



IFLA Section Library and Research Services for Parliaments

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I welcome readers new and old to the IFLAPARL Newsletter. This is my first Newsletter appearance as Chair, but I have been associated with the Section since 2000, with an interlude 2010-15, and served as Secretary in 2007-9.

IFLA and IFLAPARL face a challenging situation. There are issues arising from political developments and from the changing role and nature of the library & information sector and – in some areas – financial cutbacks in services. We need to use our knowledge and resources (including an established network) to maintain our connections, as well as our professional leadership in the sector. This lies behind some of the programme planning for the Pre-Conference and Conference in 2020. We need services to pull together and support IFLAPARL with their intellectual and professional input but also to support it in a practical way by maintaining or starting membership subscriptions. Without IFLA there is no IFLAPARL and its work on professional guidance and standards, its network and its conferences. IFLAPARL has another dimension with the adherence of research services, and we must ensure that this professional area is served fully by IFLAPARL – whatever that takes. This then would be my mission in becoming Chair:

1. to stabilise IFLAPARL membership in a challenging global context;
2. to maintain IFLAPARL's professional and intellectual leadership in the sector; and
3. to ensure that parliamentary research is an equal partner in IFLAPARL.

We have established a strategic plan that follows from past years but adds some emphasis on the points above. We are working to increase IFLA's understanding of our sector and its needs.

The planning for the 2020 Conferences is quite far advanced with the generous cooperation of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service. Calls for papers have been issued for both. The arrangements for Pre-Conference registration are underway: it is strongly advised to complete an expression of interest before 22 March. The form to express an interest, together with all essential information, is on the [IFLAPARL 2020 site](#). There are three steps to registration:

1. You express an interest before 22 March, with no commitment;
2. We confirm a pre-registered place sometime afterwards, probably in March/April, and you accept and can make firm travel plans, or decline the place;
3. You complete the final registration in May/June.

There is some pressure on places at the event: we have the capacity to accommodate as many people as attended in Warsaw and Athens, but little flexibility to go higher than that. We aim to give all IFLAPARL subscribed members the chance of at least one place, then those places remaining will be distributed. More news on this will follow shortly.

As Chair, I was invited to the conference of ECPRD in November and gave a presentation, as requested by the organisers, of the **practical ethical issues faced by services** in delivering 'evidence' for policy work. This was an extension of the ethics checklists produced by IFLAPARL. The conclusion of the presentation was that if an ethical approach depends simply on having people who are 'good' then it will, ultimately, fail. What is needed is at least an aspiration to a systematic professional approach.

Ed Wood, Director of Research at the UK House of Commons presented in the same session on ethical issues and Guido Heinen, Director of Research at the Bundestag gave the keynote. The conference ran over two days with many interesting contributions including by colleagues known in the Section including Ida Kelemen, Anthony Teasdale, Penny Young, Mary Mazanec, Heather Lank and Wolfgang Hiller. A particularly novel element was provided by speakers from the US Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office, describing their missions and operations.

Iain Watt, Chair of IFLAPARL

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JOIN US

If you are already an IFLA Member and would like to join our Section, please go to [Member Online Service](#) to manage your membership account and join our Section.

If you are not an IFLA Member, you must become one before joining any section. More information is available at the [New Members](#) site.

Joining IFLAPARL will give you priority for our Pre-Conference registration. The Pre-Conference provides a great opportunity to learn about the management of parliamentary library and research services, to hear colleagues' thoughts about key issues facing us, and to discover innovations from around the world. It is a place to establish worldwide professional contacts and friendships that might last a career, and beyond. See more about the Pre-Conference on page 3.

STAY CONNECTED

This Newsletter is published twice a year, in February and in July. To contribute to the Newsletter, please contact IFLAPARL Secretary Sonia Bebbington (Sonia.bebbington@parl.gc.ca) or IFLAPARL Information Coordinator Ellie Valentine (infoiflaparl@gmail.com).

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Visit the [Section's website](#) which includes links to our Action Plan, previous Newsletters, publications, meeting minutes, and more.

And finally, be sure to list your Service in the [World Directory of Library & Research Services for Parliaments](#).

