

II. Sources of Information for Parliament

Report prepared by Mr. Mario Farachio, Secretary General of the Senate of Uruguay (adopted at the Madrid session, March 1995)

Replies to a Questionnaire agreed at the Canberra session (September 1993)

1. Which are the sources of information of your Assembly:

- (a) the Executive
- (b) other autonomous bodies of the State (governmental bodies)
- (c) specialized agencies of the State (government)
- (d) universities or other non-governmental organizations
- (e) specialized offices or services of Parliament
- (f) other Parliaments (supra-national, regional, national)
- (g) other sources?

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Australia/HRep	X	X	X	X	X		
Australia/Sen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Belgium/ChRep	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Belgium/Sen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bulgaria/NatAssy	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Canada/HComm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chile/Senate	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Congo/NatAssy	X		X		X	X	
Denmark/Folketing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Finland/Parl	X	X	X	X	X		
Germany/Bundestag	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hungary/NatAssy	X	X	X				
India/RajyaSabha	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Indonesia/Parl	X	X	X	X			

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Israel/Knesset	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Italy/ChDep	X	X	X	X	X		
Italy/Senate	X	X	X	X	X		
Japan/HRep	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Japan/HCounc	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
KoreaRep/NatAssy	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Panama/LegAssy	X	X	X	X			
Philippines/HRep	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Philippines/Sen	X	X	X	X	X		X
Poland/Sejm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Poland/Senate	X	X	X		X		
Spain/CongrDep	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spain/Senate	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sudan/TrNatAssy	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Switzerland/FedAssy	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tanzania/Parl	X	X	X	X	X		X
Thailand/HRep	X	X	X	X		X	X
UKingdom/HComm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
UKingdom/HLords	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Uruguay/Senate	X	X	X	X		X	X
Zimbabwe/Parl	X	X	X		X	X	

Sources of information for the above Parliaments are broad. Twenty Assemblies out of thirty-five report they have access to all of the sources mentioned, and some (*Belgium, Japan, Switzerland*) state their sources of information are unlimited.

Even though this privilege is, in all cases, inherent to the control of the Executive by Parliament, in some countries (*Australia, Belgium*) freedom of information is total and for all, including Members of Parliament, who thus enjoy no further rights than their fellow citizens.

(a) Regarding the Executive as a source of information for Parliament, the *House of Representatives of Australia* add that the Executive presents to Parliament reports from the Royal Commissions occasionally appointed to inquire into matters of particular public importance.

(b) and (c) Under other autonomous bodies of the State and specialized agencies of the State as sources of information for Parliament, the following were mentioned: the Auditor General and specialized agencies such as the Industry Commission (*House of Representatives, Australia*); the General Accounting Office (*Belgium*); the Banco de Chile, the Corporation for the Promo-

tion of Production, various Superintendencies (Banking, Corporations, Insurance Companies, Social Security), owners' and workers' associations, workers' unions (Municipal, Copper, Coal, Maritime, Commerce), etc. (*Senate, Chile*); the Judiciary, the National Economic Development Office, Internal Revenue, Customs, and Immigration and Deportation Offices, and the Central Bank (*Senate, Philippines*); Supreme Chamber of Control, Office of Statistics (*Senate, Poland*); the Governments of the Autonomous Communities, local bodies, Administrations, Institutions and public bodies (State, Autonomous and Local) (*Senate, Spain*); the Federal Postal and Railway Administrations (*Federal Assembly, Switzerland*); and the National Audit Offices of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (*House of Commons, United Kingdom*).

(d) Universities and other non-governmental organizations are important sources of information for Parliaments (31 replies out of 35). However, this relationship is very variable, ranging from constant or very frequent consultation (*Belgium, Chile, Switzerland, United Kingdom*), to single cases on special requirement (*Germany*), to the utilization of the body of knowledge generated by Universities as published and kept in the Parliamentary Library (*House of Representatives, Australia*). On the other hand, the *Federal Assembly of Switzerland* also add enterprises, associations, professional organization (unions, owners, landworkers), foundations, etc.

(e) Specialized offices or services of Parliament have without doubt been the point that received amplest treatment. On one hand, Parliamentary Committees have been pointed out as the privileged source of information and research (*Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Philippines, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom House of Commons*), and on the other, the Parliamentary Libraries, which in many cases (*Australia, Denmark, Poland, Switzerland, United Kingdom*) are very active in the field of research.

However, most of the Assemblies (29 out of 35) have one or more departments of specialized information and research services, which perform the activities detailed in point 8; below. (Whenever reported, the structure of these services are included as Annex to point 5.)

(f) The importance of other Parliaments (supra-national, regional, national) and the Inter-Parliamentary bodies has been highlighted in the case of all EC countries, but also by *Chile* (which mentions United Nations Committees, OAS, ILO, GATT, FAO, MERCOSUR, PARLATINO, IPU, CEPAL), *Poland* (international organizations), and *Switzerland*. The *German Bundestag* report that it interacts with the Parliaments of the German Federated States. On the other hand, 10 Assemblies do not consider these a significant source of information.

Under (g), other sources, the following were mentioned: the press, TV and other mass media (*Belgium, Canada, Germany, India, Switzerland*); constituents (*Canada, Germany, India, Philippines, Tanzania*); and witnesses appearing before parliamentary committees (*Canada*).

2. Is the right of access to information established by:

- (a) the Constitution
- (b) law
- (c) custom
- (d) negotiation between political parties
- (e) free or unregulated arrangement?

	a	b	c	d	e
Australia/HRep	X	X	X		X
Australia/Sen	X	X			
Belgium/ChRep	X	X	X	X	X
Belgium/Sen	X	X	X	X	X
Bulgaria/NatAssy					
Canada/HComm		X	X	X	
Chile/Senate	X	X			
Congo/NatAssy	X	X			X
Denmark/Folketing			X		
Finland/Parl		X	X		
Germany/Bundestag	X	X	X		X
Hungary/NatAssy	X	X			
India/RajyaSabha	X		X		
Indonesia/Parl	X				
Israel/Knesset					X
Italy/ChDep	X	X			
Italy/Senate	X	X			
Japan/HRep	X	X			
Japan/HCounc					
KoreaRep/NatAssy		X			
Panama/LegAssy	X	X	X		
Philippines/HRep	X	X			
Philippines/Sen	X	X			
Poland/Sejm	X	X	X		X
Poland/Senate	X	X			

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	a	b	c	d	e
Spain/CongrDep	X				
Spain/Senate	X				X
Sudan/TrNatAssy					X
Switzerland/FedAssy		X			
Tanzania/Parl	X	X			
Thailand/HRep	X				
UKingdom/HComm	X	X	X		X
UKingdom/HLords	X	X	X		X
Uruguay/Senate	X	X			X
Zimbabwe/Parl		X			

Two Assemblies did not reply to this point, and two others (*Chile, Hungary*) included their reply in the context of other points.

(a) Twenty five Assemblies report that their right of access to information is established by the national Constitution. There were some interesting contributions: this provision is implicit, unwritten, in the Constitutions of *Australia* and the *United Kingdom*; since the last amendment of the Constitution of *Belgium*, a new article (No 24) stipulates that every citizen has the right to consult or to receive copy of any administrative act, with exceptions provided by law; the Constitution of the *Philippines* provides that all citizens have right of access to information, and the Constitution of *Panama* establishes the obligatory nature of the duty of the sources to inform Parliament.

