



Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section



In a rapidly changing world all parliamentarians are confronted with challenges in finding relevant, appropriate information to support the decisions they make and the actions they take. The work of parliamentary libraries and research services is to support the parliamentarians and their legislatures.

The current challenges faced by parliamentary libraries and research services in serving parliamentarians and legislatures include:

- technological advances, which have led to profound changes in the information needs and expectations of parliamentary clients;
- limited resources and expertise, which sometimes hinder the provision of quality service;
- a decline in requests for traditional library services and materials, accompanied by a growing demand for more complex and multi-faceted analysis;
- the need to work with partners from other jurisdictions to develop and implement successful, innovative strategies to address these challenges.

Work of the Section

The section aims to assist members in the challenges they face in their work by focusing on activities in these areas:

- increase the effectiveness of parliamentary libraries and research services;





Section members at Management workshop day

- develop and promote standards and best practices in providing information and knowledge to parliaments;
- exchange experiences, knowledge and problem solving, and promote networking, amongst parliamentary libraries and research services as well as with others serving in a political environment;
- provide a forum for the identification of emerging issues relating to legislative processes;
- promote the establishment of libraries and research services as a fundamental component in the development of democratic legislatures throughout the world;
- promote openness, transparency and the strengthening of democratic participation through the provision of information about parliaments to citizens.

Section membership

The Section's current membership brings together the leading professionals in over 80 parliamentary libraries at supranational, national and subnational levels in more than 50 countries. The institutions represented range from one-person libraries to services with hundreds of staff members, some operating on very limited resources and others more generously funded. Some are led from the most senior levels in their parliaments, others have to struggle to make their voice heard. This Section provides an invaluable source of support and expertise to all its members, and has a particularly strong sense of mutual respect and friendship.

Parliamentary libraries in Turkey, Vanuatu, Philippines and South Africa.





Training day on Leveraging Technology for Parliamentary Libraries and Research Services

In most of the regions of the world, there is an active association of parliamentary libraries and research services. These regional groups provide activities, knowledge sharing and mutual support to their members and are woven together into a global group by the IFLA section. A list of these regional associations can be found on our website. As well as the regional associations and parliamentary libraries and research services, there are also a handful of individual members.

Organisation and Activities

The Section's work is steered by a Standing Committee of twenty, each of whom is elected for 4 years. To ensure renewal, half of these positions terminate every second year and new representatives are elected. The Standing Committee members vote for a Chair and a Secretary in election years, for a 2 year term, who act as the Executive Committee. Membership of the Standing Committee is on a personal, rather than institutional basis, and members of the Standing Committee undertake to attend annual meetings of the Section.

The major event of the year is the annual IFLA conference and the Section's preconference which is usually hosted by the parliament of the host country for the IFLA conference. The preconference is a 2 or 3 day programme in addition to the open sessions during the main IFLA conference. The section has developed a tradition of a management workshop day offsite with a more interactive format. The 26th preconference of the IFLA section for Library and Research Services to Parliaments will be held in Stockholm, Sweden in August 2010.

Parliamentary libraries in Samoa, New Zealand, Quebec and Philippines





Standing Committee meeting of the Section in Milan, August 2009.

Being part of IFLA ensures that the Section maintains links with other types of libraries and keeps abreast of general library developments. It is also important to align with parliamentary developments and with the professional associations that link parliaments together around the world. In recent years, we have worked with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) and the Global Center for ICT (a joint initiative of the UN and the IPU) to organise events and to contribute to reports and standards.

A recent initiative was a Training Day, *Leveraging Technology for Parliamentary Libraries and Research Services* which was held in conjunction with our 25th preconference in Rome. The Global Center for ICT organised the event, including inviting and funding the participants. The Italian Parliament hosted the event and IFLA provided the speakers and session leaders. Participants were from developing parliaments and were mostly first-time attendees at an IFLA event. The success of this event will be built upon for another training day in association with an Australian event being developed for early 2011.

Further Information

The Section publishes an electronic Newsletter two to three times a year, and an annual report. There is a list serve which interested people can subscribe to for knowledge sharing and problem solving within the community. The main source of information about the Section is the Section's website page.

<http://www.ifla.org/en/services-for-parliaments>. You are also welcome to sign onto the Section's mailing list at:

<http://infoserv.inist.fr/wwsympa.fcgi/info/iflaparl2>.

Section members, including Standing Committee members.

