

ASSOCIATION OF GENERAL SECRETARIES OF PARLIAMENTS

The Social Protection of Parliamentarians

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INTRODUCTION

A review of the social protection of parliamentarians was launched at the Conference of the *Association of the General Secretaries of Parliaments* which was held in Brussels in April 1999.

It was decided to devise a questionnaire designed to reveal, beyond the diversity of national legislative arrangements, the common principles likely to exist in this area.

The questionnaire was then approved at the Berlin session in October 1999 and sent to all members of the Association. 56 countries responded to the questionnaire, which equates, after taking bicameral systems into account, to a total of 78 responses.

The questions covered three main subjects, namely, the pension entitlement of parliamentarians by virtue of their elected office, their social security cover during the period of said term of office and, lastly, the social protection of the staff of parliamentary assemblies.

This volume presents a summary of the main lessons to be drawn from the responses given on these three subjects, which form the object of a detailed analysis in the volume 2.

I - PENSION ENTITLEMENT OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

1. PENSION ENTITLEMENT BY VIRTUE OF OFFICE

a) A widely recognised right

The ability to take account, direct or indirect, of length of service in the calculation of the pension entitlement of parliamentarians is widely recognised.

Indeed, of all the responses received, **only a small minority of assemblies indicated that parliamentary office did not entail the right to a pension** (*Bundesrat of the Federal Republic of Germany, Burkina-Faso, Council of Europe, Republic of Korea, Egypt, Lesotho, Mexico, Monaco, Nigeria, Netherlands First Chamber of the Estates-General, United Kingdom House of Lords, Thailand, Zambia*). **Nonetheless, it should be stressed that, even in these cases, members are not necessarily without any old age pension insurance**, but may belong, in particular by virtue of another office or official post, to a pension scheme. This is especially the case of members of the *Bundesrat of the Federal Republic of Germany*, of the *Council of Europe*, of the *Netherlands First Chamber of the Estates-General* and of the *United Kingdom House of Lords* (Government members from this last assembly may also choose to join the special pension scheme run by the House of Commons). Elsewhere, **a number of other countries in which no recognised pension scheme currently exists for parliamentarians have nevertheless indicated that this subject is currently under review** (*Egypt, Lesotho, Nigeria, Thailand*).

Sometimes the intervention of the assemblies regarding pensions is limited to the payment either of a gratuity proportional to the period of office (*Zambia*), or to a financial contribution intended to help parliamentarians make their own arrangements for provision (*Swiss Confederation*).

Lastly, the special case of *both chambers of the Italian parliament* should be noted : they pay their former members an "annuity" which is not, legally considered to be a retirement pension.

b) Pension cover is, in the majority of cases, compulsory

Independently of the diversity of the methods and procedures chosen to implement it, the principal feature of old age pension insurance (basic) of parliamentarians is that it is compulsory.

Such old age pension insurance is thus only optional or voluntary in a limited number of countries. In such cases, parliamentarians can usually choose either to retain their personal retirement scheme during their period of office, or to join the scheme authorised to administer the pension entitlement of parliamentarians. *Examples of the countries or assemblies concerned are Botswana, Croatia, the United Kingdom House of Commons and Zimbabwe.*

It should also be noted that the compulsory nature of the old age pension insurance of parliamentarians does not necessarily mean compulsory membership of a single pension scheme. Indeed, some national legislative arrangements permit parliamentarians to choose between a number of membership schemes. Thus, for example, the members of the Republic of *Portugal's* Assembly or of the Knesset (*Israel*) have to choose, at the beginning of their term of office, from several previously designated or approved pension schemes. **Similarly, the compulsory membership of parliamentarians to a pension scheme organised for this purpose (or designated by law) is sometimes not an obstacle to the members' continued affiliation, throughout their term of office, to the scheme under which they were previously covered as private individuals** (Andorra, France, Japan, Jordan, Luxembourg, Norway).

c) Limited recourse to supplementary old age pension insurance

As a general rule, the pension rights guaranteed to parliamentarians by virtue of their office are the same as the "basic" provision of the old age pension insurance. **The great majority of responses received thus state that any acquisition, by parliamentarians, of supplementary pension entitlement by virtue of their term of office is solely a matter for the individual** and that they should, in such cases, apply to the commercial body or company of their choice.