(b) In *Canada, Finland, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland* and *Zimbabwe* the right of access to information is provided by law. *The House of Commons of Canada* report that the Constitution includes no specific provision in this regard, and that the Access to Information Act determines which documents may be made public and which remain inaccessible; prior to its enactment, on July 1, 1983, the procedure concerning access to information was not regulated. In *Switzerland*, the supply of information to Parliament and the access to documentation requested by Parliament, its Members, committees and services, was regulated on November 29, 1975.

On the other hand, 19 Assemblies report that the above-mentioned constitutional provisions are also included in the national laws. *in Belgium*, for instance, the laws determine the frequency with which the government and its bodies must present information to both Chambers of Parliament, as well as to the political parties.

It must also be mentioned that a majority of the Assemblies (*Australia, Chile, Denmark, Germany, Finland, India, Italy, Japan, Philippines, etc.*)

report that the Standing Orders of their Assembly reflect the constitutional and/or legal provisions. For instance, the reply from the *Chamber of Deputies of Spain* includes the information that the Standing Orders determine that the source can only deny the information requested if there is a rule supporting the negative decision (i.e., official secrets or national security rules).

(c) Twelve Assemblies mention custom, but usually together with at least two of the order points. Custom seems to apply mainly to documents which do not have to be tabled by law. In *Germany* it concerns questions to local authorities, and in *Australia*, documents that the Executive considers important to submit to Parliament (reports from the Royal Commissions, treaties, agreements and exchanges of notes with foreign countries, reports of committees of inquiry established by government, and ministerial statements). The *House of Commons of Canada* mention tradition, which rules that when a Minister quotes an official document in the House, the document must be tabled.

(d) Negotiation between political parties has been mentioned by *Belgium* and by *Canada* (who report that on one rare occasion, in June 1991, confidential information became accessible following negotiations among political parties).

(e) Free or unregulated arrangement has been mentioned by eleven Assemblies as a complement to the right of access to information: in *Belgium*, for instance, governmental bodies, without being under an obligation, report on their activities and other matters to Parliament; the *German Bundestag* mention expert-hearings or questions to research institutes; the *House of Commons of the United Kingdom* list informal sources of information such as the media, the Member's own constituencies, charities, private bodies, companies, trades organizations, etc.; and the *Senate of Uruguay* mention agreements with the University and private institutes on certain subjects that require research.

The extent to which the source is obliged to present the information requested can be inferred whenever the obligation is established by law or constitution, and *Israel* and *Sudan*, the only countries that answer (e), free or unregulated agreement, as the foundation of the right to access to information, do not elaborate.

Several Assemblies mentioned restrictions to Parliament's right of access to information. In *Germany*, it is the protection of the personal sphere and of confidential deliberations of government. The *Diet of Japan* mention the right to refuse to take the oath, give testimony or present documents when it is feared that that person, or others in a certain relationship with that person, may be subject to criminal prosecution; also medical doctors and the like, or those formerly engaged in such professions, are permitted to refuse to take oaths, give testimony or present documents concerning secrets they have come to know

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because of their profession; and, finally, employees who claim that the facts they have come to know are secrets which they have learned in the course of their duties. The *National Assembly of Republic of Korea* remark that "Government is obliged to provide the information requested, as far as it is not secret". In *Spain* the obligation to submit information refers to the Chamber and its Committees, but not to its specialized information services.

As to sanctions, the *Senate of Chile* report that officers of the Executive or other governmental bodies that do not submit a document requested by Parliament are fined (fine equivalent to one monthly salary, and double fine in case of recurrence or not appearing before a committee), and in *Zimbabwe* the failure to give required information to Parliament is considered contempt of Parliament, an offence that is justiciable by Parliament itself.

3. How does your Assembly request the information? Is it through:

- (a) the Chamber itself
- (b) the Presidency of the Chamber
- (c) the Permanent Committees
- (d) specialized offices or services of Parliament
- (e) individual Members of Parliament?

	a	b	c	d	e
Austraha/HRep	X		X		
Australia/Sen	X		X		
Belgium/ChRep	X	X	X	X	X
Belgium/Sen	X	X	X	X	X
Bulgaria/NatAssy		X	X	X	X
Canada/HComm			X		X
Chile/Senate	X	X	X	X	
Congo/NatAssy				X	
Denmark/Folketing	X	X	X	X	X
Finland/Parl				X	
Germany/Bundestag	X	X	X	X	X
Hungary/NatAssy					X
India/RajyaSabha	X	X			X
Indonesia/Parl			X	X	X
Israel/Knesset			X		X
Italy/ChDep	X	X	X		X ¹

	a	b	c	d	e
Italy/Senate		X	X		X
Japan/HRep	X	X	X	X	X
Japan/HCounc	X	X	X	X	X
KoreaRep/NatAssy		X			
Panama/LegAssy	X	X	X		
Philippines/HRep	X	X	X	X	X
Philippines/Sen	X	X	X	X	X
Poland/Sejm	X	X	X	X	X
Poland/Senate		X	X	X	X
Spain/CongrDep		X			
Spain/Senate		X			
Sudan/TrNatAssy				X	
Switzerland/FedAssy	X	X	X	X	X
Tanzania/Parl	X		X	X	X
Thailand/HRep				X	
UKingdom/HComm	X		X	X	X ²
UKingdom/HLords	X		X	X	X
Uruguay/Senate	X	X	X		X
Zimbabwe/Parl	X		X	X	X

¹ and Parliamentary Groups

² and the Ombudsman

Ten Assemblies (*German Bundestag, Chamber of Representatives and Senate of Belgium, Denmark, House of Representatives and Senate of the Philippines, House of Representatives and House of Councillors of the Diet of Japan, Sejm of Poland and Federal Assembly of Switzerland*) can request information from the Executive and other external source through any and all of the above-mentioned ways. In the *Federal Assembly of Switzerland*, however, individual Members place their requests through the Central Documentation Office.

This is the largest group, since the other 25 Assemblies report they request information in ways that constitute fifteen different modalities:

(a), (b), (c), (e) - The Chamber, the Presidency, permanent committees and individual Members: the specialized offices do not request information in the case of *Chamber of Deputies of Italy* (who add the Parliamentary Groups to the above list), and the *Senate of Uruguay* (which does not have specialized information offices);

(a), (b), (c), (d) - The Chamber, the Presidency, permanent committees and specialized offices: individual Members do not request information in the *Senate of Chile*;

(a), (b), (c) - The Chamber, the Presidency, and the permanent committees: neither the specialized offices nor the individual Members request information in the *Legislative Assembly of Panama*;

(a), (b), (e) - The Chamber, the Presidency, and individual Members: neither the permanent committees nor the specialized services request information in the *Rajya Sabha of India*;

(a), (c), (d), (e) - The Chamber, the permanent committees, specialized offices or services of Parliament and individual Members: the Presidency does not request information in the *Parliament of Tanzania*, the *House of Commons of the United Kingdom* (who add the Ombudsman to the above list), the *House of Lords of the United Kingdom* and the *Parliament of Zimbabwe*;

(a), (c) - The Chamber and the permanent committees: neither the Presidency, nor the specialized offices or individual Members request information in both Houses of the *Parliament of Australia*;

(b) - In both Houses of the *Parliament of Spain* the Chamber, the permanent committees, specialized offices and individual Members request information (in the constitutional or parliamentary definition of the term) through the Presidency of the respective House; however, this mediation is largely formal, and is not required for requests of information in the ordinary sense of the word. In the *National Assembly of the Republic of Korea* all information is requested by the Speaker;

(b), (c), (e) - The Presidency, the permanent committees and individual Members: neither the Chamber nor the specialized offices request information in the *Senate of Italy*;

(b), (c), (d), (e) - The Presidency, permanent committees, specialized offices and individual Members: the Chamber does not request information in the *Senate of Poland* and the *National Assembly of Bulgaria*;

(c), (d), (e) - The permanent committees, the specialized offices and individual Members: neither the Chamber nor the Presidency request information in the *Parliament of Indonesia*;

(c), (e) - The permanent committee and individual Members: neither the Chamber, nor the Presidency or the specialized offices request information in the *House of Commons of Canada* and the *Knesset of Israel*;

(d) - The specialized information offices or services request all the information in the *National Assembly of Congo*, the *Parliament of Finland*, the *Transitional National Assembly of Sudan* and the *House of Representatives of Thailand*;

(e) - Individual Members request all the information in the *Hungarian National Assembly*.

