



NATIONAL  
DEMOCRATIC  
INSTITUTE  
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

**Stronger Parliaments vital to Democracy:**  
Overview of Resources and Expertise available to  
Members of Parliament

Central and Eastern Europe Regional Programs:

**Western Balkans  
Legislative  
Strengthening  
Initiative**

## Table of Contents

Foreword	2
Executive Summary	3
INTRODUCTION	5
PART ONE. PARLIAMENTS IN NUMBERS	1
1.1 Parliament’s budget	1
1.2 Parliamentary administrative staff, non-partisan, and partisan staff	3
PART TWO. PARTISAN AND NON-PARTISAN SUPPORT TO MPs	5
2.1 Partisan support to MPs	5
2.1.1. “Personal Assistants” of MPs	5
2.1.2. Staff and financial allocation to MP groups	7
2.2 Non-partisan support to MPs	8
2.3.1. Media relations support to MPs	10
PART THREE. ENGAGING EXTERNAL EXPERTISE	11
PART FOUR. COMMUNICATION WITH CONSTITUENTS	12
PART FIVE. MP OFFICE SPACE	14
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	15
ANNEXES	17
Annex 1 - Survey	17
Annex 2 – Parliament’s budget	19
Annex 3 – Total staff members (parliamentary administration, non-partisan and partisan staff)	21
Annex 4 – Personal assistants of MPs	24
Annex 5 – Staff and financial allocation to MP groups	30
Annex 6 – Division of tasks between non-partisan and partisan staff	37
Annex 7 – Parliamentary Institutes	39
Annex 8 – Media support services	40
Annex 9 - Engagement of external experts	41
Annex 10 – MPs’ Constituency Offices and Communication with Constituents	44
Annex 11 – MPs’ office space	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY	51

## Foreword

The following study provides information on financial and human resources available to Members of Parliament (MPs) in fifteen European legislatures.

A well-functioning parliament needs MPs who are able to fulfil the roles of lawmaking, representation, and oversight. MPs without quality personnel and adequate administrative support will find impaired in fulfilling their constitutional roles. The levels of staff, financial, and administrative support provided to individual MPs in the Western Balkans parliaments is lower compared to their European Union (EU) counterparts. NDI will continue to support institutional reform of partner parliaments in this area through the framework of the Institute's regional parliamentary program.

For more than a decade, NDI has helped the parliaments in the region to build their capacity to fulfill their constitutional roles of representation, lawmaking, and oversight. NDI assisted the parliaments in the development of constituency offices; legislative and research capacities; legislative internship programs; and staff restructuring, among other areas. The Institute has engaged various parliamentary experts in its programming, including parliamentary staff from the EU parliaments, in particular the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament, and the Polish Sejm.

The study was initiated, conceptualized and coordinated by NDI/Albania team. NDI would like to use this opportunity to thank Jelena Ulic of the Montenegrin Parliamentary Institute for leading the Institute's efforts to collect, summarize, and synthesize the information for the study.

The study, workshops, and other related activities are a part of NDI's Western Balkans Legislative Strengthening Initiative (WBLSI), which assists parliaments in the region in strengthening their capacities for law-making, oversight, and representation. With funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Initiative fosters relationships between the Western Balkan legislatures and their EU counterparts by creating forums for regional cooperation and information sharing. For more information about the Initiative, please contact Ms. Zuzana Papazoski at [zpapazoski@ndi.org](mailto:zpapazoski@ndi.org) in Poland, Ms. Vladimira Vucic at [vvucic@ndi.org](mailto:vvucic@ndi.org) in Bosnia Herzegovina, or Mr. Jake Farris at [jfarris@ndi.org](mailto:jfarris@ndi.org) in Washington D.C.

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## Executive Summary

A total of 15 parliaments in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia), Central Europe (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, including Croatia), and Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), were surveyed in May 2020 as part of the research for the comparative study on assistance and resources available to MPs. Ten out of 15 parliaments responded to the survey (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia).

Through this research, NDI sought to find out the level and type of financial and human resources available to MPs to support carrying out their legislative, oversight, and representative roles. Data on parliamentary budgets and their allocations for the work of MPs and MP groups show that each parliament provides some sort of allowance to MPs, but the level and type of allowances vary. The lowest overall budget figures are seen in the Western Balkan parliaments, even though some of those parliaments have a higher number of MPs compared to other parliaments with a significantly higher budget and lower number of MPs. At the same time, Western Balkan legislatures enjoy one of the highest percentages of funds allocated for the work of MPs, mainly to cover expenses for salaries, traveling, housing, and representation, though not as much is allocated for staff support, either through MP groups or for individual MPs' support. On the other hand, the Višegrad Group parliaments (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary) and most Baltic States' parliaments provide special allowances, which allow MPs to hire support staff of their own.

Three categories of administrative and professional support for Members of Parliament are presented in the report: personal assistants of MPs, political staff working for MP groups or caucuses, and non-partisan parliamentary administration staff. These categories encompass different working methods among the surveyed parliaments, and vary significantly in terms of approach, functions, and capacities.

Hiring personal assistants who directly support MPs is a common practice in some Central European parliaments and the Baltic States. However, there is significant variation as to how this personal assistance is organized in different parliaments in terms of the level of the financial allowance per MP to hire assistants, number of assistants, and the tasks that they perform. In some parliaments, MPs are entitled to generous staff allowances compared to others. In Hungary, for instance, each MP can spend up to 3,200 EUR a month on personal staff. The best-staffed MPs are also found in the Polish Sejm (lower house of Polish parliament), where there are no limitations in terms of number of paid staff and unpaid volunteers.

The assistance and resources made available to MPs in the Western Balkan parliaments appear more limited than those available to their counterparts in Central Europe. MPs are not entitled to personal assistants, neither for parliamentary work nor constituency work. Similarly, MP groups have a limited number of advisors at their disposal. Such limitations certainly have an impact on the capacity of MPs to effectively carry out their duties.

In instances where MPs have limited access to support in the form of personal assistants and caucus staff, they mainly rely on support from nonpartisan parliamentary administrative services, primarily legislative services, committee secretariats, and research and analysis services. In these cases, legal opinions on compliance with the constitution and domestic legal system, and international and EU law, as well as policy analysis, are provided by the secretariat to all members, but on a relatively limited scope.

Due to their impact on MP-voter relations, MPs' communication with their constituents and the availability of office space for MPs are integral. Constituency offices are the primary platform through which MPs communicate with voters to ensure that their voices are heard and that their interests are protected, which demonstrates and encourages greater engagement between MPs and voters. MP office space on parliamentary premises, however, is not available in all of the surveyed parliaments. In Poland, individual office space is not available on parliamentary premises, but rather in the MPs' individual constituencies. In North Macedonia, offices to carry out constituency work are established in municipal buildings. Other

Western Balkan parliaments provide individual office space to specific groups, such as the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, and Committee Chairs.

Institutionalized support is required for MPs to represent voters, make laws, and exercise oversight of the executive. All MPs should receive equivalent amounts of resources and assistance in the form of non-partisan parliamentary administrative support and partisan support through MP groups and/or personal assistants. MP groups, along with individual MPs, should engage qualified staff able to draft legislation and amendments and conduct research and policy analysis. Creating efficient, non-partisan support services and engaging professional, non-partisan staff to serve as a source of independent advice and guidance for MPs, is important in ensuring institutional memory in parliaments and strong capacity support for MPs. MPs, particularly through committee work, should be entitled to engage independent external expertise and the surrounding procedure should be clear, precise, transparent, and decided upon by committee members. MPs require adequate office space and facilities for them to function properly, particularly in regard to fulfilling their representative role and serving public interests. The establishment of constituency offices is one way to enable MPs to fulfill their role and has a direct impact on the nature of contact with citizens.

## INTRODUCTION

Representation, law-making and oversight of the executive are the most important roles of parliamentarians. The *Global Parliamentary Report 2012*, published by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) states: *“evidence from countries around the world suggests that politicians are not held principally to account for their legislative scrutiny or oversight of the executive, but rather for the tangible benefits that they can deliver to voters. Numerous opinion polls in different parts of the world suggest that the public believes forms of constituency service are the most important part of an MP’s role, while MPs themselves undoubtedly see the benefit of responding to voters’ needs for various reasons, not least as it is likely to enhance their chances of re-election”*<sup>1</sup>. Besides this inherent complexity, carrying out such roles can also be challenging due to limited resources at their disposal, both financially and staff-wise.

To carry out these functions, parliamentarians rely on different levels of support, from the civil servants employed by parliamentary administration to fulfill the collective demands of the institution, to the support of personal assistants and/or parliamentary party group<sup>2</sup> staff members to meet the demands of individual MPs or a group of MPs, often with partisan interests.

Parliamentary administrative staff is expected to have a non-partisan approach to serve MPs on an equal basis.<sup>3</sup> Non-partisan support is concentrated in legislative services, committee secretariats, and legislative research and analysis services. MPs also expect to receive support from their political party, either in the form of permanent staff or ad-hoc advisors with expertise in line with their ideologies and platforms. In order to engage such assistance, MPs are often entitled to special allowances, either designated directly to individual MPs or through MP groups. Such allowances cover

staffing and operational costs and are key to the elected representatives efficiently executing their functions.

The purpose of this study is to explore cross-country trends, both similarities and differences, in the approaches to securing financial and human resources for parliamentarians to carry out their duties.

The study’s primary data source are parliaments themselves. Ten of 15 parliaments contacted responded to a survey questionnaire. The survey (see Annex 1) consisted of a set of questions to gather data on the level of parliamentary budget itself, as well as the allocations for the work of MPs and MP groups; the level and types of partisan and non-partisan support available to MPs in order to carry out their legislative, oversight, and representative roles; and the type and level of allowances for such purposes. Questions regarding MPs’ communication with their constituents and the MP’s office space availability were also an integral part of the survey.

To have the most complete picture of the surveyed parliaments, data for non-participating parliaments has been collected through official websites of parliaments and reports of relevant institutions and organizations. Therefore, the number of parliaments and the data covered in each section/chapter may vary.

Each chapter provides analysis for a given topic and summarizes key findings intended to show similarities and differences between the studied parliaments. Detailed information for each country is provided under different annexes that are appended at the end of the paper (groupings of parliaments per country is provided in alphabetical order). The annexes contain tables, graphs, and figures that illustrate characteristics of parliaments and their respective systems.

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<sup>1</sup> Power, G. *Global Parliamentary Report 2012: The changing nature of parliamentary representation*, UNDP and IPU, April 2012, p. 59

<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary party group, MP group, and faction are terms that have the same meaning and are interchangeably used in this study.

<sup>3</sup> Non-partisan staff, for the purpose of this study, refer to parliamentary administration staff that support legislative, representative, and oversight activities of MPs. Those staff members exclude general logistical staff (e.g. security, drivers, cleaners, public procurement, and other administrative and technical support staff).

Bicameral parliaments have data for the lower chamber unless otherwise noted.

The following chapters provide information on parliamentary budget allocations, availability of financial resources in parliaments, as well as partisan and non-partisan support to MPs. The study is complemented by information on approaches for engagement of external expertise, the support provided to MPs for communication with their constituents, and office space availability to MPs, either in parliamentary premises or in their constituencies. The topics are tackled in five parts, followed by a separate chapter on conclusions and recommendations.

Most sources of the data can be found in the bibliography.

## PART ONE. PARLIAMENTS IN NUMBERS

### 1.1 Parliament's budget

The level of support to MPs depends, to a large extent, on parliament's annual budget.

The size of the budget differs from parliament to parliament, both in terms of the amount allotted to legislatures from the state budget and the amount that is allotted specifically to the work of parliamentarians, through MP groups or individually.

This subchapter provides answers to the following questions:

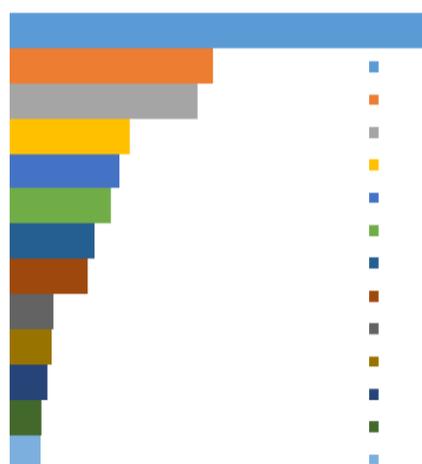
- *What is the annual budget of the parliament and its percentage of the state budget?*
- *What is the amount of expenses related to the Members of Parliament (i.e. remuneration, travel expenses, representation, housing, etc.)?*
- *What is the amount of expenses related to the work of MP groups?*
- *What is the budget for hiring personal assistants of MPs in selected countries?*
- *What is the budget per MP, through MP groups, for hiring staff?*

The Višegrad Group countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia) have the highest parliamentary budget in terms of amounts (see Figure 1). However, despite being the most populous, they do not have the highest number of MPs (see Table 1). Parliamentary budgets tend to be larger in more populous countries, but that's not always the case. For example, Lithuania, as one of the five least populated countries on the surveyed list, is among the five parliaments with the largest budget. The budget of the Slovenian National Assembly is higher than that of the Croatian Parliament, even though Croatia has a population twice as large as Slovenia. Although Hungary and the Czech Republic have similar populations, the Hungarian parliamentary budget is twice the budget of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic.

Five out of six Western Balkan parliaments (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia) have the lowest parliamentary budget amounts on the surveyed list, despite the fact that some of these parliaments have higher numbers of MPs than,

for example, Estonia and Slovenia. Similarly, five out of six of the Western Balkan parliaments, especially Kosovo, Albania, and North Macedonia, have the lowest parliamentary budgets per MP, with North Macedonia being at the bottom of the list, followed by Albania and Kosovo.

**Figure 1. Amount of annual parliamentary budget (in EUR, from highest to lowest)**



*Note: Figure for the **Czech Republic** represents the Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber). Figure for **Bosnia and Herzegovina** represents both houses (House of Representatives and House of People). Figure for **Slovenia** represents the National Assembly (lower chamber).*

**Table 1. Number of MPs per country (from highest to lowest), country population and amount of annual parliamentary budget per MP (in EUR)**

	No. of MPs	Population	Parliamentary budget per MP
<b>Serbia</b>	250	6,982,000	113,005
<b>Czech Rep.</b>	200	10,650,000	261,562
<b>Hungary</b>	199	9,769,000	547,653
<b>Croatia</b>	151	4,076,000	130,773
<b>Slovakia</b>	150	5,450,000	320,253
<b>Lithuania</b>	141	2,794,000	216,666
<b>Albania</b>	140	2,845,955	75,000
<b>N. Macedonia</b>	123	2,077,132	62,684
<b>Kosovo</b>	120	1,845,000	92,962
<b>Estonia</b>	101	1,329,000	215,518
<b>Slovenia</b>	90	2,081,000	285,983
<b>Montenegro</b>	81	631,219	118,290
<b>BaH</b>	57	3,531,159	138,407

*Note: The figures present a statutory number of MPs, prescribed in the constitution or Rules of Procedure. In the **Czech Republic** and **Slovenia**, the number of MPs includes only the lower chambers, whereas for **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, numbers are presented for both chambers and*

added to make a single figure. Population figures are collected from websites of national statistical offices.

The Western Balkans designates the greatest percentage of the state budget to parliament, at 0.47% in Kosovo and Montenegro, or even at 1.6% in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see Table 2). Albania and North Macedonia designate less than half of the percentage encountered in Kosovo and Montenegro, although the number of MPs in Kosovo (120) and Montenegro (81) is lower than in Albania (140).

**Table 2. Percentage (%) of state budget**

	Annual parliamentary budget (EUR)	% of state budget
<b>Albania</b>	10,500,000	0.23%
<b>BiH</b>	7,889,230	1.6%
<b>Croatia</b>	19,746,800	0.11%
<b>Czech Republic</b>	52,312,448	0.09%
<b>Estonia</b>	21,767,400	0.19%
<b>Hungary</b>	108,983,000	0.17%
<b>Kosovo</b>	11,155,484	0.47%
<b>Lithuania</b>	30,550,000	n/a
<b>Montenegro</b>	9,581,510	0.47%
<b>N. Macedonia</b>	7,710,1540	0.21%
<b>Serbia</b>	28,251,300	0.25%
<b>Slovakia</b>	48,038,000	0.27%
<b>Slovenia</b>	25,738,544	n/a

The Western Balkan parliaments have the largest budget related to the work of MPs (which usually includes remuneration of MPs, housing, travel, representation expenses, allowances, etc.) with Montenegro and Kosovo at over 40%, followed by Albania at 37%, and North Macedonia at 34%. An exception is Serbia that designates half as much, or 20%. A high amount of budget allocated to the work of MPs is also seen in Estonia at 46%, while Slovakia and Hungary designated less than 20% (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Amount (EUR) and percentage (%) of parliamentary budget allocated to the work of MPs**

	Annual budget related to MPs	% of parliamentary budget
<b>Albania</b>	3,860,000	37%
<b>BiH</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Croatia</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Czech Republic</b>	20,400,551	39%
<b>Estonia</b>	10,013,000	46%
<b>Hungary</b>	19,921,200	18%
<b>Kosovo</b>	5,026,450	45%
<b>Lithuania</b>	6,400,000	21%
<b>Montenegro</b>	4,506,686	47%
<b>N. Macedonia</b>	<b>2,614,214</b>	34%
<b>Serbia</b>	5,596,050	20%
<b>Slovakia</b>	9,133,000	19%
<b>Slovenia</b>	7,228,920	28%

Note: Figure for the **Czech** Chamber of Deputies includes expenditures for hiring personal assistants of MPs, which amount to 3,805,557 EUR. This expenditure is presented in Table 5. Figure for the Parliament of **Montenegro** includes the amount allotted to MP groups (360,000 EUR).

