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## **Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination**

### **Promoting inclusive participation in parliamentary and political life**

### ***Promouvoir la participation inclusive dans la vie parlementaire***

#### **Compilation of replies to the questionnaire**

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## **ALBANIA: Assembly of Albania**

### **1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

#### **a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

- No, they are not. In order to give access to people with reduced mobility they can use the elevators in order to access the building. In the plenary session building there is an entrance for people with disabilities.

#### **b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

- No.

#### **c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

- No.

#### **d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?

ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?

- The Conduct Code of MPs in its article 8 point 3 determines that the Assembly creates opportunities for women MPs and Assembly staff, who have new born children, to participate in parliamentary work with her. The Assembly continuously reviews the working conditions and culture. The Assembly provides equal opportunities for everyone, both the MP and the support staff.

#### **e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

- No.

### **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

#### **a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

- Yes there is. The Parliament of Albania changed the Rules of Procedure in order to held remote meetings. These amendments were adopted on the Plenary Session of 16 April 2020. The new amendments adopted are:

#### **Article a/5“Meetings in cases of emergency measures”**

In cases of extraordinary measures that may be imposed due to the state of war, the state of emergency or the state of natural disasters, meetings of the Bureau of the Assembly, the Conference of Chairmen, Parliamentary Committees and the Plenary Session may be held remotely or with a reduced number of MPs also through electronic means of communication.

The Speaker of the Assembly orders the development at a distance through the means of electronic communication of the Conference of Chairmen and to the Bureau of the Assembly.

The Conference of Chairman decides on held of remote or with reduced number of MPs through the means of electronic communication of the Parliamentary Committees and the Plenary Session.

In cases of holding remote meetings or with a reduced number of MPs by means of electronic communication, according to the provisions of this article, will be respected as far as possible the procedural rules provided in articles 32-40 of this regulation.

#### **Article a / 6 “Voting in cases of emergency measures”**

When meetings according to point a / 5 are held remotely by means of communication electronic voting can also be done by electronic means of communication providing authentication of MPs.

#### **Article a / 7 “Accelerated procedure of reviewing draft laws in cases of emergency measures”**

In cases of extraordinary measures, the Assembly of Albania, at the request of the Council of Ministers or one-fifth of the total number of MPs, may review with an accelerated procedure more than one draft law in the 3-week calendar and more than three draft laws on the 9-week calendar.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

– There is not a regulation regarding this issue. But, the Conduct Code of MPs in its article 8 point 3 determines that the Assembly creates opportunities for women MPs and Assembly staff, who have new born children, to participate in parliamentary work with her. The Assembly continuously reviews the working conditions and culture. The Assembly provides equal opportunities for everyone, both the MP and the support staff.

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

- Yes, the plenary session is also transmitted in the sign's language.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

– No.

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

- Yes there is.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

- The Human Resources Service and the Treatment of MPs.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement? N/A.**

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)? N/A.**

**4. Additional information** Please add any further information you may find useful.

*Should you require additional information on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us.*

## AUSTRIA: Parliament Building

### 1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation

**a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Austria's Parliament Building, dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, has been under renovation since 2017 and will be opened in October 2022. Additionally, some other buildings used by the Parliamentary Administration are being renovated and will be occupied again in the course of this year.

#### Temporary accommodations:

The various buildings serving as temporary accommodation were adapted to the needs of disabled persons wherever this was possible under the terms of the rental agreement:

To facilitate access to the buildings for disabled persons, the following adaptations were made:

- Parking lots reserved to disabled persons,
- Appropriate design of elevators (in most buildings, elevators are equipped with special devices for persons with reduced mobility – e.g. continuous handrail),
- Wheelchair-accessible entrances to buildings,
- Building entrances equipped with video intercom sets and card readers within reach of wheelchair users
- automatic (also touchless) door openers along the main circulation routes within the buildings
- portable ramps (can for instance be used to make the podium in a meeting room accessible to wheelchair users),
- wheelchair-accessible toilets

(see the Austrian answer to request # 4543 **Disability policies in national parliaments** of November 2020)

The renovated Parliament Building will provide access for persons with reduced mobility as follows:

#### Entrances

- People with motor disabilities can independently enter the doorway as the dimensions allow for the passage of a standard wheelchair.
- In order to facilitate the access of people with motor disabilities, the entrances are equipped with a ramp and/or other equipment that allows users to avoid using a step or stairs.
- People with motor disabilities can find an accessible door near any revolving doors or turnstiles and/or the revolving doors allow the reduction of their speed by pressing an adjacent button.
- Wheelchair users have sufficient manoeuvring space near the security scanner at the infeed and return points for personal effects.

#### Hallways

- People with motor disabilities, in particular wheelchair users, have sufficient space to move and turn around in the hallways.

#### Lifts

- Wheelchair users can independently use the button panels on both outside and inside of the lift cabin.
- Wheelchair users can independently enter the lift car.

- In order to facilitate the manoeuvres of a wheelchair user, there is a mirror on the wall facing the door of the lift car.
- Wheelchair users can be accompanied and assisted by another person as the dimensions of the lift car permit it.

### Stairs

- To guarantee the safety of users, in particular of people with motor disabilities, a slip-resistant surface has been installed in all stairs.
- Users can find firm and easy-to-grab handrails along the stairs.

Statements above refer to main stairs and main corridors.

(see Austrian answers to request # 4648 **Accessibility of the buildings of the national parliaments of the EU member states** and with more details to # 4655 **Adaptations and fittings to the plenary session room for parliamentarians with disabilities**, both of March 2021)

#### **c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

There is no separate procedure. Children and youth under 18 have to go through the same checks as adults. But security personnel is advised to encounter children and youth in sensible ways.

#### **d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

##### **i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

No, there are no nursery facilities. But staff and MPs can use adjacent facilities provided by the Federal Chancellery.

##### **ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

Yes, but during renovation works only in a limited number.

#### **e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Yes. This is of special importance because of the wide range of activities and programs for children and youth in the Austrian Parliament.

## **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

#### **a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

Members of the National Council and the Federal Council cannot take parental leave. Pregnancy (and pregnancy-related precautionary measures) may be a valid reason for (longer) absence of MPs (see infra 2.e.).

There are no possibilities for remote voting, proxy voting or pairing between parties in the National Council and the Federal Council.

With regard to municipal councils and provisions for parental leave, we refer to the Austrian answer to request **No. 4763 Maternity and other family leave for local councillors/locally elected representatives** of June 2021. The answer gives detailed information on the relevant legislation in three of Austria's regions.

#### **b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

This case is not explicitly regulated. This was different in the past, when access was explicitly denied. Back in 1990, the matter was debated when a new MP of the Green Party brought her baby to the constituent sitting and had to breastfeed him in the plenary. There has been no such incident, since, and it can be assumed that any such case would be handled in a pragmatic manner.

#### **c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual**

## impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?

### Assistance for people with hearing loss:

#### Sign language:

- Sign language interpreters take part in all National Council's sittings and translate all the speeches given between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. The sittings are broadcasted by the Austrian Broadcasting Cooperation (ORF III) live and on-demand on the Parliament's website ("*Mediathek*"). The sign language interpreter is filmed by an extra camera and shown on the screen in addition to the speaker.
- Key information on Parliament and the legislative procedure on the Parliament's website is provided in sign language: [Informationen in Österreichischer Gebärdensprache | Parlament Österreich](#)
- At the moment there is no deaf member either in the National Council or in the Federal Council, therefore no individual arrangements for sign language interpretation are in place to assist in committee or other meetings.
- If requested, tours in the Parliament (temporary locations) can be accompanied by a sign language interpreter (who is paid by Parliament).

#### Subtitles/speech-to-text interpretation:

- For the broadcast sittings of the National and Federal Councils, subtitles are available on "ORF Teletext". They are available for 7 days. On the Parliament's website – and, more user friendly, on the *Mediathek* - the records of speeches are available for download as soon as possible during the sitting, or on the next day at the latest (see also Austrian answer to request **# 4347 Use of speech-to-text solutions**, question 15).
- In autumn 2022, guided tours of Parliament will be provided with automatic transcription. Participants with hearing impairments will be handed an I-pad to read the automatically produced transcript of the guide's explanations, or use an app on their own mobile phones.
- To compensate hearing loss of single employees speech-to-text interpreters are commissioned during conferences or meetings (due to Covid-19 till now for online events only).
- A Webex application for online meetings on the Parliament's PCs provides automatic subtitles in English (which is helpful for simple conversations or meetings with few participants).

For further details and assistive *infrastructure* for persons with hearing loss, such as inductive loops, see Austrian answer to request **No. 4228 Situation of people with hearing loss in parliaments** of December 2019.

### Assistance for visual impairments:

- The Parliament's website is run barrier-free, in accordance with the Web Accessibility Act ([Web-Zugänglichkeits-Gesetz – WZG](#)).
- Additionally, a reading service is available for key information on the website: *Vorleseservice "Leopold"*.

For assistive *infrastructure* for persons with visual impairments in the renovated Parliament building see Austrian answer to request **No. 4648 Accessibility of the buildings of the national parliaments of the EU member states**.

#### **d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

No, there aren't such sanctions. MPs have to inform the Parliamentary Administration of an absence prior to the beginning of a sitting. If a Member is unable to attend for 30 days or more, s/he shall so inform the President in writing, stating the reasons for his/her absence. If the Member's absence is for any reason other than medical, the President shall inform the National Council of the reason. In practice, this rules are applied in a pragmatic manner especially when MPs are ill or have caring responsibilities.

### 3. Fostering inclusive attitudes

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

Yes, there is a Code of Conduct for MPs, it can be found [here](#) (unfortunately only in German).

In the Code of Conduct, the Members of Parliament commit themselves to act in a polite, respectful and appreciative manner and to stand up against any disregard of these principles. This applies both inside and outside parliament. In their conduct, they always have the public image of politics in mind.

Furthermore, in their speeches they shall respect the dignity of the House, as is also expressed in the Code of Conduct.

Discriminatory or sexist remarks in debates will result in a call to order. See § 102 [Rules of Procedure of the National Council](#), § 70 [Rules of Procedure of the Federal Council](#):

If a person who is entitled to participate in the deliberations of the National Council or the Federal Council violates the decorum or dignity of the Federal Council, uses abusive language or does not comply with the President's orders or infringes obligations to observe secrecy under the Information Rules Act, the President shall call him/her to order.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

No, there is no department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

Yes, there is a high level of awareness of these needs with regard to disabilities. When the first MP in a wheelchair arrived in Parliament in 1986, the necessary constructions were undertaken to ensure accessibility of the Parliament Building, of his seat and of the speaker's lectern, etc. In 2009 a deaf MP took a seat, and many measures were introduced to guarantee her full participation.

The accessibility of Parliament was a high priority under the last President of the National Council and continues to be one under the current President. Regarding accessibility, the Austrian Parliament wants to function as a role model. Persons with disabilities among the public, the members of the National and Federal Councils, as well as among the staff of the parliamentary groups and of the Parliamentary Administration benefit from this effort now and will do so in the future.

Furthermore, the President of the National Council wants to raise people's awareness of the needs of people with disabilities. 15% of all people have disabilities. Many events around this issue have taken place in and outside Parliament. See Parliament's press releases regarding Zero Project Conference 2020 in Vienna ([Sobotka: Grundlegende Aufgabe der Politik ist es, die Teilhabe von Menschen mit Behinderungen an allen Bereichen des Lebens zu ermöglichen \(PK-Nr. 147/2020\) | Parlament Österreich](#) or Parliament's participation in the international campaigns "PurpleLightUp" and "#WeThe15" ([#PurpleLightUp: Das Parlament trägt Lila \(PK-Nr. 1357/2020\) | Parlament Österreich](#); [Aussendung in Sprachstufe B1: Das Parlament unterstützt die internationale Kampagne #WeThe15 \(PK-Nr. 951/2021\) | Parlament Österreich](#)).

There is a growing level of awareness with regard to other inclusive practices, i.e. the provision of information in easy language (see [here](#)).

Inclusive practices with regard to care obligations of MPs, children etc. are discussed from time to time but no concrete steps have been taken yet.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

It is difficult to answer this question as we don't have systematic data available. With regard to the experiences and measures described here, we can deduce that a lot depends on individuals who can refer to their own experiences and convince others that the proposed measures will be beneficial to all.

**4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

## **BELGIQUE: Chambre des représentants et Sénat**

### **1. Adaptation des infrastructures pour une participation inclusive**

#### **a. Les bâtiments de votre parlement sont-ils adaptés à l'accès des personnes à mobilité réduite? Y a-t-il eu récemment des rénovations pour rendre les bâtiments plus accessibles?**

Des adaptations ont été réalisées dans le bâtiment historique du Parlement pour le rendre accessible aux personnes à mobilité réduite (par exemple, les personnes en fauteuil roulant). Cette accessibilité n'est cependant pas garantie à toutes les entrées du bâtiment historique. La plupart des salles et des bureaux du bâtiment historique sont accessibles aux personnes à mobilité réduite, mais celles-ci devront parfois suivre un itinéraire adapté pour éviter certains obstacles dans le bâtiment.

En 2010, outre le bâtiment historique du Parlement où se déroulent les séances plénières et une partie de l'administration est logée, un bâtiment moderne (Forum) abrite désormais une grande partie des services administratifs ainsi que des bureaux des députés. Ce bâtiment est adapté aux personnes en fauteuil roulant.

#### **b. Existe-t-il un accès dédié aux bâtiments du parlement pour les personnes à mobilité réduite?**

Oui, mais cet accès spécial n'est pas disponible à tous les accès au bâtiment.

#### **c. Existe-t-il une procédure distincte pour l'accès aux bâtiments du Parlement pour les enfants de moins de 18 ans?**

Il n'existe pas de procédure spécifique pour les visiteurs mineurs. Les visiteurs mineurs peuvent assister aux activités parlementaires en tant que spectateurs comme les adultes, à condition de présenter leur carte d'identité, de passer les contrôles de sécurité et d'être accompagné par un adulte.

#### **d. Dans les locaux du Parlement, existe-t-il :**

##### **i. des crèches (services gratuits et/ou payants)?**

Non

##### **ii. des salles pour changer et nourrir les bébés?**

Non. Un dispositif adapté pour changer les bébés est disponible dans les toilettes des personnes handicapées pour les visiteurs (groupes et spectateurs des débats parlementaires). Il y a un local de repos pour femme enceinte attenant au cabinet du médecin du travail. Cette pièce pourrait également servir de salle pour nourrir les bébés. Lors de grands événements, on veille également à prévoir un endroit où les bébés peuvent être changés. Le groupe de travail « Parlement sensible au genre » fera la proposition de prévoir une table de langer aussi bien dans les toilettes pour les dames que dans celles des hommes.

#### **e. Les parlementaires, le personnel et les visiteuses et visiteurs du parlement sont-ils informés de l'accessibilité des bâtiments et des installations pour les personnes ayant des enfants?**

Non.

### **2. Adaptation des procédures parlementaires pour favoriser les pratiques inclusives**

#### **a. Existe-t-il une possibilité de vote à distance, de vote par procuration, de procédures de rééquilibrage entre partis pour compenser les absences, ou d'autres options pour les parlementaires ayant des raisons impératives d'absence (congé parental, femmes parlementaires qui allaitent, etc.)?**

Les députées et sénatrices bénéficient du congé prénatal et postnatal, conformément aux dispositions de la loi sur le travail. Cela n'implique toutefois pas le remplacement du membre en repos d'accouchement par un autre membre élu pour la durée du congé. A ce jour, il n'existe aucune disposition prévoyant un dispositif de remplacement temporaire pour les membres du Parlement fédéral qui ne peuvent pas participer aux activités parlementaires pour des raisons familiales.

Il existe cependant un système général de suppléance qui permet aux groupes politiques de faire en sorte qu'un autre membre du groupe remplace (avec droit de vote) le membre qui ne peut pas assister à des réunions de commissions. Les groupes politiques ont la possibilité de l'appliquer pour un membre qui peut invoquer une absence justifiée. Ce mécanisme de suppléance n'existe pas pour la séance plénière.

A la suite de l'épidémie de Corona ayant nécessité la prise de mesures sanitaires, il est possible depuis 2020 de participer à distance aux réunions des commissions (discussions et votes) de la Chambre et aux votes nominatifs lors des séances plénières de la Chambre des représentants. Depuis la crise du Coronavirus, les sénateurs peuvent participer à distance aux réunions des commissions et des séances plénières (discussions et votes).

**b. Les parlementaires sont-ils autorisés à accéder à la (aux) salle(s) de débat avec un bébé?**

Il n'existe aucune disposition réglementaire à ce sujet.

**c. Est-ce que votre parlement prévoit une assistance pour ses membres ou son personnel ayant des déficiences auditives ou visuelles ? (langage des signes, sites internet accessibles, braille, etc.)?**

Durant l'heure des questions orales hebdomadaires en séance plénière de la Chambre des interprètes en langue des signes traduisent les interventions orales pour permettre aux personnes malentendantes de suivre les débats dans la tribune ou via le streaming des séances plénières. Des interprètes en langue des signes étaient présents aux séances plénières lorsqu'il y avait une sénatrice sourde au Sénat.

L'administration de la Chambre comporte du personnel malvoyant qui dispose de matériel de bureau adapté. Le Sénat s'engage à fournir tout l'équipement nécessaire aux membres du personnel qui nécessitent un équipement spécialisé en raison de leur déficience visuelle ou auditive.

**d. Existe-t-il des sanctions contre la non-participation aux débats et aux votes qui ne peuvent être levées pour les parlementaires ayant des raisons impératives d'absence ? Quels sont les motifs d'une éventuelle dispense?**

Il existe un mécanisme de sanction pour le manque de participation aux activités parlementaires, basé sur la participation aux votes nominatifs en séance plénière de la Chambre. Aucune sanction n'est cependant appliquée pour les absences en cas de maladie, d'accident ou de congé de maternité de même que pour des absences en raison de voyages effectués dans le cadre des activités parlementaires, comme les missions à l'étranger.

**3. Favoriser les attitudes inclusives**

**a. Existe-t-il un code de conduite pour les parlementaires et si oui, inclut-il des mesures pour sanctionner les pratiques ou discours discriminatoires (en particulier le sexisme) lors des débats?**

Le code de déontologie des membres du Parlement fédéral (Chambre des représentants et Sénat) contient l'ensemble des principes, des usages et des règles de conduite que les membres des deux assemblées sont tenus de respecter dans l'exercice de leur mandat.

L'article 7 du code, annexé aux Règlements des deux assemblées, dispose que les membres du Parlement fédéral sont au service de tous les citoyens sans aucune discrimination, fondée par exemple sur le sexe, la condition sociale, la naissance, la langue, l'origine nationale ou ethnique, la conviction philosophique, politique ou syndicale, ou sur les sentiments personnels qu'ils éprouvent à leur égard.

Le code ne contient pas de dispositions pour sanctionner des discours discriminatoires puisque les opinions exprimées lors d'un débat parlementaire sont couvertes par l'irresponsabilité parlementaire garantie par la Constitution. Les membres du Parlement ne peuvent être appelés à rendre compte d'une opinion ou d'un vote qu'ils ont émis dans l'exercice de leur fonction, même si cette opinion ou ce discours a un caractère discriminatoire.

**b. Existe-t-il un service ou une personne responsable chargée de la mise en oeuvre et du suivi des pratiques non discriminatoires?**

Non. Toutefois, conformément la législation belge sur le bien-être au travail, toute situation problématique pour le personnel de la Chambre et du Sénat peut être signalée aux personnes de confiance, qui, avec une obligation de discrétion, ont un rôle de médiation dans les conflits au travail. Toute personne travaillant dans les bâtiments du Parlement fédéral a accès aux personnes de confiance et aux conseillers externes en prévention aspects psychosociaux.

**c. Dans l'ensemble, diriez-vous que les parlementaires sont conscients de la nécessité de pratiques et d'infrastructures inclusives en tant qu'exigence démocratique?**

**d. Quels sont les principaux obstacles, le cas échéant, à l'introduction d'installations et de procédures plus inclusives (par exemple, le budget, la politique, les traditions et les coutumes)?**

Il n'y a pas d'obstacles.

**4. Informations complémentaires**

Veuillez ajouter toute information complémentaire que vous jugerez utile.

Un groupe de travail « Parlement sensible au genre », qui est composé de fonctionnaires de la Chambre et du Sénat, est chargé de faire un screening transversal de l'ensemble des aspects de la vie parlementaire et du fonctionnement interne de la Chambre et du Sénat : services législatifs, documentation, communications interne et externes, gestion des infrastructures et des ressources humaines, patrimoine, etc. Il prépare un audit concernant la prise en compte du genre ; certaines conclusions pourront peut-être être transposées dans une politique inclusive plus globale.

**BULGARIA: National Assembly****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

For the Parliament building at 2 Narodno Sabranie Square, there is access for people with reduced mobility from the northern entrance of the building to the premises on the first floor and the Plenary Hall. The access to the buffet of the building and the sanitary-hygienic room on the basement level is through the use of a lifting platform for people with disabilities.

The access of people with disabilities in the building of the National Assembly, Knyaz Alexander I Square № 1 is carried out through two separate accessible entrances, marked with an international symbol of accessibility - entrance "East" and entrance "Largo" of the building. Accessible entrance "East" of the building provides an accessible route for people with disabilities to meeting rooms and conference room on the ground and first floor, foyers, buffet, communication spaces, common areas and sanitary facilities. The difference in the levels of the building has been overcome by installing four facilities - electric lifting platforms and automatically opening doors along the accessible route, through a photocell to indicate movement in front of the door, which provides easy access for people with mobility and visual impairments. The built accessible routes from the accessible entrances to the interior of the building are marked with accessibility symbols.

The Largo entrance of the building provides an accessible route for people with disabilities to the grandstand for statements in the marble lobby of the building, to the new Plenary Hall and to communication spaces and common areas through an electric lifting platform on the facade of the building to access the ground floor.

For the building at 1 Knyaz Alexander I Square, Braille brochures for the visually impaired have been provided with a route to the location of the new Plenary Hall, meeting rooms and toilets.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

There is no special access (special access regime) to the Parliament buildings for persons with reduced mobility, unless the person with reduced mobility is a Member of Parliament.

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

There is no separate procedure for access to parliament buildings for children under 18.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:****i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?****ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

There are no crèches or rooms for changing clothes and feeding babies in the parliament buildings.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?****2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices****a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?****b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?****c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?****d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

- a. **Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**
- b. **Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**
- c. **On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**
- d. **What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

**4. Additional information**

**Please add any further information you may find useful.**

## **CROATIA: Hrvatski Sabor**

### **1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

**a) Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes, the Croatian Parliament building is adapted for people with reduced mobility.

No, there has been no renovation recently.

**b) Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes, there is a dedicated access for people with reduced mobility to the Croatian Parliament building.

**c) Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

Yes, the procedure is under the jurisdiction of the Citizens' Service.

**d) On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i) Nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

No, there are no nursery facilities in the Croatian Parliament building (free of charge and/or paid services)

**ii) Baby changing and feeding rooms?**

No, there is no baby changing and feeding room in the Croatian Parliament building.

**e) Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

No, however all staff and visitors are aware of the possibility of access.

### **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

No.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

It is not prohibited.

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

No.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

No.

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

The Croatian Parliament did not adopt a Code of Conduct for Members of the Croatian Parliament, however, the Standing Orders of the Croatian Parliament prescribe those conduct of MPs that are considered inadmissible.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

The Standing Orders prescribe sanctions for the illicit conduct of MPs at the Croatian Parliament session. The chairperson is authorized to impose the prescribed sanctions on an MP in case he/she assesses that the conduct of the MP is contrary to the standing Orders provisions.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

In principle, it can be concluded that MPs are aware of the need for inclusive practices as a democratic standard.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

There are no obstacles.

**CYPRUS : House of Representatives****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes, some changes have been made within the premises of the House of Representatives to allow for the easier access of persons with disabilities. These include a platform in the entrance of the building for wheelchairs and other specialised equipment, doors that can be opened autonomously by disabled persons, facilities in lifts, special toilets and special arrangement in the press room to accommodate such persons. Further renovations are foreseen for 2022, however, major changes will occur when the new Parliament building is erected.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

See above

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

No. Children must be accompanied by an adult inside the Parliament.

**d. On the premises of the Parliament, are there:**

**i. Nursery facilities (free of charge/paid services)?** No

**ii. Baby changing and feeding rooms?** No

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

The House of Representatives will provide all relevant information upon request. Moreover, the House of Representatives has recently provided a training seminar on the accessibility of people with reduced mobility to the staff of the Parliament, so as to raise awareness and sensitise people on the need to adapt facilities to ensure equal, fair and inclusive participation of these persons to the work of the Parliament. Ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities and their needs are met and fully taken into account both at a legislative and practical level, constitute top priorities of the President of the House of Representatives.

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices****a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding etc).**

No. The Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives do not provide for these instances.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

No such request has been submitted thus far.

**c. Does your Parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairment (sign language, accessible websites, braille etc)**

Yes, the House of Representatives will provide the necessary support system for persons with visual or hearing difficulties or reduced mobility. Additionally, whenever the House of Representatives holds a Special Session, sign language is provided.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

Not applicable.

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes****a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

Yes, there is a revised Code of Conduct for parliamentarians that has been put into effect since 2021. The Code provides for sanctions against certain types of behaviours and practices on the part of MPs, including sexism.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

The Secretary General of the House is responsible for the smooth functioning of the House, including oversight of discriminatory practices/incidents. Additionally, an Equality Officer has been appointed that oversees instances of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Moreover, as regards MPs, the Code of Conduct provides for the establishment of a Committee composed of 7 MPs elected to this function by the Plenary Session. The Committee decides upon the sanctions and procures to be followed in each case as well as the implementation and monitoring of these.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

Absolutely and increasingly so. With the proliferation of new technologies and social media in particular, parliamentarians are aware of the need to promote inclusiveness as part of the democratic process. This is also linked to citizens demands for more democratic, transparent and inclusive practices and procedures, as well as issues related to legitimacy and ownership of the political process.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (e.g budget, politics, traditions and customs).**

In terms of legislation, the House of Representatives has enacted important and progressive laws as regards accessibility, participation and (the sanctioning of) discrimination. However, a lot remains to be done on a wider, societal level even though significant change has already been achieved as regards gender parity and equality in particular. However, this is a dynamic process that needs constant improvement and adaptation.

Infrastructure in terms of facilities is lacking as the House of Representatives functions within its original building since 1960. At present, all steps are taken to ensure that the special needs of people with disabilities and their independent movement and participation to the functioning and life of the parliament, are ensured. All these will be fully taken into account and incorporated in the new plans for the Parliament building.

**DENMARK: Folketinget****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility?**

YES

Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?

YES

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

YES

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

NO

The Folketing does not have a special procedure for children under 18 years of age. They have to go through the same security check as adults.

Children and young people usually arrive as part of a group – e.g. a school class. Upon receipt of school classes, the officer in charge of their visit makes sure to give them a brief oral review of the security check before entering the visitor entrance. At the entrance there are also screens with information films, which show what to do at the security check. It also appears from the Folketing's website that you as a guest on a tour etc. must go through a security check.

