# IFLA Section Library and Research Services for Parliaments

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I hope that this message finds you, and all around you, well. The last Newsletter was only in February, but it already feels like it was a different era. We were looking forward to an exciting pair of conferences in August, working well with our Irish colleagues and anticipating a pleasant reunion with old friends from round the world. I set out my objectives as Chair with some optimism they could be achieved. A few weeks later and it was becoming clear that the conferences would not be viable and the way forward for IFLAPARL altogether less certain. Our Pre-Conference was cancelled, followed by the main IFLA conference (the WLIC). The plans for IFLAPARL were for a different world and need re-thinking.

The 2021 IFLAPARL and IFLA events will be in the Netherlands as planned but, in a change of plan, the 2022 WLIC of IFLA will be in Dublin. For 2021, we have the kind agreement of the parliament of the Netherlands to host our pre-conference in Den Haag (The Hague). The WLIC will be in Rotterdam. The venue for the WLIC in 2023 has yet to be announced but will definitely be outside Europe following a run 2019-22 of Athens, Rotterdam and Dublin. It goes almost without saying that there is no absolute certainty that these conferences will go ahead, and there may be barriers to attendance if they do. They are unlikely to be like conferences we have known in the past. IFLAPARL will strive to ensure that the professional activity of the Section continues through whatever place, format and medium will work, and that its professional activity is as inclusive as possible.

We had excellent programmes in prospect for the 2020 conferences and the Standing Committee has decided that we will roll those programmes over to 2021. The Pre-Conference programme may, however, vary somewhat according to discussions in the Section and with the hosts. One obvious new topic would be our response to the pandemic. Colleagues who proposed papers in 2020 for the Pre-Conference or main conference will be asked if they wish their proposals to be considered for 2021. We will also be open to new and revised proposals for papers.

The Committee discussed the idea of a virtual conference in 2020, using the proposed papers, but noted significant challenges for IFLAPARL to run such an event this year. We also considered a publication of the papers by IFLA but that also posed challenges for a questionable level of benefit.

We propose instead that in the last quarter of 2020 we will run a 'global catch-up' for IFLAPARL members and followers. This would consist of an online event that will allow colleagues to briefly present news and service innovations from their services – a kind of 'lightning talk'. There is great work going on out there and it would be wonderful if IFLAPARL could help share it. We are aware that different time zones and technological factors make it difficult to run such an event live and open to all participants, so we are looking for a solution that addresses that. IFLA does provide some facilities which may give that solution. More news when we have it, but meantime it would be good to hear from services interested in making a short 'update' presentation. To do so, please contact the IFLAPARL Secretary.

The survey that IFLAPARL has run on responses to the pandemic gives clear evidence of the resilience and ingenuity of parliamentary library & research services. The most striking result was how services found a way to keep going – digital and remote offers really came into their own, but even where work was paper-based, services found some ways to carry on and deliver for their clients. Thanks to everyone who has contributed so far – they have been great to read, even moving. There are

still responses coming in – the survey will stay open to at least 31 July, so you are welcome to submit a response for your service if you have not already done so. I hope to publish a final analysis by September.

The survey offered anonymity in order that colleagues could feel safe to report problems as well as successes. This has worked well but prevents me from publicising in detail the inspiring stories that have been told. Everyone is welcome to tell their stories – and to share useful information – on the COVID-19 forum of IFLAPARL. Anyone in the sector can sign up to the forum – contact IFLAPARL Info Coordinator to join.

The parliamentary library & research sector has a notable range of regional associations that operate in parallel to IFLAPARL at the global level. As part of its 2019/20 Action Plan, IFLAPARL has reflected on its role in relation to those regional bodies. What could or should the global body do, what is our unique offer? To quote from a recent letter sent to the regional associations:

"It is clear that the members of a regional association may have a great deal in common and greater opportunity to cooperate than is feasible at a global level. Much of the work of a professional association can and should be done at a regional level. The question for IFLAPARL in that context is: what is the added value that a global association can bring? How do we complement the regional associations? We believe that IFLAPARL brings value to your regional association, and to all regional associations worldwide, in five ways:

> 1. IFLAPARL offers a truly global perspective: parliamentary services from many countries, cultures, development levels, sizes and models of services, types and models of parliaments, etc. enriching the network of participants. While the strength of a regional association may be what they have in common, IFLAPARL's strength is its diversity. Questions may be raised, and innovations shared at IFLAPARL that you would not find in your region alone.

