there were only about four seminars per year. Surely the sums needed to provide interpretation also in German were insignificant when compared, say, with those spent on interpretation by the EU. He had nothing against, say, only English being used when everybody felt comfortable in that language. However, when this was not the case, additional languages ought to be provided.

In reply to a question by **Mr Santaolalla**, **Mr Sawicki** said that the sentence just referred to by the Chairman had been deleted in the version sent out to correspondents in May 2007, on the understanding that it would be duly accounted for at the present meeting, as had indeed been done. German remained an

official language of the ECPRD. Any limitations on interpretation undertaken for the reasons referred to in fact concerned only seminars. Chief among them was the concern to bring down costs to national parliaments as far as possible.

**The Chairman** mentioned the major expenses occasioned by interpretation in the EU. In order to save money, the EU had introduced a policy whereby smaller meetings had to make do with only the most widely used languages, with others added only when these were deemed necessary for specific reasons or had been expressly requested.

**Mr Bloch** said he had requested the deletion of the sentence read out by the Chairman for reasons of French official policy. He maintained his suggestion.

**Mr Sawicki** suggested that - in view of Mr Bloch's request and in order to streamline the section "Interpretation for seminars" - the meeting might also wish to take out the first sentence in the second paragraph reading: "*However, in order to reduce the costs of seminars to national parliaments as far as possible, it is acceptable that languages other than English or French are only provided on request*".

**The meeting agreed** on both the request presented by Mr Bloch and the deletion suggested by Mr Sawicki.

**Ms Gautsche** expressed her satisfaction with the decision just taken. This permitted a host parliament to provide its own or other languages when this was felt necessary.

In reply to a question by **Ms Korzeniowska**, **Mr Sawicki** said that reports from meetings could needlessly be prepared in more languages than one if so desired. Any additional documentation from seminars would be welcomed.

#### **10. STATISTICS OF ECPRD COMPARATIVE REQUESTS: 2006 AND 2007**

**The Chairman** said that statistics concerning requests and replies in 2006 and 2007 would shortly be made available to correspondents. He gave the floor to Ms Coppolecchia to outline the situation.

**Ms Coppolecchia** said that the number of comparative requests had shown a consistent increase. Thus, by the end of September 2007, 172 such requests had been made, virtually the same number as for all of 2006. Similarly, the number of replies received had increased by 70 percent from 2006, to reach a figure close to 3,800 in 2007. For further details she referred to her summary of developments in member's files as given in Appendix 1 to the draft ECPRD activity report covering the period October 2006 - October 2007.

Much more could be done in the way of summaries. The European Parliament was not in a position to prepare summaries for others, only for its own requests. It was also important to have well prepared requests in order to facilitate life for the addressees. She would be happy to provide an example of what might constitute a well formulated request.

**Mr Marcelli** thanked Ms Coppolecchia for her excellent work. Even a relatively poor summary was better than no summary at all. Sometimes a mere juxtaposition of replies might do, provided the latter were itemized. He gathered that requesters often did summaries of replies for their own needs. Perhaps these could be sent to other parliaments even if they were in the requesting parliament's own language.

**Mr Travis** (Sweden, Riksdagen) apologised for the fact that the Swedish Riksdag often did not provide summaries. On another score, he pleaded with his colleagues to indicate when they were unable to provide replies, lest the requesting parliament have to wait until the deadline date before proceeding to an analysis of replies received.

**Mr Clements** hoped that all requesting parliaments would provide sample answers to facilitate for addressees. Furthermore, reading the requests would be greatly facilitated if texts did not, as was often now the case, appear on the computer screen in narrow columns instead of filling the whole line.

**Mr van Rijn** said that more and more questions had to be forwarded by receiving parliaments to various ministries. Often replies were late in the coming, presumably to the chagrin of requesting parliaments.

**Ms Rolef** said that her parliament, the Knesset, faced an extra work burden as most of its written material was in Hebrew script.

**Ms Dietrich-Schultz**, joined by **Mr Bloch**, said in reply to Mr Travis and Mr van Rijn that parliaments could not be sure as to when, or indeed whether, ministries to which they had forwarded requests might reply. For this reason, addressee parliaments could not often be any more precise vis-à-vis requesters. **Mr Bloch** added that it was important for requesting parliaments to include only the most important queries in order to make it easier for addressees. It was often difficult for responding parliaments to provide summaries, not least for time reasons.

