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Parliamentary Institute – Research Centre of the Parliament of the Czech Republic

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Panel III Managing our Political Environments: Culture, Constraints and Controversies

The Parliamentary Institute plays the role of academic, information, and training centre for the Parliament of the Czech Republic, its institutions, Deputies and Senators, and the Office of the Chamber and of the Senate.

History

The Parliamentary Institute was formed as the Academic Service Department of the Federal Assembly in 1990. As of the beginning of 1991 it was made the Department for Analysis and Expertise via a ruling of the Presidium of the Federal Assembly. Later it was confirmed as the Parliamentary Institute with its own Statute.

After the break-up of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic and the dissolution of the Federal Assembly, the Parliamentary Institute was transferred into the structure of the Office of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament, where it currently operates as one of the departments. It also renders its services to the Senate.

The mission of the Parliamentary Institute has been the same ever since its inception - to create a consulting and information background for Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic. The basic criterion for the work of the Institute, ever since its launch, has been expertise and impartiality in the information it provides.

The Present

The activity of the Parliamentary Institute includes a wide range of areas. Those being systematically developed at present are:

- constitutional law, national economy, social policy, finance
- defence, national security, international organisations, international politics, international law
- integration of the Czech Republic into the European Union, the process of transposing EC law into Czech law.

The list of themes is by no means a closed one. The Parliamentary Institute cooperates, as and when necessary, with external specialists.

This activity entails the necessity of continuous academic improvements for the PI employees. A significant role in this regard is played by the implementation of a PHARE (EU assistance programme) project, which makes it possible to finance co-operation with foreign institutions and acquire the necessary specialist literature. In addition to this there is also noteworthy co-operation of Institute with the TAIEX Office (Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office), which was established by the European Commission in Brussels. PI workers regularly take part in specialist seminars aimed at making an academic interpretation of the European arrangement in force in a given sphere, as well as at describing the process of the transposition of European law into the legal systems of member countries.

The Parliamentary Institute gathers information relating to European Union law and individual EU policies. Over the period it has been active PI has emerged as a unique fund of information relating to the integration process.

The Parliamentary Institute is in contact with parliamentary academic centres abroad, when fulfilling its tasks it cooperates with academic institutions, universities and colleges, and other specialist institutions at home and abroad.

Parliamentary Institute Activity

The Parliamentary Institute provides following types of information to Members of Parliament and parliamentary committees:

- *regular information* on economic and social development in the form of the Economic and Social Monitor
- *immediate information* required for a query made in writing or over the telephone is provided by the individual workers specialising in the area in question
- *answer reports* are special types of short, summary information provided for a given problem
- *information papers* comprise the most extensive portion of PI activities - these are comprehensive analyses or comparisons and theory work. These studies are prepared by academic workers at the Institute who specialise in the respective field, or they are drawn up by external specialists.
- *translations of foreign publications*, excerpts from specialist literature, studies provided by other parliamentary research and information centres, and translations of texts from foreign collections of statutes. Translations are given to specialising translation agencies and undergo specialist proof-reading by PI workers.
- *lecture activity* is currently underway in the scope of the Introductory Course of European Law, which is designed for Members of Parliament and parliamentary committees, and is aimed at the basics of European law and individual European Union policies.
- *opinions regarding compatibility with Community Law* are done in pursuance of Resolution of the Organisational Committee

Activity of the European Law Centre

Since 1993 the Parliamentary Institute has been carrying out a PHARE project, the aim of which is to reinforce the active participation of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in the process of transposing EC legislation into Czech law. It is in this sphere that the legislature applies its final and decisive powers. An absolutely necessary condition for the high-quality activity of the legislators in this sphere has shown itself to be the creation of the appropriate professional and technical background.

In the scope of these projects the **Parliamentary Centre for European Law** has been formed, which serves as an expert department of the Parliamentary Institute for Community law.

Services provided by the European Law Centre

The Parliamentary Institute and the European Law Centre serve exclusively for the needs of Parliamentary Deputies, Senators and parliamentary committees.

Information on Community law

The experts working at the Parliamentary Institute provide information, in the scope of their specialisation, on Community primary and secondary legislation, and information on the judicature of the European Court. Upon request they also draw up analyses of Community law and comparative studies of its implementation by member states. These studies can be accessed electronically as **Parliamentary Institute work** in the internal information network of the Chamber of Deputies. Selected work is also available via the Internet.

Opinions of Compatibility

The European Law Centre is obliged to process statements of compatibility with Community law as regards all non-government bills, and, in pursuance of a request of the committees, also as regards government bills, in accordance with Resolution of the Organisational Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic No. 168, from 1997. The statements are available electronically in the internal information network of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

Seminars - Introductory Course of European Law

The Parliamentary Institute is preparing seminars for Members of Parliament and parliamentary committees in European law and individual EU policies, and in the individual, specific groups of Community legislation. The seminars, of a general nature, and aimed at institutional, international law, and international-politics issues, are held by trained experts from the Parliamentary Institute in conjunction with foreign experts.

Selection of EU Documents

In co-operation with the Secretariat of the Delegation for the EU of the French National Assembly, the Centre prepares from the year 2003 a monthly Selection of EU Documents. By this activity the Parliament is preparing for the review of the governmental negotiations after the accession to the EU.

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