> 2. IFLAPARL is unique in the sector in having a global role. It can synthesise global professional guidance and standards which may aid their acceptance at institutional level. It can articulate professional concerns that may be difficult to express at institutional or even regional level. It has a connection to global bodies and a voice in global fora, even if both could be stronger. IFLAPARL can increase value by improving communication and joint coordination at global level. This would have the aim of focusing common efforts, helping to reduce any unnecessary duplication and maximising the impact of beneficial developments. IFLAPARL can serve the regional associations as well as member services in this global role.

> 3. IFLAPARL connects its members to a wider professional world. Members have the opportunity to collaborate with other IFLA Sections such as Knowledge Management, Law Libraries, Government Libraries, Government Documents, and bring a diverse professional (also international) perspective to their work.

> 4. IFLAPARL provides a kind of working model for new and developing associations and can mobilise practical support for a regional association that needs or desires it. IFLAPARL provides at least a basic network in regions where there is no association, or it is inactive.

> 5. IFLAPARL explicitly and strongly represents research services and supports professional cooperation amongst them. Some regional associations may be mainly or wholly concerned with library services. Library services are in any case very well networked whereas parliamentary research is much less so."

The letter went on to suggest some practical ways that IFLAPARL and regional associations could cooperate immediately and inviting associations to respond on these reflections and on their ideas about cooperation. Please get involved and encourage your regional association to engage in this process!

I wish you all the very best in the months ahead.

Iain Watt, Chair of IFLAPARL

## 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 on the IFLA site.

## STAY CONNECTED

This Newsletter is published twice a year, in February and in July-August.  To contribute to the Newsletter, please contact IFLAPARL Secretary Sonia Bebbington or IFLAPARL Information Coordinator Ellie Valentine.

**Join our mailing list, and check out IFLAPARL on Twitter**

Visit the IFLAPARL section website which includes links to our Action Plan, previous Newsletters, publications, meeting minutes, and more.

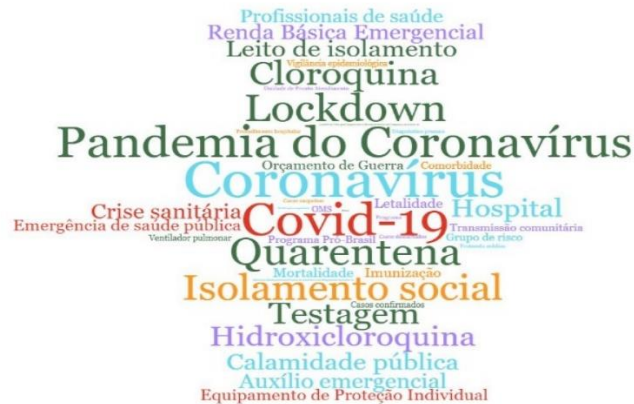And finally, be sure to list your Service in the World Directory of Library & Research Services for Parliaments.

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

# REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

## News from the Documentation and Information Center - Brazil
By Janice Silveira

1.  **Chamber of Deputies Thesaurus (TECAD)**



In times of COVID-19 pandemic the most sensitive activities of the Brazilian Parliament have been performed via a Virtual Plenary model. The team responsible for organizing and managing the Chamber of Deputies Thesaurus (TECAD) has been facing a challenging period as it has been having to deal with fairly new and unfamiliar national and international subject matters that have had seldomly come up in the past years. Those subject matters require a careful terminological study to allow for the effective organization of knowledge on a tight time spam.
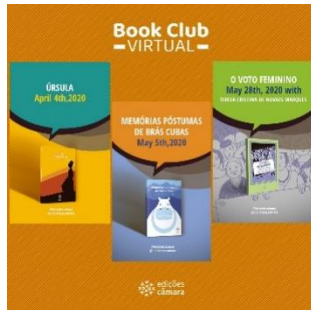
In order to respond to the high demand for legislative information indexation the number of requests for terminological studies at TECAD increased some 25% compared to the same period in 2019. For instance, May 2020 was the month where the team had the highest production rate with 345 requests for new terms analyzed and the addition of 500 new terms in the Thesaurus, most of which related to social, economic and sanitary initiatives to be adopted by the Brazilian Federal Government. Those initiatives relate mainly to emergency aid for low-income citizens, financial aid to states and municipalities and financial aid to small and medium-sized businesses.