One of the significant components of the parliamentary budget is expenditures allocated to MP groups. Since most MP group's office space is located within parliamentary premises, usually those expenditures include the hiring of political staff to work for the MP group. Slovakia, followed by the Czech Republic, allocates the least from the parliament's budget to the work of MP groups (see Table 4). However, the Slovak National Council and the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic designate a substantial amount of funds to the support of MPs through the system of hiring personal assistants for each MP (see Table 5). Taking the funds allocated to MP groups and to individual MPs for engaging personal assistants in these two parliaments into consideration, it is evident that the Czech Chamber of Deputies provides about 2,100 EUR per month per MP, while in Slovakia it amounts to approximately 3,000 EUR. Czech and Hungarian MPs can hire personal assistants and staff members through MP groups. More information is provided in the chapters that follow.

**Table 4. Annual budget for the work of MP groups (EUR) and percentage (%) of parliamentary budget**

	Annual budget for the work of MP groups	% of parliamentary budget
<b>Albania</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>BiH</b>	485,727	6.15%
<b>Croatia</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Czech Republic</b>	657,854	1.2%
<b>Estonia</b>	1,064,700	4.9%
<b>Hungary</b>	7,228,751*	n/a
<b>Kosovo</b>	380,000	3.4%
<b>Lithuania</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Montenegro</b>	360,000	3.7%
<b>N. Macedonia</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Serbia</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Slovakia</b>	62,160	0.13%
<b>Slovenia</b>	1,958,109	8%

Note: The percentage of parliamentary budget allocated for the work of MP groups is approximate in the **Czech** Chamber of Deputies (annual parliamentary budget is provided for 2020 whereas the annual budget for the work of MP groups is provided for 2018). The Assembly of **Kosovo** does not have a separate budget line for parliamentary groups as they are funded by the budget allocated by the parliamentary political parties. This amount equaled 1,133,200 EUR in 2020. However, parliamentary groups mostly benefit from the Assembly budget through covering salaries and wages for the political and support staff and covering the costs of goods and services. This amount is provided in the above table. In **Hungary**, the annual Central budget sets the statutory amount of expenditures for MP groups, thus, % of parliamentary budget is not calculated.

**Table 5. Annual budget for hiring personal assistants of MPs in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, and Slovakia**

	<i>Monthly EUR amount per MP</i>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	1,839
<b>Hungary</b>	3,200
<b>Lithuania</b>	ca. 2,700
<b>Slovakia</b>	2,949

As detailed in Table 6 below, the lowest monthly amount that comes from parliamentary budget to hire staff through MP groups, per MP, on average, is seen in Slovakia (35 EUR per MP), Albania (ca. 80 EUR per MP), Hungary (93 EUR per MP), and Kosovo (125 EUR per MP). However, as previously mentioned, Hungary and Slovakia designate a substantial amount of funds to the support of MPs through the engagement of personal assistants of MPs. The Kosovo Assembly receives additional funds for salaries of staff within parliamentary groups from the state budget (see Table 4). On the other hand, Slovenia designates a substantial amount per MP through the work of MP groups, totaling 1,813 EUR (see Table 6).

**Table 6. Budget per MP through MP groups for hiring staff, on average**

	<i>Annual EUR per MP</i>	<i>Monthly EUR per MP</i>
<b>Albania</b>	ca. 945	78
<b>BiH</b>	8,521	710
<b>Croatia</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Czech Republic</b>	3,289	274
<b>Estonia</b>	10,425	868
<b>Hungary</b>	1,118	93
<b>Kosovo</b>	1,508	125
<b>Lithuania</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Montenegro</b>	4,444	370
<b>N. Macedonia</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Serbia</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Slovakia</b>	414	35
<b>Slovenia</b>	21,756	1,813

*Note: Where the figures are not provided through the survey, they are taken from the total amount designated for MPs through MP groups (Table 4) and divided by number of MPs in respective parliament. Please note that the **Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, and Slovakia** provide separate amounts for the hiring of personal assistants and that the **Kosovo** Assembly provides an additional amount for hiring political staff in MP groups through additional state funding (see note under Table 4).*

**More detailed information on figures, per national parliament, is presented under Annex 2.**

## 1.2 Parliamentary administrative staff, non-partisan, and partisan staff

As with the budget, consequently, the number of support staff matters. The number of staff members that parliaments employ has a clear impact on its overall institutional capacity.

This subchapter provides answers to the following questions:

- *What is the total number of parliamentary administration staff, non-partisan staff, and partisan staff employed by MP groups and MPs?*
- *What is the number of staff that serve each MP on average?*

**>3 parliamentary staff per MP – highest in Slovenia (3.5) and Hungary (3.4)**

**<2 parliamentary staff per MP - lowest in Kosovo (1.6) and Albania (1.7)**

The highest number of administrative staff per MP (over three per MP), is found in Hungary and Slovenia, followed by Lithuania and Slovakia. In the Western Balkan parliaments, each MP is served by 2.9 parliamentary staff in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2.5 in Montenegro, 2.2 in North Macedonia, and 2 in Serbia. In contrast, the lowest number of parliamentary administrative staff per MP is found in the Albanian parliament (1.7) and the Kosovo Assembly (1.6).

In most surveyed parliaments (Albania, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovakia), there is less than one non-partisan staff member per MP that directly assists MPs in their legislative, oversight, and representative role. In other words, one non-partisan staff member serves more than one MP.

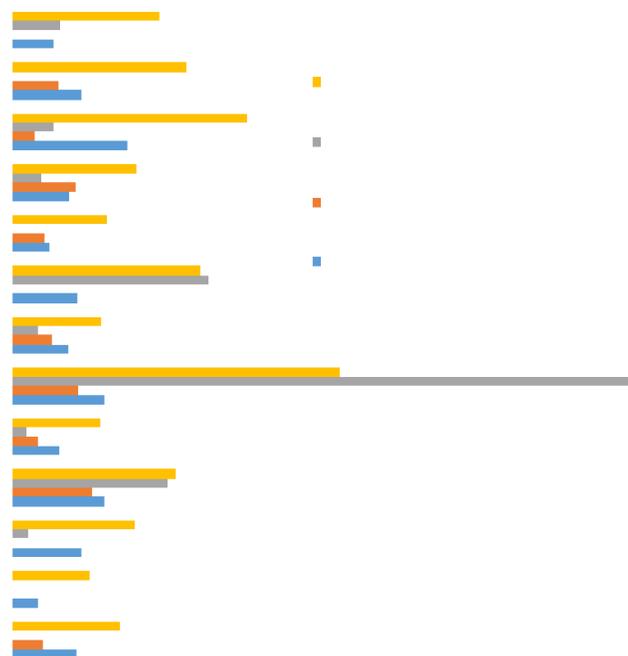
Albania and Serbia have the lowest number of non-partisan staff serving MPs (one non-partisan staff member serving two MPs on average in Albania and one non-partisan staff serving five MPs in Serbia). Exceptionally, parliament in North

Macedonia hires more than one non-partisan staff member per MP.

When it comes to partisan staff or staff employed by MP groups and MPs, the Hungarian Parliament outnumbers all the other parliaments in relation to both the number of MPs in the legislature and total administrative staff. The number of partisan staff, which includes staff hired as personal assistants of MPs and staff hired through MP groups, reached 1,356 in the Hungarian Parliament in late 2019, which is approximately seven partisan staff per MP. On the other hand, Lithuania had half as many (three) partisan staff members per MP on average.

*The figures and visual presentations for each national parliament are provided under Figure 2 and Table 7. More detailed information is presented under Annex 3.*

**Figure 2. Number of total parliamentary administration staff, and staff employed by MP groups (partisan staff), non-partisan staff, and MPs.**



**Table 7. Number of total parliamentary administration staff, and staff employed by MP groups (partisan staff), non-partisan staff, and MPs in relation to each MP**

	No. of MPs	No. of parliament. admin. staff	No. of parliamentary staff per MP	No. of non-partisan staff	No. of non-partisan staff per MP	No. of partisan staff (incl. staff employed by MP groups and MPs)	No. of partisan staff per MP
<b>Albania</b>	140	235	1.7	66	0.47	n/a	n/a
<b>BaH</b>	57	168	2.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Croatia</b>	151	266	1.8	n/a	n/a	33	0.2
<b>Czech R.</b>	200	355	1.8	174	0.87	338	1.69
<b>Estonia</b>	101	191	1.9	57	0.6	30	0.3
<b>Hungary</b>	199	711	3.6	143	0.7	1356	6.8
<b>Kosovo</b>	120	192	1.6	86	0.7	56	0.47
<b>Lithuania</b>	141	409	2.9	n/a	n/a	426	3.0
<b>Montenegro</b>	81	204	2.5	70	0.9	n/a	n/a
<b>N. Macedonia</b>	123	269	2.2	138	1.1	64	0.52
<b>Serbia</b>	250	510	2.0	50	0.2	90	0.4
<b>Slovakia</b>	150	377	2.5	100	0.7	n/a	n/a
<b>Slovenia</b>	90	320	3.5	n/a	n/a	104	1.1

## PART TWO. PARTISAN AND NON-PARTISAN SUPPORT TO MPs

### 2.1 Partisan support to MPs

Partisan support to MPs in exercising their parliamentary mandate is provided through the engagement of political staff, either by MP groups or by individual MPs.

Individual support is primarily provided through a system of personal assistants to MPs, who are usually distinct from staff members working for the MP group. Personal assistants are expected to provide MPs with direct, personal support, whereas the staff of the MP groups provide support for the parliamentary party group as a whole.

*This subchapter provides answers to the following questions:*

- *How many assistants can a Member have?*
- *Can one assistant serve two or more Members of Parliament at the same time?*
- *Does a member / parliamentary group / party receive an allocation from the parliament that can be used to hire a personal assistant? How, in general, is the system of assistants funded?*
- *Who decides the terms on which MPs' assistants are employed?*
- *What are the main tasks of personal assistants?*
- *Is the assistant's work space on the parliament's premises or in the constituency?*
- *Is an assistant's employment contract for a fixed term or is it indefinitely valid?*
- *With whom is the employment contract concluded (an MP, MP group, the parliament, a party)?*
- *Which act prescribes the hiring of personal assistants to MPs?*

#### 2.1.1. "Personal Assistants" of MPs

Managing the MPs' agenda, taking minutes at committee meetings, supporting the MP during a press conference, writing speeches, and responding to inquiries from constituents are just some of the typical tasks of an assistant (see Annex 4 for more details).

Six out of the 15 parliaments that were studied have a system of personal assistants. This trend is visible in the Višegrad Four parliaments (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland), as well as the Baltic parliaments (Latvia and Lithuania) with the exception of the Estonian Parliament, which tried to introduce a system of personal assistants. However, the proposed provisions were repealed in 2009.

Personal assistants to MPs do not exist in the Western Balkan parliaments (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia), nor in Croatia and Slovenia. See Annex 4.

**Czech Republic** – each MP is entitled to 1,839 EUR/ month for hiring personal assistant(s); no limit to number of assistants.

**Hungary** – each MP is entitled to a minimum 3,200 EUR/month for hiring personal assistant(s) – three times monthly average national salary in 2019.

**Latvia** - no more than two assistants, although the total amount of remuneration for both assistants shall not exceed the amount allocated for the salary of one assistant.

**Lithuania** – no more than three assistants; salaries are determined through civil servant categories.

**Poland** – MPs receive lump-sum; no limit to number of assistants hired.

**Slovakia** – no more than three assistants; MPs are entitled to 2,949 EUR/month for hiring staff and for the operation of MP territorial office (2.7 times the average national monthly salary).

There is not a standard model that addresses the number of personal assistants to MPs, their status, tasks, and salaries. In some countries, the number of assistants ranges from two to three at most (Latvia, Lithuania Slovakia), while in others, there is no limit (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland). They complete a wide range of tasks from administrative and secretarial duties, to performing full-time policy advisor roles. The systems of personal assistants (in the countries that implement one) can be categorized as *funds-based* and *staff-based*.

In the *funds-based system*, which is found in the Czech Chamber of Deputies, Hungarian Parliament, and Polish Sejm and Senate, the parliament allocates a lump-sum to each MP, which they can use to hire their own assistant(s). There is no limit to the number of assistants that MPs can hire. The only restriction is the limit on the budget allocated for that purpose. MPs decide whether to hire a smaller number of assistant(s) with higher pay or a larger number of assistants with lower pay. In addition, the Polish MPs can also engage unpaid volunteers.

The *staff-based system* is similarly represented and recognized in Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia, where MPs may hire a certain number of assistants. Latvian MPs may hire no more than two assistants, whereas Lithuanian and Slovak MPs may hire up to three. Furthermore, in Latvia and Slovakia, MPs are entitled to a certain amount of funding for hiring assistants with a limit in the number of assistants hired, whereas Members of the Lithuanian Parliament are entitled to a certain number of assistants (three per Member) paid for by the Office of the Seimas, as opposed to a certain amount of funding. Moreover, the Lithuanian parliament allocates additional secretary-assistants to its Members with special needs.

In terms of the *allowance* for hiring staff, the maximum amount set for hiring assistant(s) in the Czech Chamber of Deputies is 1,839 EUR/month. That amount is much higher in Hungary, approx. 3,200 EUR/month, which is equal to the basic monthly remuneration of an MP and three times the average national salary. In addition, each MP in the Czech Chamber of Deputies is entitled to a sum for covering expenses for expert and administrative work up to the amount of 25% of the MP's base salary. 'An assistant may serve only one MP' is a rule in the Slovak Parliament, while in the Czech

Chamber of Deputies and the Lithuanian Parliament, an assistant may serve another MP from the same parliamentary group, but for no more than half of their total working time in Lithuania.

Usually, parliamentary party groups do not employ or engage the services of personal assistants. Instead, the selection process is carried out independently by MPs, while the contracts, which last until the MP's mandate ends, are usually signed by the Administration/Secretariat of Parliament.

A specificity of *status* exists in the Lithuanian Parliament, whereby personal assistants of MPs are considered "civil servants of political (personal) confidence", so their status and employment procedures are governed by the Law on Civil Service. The Lithuanian Parliament approves a list of positions of civil servants of political (personal) confidence and a maximum number of assistants per MP.

The *tasks* that personal assistants perform depend mainly on the working methods and preferences of the MP they serve. Some assistants perform day-to-day tasks for their MPs, while others are involved in drafting bills, providing policy analysis, and communicating with constituents. For example, *the Latvian Parliament's Rules of Procedure* describes such tasks in detail (see Annex 4). In Latvia, a Member's assistant also has the right to participate in open meetings of the *Saeima* committees on behalf of the Member they serve.

In Poland, assistant(s) work in constituency offices run by members of the Polish Parliament that receive a lump-sum to cover the costs of operating the offices, whereas in the Slovak Parliament, the assistants can work both on the parliamentary premises (in the office of the respective MP) and in the MP's constituency office (if the respective MP decides to have such an office). In Slovakia, the MP is entitled to an allowance for hiring parliamentary assistants and for the operating expenses of constituency offices.

Different acts govern the system of personal assistants in parliaments, from the *Rules of Procedure* (Czech Republic, Latvia) and *Economic Management Regulation* in the Czech Chamber of Deputies, *Parliamentary Act* in Hungary, to the *Law on Civil Service* in Lithuania,

Act of 9 May 1996 on the Exercise of the Mandate of a Deputy or Senator in Poland, and Act no. 120/1993 Coll. on the salaries of certain constitutional officials in Slovakia.

**More detailed information on different systems in countries that support the existence of personal assistants of MPs (Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia) can be found under the Country overview in Annex 4.**

## 2.1.2. Staff and financial allocation to MP groups

A more common type of partisan support is hiring staff in MP groups, though the number of staff hired is rather limited. An exception is the Hungarian Parliament, where, besides assistants for MPs, there is a statutory number (up to one staff member per each MP) of staff hired for MP groups.

*This subchapter provides answers to the following questions:*

- *How many staff members (e.g. political advisors, admin staff) does each parliamentary group have or how many political staff per MP are employed in one group?*
- *What amount of financial resources are allocated to each MP group in order to employ/engage political staff?*
- *Are staff hired by the Parliament or the MP group?*
- *What kinds of tasks does the staff in MP groups perform?*
- *Is such financial and/or personnel support prescribed by the Rules of Procedure or through some other act? If yes, can you please specify?*

*Note: Since party groups may be entitled to receive additional (public) funding for its operations, apart from funding through the parliament's budget, or straight from the state budget, some staff members of the parliamentary groups may be hired from financial sources other than that of the parliament.*

Aside from the office space and technical equipment provided by parliament, each parliament's MP groups are organized differently in terms of the number of staff engaged, financial resources allotted, status and contracting rules, and tasks performed.