If you have any problems connecting, send an email to infoiflaparl@gmail.com

2020 CONFERENCE and PRE-CONFERENCE PLANNING



IFLA Section
Library and Research Services
for Parliaments



Seirbhís Thithe
an Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas Service

The Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section (IFLAPARL) is pleased to announce its 36th Pre-Conference hosted by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, Dublin, Ireland, from 12 – 13 August 2020.

Theme

- *The parliamentary life of information: how library and research services provide value for parliaments, Members and citizens.*
- Please [see the full call for papers here](#) and consider contributing to our programme.

Date

- 12 & 13 August 2020, with possible IFLAPARL activities to be confirmed for the 14th

Venue

- The 2020 IFLAPARL pre-conference is hosted by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, with meetings taking place offsite.
- Tours of Leinster House, the seat of the Houses of the Oireachtas, will be included in the programme.

Registration

- See [details on completing an expression of interest](#) before 22 March.

[Letters of invitation](#) can be generated from the WLIC Conference site.

86th WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS
The [2020 WLIC](#) will be held in Dublin, Ireland at the
Convention Centre Dublin (CCD) from 15 – 21 August 2020.

IFLAPARL will once again host an open session, entitled *Evidence-based policy' and parliamentary library & research service practice: what works?*

Our [call for papers](#) is available on the conference website, so please consider contributing to the programme.

Additionally, we will have two business meetings. These are yet to be scheduled, but please join us for news of IFLAPARL activities.



REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

News from the Documentation and Information Center - Brazil

By Janice Silveira

1. Editorial Experience



In 2019, in order to disseminate the editorial production of the Brazilian Parliament and bring the institution closer to society, the Chamber of Deputies participated in 7 international book fairs and biennials in different regions of Brazil. Around 55 titles on the legislative process were presented, legislation, culture, citizenship and other topics under debate in the Parliament. Edições Câmara's - the editorial arm of the House- ebooks can be downloaded for free [on the site](#) and at Amazon, Google, Apple and Kobo stores. In 2019 alone, there were more than 500 thousand downloads and the Chamber's publications were among the most downloaded lists.

2. KESA – Emergency Collection Security Kit



In an unprecedented initiative in Brazil, the Chamber of Deputies adopted a new technology aimed at increasing the security of its collections: The Emergency Collection Security Kit (KESA). Twelve containers have been distributed in the main spaces where Chamber's collections are located. Those containers have tarps, bucket, sand for the containment of chemical substances, individual protective equipment, among other items. Teams were trained on how to use the technology and care for the preservation of cultural heritage if necessary.

3. Third Seminar on Archives Management of the Federal Legislature



The seminar was promoted by the Archives of the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate and aimed at discussing the present and future challenges of the archivists and institutions in the context of the General Law for the Protection of Personal Data (Law 13.709 / 18). Although the law will only come into force in August 2020 it has already impacted the methods used in the archives and thus highlights the relevance and urgency of the proper treatment of personal data collected during citizens interactions with governmental institutions.

4. First Meeting of Writing, Audiovisual and Archive Staff

The meeting, promoted by the Association of Secretaries-General of the Portuguese-speaking Parliaments (ASGPLP) and hosted by the Federal Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, was attended by representatives of the parliaments of seven countries: Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor-Leste. The representatives discussed models of organization of legislative information, joint actions of the two houses in the legislative process, topics related to news coverage and other related topics. The meeting allowed for the exchange of good practices and generated perspectives for an increase in technical cooperation initiatives.



Workshop Report, IFLAPARL 2019: Science and Innovation in Parliamentary Libraries and Research Services

By Dr. Fotis Fitsilis, Hellenic Parliament

On the second day of the 35th Pre-Conference of Parliamentary Research and Library Service, which took place in the premises of the Hellenic Parliament, the hosts organized a special twin workshop on Science and Innovation in Parliamentary Libraries and Research Services.

The workshop featured some innovative case studies from the Hellenic Parliament Library, the Scientific Service and beyond, as a series of lightning talks, leading into an interactive discussion of participants' own experiences. Some of the case studies included, but were not limited to:

- Crowdsourcing of parliamentary studies,
- Users' access to legal discourse in parliamentary Libraries and
- Doing science in the parliament.