The officers who carry out the security check, of course, take into consideration that children and young people need different kind of information and treatment.

On the Folketing's website, you can read more about what the Folketing has to offer to children and young people.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:****i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

NO

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

Yes, The Folketing has a changing area for guests who bring very young children.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Yes, see answer to question c.

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices****a. Is there a possibility of**

**remote voting** NO, remote voting is not possible according to the Constitutional Act of Denmark.

**proxy voting**, NO

**pairing agreements between parties to balance absences** YES

**or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?** NO

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant? NO**

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

In the Chamber, and in a few other places, there is a teleloop.

A special screen program called SuperNova has been acquired, it can both read text aloud and enlarge the text. It works with a USB key.

In general, the Folketing follows current legislation in Denmark for web accessibility for public websites. In addition to legal requirements, the Folketing has implemented the tool "Access with signs" on our public websites - this tool can be accessed in the footer on the websites. In addition, there is a "read aloud" function at the top of the websites, the "ear" button in the toolbar. See the website of Folketinget: <https://www.ft.dk/>

MPs benefit from the Folketing's accessibility work on public websites, even though it is not targeted at members.

**d Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

Members are not obliged to participate in debates.

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

According to section 29, subsection 2 of the Standing Orders of The Danish Parliament If the Speaker considers the statements of a Member improper, the Speaker may call the Member to order. If the Member does not obey the directions of the Speaker, the latter may ask the Member to discontinue his speech. The Speaker may also decline to call upon the Member to speak once more during the same sitting. Furthermore, the Standing Orders Committee may decide to exclude a Member who has been called to order from the sittings of the Danish Parliament for up to 14 sitting days. For the duration of the exclusion, the Member in question is not allowed to take part in committee meetings either

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

The administration of the Danish Parliament has a whistleblower scheme for employees.

In addition, it is possible to contact HR.

Several parties in the Folketing have a whistleblower scheme.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement? Yes**

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

**4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

**ESTONIA: Riigikogu****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Toompea Castle (the seat of the Riigikogu – the Parliament of Estonia) is accessible to visitors with mobility disabilities. All major rooms – the balcony of the Session Hall, the Conference Hall and most of the working rooms – can be reached by wheelchair.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

The left entrance of Toompea Castle is accessible by a ramp without steps. Next to the door, at the wheelchair level, there is a doorphone through which the reception desk can be contacted. An employee of the Riigikogu Chancellery is called to receive the visitor with mobility disability and accompany them to the building. Toompea Castle can be entered on wheelchair through the car gate. Inside, wheelchairs can use regular elevators, as well as two wheelchair stairlifts. There is also an adapted toilet.

(The building of the Riigikogu is a listed building. All the repair and construction works must be agreed with the National Heritage Board.)

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

The procedure is broadly the same. But a child aged 7-15 may present a student card as a valid photo identification and a child under the age of 7 is not required to present an ID document to gain entry.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:****i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?****ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

There is an unguarded children's room (unguarded playroom) in the building of the Riigikogu, which is primarily meant for children who are 5-10 years of age. This room is equipped with toys, books, TV and DVD-player. The room has also a small kitchenette.

There is no babysitter in this playroom and all children are there under the responsibility of the parent.

Toilet next to the children's playroom is equipped with the changing table and potties.

There are no other special baby changing or feeding rooms.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

There is information about access to Toompea Castle for visitors with mobility disabilities on the website of the Riigikogu - <https://www.riigikogu.ee/en/accessibility/>

Information about the children's room is available on the internal website, while this room is mainly meant for the use of the MPs and staff of the parliament.

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices****a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

The Riigikogu has adopted the 'Status of Members of the Riigikogu Act' that allows to suspend the mandate of the member of the Riigikogu for the period of parental leave. MP may decide to suspend his or her mandate on the grounds of temporary incapacity for work (which may be pregnancy and maternity leave or adoptive parents leave) or because of need to raise a child who is under three years old. MP may suspend his or her mandate for no less than three months. (Please see [Status of Members of Riigikogu Act, § 6.](#))

In practice, there have been MPs who have suspended their mandate for the period of parental leave and those who have not.

(Proxy voting – this instrument is not provided for in the Riigikogu.

Pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence – there is no such tradition in the Riigikogu.)

It is not possible to vote outside the Plenary Hall of the Riigikogu. (Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Riigikogu has amended the rules of procedure to allow for remote plenary sittings and remote voting. Under that legal amendment, a sitting with remote attendance can now take place in cases where there are objective obstacles that prevent the organisation of a regular sitting with the physical presence of all the members of the Riigikogu.) Thus, under normal circumstances remote voting is not possible.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

There are no written rules about it and this issue has not been regulated by the Riigikogu Rules and Procedure Act. In practice, so far it has not been forbidden to bring an infant to the Session Hall.

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

There are no facilities to ensure that visually impaired persons can move around the building independently.

Since 2011, we have had an MP with a hearing impairment. He uses a hearing aid. He also sits in the front row and reads from lips. When he is called to answer questions from the rostrum, a small table is placed next to the rostrum for a computer monitor that displays the questions put to him. This monitor is an extra monitor connected to the computer of the Secretary of the Chamber who sits right next to the rostrum. The Secretary types up the questions in real time as a Word file.

The website of the Riigikogu has been constructed and compiled to comply with WCAG 2.0 AA accessibility guidelines. This means that certain technical tools and content compilation principles have been used that help users with visual or hearing disabilities to consume the content of the website. Please see also - <https://www.riigikogu.ee/en/accessibility/>

Subtitled plenary sittings are broadcast live on the Riigikogu webpage. More specifically, we are currently testing AI created subtitles, which are displayed on the video flow of the sittings of the Riigikogu. The subtitles are generated in the Kiirkirjutaja application developed by Taltech Laboratory of Language Technology. *Kiirkirjutaja* ("Rapid Writer") forwards the subtitles exactly as it understands these, and as faithfully as possible to the words of the speaker. The Chancellery of the Riigikogu is not responsible for the absolute veracity of the subtitles; these are intended to provide basic information to the hard of hearing. For more detailed information, the viewers are encouraged to read the verbatim record of the sitting.

In general, the video recordings of ceremonial plenary sittings are accompanied by sign language interpreter.

By default, the sittings of the Riigikogu's committees are not public. When issues that are of greater interest to the public are discussed, the committees hold public sittings or parliamentary hearings, where the positions of the stakeholders and specialists are explained.

Since the beginning of 2022, it has been also possible to add AI created subtitles on the video flow on the public committee meetings. If necessary, a committee may order a sign language interpreter. For example, a sign language interpreter is ordered if there are deaf or hard of hearing persons participating or if the topic of the meeting is of interest to the deaf or hard of hearing persons. For example, most of the public sittings of the Social Affairs Committee are accompanied by sign language interpreter.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

There are no sanctions against non-participation at the plenary sittings or committee meetings of the Riigikogu.

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

In the Riigikogu we don't have a code of conduct (or code of ethics) for the MPs. In 2014 the 'Good Practice of Members of the Riigikogu' was approved by the council of elders of the Riigikogu (this body is not defined in the Riigikogu Rules of Procedure and Internal Rules Act and is comprised of members of the Board of the

Riigikogu and the heads of Riigikogu's political factions) - [https://www.riigikogu.ee/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/good\\_practiceMP.pdf](https://www.riigikogu.ee/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/good_practiceMP.pdf)

Pursuant to the Good Practice: Members of the Riigikogu shall show respect for their colleagues and others, be polite and avoid using inappropriate language.

However, I would like to stress out that Good Practice is seen as guidance and the document is not binding.

According to § 66 of the Act, the Chair (the President or a Vice-President of the Riigikogu) of the sitting ensures order in the session hall and pursuant to § 72 of the aforementioned Act, the Chair takes measures in order to ensure discipline:

*§ 72. The authority of the chair of the sitting in conducting the deliberation of agenda items*

*(1) If a report, comment or question exceeds the allotted time, the chair of the sitting demands that the report, comment or question be brought to a close. If the person making a report, presenting a comment or asking a question deviates from the agenda item, the chair demands a return to that item. If the demand of the chair is ignored, the chair cuts off the report, comment or question by switching off the microphone.*

*(1<sup>1</sup>) If the person making the report, presenting a comment or asking the question uses improper expressions, the chair of the sitting admonishes him or her. If the chair's reminder is ignored, the chair cuts off the report, comment or question by switching off the microphone.*

No disciplinary measures are provided by the law. The chair of the sitting may use different means (usually oral remark) to ensure that order is maintained at the sitting.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

No.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

We regret the lack of data on that.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

To our knowledge, the current the situation is probably considered to be, for the most part, satisfactory.

**4. Additional information. Please add any further information you may find useful.**

N/A

## **FINLAND: Eduskunta**

### **1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

#### **a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes. During the renovation of parliamentary buildings 2010 – 2017 access of persons with reduced mobility was significantly improved.

#### **b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes.

#### **c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

There is no special procedure for children under 18. The only procedure for children is that it is not recommended to come with prams on guided tours. Strollers and carriages should be left in the inner lobby of the visitor entrance.

#### **d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

##### **i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

No.

##### **ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

In the Finnish Parliament there are two special care rooms for babies where e.g. changing the nappy and feeding may take place in a quiet atmosphere. The MPs and civil servants may use this room but in practice it is used by the MPs who have small children.

#### **e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Yes.

### **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

#### **a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

No. Remote voting is in theory possible, but it was planned only due to the covid 19 situation. However, it has not been used.

The rights of Members of the Eduskunta are personal and cannot be replaced temporarily. This means also that a Member of the Eduskunta having maternal/parental leave still has the right to participate in e.g. Plenary Session. However, committees have alternate members by whom absent members are substituted.

#### **b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

Presence of children in the plenary hall and in parliamentary committees is not authorized.

#### **c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

No. Because there is no need. In cases when an MP has needed/will need in future special services, the parliament has provided/will provide necessary aids.

In addition, question hours are interpreted simultaneously in sign language and there are induction loops for visitors. All plenary sessions and other webcasts are available on the website with text/subtitles. The accessibility of the Parliamentary Website has been improved in accordance with the Accessibility Directive of European Union as well.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

No.

Waiver is possible only if there is no justified reason of absence (e.g. maternal/paternal leave or sickness).

According to the Constitution (Section 28 - Suspension of the office of a Representative and release or dismissal from office):

“If a Representative essentially and repeatedly neglects his or her duties as a Representative, the Parliament may, after having obtained the opinion of the Constitutional Law Committee, dismiss him or her from office permanently or for a given period by a decision supported by at least two thirds of the votes cast.”

In addition, according to the Act on the Salary of MPs (available in Finnish and in Swedish) Section 2:

If the representative repeatedly fails to participate in parliamentary work without an acceptable reason, Parliament may decide, on a proposal from the Speakers' Council, that he or she forfeits or part of the delegate fee for the specified period

However, this sanction has never been applied.

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

In Eduskunta, there is no code of conduct. However, you will find the provisions on the behaviour of MPs in the attached answer to the ECPRD request 4355 - Code of Ethics and explanations relating to the Code, violation of the Code.<sup>1</sup>

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

The Administration and Services Department.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

Information on practices is provided by different channels (.e.g. intranet, parliamentary groups, and in the training sessions for new MPs).

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (e.g. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

Unfortunately, this has not been investigated.

### **4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I.

## **FRANCE: Assemblée Nationale**

### **1. Adaptation des infrastructures pour une participation inclusive**

#### **a. Les bâtiments de votre parlement sont-ils adaptés à l'accès des personnes à mobilité réduite? Y-a-t-il eu récemment des rénovations pour rendre les bâtiments plus accessibles ?**

L'Assemblée nationale dispose :

- de deux immeubles « historiques » construits dans la première moitié du 18ème siècle : la Palais-Bourbon (qui accueille l'hémicycle et l'essentiel des services législatifs : service de la séance, compte-rendu, commissions) et l'Hôtel de Lassay (services de la présidence).

- trois immeubles récents (années 70 à 80), implantés à proximité immédiate du palais Bourbon.

Comme tout « établissement recevant du public », les locaux parlementaires doivent respecter certaines normes d'accessibilité qui doivent permettre aux personnes handicapées de circuler avec la plus grande autonomie possible, d'accéder aux locaux et équipements, d'utiliser les équipements et les prestations, de se repérer et de communiquer.

L'accès concerne tout type de handicap. Depuis la « loi handicap » du 11 février 2005 le Code de l'action sociale et des familles en donne une définition très large dans son article L-114 qui est ainsi rédigé :

« Constitue un handicap, au sens de la présente loi, toute limitation d'activité ou restriction de participation à la vie en société subie dans son environnement par une personne en raison d'une altération substantielle, durable ou définitive d'une ou plusieurs fonctions physiques, sensorielles, mentales, cognitives ou psychiques, d'un polyhandicap ou d'un trouble de santé invalidant ».

Les conditions d'accès doivent être les mêmes que pour les personnes valides ou, à défaut, présenter une qualité d'usage équivalente.

L'accessibilité de ces établissements et de leurs abords concerne :

- les cheminements extérieurs,
- le stationnement des véhicules,
- les conditions d'accès et d'accueil dans les bâtiments,
- les circulations horizontales et verticales à l'intérieur des bâtiments,
- les locaux intérieurs et les sanitaires ouverts au public,
- les portes, les sas intérieurs et les sorties,
- les revêtements des sols et des parois,
- les équipements et mobiliers intérieurs et extérieurs susceptibles d'y être installés (dispositifs d'éclairage et d'information des usagers, par exemple).

Ces règles sont précisées sur le site du Gouvernement :

<https://www.service-public.fr/professionnels-entreprises/vosdroits/F32873>

On constate, sans grande surprise, que :

- La mise aux normes a été plus facile sur les immeubles récents.
- Pour les immeubles « historiques » les divers travaux constituent généralement une occasion de faciliter la circulation des personnes avec un handicap.

Par exemple la salle des séances (inaugurée en 1832) est accessible à un fauteuil roulant (avec une rampe amovible), et une des tribunes des visiteurs dispose de bancs qui peuvent être déplacés pour accueillir une dizaine de fauteuils.

Sur des équipements moins visibles cette exigence est très présente. On constate ainsi la mise aux normes de la plupart des ascenseurs (avec pour certains une signalétique en braille ou des messages sonores) et des sanitaires (à l'occasion de la réfection d'un « bloc » de sanitaires un WC handicapé va être aménagé).

Cette exigence s'explique aussi par le fait que les locaux parlementaires accueillent de plus en plus de personnes âgées soit à l'occasion de visites patrimoniales, soit dans le cadre du travail législatif.

**b. Existe-t-il un accès dédié aux bâtiments du parlement pour les personnes à mobilité réduite ?**

Non. Mais on relèvera que tous les « points d'entrée » ont été mis à niveau et sont parfaitement accessibles aux personnes en fauteuil par exemple.

**c. Existe-t-il une procédure distincte pour l'accès aux bâtiments du Parlement pour les enfants de moins de 18 ans ?**

Il n'y a pas de règles écrites mais le mineur (la seule disposition dans le règlement porte sur l'audition de mineur par un organe de l'Assemblée) pour des questions de responsabilité, doit être placé sous la surveillance d'un proche ou d'un enseignant.

**d. Dans les locaux du Parlement, existe-t-il :**

**i. des crèches (services gratuits et/ou payants) ?**

Dans les premiers mois de la présente XVème Législature (juin 2017 – juin 2022) la nouvelle majorité a lancé un projet d'implantation d'une crèche dans les locaux parlementaires. Ce projet a été abandonné en raison de son coût et des nombreuses contraintes tant pour l'aménagement des locaux que pour la qualification et le nombre des agents à recruter.

Actuellement deux systèmes sont pratiqués :

- soit une allocation versée aux personnes concernées (députés, collaborateurs de députés, fonctionnaires, agents contractuels) ;

- soit l'accès à une des trois crèches privées situées à proximité immédiate de l'Assemblée nationale ; en raison de leur coût élevé il y a également une participation de l'Assemblée. Ces places sont affectées en priorité aux parents isolés et/ou avec un revenu modeste.

**ii. des salles pour changer et nourrir les bébés ?**

Non. Dans ces situations ces opérations ont lieu dans les bureaux.

**e. Les parlementaires, le personnel et les visiteuses et visiteurs du parlement sont-ils informés de l'accessibilité des bâtiments et des installations pour les personnes ayant des enfants ?**

Des informations sont accessibles sur l'Intranet.

**2. Adaptation des procédures parlementaires pour favoriser les pratiques inclusives**

**a. Existe-t-il une possibilité de vote à distance, de vote par procuration, de procédures de rééquilibrage entre partis pour compenser les absences, ou d'autres options pour les parlementaires ayant des raisons impératives d'absence (congé parental, femmes parlementaires qui allaitent, etc.) ?**

La question du vote à distance – pour la séance publique - a été débattue au début de la crise du Coronavirus.

L'Assemblée nationale avait adopté une résolution modifiant le règlement de l'Assemblée nationale en ce qui concerne l'organisation des travaux parlementaires en période de crise. L'article unique de cette résolution prévoyait que, en cas de « circonstances exceptionnelles de nature à affecter de façon significative les conditions de participation, de délibération ou de vote », la Conférence des présidents pouvait adapter temporairement les modalités de participation, de délibération et de vote des députés lors des réunions de commission et en séance publique, le cas échéant par le recours à des outils de travail à distance, en tenant compte de la configuration politique de l'assemblée.

Cependant le Conseil constitutionnel a censuré ce texte dans sa décision n° 2021-814 DC du 1er avril 2021. Le Conseil a notamment relevé que cette résolution semblait conférer une trop grande marge d'appréciation à la conférence des présidents pour décider de l'organisation d'une séance public « en hybride ».

<https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/actualites/communiquede/decision-n-2021-814-dc-du-1er-avril-2021-communique-de-presse>

Concrètement un député ne pouvant participer aux travaux dans l'hémicycle peut confier une procuration de vote à un de ses collègues (un député ne peut recevoir qu'une seule procuration).

**b. Les parlementaires sont-ils autorisés à accéder à la (aux) salle(s) de débat avec un bébé?**

Non. L'article 8 de l'Instruction général du Bureau (annexée au règlement de l'Assemblée nationale) dispose que : « À l'exception des porteurs de cartes régulièrement délivrées à cet effet par le Président et du personnel en service, nul ne peut, sous aucun prétexte, pénétrer dans la salle des séances ».

Sur cette base juridique les huissiers ne pourront que s'opposer à la tentative d'entrée d'un bébé.

**c. Est-ce que votre parlement prévoit une assistance pour ses membres ou son personnel ayant des déficiences auditives ou visuelles ? (langage des signes, sites internet accessibles, braille, etc.) ?**

*Personnes sourdes et malentendantes*

De nombreux locaux de l'Assemblée nationale sont équipés de dispositifs spécifiques, de type BIM (boucle à induction magnétique qui permet d'entendre une source sonore sans être gêné par la distance, le bruit ambiant, les phénomènes d'échos ou de réverbérations sonores :

- Les grandes salles de réunion (Lamartine : 140 sièges et Victor Hugo : 340 sièges) ;
- 10 salles de commission ;
- 9 autres salles de réunion situées dans les différents bâtiments.

Par ailleurs, l'Assemblée nationale dispose également d'environ 200 casques audio.

On relèvera que l'ensemble de travaux (séance publique, réunions de commission) sont accessibles sur le site Internet (en temps réel ou en VOD) avec une possibilité de sous titrage.

Enfin, le site Internet offre de très nombreuses transcriptions écrites de ces travaux (compte-rendu des séances tenues dans l'hémicycle ainsi que de l'ensemble des travaux en commission).

*Personnes aveugles ou mal voyantes*

Certains équipements disposent de signalétique en braille.

Par ailleurs, l'Assemblée compte un certain nombre d'agents malvoyants qui disposent de matériels spéciaux, attribués en liaison avec le médecin de prévention (grands écrans) ou sont affectés sur certains postes (le standard compte des agents aveugles).

**d. Existe-t-il des sanctions contre la non-participation aux débats et aux votes qui ne peuvent être levées pour les parlementaires ayant des raisons impératives d'absence ? Quels sont les motifs d'une éventuelle dispense ?**

L'article 42 du règlement de l'Assemblée nationale (RAN) prévoit une retenue de 25% sur le traitement du député qui a plus de deux absences par mois aux réunions de commission.

Cependant le même article prévoit qu'en cas d'un « empêchement insurmontable » le député est excusé. Cette situation n'est pas plus définie et est laissée à l'appréciation du président de la commission.

En revanche pour la séance publique il n'existe pas de sanctions financières de ce type.

**3. Favoriser les attitudes inclusives**

**a. Existe-t-il un code de conduite pour les parlementaires et si oui, inclut-il des mesures pour sanctionner les pratiques ou discours discriminatoires (en particulier le sexisme) lors des débats ?**

L'article 70 du RAN dispose que :

Peut faire l'objet de peines disciplinaires tout membre de l'Assemblée :

- 1° Qui se livre à des manifestations troublant l'ordre ou qui provoque une scène tumultueuse ;
- 2° Qui se livre à une mise en cause personnelle, qui interpelle un autre député ou qui adresse à un ou plusieurs de ses collègues des injures, provocations ou menaces ;
- 3° Qui a fait appel à la violence en séance publique ;
- 4° Qui s'est rendu coupable d'outrages ou de provocations envers l'Assemblée ou son Président;
- 5° Qui s'est rendu coupable d'injures, de provocations ou de menaces envers le Président de la République, le Premier ministre, les membres du Gouvernement et les assemblées prévues par la Constitution ;
- 6° Qui s'est rendu coupable d'une voie de fait dans l'enceinte de l'Assemblée ;
- 7° À l'encontre duquel le Bureau a conclu, en application de l'article 80-4, à un manquement aux règles définies dans le code de déontologie.

Ces comportements sont sanctionnés par divers outils listés à l'article 71 du RAN : inscription au procès-verbal, retenues sur le traitement, interdiction de se rendre dans les locaux parlementaires.

Par ailleurs le code de déontologie (annexé au RAN) comprend un article 6 sur l'« exemplarité ».

**b. Existe-t-il un service ou une personne responsable chargée de la mise en œuvre et du suivi des pratiques non discriminatoires ?**

L'assemblée nationale dispose de plusieurs outils :

- Le déontologue : <https://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/qui/deontologie-a-l-assemblee-nationale>
- La cellule « anti-harcèlements » pour aider les personnes qui subiraient un harcèlement (psychologique, sexuel)

Lors de la dernière révision du RAN un nouvel article 80-6 a été ajouté. Il précise que « le Bureau définit les conditions de mise en place d'un dispositif de prévention et d'accompagnement en matière de lutte contre toutes les formes de harcèlement ».

Lors de sa réunion du 9 octobre 2019, le Bureau de l'Assemblée nationale a adopté le principe du recours à une cellule extérieure regroupant des professionnels dotés de compétences pluridisciplinaires pour assurer la lutte contre les harcèlements.

Après mise en concurrence, un prestataire extérieur a été sélectionné par les Questeurs en janvier 2020 et la cellule « anti-harcèlements » a commencé à fonctionner le 1er février 2020. Les députés, les collaborateurs et les employés de l'Assemblée nationale peuvent y recourir. Il leur est possible de se manifester s'ils s'estiment victimes de harcèlement ou s'ils pensent avoir été témoins d'actions de harcèlement.

La cellule est accessible 24h/24 et 7 jours/7 par téléphone ou par une plateforme internet dédiée ; elle est composée d'avocats, de juristes et de psychologues. Sa mission est d'écouter et de conseiller les personnes qui la sollicitent et éventuellement de les accompagner dans l'engagement de démarches adaptées. Dans ce cadre, si la victime présumée d'agissements sexistes, d'agression sexuelle ou de faits constitutifs de harcèlement sexuel ou moral le souhaite, le Déontologue de l'Assemblée nationale peut être saisi. Il lui revient alors de mettre en œuvre toutes les actions nécessaires pour le traitement de la situation, le cas échéant en prenant contact avec l'auteur présumé des faits. Après un an d'expérimentation, ce dispositif a été pérennisé par le Collège des Questeurs qui, après appel d'offres, a, le 14 janvier 2021, attribué un marché au même prestataire.

**c. Dans l'ensemble, diriez-vous que les parlementaires sont conscients de la nécessité de pratiques et d'infrastructures inclusives en tant qu'exigence démocratique ?**

Oui. Très certainement. Les députés sont « en phase » avec l'évolution des mentalités en ce domaine dans l'ensemble de la population.

**d. Quels sont les principaux obstacles, le cas échéant, à l'introduction d'installations et de procédures plus inclusives (par exemple, le budget, la politique, les traditions et les coutumes) ?**

Ils peuvent être de plusieurs ordres. Si l'on prend en compte, par exemple, l'adaptation de l'hémicycle on doit intégrer des contraintes financières, techniques, esthétiques, patrimoniales...

**GERMANY: Bundestag<sup>2</sup>****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

**Response:** The German Bundestag is, as a matter of principle, accessible to those with disabilities. For this reason, the Reichstag building was redesigned in 1999, taking applicable DIN standards for barrier-free access to public buildings into account. It can be accessed by wheelchair users via ramps, and also via the Disabled Entrance by the West Portal. Wheelchairs are available on loan if required. All Reichstag visitors with disabilities enjoy barrier-free access to the building via ramps at the North and South Portal, as well as via a lift at the West Portal. Members of the German Bundestag with disabilities can additionally use the ramps at the East Portal on the ground floor. A horizontal console is to be installed in a model lift for easier operability on the part of wheelchair users. Furthermore, entrances to the plenary chamber are located on the first floor on the eastern and western side. Members of the German Bundestag using wheelchairs are able to access the plenary chamber via a direct lift on the eastern side between the ground floor and the first floor, while two ramps were added to the plenary chamber. Sections of the Members of the German Bundestag's seats and the seats in the last two rows of the government bench, as well as the seats in the last two rows of the Bundesrat bench and the lectern are therefore easily accessible. In addition, a shortened ramp was fitted in the first row of the government bench for a Federal Minister using a wheelchair.

Additionally, people with motor disabilities can independently enter the doorway as the dimensions allow for the passage of a standard wheelchair and in order to facilitate their access, the entrances are equipped with a ramp and/or other equipment that allows users to avoid using a step or stairs. People with motor disabilities can find an accessible door near any revolving doors or turnstiles and/or the revolving doors allow the reduction of their speed by pressing an adjacent button. Also, wheelchair users have sufficient manoeuvring space near the security scanner at the infeed and return points for personal effects. As far as the hallways are concerned, people with motor disabilities, in particular wheelchair users, have sufficient space to move and turn around. As far as the lifts are concerned, wheelchair users can independently use the button panels on both outside and inside of the lift cabin, while, they can independently enter the lift car. Also, wheelchair users can be accompanied and assisted by another person as the dimensions of the lift car permit it. As far as the stairs are concerned, users can find firm and easy-to-grab handrails along them. People with motor disabilities and more particularly wheelchair users can independently access the Plenary and also they can find and reach their accessible seating areas. Furthermore, they have appropriate space for manoeuvring a standard sized wheelchair and to move around freely in the Plenary. In reference to the interpreting booths, people with motor disabilities and more particularly wheelchair users can independently make their way to the entrance to the interpreting booths (also the tribune in the Plenary).