4. Does your Assembly make provision for party research offices or staff to make requests for information?

	yes	no
Australia/HRep		X
Australia/Sen		X
Belgium/ChRep		X
Belgium/Sen		X
Bulgaria/NatAssy		
Canada/HComm		X
Chile/Senate		
Congo/NatAssy		
Denmark/Folketing	X	
Finland/Parl	X	
Germany/Bundestag	X	
Hungary/NatAssy	X	
India/RajyaSabha		X
Indonesia/Parl		X
Israel/Knesset	X	
Italy/ChDep		X
Italy/Senate		X
Japan/HRep		X
Japan/HCounc		X
KoreaRep/NatAssy	X	
Panama/LegAssy		X
Philippines/HRep		X
Philippines/Sen		X
Poland/Sejm	X	
Poland/Senate	X	
Spain/CongrDep		X
Spain/Senate		X
Sudan/TrNatAssy	X	
Switzerland/FedAssy	X	
Tanzania/Parl		X

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	yes	no
Thailand/Rep		X
UKingdom/HComm		X
UKingdom/HLords	X	
Uruguay/Senate		X
Zimbabwe/Parl		X

Three of the 35 Assemblies either did not reply to this point, or their replies could not be correctly processed.

It can be observed that 21 Assemblies have no provisions for the existence of party research offices or staff to make requests for information, while 11 do.

However, many Assemblies of the above-mentioned majority group offered remarks to the point that the lack of political party offices or staff in their Assembly does not hinder access to information: "Political groups have access to all useful information regarding the parliamentary activities of the Senate." (*Senate, Belgium*); "... Requests of information from Members of the Parliamentary Groups addressed to the offices of the Senate are passed on in the name of the Member." (*Senate, Italy*); "... The Secretariat of the Senate attends to all the needs of all Senators regardless of political affiliation. The Senate Secretariat is composed of non-partisan civil servants whose prime duty is to provide support services to all the Senators." (*Senate, Philippines*); "No special provision, but they can ask for help from the services of Parliament." (*Chamber of Deputies, Spain*); "There is no specific constitutional or statutory provision regarding requests of information submitted by political parties of Parliamentary Groups. However this is no hindrance, since logically they can channel their requests through the various organs of the House of which they are part." (*Senate, Spain*); "There is a Parliamentary Secretariat staffed with officers of different disciplines who provide research services to the MPs." (*National Assembly, Tanzania*).

On the other hand, there were Assemblies that pointed out differences between political parties and the Parliamentary Groups, whose status is different: "In our system of Parliament, we only know the Faction of political parties/groups within the House. And the Factions may request for information." (*Parliament of Indonesia*); "In principle, the offices of the Chamber have no relation with the political parties, only with the Parliamentary Groups established according to Article 14 of the Standing Orders of the Chamber of Deputies. Parliamentary Groups can place their requests for information or documentation with the offices of the Chamber." (*Chamber of Deputies, Italy*). Also see the reply from the *German Bundestag* (infra).

Eleven Assemblies have provisions for party research offices or staff to make requests for information. They are: the *Folketing of Denmark* ("For the purpose of undertaking the parliamentary work, the political Party Groups in the Folketing as well as the individual Members of Parliament receive payment from the Parliament according to Rules of Financial Assistance to the Party Groups in the Folketing. The Rules are adopted by the Standing Order Committee on 5.12.1984 with amendments of 4.12.1985 and 8.2.1991. ... According to article 4 these amounts are meant to be used for expert advice, payment of staff, office expenses, Members' secretaries, etc."), the *Parliament of Finland*, the *German Bundestag*, the *Hungarian National Assembly*, the *Knesset of Israel*, the *National Assembly of the Republic of Korea*, the *Sejm of Poland* ("No special provisions. Political groups within the Assembly have access to information provided by the Secretariat's (Chancellery of the Sejm) offices and services through individual Members. Political groups receive also funds out of the budget of the Chancellery of the Sejm to make their own research and studies."), the *Senate of Poland* ("All parliamentary party caucuses receive on a regular basis all the materials of general character produced in the specialized office. Individual requests for information are channelled through senators, members of the party interested in getting the information. The party caucuses get resources from the Chancellery to commission opinions and reports on their own."), the *Transitional National Assembly of Sudan*, the *Federal Assembly of Switzerland* and the *UK House of Lords* ("all parties have office space and the opposition parties have researchers. Researcher posts are funded partly by the parties - themselves partly funded by public money; researchers may make use of the Library of the House and various other resources").

Furthermore, there are two replies that have to be analyzed separately, those of the *German Bundestag* and the *United Kingdom House of Commons*:

- the *German Bundestag* has been included with Assemblies that provide for party research offices or staff, as it replies: "Political parties receive public grants (Public Funding of Political Parties). Besides that the parliamentary groups in the Bundestag, which have in contrast to the parties the status of organs of the State, receive state subsidies. The basics are the Law on Political Parties and the Budget Law. Furthermore, the parliamentary groups have access to information, etc., provided for by the Reference and Research Services of the German Bundestag";

- the *House of Commons of the United Kingdom* has been tentatively included with Assemblies that do not provide for party research offices or staff, as it replies: "Relatively little. Some funds are provided to the Opposition parties to assist them with organization: none to the governing party. Party officials have

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no direct access to the procedures or services for obtaining information except through individual Members."

5. If there are specialized information offices or services in your Parliament, in the case of a bicameral legislature:

- (a) is it a single office for both Chambers,
- (b) or does each Chamber have its own office?

	a	b	Library serves both Chambers	Uni- cameral	
Australia/HRep		X	X		*
Australia/Sen		X	X		*
Belgium/ChRep		X	X		*
Belgium/Sen		?	X		*
Bulgaria/NatAssy				X	
Canada/HComm	?		X		
Chile/Senate		X	X		*
Congo/NatAssy		X			
Denmark/Folketing				X	
Finland/Parl				X	
Germany/Bundestag		X			
Hungary/NatAssy				X	*
India/RajyaSabha	?				
Indonesia/Parl				X	
Israel/Knesset				X	
Italy/ChDep		X			*
Italy/Senate		X			*
Japan/HRep		X			
Japan/HCounc		X			
KoreaRep/NatAssy				X	*
Panama/LegAssy				X	
Philippines/HRep		X			
Philippines/Sen		X			
Poland/Sejm		X	X		*
Poland/Senate		X	X		*
Spain/CongrDep		X			
Spain/Senate		X			*

	a	b	Library serves both Chambers	Uni- cameral	
Sudan/TrNatAssy				X	
Switzerland/FedAssy	X				*
Tanzania/Parl				X	
Thailand/HRep		X			
UKingdom/HComm		X			
UKingdom/HLords		X			
Uruguay/Senate		X	X		
Zimbabwe/Parl			X		

Eleven of the above Assemblies (*Bulgaria, Congo, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Republic of Korea, Panama, Sudan and Tanzania*) are unicameral, and 23 bicameral.