Workshop organizer and IFLA member Dr. Fotis Fitsilis, Head of Department for Scientific Documentation and Supervision in the Hellenic Parliament, opened the session with a presentation of the [Hellenic Optical Character Recognition \(OCR\) Team](#), which represents a novel scientific crowdsourcing approach aiming exclusively at the processing and study of parliamentary data. This is an informal yet powerful initiative which builds on the simple idea that a decentralized group of people may accelerate both processing and study of textual data with the goal to create parliamentary (linked) open data. The highlight of the talk was a [short video](#) to display the methods and technologies used by the *Hellenic OCR Team*. Dr. Fitsilis described participation in the platform as a unique opportunity for members to network and contribute towards a higher cause in a state-of-the-art scientific field. Creative opportunities of financial and inter-institutional support were mentioned, such as the successful participation at the Google Summer of Code and the efficient use of internships from affiliated domestic universities.

Dr. Maria Kamilaki, Head of the Parliamentary Library Department in the Hellenic Parliament and a linguist, focused on the role of parliamentary libraries in facilitating users' access to legal discourse, i.e. the idiosyncratic genre used by lawyers, government officials, administrators and others, which is often completely foreign to the layperson. Given the importance of the popularization of legal texts, libraries can go a step further from providing simple access to reliable legal resources to becoming key intermediaries for the public in close reading of parliamentary texts. Apart from traditional interventions, such as citing sources of plain language information and printed glossaries of legal terminology, librarians can navigate readers through a wide variety of open-access digital tools, such as comparative multilingual legal vocabularies like the one accessible through the webpage of the [Court of Justice of the European Union](#). Controlled vocabularies (e.g. [Eurovoc](#)) and terminology data bases (e.g. [IATE](#)) allow users to explore legal terms, collocations and coinages, by citing definitions, semantic relations (proximity, equivalence, opposition etc.), comments on stylistic and pragmatic usage and many more. Moreover, syntactic parsers can simplify complex sentences, providing part-of-speech recognition, while automatic summarization of lengthy documents and powerful visualization tools (e.g. [Voyant](#)) can help everybody see through the opaque legal text. The options are endless, so long as someone is ready to think out-of-the-box!

Dimitrios Garantziotis, intern in the Scientific Service of the Hellenic Parliament and law student in the Law School of Athens, made a short presentation on the possibilities and the opportunities a parliament can offer to a prospective lawyer in the field of scientific research. Starting from common problems in the field of legal research and assistance, Mr. Garantziotis focused on the analogy that exists between parliamentary discourse and scientific research, where in both occasions there is a debate on often controversial matters, highlighting that a parliament should encourage and promote closer collaboration with scientists, and showcase key contributions to society as a way to increase people's trust in the institution.

There was a vivid interest for the presentations, for crowdsourcing in particular, and several participants contributed to the subsequent discussion. For instance, Blagnienė Renata, Head of the General and Bibliographic Information Unit at the Seimas, Lithuania, referred to the ability to consistently add and train new members to the *Hellenic OCR Team*. Dr. Alexandros Koutsogiannis, Hellenic Parliament Scientific Service, mentioned that data-driven results from academic research could positively contribute to parliamentary discourse. Wojciech Kulisiewicz, Director of the Sejm Library, Poland, questioned the possibility to universally apply FAIR data

principles to parliamentary data, due to their considerable size and different formats. Krisztina Kardos, Hungarian National Assembly, described the use of infographics to attract and inform a larger audience, a practice that is also widely used by the European Parliament. Furthermore, Janice Silveira, Library Director in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, underlined the inherent difficulties due to the lack of financing, mentioning that creative solutions are not always without risk.

All in all, it has been a successful workshop that motivated participants to look after possibilities for cooperation, e.g. within the IFLA or the Interparliamentary Union networks, to fuel exchange of good (or bad) practice and to be innovative in each dimension of institutional development.

All [2019 pre-conference materials](#) are available on the IFLAPARL website.

Workshop Report, IFLAPARL 2019: The Influence of the Digital Society on Parliaments

By Sonia Bebbington

Using the International Parliamentary Union's [2018 World e-Parliament Report](#) as a jumping-off point, this discussion-based session saw participants exploring with their international counterparts the aspects of the digital society which have an influence on the people, content and processes of Parliament. Through small group discussions, the session encouraged a greater understanding of the nature and extent of the influence of digital shifts in their own and others' jurisdictions.