In reference to the Offices, people with motor disabilities and more particularly wheelchair users can independently enter. They can also have access to adapted workstations. Wheelchair users can independently reach all the control panels of the offices (switches, call buttons, opening mechanisms, etc.), while, they have suitable a manoeuvring space. As far as the adapted toilets are concerned, wheelchair users can independently enter. Inside the adapted toilets, wheelchair users have sufficient manoeuvring space and they can independently use the washbasin. Wheelchair users have a spiffy space that allows lateral transfer to the WC. As far as the Canteens – cafeterias are concerned, people with motor disabilities can access independently. They also have sufficient manoeuvring space, allowing them to move around independently. As far as the signage is concerned, information signs are visible and legible from both standing and seated positions. As far as the Evacuation protocol for people with disabilities is concerned, in case of an emergency, people with disabilities can identify and locate the persons in charge of the evacuation who will offer them assistance.

Last but not least, a condition of employment for all staff working in public relations is an awareness of how to respond to the needs of severely disabled visitors. They must also be familiar with the assistive devices available and know how to use them. This knowledge is tested from the interview stage, and role plays on professional appearance and conduct are conducted. The spokesperson for people with disabilities, who is also a member of the selection committee during recruitment, can be contacted at any time regarding further questions relating to persons with severe disabilities.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**


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<sup>2</sup> Compiled by the Secretariat with regard to replies to previous ECPRD questionnaires: 2927, 3112, 3170, 3511, 3529, 4179, 4228, 4543, 4648, 4650, 4827.

**Response:** Yes

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

**Response:** N/A

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

**Response:** At the premises of the German Bundestag a day care facility is established where children from the age of 6 months up to 6 years are taken care of in 11 groups. Both, administrative and political staff and parliamentarians, can register their children for childcare in this Bundestag Kindergarten. The kindergarten is open between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., in sitting weeks until 6.30 p.m. It is mostly used by administrative and political staff and by parliamentarian's resident in Berlin. As the Members of the House usually are in their constituencies every other week and come only every second week to Berlin, they tend to use childcare facilities in their home areas. Those are not provided by the Bundestag. Additionally, to the Bundestag kindergarten there are several baby care and playrooms available at the premises of the Bundestag which can be used by members and by staff. The Administration of the German Bundestag has operated a nursery facility since 1970. Following the Bundestag's decision to move its headquarters to the federal capital, the nursery opened in Berlin in August 1999.

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

**Response:** In Germany, there are no legal regulations concerning baby changing facilities. In fact, there exist baby changing facilities in many private establishments as well as in public institutions (including the German Bundestag) which have been equipped on the own accord of the private establishment or the public institution. Additionally, to the Bundestag kindergarten there are several baby care and playrooms available at the premises of the Bundestag which can be used by members and by staff. One of those childcare and nursing rooms is located just next door to the plenary hall. As the facility is part of the German Bundestag's internal operations, employees can find information about the nursery and the services provided via the Bundestag's Intranet page. Furthermore, information is available on the nursery (focusing on the architecture of the building) on the Bundestag's website.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children? Yes**

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

**Response:** In Germany, MPs are not considered employees and therefore have no legal entitlement to parental or family leave. Only with regard to the deduction from the lump-sum expense allowance do special provisions apply within the statutory maternity protection periods (six weeks before and eight weeks after the birth): While otherwise MPs have to expect deductions of 100 to 200 euros for lack of attendance, absence during this period does not lead to any deductions. The absence of a Member of Parliament within the statutory maternity leave periods does not result in a deduction from the lump-sum expense allowance pursuant to section 14 of the Members of the Bundestag Act. The same applies to the care of a sick child under 14 years of age. In the case of absences for other reasons, the lump-sum is reduced by 100 euros or 200 euros per day. Under the German constitution, Members of the German Bundestag hold a free mandate, which they exercise independently without being bound by orders or instructions. They are responsible only to their conscience and determine themselves how to exercise their mandate. This also means that they can decide independently on the extent of their activities in the Chamber, in committee, in their parliamentary group and in their constituency. Be that as it may, their constitutionally enshrined representative role obliges them, at least in their collective identity as the body of the Bundestag representing the whole people, to participate in its work in such a way that the function and operating capacity of Parliament are guaranteed. This is why the Federal Constitutional Court has ruled that any Member's decision not to exercise his or her mandate would be incompatible with the representation principle. Parliament has acted on this ruling by including in its Rules of Procedure an obligation on every Member to take part in the work of the Bundestag.

However, the Rules of Procedure of the German Bundestag contain a provision whereby the President (Speaker) may grant leave for Members of Parliament for a particular period. In parliamentary practice,

however, this provision is not applied. Instead, Members merely notify the President in writing that they will be unable to attend on a sitting day or days or that they will be absent from votes in which name cards are to be used. There is no check on the reasons for their absence, which might be child-care or other family duties. It is therefore incumbent on all Members individually to decide, in the free exercise of their mandate, on the extent of their participation in parliamentary activities in general and when and for what reasons to absent themselves from plenary sittings or committee meetings especially. However, the Members of Parliament Act provides for a reduction of the expense allowance for Parliamentarians if a Member does not enter his or her name in the attendance register that is displayed on sitting days. The reduction amounts to 100 euros per sitting day and 200 euros if a plenary sitting is scheduled on that day. For failure to participate in votes involving the use of named voting cards or in roll-call votes, an amount of 100 euros is deducted from the expense allowance. The total amount deducted is limited to 100 euros per sitting day in cases where the Member has been granted leave of absence. Addressing a written notice of absence to the President of the Bundestag counts as being granted leave of absence. Anyhow, during the statutory period of maternity leave or if a Member of the Bundestag has a child under the age of 14 living in his or her household who is certified ill by a doctor and for whom the Member must care personally because no other responsible person is available in the household to do so, the Member's absence does not result in a reduction of the expense allowance.

Because of the above-mentioned constitutional status of Members of Parliament, delegation of their mandated duties is not possible. The principle of free exercise of a mandate means that, in their speeches, transactions and voting behaviour in votes or elections within the House, Members are guided by their conviction and conscience and cannot therefore delegate these highly personal mandated activities. For this reason, the Bundestag Rules of Procedure make no provision for the use of a substitute or proxy to exercise a Member's speaking and voting rights in Parliament, not even for family reasons. If Members are unable to attend plenary sittings for whatever reason, their only option is to seek a political pairing arrangement between the groups of the governing coalition and those of the opposition in order to ensure, for the sake of fairness, that the Members' absence does not distort the political balance of the House. In times of comfortable majorities for the governing parties (as in the last and in the current term), this is however rarely necessary. For committee seats, the Rules of Procedure prescribe that the parliamentary groups appoint committee members and their substitutes. The substitutes can take part in committee meetings with full membership rights in the absence of titular members. When they do so, however, they act in fulfilment of their own mandate in accordance with their own conviction; accordingly, the substantive input of substitutes does not necessarily represent the views of absent Members. Attached to the minutes of the Bundestag is a list containing all the MPs who have been granted leave of absence for the sitting day in question or for certain voting procedures on that sitting day (list of excused members). If a Member has been granted leave of absence for the reason of maternity protection, this fact will be mentioned in the list of excused members, but only if the Member wishes so. Next to her name it will be printed: "absence because of statutory maternity protection period". There is no automatic pairing mechanism in place for MPs who are absent for these reasons.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

**Response:** In general, it is not permitted to take children into the plenary hall of the German Bundestag. However, if a Member of the House asks for the permission of the sitting president it has always been permitted to take very small children (babies) into the hall during votes only and if there is no other way of taking care of the child for that moment. A child-care and nursing room is provided right next door to the plenary hall. The question of breastfeeding in the plenary hall has not yet been raised in the German Bundestag. It would be for the sitting president to decide, whether to allow it or not. However, he or she will have to take to account the general practice to allow the presence of children only for a very limited period of time during voting procedures.

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (MPs have to be present in the plenary hall for taking part in a voting procedure; voting outside the plenary hall is not permitted sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

**Response:** An audio induction loop was installed for hearing-impaired Members. Notices at the entrances to the Plenary Chamber provide information for those requiring this service. Induction loops assist those with a hearing impairment in hearing plenary debates and lectures on the visitors' galleries. Signs at the entrances to the plenary chamber draw users' attention to this amenity. Magnetic induction loops for people with hearing loss have been installed elsewhere in the building as well, e.g. in 12 parliamentary group meeting rooms. Furthermore, assistance for people with hearing loss is provided in other areas (e.g. committee rooms) in the form of an induction loop or headphones that can be connected to the conference system via a hand-held receiver. For deaf visitors in groups of at least ten people, sign language interpreters can be provided and the Language Service of the German Bundestag is responsible for providing sign language interpreters for plenary sessions and meetings of the parliamentary committees. In staff selection, every effort is made to ensure that severely disabled applicants receive any assistance or extra time that they may require. Within the Administration, a technology-based solution is available to facilitate telephone calls with employees with

hearing loss. The Administration also runs introductory sign language courses for staff members without hearing loss from time to time. In accordance with Section 181 of the Social Code, Book IX, Rehabilitation and Participation of Disabled Persons, the Bundestag Administration, as the employer, has appointed an Inclusion Officer, who is responsible for representing the Administration on matters relating to persons with severe disabilities. The Inclusion Officer is tasked with assisting persons with severe disabilities to overcome or at least reduce the disadvantages resulting from a disability and provides support so that these employees are able to develop and utilise their expertise and professional skills. As required by law, there is trustful cooperation between the employer's Inclusion Officer and the Representative of the Severely Disabled, who is elected by employees with disabilities and persons of equivalent status within the Bundestag Administration.

In compliance with the Ordinance on Accessible Information Technology, the **German Bundestag's website** is designed to be accessible to people with hearing loss and provides information in German sign language, as well as subtitled content, on parliamentary procedures and working methods, the work of Members of the Bundestag, German legislation and the conduct of Bundestag elections. Information on visiting the Reichstag Building, including the services provided for people with hearing loss, such as the video guide, is also available. During **visits to the dome of the Reichstag Building**, short films in sign language that point out places of interest in the vicinity are played on request.

Since 9 September 2015, the German Bundestag has offered barrier-free access to live broadcasts of core-time debates and special events in sign language and with subtitles online at [www.bundestag.de/gebaerdensprache](http://www.bundestag.de/gebaerdensprache). The most important debates of the approximately 22 session weeks taking place each year on Thursdays from 9 a.m. until around 1 p.m. – known as core-time debates – as well as special events have, since then, been interpreted live in sign language and subtitled virtually in real time. The general debate on the budget of the Federal Chancellery, which is held twice annually, also numbers among the core-time debates. The most important of the special events are broadcast barrier-free on the internet. The videos can subsequently be accessed in the media centre on the sign language webpage of the German Bundestag, and are arranged chronologically in accordance with the items on the agenda of the plenary session. Deaf and hearing-impaired people may find further videos in sign language and with subtitles on a variety of plenary issues at any time, thereby helping them to overcome obstacles to communication.

The Language Service of the German Bundestag is responsible for providing sign language interpreters for plenary sessions and meetings of the parliamentary committees. The provision of sign language interpreters for meetings of employees of the Bundestag Administration is a matter for the staff council or the Representative of the Severely Disabled. The Bundestag Administration provides its employees with sign language interpreters for work-related purposes such as staff reviews, team meetings, general staff meetings and selection processes. In staff selection, every effort is made to ensure that severely disabled applicants receive any assistance or extra time that they may require. Applicants with hearing loss may be supplied with the technical questions in writing if necessary. Within the Administration, a technology-based solution is available to facilitate telephone calls with employees with hearing loss. An interpreter supplied by an external agency provides two-way interpretation using sign language and speech. The telephone used by the employee with hearing loss is fitted with a webcam. As persons with severe hearing loss may have sign language as their first language, they may be unfamiliar with German grammatical structures. The Bundestag Administration, as their employer, therefore runs regular training courses in German grammar for these employees. The Administration also runs introductory sign language courses for staff members without hearing loss from time to time. In accordance with Section 181 of the Social Code, Book IX, Rehabilitation and Participation of Disabled Persons, the Bundestag Administration, as the employer, has appointed an Inclusion Officer, who is responsible for representing the Administration on matters relating to persons with severe disabilities. The Inclusion Officer is tasked with assisting persons with severe disabilities to overcome or at least reduce the disadvantages resulting from a disability and provides support so that these employees are able to develop and utilize their expertise and professional skills. In case of an emergency, hearing impaired people will be alerted by visual fire alarms.

In addition, stainless steel bars were fitted by the top and bottom steps on the premises of the German Bundestag in order to create a contrast for the severely disabled. This was in response to calls for improved visibility of the steps. On another flight of stairs, tactile markings were installed at the top and bottom steps for the visually impaired. Assistance for people with a visual impairment and blind people is provided in the form of Braille labels and audio floor notifications in the lifts on the premises of the new buildings. Tours for blind people and those with a visual impairment are offered if required for groups of at least ten visitors. There is a version of the audio guide for the blind (featuring an audio description and portable tactile guide), as well as a video guide for deaf visitors. An audio guide version using simple language is also available. A tactile model of the Reichstag building, a tactile diagram of the plenary chamber and the dome, as well as a tactile model of the parliamentary and government district, enable blind and visually impaired visitors to explore the forums of German democracy.

Also, the lighting level of the hallways is comfortable to move around independently. The layout of the buttons on the control panel allows for use by visually impaired people (numbers in relief, good colour contrast between the numbers, the buttons and their background, text in Braille, etc.) and the lighting level of the cabin makes it comfortable for them to independently use the lift. All written instructions in the lift car are available in Braille or in another format accessible to visually impaired people. The source code of the Bundestag website has been optimised for blind people and those with severe visual impairments in such a way that this screen content is accessible to these users with the use of screenreader software.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers? See reply 2a**

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates? N/A**

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices? N/A**

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement? Yes**

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)? N/A**

**4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

**GERMANY: Bundesrat<sup>3</sup>**

**1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

**a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

**Response:** People with motor disabilities can independently enter the doorway as the dimensions allow for the passage of a standard wheelchair. In order to facilitate the access of people with motor disabilities, the entrances are equipped with a ramp and/or other equipment that allows users to avoid using a step or stairs. They can also find an accessible door near any revolving doors or turnstiles and/or the revolving doors allow the reduction of their speed by pressing an adjacent button. Wheelchair users have sufficient manoeuvring space near the security scanner at the in-feed and return points for personal effects. As far as the hallways are concerned, people with motor disabilities, in particular wheelchair users, have sufficient space to move and turn around in the hallways. As far as the lifts are concerned, wheelchair users can independently use the button panels on both the outside and inside of the lift cabin. Furthermore, they can independently enter the lift car. They also can be accompanied and assisted by another person as the dimensions of the lift car permit it. As far as the stairs are concerned, users can find firm and easy-to-grab handrails along the same stairs. All areas in the Secretariat of the Bundesrat are accessible via wheelchair and staircases with additional supports such as easy-to-grab handrails and with special lightings and protections against slipping.

As far as the Parliament's plenary room is concerned, people with motor disabilities and more particularly wheelchair users can independently access the Plenary. As the plenary hall itself has several steps, the German Bundesrat has invested in rebuilding measures to make the plenary hall accessible for wheelchair users by installing several ramps. These Ramps are connected with electronic operating elements, so that they can be used by pressing a button. Moreover, the German Bundesrat has also modified the seat of the speaker by creating a possibility to remove the bench behind the speaker's chair. Thus, the speaker will have more space and will be able to use a wheelchair, if necessary. People with motor disabilities, can find and reach their accessible seating areas in the Plenary, while they have appropriate space for manoeuvring a standard sized wheelchair and to move around freely. They can also access the tribune in the Plenary. The Committee rooms have no steps so they are accessible for wheelchair users. In addition, there are several barrier-free sanitary facilities.

People with motor disabilities can also independently make their way to the entrance to the interpreting booths. (Only possible with a few interpreting booths). As far as the offices are concerned, they can independently enter the offices and have access to adapted workstations. Wheelchair users can independently reach all the control panels of the offices (switches, call buttons, opening mechanisms, etc.) and they have suitable a manoeuvring space inside the offices. They can independently enter the adapted toilets, where they sufficient manoeuvring space as well and can independently use the washbasin. Wheelchair users have a space that allows lateral transfer to the WC. People with motor disabilities can also independently access the canteens/cafeterias where there is sufficient manoeuvring space, allowing them to move around independently. As far as the evacuation protocol for people with disabilities is concerned, in case of an emergency, they can identify and locate the persons in charge of the evacuation who will offer them assistance.

We should add that the main entrance door opens and closes automatically, and the different levels of the building are accessible by lift. Moreover, the buttons in the elevators are installed in such a way that they are accessible for wheelchair users. The width of the corridors, waiting areas and doors to the plenary chamber and committee and meeting rooms are large enough for a wheelchair user to manoeuvre.

The German Bundesrat is continuously working on the accessibility of the Parliament, which is difficult because it is a historic and listed building. In addition to the original listed building the Federal Council is planning to build a new visitors' centre where the latest requirements and standards for the ease of use for the disabled will be respected. Generally, an actualization of the guidance system is planned to allow a better orientation for disabled people inside the building. At all relevant points in the Bundesrat floor plans are installed showing the point where one currently is. In addition, there are signposts directing to the rooms and chambers. The staff of the Visitor Service assists disabled people moving and orientating inside the building.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

**Response:** Yes

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<sup>3</sup> Compiled by the Secretariat with regard to replies to previous ECPRD questionnaires: 2927, 3112, 3170, 3511, 3529, 4179, 4228, 4543, 4648, 4650, 4827.

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

**Response:** N/A

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?

ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?

**Response:** No. The employees have access to a children friendly office, if requested in advance. The German Bundesrat does not have any nursery facilities. As members reside in their individual states and only travel to Berlin for plenary sessions and the Secretariat has some 200 staff members, this small amount of potential clients does not justify to run a nursery. Also, in Germany, there are no legal regulations concerning baby changing facilities. In fact, there exist baby changing facilities in many private establishments as well as in public institutions (including the German Bundesrat) which have been equipped on the own accord of the private establishment or the public institution. There is a playroom for small children within the framework of a parent-child office set up for employees of the secretariat of the German Bundesrat. However, this is not in the immediate vicinity of the plenary hall. Voting is not possible while being in the parent-child office. There are no restrooms equipped for changing nappies or feeding babies.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

**Response:** No

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

**Response:** There is no **maternity/paternity/parental/family** leave but, keep in mind that only one member of each federal state (Land) is enough to cast all votes of the respective Land, therefore individual presence is not necessary. Also, there is no remote participation and/ or voting. The Members of the German Bundesrat are always members of a government of a Federal State. Therefore, the member is subject to the rules of the government of the respective state. Due to their function as a member of the Federal State government, they may be granted maternity leave. The German Bundesrat has no own provisions on maternity leave. The general rules on maternity leave in Germany apply also for members of the Federal State government. Consequently, maternity leave is granted during the period of maternity protection in the event of pregnancy, that is six weeks before and eight weeks after the woman gave birth to a child. During this period of time, the member of the Federal State government shall receive the usual monthly remuneration. There is a regulation on federal level for paid maternity leave that applies to all women, however there is none for parental leave regarding parliamentarians or members of the German Bundesrat.

The Bundesrat's rules of procedure do not allow remote or hybrid committee meetings. However, in the time of the pandemic Bundesrat committees have made extensive use of so-called written procedures and have thus remained operational. Currently, there is no discussion to allow for total substitution of physical committee meetings by remote ones. On the other hand, videoconferences may support committee work, if possible (for instance, in the preparing phase of written procedures or meetings). Various conference systems are available for such accompanying videoconferences. Also, there is a written vote.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

**Response:** This special case is neither regulated in the Rules of the House nor in the Rules of Procedure of the German Bundesrat. So far there has only been one incident. The member of the German Bundesrat was allowed to bring her baby to the parliamentary sitting.

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

**Response:** In accessing the building, visually impaired people do not risk being hindered by any undetectable obstacle. A tactile guidance strip between the main entrance and the security checkpoint is installed in order to assist them. The lighting level of the hallways is comfortable for visually impaired people to move around independently. The layout of the buttons on the control panel allows for use by them (numbers in relief, good

colour contrast between the numbers, the buttons and their background, text in Braille, etc.). Moreover, the lighting level of the cabin makes it comfortable for visually impaired people to independently use the lift. All written instructions in the lift car are available in Braille or in another format. Both hearing and visually impaired people can find safety, wayfinding and user information in audible and/or tactile forms as relief plans or models of the building. Also, some elevators are equipped with Braille and voice announcement. In case of an emergency, hearing impaired people will be alerted by visual fire alarms. Unfortunately, the Bundesrat has no solutions for hearing or visually impaired MP's or visitors. However, until now there was no necessity for rebuilding measures as there were no MP's with such a handicap. If there are hearing impaired visitors, sign language interpreters are assigned. Up to now there are no especially highlighted signs. Users' needs have not yet been expressed. The staff of the Visitor Service assists disabled people moving and orientating inside the building. If a group of visitors needs sign language interpretation, the secretariat of the German Bundesrat will organize and finance an interpreter. However, in most cases visitors will bring their own interpreter for sign language. Basic information about the role and function of the German Bundesrat are available in sign language online. Finally, employees with hearing loss would be granted assistance according to the Social Security Code IX (Rehabilitation and participation of people with disabilities).

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers? See reply 2a.**

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates? N/A**

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices? N/A**

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement? Yes**

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)? N/A**

### **4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

**GEORGIA: Parliament****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes.

**Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

In November 2017, the Parliament of Georgia introduced and in 2019 implemented the parliamentary building adaptation plan<sup>4</sup> - Accessible Parliament for All, in the framework of the project "Strengthening the Parliamentary Democracy System". The aim of the plan was a full adaptation of the parliamentary building as well as the parliamentary services providing an appropriate infrastructure for people with disabilities. At present, the parliamentary building is fully accessible for persons with mobility and vision impairments to promote their inclusive participation in parliamentary and political activities.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Adaptation process has envisaged a technical equipment of the citizens' reception of the building adapting it to the needs of disable people; installation of e-elevator platforms, evacuation chairs for the persons with disabilities, automatic door opening systems at the entrances, the tactic paths and stairs to be improved with anti-sleep equipment; opening of the adapted sanitary nodes; creation of the special room to be equipped with the multifunctional devices and navigation system to ensure the reception of full service and information for everybody.

"Accessible Parliament for All" responds to the new norm under the new Constitution of Georgia envisaging the obligation of the State to ensure special conditions for the persons with disabilities.

This process will continue and innovative projects will be constantly introduced in the Parliament of Georgia.

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

For children under 18 there are no separate procedure. They can enter the building through the same security check as others. They are allowed with an ID card, a birth certificate or an adult escort. School students will be admitted for a group visit (tour of Parliament) using special previously accepted lists.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:****i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

No.

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

No.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

No.

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices****a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

No remote voting, proxy voting is possible in the plenary sittings; no pairing agreements in question are envisaged.

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<sup>4</sup> The adaptation plan was developed with the Parliamentary initiative in cooperation with the NGO "Mariani" and EU, UNDP and IDFI support.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

N/A

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

Yes. Plenary sessions are broadcasted with the sign language translation; the reception office is equipped with a printer in Braille, inscriptions on toilet doors are made in Braille; the parliamentary website is adapted for the use by vision impairment people.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

In case of non-attendance of the plenary sitting an MP shall personally notify relevant service in writing about the reason of absent before registration procedure at the morning plenary Sitting starts. Otherwise, an MP shall be considered to have missed a plenary sitting without an imperative reason.

An MP shall not be considered to have missed a plenary sitting without an imperative reason if the he/she refuses to participate in the discussions and decision-making process on the ground of political opinions (a boycott). To this effect, a written application shall be submitted to the Chairperson of a plenary sitting or an oral statement shall be made after the completion of registration.

A valid excuse for the non-attendance of a plenary sitting by an MP shall be his/her illness (confirmed by a medical certificate for sick leave), business trip, or the birth/death/illness of a family member (confirmed by a medical certificate for sick leave).

An MP shall also not be considered to have missed a plenary sitting without an imperative reason due to meetings with the representatives of delegations of foreign countries on official visits to Georgia, based on the written application of the MP, if there is written consent from the Chairperson of the Parliament.

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

The Code of Ethics of the Members of the Parliament of Georgia envisages above mentioned measures (Articl.4).

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

The Board of Ethics is. The Parliament of Georgia shall, for the period of its term of office, establish the Board of Ethics by a decree, within two months after the recognition of its authority. The decree shall state the number of members of the Board. The composition of the Board of Ethics shall be determined in proportion to the number of MPs from factions and non-faction MPs. In addition, the representation of the parliamentary majority in the Board of Ethics shall not exceed half of the number of its members.

A member of the Board of Ethics nominated by a faction shall be subject to rotation once a year.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

Yes.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

N/A.

**4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

**GREECE: Hellenic Parliament****5. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

**f. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

**g. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

The Parliament's infrastructure offers full access to people with reduced mobility, either by special ramps or by elevators, both inside the building and around. Several interventions have been carried out in order to ensure the possibility of accessibility to people with disabilities, in the main building of the Hellenic Parliament. All unevenness in the surrounding area has been addressed with low-slope ramps so that wheelchairs can move easily. Access to the interior of the building takes place through two main entrances on the West and East side, which have a wide ramp for the movement of wheelchairs accompanied by specialized personnel provided by the security service of the Parliament.

In case of entrance/exit of people with disabilities by a vehicle, there are located specially designed parking spaces at the Vehicle Station at the level of the entrance of the vehicles on Vas. Amalia Avenue. The visitor is then guided using an elevator to the outer courtyard of the mansion for further movement. The building, due to its layout, allows accessible continuous corridors, safe and without obstacles, with a width of more than 0.90m. These routes are largely flat, with the provision of a ladder platform lift to intermediate levels or with the use of a folding ramp. For access to the floors of the Parliament, people with disabilities use an elevator of appropriate standards specifications, i.e., the doors open automatically for easy wheelchair access, the floor selection keypad is at the right height and there are floor signs buttons in Braille. The building has sanitary facilities to serve people with disabilities and people with disabilities on the levels, garage, ground floor and second floor. These spaces meet the specifications, as defined in the relative Ministerial Decision 2998 / B / 20-7-2020, that is the minimum dimensions of the spaces, the back doors, the location of the sanitary ware, the placement equipment items in suitable height zones e.tc.

Also, additional auxiliary equipment has been installed in specific sanitary areas, e.g. handles to facilitate people with mobility problems. Last but not least, on the website of the Hellenic Parliament one may find a video with detailed instructions on the accessibility of people with disabilities in the main building.<sup>5</sup>

**h. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

Access to parliament for children under 18 can be permitted only if the child is accompanied by its escort guardian. However, the Parliament further offers access to students with school visits, with special permission via the Foundation of the Hellenic Parliament<sup>6</sup>.