Similar to personal assistants of MPs, the manner of engaging staff in MP groups and their number can be sorted in two categories: *funds-based* (Czech Republic, Estonia, Montenegro) and *staff-based* (Albania, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia).

It is common that the number of staff members in MP groups does not match the number of MPs in the group. Since support to MPs may be equalized or outreached in other parliaments through the system of hiring personal assistants. The Hungarian Parliament is an exception in that regard because, besides hiring personal assistants to MPs, each MP group is entitled to hire between five to 15 political staff, depending on the size of the group, plus political staff in the group equal to the number of members (for example, a party group of seven members can hire 7+5 employees and a party group of 57 members can hire 57+15 employees).

In the *funds-based system*, MP groups receive a certain amount of funds, in proportion to the number of MPs in the group and it is up to the group members to decide how much to spend on their political staff. Usually, the budget for an MP group consists of a base amount per group and an additional amount per MP in the group. For example, the Estonian Parliament allocates a base amount of 4,200 EUR per group per month and an additional amount of 400 EUR per MP per month. Likewise, in the Czech Chamber of Deputies, each group receives the same amount per month (919 EUR) plus the same amount for each member of the group (199 EUR), whereas opposition parties are entitled to a contribution which increases by a coefficient of 1.3 (or 259 EUR). In Montenegro, there is no limit to the number of staff hired, but the financial limit allocated to MP groups depends on the group size (base amount plus additional amount per MP).

The most common system is the *staff-based system*, in which there are predefined statutory numbers of staff members that parliamentary groups are entitled to. Some of the parliaments that set such a limit are the Croatian, Kosovo, Hungarian, Serbian, and Slovenian parliament. For example, in the Hungarian and Slovenian parliament, one statutory staff member in an MP group serves on average 2-3 MPs, while in the Kosovo Assembly and the North Macedonian Assembly, one staff member serves an average

of five MPs. As previously demonstrated, in addition to these statutory numbers of staff members, the Hungarian Parliament's MPs can be assisted by additional staff members up to equal the number of MPs who are members of that parliamentary group. The lowest number of political staff employed in MP groups is recognized in Slovakia, however the total number of political staff that supports MPs evens out since Slovak MPs have personal assistants (up to three) that support their parliamentary work. Additionally, employing a parliamentary group secretary is a common practice in some parliaments (Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia).

When it comes to the amount of financial resources allocated to MP groups in order to employ/engage political staff, amounts per MP differ significantly (see Table 6). If we exclude the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, which each allocates a significant amount of funds to hiring personal assistants of MPs as opposed to hiring staff in MP groups, the lowest amount of money per MP for hiring political staff in MP groups is in the Albanian Parliament.

It is at the discretion of the parliamentary group to define *tasks* that staff members perform.

The hiring and contracting rules for political staff in MP groups differ from parliament to parliament. They are not employees of the parliamentary administration, but the contracts are signed by the Administration of the Parliament upon proposal of the parliamentary group/MPs in Albania, Czech Republic, Estonia and North Macedonia. In Hungary, the director of the parliamentary group's office, together with the director general of the Office of the National Assembly, has the right to hire group staff members. They are hired by, and are employees of, the Chancellery in Slovakia, whereas in the Serbian and Slovenian parliaments, their positions are incorporated in a rulebook on organization and systematization of positions in the Assembly making the parliament their sole employer. In Montenegro and Kosovo, the MP group itself exercises employer rights over staff. In Croatia, contracts with staff are signed by the Secretary General and last until the end of the term of the parliament.

Rules of Procedure are the main mechanisms that govern operations of parliamentary party groups. However, some additional acts usually regulate such issues in more detail. The following

of such acts include: *Law on Status of MPs* (Albania), *Economic Management Regulation for Political Groups* (Czech Chamber of Deputies), *Act on the National Assembly* (Hungary), *Board of the Seimas Decision* (Lithuania), *Administrative Committee Decision* (Montenegro), *Budgetary Council of the Assembly* (North Macedonia), *Rules on the Management of Parliamentary Caucuses* (Slovakia), *Deputies Act* (Slovenia), *Decision of the Board of the Riigikogu and order of the Secretary General* (Estonia), *Presidency* (Kosovo), *Committee on Administrative, Budgetary, Mandate and Immunity Issues Act* (Serbia).

***More detailed information on different systems in each country, along with a summary table, can be found under Annex 5.***

## **2.2 Non-partisan support to MPs**

In contrast to the previously described categories of advisors whose work is partisan in nature, staff members that work in the parliamentary administration are expected to have a non-partisan approach and serve the institution as a whole.

The expert (non-partisan) support to parliamentarians is key to the effective functioning of legislatures. Direct support for carrying out law-making and oversight functions of the legislature is provided through the legislative service, along with committee secretariats and research services that operate either as stand-alone units, or as a part of Parliamentary Institutes.

Each of these services has a specific role, though the responsibilities that fall within their portfolio differ from parliament to parliament. What most parliaments have in common is the role of legislative service as a separate department within parliamentary administrative structure, hiring professional staff with law degrees whose primary task is providing expertise in the field of legislative technique. Exceptionally, the Montenegrin and Serbian Parliament do not have such service. Instead, the scope of work of the legislative service in these two parliaments falls under the responsibility of the Legislative Committee Secretariat in the Montenegrin Parliament, and the Constitutional and Legislative Issues Committee in the Serbian National Assembly.

An equally important role, mainly through legislative service or committee secretariats in some parliaments, is providing legal opinion on the compliance of a bill with the constitution, domestic legal order, the EU acquis, and international law. Receiving tables of compliance with the EU acquis and/or with the international law from the government that usually accompany the bill submitted to the legislature is not enough, making oversight by the legislature crucial to holding the government accountable.

Below is an overview of the main tasks that the aforementioned services fulfill in the surveyed parliaments, whereas a more specific list can be found in Annex 6.

A thorough review of tasks performed by the aforementioned services in ten surveyed parliaments, shows that the *legislative service* has the most extensive role when it comes to providing support in law-making and oversight. The committee secretariats follow, by providing technical legislative support (particularly in those parliaments that do not have a separate legislative department), drafting committee reports, and giving consultations on issues of legislative and procedural character during committee meetings. Making sure that the bill is in compliance with the constitution, the existing domestic legal system, the international law, and the EU acquis can be a task of one of these services, or even both, as is the case in Estonia, and Hungary.

Drafting bills and amendments are tasks that are performed solely by the partisan staff in the Czech Chamber of Deputies and Slovak Parliament, while in the Western Balkan parliaments it is a task primarily performed by either the legislative service (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and North Macedonia) or committee secretariats (Montenegro and Serbia). It seems that such practice is common in parliaments where MPs rely mostly on expertise of parliamentary administration.

The *research service* also plays an important role in providing law-making and oversight support. For example, the Slovak and Montenegrin Parliamentary Institute staff may follow a committee meeting a research paper was drafted on the agenda item and, with the consent of the committee members, the Slovak Parliamentary Institute may even take the floor in the committee meeting. In North Macedonia, upon request of the

MPs, the research service may provide consultations on issues of legislative and procedural character during committee meetings. Diversely, in the Kosovo and Montenegro Assembly, after the state budget proposal enters parliamentary procedure, specific analysis is prepared by the Unit for Budget and Financial Analysis that operates within the Directorate for Research, Library, and Archive in Kosovo, or by the Parliamentary Budget Office that functions within the Parliamentary Institute in Montenegro.

*Parliamentary institutes as specialized units within parliamentary administrations structures play a significant role in providing non-partisan support to MPs. The amount and scope of work of departments that fall within them may differ from parliament to parliament, but they all have the same aim, which is to provide a unique level of expertise, primarily in the area of research and analysis, in numerous fields. The Czech Chamber of Deputies and the parliaments of Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Slovakia are some examples of where such institutes play an important role. Annex 7 provides information on budget allocations for functioning of Parliamentary Institutes in these four countries.*

While parliamentary administration staff must ensure impartiality, and treat each MP equally regardless of political affiliation, political staff/assistants seek to promote the interests of the MP they work for or the MP group they support. Thus, besides non-partisan staff, partisan staff working for MPs play a significant role. In Estonia, partisan staff is involved as much as non-partisan staff in the procedure, which gives MPs overview of expertise from both non-partisan and partisan perspectives. Partisan staff is also, to a large extent, involved in tasks such as drafting wording of bills and amendments to a bill in Estonia, Hungary, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovakia and drafting other legal acts in Estonia, Hungary, and Slovakia. Additionally, these staff members attend committee meetings in Albania, Estonia (where they can also take the floor in a committee meeting), Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. Apart from attending committee meetings, partisan staff employed in the Western Balkan parliaments of Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia do not seem to

play any other aforementioned law-making or oversight support role.

In Serbia, one non-partisan staff member serves the largest number of MPs (one for five MPs, followed by Albania where it is one for two MPs). On the other hand, the Parliament of North Macedonia has the largest number of non-partisan staff members that are at the disposal of the MPs (see Annex 3).

### **2.3.1. Media relations support to MPs**

The work of parliamentarians is subject to citizens' scrutiny and assessment. MPs should be transparent about the work they do in order to ensure accountability. When it comes to monitoring the work and the flow of information from MPs to citizens, the media undoubtedly plays a central role.

In this process, MPs must be provided with support in dealing with media inquiries and be up-to-date with current trends regarding communication channels. Often, media and public relations departments within parliaments are limited in the scope of activities and support that they can provide to individual MPs. Such activities include providing official communiqués to the media about the work of parliament and maintaining the parliamentary website and any other social media profile that parliament as an institution has. However, when it comes to maintaining a website and social media profiles organized by individual MPs, a growing trend which presents a platform for debates and discussions, the parliamentary administration offers minimal or no assistance. Rather, it is usually the responsibility of MPs' personal assistants or assistants hired through MP groups.

***Annex 8 provides an overview of tasks that the public relations and media departments in parliaments provide.***

## PART THREE. ENGAGING EXTERNAL EXPERTISE

In nine of the parliaments that participated in the survey, there is a mechanism in place to facilitate engagement of external expertise. The process of acquiring external expertise is usually defined in the Rules of Procedure and further stipulated in other parliamentary acts. The engagement of experts comes in many different forms in parliaments. In the Western Balkan parliaments (Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia), for example, committees can request external expertise for a specific need they have. In other countries, experts can also address the needs of individual MPs (Czech Republic), MP groups and committees (Serbia, Slovakia), or for the needs of MPs, MP groups, and Committees (Hungary).

The Board of the Estonian Parliament proposed that committees and the Legal and Research Department may commission expert opinions and applied studies from universities and other institutions.

In terms of allowance, members of the Czech Republic Chamber of Deputies are entitled to

25% of the base salary of MPs for engaging external expertise. The Estonian Parliament is entitled to be reimbursed by up to 30% of the MP's salary for the purpose of engaging external expertise. In the Albanian Parliament, the rate is 40% of the monthly salary of a permanent committee advisor. External experts engaged by the Parliament of Montenegro receive monthly amounts equivalent to the salary of a committee secretariat advisor or up to 800 EUR per project by the Assembly of Kosovo.

In Slovakia and Hungary, funds allocated to MPs and MP groups from the parliament's budget can be used to engage external expertise or to conduct a specific task, whereas in the North Macedonian Parliament, external experts are engaged at the request of parliamentary groups.

***Below is a summary table of the parliamentary systems of engaging external expertise, while Annex 9 provides a more detailed overview of the external expertise systems in nine surveyed parliaments.***

**Table 8. Summary of several parliamentary systems of engaging external expertise**

	<i>External expertise</i>	<i>For the purpose of</i>	<i>Decision taken by</i>	<i>Compensation level</i>
<i>Albania</i>	✓	Committee/Sub-committee/Council	Bureau of the Parliament	Monthly compensation of up to 40% of the monthly salary of a permanent committee's advisor
<i>Czech Rep.</i>	✓	MPs, as needed	MPs	25% of an MP's base salary
<i>Estonia</i>	✓	MPs/committees/ Legal and Research Department	Board of the Parliament	up to 30% of an MP's salary
<i>Hungary</i>	✓	MPs / parliamentary party groups / committees	MPs / MP groups / committees	Within the allowance provided to MPs / MP groups / committees
<i>Kosovo</i>	✓	Committees	Committees	Fixed 50 EUR daily fee, up to 800 EUR per expertise
<i>Montenegro</i>	✓	Committees	Committees	Monthly compensation equivalent to the monthly salary of a committee secretariat advisor (currently approx. 680 EUR)
<i>N. Macedonia</i>	✓	Committees	Committees, upon proposal of MP groups from the ruling majority and opposition	n/a
<i>Serbia</i>	✓	Committees / MP groups	For committees: President of the Parliament, upon a committee's proposal; For MP groups: Administrative, Budgetary, Mandate and Immunity Issues Committee	n/a
<i>Slovakia</i>	✓	Committees / MP groups	Committees / MP groups	n/a

## PART FOUR. COMMUNICATION WITH CONSTITUENTS

Regarding their representative role, it is crucial that MPs build and maintain contact with their electorate who will hold them accountable to their actions in office and to the promises they made during their electoral campaign, to better understand the needs, priorities and concerns of constituents, and to utilize this feedback to translate into legislative action; dedicated parliamentary and/or constituency offices provide a space for citizens to connect with their representatives along these lines.

Two different constituency types are in place in the surveyed countries: *a single nationwide constituency* (Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovakia) and *multiple geographic constituencies* (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, North Macedonia, Poland, and Slovenia).

In order to support members of parliament so that they can more effectively represent their electorate, meet citizens' expectations, and communicate efficiently with them, parliaments may provide an additional allowance to MPs.

For example, in the Czech Republic, aside from having offices in the Chamber of Deputies premises where deputies can meet with citizens, each MP has their own constituency office space and a monthly allowance, dependent on the size of the constituency, to compensate for additional expenses incurred. Similarly, in Slovenia, members' offices are established in the constituencies and each member is entitled to a monthly lump sum to cover expenses incurred due to their work in the constituency. On the other side, in the Polish Sejm, there are no MPs' offices on parliamentary premises; however, every member is obliged to run at least one office in their constituency, so there are 460 official MP offices and many more unofficial ones. The operational costs of these offices (such as lease, furniture and equipment, office supplies, phone, internet expenses) are covered by the parliament.

Joint offices may also be set up in Poland and Slovenia.

MPs may use financial resources they are entitled to, either individually or through MPs groups, to cover the costs related to their communication

with the electorate, if they decide to do so, in Estonia, Hungary, and Slovakia.

Constituency offices housed in local government spaces are set up in almost every electoral district in North Macedonia. In cooperation with the local government, such offices are set up in some regions of Albania, with separate offices for majority and opposition MPs. Parliamentary constituency offices are also set up in Serbia where citizens can voice their opinions on certain issues and civic initiatives in direct communication with MPs. MPs may also arrange meetings with citizens in parliamentary premises (offices of MPs or MP groups).

Some other Western Balkan parliaments have no such set-up and face limited office space; therefore, their MPs can meet with citizens in the offices of political parties in municipalities, entities and districts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or in MP group offices within parliamentary premises in the parliaments in Kosovo and Montenegro.

***Below is a summary table presenting constituency types and availability of MPs' constituency offices. Annex 10 provides a country overview of parliaments' set-up for MP communication with constituents.***

**Table 9: Summary of constituency types and availability of MPs' constituency offices**

	<i>Electoral system – Constituencies</i>	<i>MPs' Constituency Offices</i>
Albania	- 12 multi-member constituencies corresponding to Albania's 12 administrative regions (from four to 32 seats)	24 MPs' offices in 12 regions: one office for the majority parliamentary group, one office for opposition
BiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the Republika Srpska	No such offices
Czech Republic ( <i>The Chamber of Deputies</i> )	- 14 multi-member constituencies ("electoral regions")	Each Member has their own constituency office space; monthly amount ranges depending on the size of city/municipality
Estonia	- 12 multi-member (six to 13 seats, according to population) constituencies	MPs may use allowance (30% of the salary, approx. 1,300 EUR) for this purpose if they want to
Hungary	- 106 single-member constituencies - one nationwide constituency (returning 93 members elected under the proportional representation system)	MPs may use allowance (up to 50% of the MP's basic remuneration, approx. 1,200 EUR) for this purpose if they want to
Kosovo	one nationwide constituency	No such offices
Montenegro	one nationwide constituency	No such offices
North Macedonia	- Six multi-member constituencies in the country (20 seats each; 120 seats in total); - One constituency abroad which covers Europe, Africa, North and South America, Australia and Asia.	MPs constituency offices for contact with the citizens are set up in almost every constituency
Poland (Sejm)	- 41 multi-member (seven-19 seats) constituencies, a total of 460 seats	Every MP is obliged to run at least one office in his/her constituency; MPs receive allowance to run their offices (approx. 3,200 EUR/month)
Serbia	one nationwide constituency	There are currently 42 offices in districts and provinces of Serbia
Slovakia	one nationwide constituency	MPs may use allowance they are entitled to (2,949 EUR/month) for hiring personal assistants and covering operational expenses for parliamentary territorial office
Slovenia	Eight electoral units each divided into 11 single-seat constituencies (88 seats in all) special constituencies for two members, respectively representing the Hungarian and Italian minorities	Members' offices are established in the constituencies; each Member is entitled to a monthly lump sum (180 EUR) to run operational costs

Source: Inter-parliamentary Union, survey responses

## PART FIVE. MP OFFICE SPACE

In Estonia, Hungary, North Macedonia, and Slovakia, each Member is provided with a fully equipped office in the parliamentary building, with the exception of Poland which has no individual offices for MPs in its parliamentary building. Instead, the Polish MPs are entitled to individual constituency offices.