These new terms also guided the elaboration of the thematic page about the coronavirus and the tagging of related news on the Chamber of Deputies website.


2.  **Coronavirus page at the Chamber of Deputies web Portal**

In the Coronavirus-Covid19 thematic page of the Chamber of Deputies Portal, there is a specific area with data on the pandemic evolution and other general information collected by the Documentation and Information Center. The goal is to offer specialized and accurate information on the subject to the general public. We gather most of the information from the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization publications, state and worldwide legislation on the subject, databases with free accessible content among other sources of information.
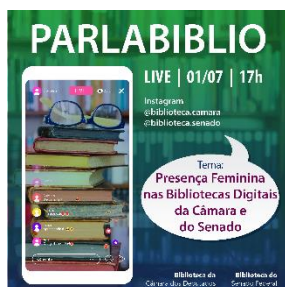
### 3. Virtual Book Club



The Virtual Book Club is an initiative developed by Edições Câmara and the Chamber of Deputies Library aiming at encouraging reading in times of social isolation. At each meeting of the club, one of the books published by Edições Câmara is selected to be debated in a live on Instagram. Among the books already discussed are classics from Brazilian literature, by authors such as Maria Firmina dos Reis and Machado de Assis, and the book 'The Female Vote in Brazil', which addresses facts and curiosities on the struggle for women's political rights.

The Edições Câmara makes e-books available for download free of charge. Promoting free and universal access to information and culture is especially important during this period marked by social isolation due to the quarantine. There has been a significant increase in the number of downloads from the Edições Câmara website. Some books, such as 'The Female Vote in Brazil' downloads for instance saw over 2,000% increase in this period. The e-books published by Edições Câmara can be downloaded on the Livraria da Câmara website, Amazon, Apple Store, Google Play and Kobo platforms.

### 4. Parlabiblio



Parlabiblio is a joint initiative sponsored by Libraries of the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate created during the quarantine. Parlabiblio is a live on Instagram hosted by professionals from both institutions aiming at presenting library's online services and publications, and the promotion of reading mediation.

Parlabiblio uses social media to promote to the general public the value of the services both libraries can provide to them.

### 5. Chamber of Deputies Digital Preservation of Documents

The Documentation and Information Center is a pioneer of digital preservation in Brazil. The project implementation process started in 2012 as a Documentation and Information Center (Cedi) sectoral project. However, due to the complexity and scope of the endeavor, it had to be embraced by several areas of the Chamber of Deputies.

To achieve the project's objectives, the following important steps were carried out, among others:
- conducting feasibility tests on software available worldwide, resulting in the choice of Archivematica software for managing the repository for the preservation of digital archival documents;
- modeling of the digital preservation processes of the Chamber of Deputies;
- Archivematica integration with Access to Memory (AtoM) for dissemination and access to digital archival documents.

The adopted software meets national and international requirements for the preservation and dissemination of digital documents. After completion of the project, the Digital Preservation Service of the Chamber of Deputies was created in 2019.

We aim to integrate the Archivhematics software with Dspace (software used by the digital library of the Chamber of Deputies) and with the Computerized Archival Document Management System (SIGAD).

# Knesset activity during the Covid-19 pandemic

Deena Tzadok, Knesset Research and Information Centre

**Background**:
Following parliamentary elections held in Israel in March 2020, the 23rd Knesset was sworn in, and shortly thereafter, during the period of time until the formation of the government and establishment of the Standing Committees, various temporary committees were formed to deal with urgent business. Specifically, the **Special Committee for Dealing with the Novel Coronavirus** was formed on 24 March and held many meetings on various issues related to the response to Covid-19.

In May the new government was formed, and subsequently all 12 permanent committees of the 23rd Knesset have been established and currently active (alongside 5 special committees which have also been formed, including a **Special Committee on the Novel Coronavirus and for Examining the State's Preparations for Epidemics and Earthquakes**).

Regarding parliamentary activity, starting the week of 3 May 2020, the Ministry of Health allowed for **reopening of most** (but not all) **industries**, including in the public sector, **under the social distancing rules and strict hygiene conditions of the "Purple Badge" – a set of specific rules for opening businesses and services, receiving customers and employing workers**. The Knesset administration has implemented the Purple Badge rules set out by the Ministry of Health for the public service.