After defining both the digital society and the e-Parliament, we explored as a group the evolution of digital changes to parliamentary library and research work. Beginning with the example of digital collections management, we discussed the shift from print through to discrete digital books, and into the current era of disparate and increasingly granular data as a means of disseminating, accessing, and indeed repurposing information. The challenges relating to this shift were discussed, including the fundamental de- and re-contextualisation of the data, the challenges related to integrity and preservation, and those relating to accessibility.

Following this discussion, the workshop separated into smaller groups, and with examples of different digital societal shifts (including the 24/7 news cycle, the rise of social media as a news source, and the desire to use social media to increase citizen awareness and engagement). Participants chose examples for discussion, bringing their own jurisdictions' experiences to bear.

Outcomes of the discussions included an awareness of the continued digital divide in some jurisdictions, the use of multiple systems to ensure both preservation and access to information, significant changes in the nature of research and reference products and services to support more multi-media elements (e.g. more visual information; short audio podcasts), and the challenges around supporting member use of social media for parliamentary purposes while remaining cognizant of the library and research service's requirement to remain non-partisan.

All [2019 pre-conference materials](#) are available on the IFLAPARL website.

Workshop Report, IFLAPARL 2019: Change Management

By Ellie Valentine

During the pre-conference hosted by the Hellenic Parliament, incoming IFLAPARL Section Chair Iain Watt led a workshop on Change Management. During two sessions thirty-three participants discussed the various types of changes experienced in their library and research services and exchanged views on how to effectively address and manage those inevitable change processes.

Discussions focused on changes: internal to the service; internal to parliament; associated with changing technologies; associated with societal transformations; and with the business and professional environment.

A focused discussion and exchange of experience was discussed after reviewing a [summary of Change Management approaches](#).

All [2019 pre-conference materials](#) are available on the IFLAPARL website.

Seminar Report: European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD)

By Eschel Alpermann

On 7-8 November 2019, the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) hosted its third annual seminar for parliamentary research services and libraries in the framework of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD). The seminar on 'Empowering through knowledge: Parliamentary research in an era of disinformation and information overload' drew 69 participants from 34 parliamentary chambers of ECPRD member countries as well as from the European Parliament. Iain Watt, chair of IFLAPARL, featured as a special guest.



Discussions were structured around five topical sessions. Setting the scene, a panel of directors of five parliamentary research services moderated by Anthony Teasdale, Director-General of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), kicked off proceedings by discussing managerial challenges and how to bring about success. Luigi Gianniti, Director of the Research Service of the Italian Senate, Penny Young, Librarian and Managing Director for Research and Information of the UK House of Commons, Mary Mazanec, Director of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) of the US Congress and Dr. Heather Lank, Parliamentary Librarian of the Library of the Canadian Parliament, discussed their understanding of - and the preconditions for - success, the internal and external threats to parliamentary democracies, and the corresponding pressures and implications for research services.



In a second session, four presenters - Giovanni Rizzoni, head of the Research Department of the Italian Camera dei Deputati, Hodaya Kain, Director of the Knesset's Research and Information Center in Israel, Alexandra Holle from the Hungarian National Assembly and Alec Vuijlsteke, head of EPRS' client needs team - presented and exchanged views on best practices in welcoming a new parliament. They attempted to identify the right approach with newly-elected members of parliaments and the most efficient way of familiarising them with the available library and research services and how they can best optimise these services in their parliamentary work.

Following the successful interventions of the OECD and the World Bank at the two previous ECPRD seminars, this year's session on 'Working with partners' featured presentations by a set of partners from Capitol Hill, notably the Congressional Research Service, the Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office.

We also premiered a keynote speech delivered via video-link by the head of the German Wissenschaftliche Dienst, Guido Heinen, in Berlin. In this fourth session, he addressed the challenges of supporting evidence-based policy-making in the current political context and reflected upon ethical guidelines for independence. This was complemented by a presentation by Iain Watt, Chair of IFLAPARL as a special guest of the ECPRD seminar, on the ethics check-list for parliamentary research services, which has been worked up in the Section for Library and Research Services for Parliaments (IFLAPARL) of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). Another presentation followed, by Edward Wood, the Director of Research of the UK's

House of Commons, on objectivity and expertise in parliamentary research, which illustrated the struggle for the case of evidence-based policy-making in times of Brexit.