**i. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

Within the premises of the main building of the Hellenic Parliament there is actually an on-site crèche and nursery school which constitute a department unit, falling under the competency of the Department of Nursery of the Directorate for Human Resources and Training. This service is available to the children of MPs, Parliament permanent or other personnel, according to President of Parliament's decisions and availability.

The aim is to provide child care facilities, school lunches, enjoyment in learning through play and structured activities, promote children's cognitive, emotional, psychological and physical development, ensure a smooth transition to elementary school life and provide pre-school education based on contemporary pedagogy and participation of parents in their child's learning. The nursery also seeks to promote the development of physical, emotional, cognitive and social skills in line with the principles of elementary and secondary education. The curriculum is delineated by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and is developed by the head of unit in cooperation with the staff. The crèche and nursery school are committed to children's rights laid

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/ToKtirio/Fotografiko-Archeio/#a14260ff-9290-4a8b-bcaf-a7e700a96fe6>

<sup>6</sup> <https://foundation.parliament.gr/el/ypoboli-aitisis-gia-episkepseis-sholeion-sti-boyli>

down by national and European legislation, in particular under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A three-member committee, set up by the President of the Parliament's decision, is vested with the registration of children and certifies the technical requirements for the design and functioning of the crèche and nursery school in cooperation with the Director of Technical Services. Annual activities reports are submitted to the President of the Parliament. The Department Regulations supplementing this Regulation specify the internal organization, terms, obligations, duties, personnel posts, qualifications and expertise required.

**j. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Please view our replies to the questions above as well as the related links.

**6. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**e. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

According to article 70A of the Standing Orders "Members on a mission from the Government or from the Parliament abroad may take part in the vote, when they are nominative, and when a qualified majority is required to take a decision, by letter or fax signed by them with an appropriate reference to the matter. The above rules shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to pregnant Members, for the period of the last month of gestation and of the month following the birth." They may also participate in secret ballots by means of a stamped letter. The stamped letter or fax, as appropriate, shall be addressed to the President of Parliament.

**f. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

N/A

**g. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

The Hellenic Parliament provides with an employee under private law contract to any MP who is blind, deaf, hearing impaired or with speech disability or a disability of at least 80% so as to cover unforeseen and urgent needs and in particular, the specific needs of administrative support of these MPs. The site of the Hellenic Parliament also provides with an audio version of the Standing Orders of the Parliament in the homepage<sup>7</sup> of the Parliament.

**h. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

Article 76 on "Presence of MPs in sittings Leave of absence" of the Standing Orders states:

*"1. MPs are obliged to be present at the entire duration of the sittings of the Plenum and of the Recess Section of which they are members.*

*2. At every sitting a list is presented containing the names next to which a signature is to be placed. The reasons for absence as well as the ways of its confirmation are determined by a decision of the Speaker of Parliament and by the concordant opinion of the Conference of Parliamentary Chairmen.*

*3. A leave of absence is required when MPs are absent for more than five sittings a month or when they are away at a mission abroad on the days of Plenum and Recess Section sittings.*

*4. The leave of absence is supplied following a written application of the interested MP. The largest number of MPs who are allowed to be absent cannot exceed one sixth (1/6) of the total number of MPs.*

*5. The absence, without permit, of an MP in more than 5 sittings of the Plenum, the Recess Section and the Committees is considered an unreasoned one and results in a deduction of 1/30th of the monthly remuneration for every sitting of absence.*

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<sup>7</sup> [Standing Orders of the Hellenic Parliament](#) – audio version

6. *The MP can provide explanations for her/his absence to the Speaker of Parliament. If she/he does not do so, or if the explanations are not satisfactory, the Speaker orders a reduction of the MP's remuneration as specified in the previous article.*

7. *The provisions of the present article are not implemented for MPs who are members of Government."*

## **7. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

### **e. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

Indeed, there is a Code of Conduct with various provisions and sanction measures. Article 2 on General Principles states:

*"Members of Parliament shall:*

*a) Comply strictly with the Rules of Procedure of Parliament and safeguard the free and democratic functioning of Parliament;*

*b) Exercise their duties with impartiality, selflessness, objectivity and mutual respect;*

*c) Adhere to the principles of defense of the repute of Parliament, dedication to parliamentary procedures and discretion, where this is required by the Constitution, the law or the Rules of Procedure of Parliament;*

*d) Serve the public interest, to the exclusion of any financial or other personal interest or advantage for themselves or third parties;*

*e) Help prevent expressions of hatred against persons because of their racial or ethnic origin, religious or political belief, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation.*

*f) Make prudent use of and carefully manage the resources and benefits that Parliament makes available to them exclusively for the proper performance of their work and the fulfillment of their parliamentary duties."*

For additional information regarding the Code Of Conduct please view our replies to Requests: Requests 4470, 4355 and 4170.

### **f. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

The Special Standing Committee on Parliamentary Ethics is responsible for the monitoring and implementation of the code of conduct and in particular examine the case files and report to the Parliament on requests for waiver of the immunity of Members. The Chairperson of every Committee or/and Assembly meeting further holds the authority to ensure the implementation of non-discriminatory practices of MPs during sessions.

### **g. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

### **h. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions, and customs)?**

The process of more inclusive facilities and procedures in the Hellenic Parliament is an ongoing one.

## **HUNGARY: National Assembly**

### **1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

**a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

We would like to answer answers a) and b) together.

Yes, Parliament buildings are suitable for access for people with reduced mobility. The most recent major development was the construction of a new office building (Szabad György Office Building), where accessibility was already taken into account in the design, and the new design of the square in front of our historic Parliament, the Parliament House, has also been specifically designed with people with disabilities in mind.

Both chambers at the historical building of parliament (Országház) are accessible without the use of stairs. The historic building of the Parliament has its limitations due to its original construction, but the parliamentary work of MPs with disabilities must be ensured under all circumstances. Therefore, the Office of the National Assembly pays meticulous attention to the seats, making them wider for MPs with reduced mobility or other disabilities, so that they can exercise their rights from a wheelchair too.

Designated entrances and the meeting rooms are equipped with ramps, and the main entrances are equipped with lifting platforms. MPs with wheelchairs and guests can access the building's elevators with a dedicated ramp from the surrounding square.

The plenary hall has been wheelchair accessible since the reconstruction of the building. At least eight wheelchairs can be accommodated in the plenary hall. The necessary desks and offices were rebuilt to suit the personal needs of the disabled MPs. Members in wheelchairs have access to the desks of ministers in the middle of the chamber hall, as well. However, there is a route in the building of the Parliament where a disabled MP can only move with escort. For their utmost support the Office of the National Assembly provides permanent personal assistance to deaf-mute or visually impaired Members.

Elevators and restrooms can also be used in wheelchairs. Inside elevators buttons are accessible for wheelchair users and in our office buildings the number of floors can be heard at all levels for the visually impaired.

The House of Parliament is accessible to people with disabilities. We provide barrier-free transport for visitors with reduced mobility. The staff of the National Assembly provides help in case of applying or buying tickets upon request. With the exception of guide dogs, animals are not allowed in the building.

The Speaker's Order No. 8/2020 on the transfer of the right to access in accordance with the Order No. 13/2020 of the Director General of the Office of the National Assembly implemented the rules to enter and to stay in the premises of the Parliament, the Office of the National Assembly, to enter and to exit the premises of the Parliamentary Guard, to enter and to exit the underground garage in Kossuth square, and in regard with the activities of the Office of the National Assembly and the Parliamentary Guard:

(15) The Parliament shall be barrier-free for persons with reduced mobility and other persons with disabilities. An employee of the Public Relations Office assists their movement in the Parliament by elevator.

According to the Section 63 (4) of the Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and Promotion of Equal Opportunities organisations and legal entities using state budget, which employ more than 50 employees are obliged to draw up an equal opportunities plan. In order to fulfil this obligation the Office of the National Assembly (as employer) and the Parliamentary Employees Representative Association (as employee representative organisation) shall adopt an Equal Opportunities Plan at regular intervals.

The Equal Opportunities Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and Promotion of Equal Opportunities, the Act CXCV of 2011 on Civil Servants, the Act I of 2012 on Labour Code, and the Regulation 679/2016 of the European Parliament and of the Council (GDPR)

The current equal opportunities plan sets out the objectives to achieve for the period 1. January 2020. – 31. December 2022.

The signatories to the Equal Opportunities Plan are committed to take supportive measures to promote equal opportunities for employees for the following groups:

- people around pension age
- women,
- aged older than 40,
- roma minorities,
- disadvantaged,
- disabled,
- people with families.

The plan covers issues with regards to salary, professional development, training, working conditions, childcare and parental benefits.

The Office of the National Assembly shall pay particular attention to preventing and eliminating the direct and the indirect discrimination of employees because of age, gender, nationality, family or health status.

The Office of the National Assembly declared to help settling down, encouraging to have children (including participation in the reproduction process). These are of a high priority for the Office of the National Assembly and it provides support within its capabilities.

In order to maintain equal treatment and promote equal opportunities, the signatories of the Plan shall provide a barrier-free work environment for people with disabilities.

The Equal Opportunities Plan also contains a section to ensure a barrier-free work environment for people with disabilities:

The building of the Parliament, the Barankovics István Office Building, the Szabad György Office Building and the Visitor Centre are wheelchair accessible, and accessible restrooms are available. The conditions of technical aid for accessibility are constantly monitored and maintained by the Department of Engineering.

In order to support the entrance of people with disabilities, an external elevator was installed at the entrance in the Barankovics István Office Building.

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

There is no separate procedure.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

There are no nursery facilities.

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

There is no separate room, but when such a request is made, the Office will provide a separate room for the representative concerned.

However, when visiting the Parliament House, there is no dedicated room or solution, so only the Visitors' Centre's rest rooms are available.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Members, staff and visitors alike will be given all the information they need, including - especially for those who are concerned - about accessibility. Information is provided in two forms for visitors: on the one hand, visitors are asked to indicate in advance on the [visitor's website](#), for example if they are wheelchair visitors, and can read all other information there, and on the other hand, visitors can contact the guides directly with any further questions.

Given that there is no dedicated room for a crèche or a changing and feeding room, no specific information is provided. In the case of visitors, guides, representatives and staff, the Office will endeavour to find a solution, particularly with regard to baby changing and feeding.

(To complete the picture, Hungary has a network of free state-funded crèches and kindergartens for all citizens, where children can go for education, development and care up to the age of 6. Hungarian nurseries and kindergartens are open to the children of both MPs and staff - as is the case for all Hungarian citizens - but there are of course also private institutions.)

## **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

### **a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

Neither the Fundamental Law, nor the Act on the National Assembly, nor the Rules of the House allow for a proxy vote or a remote vote in the plenary (proxy voting by substitute may only take place in the case of a Member who is excluded).

In case of committee votes, substitution is possible and in the absence of a member of the committee, he or she may only give a proxy mandate to a member of the same parliamentary committee. The proxy mandate shall be valid for a single committee meeting.

### **b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

There are no specific rules for babies in the Chamber, but in practice there have been examples of a Member taking her baby into the Chamber, although such cases are very rare.

### **c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

Yes. There is a hearing-impaired Member of Parliament, assisted by sign language interpreters during plenary and committee meetings. The interpreters constantly translate the heard information into sign language. Hungarian sign language interpreters are provided by the Office of the National Assembly. The Hungarian sign language is protected by the Fundamental Law (constitution) and it is regulated by a separate law as well, Act CXXV of 2009 on Hungarian Sign Language and the Use of Hungarian Sign Language.

Parliament's website is accessible for the blind and partially sighted, with an accessible version available on the website (a version with bigger letters and different colouring plus machine readable standard text).

Kossuth Square (the square surrounding the Parliament House) and the Visitors' Centre in the Parliament House are also accessible for the blind and partially sighted.

In Kossuth Square, for example, so-called tactile pavement signs (metal bumps that protrude slightly from the pavement) help blind and partially sighted people to find their way around, for example at tram stops, but you can also find a 3D (mappable) building model here at the square.

### **d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

Yes, the main relevant legislation is Article 4 (3) f) of the Fundamental Law:

*„(3) The mandate of a Member of the National Assembly shall terminate:*

*f) if he or she has failed to participate in the National Assembly's work for one year.”*

More detailed rules on "normal" absences exist in the [Act XXXVI of 2012 on the National Assembly](#) (hereinafter Parliament Act) and the Rules of Procedure ([Resolution 10/2014. \(II. 24.\) OGY on certain provisions of the Rules of Procedure](#)) .

In short, sanctions are imposed for missing more than a quarter of the votes cast using a vote-counting machine in a given month's session or sessions of Parliament as indicated in the orders of the day. It is, however, necessary to distinguish between certified absences and unverified absences - the latter being penalised, in the form of a reduction in the Members' honorarium (salary). The leader of the parliamentary

group decides on the justification (about its own parliamentary group members) for the absence and informs the President of the decision.

If the leader of a political group certifies the absence of a Member belonging to his or her political group, the Speaker shall not investigate the reason for the absence, which shall be deemed to be justified. In effect, therefore, it is at the discretion of the political group leader to justify the absence.

We are not aware of any examples where justified absences have been sanctioned and, to the best of our knowledge, the reasons given by Members are accepted - whether due to illness, other official business or children - and therefore do not need to be specifically proven to them. We would also like to add that the political groups have strong prerogatives and their own internal rules, so they can probably ensure the necessary attendance by other means.

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

#### **a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

Yes, the disciplinary law of the Parliament Act provides for this:

*“Section 46/B(1) The chair of the sitting may reprimand or warn any Member who uses a term that harms the reputation of the National Assembly, the dignity of the sitting, or any person or group, in particular a national, ethnic, racial or religious community, or is otherwise indecent, or who commits another act of such nature.(2) Should the measure referred to in paragraph (1) be without result, the chair of the sitting may deny the right to speak to the Member, and the Member shall not be given the floor on the same sitting day in the discussion of the same agenda item.”*

#### **b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

Yes, an Equal Opportunities Officer in the Civil Service (HR) Department, who has a law degree.

#### **c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

Unfortunately, we are unable to answer this question in the absence of research or data collection on the views and knowledge of MEPs on this issue.

#### **d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

Unfortunately, we cannot answer this question due to a lack of data.

### **4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

The laws and the internal rules of the office mentioned in our response, as well as the concrete steps and solutions described, lay the foundations for inclusive practice in the Hungarian Parliament. However, the protected historic interior of the Parliament House, for example, has been a challenge, and in many cases individual solutions and compromises have been necessary, for example, in creating accessibility.

The issue of separate nursery and feeding rooms accessible to all concerned has not yet been resolved, and can only be addressed on a case-by-case and individual basis.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**ICELAND: Althingi**

**1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

**a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes.

**Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

No.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes.

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

No, except they are attending parliament in school groups.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

No.

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

Yes.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Yes.

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

Neither remote nor proxy voting is allowed. Pairing agreements are informal.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

Yes, but there are not any rules relating to that.

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

The Parliament provides assistance to Members with disabilities. Former Members have been provided with necessary assistance: a blind MP was provided with a dog, an interpreter was employed by the Parliament while a deaf person was sitting as a Substitute Member.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

No.

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

The code of conduct for parliamentarians relates to financial matters, not to sexual harassment.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

No.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

N/A.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

N/A.

**4. Additional information**

**Please add any further information you may find useful.**

## **LATVIA: Saeima of the Republic**

### **1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

#### **a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes. The Parliament of Latvia is open to all members of society and is working to ensure accessibility for people with mobility and other functional impairments, including wheelchair users.

The Saeima is located in historic buildings of high cultural and historical value. Particular attention is paid to the accessibility of the buildings, while also preserving their heritage. Accessibility is provided in all buildings of the Saeima, so that visitors, including wheelchair users, can access all meeting rooms independently.

Please, see this link for more information: <https://www.saeima.lv/en/contacts1/accessibility-at-the-saeima/>

#### **b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes.

#### **c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

No.

#### **d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

##### **i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

No.

##### **ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

No.

#### **e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Yes.

### **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

#### **a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

In the Saeima, usually during the parental leave MP have the right to give up his/her mandate.

#### Rules of Procedure

*5. (1) A Member shall have the right to give up his/her mandate during his/her term of office as Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister or during maternity and childbirth leave, child adoption leave, as well as childcare leave. Upon receiving notice about the giving up of a mandate, the Presidium of the Saeima (hereinafter – the Presidium) shall invite the next candidate to become a Member and shall notify the Mandate, Ethics and Submissions Committee thereof. The Mandate, Ethics and Submissions Committee shall verify the election documents and shall notify the Saeima of the results of this verification, and the Saeima, by its decision, shall approve the mandate of the said candidate.*

#### **b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

The Rules of Procedure does not specify this issue.

#### **c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

There has been no such precedent in the Saeima.

**e. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

[Rules of Procedure](#)

*7. Every Member is obliged to participate in the work of the Saeima.*

*8. (1) A Member shall be permitted to be absent from the work of the Saeima for not longer than one week, provided that he/she has informed the Presidium and has requested leave in advance. This right shall not be used more than once during each session. This leave shall be unpaid and granted for a specific period of time*

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

MPs must follow the Rules of Procedure and Code of Ethics for Members of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

According to [the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia](#) Section 91, all human beings in Latvia shall be equal before the law and the courts. Human rights shall be realised without discrimination of any kind. Specific department does not exist.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

Yes.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

N/A

## **LITHUANIA: Seimas**

### **1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

#### **a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes. All parliamentary building are adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility.

#### **b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes. As there are two MPs with mobility impairments (wheelchair users) at the present Seimas, their places in the Plenary Chamber are at the back row of the Plenary (easy accessible places) and without ordinary stationary chairs.

These two MPs also have specially arranged PC (the voting console is adapted to vote with a computer mouse).

#### **c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

Procedure for access of minors (up to 14 years old) accompanied by the MPs or parliamentary employees (i. e. their children or dependants) is simplified. In other words, there is no need to issue official permit for such minors.

#### **d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

- i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**
- ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

Yes. There is designated place for baby changing and feeding rooms.

In addition, currently room for children playground is setting up in the parliamentary building.

#### **e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Mostly such information (especially is available through internal communication tools (for instance, on intranet of the parliament) since it is more relevant for MPs and employees.

### **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

#### **a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

Currently only meetings of committees and commission are held online or in a mixed way. No remote voting, proxy voting is possible in the plenary sittings.

#### **b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

In principle, yes, i. e. there is no restriction on that.

#### **c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

No.

However, official website of the Seimas has a version adapted to visual impaired people.

#### **d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

Pursuant to the Statute of the Seimas (Rules of Procedure) if an MP is unable to attend a Seimas sitting, a Seimas committee or commission meeting, he/she must, in advance or if not possible in advance – not later than within one week, notify respectively the Secretariat of Seimas Sittings, the committee or commission chair specifying the reasons of non-attendance. Important, justifiable reasons for non-attendance at Seimas sittings and at Seimas committee or commission meetings includes temporary working incapacity, business trip, child-rearing leave of a Member of the Seimas or other important circumstances, and non-attendance at sittings or meetings with the approval of the Board of the Seimas. If a Member of the Seimas fails to inform that he/she

will not attend a sitting or meeting or to indicate the reasons for non-attendance, it shall be deemed that a sitting or meeting has been missed without an important justifiable reason.

Therefore, no sanctions are applied if MP presents important, justifiable reasons for non-participation in plenary sittings and committees meetings.

### 3. Fostering inclusive attitudes

#### a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?

There are no specific measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates. However below described sanctions could be applied in such cases.

Extracts from the Statute of the Seimas<sup>8</sup> (Rules of Procedure):

#### Article 20. Warning to a Member of the Seimas

1. If during a sitting a Member of the Seimas begins to argue with Members of the Seimas or other participants of the sitting or makes noise in the Plenary Chamber, the chair of the sitting may call to order the Member of the Seimas.

2. If the said Member of the Seimas does not heed the warning of the chair of the sitting, the warning may be recorded in the minutes of the sitting. A warning to a Member of the Seimas for a public threat to colleagues, for an insult of a Member of the Seimas or a group thereof, for dishonest voting may be immediately recorded in the minutes.

3. The warning which is recorded in the minutes of the sitting shall be administered on the recommendation of the chair of the Seimas sitting or the Commission for Ethics and Procedures, without debate and by a simple majority of the Members of the Seimas participating in the voting.

4. A Member of the Seimas to whom administration of such warning is proposed, shall have the right to explain himself to the Seimas for a maximum of 3 minutes prior to the voting.

#### Article 21. Removal of a Member of the Seimas from a Sitting

1. The Seimas may temporarily exclude a Member of the Seimas from the Plenary Chamber until the end of the sitting of that day, if he:

- 1) continues, after being called to order, to interrupt the business of the Seimas;
- 2) during a sitting, calls for the use of the coercion or uses it personally;
- 3) publicly insults or threatens the President of the Republic, the Seimas, the Speaker of the Seimas, the Members of the Seimas, the Government, or the Prime Minister, or threatens them during a sitting;
- 4) disgraces the name of a Member of the Seimas with his actions.

2. In the cases referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, decisions concerning the exclusion of a Member of the Seimas from the Plenary Chamber shall be adopted without debate by a simple majority of the Members of the Seimas participating in the voting, on the recommendation of the chair of the sitting or the Commission for Ethics and Procedures.

3. If a Member of the Seimas who has been temporarily removed from a sitting refuses to heed the demand of the chair of the sitting to leave the Plenary Chamber, the sitting shall be temporarily interrupted and security officers shall escort the Member of the Seimas concerned from the Plenary Chamber.

4. The Member of the Seimas who is removed from Seimas sittings shall not receive a salary for the days when the Seimas sittings from which he is removed are held.

#### b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?

No.

#### c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?

Yes.

#### d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?

Politic, traditions and customs.

<sup>8</sup> Link to the English translation of the Act: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/f5d4f850488811eca442ce6d75941970?jfwid=-11fvkwhscf>

4. **Additional information** Please add any further information you may find useful.

**NORTH MACEDONIA: Assembly of the Republic****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility?**

- In the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, entry and exit access ramps (in total six) have been built for persons with reduced mobility, provided access to assistive devices, as well as adequate access to the elevators in the Assembly. In addition, in the Boris Trajkovski Hall, a place for accommodation of participants with reduced mobility and aids is provided.

**b. Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

- No.

**c. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

- Please refer reply under (a) question no.1.

**d. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

- According to the Instructions for implementation of the rulebook on internal order, children under 14 years of age are not allowed to enter the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia except with the permission of the Secretary General. The same rule applies to the children of MPs and employees in the service of the Assembly. The name and surname of every person under 18 years of age who enter the premises of the Assembly must be provided.

**e. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?** -No.

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?** -No.

**f. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

- Yes, the Parliamentary Institute of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia provides information about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children to MPs, staff and visitors.

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices****a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

- No, according to the Rules of procedures of the Assembly of North Macedonia there is no possibility of remote working, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

- According to the instructions for implementation of the rulebook on internal order, children under 14 years of age are not allowed to enter the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia except with the permission of the Secretary General. The same rule applies to the children of MPs and employees in the service of the Assembly.

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

- There are currently no employees in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia with hearing and/or visual impairments. The parliament does not provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments but once a year Parliamentary Institute organizes a round table with some of the associations of persons with disabilities, where all possibilities and solutions are discussed. An appropriate sign language interpreter is provided. In addition, all promotional videos and educational materials, related to the work of the Assembly, as well as the visits to it, contain a sign language interpreter, as well as audio production for the necessary information materials. The Parliamentary Institute also produced posters in sign

language, which, through pictures and text, described key terms such as Parliament, MP, constitution, law, democracy and elections, in sign language. The Parliamentary Institute provided a translation of the Constitution and the promotional and educational materials in Braille. Additionally, for these citizens, on the website of the Assembly audio recordings of all informative and educational materials of the Assembly are placed. Parliamentary Institute is organizing guided tours for Blind and Visually Impaired people.

From this year, there is new activity (teaching lessons for sign language) for the MPs and the staff which are directly included in the activities of the Assembly connected with relations with public.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

- There are no sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes.

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

- According to the Code of ethics for MPs of the Republic of North Macedonia, an MP shall perform his/her function without any prejudice and discrimination in terms of gender, race, skin colour, national and social origin, political and religious beliefs, welfare and social position, while respecting the freedoms and rights of humans and citizens. The Committee on Rules of Procedure and Mandatory-Immunity Issues of the Assembly is the body competent to decide upon minor and major violations and pronounce measures. The Committee may pronounce the following measures for failure to respect the Code of Ethics: reprehension, pronounced for minor violation and public reprehension, pronounced for major violation. Committee's decisions are published on the website of the Assembly for a period of 30 days.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

- Please refer to answer under (a) question no.3

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement? - N/A**

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

- According to the Joint research paper prepared by Polio Plus and Parliamentary Institute "Analyses of the practices of parliaments in relation to the community with disabilities" in order to introduce more inclusive facilities and procedures it is necessary to prepare a comprehensive analysis of the policies of the Assembly of North Macedonia in terms of disability to implement the obligations arising from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with a disability. Additionally, the Assembly should develop an action plan for improving accessibility, both in terms of physical and information and communication accessibility in the premisses of the Assembly, with indicators and mechanisms for monitoring that plan. Also, the Assembly should develop a Guide for the application of the legal institute of appropriate adjustment, as well as to provide financial resources for its implementation.

**4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

## **NORWAY: Stortinget**

### **1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

#### **a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes, multiple buildings in the parliamentary complex are adapted to access for persons with reduced mobility. There have not been any recent renovations for this purpose.

#### **b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes.

#### **c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

No.

#### **d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

##### **i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

No, there is not a nursery with individuals watching the children. There is a playroom for children where either the parent or someone the parent brings can watch the child.

##### **ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

One can use the playroom and rooms adjacent to the playroom.

#### **e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Information is only provided to elected MPs.

### **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

#### **a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies etc.)?**

There is no possibility of remote voting or proxy voting. The political parties have an agreement on a pairing system, which means that if certain members of a party are absent the other parties ensure that they reduce the number of MPs present to vote in order for the strength of each party to be the same as if all MPs were present.

#### **b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

Only MPs and parliamentary staff can enter the chamber. If a situation occur where an MP want or need to have an infant with him/her, the President has to decide on the request.

#### **c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

Yes, the parliament will provide assistance for MPs or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments, e.g. braille.

#### **d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

There are no sanctions against non-participation in debates.

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

#### **a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

There is no code of conduct, but ethical guidelines (in Norwegian <https://www.stortinget.no/no/Stortinget-og-demokratiet/Representantene/Etiskveileder-for-storingsrepresentantene/> ). Amongst other things, the guidelines refer to respectful treatment of others and specifically states that no sexual harassment is to take place. There are no sanctions specified for MPs who might breach the guidelines. However, during debates etc., the president of the parliament can and will sanction MPs who breach the guidelines.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

There is no specific office in the parliament for this purpose, but the Working Environment act applies to the parliament as an employer and specifies the rules for the work environment, including issues related to discrimination. These rules only apply to employees in the parliamentary administration.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

I cannot answer this in a sufficient manner without doing some additional research, which we do not have the capacity to do. However, based on experience, I believe parliamentarians are aware.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

To our knowledge, there are no specific obstacles.