Therefore, **there is currently no limitation on the number of MKs who can attend plenary and committee meetings**. Obviously, any MKs who have been exposed to verifiedCovid-19 patients, displaying symptoms or tested positive are meant to self-isolate and not come to the Knesset or participate in parliamentary activity.

**In the Plenary:**
According to the current guidelines, **all 120 MKs can participate and vote in the Knesset Plenary at the same time, while still abiding by social distancing between all persons**. This is implemented by dividing the MKs between the two levels of the plenary hall: some MKs in the seats on the floor of the plenary, and others in the press gallery;3 in all cases there are one or two empty seats between each of the MKs. Each MK has an assigned seat on one of the two levels and can vote from his/her place by means of the electronic voting system which has been routed to the new seats by the Computer and Technology Department of the Knesset.

In meetings where there is not full attendance, the MKs often prefer to sit on the main level of the plenary so they can reach the podium easily when they rise to address the plenary. In meetings where there is full attendance each of the MKs will sit and vote from their assigned place and they will be spread out on both levels. During the course of the meeting, the microphones are cleaned between each of the MKs.

**There is no possibility of participating or voting remotely in the Knesset Plenary**.

**In the Committees:**
**According to guidelines adopted at the beginning of the outbreak, the Knesset committees were convened simultaneously in two large committee meeting rooms** with a video connection between them so that all those present in both rooms were considered to be present in the meeting. In order to allow for social distancing and to limit the number of those present in each room, only MKs (including MKs who are not members of the committee) and Knesset staff were allowed to enter the rooms; other participants joined in the meetings using Zoom. In each room, a staff member was present to assist in counting votes when necessary.

On 19 April the Temporary House Committee decided **to allow MKs to participate in committee meetings by video-conference**, but only if they meet one of the following conditions: (a) have been positively diagnosed with Covid-19, or (b)

are in home isolation, or (c) are in a high risk group; this decision only relates to remote participation and **does not allow for voting remotely**.

More recently, **some of the committee meetings have been held in only one large committee room**. This was possible in view of the fact that **Perspex partitions have been placed between each of the seating places in the committee rooms**; these partitions allow for seating of up to 43 persons in the large permanent committee rooms, with a physical barrier in between people in accordance with social distancing rules.

The microphones and seating areas are cleaned between meetings and as necessary.

**Knesset administration and staff:**
All those employees necessary for running the Knesset meetings must be physically present in the Knesset; some of those who can work from home are doing so. Anyone entering the Knesset must have their temperature measured.

According to rules set out by the Knesset Director General, **social distancing** is practiced at all times in the Knesset buildings and specific accommodations were made in rooms where there was not enough space between employees' seating area, such as use of Perspex partitions. As for hygiene, cleaning fluid dispensers have also been placed in many spots around the building. Furthermore, **all Knesset staff are required to wear masks in the Knesset**, unless they are alone in their office. There is an expectation that MKs wear masks as well, although there is no ability to formally obligate them to do so.

## News from the Korean National Assembly Library
Anna Lee

The Korean National Assembly Library has temporarily restricted walk-in use for the public since February 24 to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it has remained open to provide general services for lawmakers and staff of the legislative support agencies.

With the world watching it with interest, the Korean government held the 21st National Assembly elections on April 15. Thanks to the K-quarantine and social distancing measures, no additional confirmed cases occurred during the election. In line with the start of the 21st National Assembly, the Library provides and promotes various services such as hosting a training session exclusively for first-term lawmakers regarding the use of Library services. It has also published *The History of the Seventy-Two Years of the National Assembly by Statistics*. By looking at trends in terms of gender, occupation, and academic background of lawmakers elected as representatives of the people, we can see the changes in our society. It also helps to get a glimpse of political history in terms of the changes in the party negotiation groups in which they belong. It explains the activities related to the budget and settlement of accounts, as well as those related to parliamentary audits and parliamentary investigations, led by legislative activities.



The National Assembly Members' Reading Room has been remodeled for welcoming the 21st National Assembly members and setting the members' publications for exhibition. The collection for the exhibition exceeds over 225 books of 178 members of the National Assembly. The Library used to train the new aides of the Assembly, but such gatherings are avoided these days so special promotional teams from both the Parliamentary Information Office and Legal Information Office visit the members' offices in person instead to promote the library services face-to-face.