A final session was devoted to policy evaluation. The EPRS' own Director for Impact Assessment and European Added Value, Wolfgang Hiller, shared the first findings and results of an ECPRD request submitted in summer 2019 on how national parliaments deal with ex-ante impact assessment and ex-post evaluation. Twelve parliamentary chambers in the EU currently engage substantially (or on a smaller scale) in ex-ante impact assessment. Given that the Irish Houses of the Oireachtas had hosted an ECPRD seminar on this very topic in 2016, and feature among the most active in this field, Catherine Lynch shared the Irish parliamentary experience thus far in building up capacities in these areas. Karl Repplinger, the European Parliament's Director for Economic and Scientific Policies, rounded off this last segment of the seminar with an insightful presentation on the new challenges ahead and how best to prepare parliaments to deal with them.

As a new initiative, the 2019 edition of the Brussels ECPRD seminar was preceded by a fringe meeting held in a video conference format, that linked the ECPRD seminar in Brussels to the the international seminar of the National Assembly Research Service (NARS), which took place on the same day in Seoul, South Korea, for the tenth successive year. The chief of NARS, Dr Hajoong Kim, and the Secretary-General of the European Parliament, Klaus Welle together with Anthony Teasdale, moderated a lively world-spanning virtual exchange among the parliamentary research services of the G7 countries, other European countries and Asian states such as Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Cambodia, among others. Discussions touched upon optimisation of quality, service and delivery to members of parliaments, how to adapt to the changing needs of members, how to empower them to scrutinise governments, as well as how to tackle disinformation and address fake news. Ida Kelemen, Head of the Hungarian Parliament's Information Service for Members of Parliament and coordinator of ECPRD's Parliamentary Libraries, Research Services and Archives area of interest, as well as Katrin Ruhmann, Co-Director of ECPRD, took this opportunity to report on the ECPRD's main activities.



Supporting Ghana's Parliament to use data to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

By Verity Warne

Comprehensive data for monitoring the progress of SDG implementation is crucial to enable parliaments to perform their oversight and accountability role effectively and ensure no part of the country is left behind. Led by the [African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs \(ACEPA\)](#) in partnership with the [Ghana Statistical Service \(GSS\)](#) and [INASP](#), **Data for Accountability** is the first project specifically aiming to strengthen the use of statistics in parliamentary oversight and representation in Ghana.

The SDGs pose challenges for many countries which have committed to the 17 goals but are not equipped to monitor progress. Incomplete statistical coverage of the indicators is a key part of the problem. Despite strong shared support for the SDGs from multiple branches of government, collaboration between parliament and the statistics service in Ghana has been limited. Recent reforms of the national statistics systems (supported by a Statistics Bill introduced in 2019) provide the opportunity to change this.

But, the production of high-quality data is not in itself sufficient for monitoring progress towards the SDGs; this must be accompanied by its systematic use:

- Parliamentary researchers, librarians, committee clerks and other staff who are responsible for providing evidence to decision makers need to be able to easily access, interpret and use data to answer MPs' questions and prepare reports and analysis to inform committee oversight of the government.
- MPs need to be able to see the status of key indicators such as health, education and infrastructure in their constituencies so that they can represent their needs.

Data for Accountability will help Parliament to oversee the implementation of the SDGs in Ghana, by providing the evidence needed to monitor progress and advocate better for their constituencies. In addition to supporting Parliament's oversight of SDG progress, the project aims to strengthen the capacity of parliamentary research officers to provide MPs with data and evidence that is most relevant to their work.

Parliamentary research staff identified a number of key opportunities for increased capacity during the needs assessment phase of the project including, the use of data to forecast achievement of SDG goals. Analysis of SDG data and understanding of SDG indicators, connecting SDGs with other frameworks such as Agenda 2063, and communicating the analysis of SDG data to MPs.

Data for Accountability will use a range of approaches to strengthen the collaboration between data producers and parliament and support parliament to use data to oversee progress towards SDGs, including training and mentoring of MPs, parliamentary staff and GSS staff.

DAP will support the development of constituency specific data - enabling MPs to better monitor the SDGs in their communities and represent constituents' needs.