**4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

**POLAND: Sejm****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes, the Sejm buildings are adapted for people with mobile disabilities. Several accommodations were introduced: the wheelchair ramps, including one in the plenary hall which secures the access to the Sejm rostrum, special parking spots, appropriate accommodation of the toilets, special lifts. Yes, there have been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes.

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

Young people usually come to buildings of the parliament in a group under the care of a guardian.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:****i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

No.

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

Yes.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Yes, that information is available.

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices****a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

According to Article 198a of the Standing Orders of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland:<sup>9</sup>

*1. In the case of:*

*1) introduction of a state of emergency, a state of natural disaster or martial law, or*

*2) a state of epidemic within the meaning of the Act of 5 December 2008 on fighting infections and human infectious diseases (Dziennik Ustaw of 2019, items 1239 and 1495, of 2020, items 284, 322 and 374)*

*- a sitting of the Sejm may be held via electronic means of distance communication.*

*The Marshal of the Sejm shall make a decision on holding the sitting of the Sejm via electronic means of distance communication after having sought the opinion of the Council of Seniors.*

*When the decision is made to hold the sitting of the Sejm via electronic means of distance communication, the Chancellery of the Sejm shall ensure an access to electronic means enabling such participation in the sitting to all Deputies who submit such a request.*

*A template of the request referred to in para. 3, as well as procedure and method of submitting it, shall be established by the Marshal of the Sejm by means of an order.*

<sup>9</sup> [Consolidated text of the Standing Orders of the Sejm: Resolution of 30 July 1992](#), Monitor Polski 2021, item 483 (PL), as amended.

*The provision of para. 3 shall apply as appropriate to the entities referred to in Article 170 paras 1-3.*

*The provisions of Part I-III and IV-V shall apply as appropriate to the sitting of the Sejm under the procedure referred to in para. 1 and to the sittings of the Sejm bodies under the procedure referred to in Articles 198i para. 1 and 198j para. 1, except when the provisions of this Part provide otherwise.*

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

The Rules and Regulations of the Sejm do not provide for the presence of deputies with children in the chamber, but in practice there have been such cases.

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

Yes. For more detailed information please see ECPRD request 4228: *Situation of people with hearing loss in parliaments* and ECPRD Request No. 4883: *Subtitling of committee and commission meetings (for the hearing-impaired persons)*.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

According to the Standing Orders of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland:

*Where participation in a sitting of the Sejm or a standing or special committee is not possible, a Deputy shall, insofar as possible, notify either the Marshal of the Sejm or the chairman of the committee before the relevant sitting and shall within 7 days justify such absence in writing to the Marshal of the Sejm or to the chairman of the committee. The procedure for submitting a justification of absence shall be defined by the Presidium of the Sejm (Art. 7 p.7).*

*The following reasons shall be deemed to justify the failure by a Deputy to participate in a sitting of the Sejm or a committee, or in voting:*

*1) illness or necessary care of a sick person,*

*2) foreign or domestic trips at the request of the Sejm, the Marshal of the Sejm or a committee, approved by the Presidium of the Sejm,*

*3) conflict in the times of sittings of committees or subcommittees to which a Deputy belongs if he participated in one of those sittings, and in the case of conflict in the times of sitting of the Sejm and a committee or a subcommittee, subject to Article 152 para. 4 — fulfilling the functions of a rapporteur or speaking at a sitting of the Sejm,*

*4) leave granted to a Deputy by the Marshal of the Sejm, subject to para. 10,*

*5) other serious, unpredictable or unavoidable occurrences (Art. 7 p. 8).*

*Information concerning unexplained absences by Deputies at sittings of the Sejm and its committees shall be available to the public (Art. 7 p. 9).*

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

No.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

Yes. Since June 2020 there is a coordinator for accessibility issues in the Chancellery of the Sejm, whose main tasks include: support of people with special needs, preparation and coordination of the enforcement of activity plan for ensuring the Chancellery's accessibility in accordance with minimum requirements described in Art. 6 of the Act of 19 July 2019 (point 1(5) above), monitoring of the activity of the Chancellery in the scope of ensuring such accessibility.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

Yes.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

We are not aware of such problems.

**POLAND: Senate**

**1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

**a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes, the Senate buildings are adapted for people with mobile disabilities.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

No

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

Young people usually come to parliament in a group with a guardian. As a group, they enter without needing a pass, as is the case with adults.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?** No

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?** No

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?** No

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

According to Art. 6 of the Rules and Regulations of the Senate in special justified cases resulting from the introduction of a state of emergency, epidemic or epidemiological emergency, the Marshal of the Senate, after consulting the Council of Seniors, may allow senators located outside the Senate seat to vote and participate in a Senate or committee meeting using means of electronic communication.

In the Senate, it is not possible to vote by proxy and to pair contracts between the parties to compensate for absences.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

The Rules and Regulations of the Senate list the persons who may attend the plenary meetings. Its provisions do not provide for the presence of senators with children in the chamber.

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

No, but so far there have been no senators or staff members with such disabilities.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

In accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Senate, in case of an impediment preventing a senator from attending a sitting of the Senate, a senator should give reasons for his absence in writing, within 14 days of the date of the occurrence, by sending a letter to the Speaker of the Senate or – in the case of a committee sitting – to the respective committee chair.

Justified impediments making the presence of a Senator at a sitting of the Senate, or participation in voting at a Senate sitting impossible, are:

1) sickness;

2) having to take care of a sick person;

- 3) foreign or domestic travel associated with the senatorial mandate, approved by the Marshal of the Senate;
- 4) convergent timing of the sittings of committees of which the Senator is a member, if he has taken part in any such sitting;
- 5) leave granted to the Senator;
- 6) other important reasons.

If the senator fails to excuse his or her presence, then the Speaker orders a reduction in the salary and the parliamentary allowance.

A Senator affected by an order of the Speaker can appeal it to the Presidium of the Senate within 14 days of its delivery. The Presidium of the Senate decision, issued upon consultation with the Rules, Ethics and Senatorial Affairs Committee, is final.

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

There is no code of conduct.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

No

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

Yes, but it is difficult to cite specific documents or statements by senators.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

Such obstacles are unknown.

## PORTUGAL: Assembly of the Republic

### 1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation

#### a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?

The Portuguese Parliament is located in a former Benedictine Monastery of the 16th century (Palácio de São Bento). It was first adapted to parliamentary use in the 1830's and has suffered many changes in the following years.

As it often happens with old buildings, the Palácio de São Bento is not originally friendly to disabled people – e.g. staircases are plentiful and some corridors are quite narrow. Because the building is classified as National Monument, changes must respect the historical elements, which is a challenge (formally, every change has to be previously allowed by the Portuguese Directorate-General for Cultural Heritage).

In spite of all these challenges, in the last decade efforts have been made to overcome these shortcomings, in the interest of disabled people. This effort was initially aimed at visitors and then extended to MPs.

Here is a list of some of the arrangements implemented to make buildings more accessible, ensuring full autonomy for individuals.:

- Construction of a ramp and frontal car park at the back entrance of the Palácio de São Bento and placement of signaling notices to this entrance at the other entrances;
- Organizing the lateral entrance of the Palácio de São Bento and defining a frontal car park to facilitate wheelchairs mobility;
- Construction of sanitary facilities for wheelchairs and placement of respective signaling notices;
- Placement of a platform wheelchair lift in the connection between the 2001 extension building and the Palácio de São Bento;
- Creation of six specific places for wheelchairs in the Public Galleries.
- Placement of two ramps in the access to the plenary hall (to overcome three steps);



- Installation of a three-platform elevator in the plenary hall to allow the MP to accede the rostrum.



- The Senate Hall (previous Second Chamber, now used for international and national meetings) has also been refurbished with new seats in the first row, accessible for wheelchairs.



- In the 2001 extension building (usually named “New Building”) a new ramp was built in the auditorium, allowing wheelchairs to accede to several rows of the room.



- Installing several elevator platforms when stairs difficult the internal circulation of wheelchair users. These platforms can be autonomously operated.
- Affixing inscriptions in Braille and installing voice indications for blind people in the elevators.
- Installing in the bathrooms for disabled people emergency sound signs.
- Adding voice guidance to the fire safety system.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

There is no entrance specially dedicated to persons with reduced mobility. But there are several entrances prepared to wheelchairs.

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

No.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

The Portuguese Parliament offers a paid nursery service to which MPs and workers can enroll their children up to three years old.

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

No.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

At the beginning of each legislature, MPs are informed about the existence and conditions of use of the nursery.

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

Article 93, paragraph 3 of the [Rules of Procedure of the Assembleia da República](#) (RAR) states that without prejudice to the right to abstain, a proxy or postal vote is not permitted. According to paragraph 2 of the same article, no Member of Parliament present has the right to abstain from voting except on duly substantiated grounds of conscience by the Member of Parliament present at the sitting. Only this exception is considered as a justification for not participating in voting ([Article 8](#), paragraph 3 of the Statute of Members, approved by [Law no. 7/83 of 1 March](#)) (consolidated version).

Under [Article 5](#) of the Statute of Members, Members of Parliament may request to be substituted one or more times during the course of the legislature, due to an appropriate reason. The law specifies that an appropriate reason consists of: a) Serious illness that creates an inability to perform his/her functions for a period of no less than 30 days and up to the limit of the respective justifiable reason; b) The undertaking of maternity or paternity leave; c) The need to ensure the continuance of criminal proceedings; d) Serious reasons of a familial, personal, professional or academic nature.

Due to the pandemic situation, [Resolution 87-B/2020 of 20 November of the Assembleia da República](#) approved exceptional procedures for Members of Parliament to participate in plenary sittings via videoconference, provided that the Bureau was notified in advance, under the terms of which Members residing or elected in the autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira, Members residing or elected in emigration constituencies in Europe and outside Europe, and Members who, by the health authority, have been ordered to remain in quarantine, are allowed to speak and vote.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

N/a

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

The sign language interpretation of the ARTV-Parliament Channel broadcasts results from [Assembleia da República Resolution No. 82/2003 of 9 of December](#), which charged the Board of Administration with implementing a set of measures to guarantee access by disabled people to Parliament and its work. As such, since 25 April 2006, live broadcasts on the ARTV-Parliament Channel all include sign language interpretation, allowing plenary and parliamentary committee sittings and meetings to be followed.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

Part of the answer to this question is already included in the answer to question 2a.

Under the provisions of paragraph 6 of [Assembleia da República Resolution No. 21/2009 of 26 March](#), which approved the Attendance and Absence Rules of Procedure for Plenary Sittings, “the Members have the right to present justifications for absences, under the terms established in the respective Statute and the Rules of Procedure, provided that they comply with the respective justification requirements”. According to paragraph 7 of the same Resolution, “Members shall be taken at their word, and therefore shall not require additional proof. Where illness is invoked, a medical certificate may, however, be required if the condition lasts more than one week.” The Member has five days to submit this justification, and only parliamentary days count towards this period of time. It should also be noted that “absence from any vote previously scheduled, in a plenary, shall follow the rules of procedure for absence from plenary sittings, as regards justification and for the legal effects concerning financial penalties”, under the terms of paragraph 21 of the aforementioned Resolution.

Finally, in accordance with paragraph 1 of [Article 8](#) of the Statute of Members, “Members who: b) Do not take their seat in the Assembleia da República or exceed the number of absences, except for justified reasons, in accordance with paragraph 2 and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, shall lose their mandate”. Paragraph 2 of the same article states that “illness, marriage, maternity and paternity, bereavement, force majeure, parliamentary mission or proceedings and political or party work to which the Member belongs, as well as participation in parliamentary activities, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, shall be considered as justifiable reasons for absence.” Paragraph 3 states that “a duly substantiated appeal on the grounds of conscience by a Member of Parliament present at the meeting shall be considered justification for not taking part in voting”. Finally, paragraph 4 provides that “in exceptional cases, transport difficulties may be regarded as justification for failures to attend”.

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

#### **a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

The Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament is approved by [Assembleia da República Resolution no. 210/2019, of 20 September](#). Pursuant to Article 5, “members of the *Assembleia da República* shall perform their functions with respect for other members of parliament and for the members of other sovereign bodies, for the citizens they represent and for other public and private entities which they deal with when carrying out their mandate.” It is a duty of Members to “intervene in parliamentary proceedings with courtesy and institutional loyalty, refraining from behaviour that does not bring prestige to the parliamentary institution” (Article 9, subparagraph f)).

#### **b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

The Parliamentary Committee for Transparency and the Statute of Members shall be responsible for ensuring the application of the Code of Conduct and shall exercise the responsibilities provided for therein, namely: a) Conducting enquiries on its own initiative, at the request of the person concerned or by determination of the President of the Assembleia da República; b) Issuing generic statements or recommendations, under the terms provided for in the Statute of Members; c) Drafting an annual report on the application of the Code and the activity of the Committee in this area (Article 12 of the Code).

#### **c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

N/a.

#### **d. What are the principal obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (e.g. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

N/a.

### **4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

## ROMANIA: Chamber of Deputies

### 1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation

#### a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility?

Yes

#### b. Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?

Yes. Three years ago, wheelchairs (platforms) stairlifts were installed inside the building. Those entrances are also intended for visitors and groups of children and students participating in various programmes organised by the Chamber of Deputies.

#### c. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?

No.

#### d. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?

Children under 14 years of age are a special case (because they do not have an identity card) for they have to be accompanied by an adult or in organised groups.<sup>10</sup>

#### e. On the premises of the parliament are there:

##### i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?

No.

##### ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?

No.

#### f. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?

No, but at the entrance there is the information office that can address all aspects of interest to visitors.

### 2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices

#### a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?

Currently remote voting procedures and mechanisms are in place and functional. They were introduced for the pandemic period. It is very likely that, it will be used in non-pandemic situations as well.

#### b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?

No.

#### c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?

No.

#### d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?

Article 244, paragraph 8, of the Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies provides as follows: Deputies who have not taken part in at least one parliamentary activity in the House, within the program and agenda approved for that day, or who have not obtained a statement of reasons for their absence shall be considered to be unjustified and shall be deducted 1% of the gross allowance.

Article 244, paragraph 5:

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<sup>10</sup> <http://cic.cdep.ro/en/visiting/general-rules-regarding-the-guided-tours>

The following are considered as absent motivated by the deputies:

- a) who are members of the Government;
- b) who have received from the Chamber of Deputies or the Standing Bureau of the Chamber of Deputies a task which keeps them out of its work;
- c) who have received the approval of the Standing Bureau of the Chamber of Deputies to participate in various activities in which they have been invited to participate;
- d) who are on medical leave;
- e) who obtained paid leave of up to 8 days per session;
- f) who obtained the motivation of the absences under the conditions of par. (2) and (3).<sup>11</sup>

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

#### **a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

In parliamentary debates, deputies are obliged to respect the rules of conduct, courtesy and parliamentary discipline, and to refrain from committing acts that impede or hinder the activity of other MPs, not to use or display provocative, insulting, offensive, discriminatory expressions or slanderous.

There are no special sanctions, there are sanctions for infringements of the Regulation in general, such as: verbal warning; call to order; withdrawal of the word; removal from the room during the meeting; written warning.

#### **b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

No.

#### **c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

N/A

#### **d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

N/A

### **4. Additional information**

**Please add any further information you may find useful.**

Every citizen, regardless of his or her status, must be subject to national anti-discrimination regulations and to the various measures required to protect persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site2015.page?den=act4\\_1&par1=0&idl=2](https://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site2015.page?den=act4_1&par1=0&idl=2)

**ROMANIA: Senate**

**1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

**a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Yes**

**Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible? Not recently**

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility? Yes**

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18? They have to be accompanied by adults.**

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)? No.**

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms? No.**

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children? Yes**

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)? Remote voting.**

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant? No.**

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)? No.**

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers? There are not.**

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates? There is a code of conduct, it does not specifically include sexism, it includes forbiddance of any offensive speech/attitude.**

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices? No.**

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement? Yes.**

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)? N/a.**

**4. Additional information** Please add any further information you may find useful.

## **SAN MARINO: Consiglio Grande e Generale**

### **1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

**a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

The Parliamentary Building (Palazzo Pubblico) is accessible for persons with reduced mobility (there are ramps at the entrance, a lift leading to the upper and lower floors, accessible seating places and wheelchair accessibility in public and working area)

More specific adaptations in order to remove barriers have also been made in 2007 and 2018, on the occasion of the six-month term of the Captains Regent (Heads of State and Presidents of Parliament) as one of the Captains Regent was a member of parliament with reduced mobility

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

No

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

**ii. ibaby changing and feeding rooms?**

No

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Yes

### **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

No

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

There is no regulation on this issue

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

No

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

No

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

The Great and General Council (Parliament), in its sitting of 21 March 2022 unanimously adopted the Code of Conduct for Parliamentarians.

According to the general principles referred to in article 1 of the Code of Conduct for parliamentarians, the members of the Great and General Council shall perform their functions with diligence, responsibility and a supreme sense of duty. Their mandate shall be inspired by principles of honesty, integrity and transparency. Their conduct shall aim at protecting the honour, dignity and decorum of their function as Members of the Council. They shall act in the general and exclusive interest of the State and refuse any undue advantage or other undue benefit.

Pursuant to article 2 (duties of the Members of the Great and General Council) the provisions of this Code of Conduct shall supplement the duties of the Members of the Council contained in Chapter IX of Book I of the Statutes, in the Rules of Procedure of the Great and General Council and in their solemn oath. This shall not affect the possible application of criminal rules in force in case of criminally relevant conducts. In carrying out their mandate, the Members of the Great and General Council shall:

The Rules of Procedure of the Great and General Council require all MPs to swear an oath of allegiance prior to taking office. This oath reads as follows: "I swear and promise eternal loyalty and obedience to the constitution of the Republic, to support and defend freedom with all my strengths, to strictly respect old, new and future Statutes and Decrees; to appoint and vote only for persons who I believe are capable, faithful and able to provide a good service to the Republic in any Institution and Public Offices, without letting myself get carried away by any passion of hate or love, or by any other consideration". The Rules of Procedure also include some rules on order and decorum. In particular, according to art.65 of the Rules of Procedures, MPs, Ministers and all those admitted to the parliamentary sittings shall behave with dignity and demonstrate respect for the Parliament. They are not permitted to use inappropriate expression or behave improperly, undermining the freedom of debate or disturbing the parliamentary session.

A Code of Conduct for Public Officials was adopted in 2014 whose purpose "shall be to clarify the rules on integrity and conduct that public officials are required to observe, to help them respect these rules and to inform users of the conduct that they can legitimately expect from public officials".

MPs are considered public officials (Article 149, Penal Code) and the Code of Conduct for Public Officials states that its provisions "shall be reference principles for the conduct of the members of the Great and General Council, the Heads and members of the Township Councils, the members of the Congress of State, the judges and the members of the Police Forces with regard to compatible aspects and without prejudice to the special rules applicable to them".

The Code of Conduct for Public Officials also states that "In exercising their functions, public officials shall not act or omit to act in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner to the detriment of any person, group of persons or organisations and shall give due consideration to the rights, obligations and legitimate interests of others".

**4. Additional information** Please add any further information you may find useful.

**SLOVAK REPUBLIC: National Council****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

**a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes.

**There have been no recent renovations.**

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

Each visitor has to go through a separate entrance. Smaller children do not have to go through metal detectors. Children under 18 that already have an ID need to prove their identity (except for scheduled visits, where a list of visitors and their identification is submitted prior to the visit).

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

**i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

No

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

**Some toilets are equipped with baby changing facilities. There is no special feeding room.**

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

No

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

Hybrid committee meetings are only available during state of emergency and extraordinary situation.

Members of the Committee of European Affairs have their substitutes.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

No

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

There have not been any members or staff with hearing impairment. These situations would be dealt with ad hoc upon occurrence.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

The MP is obliged to attend the meetings of the National Council and the meetings of its committees to which he/she has been elected. A written excuse must be sent by the Member before the sitting at which he/she cannot participate due to illness or other serious reason. An apology is not required if the reason for the Member's absence from the meeting is related with the performance of the duties of a Member approved by

the Speaker of the National Council or chairman of the committee. For further details see Section 63 of the Rules of Procedure.<sup>12</sup>

If a Member does not attend at least two meeting days of the National Council or its committees to which he/she has been elected without due justification, within a period of one calendar month, he/she loses the right to half of the salary, functional allowance and half of the flat-rate compensation which he/she would otherwise receive next month.

If a Member does not attend at least four meeting days of the National Council or its committees to which he/she has been elected without due justification, within a period of one calendar month, he/she loses the right to the whole salary, functional allowance and the flat-rate compensation which he/she would otherwise receive next month.

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

#### **a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

There is no officially legislated Code of Conduct in the National Council of the Slovak Republic. However, according to Section 9a of the Rules of Procedure of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, “each Member while serving his/her term must oblige by the moral and ethical code of conduct, abide the Constitution, laws, and the Ethical Code of the Member, which shall be approved by the National Council resolution”. This amendment to the Rules of Procedure thus establishes a legal basis for adopting a Code of Conduct. Additionally, revised sections 135(d) and 139(4) of the Rules have introduced MPs’ liability for breaching of the Code.

#### **b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

There is no special department. Any forms of discrimination is dealt with pursuant to Antidiscrimination act and Act on Civil Service.

#### **c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

N/A

#### **d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

N/A

### **4. Additional information**

**Please add any further information you may find useful.**

In 2015, the National Council of the Slovak Republic approved the Act no. 176/2015 Coll. on the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and on the amendment of certain laws,<sup>13</sup> which establishes the institution of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. The Commissioner assesses, on the initiative or on his/her own initiative, the observance of the rights of the person with a disability and monitors the observance of the rights of persons with disabilities. For further details see <https://www.komisarprezdravotnepostihnutych.sk/>.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/1996/350/20210901.html>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2015/176/>

**SLOVENIA: National Assembly****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes. The Slovenian parliamentary building allows access for persons with reduced mobility. This access has been arranged two years ago, therefore no further adaptation is needed for the time being.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes.

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

No.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:****- nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

No

**- baby changing and feeding rooms?**

No. Should a need arise for such facility, the competent parliamentary services would provide it as soon as possible.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

No.

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices****a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

No. The Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly<sup>14</sup> (hereinafter: RPNA) currently only provide for remote voting in emergency situations<sup>15</sup>. The said provision of the Rules of Procedure was adopted in April 2020 due to Covid-19 epidemic.

The RPNA still do not provide for the possibility (under certain conditions) of remote voting by secret ballot.

Likewise, the Rules of Procedure do not contain a provision that would allow deputies on maternity leave to debate or vote remotely.

At the initiative of the Marjan Šarec Deputy Group, the Commission for the Rules of Procedure, issued a decision at its meeting of 6 October 2021 to prepare, within the already established working group, the final text of draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly to regulate the situation of the deputies of the National Assembly in the event of absence due to maternity, paternity or parental leave.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

There is currently no regulation in the Slovenian parliament that would specifically define this issue.

<sup>14</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 35/2002 as amended.

<sup>15</sup> In the event of a natural or other serious disaster (extraordinary circumstances), the President of the National Assembly may convene a session remotely, pursuant to a decision of the Council of the President of the National Assembly, if holding the session with the physical presence of deputies poses a risk to the health and safety of the deputies, and if this is necessary to decide on matters that cannot be delayed (Article 93a of the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia).

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

Yes. In Slovenia, deafblind people are guaranteed such assistance which is also enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (as a constitutional right). Please see answer to question No. 3/c for more information.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

No. A deputy who has urgent or justified reasons for absence at a session of the National Assembly or a meeting of its working body of which he or she is a member is not subject to sanctions against non-participation. Article 95 of the RPNA stipulates that a deputy who is unable to attend a session of the National Assembly or a meeting of the working body of which he is a member must inform the President of the National Assembly or the chairman of the working body of his absence and the reasons therefor no later than one day prior to the beginning of the session or meeting or one day prior to the resumption of an adjourned session or meeting, unless he is prevented from doing so by force majeure.

The following are deemed to be justified absences of a deputy (Article 95(2) of the RPNA):

- justified absence from work as defined by the regulations on employment relations and health insurance,
- absence related to work assignments approved by the President of the National Assembly,
- extraordinary leave approved in accordance with the law and an act of the Commission for Public Office and Elections,
- absence of the deputy from the meeting of a working body due to simultaneous participation in the work of another working body of which he is a member,
- absence of the deputy from the meeting of a working body of which he is a member if, following authorisation granted by the leader of the deputy group, he is substituted for at the meeting by another deputy of the same deputy group,
- absence due to the deputy's activities in a constituency during the days determined for activities in constituencies by the work programme of the National Assembly,
- absence due to the announced and explained absence of all members of the deputy group of which he is a member from the discussion of a particular item on the agenda,
- absence related to work assignments approved by the leader of the deputy group.

Absence due to circumstances considered to be force majeure is also deemed to be a justified absence of a deputy (Article 95(3) of the RPNA).

A deputy is not entitled to salary, the allowance for meals during work time, and reimbursement of travel expenses to and from work for days of unjustified absence from a session of the National Assembly or a meeting of a working body (Article 97 of the RPNA). A more detailed procedure for determining a deputy's unjustified absence from a session of the National Assembly or meeting of its working body is laid down by the Commission for Public Office and Elections.

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

Yes.

The Code of Ethics for Deputies<sup>16</sup> was adopted by the Council of the President of the National Assembly on 12 June 2020; the adoption thereof is based on Article 24 of the RPNA.

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<sup>16</sup> Available at the following link:

[https://fotogalerija.dz-rs.si/datoteke/drugo/soj/eticni\\_kodeks/20\\_06\\_12\\_ETICNI\\_KODEKS.pdf](https://fotogalerija.dz-rs.si/datoteke/drugo/soj/eticni_kodeks/20_06_12_ETICNI_KODEKS.pdf)

The Code lays down the principles which deputies must observe when performing their office. It applies to all deputies and any failure to respect its principles is considered dishonourable for both the deputies and the National Assembly.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

No.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

Yes. In the Slovenian parliament, we are aware of the need for inclusive practices as one of the democratic requirements of a modern society. For this reason, obstacles for persons with reduced mobility were eliminated in the past and in the first half of last year the deputies adopted an amendment<sup>17</sup> to the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia enshrining the right to use and develop the Slovene sign language.<sup>18</sup>

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

As said above, there are no specific barriers in Slovenia that need to be highlighted in order to make the infrastructure in the National Assembly building even more inclusive. In the future, it would be worth considering remote discussions and voting also in other cases (such as maternity and prolonged illnesses), not only in emergencies<sup>19</sup> (such as the Covid-19 pandemic). Consideration should also be given to the possibility of remote voting by secret ballot in cases where deputies are unable to attend a session on the premises of the National Assembly for justified reasons.

The fact that the above changes have not yet been made may also be due to Slovenia being a rather young democracy and its parliamentary practice still being developed and improved.