In a few cases (Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro), this office space is restricted to certain members (e.g. the Speaker, deputy speakers, committee/commission chairs, heads of MP groups).

Sharing office space is a common practice in Albania, Czech Republic, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, whereas in Slovakia, each MP has their own office and can share it with assistant(s).

Usually, MP groups also have their own offices within parliamentary premises and the size of the

office allocated to MP groups depends on the number of its members. In principle, groups with the most members get the largest offices.

**Annex 11 provides an overview of parliaments' set-up for MPs' office spaces and provides answers to the following questions:**

- Does each MP have his/her own office space?
- Does an MP share office space with his/her collaborators?
- Is the allocation of office space for MPs and/or MP groups regulated by law or some other act? If not, how is the office space allocated to MPs and parliamentary groups in practice?

**Table 8. MPs' office space on parliamentary premises**

	<i>Individual office space</i>	<i>Individual office space for certain categories</i>	<i>Shared office space</i>	<i>Legal base</i>
<b>Albania</b>		✓	✓	Law no. 8550 on "The Status of MPs"
<b>Czech Republic</b>			✓	Act no. 236/1995 Coll. – On Salary of the Representatives of the State
<b>Estonia</b>	✓			Not regulated
<b>Hungary</b>	✓			Act XXXVI of 2012 on the National Assembly
<b>Kosovo</b>		✓	✓	Rules of Procedure
<b>Montenegro</b>		✓	✓	Not regulated
<b>N. Macedonia</b>	✓			Act on the internal order of the Assembly
<b>Poland</b>	✓ (constituency office only)			n/a
<b>Serbia</b>			✓	Act of the Secretary General
<b>Slovakia</b>	✓			Act on the salaries of certain constitutional officials

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Each parliament provides allowances to MPs, but the level and purpose vary. The Višegrad Group parliaments and most Baltic States' parliaments provide special allowance for MPs to hire support staff of their own. On the other hand, most parliaments in the Western Balkans enjoy a substantial amount of funding allocated to the work of MPs (salaries, housing, representation, travel). However, limited resources are allocated to the work of MP groups, and no resources are allocated for hiring personal assistants. A more comprehensive overview of the personnel and financial resources is required to conduct specific analysis on the level and type of resources.
- Two different models are in place for partisan staff structures: engagement of staff within MP groups that serve the group as a whole and/or engagement of personal assistants to MPs that serve individual MPs. In most parliaments, MP groups have only a few advisors and administrative staff at their disposal. Sometimes, such scarce staff resources at the MP group level are offset by MPs' personal assistants, who are treated separately from those staff members working for the MP group.

Both models recognize two systems in place: *fund-based* and *staff-based*. The main difference is that every assistant is paid the same in the staff-based system, whereas the fund-based system gives more flexibility for the MP to choose whether to hire a smaller group of well-paid staff members or a larger group of lesser paid staff. It is up to the parliament to choose which system it wants to adopt.

- Most surveyed parliaments tend to rely on their legislative service, committee secretariats, and research service to carry out lawmaking and oversight activities. Despite the fact that each of these services has numerous staff members, they can assist all the MPs in a limited way and often serve more than one MP. Parliaments with scarce non-partisan staff members need to additionally strengthen their specialized services with human capacities.

However, the most balanced approach is for parliaments to have a political staff structure parallel to the parliamentary administrative one. Such structure would provide adequate

administrative and professional support for parliamentary work of Members from a partisan point of view.

- It is common for parliaments to provide ad-hoc funding for engaging external expertise in specific fields that allow MPs to have access to the best available evidence and in-depth analysis on specific issues. Such a mechanism provides an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of the work of MPs, MP groups, committees, and, in some instances, strengthen the capacity of parliamentary research support. Most often, the parliamentary committees are responsible for engaging expertise for discussion on law proposals. The procedure for engaging expertise should be clear, precise, transparent, and, if engaged for committee purposes, the selection should be decided on by committee members.
- MPs in their representative role, to some extent, rely on parliamentary media support services. An additional tool to reach the public is through social media accounts, for example, in order to engage citizens and involve them in MP's activities. Parliaments put some effort into promoting the work that individual MPs do, but their support for individual MPs is rather limited. Parliamentarians must be enabled to have necessary means (i.e. provision of greater resources) either through renting an office or hiring assistants who will assist them in improving public understanding of what MPs do, inside and outside parliament.
- Parliaments appear to be relatively open institutions to their citizens. Elected representatives seem to be linked to a geographically defined constituency through the establishment of constituency offices. Since Members of parliament are elected to serve the public interest, MPs' representative responsibility is very important to both citizens and politicians and it is an expected part of the job. In Poland, for example, each MP is obliged to run at least one office in his/her constituency. The type of constituency has an impact on the nature of contact and representation. Thus, it seems that in the parliaments where the electoral system recognizes one single constituency, the leadership of parliament is often reluctant to allocate funds for constituency offices. Some parliaments are making efforts to provide possibilities for direct contact with citizens, allowing them to hold representatives

accountable. Certainly, more still needs to be done to improve the connection between citizens and the parliament.

- There is not always individual office space on parliamentary premises. There is no individual office space on parliamentary premises in Poland, however, there are individual office spaces in the MPs' constituencies. Not having a separate office is similarly represented among

There is no 'one-size fits all' approach or solution when it comes to providing financial and personnel resources to MPs and MP groups. In order to fully understand the situation in parliaments, it is necessary to take into account a variety of factors, such as their budgetary amounts starting from the state level, institutional framework, electoral systems, partisan and non-partisan structures, and parliamentary infrastructures and organization.

surveyed parliaments, especially in the Western Balkans. Parliamentarians should enjoy individual workspaces and spaces for meeting and organizing activities, which are essential to their roles. The net benefit will largely depend on a parliament's special capacities and available funding for purchasing or renting additional space.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1 - Survey

### Annual budget of the Parliament

1. What is the total annual budget of the parliament?
2. If possible, can you please break down the total annual budget of the Parliament according to the following categories:
  - expenses directly related to the Members of Parliament,
  - expenses related to the work of MP groups.

### MP groups and financial and human resources to support their work

1. What kind of financial and personnel support does each MP group (faction, parliamentary party group) receive from the Parliament?
  - How many staff members (e.g. political advisors, admin staff) does each parliamentary group have or how many political staff are employed per MP in one group?
  - What is the amount of financial resources allocated to each MP group in order to employ/engage political staff?
  - Are staff hired by the Parliament or MP group?
  - Can you briefly describe what kind of tasks the staff in MP groups perform?
  - Is such financial and/or personnel support prescribed by the Rules of Procedure or through some other act? If yes, can you please specify?

### Personal assistants of MPs

1. Do members of your parliament have a personal assistant / personal assistants or are the MPs served by assistants employed by the member's parliamentary group?

If the MPs have personal assistant(s), please provide the following information:

- How many assistants can a member have?
- Can one assistant serve two or more Members of Parliament at the same time?
- Does a member / parliamentary group / party receive an allocation from the parliament that can be used to hire a personal assistant? How, in general, is the system of assistants funded?
- Who decides the terms on which MPs' assistants are employed?
- What are the main tasks of such personal assistant?
- Is the assistant's work space on the parliament's premises or in the constituency?
- Is an assistant's employment contract for a fixed term or indefinitely valid?
- With whom is the employment contract concluded (an MP, MP group, the parliament, a party)?
- Which act prescribes hiring of personal assistants to MPs?

### MP's office space

1. Does each MP have his/her own office space?
2. Does an MP share office space with his/her collaborators?
3. Is the allocation of office space for MPs and/or MP groups regulated by law or some other act? If not, how is the office space allocated to MPs and parliamentary groups in practice?

### MPs' communication with their constituents

- What resources does the parliament have in place to enable MPs' adequate communication with their constituents?

### Media relations support (including social media)

- What media relations support from the parliamentary service is provided to MPs?

**Engaging external expertise**

1. Are MPs, MP groups, or committee members allowed to engage external expertise to conduct a specific task?
2. Do written rules exist which specify and govern the conditions for engaging such external expertise and for using budgetary resources to pay for external expertise? If yes, can you briefly explain the procedure or refer us to the relevant act that regulates this issue?

**Parliamentary administration staff in numbers**

1. What is the total number of staff employed in parliamentary administration?
2. What is the total number of non-partisan staff that support legislative, representative, and oversight activities of MPs? This number excludes general logistical staff (e.g. security, drivers, cleaners, public procurement, other administrative and technical support staff).

***We would appreciate it if you could fill in the table below, referring which service provides the listed tasks.***

Type of task	Task of legislative (legal) service	Task of committee secretariats	Performed by other unit in parliamentary administration (please specify)	Performed by partisan staff (staff in MP groups, MPs' assistants, etc.)	Comments
drafting wording of bills					
drafting amendments to a bill					
drafting other legal acts					
providing technical comments to a bill					
reviewing conformity of bill with the legal system					
reviewing conformity of a bill with the Constitution					
reviewing compliance of a bill with the <i>EU acquis</i>					
reviewing compliance of a bill with international law					
preparing legal opinion to a state budget proposal					
following/participation in a committee meeting					
taking the floor in a committee meeting					
drafting a report of a leading committee					
giving consultations on issues of legislative and procedural character during committee meetings					

## Annex 2 – Parliament’s budget

### Country Overview

*Note: Figures provided in local currencies are converted to EUR currency by using OANDA currency converter at [www1.oanda.com/currency/converter](http://www1.oanda.com/currency/converter). Figures in tables for the Czech Republic and Slovenia represent lower chambers. Figures for Bosnia and Herzegovina represent both houses (House of Representatives and House of People).*

**Albania:** Total annual parliamentary budget is around 1.2 billion ALL (or 10.5 million EUR). It makes up about 0.23% of the state budget. Expenses directly related to MPs can be broken down, as follows: salary expenses - 260 million ALL (or 2.1 million EUR); social security and health benefits - 32 million ALL (or 260,000 EUR); expenses per MP, as stipulated in the law on “The status of MPs” in Albania which include phone expenditures (a fixed tariff), fuel remuneration, expenses for foreign travel, rent expenses for MPs not residing in Tirana, and allowance for participation in the permanent committees and subcommittees, all amount to about 186,000,000 ALL (or 1.5 million EUR). With regards to the MPs groups, for the biggest parliamentary group the yearly expenses (salary and social security contributions for hiring staff) amount to ca. 70,000 EUR. For smaller parliamentary groups, annual salary expenses (salary and social security contributions for hiring staff) amount to 17,000 EUR. [Source: survey response](#)

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The budget of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina (comprising two Chambers: House of Representatives and House of Peoples) in 2018: 15,430,000 BAM (or 7,889,230 EUR). State budget in 2018: 950,000,000 BAM (or 485,727,000 EUR). Expenses related to MP groups: 950,000 BAM or 485,727 EUR. [Source: survey response](#)

**Croatia:** Croatian Parliament’s planned budget for 2020 amounts to 149,553,099 HRK (or 19,746,800 EUR). The 2020 state budget amounts to 129,586,736,674 HRK (or 17,110,500,000 EUR). [Source: Hrvatski sabor, Proračun Hrvatskog sabora za 2020. godinu, https://www.sabor.hr/sites/default/files/uploads/inline-files/PRORACUN\\_HS\\_2020-2022.pdf](https://www.sabor.hr/sites/default/files/uploads/inline-files/PRORACUN_HS_2020-2022.pdf)

**Czech Republic:** The Chamber of Deputies’ budget in 2020 is 52,312,448 EUR. In terms of expenses directly related to the Members of Parliament, they can be divided as follows: salaries of the representatives of the state – 8,193,942 EUR; e-communication services – 221,769 EUR; travel insurance – 3,561 EUR; furnishings and rents of non-residential spaces – 1,907,675 EUR; assistants’ expenses – 3,805,557 EUR; travel expenses: 747,880 EUR; expert reports expenses: 1,488,831 EUR: office supplies: 190,007 EUR; reimbursement for general expenses – 3,841,329 EUR. Total: 20,400,551 EUR. Reimbursement for general expenses granted to the political groups according to Section 78 of the Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies and the Economic Management Regulations for Political Groups approved by the Chamber of Deputies in 2018: 657,854 EUR.

According to the Economic Management Regulations for Political Groups approved by the Chamber of Deputies each year, political groups receive monthly financial allocations for their activities - 919 EUR per political group + 199 EUR for each member of the government party group or 259 EUR for each member of the opposition party group. Total financial allocation for party groups per month in 2020 was 54,821 (657.854 EUR / 12 months). The financial resources granted by the Office allocated for hiring assistants are 1,839 EUR per deputy per month. [Source: survey response](#)

**Estonia:** Total parliamentary budget for 2020 is 21,767,400 EUR. This figure includes the budget of Riigikogu, Chancellery of the Riigikogu, Foresight Centre, and Electoral Office. Expenses directly related to MPs amount to 10,013,000 EUR in 2020 and include basic salaries for MPs, reimbursement of expenses and housing, travel, and training. Expenses related to the work of MP groups amount to 1,064,700 EUR in 2020 and do not include the current expenditures (furniture, equipment, utility costs, IT hardware and licenses, etc.), which are included in the budget of the Chancellery of the Riigikogu. The amount of financial resources allocated to MP groups in order to employ/engage political staff for all five factions of the Riigikogu in 2020 is 1,053,300 EUR (incl. taxes). Total state budget expenditure for 2020 is 11.6 billion EUR. [Source: survey response](#)

**Hungary:** Total expenditures of the *Office of the National Assembly* that deals with the majority of the expenditures related to the constitutional functions of the Parliament (such as the remuneration of the MPs, running costs of parliamentary buildings, etc.), in local currency, is 37,54 billion HUF (or 108,983,000 EUR). According to the Act LXXI of 2020 on the Central Budget of Hungary, the total annual budget of the Chapter I – National Assembly is 150,837 billion HUF. However, it should be noted that this is the grand sum of Chapter I as a whole, combining several components other than the operational costs and, as a consequence, the annual budget of the Parliament itself. The remuneration of MPs and Nationality Advocates (including social security expenses), various allowances, such as fuel card, housing (if they do not reside in Budapest), etc. is set at 6.862 billion HUF (or 19,921,200 EUR) for 2020. Detailed expenses related to the work of MP groups are not available. Such expenses, e.g. salaries of their staff, are planned in the general budget in the same structure as of other parts and employees of the Office of the National Assembly. The expenses they are entitled to depend, to a great extent, on the size of the parliamentary group. Namely, the annual central budget always sets the statutory amount of expenditures pertinent to the political parties based on the received votes (both in the parliament and those that could not perform the constitutional threshold to enter to the Parliament, but reached at least 1% of the votes on the last general election). Subsidized parties in the Parliament for the FY 2020: FIDESZ - Magyar Polgári Szövetség 967.8 million HUF (2,809,630 EUR); Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom - Párt 510.3 million HUF (1,481,460 EUR); Magyar Szocialista Párt 305.5 million HUF (915,932 EUR); Lehet Más a Politika 217.9 million HUF (632,589 EUR); Demokratikus Koalíció 207.1 million HUF (601,235 EUR); Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt 180.4 million HUF (523,722 EUR); Párbeszéd Magyarországért Párt 91.0 million HUF (264,183 EUR). Subsidized parties not in the Parliament for the FY 2020 are: Momentum Mozgalom 44.3 million HUF; Magyar Kétfarkú Kutypárt 24.6 million HUF. Total amount of the Central budget is roughly to 21,793 billion HUF. [Source: survey response](#)

**Kosovo:** The budget of the Assembly for 2020 is 11,155,484 EUR and it is divided into four programs. The budget for MPs' programs is 5,026,450 EUR (this amount includes 500,000

EUR allocated for the payment of transitional salaries of MPs in the 6<sup>th</sup> legislature, that are not elected in the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature and do not have other sources of income).