Supplementary old age pension insurance is however provided for parliamentarians, either on a compulsory basis (Angola, Ethiopia, Finland, Norway, Federal Council of Russia, Slovenia and the Swiss Confederation), **or on a voluntary basis** (Canada, Ireland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Mongolia, United Kingdom, Slovenia and the Czech republic). Romania is working on a supplementary pension scheme for 2001.

It should be stressed that, **in some assemblies, supplementary old age pension insurance is the only such scheme that can be specifically arranged (or offered to) for parliamentarians by virtue of their office, with the "basic" old age pension insurance coming under a common rights pension scheme.** This is the case, for example, in *Finland* and *Russia*. In *Norway*, the qualifying age for pension entitlement is lower than the common rights age, and the parliamentary pension can be assimilated to a "basic" pension as long as the holder has not yet reached this common rights age. The parliamentary pension, which is added to other pension rights acquired by parliamentarians in a personal capacity, may be considered to be a supplementary retirement pension.

There is also the special case of *Canada*, where only holders of certain official posts are entitled to supplementary old age pension insurance (Presidents of the two chambers and the Leaders of the Governing Party and the Opposition).

2. METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCING OF PARLIAMENTARY PENSIONS

a) Equally shared membership of special pension schemes and common rights pension schemes

For the most part, **pension rights acquired during the period of parliamentary office are managed:**

- either under a special pension scheme;
- or by another pension scheme, parliamentarians then classed in the same way as other members of said scheme.

The table below shows that there is a relatively equally balance in the number of parliamentary assemblies using each of these systems:

Special Pension Schemes		
South Africa - Germany (Bundestag) - Australia (Senate) - Belgium (House of Representatives & Senate) - Canada (House of Commons and Senate) - Cyprus - Denmark - Estonia - France (National Assembly and Senate) - India (House of the People and Council of States) - Ireland (House of Representatives & Senate) - Italy - Japan - Namibia - Norway - New Zealand (until 1992) - Netherlands (Second Chamber of the Estates-General) - United Kingdom - Sweden - Sri Lanka -		
Other pension schemes		
<i>The parliamentarian remains a member of his previous pension scheme</i>	<i>The parliamentarian belongs to the general scheme</i>	<i>The parliamentarian belongs to the civil service scheme</i>
Austria - Benin - Burkina Faso - Cambodia - Egypt - Spain - Netherlands (First Chamber) - Mexico - Monaco (no scheme provided) - Romania - Zimbabwe (if the parliamentarian chooses to continue to belong to his previous pension scheme)	Andorra - Angola - Armenia - Macedonia - Poland - Portugal (if the parliamentarian has opted for this scheme) - Russia (Federal Council) - Slovenia - Swiss Confederation - Czech Republic - Ukraine	Belarus - Botswana - Finland - Greece - Iceland - Israel - Jordan - Luxembourg - Mongolia (if the parliamentarian has opted for this scheme) - New Zealand (since 1992) - Philippines - Portugal (if the parliamentarian has opted for this scheme) - Zimbabwe (if the parliamentarian has opted for this scheme).

It is apparent from this table that the **common rights schemes** competent to manage, in some countries, the pension rights acquired by parliamentarians by virtue of their office, are, most often, either the pension scheme for civil servants (or holders of official posts), or the "general" or "universal" pension scheme applicable to all economically active persons or citizens, or, lastly, the pension scheme to which the parliamentarian belonged in a personal capacity prior to the start of his term of office.

In addition, recent changes (or proposed changes currently being introduced) indicated in the responses of parliamentary assemblies do not make it possible to say that one or other of these systems (special or other scheme) is generally favoured. Thus, some countries (*e.g. Spain*), whose parliamentarians currently belong to a common rights scheme, may be considering the introduction of a special pension scheme. Others, on the contrary, whose parliamentarians previously benefited from a special scheme, now allow them to choose which pension scheme to join (*e.g. Israel*) from a selection of approved schemes or bodies (pension funds), or make them members of a common rights pension scheme (*e.g. Austria*).

b) More or less established involvement by assemblies in the management and funding of parliamentary pensions