**4. Additional information**

**Please add any further information you may find useful.**

In Slovenia, the National Assembly is a legislative body composed of 90 deputies. They are elected for a term of four years. Formally and in practice Slovenian political parties advocate greater representation of women in parliament, but the voters are the one who ultimately decide thereon. In the past, the share of women in parliament was 12 to 13%, but in the last terms it increased to over 30%.

Since the first session of the National Assembly in 1992, Slovenia has also seen the birth of several "parliamentary children". The first parliamentary child was born by a deputy in 1992 (two weeks after validation of her term of office) who also took maternity leave. Between 1992 and 1996, two other deputies gave birth and were also on maternity leave for part of their term of office. The fourth parliamentary child was born in 2012, and the fifth in August 2021. In the latter case, the deputy took maternity leave during the parliamentary recess, and later also parental leave. However, during this time she came to vote on the premises of the National Assembly. As mentioned before, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia has not yet made the arrangements for deputies on maternity leave or nursing mothers to be able to debate and vote remotely.

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<sup>17</sup> Article 62a of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia reads as follows: "The freedom to use and develop the Slovene sign language shall be guaranteed. In those municipalities where also Italian or Hungarian are official languages, the freedom to use the Italian or Hungarian sign language, respectively, shall be guaranteed. The use of these languages and the status of their users shall be regulated by law. The freedom to use and develop tactile sign language shall be regulated by law." This amendment to the highest legal act is the result of joint efforts of the civil society and the Government as the proposer and of the National Assembly, which ultimately voted in favour of the amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia.

<sup>18</sup> There are 1500 deaf people in Slovenia who use Slovene sign language, about 450 people who have cochlear implants, about 100 deafblind people who use sign language and about 75 000 people who use hearing aids.

<sup>19</sup> In the event of a natural or other serious disaster (extraordinary circumstances), the President of the National Assembly may convene a session remotely, pursuant to a decision of the Council of the President of the National Assembly, if holding the session with the physical presence of deputies poses a risk to the health and safety of the deputies, and if this is necessary to decide on matters that cannot be delayed (Article 93a of the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia).

## **SLOVENIA: National Council**

### **1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation**

#### **a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

The National Council shares its premises in the Parliamentary building with the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia. The Parliamentary building is accessible for persons with disabilities.

#### **b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Persons with reduced mobility (particularly those using the wheelchair) have access to the main entrance, the reception and the wheelchair lift, the Small Hall (the chamber of the National Council) and its lobby (using a wheelchair lift), the Great Hall (the chamber of the National Assembly) and its lobby (using a wheelchair lift located on the stairway to the left of the lobby of the Small Hall), the ground, first, second and third floor (using a standard elevator), and the balcony of the Great Hall and its lobby (using a standard elevator and a wheelchair lift). The Great Hall provides access to the podium to persons with disabilities using a wheelchair. There are reserved places for persons with disabilities in both the Great Hall and the Small Hall at the left and right entrances. In the balcony of the Great Hall, two places for persons with disabilities using a wheelchair are located at the left entrance and two at the right entrance to the balcony. Portable ramps intended to aid in overcoming slightly raised obstacles can be installed upon prior request. Toilet facilities for persons with disabilities are available in the lobby of the Small Hall and have been renovated recently.

Persons with disabilities and those using a wheelchair can be assisted by an escort when entering the Parliamentary building and the individual areas thereof. If entering alone, they can be assisted by the staff of the National Assembly. There are four wheelchair platform lifts located at various points in the Parliamentary building. Wheelchair platform lifts are located on the left stairway of the main entrance, on the left stairway leading from the lobby of the Small Hall to the ground floor; on the left main stairway leading to the third floor or the balcony of the Great Hall, and on the mezzanine between the second and third floors (which may be accessed by means of the standard lift). Blind persons may enter the National Assembly with their guide dogs.

#### **c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

No.

#### **d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

i. **nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?** No.

ii. **baby changing and feeding rooms?** No.

#### **e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

No.

### **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

#### **a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

Rules of Procedure of the National Council<sup>20</sup> were amended after the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in spring 2020 to allow for remote attendance and voting at sessions of the National Council, as well as its Commissions and Interest Groups. Article 33.a determines that remote sessions of the National Council and its bodies can be called only in extraordinary circumstances, such as natural and other disasters, pandemics or other extraordinary circumstances when a session with physical attendance by members of the National Council cannot be held without risk to their health or safety or if this is not possible for another reason. When remote sessions are called, members of the National Council may decide whether they wish to participate in person or remotely. Remote voting can take place only when remote sessions are called, therefore in normal circumstance, remote voting is not practiced, as remote sessions are not called without the presence of 'extraordinary circumstance'. Rules of Procedure of the National Council (Article 24) also stipulate that proxy

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<sup>20</sup> The Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. [70/08](#), [73/09](#), [101/10](#), [6/14](#), [26/15](#), [55/20](#) and [123/20](#); (in Slovene).

voting is possible for voting at sessions of Commissions or Interest Groups of the National Council, but not at plenary sessions of the National Council. A member of the National Council who cannot attend a session of a Commission or an Interest Group can authorize another member of the National Council to substitute him and act as his proxy. The authorization must be submitted in written form and transfers all rights and duties to the proxy member.

Above versions of parliamentary participation are not intended as inclusive practices, but have been responses to general needs arising from parliamentary operations. Whereas any member of the National Council can at any point decide to name a proxy to attend sessions of a Commission or an Interest Group of the National Council, this is not the case for plenary sessions of the National Council. Remote voting also cannot take place upon request by a member of the National Council, but is only possible in extraordinary circumstance if a remote session of the National Council is called.

#### **b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

There are no provisions in the Rules of Procedure of the National Council, the National Council Act or the House Rules of the Parliamentary building that deal specifically with this issue. In practice, this question has not yet arisen in the National Council. The only stipulations of the Rules of Procedure of the National Council that could potentially relate to this issue are:

- Article 44 (maintaining order at sessions): the president of the National Council is responsible for maintaining order at sessions of the National Council.

- Article 64 (attendance of sessions): representatives of media have the right to attend sessions of the National Council, its Commissions and Interest Groups, and inform the public of their work.

#### **c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

Special assistance for persons with hearing and/or visual impairments is made available to visitors of the Parliament. In practice, there has not been a need for such assistance to members or staff of the National Council.

#### **d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

There are no sanctions against non-participation at sessions of the National Council, its Commissions and Interest Groups. If members do not attend, they are not entitled to receive payment or other remuneration, irrelevant of the reason for non-participation (based on Article 66 of Rules of Procedure, the Officials in the State Administration Bodies Act, and internal acts of the National Council).

### **3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

#### **a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

The Ethical Code of Members of the National Council<sup>21</sup> 2 was adopted in 2015. Whilst the code makes no explicit reference to sexism, the following articles are relevant to discriminatory practices or discourse:

- Article 5 (on dignity): during the performance of their function, a member of the National Council must demonstrate respect for all individuals and acceptance of diversity. They must foster democratic dialogue and avoid humiliation or underestimation of others. They must perform their function in compliance with the Constitution, laws, and Rules of Procedure of the National Council.

- Article 6 (on responsibility): members of the National Council must perform their function with care and responsibility, in compliance with the legal order and moral and ethical values of a democratic society.

- Article 9 (on relationships): relationships among members of the National Council and their treatment of other dignitaries and employees of the National Council (and other national and international bodies with which the National Council cooperates) must be based on mutual respect, tolerance, and dignity.

- Article 10 (on behavior in the National Council): violations of Rules of Procedure of the National Council and other acts of the National Council are not permissible. A member of the National Council, in performing their

<sup>21</sup> [Ethical Code of Members of the National Council](#) (in Slovene).

work, must behave so as not to obstruct the work of the National Council, Commissions, Interest Groups or other working bodies within the National Council. They must perform their tasks reliably, respectfully and in a manner that does not interfere with their peers and other attendees of sessions, meetings and other activities within the National Council. They must speak respectfully, in a way that protects the dignity of the National Council. During discussions, they must avoid quarrelling with, interrupting and obstructing a speaker. They must not encourage violence, intolerance and discrimination and must not use hate speech and terms or statements which could be insulting.

Other than prohibiting violations of the Rules of Procedure of the National Council and other acts of the National Council, the Ethical Code does not include measures for sanctioning violations of its stipulations.

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

No department deals specifically with the implementation of non-discriminatory practices.

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

Yes.

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (e.g. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

There has not yet been much demand for implementing more inclusive facilities and procedures. Most notably, child-care facilities (including access to the Parliamentary building) and maternity/paternity leave have not been required due to the demographic structure of members of the National Council. 5

Other accommodations have been ensured when the need arose. For instance, accommodations have been made for a current member of the National Council, who is paraplegic. Specifically, his seat in the chamber has been moved to a suitable place which is accessible with a wheelchair and the procedure during sessions of the National Council has been amended so that the member of the National Council is not required to move to the podium when speaking, but can do so from his permanent seat.

With the aim of ensuring inclusivity, the National Council is currently also preparing a new website for visually impaired persons, as well as for members of the Italian and Hungarian national minorities.

## ESPAGNE: Congrès des Députés

### 1. Adaptation des infrastructures pour une participation inclusive

- a. **Les bâtiments de votre parlement sont-ils adaptés à l'accès des personnes à mobilité réduite ?**  
**Y a-t-il eu récemment des rénovations pour rendre les bâtiments plus accessibles ?**

Les bâtiments du Congrès des Députés sont adaptés à l'accès des personnes à mobilité réduite, et conformes aux dispositions légales en Espagne en matière d'accessibilité égale pour les personnes handicapées, en particulier la [loi générale sur les droits des personnes handicapées et leur inclusion sociale, approuvée par le décret-loi royal 1/2013, du 29 novembre](#).

D'une part, les **installations de travail habituel** (salles de commission, services auxiliaires) ont fait l'objet de **travaux progressifs afin de les adapter aux besoins des personnes à mobilité réduite** (par exemple, installation d'ascenseurs, construction de rampes, aménagement de toilettes adaptées aux personnes handicapées, etc.).

D'autre part, le **Palais du Congrès des Députés**, bâtiment daté de 1850 qui abrite l'hémicycle, fait l'objet d'une protection renforcée en raison de sa grande valeur historique et artistique. En conséquence, les transformations architectoniques sont plus limitées (elles doivent être autorisées par les services de Patrimoine), même si des **ascenseurs ont été installés** permettant aux personnes à mobilité réduite d'accéder au dernier rang de l'hémicycle. D'ailleurs, aucune barrière n'existe pour accéder au rez-de-chaussée de la salle plénière, où un pupitre de l'orateur est placé permettant aux porte-paroles ayant une mobilité limitée de faire leurs allocutions. Cependant, la plateforme principale de l'orateur, située en haut d'un petit escalier, de même que les rangs intermédiaires du gradin, ne sont pas encore pleinement accessibles.

- b. **Existe-t-il un accès dédié aux bâtiments du parlement pour les personnes à mobilité réduite ?**

Tous les accès aux sièges du Congrès des Députés disposent d'un même degré d'accessibilité, donc il n'est pas prévu un point d'entrée spécifique pour les personnes à mobilité réduite.

- c. **Existe-t-il une procédure distincte pour l'accès aux bâtiments du Parlement pour les enfants de moins de 18 ans ?**

Il n'existe pas de procédure spécifique pour l'accès des enfants aux sièges du Congrès des Députés.

- d. **Dans les locaux du Parlement, existe-t-il :**

- i. **des crèches (services gratuits et/ou payants) ?**

Oui, **une chèche est disponible** aux bâtiments du Congrès des Députés. Cette installation est disponible pour les collectifs suivants : les députés, les fonctionnaires du Congrès des Députés, les agents temporaires/éventuels, ou le personnel des groupes parlementaires. Les personnes intéressées à obtenir une place à l'école préprimaire du Congrès devront déposer une demande de place. Les services de l'école préprimaire du Congrès des Députés sont **payants**.

- ii. **des salles pour changer et nourrir les bébés ?**

Ces **salles sont prévues** dans le '[1 Plan d'Égalité des Cortes Generales](#)' : «*Les installations et équipements du Parlement seront adaptés pour les faire sensibles au genre. Par exemple, la mise à disposition de salles d'allaitement et d'installations pour changer les bébés* » (Axe 1, Mesures organisationnelles et transversalité, point 7). Ces installations seront progressivement aménagées.

- e. **Les parlementaires, le personnel et les visiteuses et visiteurs du parlement sont-ils informés de l'accessibilité des bâtiments et des installations pour les personnes ayant des enfants ?**

N/A

## 2. Adaptation des procédures parlementaires pour favoriser les pratiques inclusives

- a. **Existe-t-il une possibilité de vote à distance, de vote par procuration, de procédures de rééquilibrage entre partis pour compenser les absences, ou d'autres options pour les parlementaires ayant des raisons impératives d'absence (congé parental, femmes parlementaires qui allaitent, etc.) ?**

En accord avec l'Article 82 du [Règlement du Congrès des Députés](#), il est établi ce qui suit par rapport au **vote à distance** :

« Dans les cas de **grossesse**, de **maternité**, de **paternité** ou de **maladie grave**, parce qu'ils empêchent l'exercice des fonctions parlementaires et compte tenu des circonstances particulières qui le justifient, le Bureau de la Chambre peut autoriser, dans un document motivé, les députés à **exprimer leur vote par procédure télématique** avec vérification personnelle en séance plénière, pour les votations qui, n'étant pas susceptibles de fragmentation ou de modification, permettent de prévoir comment et quand ils seront effectués.

À cette fin, le député doit soumettre la demande par écrit au Bureau du Congrès, qui informera de sa décision en précisant, le cas échéant, les votations prévues et le délai dans lequel il peut exprimer son vote au moyen de cette procédure. Les votes émis par cette procédure doivent être vérifiés au moyen du système établi à cet effet par le Bureau, et ils seront détenus par la Présidence de la Chambre avant le début de la votation correspondante ».

Aux fins de ce qui précède, la **procédure de vote télématique** a été approuvée par la Résolution du Bureau du Congrès des Députés du 21 mai 2012, laquelle peut être consultée [ici](#).

Enfin, il convient de mentionner que, sur cette base juridique, les mécanismes de vote télématique ont été activés pendant la pandémie (COVID-19) grâce à la formule des accords du Bureau du Congrès des Députés.

- b. **Les parlementaires sont-ils autorisés à accéder à la (aux) salle(s) de débat avec un bébé ?**

Cette circonstance n'est pas prévue.

- c. **Est-ce que votre parlement prévoit une assistance pour ses membres ou son personnel ayant des déficiences auditives ou visuelles ? (langage des signes, sites internet accessibles, braille, etc.) ?**

En ce qui concerne l'accessibilité des personnes avec des déficiences auditives ou visuelles, il convient de noter qu'il existe un **accord-cadre en vigueur** entre le Congrès des Députés et la Confédération nationale des sourds, l'Organisation nationale espagnole des aveugles (ONCE) et la Confédération espagnole des familles de sourds (FIAPAS). L'objectif de cet accord-cadre est d'informer les personnes ayant un handicap sensoriel des activités réalisées par l'institution, ainsi que de mettre à disposition toute la documentation produite par le Congrès des Députés, par des moyens permettant une **accessibilité totale**.

En vertu de cet accord, il convient de souligner la collaboration annuelle signée entre le Congrès des députés et la FIAPAS, par laquelle **une assistance est fournie aux personnes ayant des déficiences auditives** dans le cadre des visites au siège parlementaire, dans le cadre des Journées portes ouvertes du Congrès des députés. À cette fin, les citoyens bénéficient d'un service de prêt de **boucles magnétiques individuelles**, afin que les personnes sourdes et les utilisateurs d'appareils auditifs ou d'implants puissent profiter de la visite dans des conditions de pleine accessibilité et d'égalité.

D'autre part, le Congrès des Députés diffuse toutes les **sessions plénières** sous-titrées afin de permettre à toutes les personnes ayant des déficiences auditives de les suivre plus facilement. Pour certaines sessions et événements d'une importance particulière, ce sont normalement diffusés en langage de signes. Le Congrès des députés propose également une visite virtuelle des bâtiments parlementaires en langue des signes sur [sa chaîne YouTube](#).

d. **Existe-t-il des sanctions contre la non-participation aux débats et aux votes qui ne peuvent être levées pour les parlementaires ayant des raisons impératives d'absence ? Quels sont les motifs d'une éventuelle dispense ?**

En accord avec l'article 15 du [Règlement du Congrès des Députés](#), l'assistance aux séances plénières et aux commissions dont les députés font partie constitue un « **devoir** » des élus.

Conformément au [Règlement intérieur du Congrès des Députés](#), il est établi ce qui suit en ce qui concerne l'absence éventuelle de députés aux débats :

**Article 70**

1) [...] *Si un membre appelé par le Président n'est pas présent, il est entendu qu'il a refusé de prendre la parole.*

Sans préjudice de ce qui précède, en ce qui concerne l'absence d'un député lors d'un vote, le règlement du Congrès des Députés prévoit :

**Article 78**

1) *Pour pouvoir adopter des résolutions, la Chambre et ses organes doivent être en session régulière et réunir la majorité de ses membres.*

2) *Si, au moment du vote ou après le vote, le quorum visé à l'alinéa précédent n'est pas atteint, le vote est reporté pour une durée maximale de deux heures. Si, passé ce délai, le vote ne peut pas non plus être valablement effectué, la question est soumise à la décision de l'organe correspondant lors de la réunion suivante.*

**Article 79**

1. *Pour être valables, les résolutions sont adoptées à la majorité simple des membres **présents** de l'organe correspondant, sans préjudice des majorités spéciales établies par la Constitution, les lois organiques ou le présent règlement.*

2. *Le vote des députés est personnel et ne peut être délégué. Aucun député ne peut prendre part au vote des résolutions affectant son statut de membre.*

3. *les membres de la Chambre qui, bien qu'absents, **ont été expressément autorisés par le Bureau à prendre part au vote, sont comptés comme présents** au moment du vote.*

D'ailleurs, il convient également de rappeler que le Congrès des Députés prévoit également la formule du vote à distance, telle qu'elle figure à l'article 82 du [Règlement du Congrès des Députés](#) et dans [la procédure spéciale qui la développe](#) (voir question 2.a du questionnaire).

Toutefois, le règlement intérieur du Congrès prévoit l'adoption de **sanctions** « *lorsqu'il s'abstient de manière répétée ou notoire d'assister volontairement aux séances plénières ou de commission* », ce qui est considéré comme un **manquement aux devoirs des députés**, conformément à l'article 99.1 du règlement.

Selon le même article, le Bureau du Congrès, par un accord motivé, « *indique l'étendue et la durée des sanctions* » qui peuvent « *impliquer la suspension de tout ou une partie des droits de député* » (art. 6-9 du Règlement). Également, ces sanctions « *peuvent également être étendues à la partie aliquote de la subvention* » prévue pour les groupes parlementaires (art. 99.1 et 99.2, [Règlement du Congrès des députés](#)).

En outre, dans le cas où une sanction est imposée et que celle-ci a été exécutée, et que malgré cela, le député persiste dans son attitude, la Chambre plénière peut décider de **suspendre temporairement le statut du député**, conformément à l'article 101 du [Règlement du Congrès des Députés](#).

**3. Favoriser les attitudes inclusives**

a. **Existe-t-il un code de conduite pour les parlementaires et si oui, inclut-il des mesures pour sanctionner les pratiques ou discours discriminatoires (en particulier le sexisme) lors des débats ?**

En effet, par Accord des Bureaux du Congrès des Députés et du Sénat du 1er octobre 2020, le [Code de conduite des Cortes Generales](#) (Parlement Espagnol) a été approuvé. Ce code de conduite, qui est contraignant, établit que les parlementaires doivent observer les principes généraux **d'intégrité, de transparence, de diligence, d'honnêteté, de responsabilité et de respect** (article 2.1. du code de conduite des *Cortes Generales*).

Il convient de souligner que le Code de conduite des *Cortes Generales* met l'accent sur **l'exemplarité publique des députés**, « *renonçant à tout profit économique direct ou indirect* » dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions (article 2, code de conduite des *Cortes Generales*). À cette fin, il établit des dispositions sur les conflits d'intérêts (article 3), le registre des intérêts (article 4), les cadeaux (article 5), les données biographiques et l'agenda (article 6), les voyages et la participation à des missions d'observation électorale à l'étranger (article 7).

En ce qui concerne les infractions et les sanctions (article 9), le code de conduite établit ce qui suit :

*1. La Présidence de chaque Chambre, de sa propre initiative ou à la demande d'un autre membre du Parlement, peut demander l'ouverture d'une procédure pour déterminer s'il y a eu violation du présent code par un député ou un sénateur, notamment en cas de conflit d'intérêts.*

*2. La Présidence de la Chambre confie à la commission du statut des députés [...] l'élaboration d'un rapport sur l'infraction éventuelle. À cette fin, la commission entend le député concerné et, le cas échéant, peut demander un rapport au bureau des conflits d'intérêts.*

*3. Le rapport de la commission conclut à l'existence ou non d'une infraction et, le cas échéant, propose la sanction appropriée conformément au règlement de la Chambre. Le rapport est transmis au Bureau du parlement, qui en ordonne la publication au Journal officiel des Cortes générales et décide, conformément au Règlement de la Chambre, de l'opportunité de la sanction proposée, le cas échéant.*

Cependant, le [Code de Conduite des Cortes Generales](#) n'établit pas de dispositions spécifiques au sujet de la prévention et sanction des pratiques discriminatoires en raison du genre. D'autre part, en ce qui concerne la partie administrative du Congrès des Députés, il est essentiel de souligner l'importance du [1er Plan d'égalité des Cortes Generales](#), qui est applicable au personnel fonctionnaire des *Cortes Generales*, au personnel technique du Congrès des Députés et du Sénat, et au personnel temporaire des deux Chambres. Le 1er plan d'égalité des *Cortes Generales* a les objectifs généraux suivants :

- Prévenir et agir efficacement pour **éliminer les inégalités existantes** face à toute forme de discrimination directe ou indirecte fondée sur le sexe dans l'accès à l'emploi, le recrutement, la formation, la promotion professionnelle, la rémunération et les conditions de travail.
- Faciliter la **conciliation** de la vie personnelle, familiale et professionnelle du personnel des *Cortes Generales*, en favorisant la coresponsabilité.
- Prévenir et prendre des **mesures correctives** en cas de **harcèlement sexuel et de harcèlement fondé sur le sexe**, ainsi que de **tout autre comportement sexiste**, et améliorer les conditions des employées victimes de violence fondée sur le sexe.
- Intégrer la **perspective de l'égalité des sexes** de manière transversale dans tous les domaines d'activité de l'administration parlementaire et veiller à l'utilisation inclusive de la langue dans la communication et les documents de l'administration parlementaire.
- Doter l'administration parlementaire d'**unités d'égalité spécifiques** et de la structure administrative nécessaire pour mettre en œuvre et contrôler le plan d'égalité de manière continue.

De même, le plan d'égalité établit les axes d'action suivants :

1. **Mesures organisationnelles et transversalité.**
2. **Accès à l'emploi public.**

3. **Carrière professionnelle et rémunération** des fonctionnaires et employés du Parlement espagnol.
4. **Formation, information et sensibilisation.**
5. **Représentation.**
6. **Temps de travail**, équilibre entre vie professionnelle et vie privée et coresponsabilité.
7. **Santé au travail, prévention du harcèlement** et de la violence sexiste.
8. La **communication** et le **langage inclusif**.

Enfin, conformément aux dispositions du Plan d'égalité, il convient de noter que le Parlement espagnol a élaboré un [protocole d'action spécifique pour faire face au harcèlement](#) sexuel, au harcèlement fondé sur le sexe et à toutes les formes de harcèlement et de violence. Le protocole contre le harcèlement peut être consulté dans son intégralité ici.

En ce qui concerne le régime disciplinaire, le protocole anti-harcèlement établit ce qui suit :

#### **Article 14 : Régime disciplinaire.**

1. *Si, en raison de la nature des faits, ils ne peuvent pas être acheminés par la procédure de résolution spéciale ou, même s'ils le sont, si la personne concernée décide de ne pas l'utiliser, ou si, après l'avoir utilisée, le comportement s'est répété, la personne qui s'estime victime d'une conduite constituant un harcèlement ou une violence, ou toute autre personne ayant connaissance des faits, peut s'adresser au chef du **Secrétariat général de la Chambre, organe compétent pour engager une procédure disciplinaire formelle** aux fins de réclamer la responsabilité disciplinaire que l'agresseur présumé aurait encourue.*
2. *Au cours de la procédure disciplinaire, qui doit se dérouler dans les meilleurs délais, des **mesures de précaution** peuvent être imposées pour assurer la protection de la victime.*
3. *Dans le cas où il est décidé que des informations confidentielles doivent être obtenues avant l'ouverture d'une procédure disciplinaire, **le témoignage ou le rapport** du conseiller confidentiel [Cheffe du département de l'égalité, de la prévention et de la santé et sécurité au travail] peut faire partie de ces informations, si la procédure spéciale a été suivie.*
4. *Le régime disciplinaire contenu dans les articles 68 à 73 et la cinquième disposition additionnelle du [statut du personnel des Cortès générales](#) s'applique aux fonctionnaires. Les dispositions de leurs conventions collectives respectives s'appliquent au personnel employé par le Congrès des Députés.*
5. *Tout ce qui précède est sans préjudice des responsabilités découlant de la commission du délit de harcèlement moral tel que défini à l'article 173 du [code pénal](#), du délit de harcèlement sexuel tel que défini à l'article 184 du code pénal, ou du délit en question selon les faits.*

#### **b. Existe-t-il un service ou une personne responsable chargée de la mise en œuvre et du suivi des pratiques non discriminatoires ?**

Conformément au '[1er Plan d'égalité des Cortes Generales](#)', les actions suivantes sont envisagées dans le cadre de l'Axe 1 « *mesures organisationnelles et transversalité* »

1. Une **Commission sera créée pour suivre la mise en œuvre** du 1<sup>er</sup> Plan d'égalité des *Cortes Generales*, avec une composition paritaire, composée de six représentants de l'administration parlementaire et six représentants des fonctionnaires et des employés.
2. Au sein du Secrétariat Général du Congrès des Députés [...], les compétences en matière d'égalité seront attribuées à des **unités spécifiques**, dont le niveau administratif, la composition et les compétences seront établis dans la modification correspondante des tableaux organiques du personnel.

En ce qui concerne le traitement des **situations de harcèlement et de violence**, le Plan pour l'égalité prévoit également que celles-ci soient traitées par des **unités spécialisées** (Axe d'action 8, point 55).

À fins évoquées ci-dessus, il a été créé le **Département de l'égalité, de la prévention et de la santé au travail**. Ce département est adscrit à la Direction de Ressources Humaines et Gouvernement Intérieur.