\*The Assembly of Kosovo does not have a separate budget line for parliamentary groups. Parliamentary groups are funded by the budget allocations for Financing of Political Entities, as stipulated by the Law on Financing Political Parties. Pursuant to the Law on Budget for 2020, the budget allocated for "Political Support Staff" is 1,133,200 EUR (*this amount includes salaries and allowances and goods and services, for this category*). The law stipulates that the amount of budget dedicated to support political subjects cannot exceed 0.17% of the state budget. Parliamentary groups can hire staff from this budget. However, parliamentary groups also benefit from the Assembly budget in two ways: directly, through salaries and wages for the political and support staff and indirectly, by covering the costs of goods and services. Based on the budget plans for 2020, salaries and wages for political staff are allocated 181,000 EUR. For goods and services (office equipment, inventory, internet and other services) about 200,000 EUR is allocated. In relation to the overall budget of the Assembly, parliamentary groups during 2020 are allocated roughly 380,000 EUR, or 3.4% of the budget. This percentage is low because most of the expenses of the parliamentary groups are covered by the budget allocated by the parliamentary political parties within the Democratization Fund according to the law on financing of political parties. The total state budget in 2020 is 2,356,860,915 EUR. [Source: survey response](#)

**Lithuania:** The figures in the tables use data from 2018. The total parliamentary budget in 2018 was 30,550,000 EUR. Total expenditures for MPs of 6.4 million EUR include remuneration and social insurance contributions of MPs and reimbursement to cover expenses related to their parliamentary activities (e.g. office, postal expenses, transportation), but do not cover foreign travel expenses. Expenditures for political staff of 4.59 million EUR include remuneration and social insurance contributions of political staff (assistants of MPs, etc.). [Source: ECPRD parliamentary indicator](#)

**Montenegro:** The total parliamentary budget in 2020 amounts to 9,581,510 EUR. Expenses related to MPs include remuneration, allowances, representation expenses, official trips, consulting

services, funds allocated to MP groups, etc. and amount to 4,506,686 EUR. Annual expenditures for MP groups amount to 360,000 EUR. [Source: survey response](#)

**North Macedonia:** The planned budget of the Assembly with the supplementary budget for 2020 is 476,610,000 MKD (or 7,710,154 EUR) Budget funds intended for MPs (salaries, offices, and office staff) are 161,600,000 MKD, or 33.9% of total budget, out of which 151,200,000 MKD (31.7% of overall budget) gross value, are planned for MPs salaries (not including payments of appanage) and 10,400,000 MKD (2.2% of overall budget) are planned for the constituent offices for contact of the MPs with the citizens. The aforementioned amount does not include travel costs and rent expenses. No information is available for expenses related to the Members of Parliament or the work of MP groups. [Source: survey response](#)

**Serbia:** The annual budget of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, in local currency, is 3,333,924,000 RSD (or 28,251,300 EUR). The budget expenses directly related to Members of Parliament are 660,388,000 RSD (or 5,596,050 EUR). Total state budget for 2020 amounts to 1,318,418,831,000 RSD (or 11,172,100,000 EUR). [Source: survey response](#)

**Slovakia:** The annual budget of the Chancellery of the National Council of the Slovak Republic in 2019 was 48,038,000 EUR (the Chancellery is also the manager of Bratislava castle and its premises; thus, the total budget of the Chancellery includes resources for maintenance and reconstruction of these historical buildings, as well). Total expenditure of the state budget was 17,538,901,300 EUR. Salaries and other settlements for MPs in 2019 were 9,133,000 EUR.

Pursuant to the decision of the Speaker of the National Council, the [monthly allowance](#) for each parliamentary group in 2020 is as follows: Ordinary people and independent personalities - 1,785 EUR; SMER - Social Democracy - 1,330 EUR; Kotlebovci - People's Party Our Slovakia - 595 EUR; Freedom and Solidarity - 455 EUR; We are Family - 595 EUR; For People - 420 EUR. Each parliamentary group gets an allowance calculated based on its number of MPs – 35 EUR/Member of Parliament/month. [Source: survey response](#)

**Slovenia:** The figures provided in the tables refer to the National Assembly (lower chamber) for 2018. The total size of the National Assembly budget was 25.738.544,64 EUR. The annual budget for the work of MPs in the amount of 7,228,920.97 EUR includes expenses for salaries, allowances, business travels, trainings, phone, etc. Salaries of political staff, paid directly by the National Assembly amounted to 1,198,153.41 EUR. Members of Parliament can hire additional staff or buy services (contract with suppliers outside the parliament) to support their work in parliament. Altogether, salaries paid to the political staff and sources for additional support in 2018 amounted to 1,958,109.32 EUR. [Source: ECPRD parliamentary indicator](#)

### Annex 3 – Total staff members (parliamentary administration, non-partisan and partisan staff)

*Note: Non-partisan staff relate to parliamentary administrative staff members that support legislative, representative, and oversight activities of MPs. This number excludes general logistical staff (e.g. security, drivers, cleaners, public procurement, other administrative and technical support staff).*

### Country overview

**Albania:** Total number of staff employed in parliamentary administration is 235. Total number of non-partisan staff is 66. [Source: survey response.](#)

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Total number of staff employed in parliamentary administration is 168. [Source: survey response.](#)

**Croatia:** Total number of staff employed in parliamentary administration is 266 (reference year is 2018). [Source: ECPRD parliamentary indicator](#)

**Czech Republic:** Total number of staff in political groups (25) and the approximate overall number of assistants to the deputies (313) is 338. The staff are not employees of the Office of the Chamber of Deputies; they are hired solely by the political groups and financed by the financial support granted to the groups by the Office and by various other means of the particular political party. The total number of non-partisan staff employed by the Office of the Chamber of

Deputies is approximately 355 employees. Total number of non-partisan staff is 174, distributed as follows: Secretariat of the President of the Chamber of Deputies (14); Secretariats of the Vice-Presidents of the Chamber of Deputies (5); Standing Committees (53); Standing Commissions (8); Legislative Department (25); Organizational Department (17) Press Department (15); Department of International Relations (10); Parliamentary Institute (27). [Source: survey response.](#)

**Estonia:** As of 20 May 2020, there is a total of 221 staff members. This number includes political staff employed by factions, staff of Foresight Centre and State Electoral Office. (number of political staff employed by factions is 30). The number of non-political staff as of 20 May 2020 is 140. The number of staff of the committees and Legal and Research Department is 57. [Source: survey response.](#)

**Hungary:** The total number of staff employed by parliamentary administration is 673 (plus 38 part - time employees). Manual workers are not included. The total number of non-partisan staff (employees of the Directorate for Legislation) is 143. At the end of 2019, the number of political staff employed by the Office of the National Assembly for political groups (220) and staff employed by MPs (1136) funded by parliament was 1356. [Source: survey response and ECPRD parliamentary indicator.](#)

**Kosovo:** The total number of staff employed in parliamentary administration is 192. There is a total of 86 non-partisan staff working in four directorates: Directorate for research, library and archives; Directorate for support to parliamentary committees; Directorate for legal services; Directorate for legal and procedural matters. The total number of political and support staff engaged in the Assembly, paid from the Assembly budget, is 56 employees, distributed as follows: Speaker's cabinet staff (10), Deputy Speaker's staff (10), Committee chairperson's staff (14), MP group staff (22). [Source: survey response](#)

**Lithuania:** In 2018, there was a total of 409 members of staff in parliament (this number includes 243 career civil servants employed on the basis of the Law on Civil Service and 166 services staff employed on the basis of the Labor Code). There was a total of 441 political staff

members employed by political groups and MPs. The number of political staff consists of assistants of MPs (404), staff of political groups (22), and secretariats of the Speaker, Deputy Speakers and the Leader of the Opposition (15 in total). [Source: ECPRD parliamentary indicator](#)

**Montenegro:** The total number of staff employed in parliamentary administration is 204. The total number of non-partisan staff is 70. Since MP groups hire their own staff, there is no data on the number of partisan staff members employed with MP groups. [Source: survey response.](#)

**North Macedonia:** The total number of staff employed in parliamentary administration is 269. The total number of non-partisan staff is 138. The total number of partisan staff paid by money from the parliamentary budget is 64 (this number includes assistants to MPs and assistants in constituent offices for contact of the MP with citizens). The number refers to the last MPs' mandate from 2016-2020. [Source: survey response.](#)

**Serbia:** The National Assembly Service shall comprise of a total of 214 classified jobs with 510 employees, as follows: 5 civil servants in appointed positions, 384 civil servants in executive positions, and 121 general service employees. The number does not include staff at Speaker's and Deputy Speaker's office or contracted consultants in MP groups. There is no exact figure on total number of non-partisan staff. Estimates hold that it is approximately 50 employees. Political staff employed by political groups and MPs is 90 in 2020. [Source: survey response and ECPRD parliamentary indicator.](#)

**Slovakia:** There are 144 employees in civil service (pursuant to Act no. 55/2017 Coll. on Civil service as amended) and 233 employees in public service (pursuant to Act no. 552/2003 Coll. on the performance of work in the public interest as amended). There is no precise figure on the number of non-partisan staff. It might be approximately 100 employees. [Source: survey response](#)

**Slovenia:** The total number of staff in the National Assembly parliamentary service was 320 in November 2019. The number of political staff employed by political groups and MPs was

104 in November 2019. Source: ECPRD parliamentary indicator

***This Annex is complimented by a graph and a table, as follows: Annex 3 – Figure 1: Number of total parliamentary administration staff, non-partisan staff and staff employed by MP groups***

*and MPs (partisan staff), compared to the number of MPs; and Annex 3 – Table 1. The number of total parliamentary administration staff, non-partisan staff, and staff employed by MP groups and MPs (partisan staff), compared to each MP*

## Annex 4 – Personal assistants of MPs

Table: Existence of the system of personal assistant(s) of MPs in surveyed countries

	Right to personal assistant(s)		Model		Number of staff per MP		Status of staff	Allowance per MP per month (EUR)	Working space	
	Yes	No	Staff-based	Funds-based	Limit	No limit			Parliament	Constituency
Albania		✓								
BaH		✓								
Croatia		✓								
Czech Republic	✓			✓		✓	Contractors, Member-assistant contract cosigned with the Office of the Chamber of Deputies	1,839	✓	✓
Estonia		✓								
Hungary	✓			✓		✓	Member-assistants contract cosigned with the Office of the National Assembly	3,200	✓	✓
Kosovo		✓								
Latvia	✓		✓		Two		Hired and dismissed by Secretary General (upon the Member's proposal)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lithuania	✓		✓		Three		Civil servant of political (personal) confidence – status and employment governed by the Law on civil Service	2,700 (approx. amount)	n/a	n/a
Montenegro		✓								
N. Macedonia		✓								
Poland	✓			✓		✓	Contractors, Member-assistant contract			✓
Serbia		✓								

<b>Slovakia</b>	✓		✓	Three	Contract is concluded with the Chancellery	2,949	✓	✓
<b>Slovenia</b>		✓						

## Country Overview

**Czech Republic:** In the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, deputies may have as many assistants as they want (on average, they have two). It is fully at the discretion of deputies who they choose as their assistant(s). Parliamentary party groups do not employ or engage the services of personal assistants. An assistant can serve two or more deputies at the same time.

The Office of the Chamber of Deputies also covers each deputy's expenses for an assistant by paying an invoice for the person who concludes a Deputy-assistant contract with the Office. These services may be provided by more than one assistant to a single Deputy, in which case, the maximum amount payable for an assistant is divided among these assistants. The amount granted to a deputy for employing assistant(s) is 1, 839 EUR.

The assistant(s) perform a broad spectrum of tasks and provide various services related to the deputies' needs ranging from miniscule administrative work to writing various technical reports or preparation of bills.

The conditions of the employment contract between a deputy and their assistant depend solely on mutual agreement between the deputy and the assistant. The only limitation is its duration which lasts the term of the office of the deputy. Although the assistants are hired by deputies according to their needs and demands, the contracts are ultimately signed with the Office of the Chamber of Deputies. They are not considered employees, but independent contractors.

The option to hire assistants stems from the support and services provided to the deputies by the Office of the Chamber of Deputies according to Section 117 of the Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies, which states that "*The Office of the Chamber of Deputies provides professional, organizational and technical support for the activities carried out by the Chamber of Directors, its bodies and offices, the Deputies, political groups and the members of the European Parliament elected within the territory of the Czech Republic, Act No. 236/1995 Coll., on salaries and other requirements associated with the performance of the office of representatives of public authority and some state bodies and judges, as amended, and resolution of the Budget Committee, govern the work of MPs' personal*

assistants. Source: survey response, ECPRD, presentation

**Hungary:** According to the *Act XXXVI of 2012 on the National Assembly*, each MP is entitled to have a budget up to his/her basic remuneration to hire personal assistants in addition to the staff employed by their party group, and from the budget of the Office of the National Assembly. The number of personal assistants is not limited, only the budget allocated for that purpose. The basic remuneration is stipulated by the aforementioned Act (Section 104) and Act CXCIX of 2011 on Public Service Officials, and it shall be equal to the remuneration of the Deputy State Secretary. In April 2020 it amounted to 1,103,400 HUF (or approx. 3,200 EUR). The salary of the personal assistant(s), employed by the individual MP, will vary and depends on the Member himself/herself. Since MPs hold different positions, their remuneration is also different. Namely, Subsection of the Section 111 of the Act states that:

*"The activities of the Member shall be assisted by persons financed by the Office of the National Assembly."*

The Subsections (3) -(4) of the Section 112 sets forth financial and legal conditions for the employment of these assistants.

*"(3) The Office of the National Assembly shall provide a cover for the benefits under Section 111(3) of the Member in the form of granting the Member a monthly expenditure equal to the remuneration specified in Section 104(1), not including the public dues charged to the payer."*

*"(4) The staff members supporting the activity of the Member shall be employed with a contract of employment or in a status under civil law for a fixed term during the mandate of the Member. The employer's rights shall be exercised by the Member with the countersigning of the Office of the National Assembly. The right to dispose of the whole or a part of the expenditure referred to in paragraph (3) and the exercising of the employer's rights may be conferred upon the leader of the parliamentary group."*

The Subsection (1) of the Section 104 defines the *remuneration of the MPs:*

*"(1) The Member shall be entitled to receive a monthly remuneration from the date of his or her oath-taking until the termination of his or her mandate; the amount of the remuneration*

*shall be equal to the remuneration of the Deputy State Secretary consisting of basic remuneration, remuneration supplement and executive supplement, as determined in the Act on public service officials.”*

Based on the above, an MP can hire one or more assistants based on his/her personal needs up to the amount set forth in the aforementioned Subsection (1) of the Section 104. The system makes this choice very flexible and in line with the MP's preferences. However, this amount may vary greatly since there are MPs that hold different positions, making their remuneration different, as well.

The basic monthly remuneration of an MP (and a Deputy State Secretary) is 1,103,400 HUF as of April 2020 (about 3,200 EUR), which is three times the previous year's average salary published by the Central Statistical Office.

Source: [survey response](#)

**Latvia:** Chapter IX in the Rules of Procedure prescribes that each Member of Saeima shall be entitled to no more than two assistants. However, the total amount of remuneration for both assistants shall not exceed the amount allocated for the salary of one assistant. Furthermore, salaries for the assistants shall be paid for by the state budget. It is up to the Member who he/she wants to hire as assistant(s). MP groups do not employ or engage the services of parliamentary assistants.

The tasks of MP's assistant(s) are to settle all organization, technical issues, consultative tasks, and other matters related to the work of a Member, and more specifically are prescribed in the Rules of Procedure, as follows:

- facilitating the Member's work in the Saeima and its committees;
- accepting proposals and complaints from the electorate and considering their submissions;
- together with the heads of local governments, enterprises, and organizations, arranging appointments for the electorate to meet the Member;
- organizing meetings of the Member with the electorate;
- providing the Member with the necessary information and reference materials;
- receiving the electorate outside the Member's regular reception hours and, upon the Member's request, discussing proposed issues together with the relevant officials or establishments;

- ascertaining the electorate's opinion about the performance of the Saeima and its Members;
- upon the Member's instructions, providing the electorate with relevant information;
- settling administrative and technical issues related to the Member's work;
- doing all paperwork for the Member.

Furthermore, a Member's assistant has the right to be present at open meetings of the Saeima committees on behalf of the Member.

Article 198 of the Rules of Procedure stipulates that a Member's assistant shall be hired and dismissed by the Secretary General of the Saeima Administration upon the Member's recommendation and in conformity with the provision of the Labor Law.

The employment contract is concluded for one of the following terms:

- for the Member's term of office;
- for a specified term no shorter than six months, with the possibility of extension. If a Member's mandate ends before the end of the employment contract term, the employment contract with the member's assistant is terminated on the day the Member's mandate ends.

Source: [Rules of Procedure, ECPRD](#)

**Lithuania:** MPs of the Seimas are entitled to a certain number of assistants paid for by the Office of the Seimas, with certain limitations applying.

The *Statute of the Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania (Article 16) stipulates that three secretary-assistant posts shall be allocated to each Member of the Seimas, whereas an additional secretary-assistant shall be allocated to a Member of the Seimas with special needs, upon approval of the Board of the Seimas. The basic salary is paid for the grade of the civil servant and is the same for all positions in that grade.

The status and employment procedures for MPs' assistants are governed by the *Law on Civil Service*, according to which secretaries-assistants of MPs are '*civil servants of political (personal) confidence*' (Article 10). Namely, the Seimas shall approve by resolution, at Government's proposal, a list of positions of civil servants of political (personal) confidence in the Seimas (Article 8 of the Law on Civil Service). It shall specify the levels and categories of civil service positions.

Furthermore, Article 16 of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania Statute stipulates that civil servants of political (personal) confidence of a Member of the Seimas – secretary assistants of a Member of the Seimas shall help a Member of the Seimas carry out parliamentary activity, whereas civil servants of political (personal) confidence of the Speaker of the Seimas shall help the Speaker of the Seimas formulate political provisions and priorities, make decisions, and implement such decision.