# EPRS during the coronavirus crisis: How we managed a 'continuity+' business
Etienne Bassot

When in mid-March the Belgian government announced the lockdown of the country, the European Parliament quickly moved to 100 per cent teleworking, as did the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). The global pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns did not prevent the European Parliament from continuing its work: for the first time in history, Members were able to participate remotely in EP proceedings. Hence the need for EPRS to continue to deliver its services, following the motto 'empowering Members through knowledge'.

Besides the difficulty of adjusting to work from home, the loss of direct interaction with colleagues and clients, and the resulting changes in Members' needs forced EPRS, like many other parts of the Parliament's administration, to make unprecedented adaptations and innovations.

Distribution channels were quickly adjusted to reflect the new situation. While distribution of paper copies represented an important part of the EPRS strategy for reaching its clients before the coronavirus crisis, digital publications have now become by far the most important communication tool. To better adapt to digital reading, our publications now include even more, visual features, such as graphs, charts and maps.

Interaction with Members has changed too. Phone requests have dropped, replaced by emails and requests on our interactive platform. In-person briefings, which were traditionally delivered in the Members' office, now take place remotely over various online platforms. Policy events and book-talks are now being held online, rather than in the Library Reading Room of the Parliament, with recordings featured on the EP website afterwards. The same goes for the information sessions on knowledge sources provided by EPRS to the whole Parliament community, which are nowadays done online too.

On the research side, we have devoted particular attention to work touching upon the coronavirus, its consequences and the EU's response to it. In doing so, we have covered a wealth of policy areas. Suffice to mention that, since March 2020, EPRS has produced some 300 publications, over half of which related to the coronavirus crisis in some way. Communication and outreach also had to change: our regular newsletter to the parliamentary community is now more frequent and its contents go beyond our own output. We now include selected material from other reliable sources on the nature and impact of the pandemic, and the role of the Union in countering it. Overall, we would describe these adaptations as 'continuity plus' business. Keeping and adapting our core activities, but also developing additional products.

In all of this, we launched new research projects to explore the work of national parliaments and their responses to the coronavirus crisis in 27 Member States. A number of briefings published between May and July 2020 provide a comparative overview of Member States' institutional response, focusing on three main aspects. First, they analysed whether Member States were equipped with constitutional provisions to deal with the emergency situation and, if so, whether they made use of them. Second, they identified the nature and content of the main legislative or regulatory means used to counteract the pandemic. Third, they looked at the role of parliaments during the pandemic, in particular what type of oversight was exercised in the 27 EU Member States. These briefings have provided a qualitative assessment of the measures taken in relation to the national legislative and constitutional settings.

Moreover, the pandemic also raised specific challenges for parliaments, whose functioning is based on the principles of pluralism, deliberation and transparency. That is why EPRS analysed provisions adopted by the European and national parliaments to ensure the smooth functioning of the legislative bodies. These provisions varied a lot among Member States. Indeed, some Parliaments went entirely digital, using remote technology to ensure all Members were able to take part in parliamentary work, including voting. Others opted to adopt parliamentary decisions with a reduced number of members, while ensuring the balance of power between the different political groups was maintained.

State of Emergency: Situation in certain Member States, I, II, III, IV
Parliaments in emergency mode, How Member States' parliaments are continuing with business during the pandemic.

## IFLA – Government Information & Official Publications section (GIOPS) requests survey participation

IFLA – GIOPS has developed a 15 minute-survey in order to find out about challenges, problems and ideas of Government Librarians and Librarians working in related fields, and requests the participation of IFLAPARL members.

Cornelie Butz, GIOPS Chair, writes:

By analyzing the survey results, we hope to improve IFLA services for Government Librarians in the future. Since your Section is representing Parliament Libraries and Research Services and our Section is dealing with Government Information, we thought it might be helpful to have the link to our survey shared by your section to reach an even broader audience.

The survey is open until July 31, and results will be shared with IFLAPARL thereafter.

## News from the Canadian Library of Parliament
Submitted by Sonia Bebbington

**Launch of the Virtual Experience of Parliament**



The Library of Parliament, on behalf of the Parliament of Canada and in collaboration with the National Film Board of Canada, was proud to launch *Parliament: The Virtual Experience*.

While this is an opportune moment to be able to offer a virtual experience due to the pandemic, this project has been in development for some time and was initiated in anticipation of the closure of the Centre Block, which houses both chambers of our legislature, for restoration.