Of the latter, 20 report that each Chamber has its own specialized information offices or services, and three report that it is one office for both Chambers. The latter are the *House of Commons of Canada* (where the Library supplies research services for both Chambers), the *Rajya Sabha of India* (where one office, which is under the administrative control of the Lok Sabha Secretariat, serves both Chambers of the *Parliament of India*), and the *Federal Assembly of Switzerland* (where all Parliamentary services are shared by both Houses).

There are several aspects that point to the diversity of the information offices or services of the above-mentioned 20 bicameral Assemblies.

Nine Assemblies representing six bicameral Parliaments (*Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Poland and Uruguay*) report that, in addition to one specialized information office for each Chamber, there is a Parliamentary Library that serves both Houses of Parliament.

Sometimes the services performed by Parliamentary Libraries are, in both uni-cameral and bi-cameral legislature, so broad as to absorb an important part (*Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, United Kingdom*) or all (*Canada*) of the specialized information office or service. For instance:

- both Houses of die *Parliament of Belgium* mention die small size of their information service: "The Chamber has a "Studies and Documentation" service, but its small size does not allow it to qualify as a "specialized service" (*Chamber of Representatives*), "The Senate no longer has an autonomous studies service. Several years ago, the activities of this service were reorga-

nized ..." (*Senate*), due to the fact that the Library, which serves both Chambers, has access to thirteen external databanks and includes several information and research sections; the information services of the Folketing, being part of the "Archives, Library and Information Services" is of a very small size and does not qualify as a specialized service. The information services of the "EU Information Centre" is mainly for the public but may serve Members too;

- in the *Parliament of Canada* the Research Branch of the Library of Parliament provides its services to both Houses, while each House has its own public information service.

Therefore, the possible replies to the above question, (a) and (b), do not fully represent the operation of the information services in the *Parliament of Belgium* and, strictly speaking, the *Parliament of Canada* would be (a) except that, unlike the *Parliament of India*, the Library and its employees answer to both the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Commons (see point 6., below). In this connection it is interesting to note that *the Parliament of Zimbabwe*, unicameral, remarks: "When we had a bi-cameral legislature we had a single specialized research department for both Chambers."

Summing up, the Assemblies of bicameral legislatures that have their own specialized information services are: *Australia, Belgium, Chile* (which highlights the importance of services performed by this office), *Italy, Japan, Philippines, Poland, Spain, the United Kingdom* (which adds: "... there is obviously a mutual use of each other's resources under a variety of arrangements.") and *Thailand*.

The *Senate of Uruguay* does not have specialized research and information services in the strict meaning of the term, but each Chamber has its own Legislative Information, Archives, etc., offices, which do not research or acquire information, but process information already received.

[* Annex A: not reprinted; see p. 59]

6. To whom does the specialized office or service answer:

- (a) to the Chamber itself
- (b) to the Presidency
- (c) to the Secretariat
- (d) to a special committee of Members
- (e) to the Library
- (f) to an autonomous administration?

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Austraha/HRep		X				
Australia/Sen		X				
Belgium/ChRep			X			
Belgium/Sen			X			
Bulgaria/NatAssy		X	X			
Canada/HComm		X	X			
Chile/Senate		X	X			
Congo/NatAssy			X			
Denmark/Folketing		X	X			
Finland/Parl			X			
Germany/Bundestag		X	X			
Hungary/NatAssy						
India/RajyaSabha						
Indonesia/Parl			X			
Israel/Knesset					X	
Italy/ChDep		X	X			
Italy/Senate		X	X			
Japan/HRep	X	X	X	X		
Japan/HCounc	X	X	X	X		
KoreaRep/NatAssy						
Panama/LegAssy			X			
Philippines/HRep		X	X			
Philippines/Sen	X	X	X	X		
Poland/Sejm			X			
Poland/Senate			X			
Spain/CongrDep		X	X			
Spain/Senate		X	X			
Sudan/TrNatAssy			X			
Switzerland/FedAssy			X			
Tanzania/Parl	X	X				
Thailand/HRep			X			
UKingdom/HComm		X	X	X	X	
UKingdom/HLords			X	X		
Uruguay/Senate			X			
Zimbabwe/Parl			X			

The analysis of this point, which refers to the oversight of the specialized offices or services, shows there are nine different organizational modalities.

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(c) 14 Assemblies (*Belgium, Congo, Denmark, Finland, Indonesia, Panama, Poland, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Uruguay and Zimbabwe*) report that said services answer to the Secretary General of the House or the Parliament. Some interesting remarks offered by these Assemblies are: the Central Office is the Secretariat of the *Parliament of Finland*; the *Parliament of Indonesia* report that its specialized information services also answer to the Committees, the Special Committees, the Factions in the House and the individual Members; the *Senate of Italy* report that the Assistant Secretary General is responsible for the coordination of documentation and research activities; in *Switzerland*, the Directorate of Parliamentary Services (Secretary General and three Joint Secretaries) is responsible for the Central Documentation Office; and the *House of Commons of Canada* report that, while the Parliamentary Library (which performs the specialized information services, see point 5., above) answers to the Speakers of both Houses, (b), the public information services answer to the Secretary General of each House (c).

(b) and (c) 9 Assemblies (*Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Germany, Italy, House of Representatives of the Philippines, Spain*) report that their specialized information services answer to both the President and the Secretary General.

(a), (b), (c) and (d) 3 Assemblies (both Houses of the *Diet of Japan* and the *Senate of Philippines*) report their specialized information services answer to the Chamber, the President, the Secretary General and to a special Committee of Members, to which the *Diet of Japan* add permanent and special committees and individual Members, and the *Senate of Philippines* the Presidents of permanent and ad-hoc committees and individual members.

(b) Both Houses of the *Parliament of Australia* report that their specialized information services answer to the President of each House.

(e) The *Knesset of Israel* report that its specialized information service answers to the Library.

(a) and (b) *The National Assembly of Tanzania* report that its specialized services answer to the Chamber and Presidency.

(b), (c), (d) and (e) The *House of Commons of the United Kingdom* report that the Library answers to the Speaker (b), through a Committee of the House (d), that there are several Committees of Members who assist the Speaker in exercising her administrative duties, and that the relevant staff, with the exception of the Clerk and the Clerk Assistant, are employees of the House of Commons Commission, a statutory body, presided over by the Speaker.

(c) and (d) The *House of Lords of the United Kingdom* report that the Librarian answers to the Clerk of the Parliaments for the operation and manage-

ment of the Library. Questions relating to the policy of the Library are referred to a Committee of the House.

Finally, the specialized information service available to the *Rajya Sabha of India* answers to the other House of Parliament, the *Lok Sabha*.