**Mr Sawicki** pointed to the possibility of placing a public document of relevance on the ECPRD website, and to refer to it in the reply.

**Mr Travis** thanked Ms Dietrich-Schulz and Mr Bloch for their comments. What he had meant was simply that, to the extent it was known from the outset that no reply could be given, then this might be indicated.

**The Chairman**, in summing up the discussion, felt that the meeting had agreed that even an imperfect summary was better than a none at all. Juxtaposition of replies could also be of advantage, preferably sorted by headings.

Secondly, it would be good if the requesting parliament could suggest a format for the desired reply, including by providing examples of the types of information sought.

Thirdly, it was desirable that requesting parliaments limit themselves to questions that could be answered by the addressee parliament itself. Requesters should try to put themselves in the shoes of addressees and take into consideration the amount of work to which questions might give rise.

Finally, addressee parliaments should if possible indicate it straight away if they were not able to reply to a given query, so as to facilitate planning on the part of the requesters.

**The Chairman**, joined by **Mr Sawicki**, said he thought he spoke on behalf of all those present in thanking Ms Coppolecchia most warmly for all her work over the years. It was difficult to imagine that someone could ever pick up her mantle once she had retired, and yet this would somehow have to happen.

## **11. ECPRD WEBSITE DEVELOPMENTS**

### **THE NEW ECPRD WEBSITE - "YOUR PLACE ON THE WEB"**

**The Chairman** gave the floor to Mr Gérard Hilbert of the European Parliament who would present the latest developments as regards the new ECPRD website. It would be operational as from mid-October 2007, including the new "Forums" for the ECPRD's four 'Areas of Activity'.

**Mr Hilbert** introduced the new website. For the full presentation text, please see website <https://ecprd.secure.europarl.europa.eu/ecprd/secured/calend/meeting.do?meid=115>

His team and himself could only, in a manner of speaking, make the bottle for the wine, not the wine itself. He therefore encouraged members to continue to do their utmost to further improve their already excellent "wine". He joined the Co-directors in expressing his great appreciation of Ms Coppolecchia for all her help in preparing the website. The new site would provide extra features on a continual basis. Higher visibility would also be given to the "Areas of activity". In the European Parliament a new project was under way for "full text search" that would also include the ECPRD.

**The Chairman** thanked Mr Hilbert, and through him the European Parliament's Information Technology Directorate, for truly splendid work.

**Mr Marcelli** joined the Chairman in paying tribute to the new website and the work by Mr Hilbert and his colleagues. He hoped that the potential for ECPRD cooperation with national parliaments could now be fully exploited.

**Mr Wijgergangs** (Netherlands, first chamber) very much hoped that the “full text search” referred to by Mr Hilbert could be installed as soon as possible in order to accelerate the search for answers. This should be a high priority for the ECPRD and its ICT group, not least since it could make certain requests for information superfluous.

**The Chairman** said that a reorganisation among the services dealing with this matter was under way. He hoped to be able to report on developments in the near future.

**Mr Hilbert** said that the “full text search”, applied to the European Parliament as a whole, and not only the ECPRD. The project was likely to be ready in about a year.

**Mr Sawicki** also thanked Mr Hilbert for his work and encouraged members to inform the ECPRD about any proposals for improvement they might have.

**Mr Hilbert**, referring the Forums, said that they were meant principally as fora for discussion, not as a document management system.

## **12. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Mr Nowina-Konopka** and **Mr Sawicki** in conclusion thanked their Armenian hosts most warmly for all they had done in preparing the present meeting. Members looked greatly forward to the study visits to be carried out during the remainder of the meeting. Members’ thanks were addressed to Mr Torosyan, Speaker of the Armenian parliament; Mr Kotanyan, Secretary General of the Armenian parliament, Ms Arakelian, Ms Mkrtumyan and Ms Martirosyan of the International Secretariat of the Armenian parliament.

**The two Co-Directors** also noted that this would be the last meeting in which Ms Irina Nistor, Romanian Correspondent, and Mr Klaus Hajek, Austrian Correspondent participated. They thanked them for their major contributions to the work of the ECPRD.

There was no other business

**The Conference was closed** on 12 October 2007 at 4 p.m.