



NEWSLETTER OF THE IFLA SECTION ON LIBRARY AND RESEARCH SERVICES FOR PARLIAMENTS

FEBRUARY 2016



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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Dear Colleagues,

2016 is starting to be a busy year for the Section! In November 2015, the Standing Committee (SC) submitted its action plan for 2016-2017 to the IFLA Professional Committee. The action plan was the result of several weeks of discussion among SC members on how to align the next two years' activities with the IFLA Strategic Plan 2016-2021. We focused on three key initiatives from the IFLA plan: (1) changing attitudes and perception; (2) capacity building - enhancing regional presence; and (3) capacity building - advancing leadership. Within each initiative, we listed the activities that the Section will be doing in 2016 and 2017, and the ways in which we will communicate the activities to our members, one of which is through this newsletter. More information about the IFLAPARL action plan can be found on page 2.

Planning for the major activity of the Section, our annual pre-conference, is ongoing. You may have already seen that the pre-conference website is up and registration is open. We anticipate that many colleagues will attend the pre-conference and I encourage you to register as early as possible. The Section continues to work with the Inter-Parliamentary Union: a number of our members provided input to an IPU request for examples of the innovative use of ICT in parliaments. IPU also provided copies of the "Guidelines for Parliamentary Research Services" for distribution at regional meetings of the ECPRD and APLAC (summaries of the meetings are published in this newsletter).

Finally, I look forward to working with you on the activities that we have outlined in our action plan. I invite you to engage with the Section and the Standing Committee, respond to the call for papers in the upcoming pre-conference, the main and joint sessions at the IFLA WLIC, and to participate in discussions on the Section's discussion list.

Lillian Gassie
Chair, IFLA Section
Library and Research Services for Parliaments

How to join the Section

If you already are an IFLA member, but not a Section member, please go to <http://archive.ifla.org/III/members/form2a.htm> to register as a member of the Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments.

If you are NOT an IFLA member you have to become an IFLA member before joining any Section, <http://www.ifla.org/membership/new-members>.

IFLAPARL ACTION PLAN 2016-2017

Shortly after the 2015 IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Cape Town, the Standing Committee was charged with developing an action plan for 2016-2017 that is aligned with the [IFLA Strategic Plan and Key Initiatives](#). The SC identified three IFLA key initiatives that were most relevant to the community of parliamentary libraries and researchers, and the activities that the Section will undertake to accomplish each initiative.

1. Changing attitudes and perception. The objective of this initiative is to gain recognition within parliaments that library and research services are essential services. The Section will work to identify and share best practices on how to demonstrate the value of parliamentary libraries and research services, exchange information and improve on its promotional materials.
2. Enhanced regional presence, under the initiative of capacity building. The goal here is to increase the participation of the Section in regional network activities, to raise awareness of the role of IFLA and the Section in advancing the work of parliamentary libraries and research services. At the same time, this initiative also complements the first initiative of changing attitudes and perception by raising awareness of the value of parliamentary libraries and research services.
3. Advancing leadership, under the initiative of capacity building. The Section will continue to plan and implement training and knowledge sharing activities within our community, providing leaders and staff with the necessary skills to respond to parliamentarians' changing information and analysis needs and to design their services and products accordingly.

Details on the action plan, including some of the activities related to the three initiatives above can be found [on the Section's website](#).



Share and connect

- Check out the Section's website: <http://www.ifla.org/services-for-parliaments>
- Sign up for the IFLAPARL discussion list, which is open to all members as well as others interested in the Section; <http://www.ifla.org/services-for-parliaments>
- Contribute news about your library and/or research service: email Lillian Gassie, Chair, iflaparl.chair@gmail.com or Karin Finer, Secretary, karin.finer@europarl.europa.eu

PLANNING FOR IFLA CONFERENCES 2016

WLIC 2016



The Section is planning a robust set of programmes at WLIC 2016 in Columbus, Ohio. Based on feedback from the Standing Committee and Section members, we are organizing a more interactive session with a few short presentations followed by group discussions. The theme of the session is “Meeting the needs of parliamentary clients”, with the goal to facilitate the exchange and sharing of practical experience on how participants have been able to meet the changing needs of parliamentary clients. If you have a project or service to share with colleagues, please consider responding to the [call for presentations](#).