Article 12 of the Law on Civil Service stipulates with regards to the recruitment of civil servants of political (personal) confidence, that civil servants of political (personal) confidence shall be recruited without competition on the basis of a choice made by a state politician or a collegiate state institution. Even though MPs may freely choose persons to serve as their assistants, they do not conclude employment contracts with them. MPs are paid by the Parliament's budget and, from a legal point of view, the Secretary General of the Office of the Seimas is an employer of assistants of MPs.

A job description, described in accordance with the *Methodology for the Job Description and Evaluation of Civil Servants approved by the Government*, shall specify the level and category of a position, special requirements for a civil servant in the position, and the functions assigned to it. (Law on Civil Service)

Assistant secretaries of members of the Seimas shall be allowed to work as an assistant secretary to another member of the Seimas, if he or she belongs to the same parliamentary party, a secretary assistant to the elder of a parliamentary group, or an employee working under an employment contract, but for no more than half of the total working time (Law on Civil Service, Article 17).

Pursuant to Article 44 of the Law on Civil Service, a civil servant of political (personal) confidence is dismissed from office if he/she resigns, loses the confidence of the state politician, collegiate state institution that has recruited a civil servant of political (personal) confidence to office, or upon the expiry of the mandate of the state politician who has recruited the assistant. [Source: Statute of the Seimas, Law on Civil Service](#)

**Poland:** Hiring of personal assistants in the Polish Parliament is governed by the *Act of 9 May 1996 on the Exercise of the Mandate of a Deputy or Senator*. Polish deputies receive a lump-sum in the amount jointly determined by the Speakers of the Sejm and the Senate that deputies can use to finance the employment of their staff. Each Polish deputy decides on the employment of his or her assistants (including those working as volunteers), and there are no restrictions when it comes to the number of personal assistants that can be hired. Deputies employ their staff for the duration of their parliamentary mandate. Remuneration of the employees of parliamentary offices is specified in the contracts of employment concluded by Deputies. This is an individual matter, depending on the will of the contracting parties.

Hired staff shall be employed at constituency offices – run by members of the Polish Parliament. Namely, Article 23 of the aforementioned Act stipulates that, "*deputies and senators shall create deputy, senatorial or deputy-senatorial offices to service their activity in the field. A deputy and senator may carry on his/her activity in the field in a selected constituency or constituencies. A deputy and senator shall be entitled to a lump-sum for covering the costs related to the operation of offices, under the principles and in the amount specified jointly by the Speaker of the Sejm and the Speaker of the Senate*".

Furthermore, "*a deputy or senator may employ workers in the office in his/her own name for a specified time, no longer than for the time of exercising the mandate. The activity of a deputy or senator may be supported by volunteer co-workers. A deputy or senator shall establish the remuneration of employees of the offices, within funds received as lump-sum as mentioned above. Funds for such purposes are ensured in budgets of the Chancellery of the Sejm and the Chancellery of the Senate, as appropriate.*

*A deputy and senator shall be obliged to annually submit to the Chancellery of the Sejm and the Chancellery of the Senate, as appropriate, in connection with the expiry of the mandate and at the end of the term of office, a settlement statement of the amounts of lump-sums used for running the office*". [Source: Act of 9 May 1996 on the Exercise of the Mandate of a Deputy or Senator, ECPRD](#)

**Slovakia:** In the National Council of the Slovak Republic, each Member of Parliament is entitled to (a) personal assistant(s), although the MP shall

be entitled to no more than three assistants. Another precondition is the total sum assigned for salaries of assistants and for operating costs of running offices of respective MP per month. Hence, he/she may have one, two, three, etc. assistants, as long as he/she is able to cover their salaries with the prescribed sum. [Source: survey response](#)

Namely, pursuant to Section 4a para 2 of the *Act no. 120/1993 Coll. on the salaries of certain constitutional officials of the Slovak Republic as amended*, for the performance of professional and administrative work related to the activities of the MP's office, the Chancellery shall provide the MP with an assistant. The Act, furthermore, prescribes that an MP can have up to three assistants. Thus, MP may have one, two, or three assistants, based on the decision of the respective MP.

According to Section 4a para 2 of the Act on the salaries of certain constitutional officials, an assistant can serve only one MP.

According to Section 4a para 3 of the Act on the salaries of certain constitutional officials, the remuneration of a parliamentary assistant and the operating expenses of a parliamentary territorial office shall, for 12 consecutive months, total 2.7 times the average nominal monthly salary of an employee in the Slovak economy for the previous calendar year rounded up to the nearest euro. The total monthly amount rounds up to 2,949 EUR in 2020. This amount is split among assistants and must also cover the rent of the territorial MP's office (if an MP decides to have one). This is based on the decision of the respective MP.

Assistants receive their salary from the budget of the Chancellery. An MP must notify the Chancellery about the details of the person who will perform the function of assistant and determine the amount of monthly remuneration of the assistant(s) in writing in the form of a percentage of the amount set by the Member for the assistants and information on where he/she will have parliamentary territorial office (if the MP decides to have such office).

The assistant performs his/her function as a person who conducts business on the basis of a trade license authorization, as a person entered in the commercial register or as a person who carries out business on the basis of a license other than a trade license. The Chancellery shall

conclude a contract with an assistant pursuant to Section 269(2) of the Commercial Code. Pursuant to Section 4a para 3 of the Act on the salaries of certain constitutional officials, the precondition for the performance of the function of a parliamentary assistant is at least a completed general secondary education or a complete secondary vocational education and integrity. The contract is for a fixed term of a maximum of 4 years – until the end of the parliamentary term. The contract shall also be terminated in case of an early end to the parliamentary term.

The Chancellery shall provide the assistant with remuneration in the amount designated by the respective MP after proper delivery of an invoice for the performance of services of the assistant to the MP. The MP is obliged to certify the signature on this invoice and confirm that the assistant performed his/her function during the invoicing period. The invoice shall include specification of the work performed by the assistant and is issued once a month.

When it comes to the tasks of assistants, this depends mainly on the working methods and preferences of each MP. Some assistants do basic administration work and day-to-day tasks to help the MPs, some of them are directly involved in drafting bills and speech writing.

The Chancellery provides each MP with an office in the parliamentary premises in addition to the possibility to rent an office in the region. Thus, in practice, the assistants can work both on the parliamentary premises or in the MP's territorial office. [Source: survey response](#)

### **Typical tasks of personal assistants of MPs**

In the European Parliament, the tasks of a Member's assistant vary depending on whether the assistant is based in the local constituency office or parliament. Nonetheless, they are chosen by a Member and they assist Members directly in their day-to-day work, under their direction and authority and on a basis of mutual trust. Overall, they are responsible for compiling background information on important political issues relating to their MEP's work and for writing the draft reports, opinions, and amendments tabled by their MEP. They also draft speeches, answer questions from members of the public, look after groups of visitors, and are in charge of the day-to-day tasks in their MEP's office. The staff hired by political groups and deputies in the

**Czech Republic** Chamber of Deputies, perform a broad spectrum of tasks, and provide various services related to the deputies' needs and duties, ranging from miniscule administrative work to writing various technical reports or preparing bills. The **Slovakian** MPs' assistants do basic administrative work and day-to-day tasks to help the MPs, where some of them are directly involved in drafting bills and speech writing.

## Annex 5 – Staff and financial allocation to MP groups

**Table. Number of parliamentary party groups and prescribed number of staff hired**

	<i>No. of MP groups</i>	<i>Prescribed limited number of staff hired, depending on group size</i>
<i>Albania</i>	4	
<i>Croatia</i>	15	<15 members = 2 staff members (one secretary and one advisor) For every additional 15 members of the group, one additional advisor is employed.
<i>Czech Republic</i>	9	No limit in number of staff
<i>Estonia</i>	5	<i>no limit in number of staff</i>
<i>Kosovo</i>	8	one assistant per parliamentary group and, for every 10 MPs one advisor
<i>Hungary</i>	7	<10 MPs in a group = 5 staff members 11 – 20 MPs = 7 staff members 21 – 34 MPs = 10 staff members 35 – 50 MPs = 12 staff members > 50 MPs = 15 staff members
<i>Lithuania</i>	7	n/a
<i>Montenegro</i>	8	No limit in number of staff
<i>N. Macedonia</i>	4	One external associate for every 5 MPs
<i>Serbia</i>	15	≤15 MPs = 2 staff members (1 advisor, 1 admin.) 16 – 44 MPs = 4 staff members (2 advisors, 2 admin) 45 – 80 MPs = 6 staff members (3 advisors, 3 admin) 81 – 129 = 8 staff members (4 advisors, 4 admin) >130 = 12 staff members (6 advisors, 6 admin)
<i>Slovakia</i>	6	one staff member per group
<i>Slovenia</i>	10	<i>each MP group is provided with a secretary, two technical advisers and a clerk as well as an additional clerk for every eight MPs</i>

## Country Overview

**Albania:** Working conditions of parliamentary groups are governed by the *Rules of Procedure (Article 17)*, which prescribes that parliamentary groups are provided with the necessary premises and equipment. The act that furthermore regulates the hiring of political staff in the Albanian institutions is the law on the “*The status of MPs*”, and a *Decision of the Council of Ministers*.

Namely, each parliamentary group shall have an administrative secretary and an advisor, while the largest MP group of the majority and the largest MP group of the opposition shall have three to four advisors for certain areas of parliamentary activity. For example, the biggest MP group in the Albanian Parliament has one secretary and four advisors, whereas the smaller MP group has one secretary and one advisor.

Annual expenses (salary and social security contributions for staff members) for the MP group with the largest number of members, amount to around 70,000 EUR. For smaller MP groups, with one secretary and one advisor, the annual expenses (salary and social security contributions) amount to 17,000 EUR.

Office space, technical equipment, etc. are provided by the Parliament.

The political staff hired in MP groups are hired by the Parliament at the discretion of the MP group. The tasks that political staff in MP groups perform range from preparing agendas for MPs, conducting research, maintaining contacts with different institutions, organizing meetings or press conferences, etc. [Source: survey response](#)

**Croatia:** Article 31 of the *Rules of Procedure* stipulates that Secretary General of the Parliament shall ensure adequate facilities and technical and other conditions for work of political groups proportional to the number of group members (meeting rooms, transcripts, photocopying, delivery of materials, and other services).

Furthermore, a political group shall be entitled by the decision of its chairperson to employ a staff member to act as a political group secretary, the costs of which shall be covered by the Parliament's budget. Political groups may employ one official and, for every additional 15 members of the group, an additional official to perform professional and administrative tasks for the group, and the costs of their employment shall be covered by parliamentary funds.

By way of derogation, persons may be admitted to public service for a fixed period, i.e. until the date of the end of the term of Parliament, without holding an open competition or posting a vacancy notice for admission to public service. Those public servants may not be deployed to posts outside the political groups. Legal provisions pertaining to the employment probation period, the state exam, and employee transfer and promotion shall not apply to those public servants. Public service of the public servant referred above may cease before the end of the term of Parliament, based on the decision of the chairperson of the political group. Contracts with staff are signed by the Secretary General.

[Source: Rules of Procedure](#)

**Czech Republic:** Each political group is granted a financial amount according to Part Nine of *Act no. 90/1995 Coll. on the Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies (Article 78)* and the Economic Management Regulations for Political Groups approved by the Chamber of Deputies each year.

*All political groups are entitled to financial contributions from the Chamber's budget covering operating expenses. The exact amount depends on the number of their members.*

In 2020, the proposal for financial support granted by regulation has been, as follows: each group receives a base amount of 919 EUR per month plus a variable amount of 199 EUR for each member of the government party group or 259 EUR for each member of the opposition party group (political parties in opposition are entitled to a contribution increase by coefficient 1.3).

Staff members are not employees of the Office of the Chamber of Deputies; they are hired solely by the political groups and financed by funds granted to the groups by the Office and through other means of the particular political party. However, the contracts are ultimately signed with the Office of the Chamber of Deputies.

The staff hired by the political groups and deputies perform a broad spectrum of tasks and provide various services related to the deputies' needs ranging from miniscule administrative work to writing various technical reports or preparing bills. [Source: survey response](#)

**Estonia:** One faction of the Riigikogu has four to ten staff members. Each group is allocated a budget for the salaries of staff hired in proportion

to the number of MPs. This budget consists of a base amount (4,200 EUR per month) and of an additional amount (400 EUR per MP, per month), plus social tax and contribution to the funded pension. It is up to factions to decide whether to hire fewer high-paid or more low-paid staff members.

The methodology for calculating the remuneration of the staff of political groups has been approved by a decision of the Board of the Riigikogu. Other current expenses are approved by a decision of the Board or an order of the Secretary General.

The Chancellery provides office space for parliamentary groups. Office costs are covered by the parliament's budget and factions can use the chancellery's services and facilities.

A total of 1,053,300 EUR (including taxes) has been allocated to all five factions of the Riigikogu in 2020 (there are four main parliamentary political groups (referred to as factions in Estonia) and an additional fifth "faction" of Unaffiliated MPs.

The political group decides (within the limits of the budget) the number of staff to be hired and the tasks to be performed. The employment contract with a staff member is concluded by the Secretary General on the proposal of the Chairman of the faction. [Source: survey response](#)

**Hungary:** There are predefined statutory numbers of staff members that parliamentary groups are entitled to. This number is based on the proportion of their mandates in the Parliament.

*Act XXXVI of 2012 on the National Assembly stipulates that the parliamentary group's operation shall be assisted by staff members employed by the Office of the National Assembly. Depending on the number of members in the parliamentary group, its operation may be assisted by a certain number of staff members, as prescribed in Section 115 that follows. Additionally, the group may be assisted by public officials or employees in a number equal to the number of the members in the parliamentary group.*

Section 115 of the Act stipulates the following:  
“(1) *The parliamentary group's operation shall be assisted by staff members employed by the Office of the National Assembly, working in the*

*offices of the parliamentary group specified in Section 114(1).*

*(2) Depending on the number of the members in the parliamentary group, its operation may be assisted by*

*(a) five staff members if the number of the parliamentary group's members is not more than ten,*

*b) seven staff members if the number of the parliamentary group's members is between 11 and 20,*

*c) ten staff members if the number of the parliamentary group's members is between 21 and 34,*

*d) twelve staff members if the number of the parliamentary group's members is between 35 and 50,*

*e) fifteen staff members if the number of the parliamentary group's members is over 50. Furthermore, the group may be assisted by public officials or employees with a higher or secondary education qualification in a number equal to the number of members in the parliamentary group.*

*(3) The parliamentary group shall be entitled to employ the persons referred to in paragraph two within the expenditure of wages specified in paragraph four or, in the case of a reallocation under Section 118(1), within the expenditure of wages specified in paragraph four increased by the reallocation. A contract under civil law may also be established on the account of the expenditure of wages.*

*(4) From March 1 of the current year until the end of February of the following year, the parliamentary group shall be entitled to a monthly salary equal to two and a half times the average national monthly gross published by the Central Statistical Office earnings for the year preceding the year in question.*

*(5) The rules pertaining to public officials and to employees employed by public administration organs shall apply to the public officials and employees assisting the work of the parliamentary group with the provision that the employer's rights shall be exercised with the consent of the leader of the parliamentary group.*

*(6) The Office of the National Assembly shall specifically provide the amount specified in the Act on the central budget for the purpose of covering cafeteria benefits. To cover bonuses and other benefits that fall within the decision-making power of the party exercising the employer's rights, the parliamentary group shall be entitled to have an expenditure equaling 10% of the expenditure of wages specified in paragraph four, on the account of which no*

*person specified in paragraph two shall be employed.”*

In other words, within the parliamentary group, MPs can hire employees besides the five to 15 that are guaranteed by the list specified by the aforementioned (a-e) points of subsection two of the Section 115. These are statutory numbers. However, in addition to these employees hired on the ground of the aforementioned list of the Section 115 of the Parliamentary Act, they can be assisted by additional colleagues up to the number of MPs who are members of that parliamentary group. For example, the smallest possible parliamentary party group, which is composed of five MPs, is entitled to five staff members by law and plus five more staff members (ten in total).

Nevertheless, the groups have to take into account their financial position, which is stipulated by the aforementioned subsection three and four of the Section 115. The financial contribution to the parliamentary group for staff salary would be the monthly average salary of the previous financial year's gross average monthly salary in Hungary published by the Central Statistical Office. In this case, equivalent to the monthly average salary for 2019 (the average salary was 367,800 HUF/month for 2019, or approx. 1,060 EUR). Given the previous example, if there are ten staff members in a group, the calculation would be as follows:  $1,060 \times 2,5 \times 10 = 26,500$  EUR for monthly salaries to be distributed among the staff members of the political group.

As a consequence, the financial contribution of the budget to the parliamentary party group staff salary would be two and a half times the monthly average salary of the previous financial year's gross average monthly salary in Hungary published by the Central Statistical Office. The monthly average salary was 367,000 HUF (ca. 1,060 EUR) per month for 2019.

Starting from the new parliamentary term in 2014, the budget and limits for hiring the staff for the party groups and individual MPs has been increased, parallel with the decrease of the number of the MPs (from 386 to 199).