7. Are the resources for its operation included in the budget of your Assembly, or are they received and administered separately?

included

Austraha/HRep	X
Australia/Sen	X
Belgium/ChRep	X
Belgium/Sen	X
Bulgaria/NatAssy	X
Canada/HComm	X
Chile/Senate	X
Congo/NatAssy	X
Denmark/Folketing	•X
Finland/Parl	X
Germany/Bundestag	X
Hungary/NatAssy	
India/RajyaSabha	in the Lok Sabha budget
Indonesia/Parl	X
Israel/Knesset	X
Italy/ChDep	X
Italy/Senate	X
Japan/HRep	X
Japan/HCounc	X
KoreaRep/NatAssy	X
Panama/LegAssy	X
Philippines/HRep	X
Philippines/Sen	X
Poland/Sejm	X
Poland/Senate	X
Spain/CongrDep	X
Spain/Senate	X
Sudan/TrNatAssy	X
Switzerland/FedAssy	X
Tanzania/Parl	X
Thailand/HRep	X

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
Chile/Senate	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		*
Congo/NatAssy	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	
Denmark/Folketing	X	X							X	X	*
Finland/Parl	X										
Germany/Bundestag	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		*
Hungary/NatAssy											*
India/RajyaSabha	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	
Indonesia/Parl	X							X	X		*
Israel/Knesset	X		X	X	X				X	X	
Italy/ChDep	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		*
Italy/Senate	X	X	X	X	X	X					*
Japan/HRep	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Japan/HCounc	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
KoreaRep/NatAssy	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Panama/LegAssy		X		X			X	X			
Philippines/HRep	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Philippines/Sen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Poland/Sejm	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	*
Poland/Senate	X	X	X	X	X				X		*
Spain/CongrDep	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	*
Spain/Senate	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Sudan/TrNatAssy	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		*
Switzerland/FedAssy	X	X	X	X	X				X		*
Tanzania/Parl	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Thailand/HRep	X	X		X	X						*
UKingdom/HComm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	*
UKingdom/HLords	X	X	X	X	X						
Uruguay/Senate	X	X							X	X	
Zimbabwe/Parl	X					X			X		*

The above chart cannot be considered separately from additional information forwarded by the Assemblies, which on one hand elaborates on, and on the other modifies, the above data [*Annex B: not reprinted; see p. 59*].

The size of the specialized information offices or services and the amount of studies they are required to perform depend on many factors. The requirements would be different, for instance, in Parliaments from EC countries, which intercommunicate and access databanks; Parliaments from countries whose national laws provide total freedom of information; depending, as well, on the size and activity of the Secretariats of the Permanent and Special Committees.

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Finally, there are Parliaments (*Chile, Uruguay*) which are considering plans to improve and enlarge their specialized information services. Therefore, a structural or systematic analysis, relating the different points of this questionnaire, would provide additional insights.

9. Activities performed by the specialized service are:

- (a) exclusively for Members
- (b) available to the public in general?

	a	b
Australia/HRep	X	
Australia/Sen	X	X
Belgium/ChRep	X	X
Belgium/Sen	X	
Bulgaria/NatAssy		X
Canada/HComm	X	X
Chile/Senate	X	
Congo/NatAssy		X
Denmark/Folketing	X	
Finland/Parl	X	
Germany/Bundestag	X	X
Hungary/NatAssy		
India/RajyaSabha	X	
Indonesia/Parl	X	
Israel/Knesset	X	
Italy/ChDep	X	X
Italy/Senate	X	X
Japan/HRep	X	
Japan/HCounc	X	
KoreaRep/NatAssy	X	X
Panama/LegAssy	X	X
Philippines/HRep	X	X
Philippines/Sen	X	X
Poland/Sejm	X	
Poland/Senate	X	
Spain/CongrDep	X	
Spain/Senate	X	
Sudan/TrNatAssy	X	X
Switzerland/FedAssy		X
Tanzania/Parl	X	

	a	b
Thailand/HRep	X	X
UKingdom/HComm	X	X
UKingdom/HLords	X	
Uruguay/Senate	X	
Zimbabwe/Parl	X	X

Since many Parliaments (*Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Indonesia, Poland, Spain*) remark that the services of the specialized information offices are not exclusively for the use of Members but also for the bodies of the House, the Secretariat, its departments and staff engaged in official business, it is concluded that point (a) should have been defined in this wider sense. The reply from the *House of Commons of Canada* illustrates the point: "The services of the Research Branch of the Library of Parliament are reserved for parliamentarians, their employees, Committees, parliamentary associations and delegations, and senior officials of the Senate and the House of Commons." The *House of Representatives of Australia* add, to the above list, the office of the Governor General.

Secondly, it is observed that the specialized information offices of many of the above Assemblies produce different types of information: one that is exclusively for parliamentary use; another which, on request, can be supplied to members of the press, universities and special interest groups; and finally, one that is accessible to the general public or that is produced with a view to that end. Therefore, consideration has to be given to the remarks that accompany some of the replies.

In that respect, the *Australian Senate* report that, occasionally, information is supplied to the public in general; the *Chamber of Representatives of Belgium* report that, even though initially information produced was destined almost exclusively for Members, at present one half of all requests of information come from the general public; while at the *Senate of Chile* this happens only exceptionally.

The *German Bundestag* report that: "The activities performed by the Reference and Research Services or other services of the Bundestag administration are principally only available for Members or organs of the Bundestag. Several services however are accessible to the public too, for instance the ... "Handbook", or information by the Subject and Speaker's Indexes. Moreover the Reference and Research Services as well as other services of the Bundestag administration on request provide information to members of the press, universities and various interest groups."

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The *Senate of Philippines* state that a "request from the general public may also be entertained upon recommendation and approval by the Officers of the Senate", and the *Senate of Spain* report that, since much of the work produced by the specialized information offices is useful in the areas of research, teaching, etc., "it can be disseminated, on petition, and provided that this does not hinder the good operation of the Chamber or the due reserve of its proceedings."

The *Federal Assembly of Switzerland* report report that the activities performed "are accessible to the public, generally speaking. (...) According to its possibilities, the Central Documentation Office can entertain requests of third parties (reporters, students, the general public)."

The *House of Commons of the United Kingdom* reports that: "The services are very predominantly for Members. However the general public very properly ask for parliamentary advice on the telephone and by letter and in this area information is provided."

All the work produced by the specialized information service is available to the general public in the *National Assembly of Congo*, the *National Assembly of Bulgaria* and the *House of Representatives of Thailand*.

The *House of Commons of Canada*, the *Senate of Spain* and the *Parliament of Zimbabwe* report that their specialized information offices produce publications destined to the general public.

The *Chamber of Deputies* and the *Senate of Italy* (which also have Press Offices) and the *Senate of Uruguay* report that their Libraries are open to the public, while the *House of Commons of the United Kingdom* report that "... the Library has a Public Information Office which answers general inquiries and it provides assistance to schools via an Education Officer", and both Houses of the *Canadian Parliament* have Public Information Offices.