The pension scheme for parliamentarians **may be managed:**

- **directly by the parliamentary assembly concerned:** this is the model most often used in the management of pension schemes specific to parliamentarians (Germany - Bundestag, Angola (supplementary scheme), Belgium - House of Representatives and Senate, Canada Senate, Denmark, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Italy, United Kingdom - House of Commons, Sri Lanka). It must also be stressed that, even in this case, the degree to which parliamentary assemblies are involved is eminently variable, going from internal and completely autonomous management (*e.g. National Assembly and Senate of the French Republic*) to management delegated to an outside body, supervised by a supervisory board elected by the parliamentary assembly (*e.g. United Kingdom House of Commons*).
- **by an outside body to which parliamentarians belong, but collaborating with the parliamentary assembly concerned** (*South Africa, Australia - Senate, Canada - House of Commons, Cyprus, India, Israel, Japan, Norway*), this collaboration may be limited, for example, to the administrative declaration of new members of parliament to the pension scheme to which they belong or the treatment of complaints from parliamentarians about the management of their pension. In other case, on the contrary, collaboration between the relevant department of the parliamentary assembly and the outside body may be more extensive. Thus, for example, the department of the *Indian Parliament* calculates entitlement and arranges for payment of pensions, the actual payment of which is then entrusted to the competent outside body (in this instance - Central Pensions Office of the federal government).
- **by an outside body without the intervention (except, if necessary, the payment of contributions) of the parliamentary assembly,** the most frequent position for this method of management is, of course, the compulsory membership of parliamentarians of a common rights pension scheme. In most of these countries, however, the parliaments concerned do come to see, under their general powers of control, the accounts of such common rights schemes.

Management of a pension scheme without the intervention of the Parliamentary assembly		
<i>The parliamentarian remains a member of his previous pension scheme</i>	<i>The parliamentarian belongs to the general scheme</i>	<i>The parliamentarian belongs to the scheme for civil servants or special pension scheme</i>
Austria - Benin - Burkina Faso - Cambodia - Egypt - Spain - Netherlands (First Chamber) - Mexico - Monaco (no scheme provided) - Romania - Zimbabwe (if the parliamentarian chooses to continue to belong to his previous pension scheme)	Andorra - Angola - Armenia - Macedonia - Poland - Portugal (if the parliamentarian has opted for this scheme) - Russia (Federal Council) - Slovenia - Swiss Confederation - Czech Republic - Ukraine	Civil Servants: Belarus - Botswana - Finland - Greece - Iceland - Israel - Jordan - Luxembourg - Mongolia (if the parliamentarian has opted for this scheme) - New Zealand (since 1992) - Philippines - Portugal (if the parliamentarian has opted for this scheme) - Zimbabwe (if the parliamentarian has opted for this scheme). Elective posts: Australia (Senate) - Namibia.

On the matter of funding methods and procedures for parliamentary pensions, it can be noted that, **in the majority of cases, and whatever the nature of the contributory schemes, parliamentarians and the parliamentary assemblies pay respectively employees' and employers' contributions** for old age pension insurance. Of the exceptions to this general rule, it should be stressed that:

- **parliamentarians are sometimes entitled to a pension without their being required to make contributions** (Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany, Estonia, India, Netherlands - Second Chamber of the Estates-General, Sri Lanka, Sweden);

- the "employers'" share of contributions to old age pension insurance may be paid directly from the State budget, instead of from the budget of the parliamentary assembly (South Africa, Cyprus, Croatia, Ethiopia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Mongolia, Portugal, United Kingdom - House of Commons).

c) The special case of bicameral systems

With regard to the general observations made earlier, it seems useful to linger for a moment on **the methods and procedures chosen by the parliaments comprising two assemblies who responded to the questionnaire. Very logically, it turns out that parliamentary pensions are then organised on the basis of principles common to the two assemblies concerned.** Thus, parliamentarians of such assemblies are usually covered by the same old age pension insurance scheme (*Belarus, Canada, India, Ireland, Japan, Russia, Poland*). The only notable exceptions are:

- on one hand, *Austria* and *Spain*, where the application of the common rule (the parliamentarian continues to belong to the personal pension scheme under which he was previously covered) is inevitably interpreted as a function of different individual circumstances;

- on the other hand, *France*, *Belgium* and *Italy*, where the underlying reasoning behind the arrangements adopted by the two assemblies (internally managed autonomous scheme) is necessarily translated by the creation of a specific pension scheme for each of them.

The particular case of the Canadian Parliament should also be stressed, where the **autonomous pension scheme common to members of both assemblies** is managed:

- **for the part applicable to members of the House of Commons: externally**, by a federal government body (in collaboration with the administrative services of the assembly);

- **for the part applicable to members of the Senate: internally**, by a government servant accountable to the Senate finance director.