MPs may employ their employees by labor contract for definite term till the end of their mandate, in employment relationship or civil law

relationship. The Members themselves exercise the employer right over their employees with the countersign of the General Director.

The Act XXXVI of 2012 on the National Assembly stipulates that, in order to cover the expenses related to its operation, a parliamentary group is entitled every month, on the account of the budget of the Office of the National Assembly, to an amount equal to tenfold of the remuneration of an MP (the monthly basic remuneration of an MP - three times the previous year's average salary published by the Central Statistical Office – was 1,103,400 HUF [or 3,191 EUR] in April 2020). Additionally, each month, the parliamentary group of governing parties is entitled, to an amount equal to 30%, and in the case of opposition parties, to 40% of the same remuneration of an MP.

No real estate owned or managed by a political party shall be used for the purposes of ensuring office accommodation on the account of the amount specified above.

The independent Member shall be entitled to an amount equal to 40% of the remuneration of an MP previously mentioned for the purpose of covering the costs related to the Member's activities.

For the purposes of managing the aforementioned amount, the Treasury shall hold a payment account or a subsidiary account related to that account for the parliamentary group.'

Staff members of parliamentary groups shall deal with various tasks including primarily administrative, legal, and technical assistance to MPs of the respective parliamentary group.

Staff members are hired by the Office of the National Assembly; however, employer's rights are exercised jointly by the director general of the Office of the National Assembly and the director of the parliamentary group's office. [Source: survey response, Act XXXVI of 2012 on the National Assembly](#)

**Kosovo:** Article 20 of the Rules of Procedure stipulates that parliamentary groups shall be provided with necessary and proportional space, as well as necessary conditions, equipment, and political staff. The political staff of parliamentary groups shall receive remuneration for their work in accordance with the decision of the President.

Each parliamentary group employs one assistant per parliamentary group and, for every ten MPs, one advisor per parliamentary group, who are paid by Parliament's budget program for political support staff.

The MP group decides whom to employ. The Personnel Service of the Parliament prepares contracts that are signed between the Head of parliamentary group and employee.

The Rules of Procedure furthermore stipulates that, "The Presidency decides on funds, rules on accommodation, and equipment of the Members of Assembly, administration officials, the staff of the Presidency members, and the staff of parliamentary groups". [Source: survey response](#)

**Lithuania:** The Statute of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania (Article 16) stipulates that there are "civil servants of political (personal) confidence" and public consultants of political groups.

Civil servants of political (personal) confidence of a political group and assistants to political groups shall help a political group with its activities. The *Board of the Seimas* shall fix a number of civil servant of political (personal) confidence posts for each political group by taking into account the number of political group members. Each political group shall be allocated at least one assistant to a political group post. Furthermore, during the period of its mandate, a political group may have public consultants. [Source: Statute of the Seimas](#)

**Montenegro:** The Rules of Procedure (Article 32) stipulates that the Secretary General of the Parliament, in agreement with the President of the Parliament, and the Collegium of the President of the Parliament, shall provide the space and other technical facilities required for the work of MP groups, proportional to the number of members in the group.

Hiring of a group secretary and consultants is stipulated by the *Rules of Procedure* (Article 32) and *Administrative Committee's Decisions on determining the amount, manner and procedure for spending funds allocate to MP groups, for hiring secretaries and consultants in MP groups*.

An MP group may have a group secretary and a certain number of consultants hired by the group at Parliament's expense. Aside from one secretary per MP group, there is no regulation on how many more staff members are hired for

additional MPs in the group. Thus, since MP groups act as their employer, there is no precise number of staff that work in MP groups.

The amount of funds allocated for the hiring of the secretary and consultants is defined in proportion to the number of MPs in the MP group and prescribed by the aforementioned decision of the President. Specifically, all MP groups are entitled to a certain amount of money per month (a total of 30,000 EUR for all MP groups per month) from the parliamentary budget for hiring one secretary and one or more consultants in each group. There is no limit in the number of consultants that can be hired.

The funds are distributed such that 10% of the total monthly amount of 30,000 EUR (or 3,000 EUR) is divided among groups and allocated to them in equal amounts (base amount). *There are eight MP groups in the Parliament of Montenegro, so each group receives 375 EUR/month (3,000 EUR ÷ 8).*

The rest of the monthly funds (27,000 EUR) is allocated in proportion to the number of MPs in the group. For example, each MP group receives 375 EUR/month (base amount). The remainder, or 27,000 EUR per month is divided with total number of MPs (81), which results in  $27,000 \text{ EUR} \div 81 = 333 \text{ EUR}$  per MP per month. If one MP group has three members, it receives  $375 \text{ EUR (base amount)} + (333 \text{ EUR} \times 3 \text{ MPs}) = 1,374 \text{ EUR}$

The total annual amount for all MP groups sums up to 360,000 EUR.

The MP group chairman, at least once a year, submits a report on the use of funds for hiring staff to the Collegium of the President of the Parliament and the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget. The report shall be submitted no later than March 31 of the current year for the previous year. If the report is not submitted within the prescribed deadline, the Secretary General of the Parliament may suspend allocation of the funds to that MP group.

The staff hired in MP groups perform various tasks, such as preparing and analyzing materials for committee meetings and plenary sittings, assisting MPs in preparing for discussions during sittings, organizing press conferences, organizing meetings, attending committee meetings, and providing other technical and professional assistance to MPs. [Source: survey,](#)

Rules of Procedure, Decisions on determining the amount, manner and procedure for spending funds allocate to MP groups, for hiring secretaries and consultants in MP groups

**North Macedonia:** Each MP group in the Assembly, depending on the number of MPs, and a certain number of independent MPs, have the right to take up external associates. The Budgetary Council of the Assembly determines the number of external associates, in accordance with the principle that every five MPs can have one external associate. Funds necessary for the engagement of external associates are determined by the Budgetary Council of the Assembly and allocated from the Assembly's finances within the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia (amount not available). The proposal for hiring the external associates is made by the MP groups. The external associates are engaged for the duration of the mandate of the MPs on the basis of a contract made by the Secretary General. Some of the tasks of external associates of MP groups include: preparing information on materials received in the Assembly (draft laws, reports, authentic interpretations, information, etc.), preparation of analysis for the received materials, preparation of amendments, preparation of draft laws, preparation of interpellations and preparation of other materials of interest to the MPs for the commissions and the plenary sessions, etc.  
[Source: survey response](#)

**Serbia:** A parliamentary group in the National Assembly has the right to hire consultants to perform professional and administrative tasks of parliamentary groups. The number of consultants that a parliamentary group in the National Assembly may engage is determined as follows: a parliamentary group with up to 15 MPs has the right to engage two persons (one for performing professional and one for performing administrative tasks); A parliamentary group from 16 to 44 MPs has the right to hire four persons (two to perform professional and two to perform administrative tasks); a parliamentary group of 45 to 80 MPs has the right to hire six persons (three to perform professional and three to perform administrative tasks); a parliamentary group of 81 to 129 MPs has the right to hire eight persons (four to perform professional tasks and four for performing administrative tasks); a parliamentary group of more than 130 MPs has the right to hire 12 persons (six to perform professional tasks and six to perform administrative tasks).

According the Rules of Procedure (Article 65), the Committee on Administrative, Budgetary, Mandate and Immunity Issues shall adopt the Act on employing consultants in parliamentary groups of the National assembly and on cost compensation for engaging scientists and experts in the work of the National Assembly.

The staff in MP groups perform various tasks that include: analysis of laws, draft laws, and other acts within its scope of the committee work; preparation and organization of sittings of working bodies, preparation of reports, and preparation acts and information on issues considered at sittings of working bodies; giving expert opinions on issues considered by working bodies; prepare amendments to draft laws, other regulations and general acts for the needs of the committee; monitoring performance of conclusions of working bodies, drafting of acts of importance for the implementation of control functions of the National Assembly; organization of public hearings; preparation of analysis and information on initiatives, petitions and proposals of citizens, associations and organization; and other technical and administrative tasks for the needs of parliamentary groups and MPs.

The National Assembly is the employer of all staff. Employees engaged as consultants in the MP group establish employment for a certain period of time as independent executors while there is a parliamentary group for which they perform work. The consultant is assigned to a position in accordance with the Rulebook on Internal Organization and Systematization of Positions in the Service of the National Assembly.  
[Source: survey response, Rules of Procedure](#)

**Slovakia:** Each parliamentary group can have one person appointed by the chairperson of the parliamentary group who is responsible for the management of funds allocated to each parliamentary group by the Chancellery of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. Besides this task, such persons are responsible for day-to-day duties and administrative work in the parliamentary group. Currently, there are four persons employed by the Chancellery for this particular task. In those parliamentary groups, where the chairperson has not appointed an admin staff, the allocated funds are managed by one responsible MP from the parliamentary group.

Political advisors provide their professional help predominantly to Speaker/Vice Speakers of the National Council and not the parliamentary group. Parliamentary group staff members and political advisors of the Speaker/Vice Speakers are employees of the Chancellery and do not receive any salary from funds allocated to parliamentary groups.

According to Article 3 of the Decision no. 142 of the Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic from 21 October 2010 on the Rules on the Management of Parliamentary Caucuses, the Chancellery of the National Council of the Slovak Republic will allocate premises of the National Council to the MPs, equipped with basic office furniture and technical equipment (computer, printer, a multifunction machine for copying, scanning and faxing, video recorder, TV, radio, refrigerator). The caucus may also be equipped with other technical equipment necessary for the performance of an MP (e.g. technical accessories extending the functionality of a laptop or a PC, etc.). However, these expenses need to be covered by funds allocated to each parliamentary caucus. According to Article 1, Section 4 of the Decision, the Speaker of the National Council, by his/her decision determines the limit of the funds for the relevant fiscal year, taking into account the number of members of individual caucuses.

The staff are hired by, and are employees of, the Chancellery. [Source: survey response](#)

**Slovenia:** MPs are entitled to expert assistance of the civil servants (i.e. expert advisers) hired in MP groups. The employer is the National Assembly and the employment contracts are concluded with the National Assembly for a definite period of time, that is, for the duration of the parliamentary term of the MP group.

Pursuant to the *Deputies Act*, a fixed sum for technical advisers of MPs is allotted to an MP group for each MP. The amount of the sum is determined by the National Assembly. The Ordinance on Internal Organization, System of Positions, and Titles in the Services of the National Assembly further stipulates that in order ensure functionality, each MP group is provided with a Secretary, two technical advisers, and a clerk as well as an additional clerk for every eight MPs. An MP group consisting of more than eight MPs has the right to an additional adviser for every six MPs. Their salaries are paid for by the National Assembly (Art. 11 of the Ordinance). They are employed based on a public tender

procedure conducted by the Organization and Personnel Section, whereby all job requirements as listed in the Rules on Internal Organization and Systematization of Positions in the Services of the National Assembly (Systemized Positions) need to be specified and advertised.

Furthermore, each deputy group is provided with additional funds for technical assistance, whereby the amount allocated to a deputy group for each deputy on a monthly basis for such help should not exceed an amount, which equals the monthly salary of an undersecretary. Such funds may be spent for temporary employment of civil servants or for contractual services (Art. 12 of the Ordinance). Such vacancies are advertised however, no job requirements are specified and the selection is the exclusive right and/or decision of the leader of the deputy group.

The main tasks of technical advisers are as follows: to provide expert advice when formulating the content of legislative initiatives, amendments, proposals, motions, to provide for their legal accuracy, to follow the sessions of the National Assembly and all legislative and other procedures in the National Assembly, to prepare reports and other documents for the deputy group, to prepare starting points for discussions of working bodies, to collect opinions and suggestions for adopting, amending and supplementing the legislation, to provide for publicity of the work of the deputy group, to work with media, etc. [Source: Deputies Act, ECPRD](#)

## Annex 6 – Division of tasks between non-partisan and partisan staff

Type of task	Task of legislative (legal) service	Task of committee secretariats	Performed by other unit in parliamentary administration (please specify)	Performed by partisan staff (staff in MP groups, MPs' assistants, etc.)	Comments
drafting wording of bills	AL, BaH, EE, HU, KOS, NM	EE, HU, MNE, SRB (on MPs' proposal)		CZ, EE, HU, MNE, SRB, SK	HU (Committee secretariats are involved in cases when the proposer of a legislative proposal is a standing committee) KOS (Directorate for legal services only on request of the initiator of a bill)
drafting amendments to a bill	AL, BaH, EE, HU, NM	EE, HU, KOS, MNE, SRB (on MPs' proposal)		CZ, EE, HU, MNE, SRB, SK	SK (Department of Legislation and Law Approximation and committee secretariats may provide consultations on request)
drafting other legal acts	AL, BaH, EE, HU, NM, SRB	EE, MNE, SRB	KOS (DG for legal services)	CZ, EE, HU, SK	KOS (Working group is formed by the decision issued by Secretary General)
providing technical comments to a bill	AL, BaH, CZ, EE, HU, KOS, NM, SRB (Department for the Preparation of Sessions), SK	EE, MNE (Legislative Committee), SRB (Constitutional and Legislative Issues Committee)	EE (Editors of the Verbatim Records and Translation Department)	CZ, EE	
reviewing conformity of bill with the legal system	AL, EE, HU, NM, SK	BaH (Constitutional – legal Commission), EE, HU, KOS (Legislative Committee staff), MNE (Legislative Committee staff), SRB (Constitutional and Legislative Issues Committee)		CZ, EE	
reviewing conformity of a bill with the Constitution	AL, EE, HU, SK	BaH (Constitutional – legal Commission), EE, HU, KOS (Legislative Committee staff), MNE (Legislative – Committee staff), SRB (Constitutional and Legislative Issues Committee)		CZ, EE	
reviewing compliance of a bill with the EU <i>acquis</i>	EE, HU, KOS, NM, SK	EE, HU, MNE, SRB	KOS	CZ, EE	Directorate for legal services and Committee on EU integration staff
reviewing compliance of a bill with international law	AL, EE, HU, NM, SK	EE, HU, MNE		CZ, EE	
Type of task	Task of legislative (legal) service	Task of committee secretariats	Performed by other unit in parliamentary administration (please specify)	Performed by partisan staff (staff in MP groups, MPs' assistants, etc.)	Comments

<b>Preparing legal opinion to a state budget proposal</b>	AL, BaH, KOS, SK	HU, MNE, SRB		CZ, EE	HU (Fiscal Council of Hungary); KOS (Specific analysis is prepared by the Unit for Budget and Financial analysis within Directorate for research, Library and Archive); MNE (Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget staff and Legislative Committee staff; specific analysis is prepared by the Parliamentary Budget Office within Parliamentary Institute; SRB (Committee on Administrative, Budgetary, Mandate and Immunity issues (for the National assembly part of the state budget) and Committee on Finance, State Budget and Control of Public Spending for the state budget); SK (keeps track of the annexes of the draft law on State Budget and cooperates to prepare the clean cope of the adopted law)
<b>following/participation in a committee meeting</b>	AL, BaH (upon request of committee chair); EE, HU, KOS, SK	AL, CZ, EE, HU, KOS, MNE, NM, SRB, SK	AL (Parliamentary Commission Service); MNE and SK (Parliamentary Institutes staff may follow the committee meeting, if it prepared a research paper on the agenda item)	AL, CZ, EE, KOS, MNE, NM	
<b>taking the floor in a committee meeting</b>	AL, CZ, BaH, EE, HU, SK	CZ, EE, HU, SK	SK (Parliamentary Institute if it drafted a research paper on the agenda item)	CZ, EE	With the consent of the committee's members Parliamentary Institute, if it drafted a research paper on an item in question
<b>drafting a report of a leading committee</b>	AL, CZ, EE; HU	CZ, EE, HU, KOS, MNE, NM, SRB, SK		EE	
<b>giving consultations on issues of legislative and procedural character during committee meetings</b>	AL, CZ, EE, HU, NM, SK (on request)	EE, HU, KO, MNE (committee secretary), NM, SRB (committee secretary), SK	NM (Research service upon request of MPs)	EE	

**Abbreviations used: Albania (AL), Bosnia and Hercegovina (BaH), Czech Republic (CZ), Estonia (EE), Hungary (HU), Kosovo (KOS), Montenegro (MNE), North Macedonia (NM), Serbia (SRB), Slovakia (SK)**

## Annex 7 – Parliamentary Institutes

Table. Number of units, numbers of staff and budget allocations for functioning of Parliamentary Institutes

C Z E C H R E P U B L I C	Parliamentary Institute				PI / Parliamentary budget (%)
	General Analysis Department	European Affairs Department	Communication and Education Department		1.4%*
*Please note that this is a very approximate amount for the Czech Parliamentary Institute. Only the approximate labor costs are calculated. If the labor cost in PI is compared to the labor cost of the whole parliamentary administration, then PI labor cost is approx. 8% of the total labor cost. When the PI labor cost is compared to the total parliamentary budget it comes to 1.4%.					
N. M A C E D O N I A	Parliamentary institute				PI / Parliamentary budget (%)
	General analysis, research and European integration department	Education and Communication/Research Library and Legislative Archive Department			2.8%
Total planned budget for salaries of the employees in the Parliamentary Institute, in gross amount, is 13,387,000 MKD or 2.8% of overall parliamentary budget).					
M O N T E N E G R O	Parliamentary Institute				PI / Parliamentary budget (%)
	Research Center	Library and Documentation Center and Archive	Education Center	Parliamentary Budget Office	2.5%*
*Please note that only the approximate amount of the PI labor cost is calculated and compared to the total labor cost of parliamentary administration; then this amount is compared to the total parliamentary budget. Thus, the PI labor cost is approx. 8% of the total labor cost When the PI labor cost is compared to the total parliamentary budget it comes to approx. 2.5%.					
S L O V A K I A	Parliamentary Institute				PI / Parliamentary budget (%)
					1.33%
*Please note that this is a very approximate percentage of the Slovak Parliamentary Institute. The amount for PI used to calculate relation to the total budget of the Chancellery includes salaries for staff, the budget of the Library for books and periodicals, and miscellaneous expenses.					