10. Where they are for the exclusive use of Members, who commissions them:

- (a) the authorities of the Chamber
- (b) the Permanent of Special Committees
- (c) each Member of Parliament
- (d) other services of the Chamber?

	a	b	c	d
Australia/HRep	X	X	X	X
Australia/Sen		X	X	X
Belgium/ChRep	X	X	X	X

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	a	b	c	d
Belgium/Sen	X	X	X	X
Bulgaria/NatAssy				
Canada/HComm				
Chile/Senate	X	X	X	X
Congo/NatAssy				
Denmark/Folketing			X	X
Finland/Parl			X	
Germany/Bundestag	X	X	X	X
Hungary/NatAssy				
India/RajyaSabha				
Indonesia/Parl		X	X	X
Israel/Knesset			X	
Italy/ChDep		X	X	X
Italy/Senate		X	X	X
Japan/HRep		X	X	
Japan/HCounc		X	X	
KoreaRep/NatAssy		X	X	X
Panama/LegAssy	X	X	X	
Philippines/HRep	X	X	X	X
Philippines/Sen	X	X	X	X
Poland/Sejm	X	X	X	X
Poland/Senate	X	X	X	X
Spain/CongrDep				
Spain/Senate	X	X	X	X
Sudan/TrNatAssy				
Switzerland/FedAssy	X	X	X	X
Tanzania/Parl	X			
Thailand/HRep	X	X	X	
UKingdom/HComm	X	X	X	X
UKingdom/HLords		X	X	X
Uruguay/Senate	X	X	X	
Zimbabwe/Parl	X	X	X	

Eight Assemblies did not reply, or replied that they did not understand/ did not consider applicable this point, which enquires about the bodies or authorities that can order the production of a study or report by the specialized information offices or services, and one, the *Rajya Sabha of India*, replied: "These services are commissioned by the Lok Sabha Secretariat."

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(a) The intervention of the authorities of the Chamber is necessary in the *National Assembly of Tanzania*, while it seems to be optional in the other Assemblies.

(a), (b), (c), (d) Twelve Assemblies (*House of Representatives of Australia, House of Representatives and Senate of Belgium, Senate of Chile, German Bundestag, House of Representatives and Senate of the Philippines, Sejm and Senate of Poland, Senate of Spain, Federal Assembly of Switzerland and United Kingdom*) replied that any of these can request the services of the specialized information offices. In addition, the *House of Representatives of Australia* remark: "All of the above would make use of the facilities of the Parliamentary Library, although most requests would be initiated by individual Members and Senators."; the *Senate of Spain* report: ". . . whenever the request follows formal and material requirements established by the Presidency and the Secretariat General, in accordance with Rules for requests of documentary services by the Senators to the Directorate of Studies and Documentation of the Secretariat General, Rules for the operation of the Library of the Senate, and Instructions for the use of the Archives of the Chamber."; and the *House of Commons of the United Kingdom* add: "However Select Committees have some specialist staff and may employ specialist external advice. Members of Parliament usually employ a research assistant."

(a), (b), (c) Four Assemblies (*Panama, Thailand, Uruguay and Zimbabwe*) report that the "other services of the Chamber" (d) cannot request the production of studies or reports.

(b), (c), (d) can commission the services of the specialized offices in six Assemblies (*Senate of Australia, Parliament of Indonesia, Chamber of Deputies and Senate of Italy, National Assembly of Korea, House of Lords of the United Kingdom*), to which the *Chamber of Deputies of Italy* add the Parliamentary Groups, the *National Assembly of the Republic of Korea* add the Political Groups, and the *Parliament of Indonesia* add the Presidents of the Factions and the Secretary General.

(b), (c) In both Houses of the *Diet of Japan* it is the Committees and the individual Members that place requests for the services of the specialized information offices.

(c) In the *Parliament of Finland* and the *Knesset of Israel* only the Members of Parliament commission work by the specialized information service.

11. The staff of the specialized office or service are:

- (a) permanent
 (b) hired for a pre-established period of time, or for the production of a specific report?

	a	b
Australia/HRep	X	X
Australia/Sen	X	X
Belgium/ChRep	X	
Belgium/Sen	X	
Bulgaria/NatAssy	X	X
Canada/HComm	X	X
Chile/Senate	X	
Congo/NatAssy	X	
Denmark/Folketing	X	
Finland/Parl	X	
Germany/Bundestag	X	X
Hungary/NatAssy	X	X
India/RajyaSabha	X	
Indonesia/Parl	X	
Israel/Knesset	X	
Italy/ChDep	X	X
Italy/Senate	X	X
Japan/HRep	X	
Japan/HCounc	X	
KoreaRep/NatAssy	X	X
Panama/LegAssy	X	X
Philippines/HRep	X	X
Philippines/Sen	X	X
Poland/Sejm	X	X
Poland/Senate	X	X
Spain/CongrDep	X	
Spain/Senate	X	
Sudan/TrNatAssy	X	X
Switzerland/FedAssy	X	
Tanzania/Parl	X	
Thailand/HRep	X	
UKingdom/HComm	X	X

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	a	b
UKingdom/HLords	X	
Uruguay/Senate	X	
Zimbabwe/Parl	X	

All the above Assemblies have permanent staff in their specialized information or services.

On the other hand, some of the 16 Assemblies that report they hire temporary staff add remarks which allow us to conclude that, in relation to permanent staff, their numbers are minor: "Both the Committee Office and the Parliamentary Library may, from time to time, hire consultants and specialist advisers and second expert officers from executive departments to assist with particular enquiries." (*House of Representatives, Australia*); "The majority of the staff are permanent." (*Senate, Australia*); "In some cases." (*House of Commons, Canada*); "In exceptional cases temporary members of staff may be hired for special tasks." (*German Bundestag*); "... the factions hire independent experts for making an expertise or a specific report." (*Hungarian National Assembly*); "... in particular cases..." (*Chamber of Deputies and Senate, Italy*); "By President's appointment." (*Legislative Assembly, Panama*); "Most of the staff are hired on a permanent basis." (*House of Representatives, Philippines*); "Some are contractual. They are hired for a pre-established period of time." (*Senate, Philippines*); "Occasionally, studies are commissioned from outside experts." (*Sejm, Poland*); "Most of the staff of the specialized office are permanent. Some specialists are contracted on a regular basis. Reports and opinions are prepared by the outside experts." (*Senate, Poland*); "Some. Particularly the case in respect of specialist advice employed by select committees." (*House of Commons, United Kingdom*).

Finally, the *House of Representatives of Thailand* report: "At present, the House of Representatives and the Senate do not hire or commission any part-time researchers to work for them. However, there are plans to recruit their services for the work of the National Assembly in the coming future."

12. Which is the academic level and the number of officers of the service:
- (a) university graduates
 - (b) scientists and researchers
 - (c) experts
 - (d) specialized officers of the Chamber

(e) administrative officers

(f) others (please elaborate)?

	a	b	c	d	e	f	total
Australia/HRep	88						223
Australia/Sen							*
Belgium/ChRep	3						15*
Belgium/Sen	13						20*
Bulgaria/NatAssy							5
Canada/HComm							68
Chile/Senate							10-20
Congo/NatAssy							12
Denmark/Folketing	4					8	12
Finland/Parl	X	X					5
Germany/Bundestag	62						102
Hungary/NatAssy							X
India/RajyaSabha							—
Indonesia/Parl	20						20
Israel/Knesset	X						X
Italy/ChDep	59						284
Italy/Senate	20						86
Japan/HRep	168						168
Japan/HComm	140						140
KoreaRep/NatAssy	130		60		70		260
Panama/LegAssy	X						X
Philippines/HRep							X
Philippines/Sen							24
Poland/Sejm	73						79*
Poland/Senate	22	5	5	7	3		42
Spain/CongrDep	23			5	21		63
Spain/Senate	13						47
Sudan/TrNatAssy	X				X		
Switzerland/FedAssy ³	5.1			2	1.7	1.7	10.5
Tanzania/Parl	X						X
Thailand/HRep	X						X
UKingdom/HComm	X	X	X				X
UKingdom/HLords	12					6	18
Uruguay/Senate					X		11
Zimbabwe/Parl	X						X

³ numbers reflect "positions", not officers.

