

RCLS activities are part of a much larger effort for cooperation between the universities and research institutes of established democracies and those of the new post-communist states. Researchers from both sides of the former 'divide' now increasingly cooperate with one another on research and analysis of political institutions and political behaviour – in this case focusing on the representative institution of democratic political systems.

One current example of international cooperation across old boundaries is this essay, written in America, which is happily included in this special issue of the *Czech Sociological Review* to be read around the world.

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The Internationalisation of Parliaments – The Role of National Parliaments in the EU Ljubljana, Slovenia, 7–9 April 2005

'The Internationalisation of Parliaments – The Role of National Parliaments in the EU', was a conference held on 7–9 April 2005 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The conference provided an opportunity to examine the functions of modern parliaments in the era of globalisation. It was the second such conference organised by the Research Committee of Legislative Specialists since the IPSA World Congress in Durban in 2003 (the first was in Quebec City in autumn 2004). On this occasion papers were presented by eighteen participants from Germany, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, United States, and Slovenia.

The conference was opened by Mr. France Cukjati, speaker of the Slovenian National Assembly, and Mr. Anton Kokalj, chair of the Assembly's Committee on European Affairs. The conference was held in the facilities of the National Assembly.

Several aspects of the internationalisation of national parliaments were examined at the conference. One of the main consider-

ations was the process of European integration and its obvious effects throughout the region. As the example of the parliaments of a number of new member states (Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) shows, increasing internationalisation was experienced early in the process of pre-accession, when vast amounts of national legislation were being harmonised to match that of the EU. Some countries (Turkey) are undergoing similar forms of (legislative or policy-making) internationalisation, while non-members like Norway reveal examples of extremely active internationalisation (e.g. an increasing share of the MPs have positions in committees dealing with EU or international matters).

In its examination of the role of national parliaments in supranational organisations, the conference drew attention to the need for active democratisation projects in underdeveloped countries, such as Indonesia, and for international assistance to democratic parliamentary institutions in post-conflict societies, like Bosnia and Kosovo.

The parliaments of both old and new EU member countries have new opportunities to monitor and influence the process of EU decision-making and its outcomes. There are positive signs that the parliaments of the new EU member states will play an active role, drawing on the example of the Scandinavian member states. With special laws on the coordination of national parliaments and the government in some of these new member countries, and also with the changed Rules of Procedure, national parliaments will be able to exert control over their governments to greatly enhance the process of internationalising domestic affairs. Strong national mechanisms of oversight may be a requisite for increasing citizens' trust in the legitimacy of EU decisions and also for increasing the ability of national ministers and governments to successfully negotiate.

In addition to the 'institutional' capacity of parliaments, the conference devoted some attention also to the 'cultural' capacity of MPs. Greater involvement of MPs is always