We are also planning the following joint sessions:

- with Government Libraries Section, on “[Government and Parliamentary Libraries as Innovators: Supporting Communities of Practice](#).”
- with Law Libraries Section, on “Privacy Law in the Digital Age: Governments Rethink the Meaning of Information Access Policies.”
- with Knowledge Management and Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning, a Knowledge Café on “Continuous Learning in Libraries and their Communities.”

IFLAPARL PRE-CONFERENCE 2016



The host of the Section’s 32nd Pre-Conference is planning an interesting pre-conference, as reflected by the information on the [Pre-Conference website](#).

Registration is open and will end on 29 April 2016. Due to a need to limit the number of attendees and to encourage representation from as many parliaments as possible, the Standing Committee has decided that each parliamentary library or parliamentary research service will initially be assigned two seats at the pre-conference. Additional registrants will be placed on a waiting list and will be informed by 17 May 2016 if space is available. Individuals who are not working in a parliamentary library or research service will be accepted to the pre-conference on a case-by-case basis.

[A call for papers has been issued](#).

The Chair and Secretary wish to express their thanks to the Standing Committee and other members of the Section who helped in organizing the events and sessions at the 2015 pre-conference and the 2015 WLIC. We look forward to your continued support and participation in the 2016 pre-conference and WLIC in Washington, D.C. and Columbus, Ohio.

RECENT EVENTS

APLAP BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2015

By Dianne HERIOT, President APLAP

The [Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Asia and the Pacific](#) (APLAP) held its [Tenth Biennial Conference](#) at Australian Parliament House between 30 November and 3 December 2015. APLAP was founded in 1990 to encourage cooperation and knowledge sharing between parliamentary libraries and research services in the Asia-Pacific region. It's major focus is improving the quality of library and research services provided to parliamentarians by its member organisations.



The theme of the 2015 conference, which was attended by over 50 participants from 22 member countries, was the 'role of legislative libraries and research services in supporting the Legislature and the development of inclusive democratic governance'. In addition to formal presentations under each of the themed sessions –research services in Parliamentary Libraries, gender mainstreaming parliamentary library research, understanding clients, library trends and innovation, and issues in collection and information—the program featured short 'Postcard sessions' in which members talked about issues affecting their library or research service. The Chair of the IFLA Library and Research Services for Parliament, also attended to talk about our IFLA section and deliver a personal message from Donna Scheeder, IFLA President. The presentations are available [here](#).

A meeting of delegates from Pacific Parliaments was convened following the conference.

At their business meeting on 1 December 2015, APLAP members elected a new executive:

President - Dianne Heriot - Australia
Vice President Asia - Emma Rey - Philippines
Vice President Pacific - Asha Kumar - Fiji
Treasurer - Katherine Close - New Zealand

ECPRD ANNUAL SEMINAR 2015

By Ida KELEMEN Ph.D., ECPRD Correspondent of Hungarian National Assembly

The annual seminar of ECPRD (European Centre of Parliamentary Research and Documentation) Area of Interest Libraries, Research Services and Archives was held on 24-25 September in Budapest, hosted by the Hungarian National Assembly. The meeting was attended by 67 participants from 32 countries representing 38 parliaments (chambers) and ECPRD.

The seminar titled "*Libraries and Research Services Serving Openness and Transparency of Parliaments*" was inaugurated by the Hon. Márta MÁTRAI, Principal of the National Assembly (appointed Deputy of the Speaker) and Ms. Siiri SILLAJÖE, ECPRD Coordinator Area of Interest Libraries, Research Services and Archives. This was followed by a keynote speech on the transparency and openness of parliaments and a presentation of the survey results on national practices concerning the topics of the seminar (answered by ECPRD member institutions in advance).



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ECPRD ANNUAL SEMINAR 2015, CONTINUED

The seminar was divided into three panels, covering the following main topics:

- Public availability of research papers (publication, editorial policy and control system);
- Public library services (digitization, indexing and publication of parliamentary documents; information on the Parliament and parliamentary documents for public library users and general public);
- Participation of libraries and research services in parliamentary programmes for general public and youth (partner libraries programmes, special databases, Open Days and educational programmes).

The 15 presentations made during the three panels were followed by intense discussions. The main discussions were on the principal change in the interpretation of the concept of research papers' transparency (based on the judgment of the Federal Administrative Court in Germany obliging the Bundestag's Research Services to provide the public unrestricted access to their analyses and studies) and the (im)possibility of promoting parliamentarism.