Even though all of the Assemblies replied to this point, and five Assemblies included the Tables of Organization of their Secretariats General showing the structures of their specialized information services (*), data received does not allow this point to be analysed in its original layout.

Twenty-four Assemblies reported the numbers requested and, as can be observed, variations in the amount of staff of the specialized information offices are considerable, ranging from less than 10 (*National Assembly of Bulgaria, Folketing of Denmark, Parliament of Finland*), or 10.5 "positions" (*Federal Assembly of Switzerland*), to 284 (*Chamber of Deputies of Italy*).

Between these lower and upper limits are the following:

- 2 Assemblies with over 200 employees (*National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, House of Representatives of Australia*),
- 3 Assemblies with over 100 employees (*German Bundestag, both Houses of the Diet of Japan*),
- 4 Assemblies with over 50 employees (*House of Commons of Canada, Chamber of Deputies of Spain, Senate of Italy, Sejm of Poland*).
- 10 Assemblies with less than 50 employees (*House of Representatives and Senate of Belgium, Senate of Chile, National Assembly of Congo, Parliament of Indonesia, Senate of the Philippines, Senate of Poland, Senate of Spain, House of Lords of the United Kingdom, Senate of Uruguay*).

The percentage of employees of the specialized information services that have university degrees varies considerably as well, ranging from 100% to 0:

- 100% in both Houses of the *Diet of Japan* and the *Parliament of Indonesia*.
- 92% in the *Sejm of Poland*,
- 67% *House of Lords of the United Kingdom*,
- 65% in the *Senate of Belgium*,
- 52% in the *Senate of Poland*,
- 50% in the *National Assembly of the Republic of Korea*,
- 48% in the *Federal Assembly of Switzerland*,
- 44% in the *House of Representatives of Australia*,
- 39% in the *German Bundestag*,
- 37% in the *Chamber of Deputies of Spain*,
- 33% in the *Folketing of Denmark*,
- 27% in the *Senate of Spain*,

- 20-23% in both Houses of the *Italian Parliament* and the *Chamber of Representatives of Belgium*,
- 0% in the *Senate of Uruguay*.

13. The authority that hires and appoints the officers is:

- (a) the Presidency of the Chamber
- (b) the Secretariat
- (c) the Permanent Committees, or a Special Committee
- (d) the service itself, autonomously?

	a	b	e	d
Australia/HRep	X			XX
Australia/Sen	X			X
Belgium/ChRep				
Belgium/Sen				
Bulgaria/NatAssy		X		
Canada/HComm				X
Chile/Senate		X	X	
Congo/NatAssy	X	X		
Denmark/Folketing	X	X		
Finland/Parl			X	
Germany/Bundestag	X			
Hungary/NatAssy				
India/RajyaSabha		X (Lok Sabha)		
Indonesia/Parl		X		
Israel/Knesset				X
Italy/ChDep				
Italy/Senate	X			
Japan/HRep	X	X	X	
Japan/HCounc	X	X	X	
KoreaRep/NatAssy	X			
Panama/LegAssy	X			
Philippines/HRep	X			
Philippines/Sen	X	X		
Poland/Sejm		X		
Poland/Senate		X		
Spain/CongrDep		X		
Spain/Senate	X			

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	a	b	c	d
Sudan/TrNatAssy		X		
Switzerland/FedAssy		X		
Tanzania/Parl		X		
Thailand/HRep		X		
UKingdom/HComm		X		
UKingdom/HLords		X	X	
Uruguay/Senate	X			
Zimbabwe/Parl	X	X		

As can be observed, hiring and appointment of staff for the specialized information offices or services is performed through nine different channels:

(a) the Presidency, 7 Assemblies; the *German Bundestag* (adding: "... These measures shall be taken by the President in the case of officials of the administrative class (higher service) or salaried public employees of an equivalent grade, in consultation with the Vice-Presidents, and where senior civil servants or salaried public employees of an equivalent grade are recruited, with the consent of the Presidium (consisting of the President and the Vice-Presidents."); the *Senate of Italy* ("... after open competition"), the *National Assembly of Republic of Korea*, the *Legislative Assembly of Panama*, the *House of Representatives of Philippines*, the *Senate of Spain*, and the *Senate of Uruguay*;

(b) the Secretariat, 10 Assemblies: the *National Assembly of Bulgaria* ("For the Library and the "TIP" Department: the Secretary General; for the Permanent Committee: the Committees themselves."); the *Parliament of Indonesia*, the *Sejm* and the *Senate of Poland*, the *Chamber of Deputies of Spain* ("... following an established procedure to consider the merits of candidates."), the *Transitional National Assembly of Sudan*, the *Federal Assembly of Switzerland*, the *National Assembly of Tanzania*; the *House of Representatives of Thailand* and the *House of Commons of the United Kingdom* ("Staff are appointed by the various Departments of the House on the authority of the House of Commons Commission and they become employees of the Commission).

(a) and (b) the Secretariat with the authorization of the Presidency, 4 Assemblies: the *National Assembly of Congo*, the *Folketing of Denmark* (adding: "The employing authority of the Folketing is the Presidium, in practice undertaken on behalf of the Presidium by each Department in cooperation with the Management Department and a representative of the employees' union."), the *Senate of Philippines* (adding: "The President of the Senate. The Senate Secretary, whenever expressly authorized by the Senate."), and the *Parliament of Zimbabwe*;

(a), (b) and (c) Both Houses of the *Diet of Japan* ("The Secretariat... upon agreement of the President of the House and approval of the Committee of Rules and Administration.");

(a), (c) and (d) *The House of Representatives of Australia* ("In the case of the Parliamentary Library, the Presiding Officers acting jointly (i.e., the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate); in the case of the Department of the *House of Representatives*, the Speaker, on the recommendation of independently constituted staff selection committees and the head of the Department.");

(a) and (d) The service itself, with the approval of the Presidency, 1 Assembly: the *Senate of Australia*.

(b) and (c) A Committee, with the recommendation of the Secretariat: the *Senate of Chile* "... after open competition."); and the *House of Lords of the United Kingdom* ("appointments are made by the Clerk of the Parliaments. In the case of the Librarian, the Library and Computers Sub-Committee of the House's Offices Committee is involved in the selection process.");

(c) A Committee, 1 Assembly: the *Parliament of Finland* ("The Parliamentary Office Committee.");

(d) The service itself, autonomously, 2 Assemblies: the *House of Commons of Canada* ("Each service is responsible for its own staffing."), and the *Knesset of Israel*.

14. The specialized office or service has a data processing system at its disposal, which:

(a) is connected to the Chamber's databank

(b) operates independently

(c) is open to outside users (please include a brief description of the system)?

	a	b	c	
Australia/HRep	X			*
Australia/Sen		X	X	*
Belgium/ChRep	X		X	*
Belgium/Sen				
Bulgaria/NatAssy	X	X		
Canada/HComm		X	X	*
Chile/Senate	X			*

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	a	b	c	
Congo/NatAssy				
Denmark/Folketing		×		
Finland/Parl	X			
Germany/Bundestag	X			*
Hungary/NatAssy	X			
India/Rajya Sabha	X			
Indonesia/Parl	X			
Israel/Knesset	X	X		
Italy/ChDep	X		X	*
Italy/Senate	X		X	*
Japan/HRep		X		
Japan/HCounc	X	X		
KoreaRep/NatAssy	X			
Panama/LegAssy		X		
Philippines/HRep		X		
Philippines/Sen	X			*
Poland/Sejm	X	X		*
Poland/Senate	X	X		*
Spain/CongrDep	X		X	
Spain/Senate	X		X	*
Sudan/TrNatAssy				
Switzerland/FedAssy	X		X	*
Tanzania/Parl				
Thailand/HRep	X			
UKingdom/HComm	X	X	X	*
UKingdom/HLords		X	X	
Uruguay/Senate				
Zimbabwe/Parl		X	×	

Twenty-nine Assemblies replied that their specialized information offices or services have a data processing system, three (*Senate of Belgium, National Assembly of Tanzania* and *Senate of Uruguay*) replied that one is being developed, and three (*National Assembly of Congo, Transitional National Assembly of Sudan, Parliament of Zimbabwe*) do not have one.