3. BENEFITS PROVIDED BY PARLIAMENTARY PENSION SCHEMES

The methods and procedures for calculating and paying pensions acquired by virtue of parliamentary office are extremely diverse. **Reading the synoptic tables attached to this report will provide a more precise idea of these.** At the very most we can try here to establish a general typology of the systems used by national parliaments in the following areas:

a) the qualifying conditions of pension rights acquired by virtue of parliamentary office

<p>SPECIAL CONDITIONS RELATED TO THE QUALIFYING PENSIONABLE AGE</p>	<p>South Africa, Germany - Bundestag, Andorra, Angola, Australia - Senate, Belgium, Benin, Canada, Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece - Chamber of Deputies, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg,, Namibia, Norway, New Zealand, Netherlands -Second Chamber of the Estates-General, Portugal, United Kingdom (House of Commons), Sweden</p>
<p>SPECIAL CONDITIONS RELATED TO A MINIMUM PERIOD OF SERVICE</p>	<p>Germany Bundestag, Angola, Australia - Senate, Benin, Canada, Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Greece - Chamber of Deputies, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, Russia (Federal Council), Sri Lanka, Sweden</p>
<p>POSSIBILITY OF EARLY PAYMENT OF THE PENSION</p>	<p>Germany Bundestag, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, France, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, United Kingdom (House of Commons), Sweden</p>
<p>PENSION ENTITLEMENT ASSESSED ON THE TERMS & CONDITIONS OF THE COMMON RIGHTS SCHEME TO WHICH THE PARLIAMENTARIAN BELONGS</p>	<p>Austria, Belarus, Burkina Faso National Assembly, Spain, Ethiopia, Israel, Macedonia, Mongolia, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Ukraine</p>

b) Rules for calculation of the pension granted by virtue of parliamentary office

Pension proportional to length of service	South Africa, Germany (Bundestag), Australia (Senate), Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, India, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Namibia, Nepal, Norway, New Zealand, Netherlands (Second Chamber of the Estates-General), Philippines, Portugal (civil service scheme), United Kingdom (House of Commons), Russia (Federal Council), Sri Lanka, Sweden, Zimbabwe		
Account taken of service in other parliamentary assemblies (or other official posts)	Germany (Bundestag), Australia (Senate), Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Greece (Chamber of Deputies), Ireland, Italy, Netherlands (Second Chamber of the Estates-General)		
Minimum and/or maximum pension stipulated	<p>Minimum</p> <p>India, Philippines, Poland</p>	<p>Maximum</p> <p>Angola, Belarus, Belgium (Senate), Burkina Faso, Canada (Senate), Cyprus, Croatia, Finland, France, Iceland, Japan, Netherlands (Second Chamber of the Estates-General), Portugal, Ukraine</p>	<p>Minimum & Maximum</p> <p>Germany (Bundestag), Australia (Senate), Belgium (House of Representatives), Botswana, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Norway, New Zealand, Russia (Federal Council), Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom (House of Commons)</p>
Possibility of purchasing or approval of annuities	France, United Kingdom (House of Commons), Zimbabwe		
Pension paid out under the terms and conditions of the common rights scheme to which the parliamentarian belongs	Andorra, Austria, Belarus, Ethiopia, Israel, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Czech Republic, Ukraine,		

c) Rules for drawing the parliamentary pension parliamentarian and a personal retirement pension simultaneously

Multiple pensions possible without conditions or limits	Andorra, Australia (Senate), Burkina Faso (National Assembly), Canada (Senate), Cyprus, France, Finland, India, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg,
Multiple pensions possible with conditions or limits	Germany (Bundestag), Belarus, Belgium, Canada (House of Commons), Denmark, Greece (Chamber of Deputies), Ireland, Japan, Norway, Netherlands (Second Chamber of the Estates-General), Philippines, United Kingdom (House of Commons), Russia (Federal Council), Sri Lanka,
Multiple pensions not possible	Angola, Croatia, Ethiopia, Czech Republic

d) Reversion pension rights of the spouse and/or dependent children

Spouse	South Africa, Germany (Bundestag), Andorra, Angola, Australia (Senate), Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Burkina Faso (National Assembly), Canada, Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Greece (Chamber of Deputies), India, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Namibia, Norway, New Zealand, Netherlands (Second Chamber of the Estates-General), Philippines, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom (House of Commons), Russia (Federal Council), Sri Lanka, Sweden, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Zimbabwe
Dependent children	South Africa, Germany (Bundestag), Andorra, Angola, Australia (Senate), Belarus, Belgium (House of Representatives), Benin, Burkina Faso (National Assembly), Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Greece (Chamber of Deputies), India, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Mongolia, Namibia, Norway, Netherlands (Second Chamber of the Estates-General), Philippines, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom (House of Commons), Russia (Federal Council), Sri Lanka, Sweden, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Zimbabwe

e) Special benefits for parliamentarians not satisfying, at the end of their term of office, the regulations for pension entitlement by virtue of their office