An SDG desk will be established within the Parliamentary Research department to support committees to track and report on SDGs, and a Data Fair will be instituted to enable producers of research to showcase the availability of important data to parliament.

This project is situated in an important, intersection between the evidence informed policy, parliamentary strengthening and data sectors, and will generate crucial learning on how using data to support the legislation, representation and oversight functions of parliaments could further progress towards the SDGs.

We'll be sharing learning as it emerges, so if you'd like to hear more – sign up to the [DAP mailing list](#) to receive occasional email updates, and for more information see our [project page](#).



Photo by Jonathan Ernst, World Bank

The Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Canada: 2019 Conference Report

By Sonia Bebbington

The Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Canada (APLIC) met for their annual conference from 16-19 September 2019. The conference was hosted by our colleagues of the [Legislative Assembly of Alberta](#) in Edmonton.



Highlights of the conference program included a keynote address by Dr. Steve Patten on the theme of non-partisanship. Dr. Patten is Associate Dean (Research) and Professor of Political Science in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta:

Modern parliamentary democracy is organized in relation to a party system, but it is supported by nonpartisan offices and officers. Developing an understanding of what it means to be politically attuned, but nonpartisan is essential to the democratic legitimacy of the system.

We also hosted two guest speakers, presenting about emerging trends in both Archives and Academic Libraries.

Sessions by conference delegates included:

- The Current Media Landscape – issues in both licensing and service provision
- Library Metrics – presentations from three jurisdictions on stats, measurement, metrics and more
- Library Promotion following election
- Library Transformation

The Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Canada was founded in 1975 with the principal objectives of improving parliamentary library service in Canada, fostering communication among members concerning matters of mutual interest, identifying issues requiring research, and encouraging cooperation with related parliamentary officials and organizations.

As diverse as the jurisdictions they serve, Canada's parliamentary libraries today are as much about connections as collections. Traditionally housed in beautiful historic settings, these libraries have evolved as premier information centres that provide easy access to specialized resources not only for political representatives, but in many cases for the public as well.

Learn more about APLIC at our [website](#).

Cooperation of libraries and research services of the parliaments of the Visegrad Group countries

By Agata Karwowska-Sokołowska, Polish Senate



The cooperation of libraries and research services of the parliaments of the Visegrad Group countries was initiated by speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Hungary. In March 2008 she sent a letter to the chairmen of the chambers of parliaments of the Visegrad Group countries in which she pointed to the benefits that could result from closer cooperation between libraries and information and research services of the parliaments of the member countries of the Group: the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary (V4). These countries, having years of shared historical experience behind them, at the same time became members of the European Union and faced similar challenges. Therefore, mutual access to library resources and studies of research services has become expedient.

In December 2008, the first meeting was held in Budapest, which was attended by representatives of the administration of the parliaments of the V4, at which preliminary cooperation proposals and a draft work plan were established. The cooperation declaration was signed in July 2009. According to it, the purpose of cooperation is to enrich the scope and to raise the standard of information and analytical services of parliaments and to express achievements in solving problems common to the region.

In order to implement the provisions arising from the signed declaration, the following conferences were held:

- Prague, September 2009, *Digital parliamentary library of the V4*
- Bratislava, February 2010, *Databases in national parliaments V4*
- Budapest, March 2010, *Best practices in the Parliamentary Libraries and Research Services in the context of the EU Presidency*
- Bratislava - Papernička, September 2010, *Meeting of the editorial board of the Digital Library of V 4 Plus states' national parliaments*
- Warsaw, September-October 2010, *Bringing the Parliamentary Research Services on a Common Linguistic Platform*

At the meeting in Bratislava in September 2010, representatives of parliamentary libraries and research services of the Visegrad Group countries and Austria have reviewed the proposed layout of a common portal of the Digital Library and recommend its use in the project's implementation. Participants from V 4 states agreed with the participation of the Parliamentary Library of the Austrian Parliament in the aforementioned project.

As a result of the cooperation, in 2012, Visegrad [Digital Parliamentary Library website](#) was launched. The aim of the website is to enable the access to important parliamentary documents of V4 countries and Austria from a unique site. Furthermore, it contains the outline of the history of parliamentarism in individual countries, their current structure and main attributes.