During the seminar the [Guidelines for Parliamentary Research Services](#), a joint publication between IFLA and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), authored by the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments, was introduced and distributed among the participants.

At the end of the seminar, participants were invited to the 2016 pre-conference of the IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments in Washington, D.C., hosted by the United States Library of Congress.

NEWS FROM PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES & RESEARCH SERVICES

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH SERVICE: EMPOWERING MEMBERS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

Launched in November 2013, the European Parliamentary Research Service represents a major step-up in the research and scrutiny capacity of European Parliament's secretariat. With over 300 staff, its mission is to provide Members with 'independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, policy issues relating to the European Union, in order to assist them in their parliamentary work'. EPRS responds to a clear need for an enhanced in-house capacity to inform Members well on a broad range of policy questions. This support is important, especially since EU legislation tends to be technical and often more detailed than national law and since Members typically only have a limited number of assistants working to support their legislative activities.

EPRS builds on an earlier, more modest analytical service for individual Members provided by the Library, dating from 2009, and the creation of a new department dedicated to impact assessment and European added value in 2012. Its philosophy is to be independent, objective and authoritative in the work undertaken; to provide a comprehensive service, backed by specialism in all policy fields; to be client-oriented and responsive directly to the needs of Members; to offer a single point-of-entry for Members and a rapid response to requests; to ensure the clear, simple branding of all products and services and to complement written material with greater 'in person' briefing of Members.

EPRS is organised in three directorates, though Members can access all services through a single 'Members' Hotline'. The **Members' Research Service** provides analysis for Members collectively on subjects of importance across Parliament's fields of work, and delivers such services upon request to individual Members. The **Library** manages and provides physical and online access to Parliament's information sources and databases to Members and staff. The **Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value**, assists committees in better scrutinising the work of the European Commission and other EU institutions at all stages of the legislative cycle.



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NEWS FROM PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES & RESEARCH SERVICES

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH SERVICE: EMPOWERING MEMBERS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE, CONTINUED

Focus on Members

EPRS is a highly *client-driven* parliamentary research service which aims to be more than just a 'research provider' (for which there are 'competitors' on the market), by providing a *comprehensive range* of products and services empowering Members and committees through knowledge and contributing to the Parliament's effectiveness and influence as an institution. Its 'unique selling proposition' is to *answer Members' requests* for information, research and analysis (through a priority Members' Hotline), to *keep Members well-informed and up-to-date* and to *help them making an impact* in all phases of the legislative cycle through a widened and deepened range of products, which enables them to influence agenda-setting, scrutinise the executive and assess the effects of EU legislation. EPRS furthermore helps Members to *engage with the external world* (by making its products available for re-use and by pushing them to its own social media channels) and *offers key training* to the staff in a Member's office.

With regard to these services, ideally a number of 'service transactions' leads a Member to realise that EPRS can offer valuable support on several fronts: a policy analyst in EPRS might for example have written a briefing on a specific policy issue, which might subsequently have led to a request by a Member for an 'in-person briefing' to answer further questions and the same publication might have been made available at a conference organised by the Member on the topic. In terms of awareness of our services, these kinds of comprehensive and sustained efforts tend to stick in the minds of the Member more than a set of loose transactions. Timeliness and quality of service provision are of paramount importance in meeting the needs of a Member ('*at the right time, with the right product, for the right client*'). There would be little point, for example, in making available a high quality study, if the Member were to indicate that the study came too late to be useful for parliamentary work.

Outreach to Members

Making Members aware of EPRS was very high on our agenda, as at the start of the current 8th parliamentary term in mid-2014, some 48.5% of the 751 incoming Members were entirely new to the EP. Immediately after the elections and in order to promote the full range of EPRS products and services directly with Members, a small 'Client Needs Team' was created, drawing on a wider support by staff in the services. A 'client strategy' was adopted and a number of actions were launched including providing a personalised information pack to all Members and setting up an intense series of tailor-made visits to them. Senior management addressed political group meetings and visited key EP office holders, more than 120 national delegations of Members were contacted for a group presentation and as many as possible visits to individual MEPs were undertaken. In parallel, the large community of Accredited Parliamentary Assistants to Members was informed on the practical use of services provided. Overall, we found a lot of interest especially as we managed to demonstrate how EPRS could contribute to the parliamentary work of Members.