Lump sum or temporary payment	Germany (Bundestag), Angola, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France (National Assembly), Italy, Luxembourg, Mongolia, New Zealand, Netherlands (Second Chamber of the Estates-General), Philippines, Portugal, Czech Republic
Unemployment insurance (or benefits on this account)	Croatia, Finland, Mongolia, Norway, Philippines, Ukraine

II - SOCIAL SECURITY OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

Unlike pension entitlement, the "special parliamentary arrangements" appear clearly less marked in the matter of social security (sickness, maternity, invalidity, death and industrial injury insurance). Indeed, although the great majority of parliamentarians today benefit from social security cover while in office, this is, for the most part, organised within the framework of the common rights legislation of each country. Special social security schemes, organised solely for the benefit of parliamentarians, are thus an exception, even, in some cases, of an optional or subsidiary nature.

1. SOCIAL SECURITY COVER PRIMARILY DEFINED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF NATIONAL LEGISLATION ON COMMON RIGHTS

Analysis of the responses returned reveals that the great majority of, if not all, parliamentarians benefit, while in office, from social security cover.

It should be stressed that this (virtually) universal social security cover for parliamentarians results less from a deliberate decision by the assemblies than from the normal application of the different national legislative arrangements. Social security cover for parliamentarians is not therefore one of the special benefits of their office, but their right, recognised on the same basis as other citizens. **This social security cover is thus provided, in the majority of cases, in the absence of any right explicitly or specifically linked to parliamentary office** (*Germany, Australian (Senate), Belgium, Burkina Faso, Swiss Confederation, Council of Europe, Spain, Estonia, Ethiopia, Ireland, Iceland, Israel, Italian Senate, Japan, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Norway, New Zealand, Netherlands (Second Chamber of the Estates-General), Poland, Romania, United Kingdom, Russia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Ukraine*).

Elsewhere, **specific social security arrangements for parliamentarians are often optional** (since a parliamentarian who already has personal social security cover can choose to keep it during his or her period of office), **subsidiary** (the arrangements made then applying only to parliamentarians without any social security cover on the date of their election) or **supplementary** (the benefits supplement benefits under the common rights scheme under which the parliamentarian is covered, by virtue of his or her basic social security cover).

Parliamentarians without any social security cover during their term of office are thus only a minority, namely elected members in countries where an organised social protection system does not yet exist, and particularly sickness insurance, for the benefit of the population (*e.g. Belarus, Cambodia, Lesotho, Nigeria*). The Parliaments of *Lesotho* and *Nigeria* have, however, indicated that consideration is now being given to a proposal designed to guarantee social security cover for parliamentarians.

2. MANAGEMENT, WITH RARE EXCEPTIONS, BY SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES EXTERNAL TO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES

a) As a general rule: parliamentarians belong to a common rights social security scheme during their period of office

A logical consequence of the previous observation, parliamentarians usually belong during their term of office, to:

- either a **common rights social security scheme**, whether this is a scheme reserved for a particular category of persons insured, or a "universal" social security scheme, in countries in which social security, financed by taxation, is available to all resident citizens: *Andorra, Australia, Canada, Swiss Confederation, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Iceland, Israel, Japan* (if the parliamentarian does not already have personal social security cover), *Luxembourg* (idem), *Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, United Kingdom, Russia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sweden* (for sickness insurance only), *Czech Republic, Ukraine, Zambia* (industrial injury cover only, sickness insurance being a matter for the individual initiative of the parliamentarian);
- or the **social protection scheme for public servants**, in which category parliamentarians are then classified: *Austria, Korea, Greece* (for parliamentarians without social security cover on the date of his or her election, or for those who have chosen to belong to this scheme), *India, Mongolia* (if the parliamentarian selects this scheme rather than another), *Namibia* (idem), *Philippines, Portugal* (the parliamentarian may nevertheless choose to continue to belong to his or her personal scheme), *Sweden* (industrial injury) ;
- or the **social security scheme by which the parliamentarian is covered (or was covered on the date of election) in a personal capacity**: *Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Spain, Ethiopia, Greece, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mongolia* (parliamentarian's own choice), *Namibia* (Idem), *Portugal* (idem).