Annual meetings of librarians and researchers of V 4 Plus parliaments have been organized since 2017. Three seminars have been held so far: in Prague (2017), Budapest (2018) and Warsaw (2019). The meetings concerned issues related to cooperation, exchange of information and further development of a common website. The Hungarian site initiated a weekly staff exchange program, involving one staff member from each institution to be held annually. In addition, participants exchanged experiences and information on current activities, projects and challenges in individual chambers in the field of library activities and research services.

Guide to sources of parliamentary research publications in English

Iain Watt, Information@Work (Independent member)

In February 2020 I launched a [guide to sources of parliamentary research services in English](#) – to my surprise, this information does not seem to have been collated in one place before. There has been a high level of interest worldwide.

I used the guide as a basis for several custom search engines (based on Google) that allow a single search of a set of sources to deliver an integrated search result. The search on the main page of the guide covers a selection of research services worldwide, while regional search engines cover [Australasia](#) (national parliaments of Australia and New Zealand plus the state parliaments of Australia for which research publications are available); [European Union 'parliamentary'](#) (European Parliament, Committee of Regions, Economic & Social Committee and the Council); [Indian subcontinent](#) (national parliaments of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka); [All UK parliaments](#) (both Houses of the UK parliament plus the parliaments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland); [Ireland](#) (the Oireachtas of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Assembly). There are caveats to the use of these search engines (all should be considered BETA) explained on the site. If your service publishes parliamentary research in English and is not in the guide, or you want to suggest an improvement or correction, please get in touch via the website or email informationatwork@use.startmail.com.

Both Spanish and Portuguese language parliaments have expressed interest in creating similar guides.

The guide is part of a [website](#) which includes practical examples and advice on service development and service strategy together with papers on concepts and issues in the sector, the product of a 30 year career managing information and research services. New papers and posts will be added regularly.

IFLA Government Libraries Section Mid-Term Conference

Iain Watt, Information@Work (Independent member)

The conference 'Informed Parliaments, Engaged Citizens, Effective Government' was held 5 – 6 December 2019 at the headquarters of the UK Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) hosted by the DWP library. The published programme can be found [here](#), although the final version was somewhat different. IFLAPARL was not formally involved but I had been asked to speak in a personal capacity.

My presentation concerned the [relevance of evidence-based policymaking \(EBPM\) to parliamentary library and research services](#), and how this connected with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This is the background to the IFLAPARL session at the 2020 IFLA conference in Dublin.

The conference included some very strong case studies of the use of evidence in policy in government, including within the DWP itself – and the role of the library in supporting that. Donna Scheeder underlined the relevance of library services to the achievement of SDG 16, the goal that actually underpins all of the other SDGs. Access to (good) information, information for accountability and transparency in government, and information for better

decision-making – all of these are fundamental. And in all of them, parliamentary library & research services may have a role. We heard about the uses of social media and some nice library success stories. Penny Young (UK House of Commons) and Anthony Teasdale (EPRS) gave the delegates some insight into management issues in their parliamentary services. Stephen Wyber, the Policy & Advocacy Manager of IFLA, provided an overview of the global context and chaired/introduced the sessions. In all, it was a well-attended, interesting and very well hosted event.

UPCOMING RELATED MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

ICEGOV 2020

I would like to inform you about the **ICEGOV 2020** conference (**April 1-3, 2020**) in Athens. I am putting together the inaugural invited session on "Standards in legal informatics and their practical implementation", which will also handle digital transformation issues in parliaments. If you are working on the topic kindly consider attending this landmark conference as an appetizer prior to the IFLAPARL and IFLA-WLIC in Dublin.

Dr. Fotis Fitsilis, Hellenic Parliament

Global dialogue on Post-Legislative Scrutiny: The experience of parliaments, Brussels Eschel Alpermann

Parliaments have gained considerable experience in monitoring the extent to which the laws they have passed are implemented as intended and have the expected impact. Therefore, Post-Legislative Scrutiny has become an important tool for increasing government accountability and is part of the oversight role of parliament.

To discuss relevant parliamentary developments in Europe in further detail, an international workshop will take place on **Thursday 23 and Friday 24 April 2020** at the European Parliament in Brussels. The event is co-organised by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) and the European Parliament's Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments, in cooperation with the OECD's Regulatory Policy Committee and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy.