The new public outreach initiative uses innovative technologies to transport you from your homes into Centre Block, where the Senate, House of Commons, Library and other spaces come to life with vivid sound and imagery.

The program includes virtual reality (VR), online and classroom components, each one offering different ways to experience Parliament. The VR is an immersive journey, combining photorealistic views of Centre Block with rich sound, colour and light. The online experience allows you to scroll through the building and watch as specific elements emerge in finely illustrated detail. The third element, the classroom program, will bring VR kits to schools across Canada, offering students a one-of-a-kind learning opportunity about Parliament. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the classroom program has been postponed, but we look forward to making it available to Canada's teachers at an appropriate time.

## IPU's Parline database has a new look and features!



*A free resource with over 600 data points provided directly by national parliaments on their structure, composition, working methods and activities.*

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is pleased to inform IFLA members of the latest developments to its flagship Parline database on national parliaments, available in English and in French.

- A new design interface aimed at improving user experience
- New pages on the list of **Speakers**, **Secretaries General** and **Parliamentary Elections** that aggregate data across all chambers, updated every time a change occurs.
- **"Latest news"** at the bottom of the homepage to provide updates on the election/appointment of new Speakers, Secretaries-General, or other major parliamentary developments.
- **Global and regional averages of women in parliament** which can be filtered by month and year
- a **List of Field**s page identifying the 100+ fields housed in the **Compare data on parliaments** section where uses can view, download and share data via a map, lists and charts

Take a look at the "Getting started" video (English / French) to find out more.

Contact Ms. Addie Erwin or Ms. Hiroko Yamaguchi to provide feedback or for more information.

# UPCOMING MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

## Are emergency measures in response to COVID-19 a threat to democracy? Fact and Fiction.

An international digital conference

Thursday 10 September 2020; 9:00 – 17:00 h (UK time).

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, over 100 countries have passed emergency laws or declared states of emergency. The restrictive measures have been accompanied by a worrying narrative about the negative impact of these measures on democratic processes and human rights.

The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS) and Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) are co-organizing an international digital conference concentrating on the nature of emergency legislation adopted in various countries in response to the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. The digital conference will be based on the presentation of new

research findings in response to the Call for Papers. The aim is to amass enough information so that we can begin to tackle this narrative on the basis of factual information rather than assumptions.

Key discussion points:

- Procedures for the adoption of emergency measures by parliaments and executives
- Fast-tracking of legislation by parliaments and executives
- Content, timespan and proportionality of emergency measures
- Drafting aspects of emergency legislation or legislation used for emergency situations
- Areas of expansion of authority of the executive and what safeguards are put in place
- Impact of national emergency legislation on the rule of law, human rights, privacy rights
- Monitoring and evaluation of impact (post-legislative scrutiny) of emergency legislation or legislation used for emergency situations
- Sectoral, national or comparative case studies
- Mechanisms to review, amend, limit, or reverse emergency legislation and emergency powers, including review and sunset clauses

Speakers are academics, researchers, parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, legislative specialists, legislative drafters, think tanks and parliamentary development practitioners who have submitted a full paper with the new research findings.

The conference is free but advanced booking is required: please register here.

## NEW BOOKS & ARTICLES



Murphy, Jonathan and De Vrieze, Franklin (2020), **Parliaments and independent oversight institutions -- Global and country-specific analysis of parliaments' relationships with Supreme Audit, Anti-Corruption and Human Rights Institutions,** Westminster Foundation for Democracy, 40 p.

Independent oversight Institutions are an increasingly important aspect of contemporary governance around the world. While certain independent oversight institutions, such as Supreme Audit Institutions, have a long history, the number and range of independent oversight institutions has burgeoned in the past thirty years, and some countries now have numerous independent oversight institutions, many reporting directly to parliament.

Independent oversight institutions can strengthen the quality of democracy through providing specialized oversight of key aspects of governance; issues such as public financial management, respect for human rights, and the fight against corruption.

This study explores independent oversight institutions and their relationships with parliaments as a step towards understanding how these relationships can be enhanced in order to strengthen both oversight institutions and parliaments. It explores the framework of institutions in a number of countries, looking at different types of models and their advantages and disadvantages. It concludes by proposing approaches that can help strengthen the relationship between parliaments and oversight institutions in different governance and institutional contexts.

It can be accessed here.