On the other hand, thirteen Assemblies supplied additional information on their data processing systems and the databanks to which they connect, which is included [*Annex C: not reprinted; see p. 60*].

(a) As can be observed, in 22 Assemblies the data processing system of their specialized information services is connected to the Chamber's databank. Some of these Assemblies report that their data processing system is run jointly with the other Chamber of its Parliament (*German Bundestag*). This aspect is related to the discussion of Point 5 (above): Parliaments in which the Library, which performs research and documentation services, is common to both Chambers.

(a) and (b) On the other hand, 6 of the above 22 Assemblies (*National Assembly of Bulgaria, Knesset of Israel, Senate of Japan, Sejm and Senate of Poland, House of Commons of the United Kingdom*) report that the data processing system of their specialized information services, which are connected to the Chamber's databank, are also capable of operating independently.

(b) Six Assemblies (*Senate of Australia, House of Commons of Canada, Folketing of Denmark, House of Representatives of the Philippines, House of Representatives of Japan and Legislative Assembly of Panama*) report that the data processing system of their specialized information services operated independently.

(c) Ten Assemblies report that outside users can access the data processing system of their specialized information service. The accompanying remarks allow us to conclude that the said access is always restricted, relative to both the databanks that can be accessed, and the users: "Some (databases) are offered to outside users on subscription." (*Senate, Australia*); The Chamber, in the course of this Session, has decided to make some of their databases accessible to outside users." (*Chamber of Representatives, Belgium*); "The computer system of the Library of Parliament is divided into two main networks: (...); (and) a system that brings together several databanks, (which) is accessible to some 40 users, including the research offices of political parties." (*House of Commons, Canada*); "... connected to the databanks of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies (which can also be accessed by outside users duly authorized to this effect). . ." (*Chamber of Deputies and Senate, Italy*); "Under agreement it is possible to connect outside users (these agreements cover, for instance, the Supreme Court, different regional parliaments, etc.)" (*Congress of Deputies and Senate, Spain*); "Internal databanks can be accessed by users within the administration that link to the LAN system (local access network)." (*Federal Assembly, Switzerland*); and "The Library has several databases: (...) Under POLIS 3 limited access to parliamentary databases will be provided to external users on a commercial basis." (*House of Commons, United Kingdom*); the UK House of Lords also uses POLIS.

Finally, the *Chilean Senate* reports work in progress to improve its data processing services: "The Senate Information Office has its own legal databank and is, also, connected to the Library of the National Congress, (which) has its

own databanks and is part of an important project, partly financed by the World Bank, to enlarge its databanks in order to connect with other databanks that process information on economic, statistical, judicial, public health, education, housing, family, environmental, etc., subjects."

Conclusion

It is not easy to draw conclusions on a subject that is so broad, and that includes a series of open questions that merited such wide and generous answers.

In the first place it should be pointed out that, institutionally, in countries that are democratic or that strive to be democratic, Parliament has as a first source of information the Executive Power and, to a lesser degree, other organs of the State. This questionnaire did not enquire into how the Executive complies with this constitutional or legal provision, nor how Parliament can exercise its right or impose punitive action. Parliament obtains information from the Executive through two ways: (I) to carry out its mandate: requesting or demanding reports from the Executive through the channels provided by each national constitution or laws, or through the appearance of Ministers or other governmental officers before the Plenary; and (II) to carry out its legislative function: through the presence, voluntary or on request, of Ministers, other members of government or officers of the various organs of the State.

It became clear, however, that most Parliaments place special consideration on the availability of other sources of information, namely of their own, as well as on advice that is impartial, technical, and received at the right time and circumstances. Most of the answers point to the fact that Parliaments seek to have various sources of information and, in many cases, to own services that are highly, or somewhat, technical, to process and classify information adequately. The latter is very clear in countries with better resources.

The strengthening of the decision-making of the Legislative doubtlessly requires the largest amount of information, supplied by the organs of the State or obtained from independent sources, including foreign (as in the case of comparative law); its proper analysis, classification and storage; and its equitable dissemination among all Members of Parliament.

Therein lies the relevance of circulating the answers received to the questionnaire on which I report. For better understanding, we have considered it advisable to include, in the excellent analysis and synthesis work done by Ms. Monica Zeissl, Technical Advisor, the original text of the replies of several of our Colleagues as annexes to points 5, 8 and 14 [*not reprinted, see below*].

ANNEXES: A number of more detailed annexes are attached to the Report on Sources of information for Parliament, taken from the original responses to the Questionnaire distributed by Mr. Farachio. Since these are in a variety of languages, they are not printed in «Constitutional and Parliamentary Information». Copies may however be obtained from the Joint Secretary of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, Committee Office, House of Commons, London SW1A, United Kingdom. The list of annexes is as follows:

Annex A: detailed responses to Point 5 of the Questionnaire, on specialised information offices or services, from:

1. Australia (House of Representatives)
2. Australia (Senate)
3. Belgium (Chamber of Representatives)
4. Belgium (Senate)
5. Chile (Senate)
6. Hungary (National Assembly)
7. Italy (Chamber of Deputies)
8. Italy (Senate)
9. Korea, Rep. of (National Assembly)
10. Poland (Sejm)
11. Poland (Senate)
12. Spain (Senate)
13. Switzerland (Federal Assembly)

Annex B: detailed responses to Point 8 of the Questionnaire, on the activities performed by the specialised information service, from:

1. Australia (House of Representatives)
2. Australia (Senate)

3. Belgium (Chamber of Representatives)
4. Belgium (Senate)
5. Bulgaria (National Assembly)
6. Canada (House of Commons)
7. Chile (Senate)
8. Denmark (Folketing)
9. Germany (Bundestag)
10. Hungary (National Assembly)
11. Indonesia (Parliament)
12. Italy (Chamber of Deputies)
13. Italy (Senate)
14. Philippines (House of Representatives)
15. Poland (Sejm)
16. Poland (Senate)
17. Spain (Congress of Deputies)
18. Spain (Senate)
19. Switzerland (Federal Assembly)
20. Thailand (House of Representatives)
21. United Kingdom (House of Commons)
22. Zimbabwe (Parliament)

Annexe C: detailed responses to Point 14 of the Questionnaire, on data processing systems, from:

1. Australia (House of Representatives)
2. Australia (Senate)
3. Belgium (Chamber of Representatives)
4. Canada (House of Commons)
5. Chile (Senate)
6. Germany (Bundestag)

7. Italy (Chamber of Deputies)
8. Italy (Senate)
9. Philippines (Senate)
10. Poland (Sejm)
11. Poland (Senate)
12. Spain (Senate)
13. Switzerland (Federal Assembly)
14. United Kingdom (House of Commons)