Les fonctions du Département de l'égalité, de la prévention et de la santé au travail sont les suivantes:

- Organisation, supervision, coordination et répartition des tâches entre le personnel du département, ainsi que celui des unités qui en dépendent.
- Rédaction de rapports, d'études et de propositions en rapport avec les questions relevant de sa compétence.
- Conseil, promotion et coordination dans l'élaboration, la mise en œuvre, le suivi et la mise à jour du Plan d'égalité des *Cortes Generales*, ainsi que dans les mesures liées à l'accessibilité universelle.
- Gestion, coordination et contrôle de l'exécution du Plan pour l'égalité au sein de la Maison.
- Soutien, conseil, suivi et contrôle des différents types de harcèlement et de violence sur le lieu de travail, conformément aux protocoles d'action établis.
- Promouvoir, superviser et coordonner les actions de prévention, la conception et l'évaluation des risques et des plans de prévention, ainsi que la surveillance de la santé au travail.
- Gestion de la maintenance des défibrillateurs installés dans les différents bâtiments de la Chambre. Promouvoir et gérer la formation du personnel de la Chambre en matière d'égalité, de prévention et de santé et sécurité au travail.
- Rédiger les projets de résolutions et d'accords des différents organes de la Chambre qui lui sont confiés par le Directeur.
- Conseiller sur les fonctions du Comité de la santé et de la sécurité du Congrès des Députés. Préparer et promouvoir les cahiers des charges des contrats relevant de sa compétence.

En outre, le protocole de lutte contre le harcèlement prévoit un **conseiller confidentiel**, service géré par le Département de l'égalité, de la prévention et de la santé au travail

**c. Dans l'ensemble, diriez-vous que les parlementaires sont conscients de la nécessité de pratiques et d'infrastructures inclusives en tant qu'exigence démocratique ?**

N/A

**d. Quels sont les principaux obstacles, le cas échéant, à l'introduction d'installations et de procédures plus inclusives (par exemple, le budget, la politique, les traditions et les coutumes) ?**

N/A

#### **4. Informations complémentaires**

**Veillez ajouter toute information complémentaire que vous jugerez utile.**

N'hésitez pas à nous contacter si vous avez besoin de clarifications.

**SWEDEN : Sveriges Riksdag****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a) Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Yes, the Riksdag is an open parliament and everyone who wants to can visit public debates and events or take part in a guided tour. When renovating or converting the Riksdag's premises, the accessibility perspective is always taken into account in order to make sure that the premises are designed and equipped to be accessible – or more easily accessible – to all.

The Riksdag has several different entrances and most of them (including the main entrance) have been adapted in recent years to make them wheelchair accessible. There is also lift access throughout the buildings and many of the lavatories in the Riksdag are accessible to all.

In order to make the premises of the Riksdag more easily accessible to people with visual impairments, ongoing measures are taken to add more edge highlighters to stairs in the buildings, and all lifts have information in Braille. Major debates in the Chamber are normally interpreted into sign language. There is also a tactile model of the Riksdag buildings which is included on the route of many guided tours.

The Chamber, the Press Centre, and a number of premises that are often used for meetings open to the public are fitted with hearing loops. With regard to public hearings, the responsible committee has considerable discretion in deciding the practical arrangements, and sign language interpretation is sometimes provided. This would for example be the case if the subject matter of the hearing concerns the hearing-impaired. All public hearings are held in meeting rooms equipped with hearing loops.

**b) Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Yes.

**c) Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

No.

**d) On the premises of the parliament are there:****i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**

There is a kindergarten located in the Riksdag. The kindergarten is open to children of members of the Riksdag, to children of their spouses or partners, and to children in their foster care. The kindergarten takes care of children in the ages between 1 and 12 years old. It is open between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Mondays and Fridays and between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If needed, the opening hours can be extended. The kindergarten is free of charge but the MPs pay for the meals.

**ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

Yes.

**e) Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Yes.

**2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices****a) Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

Each party has several deputy members in the committees. This makes it possible for parties to substitute an absent representative in a committee with a deputy in case the regular member is absent because of family reasons, or other reasons.

If a member of the Riksdag is not able to attend a meeting in the Chamber, his or her party group can apply for a so-called pairing procedure. This procedure ensures that there is balance between the blocs during votes

in the Chamber. A pairing organiser in each party is responsible for pairing. Each party has to decide what they consider justified or legitimate in these cases. The pairing procedure is based on informal agreements between the party groups in the Riksdag.

According to the Riksdag Act, i.e. the parliamentary rules of procedure, members of the Riksdag may apply for leave of absence from their duties. There are various kinds of leave, such as parental leave, sick leave, or leave due to certain assignments outside the Riksdag. Part-time leave is not granted. Members of the Riksdag who are on leave get a pay reduction. When it comes to parental leave, the reduction is similar to that of government officials. If the leave is less than a month, the application is examined by the Speaker of the Riksdag, otherwise it is examined by the Riksdag. If a member of the Riksdag is granted leave of absence for more than one month, the duties of that member are to be carried out by an alternate member.

Remote voting or proxy voting is not allowed in the Riksdag. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Riksdag and the Riksdag Administration have undertaken several measures in order to adapt the work of the Riksdag to the prevailing circumstances. For example, the Speaker and the party group leaders agreed in March 2020 that only 55 members of the Riksdag should be present in the Chamber during debates, and the party group leaders agreed at the same time on an adaptation of the pairing agreement to reduce the number of members present at votes in the Chamber to 55. As a rule, the meetings of the parliamentary committees have been held remotely (digitally) during the pandemic, and extra deputy members have been elected in order to ensure that the parliamentary committees are fully manned. In the autumn of 2021, the Riksdag essentially returned to normal working procedures.

**b) Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

Members of the Riksdag are not allowed to bring children into the Chamber during voting and debates. According to the rules of conduct of the Chamber, only members of the Riksdag and staff of the Chamber are allowed to be in the Chamber when voting takes place. During other meetings in the Chamber, staff of the committee secretariats and party secretariats as well as government officials are also allowed to be in the Chamber in order to fulfil their work tasks.

The rules of conduct of the Chamber are decided by the Speaker of the Riksdag after hearing the group leaders of the parties.

**c) Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

In accordance with Swedish legislation, people with disabilities should be able to work on the same terms as others at the Riksdag. This is elaborated in the Riksdag's accessibility policy, which sets out that:

*“the Riksdag Administration shall aim to organize and run its activities so that they are accessible for all. This means that it shall seek to follow the Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Coordination’s (Myndigheten för delaktighet) guidelines on accessibility. The Riksdag Administration shall show consideration and respect for the equal value of all people in all contexts;*

*the Riksdag shall be a place of work where people with functional disabilities can work on the same terms as others. This means that the working conditions shall be adapted to people’s different physical and psychosocial preconditions. It should also be possible for people with functional disabilities to visit the Riksdag and receive information on the same terms as others (cf. answer to question 1 above).”*

**d) Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

Yes, since January 2022 a member of the Riksdag who does not participate in the work of the Riksdag and lacks a valid reason for doing so can be liable to return his or her pay. This is the case if the member has been absent, without a valid reason, during two three-month periods during the same electoral period for at least 60 per cent of votes. In this case, the Speaker has to have informed the member in question of his or absence and of the obligation to return his or her pay after the first three-month period.

### 3. Fostering inclusive attitudes

#### a) Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?

Yes, a Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament was introduced in 2017, but it does not specifically address discriminatory practices or discourse. Furthermore, it is a voluntary agreement adopted by the Presiding Officers of the Riksdag (i.a. the Speaker) and the party group leaders, on behalf of themselves and the other MPs. The purpose of the Code is to consolidate existing rules pertaining to MPs in one place, making them more accessible to MPs and constituents alike. As such, the Code in itself is not a legally binding document and there are no sanctions connected to the Code itself (see Appendix II).

With regard to fostering inclusive attitudes, it may however be noted that a Riksdag decision was taken in June 2006 stating that continuous systematic efforts to promote gender equality were to be undertaken in the Riksdag and that an action plan for gender equality should be determined by the Riksdag Board for each electoral period. The work must also be followed up and evaluated. The overall goal is to work for a gender-conscious parliament. For the Riksdag, this means that there shall be an equal gender distribution in various bodies and contexts, that gender equality work shall be integrated into activities and in various processes, that the internal culture shall be characterized by respect and equal resources for both women and men, that the balance between official duties and family responsibilities shall be facilitated, and that both women and men shall take part in gender equality work. The Riksdag Board nominates a working group consisting of members from all of the political parties of the Riksdag who are to work specifically with these issues. The current action programme for gender equality, i.e. for the electoral period 2018–2022, focuses on cultural aspects, such as how members treat, address and approach each other.

#### b) Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?

The Riksdag Administration aims to be a modern workplace with an open work climate that safeguards the equal value and rights of all employees. To this aim, long-term measures are taken to promote greater gender equality and diversity. The Riksdag Administration's work with equal treatment is based on the Swedish Discrimination Act. According to this Act, employers are to promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or other belief. The Administration's equal treatment work also includes preventing and stopping discrimination on the other grounds for discrimination that are regulated in the Act: gender identity or expression, disability, sexual orientation or age.

Responsibility for the Riksdag's accessibility policy (cf. above) is divided as follows:

- The Secretary-General of the Riksdag is ultimately responsible for ensuring that that Riksdag Administration works to ensure that all aspects of its activities are accessible for all. This means that the Secretary-General establishes the Riksdag Administration's accessibility policy.
- All managers are responsible for accessibility within their respective areas. This means that they should plan and implement concrete measures to achieve the policy's goals and the action plan for accessibility.
- All employees are to be acquainted with and to work according to the policy.
- The Human Resources Division is responsible for coordinating and following up measures and of keeping the Secretary-General up-to-date on the current situation.

The Riksdag Administration also has an Equal Treatment Plan, which is updated regularly. The Plan contains goals and measures relating to working conditions, opportunities to combine parenthood and work, harassment, internal mobility and recruitment. To give a few examples, the Plan states that the Riksdag Administration shall provide gender-neutral lavatories in all buildings, that managers should plan activities so as to enable employees to celebrate holidays that are not public holidays in the Swedish calendar, that measures shall be taken to achieve a more even gender balance and greater ethnic diversity in all professional areas within the Administration, and that measures shall be taken to further reduce the risk of discrimination in connection with recruitment. There is also a separate Policy on abusive treatment as well as guidelines on how to deal with and examine cases of abusive treatment. As with the accessibility policy, the Secretary-General of the Riksdag has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Administration observes the Equal Treatment Plan and the Policy on abusive treatment. The Head of the Human Resources Department or the employee's immediate superior are responsible for the implementation of concrete measures.

#### c) On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?

Yes.

**d) What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

Most of the Riksdag's premises are located in older buildings of significant architectural, cultural and historical value, which means adaptations often pose a challenge (legally it is not allowed to make significant changes). However, the Riksdag Administration takes ongoing measures to improve accessibility, for example, by adapting more of its entrances and bathrooms, installing more automatic door-openers and adding more edge highlighters on stairs.

**SUISSE : Ständerat****1. Adaptation des infrastructures pour une participation inclusive****a. Les bâtiments de votre parlement sont-ils adaptés à l'accès des personnes à mobilité réduite ?**

Y a-t-il eu récemment des rénovations pour rendre les bâtiments plus accessibles ?

**b. Existe-t-il un accès dédié aux bâtiments du parlement pour les personnes à mobilité réduite ?**

De 2006 à 2008, le Palais du Parlement a subi des rénovations. À cette occasion, une stratégie d'accessibilité sans barrières a été élaborée. L'Office fédéral des constructions et de la logistique (OFCL) a ainsi installé un ascenseur desservant tous les étages, plusieurs plateformes élévatrices pour fauteuils roulants et un monte-escaliers. De plus, les locaux sanitaires et les cabines téléphoniques ont été rendus accessibles aux fauteuils roulants ; dans la salle du Conseil national et dans plusieurs salles de séance, des boucles magnétiques ont été mises à la disposition des malentendants. Par ailleurs, l'OFCL a aménagé l'entrée des visiteurs, au sud du bâtiment, pour en faciliter l'accès aux fauteuils roulants. En 2011, la salle du Conseil des États a également été équipée de boucles magnétiques pour les malentendants et d'un monte-escaliers. De décembre 2020 à février 2021, le pupitre des orateurs a été rendu accessible aux fauteuils roulants dans la salle du Conseil national. Les mêmes travaux sont actuellement effectués dans la salle du Conseil des États.

Depuis 2018, une brochure sur le Parlement écrite en braille existe pour les malvoyants. Au printemps 2021 est parue une application audio consacrée au Palais du Parlement et à ses abords.

**c. Existe-t-il une procédure distincte pour l'accès aux bâtiments du Parlement pour les enfants de moins de 18 ans ?**

Les personnes de moins de 16 ans ne doivent pas présenter une pièce d'identité.

**d. Dans les locaux du Parlement, existe-t-il :****i. des crèches (services gratuits et/ou payants) ?****ii. des salles pour changer et nourrir les bébés ?****e. Les parlementaires, le personnel et les visiteuses et visiteurs du parlement sont-ils informés de l'accessibilité des bâtiments et des installations pour les personnes ayant des enfants ?**

Au rez supérieur du Palais du Parlement, une salle d'allaitement est à la disposition des membres des conseils.

**2. Adaptation des procédures parlementaires pour favoriser les pratiques inclusives****a. Existe-t-il une possibilité de vote à distance, de vote par procuration, de procédures de rééquilibrage entre partis pour compenser les absences, ou d'autres options pour les parlementaires ayant des raisons impératives d'absence (congé parental, femmes parlementaires qui allaitent, etc.) ?**

Non.

**b. Les parlementaires sont-ils autorisés à accéder à la (aux) salle(s) de débat avec un bébé ?**

Il n'existe pas d'interdiction explicite ; mais ce n'est pas l'usage.

**c. Est-ce que votre parlement prévoit une assistance pour ses membres ou son personnel ayant des déficiences auditives ou visuelles ? (langage des signes, sites internet accessibles, braille, etc.) ?**

Voir : 1a/b

**d. Existe-t-il des sanctions contre la non-participation aux débats et aux votes qui ne peuvent être levées pour les parlementaires ayant des raisons impératives d'absence ? Quels sont les motifs d'une éventuelle dispense ?**

Les députés sont tenus d'assister aux séances des conseils et des commissions. Dans la pratique, une absence n'entraîne pas de sanction.

Un député qui, avant le début de la séance, a annoncé son absence pour cause de maladie, d'accident, de décès d'un parent proche ou de maternité, est considéré comme excusé et les procès-verbaux de vote (listes

nominatives) le mentionnent. En cas de maladie, d'accident ou de maternité, les députés ont droit au versement des indemnités journalières correspondant à la période concernée.

### **3. Favoriser les attitudes inclusives**

À sa séance du 12 décembre 2017, la Délégation administrative a pris les décisions suivantes, en accord avec les présidents des groupes parlementaires : les parlementaires ayant des demandes liées au harcèlement sexuel peuvent s'adresser au président de leur groupe respectif. Ils ou elles peuvent aussi faire appel aux services d'une structure spécialisée indépendante.

**TURKEY: Grand National Assembly****1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation****a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?**

Our parliament buildings and parliament campus are accessible to people with reduced mobility. In accordance with the Law No. 5378 on "Persons with Disabilities", the necessary arrangements and renovations have been made in order to make public buildings and public open spaces suitable for the use of people with disabilities. While making these changes, the opinions and suggestions of the General Directorate of Disabled and Elderly Services of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and the Spinal Cord Paralysis Association of Turkey were taken into consideration. As examples in this context;

The existing pavement ramps throughout the Parliament Campus have been made in accordance with ideal inclination angle for wheelchairs (32 ramps in total) and a palpable surface for the visually impaired have been built where necessary.

Platform-type stair lifts, hydraulic elevators have been built at some points and disabled elevators are available in the buildings.

During the arrangements made in the General Assembly Hall of the Grand National Assembly, the Speaker's chair designed suitable for the use of disabled deputies.

Guidance tracking applications have been made for visually impaired people.

Private parking spaces for people with disabilities have been organized in indoor and outdoor parking lots within the campus.

In addition, a disabled-friendly call number is allocated for people with hearing and speech impairment which enables communication by text messaging.

**b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?**

Special accessibility is available to our parliament buildings for people with reduced mobility. In the Turkish Parliament Visitor Reception and Guidance Hall, where entry services are offered to visitors to the Turkish Parliament;

In order to provide priority services to our disabled visitors, relatives of martyrs, veterans, pregnant, sick, elderly visitors, a "Special Service Bureau" has been established.

If necessary, we also have wheeled vehicles that our disabled visitors can use, and our staff accompanies them to their destination in Parliament if they request it. There is also a battery-powered vehicle charging terminal for battery-powered wheelchairs for our disabled visitors.

Yellow colored sensitive floors have been made on buildings and roads in the Parliament campus and braille alphabet orientation is added to the elevator buttons.

**c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?**

There is no special procedure for children under 18. However, introductory tours of the parliament buildings and ecological tours in the parliament garden are organized for children, accompanied by school trips and our guides.

**d. On the premises of the parliament are there:**

- i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?**
- ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?**

Nursery facility (paid service) is available.

There are baby changing and feeding rooms.

**e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?**

Information on the accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children to deputies, staff and visitors to the parliament is provided by the Press, Publication and the Public Relations Department.

On the official website of the Turkish Grand National Assembly;

- All kinds of information about visiting the TGNA campus and its affiliated buildings and museums can be accessed from the link named "Visit the TGNA".
- Information can also be obtained from the "Publications" section, the People's Day brochure and brochures and booklets introducing the Parliament.
- There are brochures for proper communication with disabled visitors with special Parliamentary services for disabled visitors.
- The buildings of the Parliament can be accessed from the "Virtual Tour" application

## **2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices**

**a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?**

There are no prescribed procedure for remote voting, proxy voting or pairing agreements between parties to balance absences.

**b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?**

**Article 166 of the Turkish Grand National Assembly's Rules of Procedure is regulated as follows;**

**"Prohibition on entering the Plenary Hall or committee rooms and visitors:**

ARTICLE 166- No one may attend to the Plenary Hall and committee rooms, other than deputies, civil servants of the Secretariat of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey performing tasks related to the Plenary and Committees, deputies of the President of the Republic, ministers and public employees assigned by related institutions to contribute to the legislative work and experts invited."

According to this article, it is not possible for deputies to enter the halls of the General Assembly and the committees rooms with a baby.

**c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?**

In the General Assembly, deputies can use the electronic voting system with their own passwords and fingerprints. It is not possible for visually impaired deputies to use this system without any assistance and to determine in which direction their votes are recorded. For this reason, the deputies can carry out these operations by getting help from the people called "Kavas" in the General Assembly, who carry out the service of assisting the deputies in their legislative work.

In addition, deputies who are not able to vote with an electronic device due to a physical disability are provided with privileges that are not recognized to other deputies in certain types of voting, allowing them to vote by ballot box.

Some basic information on the official website of the Parliament under the heading "Parliament without Disabilities" can be accessed by visually and hearing impaired deputies, staff and other users.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

Deputies who have obtained permission by reporting their excuses are not considered absentees without any meeting or voting distinction and no sanctions are imposed on them. However, the granting of allowances and travel allowances to deputies who have taken leave of absence for two months or more continuously in a legislative year depends on the decision of the General Assembly. Also, If a deputy fails to attend parliamentary activities for five session days within one month without an excuse or leave of absence, the dismissal of the deputy may be decided by the General Assembly.

The exception to the attendance requirement is determined on the basis of compulsory conditions such as detention, illness documented with a medical report, and duties related to the Assembly, political parties and certain positions in their Assembly groups.

### 3. Fostering inclusive attitudes

#### a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?

The rules of conduct that deputies must comply with during Parliamentary activities are set out in the Rules of Procedure. Some articles of the Rules of Procedure related to this issue are as follows:

*Order in debates*

*ARTICLE 65- Interrupting speeches, making offensive remarks, and/or disrupting the order in the Plenary are prohibited behaviors*

*Speech style*

*ARTICLE 67- Should one use unparliamentary language in the Plenary, the Speaker invites him/her immediately to avoid speaking in that manner, and to leave the rostrum if he/she refuses to comply. The Speaker may order him/her out for that session, if he/she deems it necessary. If there is unparliamentary language in the letters and motions submitted to the Office of the Speaker, the Speaker will return the documents and motions to the owner for corrections to be made.*

These regulations are supported by disciplinary sanctions such as warning, condemnation, prohibition of speech and temporary removal from parliament as set out in the Rules of Procedure.

#### b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?

There is no special unit or official directly related to the prevention of discrimination. However, there are members of the Parliament with the title of Administrative Officer charged with maintaining peace and order in the Parliament, ensuring openness and freedom of negotiations.

#### c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?

In general, we can say that deputies are aware and sensitive about these issues. The need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic necessity can be seen both in the activities of the Parliamentary committees (such as gender-sensitive budgeting studies), as well as in the law proposals and written questions, general discussions and parliamentary research proposals submitted by the deputies in this direction.

#### d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?

There are no fundamental obstacles to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures in our parliament. In the process, practices that are more inclusive can be introduced in accordance with needs and expectations.

### 4. Additional information

Please add any further information you may find useful.

## UNITED KINGDOM: House of Commons

### 1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation

- a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?
- b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?
- c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?
- d. On the premises of the parliament are there:
  - i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?
  - ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?
- e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?

**(a+b)** Some adaptations have been made but in order to access the public tour of the building, people with reduced mobility need to follow an alternative route.

All visitors to the Palace of Westminster are able to use the same main entrance point, Cromwell Green Entrance.

Information on [accessibility](#) to the UK Parliament is available on the parliamentary website. Information is available on the webpage and through a video presentation with subtitles and sign language.

[Information for visitors with autism](#) is also available on the parliamentary website.

- c) There is information for [family visits with children](#) on the parliamentary website.

The UK Parliament also hosts school visits. Details of [tours and workshops](#) available to schools through the Education Centre can also be found on the parliamentary website.

d) The House of Commons Nursery has places for 40 children. Places have to be paid for. On weekdays the Nursery is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm. Evening sessions are available, reflecting House of Commons sitting hours.

Places are available for children from three months to five years. The following people are eligible to use the Nursery: MPs, MPs' staff, House of Commons and Parliamentary Digital Service employees, House of Lords Peers and staff (including the grandchildren of these pass holders), Press Gallery Media Pass Holders, Civil Servants with Counter-Terrorist Check level clearance and Contractors situated on the Parliamentary Estate.

Baby changing facilities are available in publicly accessible toilets. A babycare room, where parents may feed their babies in comfort and privacy, is also available to all visitors to the Palace of Westminster.

A Family Room is available for use by all passholders who need to care for family members while on the Estate.

- e) All the information on the parliamentary website about accessibility to the UK Parliament is available on the [Plan your visit](#) pages on the parliamentary website.

Information for disabled Members; on services for visitors and constituents; and on education and education services is included in the Members' handbook.

### 2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices

- a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?
- b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?
- c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?
- d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?

**a)** Proxy voting is available for new mothers, new fathers and new adoptive parents. An MP is also eligible for a proxy vote in circumstances where there have been complications relating to childbirth.<sup>22</sup>

Pairing agreements are reached between some parties. It is not officially recognised in the procedures of the House of House of Commons. It is arranged privately between MPs or the Whips of the respective parties.<sup>23</sup>

On some occasions, party Whips permit MPs to be away from Westminster for a variety of reasons.

**b)** No. The Rules of behaviour and courtesies in the House of Commons, a guide for MPs, states that:

You may take babies or toddlers with you into the division lobby, and – if necessary to get to the division lobby – take them through the Chamber. For safety reasons, you are asked to carry your child and not to bring pushchairs through the lobby. You should not take your seat in the Chamber when accompanied by your child, nor stand at either end of the Chamber, between divisions.<sup>24</sup>

However, the Procedure Committee has recently announced that it will look at whether babies should be allowed in the House of Commons Chamber and Westminster Hall.<sup>25</sup> This followed a request from the Speaker, after an MP was told that she could not bring her baby into Westminster Hall.<sup>26</sup>

**c)** The Parliamentary Digital Service provides equipment and training as required. Large print documentation is available.

MPs can claim disability assistance under The Scheme MPs' Staffing and Business Costs for:

- additional costs incurred in the performance of an MP's parliamentary functions which are reasonably attributable to a disability of an MP, a staff member, a volunteer, a job applicant or constituents visiting the MPs' office or a surgery.
- to meet the costs of any 'reasonable adjustments' required by the Equality Act 2010.<sup>27</sup>

**d)** No. There are no formal attendance requirements. Party whips make arrangements with individual MPs about attendance.

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<sup>22</sup> House of Commons, [Standing Orders Public Business 2021](#) (1.8MB, PDF), 2 December 2021, HC 804 2021-22, Standing Order No 39A; House of Commons, [Proxy Voting Scheme](#), July 2021

<sup>23</sup> Erskine May, *Parliamentary Practice*, 25th edition, 2019, [para 20.87](#)

<sup>24</sup> House of Commons, [The Rules of behaviour and courtesies in the House of Commons](#) (350 KB, PDF), September 2021, para 42

<sup>25</sup> Procedure Committee, [Presence of babies in the Chamber and Westminster Hall](#)

<sup>26</sup> Stella Creasy, "[Here's why my baby was banned from parliament – and why we must all fight this](#)", Guardian, 25 November 2021

<sup>27</sup> Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, [The Scheme MPs' Staffing and Business Costs 2021-22](#) (PDF), 18 March 2021, HC 1262 2019-21, paras 10.1-10.2

## UNITED KINGDOM: House of Lords

### 1. Adaptation of infrastructure to inclusive participation

#### a. Are the buildings in your parliament adapted for access of persons with reduced mobility? Have there been renovations recently to make buildings more accessible?

Yes, the parliament building and the House of Lords chamber are accessible to disabled users.

There are plans for the [UK Parliament building to undergo a significant Restoration and Renewal conservation project](#), which will also improve accessibility. The full scope of the project and a date for its commencement have not yet been agreed.

#### b. Is there dedicated accessibility to buildings of the parliament for persons with reduced mobility?

There is no dedicated entrance to Parliament for persons with reduced mobility. However, several of the entrance are accessible: <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/visiting/access/access-statement.pdf>

#### c. Is there a separate procedure for access to buildings of the parliament for children under 18?

Members of the public who are under 18 must pass through the same airport-style security procedure as adults to enter the building. Children/infants must be accompanied by their parent/guardian.

#### d. On the premises of the parliament are there:

##### i. nursery facilities (free of charge and/or paid services)?

##### ii. baby changing and feeding rooms?

Yes, nursing and baby changing/feeding rooms are available on the parliamentary estate: <https://www.parliament.uk/visiting/access/facilities/toilets/>

#### e. Is information provided to MPs, staff and visitors to the parliament about accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with children?

Yes, information is available on the Parliament website and in the [Accessibility Statement](#).

### 2. Adaptation of parliamentary procedures to foster inclusive practices

#### a. Is there a possibility of remote voting, proxy voting, pairing agreements between parties to balance absences or other options for members with imperative reasons for absence (parental leave, women MPs who are breastfeeding babies, etc.)?

During the Covid-19 pandemic the House of Lords introduced electronic voting, which allowed members to vote remotely whilst isolating or shielding. Since September 2021, the House of Lords has maintained an electronic voting system provided members are on the parliamentary estate when they vote. Some Members with disabilities are exempted from these requirements, so they can continue to vote remotely.

The House of Lords does not allow proxy or paired voting.