The conference will discuss the role of parliaments in regulatory governance, current ex-post evaluation practices from selected national parliaments, and evaluation as a shared responsibility of different EU actors along the policy cycle.

Attendance at the workshop is free, but the number of places is limited. Please [email](#) to register.

The 20TH APLESA Annual Conference, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, May 2020

By Simon J. Engitu; Secretary General

In fulfilment of its constitutional mandate, the Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) is finalizing arrangements to host the 20th Annual Conference and meeting of the association from **18- 22 May 2020** at the Kingdom Hotel in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. The theme of this conference will be "Parliament Library and Research Services: an interface for knowledge driven, Macro-economic growth." This theme provides a platform for discussion on the impact of knowledge sharing on the economy and development.

Invited participants will be treated to a number of activities which includes the pre-conference training on the 16th May 2020 covering topics on Producing Quality Research, Post Academic Research Life, and on Strategies for Managing Virtual Workplace and Libraries.

It must be noted that all member parliaments have been invited together with a few local government assemblies of selected member countries. In the last couple of years several Clerks or Secretary Generals of Parliaments have also been in attendance. The Chair of the IFLAParl has always been invited and we look forward to welcoming The IFLAParl Chair or a Representative to participate in the APLESA conference. We wish to encourage the IFLA section to be involved and encourage APLESA for development of the region.

NEW BOOKS & ARTICLES

Post-Legislative Scrutiny in Europe -- How the oversight on implementation of legislation by parliaments in Europe is getting stronger

De Vrieze, Franklin (2020), Westminster Foundation for Democracy, 48 p.

As parliaments start to pay more attention to their responsibility to monitor the extent to which the laws they have passed are implemented as intended and have the expected impact, Post-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) is emerging as a new dimension within the oversight role of parliament.

This new publication analyses emerging structures, procedures and methodologies shaping parliaments' ability to conduct PLS. The practices in seven national parliaments in Europe -- Belgium, Germany, Italy, France, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom -- are analysed against four different categories of parliamentary approach to PLS: passive scrutinizers, informal scrutinizers, formal scrutinizers and independent scrutinizers

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The paper highlights how different parliaments put more emphasis on one or the other of the two dimensions of PLS: (1) to evaluate the technical entrance into force and the enactment of a piece of legislation; (2) to evaluate its relationship with intended policy outcomes and the impact.

To the extent that parliaments seek to carry out both dimensions, PLS facilitates continuously improvement of the law itself and policy implementation. PLS thus contributes to increased governance effectiveness and accountability.

The publication “Post-Legislative Scrutiny in Europe” is the newest in a series of reference documents published by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy as part of its programming for legislative reform, deepening oversight and parliamentary effectiveness; the full publication can be accessed [online](#).

Release of the *Bibliographic References on the Chamber of Deputies*

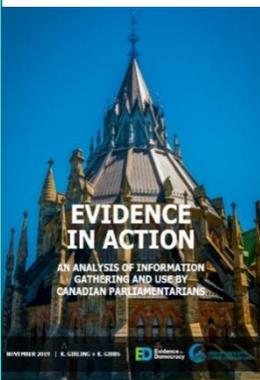
Edited in December 2019, the *Bibliographic References on the Chamber of Deputies* is a guide to sources of research on the Chamber starting from the promulgation of the Federal Constitution in 1988. The guide has been structured in six fields:

1. History, composition and representation;
2. Constitutional powers, internal regulations and legislative process;
3. Debate of ideas and appreciation of propositions;
4. Parliamentary ethics
5. Popular participation and interaction with society;
6. Employee management and other administrative issues.



Release of report: *Evidence in Action (Canada)*

Evidence for Democracy, an Ottawa-based research organization promoting the transparent use of evidence in government decision making in Canada published *Evidence in Action* (available in English only), an analysis of how Canadian parliamentarians gather and use information.



Although the sample size of 17 members of the House of Commons used for the analysis is small, the report features valuable insights into how the work of the Library of Parliament is perceived. A key finding was that the Library was generally considered to be “the most credible, reliable information source,” with 94% of MPs reporting using the Library as part of their information-gathering process.

The report noted that “(i)n general, MPs preferred the Library because it allows them to make tailored requests for information that is specific and relevant to their individual needs, and because the results are unbiased, non-partisan and delivered quickly.”