Outreach also meant ensuring proximity of products and services offered. In order to ensure *physical proximity*, we created a unique phone number for Members to contact us, we developed an EPRS antenna adjacent to the exclusive Members' bar and we organised various 'pick-up points' for Members to grab a copy of our latest publications on their way to a meeting. In terms of *online proximity*, we made a clear strategic choice for a high online presence inside the EP but also on the external 'Europarl' website and social media channels (Wordpress blog, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest) as this would also allow us to reach internal clients 'from the outside'. Finally, *human proximity* meant developing the ability for staff to act as 'ambassadors' for the service by familiarising them with the EPRS products and services across the board and by developing their skills to address clients through a 'smart assertiveness' course. A toolbox was developed to help staff approach and inform Members, including practical tips, useful guidelines, a standard script and a set of answers to frequently asked questions about our services by Members.

These efforts paid off, as at the end of 2015, we had covered nearly 80% of Members with visits and well over 75% of MEP offices had already submitted requests to our Members' Hotline.

NEWS FROM PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES & RESEARCH SERVICES

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH SERVICE: EMPOWERING MEMBERS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE, CONTINUED

Monitoring use and client satisfaction

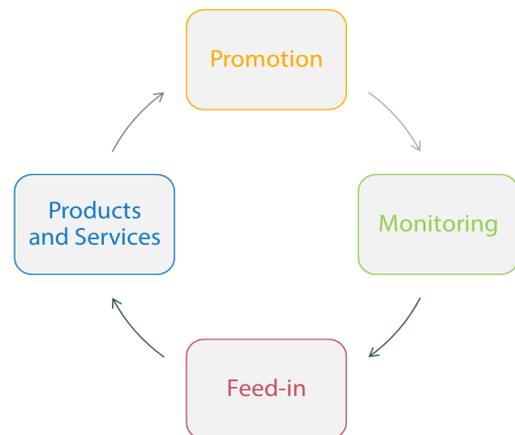
In order to monitor the use of services and, more difficult, to measure 'client satisfaction', we started from the outset to track data obtained from various reporting tools such as aggregated data on requests received through our Members' Hotline, data on outreach activities, online usage data, publication production data as well as useful data on the quotation of and external referencing to EPRS and its publications by Members, in the quality press, in academic literature and by the world at large, as an indirect way of demonstrating value of our work to Members.

An advanced reporting system providing 'market-intelligence' helps us to better understand the needs of clients, measure the 'return on investment' of the services EPRS provides and determine how to capitalise on current resources and shape future investments.

When we speak about assessing *client satisfaction*, we actively monitor and respond to feedback received from Members further to requests for research and information (our Members' Hotline was specifically designed to encourage feedback). Detecting trends or patterns in feedback consequently allow us to determine how well we meet our clients' needs, understand how and where they need our services and adapt the content and format of what we provide.

Where do we go?

After a first phase of making sure all Members were well informed about EPRS support provided, we moved on to developing a more permanent and comprehensive system to gather feedback from clients and to ensure feed-in of this feedback into our production processes. We are notably trying to establish a 'Client Needs Cycle' which consists of four – overlapping – phases each of which adding a new emphasis for action. These phases could be labelled Promotion, Monitoring, 'Feed-in' and 'Products and services' adaptation. The reasoning is that at the end of the cycle, newly developed products and services will themselves create the occasion and necessity for the adaptation of promotional actions (leading to a re-start of the cycle with focus on phase 1) whose effects have to be monitored (phase 2) etc.



The cycle will force us to continuously identify and evaluate new and innovative ways to empower Members. Henry Ford famously said that you cannot build a reputation on something you *are going to do*: we need to make sure good ideas are further developed and find their way to implementation. For every product or service we develop we should then ask ourselves who could be interested in it and how it could reach Members.

Finally, client orientation in all work undertaken by EPRS has become one of our 'key result indicators', which means that we will continue to monitor to which extent the wide range of services to Members are taken up and re-used. A more detailed indicator on 'frequency of use' can illustrate the overall number of Members actively (re-)using our products and services and will allow us to guide investment in services, set targets and develop contacts with Members.

By Alec Vuijsteke, Head of Client Needs Team, European Parliamentary Research Service (alec.vuijsteke@europarl.europa.eu)

The content of this article is the sole responsibility of the author and any opinions expressed therein do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Parliament.