#### b. Are MPs allowed access to the debating chamber(s) with an infant?

Infants are not admitted onto the members' benches in the House of Lords chamber. Infants and children may observe proceedings from the public gallery. A provision does exist for a Member's eldest child to be allowed to observe the proceedings from within the chamber by sitting on the steps of the royal throne (situated at one end of the chamber).

#### c. Does your parliament provide assistance for members or staff with hearing and/or visual impairments (sign language, accessible websites, braille, etc.)?

Parliamentary papers and other material can be provided to Members in large print and braille, if requested.

Many of the administrative offices in the House of Lords which provide services to Members have hearing loops to assist members with a hearing impairment.

The Parliamentary Digital Service has undertaken extensive work in recent years to make Parliament's various websites compatible with screen-reader technology.

Additional financial support is also available for Lords Members with a disability, considered on a case-by-case basis.

**d. Are there sanctions against non-participation in debates and votes which cannot be waived for parliamentarians with imperative reasons for absence? What are the grounds for any waivers?**

There are no sanctions for members who do not attend debates/votes due to accessibility/disability issues.

However, under the provisions of section 2 of the House of Lords Reform Act 2014 any member of the House who does not attend any sittings in a session ceases to be a member of the House. To avoid the non-attendance provisions members can apply for a leave of absence from the House for the remainder of the session.

**3. Fostering inclusive attitudes**

**a. Is there a code of conduct for parliamentarians and if so, does it include measures to sanction discriminatory practices or discourse (in particular sexism) during debates?**

Yes, the House of Lords has its own [Code of Conduct](#). It includes a parliament-wide Behaviour Code (Appendix A of the Code of Conduct) which states that members should observe the principles of "respect, professionalism, understanding others' perspectives, courtesy, and acceptance of responsibility".

**b. Is there a department or officer responsible for implementation and monitoring of non-discriminatory practices?**

Yes, compliance with the Behaviour Code is overseen by the parliament-wide [Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme](#).

**c. On the whole, would you say that parliamentarians are aware of the need for inclusive practices and infrastructure as a democratic requirement?**

The Behaviour Code is actively promoted throughout the parliamentary estate via the means of posters, leaflets, promotional literature, electronic communication, etc.

The UK Parliament has instituted a training programme called 'Valuing Everyone', intended to ensure that everyone working in Parliament recognises bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct. A list of House of Lords members who had attended the training as at November 2021 is [available on the UK Parliament website](#).

**d. What are the principle obstacles, if any, to introducing more inclusive facilities and procedures (eg. budget, politics, traditions and customs)?**

**4. Additional information**

Please add any further information you may find useful.

## Appendix I: Finland – ECPRD request 4355

### Code of Ethics and explanations relating to the Code, violation of the Code

#### Questions

1. *If your parliament has adopted a Code of Conduct (Code of Ethics) for MPs, please provide us with the link to the up-to-date version of the document (preferably in English, if possible).*
2. *Are there any explanations (guide, guidelines, recommendations etc.) relating to the Code? If yes, what is the status of this document?*
3. *What have been the most frequent breaches of the Code so far?*
4. *What have been the most frequent sanctions and penalties imposed on MPs for breaches of the Code so far?*

#### Situation in Finland:

Parliament of Finland does not have a Code of conduct. However, there are following regulations on the topic:

A. Representatives shall conduct with dignity and decorum

According to the Constitution (Section 31),

*A Representative shall conduct himself or herself with dignity and decorum, and not behave offensively to another person. If a Representative is in breach of such conduct, the Speaker may point this out or prohibit the Representative from continuing to speak. The Parliament may caution a Representative who has repeatedly breached the order or suspend him or her from sessions of the Parliament for a maximum of two weeks.*

The Speaker quite often remind on this rule and sometimes reprimand the MP in question. As far as we know, more severe sanctions have never been used.

B. Members of the Eduskunta, Parliament of Finland, are required to declare their private interests.

According to the Parliament's Rules of Procedure (Section 76 a),

*A Representative shall, within two months from when his or her credentials have been examined, provide Parliament with an account of any outside duties, commercial activities, interests as an owner in businesses and other significant assets which may be of relevance in evaluating his or her performance as a Representative. Significant changes in the personal interests during the electoral term shall be declared within two months from when the change occurred. 2 (3)*

A Representative shall also provide Parliament with an account of such income received from outside duties and commercial activities which may be of relevance in evaluating his or her performance as a Representative. Such income shall be declared each calendar year by the end of June of the year following the year when the income was accrued.

*The accounts of personal interests are submitted to the Central Office. If a Representative, despite a request to do so, fails to submit an account of his or her personal interests, the Speaker shall announce this at the plenary session of the Parliament.*

Detailed instructions regarding declarations of private interests were issued in the Speaker's Council instructions (in English).

According to the instructions members of Parliament must provide details of their private interests in so far as these could be of relevance in assessing their actions as Members of Parliament. Such private interests are as follows:

- duties and tasks that are not part of a Member's responsibilities and the income from such duties and tasks if this exceeds EUR 5,000 in a calendar year;
- business activities and the income from these if this exceeds EUR 5,000 in a calendar year;

- significant holdings and other significant ownership interests acquired for business operations or investment activities; and
- significant debts taken for business operations or investment activities as well as significant guarantees and other liabilities given for the same purpose.

A significant holding is deemed to be a holding with a market value exceeding EUR 50,000 for a single item. A significant ownership interest is deemed to be a shareholding or other holding that confers voting rights of more than 20 per cent. The obligation to declare covers both direct and indirect holdings (e.g. through an entity or partnership or a deceased's estate).

A form for declaring private interests is handed out to a member when his or her credentials are examined and the completed form is returned to the Central Office within two months. The Central Office keeps a register of declared private interests which are also published on Parliament's website. A member's personal page lists the interests he or she has declared as well as the organs to which Parliament has appointed the member. Significant changes in the personal interests during the electoral term shall be declared within two months from when the change occurred.

In addition to private interests, members must declare with certain specifications gifts, tickets and third-party funded trips that exceed a certain limit. The Central Office keeps a register of such declarations.

If a member, despite a request to do so, fails to submit an account of his or her personal interests, the Speaker shall announce this at the plenary session of the Parliament. However, there has not been need for sanctions.

C. Gifts to MPs of value more than 100 euros shall be reported to the Parliamentary Administration. Information on the donor, recipient, place and time of the given gift is registered in a database. If an MP wants to redeem the gift he/she has received, conditions will be agreed case-specifically.

D. The National Audit Office of Finland (NAOF) oversees election campaign and political party funding and receives and publishes documents and publishes reports specified in the Act on Political Parties and the Act on a Candidate's Election Funding.

Further information is available on the website of the National Audit Office. 3 (3)

F. The Office Commission adopted in October 2019 Instructions on inappropriate behaviour addressed to MPs (available only in Finnish).

G. The Government has appointed (12.3.2020) a parliamentary steering group and a working group operating under its authority to prepare a proposal on a statutory transparency register (lobbyist register) to be established in Finland. The act on the transparency register is scheduled to enter into force in 2023, and the aim is to introduce an electronic register at the same time. This should be applied to MPs as well.

## **Appendix II : Sweden - A Code of Conduct for the members of the Riksdag**

**(adopted on 14 December 2016)**

### **General points of departure**

The Riksdag is the foremost representative of the people, and the assignment as a member of the Riksdag is based on the confidence the citizens have expressed in the MPs in general elections. The MPs have agreed on a common Code of Conduct which will help to uphold this confidence.

The Code of Conduct summarises the regulatory framework and values that are central to the assignment as a member of the Riksdag. In this way, it serves as an ethical foundation for the assignment as an MP.

The Code of Conduct makes it easier for voters to hold the MPs accountable by contributing to greater transparency and clarity regarding the preconditions for the assignment.

The Riksdag is a central component of our public power, and the assignment as an MP places stringent demands with regard to judgement and conduct. The MPs should work together in democratic spirit and show one another mutual respect in their everyday work in the Riksdag.

In the exercise of their assignment, the MPs shall work to promote public interests and shall not exploit their position for personal gain. The assignment places great demands on integrity, and situations that can damage public confidence should be avoided.

### **Conflict of interests**

A member of the Riksdag may not participate in the consideration of a matter at a meeting of the Chamber if the matter personally concerns the MP him/herself, the member's husband or wife, cohabiting partner, parents, children, siblings or other close associates. Nor may a member of the Riksdag be present during the consideration of such a matter in a committee.

A member of the Riksdag who has previously served as a Government minister may participate in deliberations in the Chamber in matters relating to his or her duties as a minister. However he/she may not participate in a vote on such a matter.

A member of the Riksdag who is aware of any circumstance that may constitute a conflict of interests for him or her should, with the exception of what is stated under point 2, not participate in the consideration of the matter.

### **The register of financial interests**

Members of the Riksdag shall report their commitments and financial interests which are subject to compulsory registration under the Act on the registration of the commitments and financial interests of the members of the Riksdag (1996:810). Members shall report all information that is relevant at the time of notification, and shall report the information to the Secretariat of the Chamber. The information is then entered into the register of financial interests.

A member who has no such commitment or interest as referred to under point 1 shall notify the register of this.

### **Bribes**

Provisions concerning the taking and giving of bribes are contained in Ch. 10 of the Swedish Penal Code.

A member of the Riksdag may neither for his/her own or for anyone else's account receive, accept a promise of or request an undue reward for the performance of his/her duties. This also applies to such rewards that are given, promised or offered before the assignment has started or after the assignment has been concluded.

## **Gifts**

A member of the Riksdag who receives a gift primarily in his/her capacity as a member of the Riksdag shall report this for registration in a register of gifts.

This information shall be reported in writing to the Internal Services Department no later than two weeks after the gift was received.

Gifts with no, or insignificant economic value do not need to be reported.

## **Responsibility for the Code of Conduct**

The Presiding Officers of the Riksdag and the party group leaders have the ultimate responsibility for the Code of Conduct.

The party group leaders are responsible for ensuring that the Code of Conduct serves as a guideline for the members of their respective party groups.

## **Guide to applying the Code of Conduct for the members of the Riksdag**

### **Comments on the guide**

This is a guide to the Code of Conduct for the members of the Riksdag. The purpose of the guide is to facilitate understanding of what the Code of Conduct's values and regulations involve. In this guide, the Code of Conduct is commented on and discussed in greater detail in order to facilitate the MPs' application of the Code. Furthermore, certain regulatory frameworks and routines are clarified.

### **The introduction to the Code of Conduct**

Public confidence in the Riksdag is based on several pillars. One is representative democracy, which means that the members of the Riksdag are appointed by means of a democratic process. Another is the rule of law and the laws surrounding the Riksdag. A third important pillar of public confidence in the Riksdag is its members, both current members and members who have concluded their assignments. The members currently in the Riksdag hold a very valuable vested confidence. The Code of Conduct shall help to safeguard this confidence.

The Code of Conduct is a declaration of intent, which is made on behalf of all members of the Riksdag. The Code of Conduct is not legally binding in itself, nor is it an agreement or oath. Instead it is based on the assumption that the members of the Riksdag accept that they should follow the Code from the day they start their assignment as members.

The regulatory framework surrounding the assignment as an MP can be found in different sources: our fundamental laws, ordinary laws, regulations, handbooks and practice. The Code joins together all these different rules which the MPs are to follow in one and the same place. Thus it is easier to get an overview of the regulatory framework. Clarity about the rules that apply also makes it easier for voters to hold the MPs accountable. The introduction to the Code of Conduct also describes certain common principles for the assignment as a member of the Riksdag. These principles form a common set of ethics for what being an MP in Sweden involves.

The Code of Conduct stresses that the Riksdag is part of the public power. Chapter 1 of the Instrument of Government describes how this power is to be exercised. Article 1 sets out that public power is exercised under the law. In order to maintain the legitimacy of this principle, it is as natural as it is important that the MPs comply with the laws they adopt. This is in order to ensure that the decisions of the Riksdag are regarded as legitimate and to safeguard the citizens' confidence in the MPs. Article 2 sets out that public power shall be exercised with respect for the equal worth of all and the liberty and dignity of the individual. It further states that the public institutions shall combat discrimination of persons on grounds of gender, colour, national or ethnic origin, linguistic or religious affiliation, functional disability, sexual orientation, age or other circumstance affecting the private person. The principle of all people's equal worth is a central point of departure for the assignment as an MP.

The introduction to the Code of Conduct sends the message that the assignment as an MP places stringent demands as regards ethics and morals. These demands mean that, both privately and in their assignment, they refrain from action that may be legal, but that may also be regarded by others as unethical or inappropriate. An MP sometimes needs to make difficult ethical considerations and be aware that his or her actions may be subject to detailed examination. One way of responding to this challenge is by reflecting over whether a particular action would risk damaging public confidence in the event that it became known.

The Code of Conduct states that the members of the Riksdag work together in democratic spirit showing mutual respect for one another. This is an important point of departure for how the MPs are to behave towards each other in their everyday work at the Riksdag.

Finally in the introduction to the Code of Conduct, it is stated that the MPs are expected to put public interests before their own interests, and not exploit their position for material or economic gain. The assignment as an MP involves a position of power with access to resources, networks and information. These assets are to be used solely in the interests of the public.

### **Conflict of interests (disqualification)**

Chapter 6, Article 19 of the Riksdag Act

*“No one may be present at a meeting when a matter is being deliberated which personally concerns himself or herself or a close associate.*

*A minister may however participate in the deliberation of a matter concerning the performance of his or her official duties.”*

Chapter 7, Article 21 of the Riksdag Act

*“No one may be present at a meeting of a committee when a matter is being deliberated which personally concerns himself or herself or a close associate.”*

The rules on disqualification exist in order to ensure that the work of the Riksdag is not improperly influenced by an MP participating in decisions on matters in which he or she has a personal interest. In the Riksdag, all MPs have, in principle, an unconditional right to express themselves in all matters that are up for decision. Freedom of expression is of fundamental importance to the work of the Riksdag, and the Instrument of Government also lays down the principle that all MPs must be free to express their opinion ahead of the determination of an item of parliamentary business.

The provisions on disqualification involve an exception from this constitutional principle of freedom of expression.

The provisions on disqualification in the Riksdag Act are, in other words, a special example of restrictions regarding the MPs' freedom of expression. They prohibit MPs from participating in any way in the consideration of a matter personally concerning themselves or a close associate. The ban applies to both the debate and the decision. “Personally concerns” means that it should pertain to the MP directly; it is said that the matter must specifically concern the individual. If the MP is affected by a matter in his or her capacity as a member of a collective (e.g. a professional category) or as an official, there is no disqualification. An MP who is a member of the board of a public agency can, in other words, participate in the consideration of appropriations to this agency (see Committee Report 1989/90:KU36 p. 28).

According to the Instrument of Government, the Riksdag is prevented from performing judicial or administrative duties outside a strictly limited field set out in the fundamental laws and the Riksdag Act (in certain cases, for example, the Riksdag shall examine matters relating to permission to initiate legal proceedings against a member of the Riksdag). Since the Riksdag may not get involved in individual judicial or administrative matters, it is extremely unusual for an item of parliamentary business to directly concern an MP at the individual level. Matters in the Riksdag have a more general content in the form of legislation, budget decisions etc. A legislative decision, for example, that applies to enterprise naturally has implications for individual companies, and therefore consequences for stakeholders in the company in the form of owners, board members, managing director etc. However, this is not a formal situation of disqualification and MPs do not need to refrain from participating in consideration of such matters.

Another aspect is that it may be appropriate in certain cases not to participate in the consideration of a matter with regard to the political (ethical) implications, even if there are no grounds for disqualification in the formal sense. In such a case, an MP may voluntarily choose not to participate in the consideration of the matter.

The provision in the Riksdag Act on disqualification at meetings of the Chamber contains an exception for ministers as regards participation in the deliberation of a matter concerning the performance of their official duties. A government minister is, in other words, entitled to participate in the debate on the Committee on the Constitution's scrutiny report. This exception also applies to former ministers who are now members of the Riksdag. However, there is no exemption provision making it possible to participate in a possible vote on a scrutiny debate.

There is no general rule as to who can be regarded as a close associate apart from the categories listed in the Code of Conduct. According to the comments to the Local Government Act (upon which the provisions on disqualification in the Riksdag Act are based), live-apart partners can often be included in this concept, as can other individuals with whom the MP has close contact and who assist the MP in personal business to a greater extent than other people who are closely connected with him or her.

Merely being a beneficiary under a will does not make a person a close associate, nor does a note in a medical record indicating that someone is closely connected.<sup>28</sup> 1

An MP who is aware of a circumstance that constitutes disqualification should not participate in the consideration of a matter. Matters relating to disqualification and the implications of disqualification may arise during different stages in the consideration of an item of parliamentary business: when the matter is dealt with by a parliamentary committee, when it is debated in the Chamber and when the Speaker adopts a position on whether or not to put a question for decision. This, together with internal discussions in the party groups, naturally contributes to preventing MPs from ending up in a situation that may lead to disqualification. An MP who does not participate in the consideration of a matter in the Chamber or in a committee on account of disqualification can request that this is noted in the record.

### **The register of financial interests**

The rules on the registration of commitments and financial interests have a different point of departure than the rules on disqualification. They are based on the legitimate public interest in information about the elected representatives' commitments and financial interests regardless of whether these commitments at a specific point in time have a bearing on the decisions made in a committee or in the Chamber or on other activities of the Riksdag.

Under the Act on registration of the commitments and financial interests of members of the Riksdag the Riksdag Administration shall establish and maintain a register intended to provide overall information about the MPs' commitments and financial interests to the extent that this is justified from the point of view of legitimate public interests. The information to be registered includes interests in companies (e.g. shareholdings), ownership of commercial property, salaried employment which is not just of a temporary nature, income-generating independent operations that are run over and above their assignment as an MP, agreements of a financial nature, various board assignments and central or local government assignments which are not just of a temporary nature and certain economic benefits. Debts exceeding two price base amounts and deriving from business or investment operations are also to be registered.

Since 1 March 2008, it is compulsory for MPs to report to the register of financial interests. MPs are obliged to report all commitments and financial interests of the kind listed above that exist at the time of notification. Information that there is nothing to register shall also be reported. The obligation to provide information also applies to alternate members who are to serve for at least three consecutive months.

The information is to be reported in writing to the Secretariat of the Chamber. It must be reported within four weeks of the first meeting of the Chamber after an election or from a later date when a member commenced his or her assignment as an MP. New information or amendments to registered information shall be reported in writing within four weeks of the changes occurring. A new electoral period means the start of a new assignment as an MP. This means that re-elected MPs must report their information to the register again.

If an MP fails to report to the register, the Speaker shall announce at a meeting of the Chamber that the MP in question has failed to fulfil his or her obligation to report information to the register.

Information about how to report the information and what information to report is contained in a manual (Handledning LedEkReg) which is available on the Riksdag intranet.

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<sup>28</sup> Lindquist et al, *Kommunallagen – En handbok med lagtext och kommentarer* [The Local Government Act – A manual with legislative texts and comments (version of 1 Januari 2013, Zeteo), comments to Ch. 5, Sec. 20.]

## Bribes

Chapter 10, Section 5a of the Swedish Penal Code

*“A person who is an employee or performs an assignment and receives, accepts a promise of or demands an improper benefit for the exercise of the employment or the assignment shall be sentenced for taking a bribe to a fine or imprisonment for at most two years. [- - -]*

*Paragraph one also applies if the act was committed before the perpetrator held such a position as is referred to there or after the employment or assignment was concluded.*

*A person who receives, accepts a promise of or demands a benefit on behalf of someone else shall also be sentenced for taking a bribe under paragraph one.”*

Chapter 10, Section 5b of the Swedish Penal Code

*“A person who gives, promises or offers an improper benefit in such cases referred to in Section 5 a is sentenced for giving a bribe to a fine or imprisonment for at most two years.”*

Chapter 10, Section 5c of the Swedish Penal Code

*“If a crime of the kind referred to in Section 5 a or 5 b may be regarded as gross, the person concerned shall be sentenced for gross taking of a bribe or gross giving of a bribe to prison for at least six months and at most six years. When assessing whether the offence is gross, special consideration shall be taken of whether the act involved misuse of or an attack against a position of special responsibility, concerned significant value or was part of a criminality that has been exercised systematically or on a large scale or has otherwise been of an especially dangerous nature.”*

The Swedish provisions on crimes of bribery are very generally worded and do not contain any clear guidelines on how the provisions should be applied in practice. Personal responsibility and the ability of the individual to make ethical choices must therefore be determining factors in many cases.

Criminal liability for taking of bribes must entail that the employee or holder of an assignment has received, accepted a promise of or requested an improper benefit for the performance of the employment or assignment. This requirement implies that the relationship between the parties must predominantly be of a business nature and that the benefit can therefore be ultimately related to something that is attributable to the activities conducted by the employee's or holder of the assignment's principal. Such a business relationship between the parties does not exist if the benefit is exclusively or essentially based on, for example, a friendship or an acquaintance or other form of non-business relationship.

For criminal liability to apply, the benefit need not be focused on something that, in the end, is a task for the employee or holder of the assignment. It is sufficient that he or she, within the framework of the employment or assignment, can exert an influence on the process. Nor does it necessitate that the benefit be shown to be related to a specific official duty, and still less that it be proved that the benefit aimed to, induced or rewarded an improper measure or a measure that rewards the person who gave, promised or offered the benefit.

Responsibility for taking of a bribe may arise if the benefit goes to or was intended to go to the employee's or assignment holder's family or close relatives, or to an organisation or other body with which he or she can be associated. It is not necessary for the employee or holder of the assignment to have physically received the benefit in order to pass it on to someone else. It is sufficient for him or her to know that the benefit has been given directly to someone else and have expressed approval or in some other way taken action to encourage the receipt.

The legislation applies to improper benefits. The dividing line between a proper benefit and improper benefit is fine, and may vary with time. The assessment of whether a benefit is improper or not shall be based on all the circumstances connected with the action. Significant factors include the economic value and the nature of the benefit, as well as the particular circumstances surrounding the giving of the benefit. An improper benefit is, as a rule, given, promised or offered prior to the performance of the official duty that the benefit is intended to influence, but it may also be given in thanks for the help after the favour has been performed. *Every transaction that, seen objectively, has the potential to affect the execution of certain tasks or be construed as a reward for how the tasks have been performed is improper.* A member of the Riksdag should not expose himself or herself to the risk of even being suspected of being influenced by irrelevant wishes or considerations.

Questions that all members should ask themselves if they are offered something by an outside party are:

- is this a benefit and why is it being offered to me?
- is there any connection between the benefit and the performance of my assignment?
- what is the nature of the benefit and how much is it worth?

Situations in which they should think twice include offers of discounts, commissions, meals, travel, conferences, tickets to various events, leisure offers or services, but also less obvious benefits such as purchases at cost price, *if there is reason to believe that the benefit is being offered to the MP on account of their assignment*. Annual passes, free passes and similar offers are examples of gifts that should not be accepted. A good way of avoiding having to decide where to draw the line is, of course, to avoid accepting any gifts or benefits.

Some examples of benefits that are improper *if they are offered to an MP on account of their assignment include:*

- gifts of money in cash, securities etc.;
- monetary loans on especially advantageous terms;
- guarantee commitments or covering of loans;
- waiving of purchase price, debt, repayment instalments or interest;
- the right to use vehicles, boats, summer houses etc. for private use;
- fully or partially paid leisure trips or holidays;
- other gifts or benefits which are not of insignificant value (and in certain cases, benefits of an insignificant value) can also fulfil the requirements for what is considered improper.

Examples of benefits that may be acceptable are seriously planned, shorter study trips, courses or conferences without lavish side-arrangements, on condition that there is an obvious link between the assignment as an MP and that the benefit may be regarded as a natural component and valuable aspect of the performance of the assignment. The full circumstances must be thoroughly considered in each individual case. A study trip lasting longer than one day can, for example, rarely be regarded as appropriate. If the trip is abroad, this should be justifiable on objective grounds, for example, that there is no equivalent object of study closer to home.

## Gifts

Sometimes, MPs are offered gifts in connection with official entertainment, for example, at meetings with representatives of foreign parliaments or during committee visits. In most cases, the gift is directed to an individual MP as a representative of the Riksdag. In such cases, the gift belongs to the Riksdag and is received on behalf of the Riksdag. In cases where the gift is of insignificant value, for example souvenirs, pens or similar products, it may be permitted to accept them for personal use. In other cases, the gift should go to the Riksdag.

All gifts received by MPs in their capacity as representatives of the Riksdag are to be registered in a special gifts register. Gifts with no, or insignificant economic value do not need to be reported, however. The provisions on this are contained in the Act concerning the registration and handling of gifts received by members of the Riksdag (2016:1117), and the accompanying regulations and general recommendations.

There may be situations in which it is difficult to determine whether an MP has received a gift as a private individual, as a representative of their party or as a representative of the Riksdag. The determining factor here is whether the gift is mainly connected with the member's assignment as an MP or is given for some other reason, for example, on account of his or her position in the party. Gifts which are based purely on friendship and are not connected with the assignment as an MP naturally go to the member personally.

Anyone who receives a gift that is intended for the Riksdag may not keep the gift for private use or make use of it in some other way, for example, by selling it or giving it away. Intentionally refraining from handing over a gift that belongs to the Riksdag may involve criminal liability under the provisions of the Swedish Penal Code on embezzlement (Ch.10, Sec.1-3) or unlawful disposal (Ch.10, Sec.4).

When MPs consider whether to accept gifts for themselves, it is important that they assess whether there is a risk that the gift may be regarded as a bribe. For further guidance on improper benefits that may come under bribery legislation, see the section on bribes in the Code of Conduct.

## **Responsibility for the Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct is a voluntary agreement which has been adopted by the Presiding Officers of the Riksdag and the party group leaders on behalf of themselves and the other members of the Riksdag. The Presiding Officers and the party group leaders therefore have the ultimate responsibility for the Code. The Presiding Officers are responsible for determining how to gain support for the Code, how to keep it alive and when to revise it. The group leaders have the more direct responsibility for ensuring that the Code of Conduct is a living document which provides guidance in everyday activities and support to the MPs in their assignment.

This is natural in view of the strong position of the party groups and their significance for the work of the Riksdag and matters associated with the assignment as a MP. In practice, however, the most important factor is that each member bears a responsibility for following up the Code of Conduct and other provisions and rules.

In its efforts to implement and work practically with the Code of Conduct, the group leaders have the resources of the Riksdag Administration at their disposal.

By gathering important regulatory frameworks for the assignment as an MP in one and the same place, the Code of Conduct creates greater clarity for voters and elected representatives alike. The Code of Conduct makes it easier to identify the regulatory frameworks affecting the assignment as an MP, and this in turn makes it easier for the voters to hold the MPs to account in the case of any deviations. A Code of Conduct raises an awareness of the principles and regulatory frameworks that apply to the assignment as an MP and to the various considerations an MP regularly has to deal with. It can also help to place discussions about how to interpret the rules high on the agendas of the MPs' and party groups' discussions. In summary, therefore, the Code of Conduct serves as an important contribution to strengthening the confidence of the Swedish people in the Riksdag.