The involvement of parliamentary assemblies in the management and funding of the social security cover of their members thus varies, necessarily, as a function of the applicable national legislation. The assemblies are thus sometimes categorised as the "employers" of the parliamentarians, and as such, have to pay an "employers'" contribution. On the other hand, in countries where a "universal" social protection system exists funded by taxation, the social security cover of parliamentarians does not require any special intervention by the assemblies.

b) The exception: special social security schemes organised solely for the benefit of parliamentarians

Parliamentarians' membership (compulsory or optional) of a specific social protection scheme during their term of office is thus an exception: *South Africa, Angola, Benin, France, Egypt* (membership of the special scheme is optional), *Finland, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Zimbabwe*. Yet it may be noted that, even in these cases, the management of the special scheme is, most often, entrusted to an outside body (public or private).

However, the **special case of the French Parliament should be highlighted (National Assembly and Senate)**, for whose members belonging to **a specific, autonomous and separate scheme for each assembly** is **compulsory**, schemes that are **managed internally** by their respective administrative departments.

In a general way, **social security benefits** for parliamentarians reflect the diversity of the regulations applied by the schemes, mostly common rights schemes, to which they belong. Analysis of the synoptic tables appended to this report thus provides a necessarily partial picture of the position. Unlike pension entitlement, it seems, here too, to identify genuinely "special parliamentary arrangements" in this area. At most the following main points can be highlighted:

- **some assemblies, a minority of the total number of responses, offer their members supplementary sickness insurance**, whether benefits added to those provided by the common rights scheme to which these members are also affiliated, or benefits provided under a special social security scheme (e.g. *South Africa, Belgium, Canada* (parliamentarians then belong to the supplementary scheme for civil servants), *France, Mexico, Portugal, Slovenia*);
- **the provision of cover for the risks of invalidity and/or of industrial injury by virtue of parliamentary office remains an exception** (Federal Republic of Germany (Bundestag), Australia (Senate), Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands (Second Chamber of the Estates-General, Portugal, Sri Lanka);
- the existence, in a small number of assemblies, **of a medical service (internal or external) providing medical care for parliamentarians (and sometimes for their families), especially in the absence of an organised social security scheme** (e.g. *Angola, Cyprus, France, Czech Republic, Zimbabwe*).

III - THE SOCIAL PROTECTION OF THE STAFF OF PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES

The responses received indicated that parliamentary staff usually benefit from social security cover, the only notable exceptions being those of *Cambodia, Lesotho* and *Nigeria* (these last two countries have, however, indicated that consideration is being given to a proposal in this area).

This social security cover is mainly organised by reference to the rules applicable to other government servants, with whom parliamentary staff are most frequently classified, and after taking national legislation into account, **the staff of parliamentary assemblies are, for the most part, covered by the old age pension and sickness insurance schemes empowered to manage the social protection of other government servants**, whether these are special schemes specific to the Civil Service (this characteristic seems more marked in the field of old age pension insurance than of sickness insurance), or common rights schemes (employees' social protection schemes or "universal" social security insurance).

Social protection schemes set up for the exclusive benefit of parliamentary staff thus represent a minority of the responses examined. Again it should be stressed that these special schemes are **generally optional** or **supplementary**, and **usually only cover one of the social risks (sickness or old age) to which the beneficiaries may be exposed**. In this regard, it can be noted that only the officials of the *Council of Europe* (at least those recruited from 1998) and of the *French Parliamentary Assemblies (National Assembly et Senate)* benefit from social protection organised entirely within the framework of special schemes, for both sickness and old age pension insurance.

As for the social security of parliamentarians, the benefits provided for parliamentary staff within the framework of their social protection reflects the diversity of legislation or regulations provided in this area and reading the synoptic tables appended to this report will allow individuals to satisfy their curiosity in this area. Nonetheless, it may be noted on this subject that:

- the social protection enjoyed by parliamentary staff sometimes provides only partial cover for those concerned (e.g. *Belarus, where staff benefit only from maternity-death insurance cover; Zimbabwe, where officials are offered only sickness and death insurance cover*);
- some parliamentary staff benefit from a special medical service, usually free of charge, and sometimes made available to them on the premises of the assembly concerned. This medical service may be additional to more extensive social protection guaranteed elsewhere or, in contrast, be one of the key elements of the social cover provided for civil servants.