## Annex 8 – Media support services

### Country Overview

**Albania:** The Parliament's Media Office provides a number of services to support MPs such as providing titles of domestic or foreign press they wish to receive during their mandate, updating the parliamentary webpage, and providing concise information regarding parliamentary activities that the MPs should be informed about. The media office coordinates and organizes press conferences between MPs and journalists accredited in the Parliament. [Source: survey response](#)

**Czech Republic:** The Press Department of the Office of the Chamber of Deputies provides necessary equipment and technical support for deputies and political groups to allow for the option to record films and conduct broadcasts from the premises of the Chamber of Deputies. [Source: survey response](#)

**Estonia:** Each political group has its own media adviser. In addition, the Public Relations Department of the *Riigikogu* coordinates the public relations of the parliament and advises and supports MPs in the field of media (incl. social media). For example, the PR Department helps send out press releases. Photographic services are also provided (e.g. portraits for the web and publications, assistance in taking photos when an MP is hosting guests, etc.). The chairmen of the committee receives a wider range of media services. [Source: survey response](#)

**Hungary:** Press and media activities are the responsibility of political groups. The political groups, therefore, have their own press office, which is funded by the National Assembly, based on the budget of political groups set aside for this particular purpose. [Source: survey response](#)

**Kosovo:** The Kosovo Assembly Directorate for media and public relations, at the request of an MP, publishes information regarding the MP's meetings on the official website and Facebook page of the Assembly. [Source: survey response](#)

**Montenegro:** The Department for Public Relations informs the public on activities of the Parliament, the Speaker, Vice-speakers, Secretary General, working bodies, and MPs by preparing and issuing press releases. Further, it organizes press conferences by using parliamentary facilities and technical equipment and provides professional support for appearance in the media. The Parliament of Montenegro does not have any social media accounts, and each MP manages his/her own social media account. [Source: survey response](#)

**North Macedonia:** The Public Relations Unit is responsible for creating and uploading the content on the website of the Assembly, as well as the official social media profiles. [Source: survey response](#)

**Serbia:** The Public Relations Department performs both annual and daily accrediting of representatives of the media that follows the work of the National Assembly. Press conferences in the National Assembly may be held by MPs and other persons only if approved by the Speaker of the National Assembly. In addition to press conferences, MPs may also make special statements to foreign and domestic media on the premises of the National Assembly building. The Central Hall of the National Assembly House can accommodate the needs of press conferences and statements of MPs. [Source: survey response](#)

**Slovakia:** In general, each MP manages his/her own social media accounts. The National Council does not provide special media relational support; however, MPs can use the facilities and technical equipment available to hold press conferences on the premises of the Parliament. The Department for Communication with the Public and Media manages the content of the parliamentary website and social media by providing basic information on the work of the National Council. [Source: survey response](#)

## Annex 9 - Engagement of external experts

### Country Overview

**Albania:** Pursuant to *Article 41 of the Rules of Procedure* of the Parliament of Albania, committees have the right to engage external experts for a short period of time. The expertise is provided in the area under the competence of a Committee or Council. The experts are appointed by the decision of the Albanian Parliament's *Bureau*, at the respective Committee or Council's proposal. The *Bureau's Decision no. 33 on the engagement of external experts from 2015* stipulates a very detailed procedure with some of the main points outlined below:

The Committee Service, in cooperation with the Chair of the Committee / Sub-committee or Councils, presents a needs assessment and budget request for the engagement of external experts for the following year. The annual parliamentary budget shall plan funds for hiring such external expertise. Any additional need for expertise shall be decided by open vote.

External experts may be well-known individuals from the national academic sphere and independent experts who provide expertise in various fields.

The Committee / Subcommittee or the Council, upon this decision, shall send a request for engaging external expertise to the Bureau of the Assembly. The Bureau of the Assembly examines the financial possibilities of the Assembly to fulfill the request for the engagement of the external expert. The Chairman of the Committee / Subcommittee or the Council that has submitted the request participates, without the right to vote, in the meetings of the Bureau for considering the request. If the Bureau approves, its decision states the engagement period and monthly compensation, while the Committee / Subcommittee or the Council proceeds with the selection of the expert. If time permits, the Committee or the Council may publish a notice of interest for external expertise, with necessary details on the official website of the Assembly. Three offers for expertise shall be collected.

The Secretary General shall sign the contract with the expert and receive a confirmation letter

from the committee presidency stating that the expert has met the obligations set out in the contract.

Upon work completion, the Finance and Budget Service shall pay the expert with a monthly payment of up to 40% of the monthly salary of the permanent commission's advisor. [Source: survey response](#)

**Czech Republic** (*The Chamber of Deputies*): The deputies can engage external expertise as needed. Financial compensation is provided by the Chamber of Deputies according to the *Act no. 236/1995 Coll. – On Salary of the Representatives of the State*, providing an exhaustive list of situations in which a claim for compensation can be made and to what extent the compensation shall cover the expenses. The amount of the compensated expenses related to engaging external expertise is determined by the "compensation for services rendered" item (Section 9.1f), which can represent up to 25 percent (25%) of the base salary of the deputy. [Source: survey response](#)

**Estonia:** According to the decision of the Board of the Riigikogu, expenses related to the work of the Member of the Riigikogu are reimbursed by up to 30% of the salary of the MP (on the basis of expenditure documents). Expenses related to the work of the MP include, among other things, expenses for studies and expertise necessary for the preparation of the bill.

At the proposal of the Riigikogu, committees, the Legal and Research Department of the Riigikogu also commission expert opinions and applied studies from universities and other institutions to provide the background information that the Riigikogu needs in its work. The number of studies varies from one year to another and they are made available on the website of the Riigikogu. The commissioning of such studies is based on the *orders of the Chancellery of the Riigikogu and internal principles*. [Source: survey response](#)

**Hungary:** Within the allowance provided to MPs by the Office of the National Assembly, it is possible for MPs to engage external expertise

(even for a short period of time) to conduct a specific task, order a study, or request research. Engaging external expertise to conduct a specific task is also allowed through parliamentary party groups. Moreover, these groups have their own budget and regulations (internal parliamentary party groups' regulations are not accessible to the public), and these rules differ from group to group. All these activities must be administered in compliance with relevant laws, internal accounting, and financial regulations of the Office of the Hungarian National Assembly, but the groups are free to hire an expert or order a study. Beyond the right and budget for MPs and parliamentary party group to engage external expertise, Members shall be entitled to freely utilize the analytical, informational, and documentation services operated by the Office of the National Assembly. They are also entitled to use publications and official documents of the National Assembly.

In the case of committees, the staff of committee secretariats are parliamentary civil servants from the Directorate for Legislation. If there is a lack of special knowledge on a specific professional question or area, committees can hire ad hoc experts or order a study, etc. from their own budget. [Source: survey response](#)

**Kosovo:** Only committees have the right to engage external expertise based on the *Manual and the Administrative Instruction for Administration of Budget of Parliamentary Committees*. Prior to deciding to engage an expert, parliamentary committees need to render a Decision and prepare the Terms of Reference. The standard fee is 50 EUR a day, up to 800 EUR per expertise. [Source: survey response](#)

**Montenegro:** A basic guide to hiring external experts is *Article 73 of the Rules of Procedure*, which stipulates the following:

"For the purpose of performing tasks under its scope of work (consideration of proposal acts, preparing proposal acts or study of specific issues) and obtaining required information and professional opinions, a committee may, if needed or for a specific period, engage scientific and professional consultants for specific areas, representatives of state authorities and non-governmental organizations, having no right to decide (consultative hearing). The decision on engagement of scientific and professional consultants shall be adopted by the committee. For the purpose of executing tasks under its scope of work, a committee may establish special

working groups and engage scientific and professional consultants as their members."

The reimbursement of expenses and the remuneration for the work of external experts is regulated by the *Decision on engaging scientific and professional consultants adopted by the Administrative Committee*.

This Decision further defines the obligation of each committee to adopt a decision on engagement of scientific and professional consultants. The decision must include the name of the committee engaging the expert, the name of the expert, the field of expertise that the expert is being hired for, the task of the expert, and the deadline for fulfilling the tasks, underlining that the time for which the expert is being engaged *must not exceed 120 working days*. The committee submits its decision to the Secretary General. Political party officials shall not be engaged as experts for such purpose.

The expert is entitled to monetary compensation, on a monthly basis, of 680 EUR (this is the current rate which is equivalent to the salary of advisors in committee secretariats and can fluctuate and change).

In the event that the hired expert resides outside the seat of the Parliament, he/she is entitled to reimbursement of transportation and accommodation costs, in the manner and under the conditions exercised by MPs who have the same right. [Source: Rules of Procedure, Decision on engaging scientific and professional consultants](#)

**North Macedonia:** The issue of engaging external experts is regulated by the *Rules of Procedure*. A working body may have two members who are scientists and experts, one of whom shall be elected upon the proposal of parliamentary groups from the ruling majority and the other upon the proposal of parliamentary groups of the opposition parties. The experts shall not be members of political party organs and shall participate in the work of the working body without the right to vote. [Source: survey response](#)

**Serbia:** Article 43 of the *Rules of Procedure* stipulates that the President of the National Assembly, at the proposal of the working body, may engage scientific or professional institutions, as well as scientists and experts, in order to provide expertise on certain issues within the competence of the National Assembly.

According to Article 65 of the Rules of Procedure, the Committee on Administrative, Budgetary,

Mandate, and Immunity Issues adopts the Act on employing consultants in parliamentary groups of the National Assembly and on cost compensation for engaging scientists and experts in the work of the National Assembly. [Source: survey response](#)

**Slovakia:** Parliamentary groups can use financial resources allocated from the budget of the Chancellery to engage external expertise or to conduct a specific task. Pursuant to the *Rules of Management of Parliamentary Clubs (groups)*, these professional services are:

- participation fees for seminars and trainings, conferences, and symposia;
- interpreting and translation services;
- payments for information services (monitoring and information service);
- expenses for the payment of administrative, notary and other fees;
- elaborating studies, expertise, and assessments.

Committee members can, pursuant to *Section 54 of the Rules of Procedure of the National Council*, invite various specialists and other persons to their meetings and request their opinions, request experts, institutes of science, or other authorities to prepare expert analyses and opinions, which

may be necessary for debates in committees. Any committee may request the expert(s) in charge of such reports to present an oral explanation at the meeting of the committee.

Pursuant to the Rules of Management of Parliamentary Clubs, the original invoice or other documents must be submitted to settle the expenditure on the payment of expenses, orders, or contracts, delivery notes, and work schedules. The Chancellery shall determine the funding limit on a monthly basis for each parliamentary group. The decision on this limit must be monitored by the manager of the parliamentary club for the operational records.

Pursuant to Section 149, paragraph two of the Rules of Procedure of the National Council, persons summoned to meetings of committees, special control committees, or commissions may apply to have their itemized expenses and income loss reimbursed by an application submitted to the Chairman of the committee within three days; thereafter, their entitlement shall expire. Chairmen of the committees, special control committees, or the Chairman of the commissions shall inform these persons of their entitlement and the time limit thereof. [Source: survey response](#)

## Annex 10 – MPs' Constituency Offices and Communication with Constituents

### Country Overview

**Albania:** According to the *Decision of the Bureau of the Parliament no. 19 from 2014*, 24 MPs' offices have been opened in 12 regions of Albania, with one office for the majority parliamentary group and one office for the opposition.

The "Law on the status of MPs" (Article 18) stipulates that the Parliament, in cooperation with the local government, opens offices in every Albanian city for MPs of the majority or the opposition where they are represented. The Parliament appoints one specialist with a university degree in law and covers all of the operational costs for the functioning of these local offices, as well as the salary for the hired specialist. Tasks of the specialist include: taking care of all the administrative tasks for successful operations of the office; preparing routine answers for requests or concerns of constituents; organizing closed or open meetings with MPs and their constituents; cooperating with other local offices in the country; maintaining confidentiality during their work; preparing briefings and information for MPs; preparing and coordinating all the materials for the work of the MP; conducting research and analysis for the MPs; preparing articles and letters for editors and journalists as per MP's instructions, etc. [Source: survey response](#)

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Members of Parliament in Bosnia and Herzegovina use the offices of political parties in municipalities, cantons, entities, and districts for contacts with citizens in constituencies. However, MPs meet citizens in their offices in parliament or at the premises of parliamentary groups. [Source: ECPRD](#)

**Czech Republic** (*The Chamber of Deputies*): Deputies are entitled to "an adequately equipped office" in their constituency. The offices enable the constituents to contact the representatives directly every Monday and during "deputies' weeks" (one week of the six-week work cycle of deputies), which are dedicated to work in the constituency.

According to the *Act No. 236/1995 Coll., on salaries and other requirements associated with the performance of the office of representatives of public authority and some state bodies and*

*judges, as amended, and respective Resolutions of the Committee on the Budget*, each deputy has his/her constituency office space (max. 40 sqm.). Monthly amount allocated ranges between 9,000 CZK to 27,000 CZK (340 – 1,015 EUR), depending on the size of city/municipality, as follows: Prague – 27,000 CZK (1,015 EUR); Brno, Ostrava, Plzeň – 25,000 CZK (940 EUR); statutory cities and spa towns – 22,000 CZK (830 EUR); municipalities with more than 25,000 inhabitants – 19,000 CZK (715 EUR); municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants – 16,000 CZK (600 EUR); municipalities with more than 1 000 inhabitants – 10,000 CZK (375 EUR); other municipalities – 9,000 CZK (340 EUR).

Expenses for the lease of furniture and office equipment (up to 5,200 CZK – 202 EUR)

Expenses for office supplies (up to 3,000 / 2 200 CZK – 116 / 85 EUR)

Phone and internet expenses (up to 5,000 CZK – 194 EUR)

The deputies also have their offices in the seat of the Chamber of Deputies, so they can meet citizens in the parliamentary premises (offices, visiting room). [Source: survey response, ECPRD, presentation \(Prague, 2019\)](#)

**Estonia:** Members of Riigikogu may use allowances for this purpose, as appropriate. Since April 1, 2020, the salary of a Member of the Riigikogu is 4,330 EUR, and, in addition, expenses are reimbursed every month in a maximum amount of 1,299 EUR (30% of the salary). [Source: survey response](#)

**Hungary:** Members of the Hungarian Parliament may not organize consulting hours within the Office of the National Assembly. There are practical reasons for this, such as the fact that access to parliamentary buildings is only allowed with a special permit. The issuance of such permits is limited for security reasons. Members' consulting hours are, therefore, typically regulated by the parties and provide the necessary financial and material conditions for this purpose.

The Office provides an official email account for all MPs, but it is not the job of the Office of the National Assembly to ensure communication between the Member and the citizens of his/her

constituency. There are cases when citizens want to write a letter to a specific Member addressed to the National Assembly, but in this case the letter is redirected to the Member's mailbox. The reply to the letter is then typically sent by the Member's experts.

*The Act XXXVI of 2012 on National Assembly* provides Members with a budget for renting offices at their constituencies. As it is stipulated by law, this budget is no more than 50% of the MPs basic remuneration (that is, without allowances), which is 373,939 HUF (approx. 1,200 EUR) monthly. [Source: survey response](#)

**Kosovo:** MPs use mostly their parliamentary group meeting room for meetings with their constituents. The parliament does not provide any form of assistance to MPs for opening constituency offices. [Source: survey response](#)

**Montenegro:** Montenegro is a single nationwide constituency and MPs are available to meet citizens at the premises of the MPs' parliamentary group. There are no specific resources available for such purposes. [Source: Survey response](#)

**North Macedonia:** In the constituencies, parliamentary offices are provided for Members of Parliament. Local self-government bodies provide the MP with a working room for performing his/her work with parties and engaging in his/ her constituency.

MPs' constituency offices for contact with the citizens are opened in almost every constituency in order for the MPs to be closer to the citizens and hear about their problems, but also to discuss how to resolve them in the Assembly and in other state institutions. According to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Assembly does not hold sessions on Fridays so that the MPs are available to citizens in the constituency offices. [Source: survey response](#)

**Poland (Sejm):** Every MP is obliged to run at least one office in his/her constituency, meaning there are 460 official MPs' offices and many more unofficial ones. Each MP must notify the Chancellery of the Sejm in writing of establishing and relocating his/her office.

An MP signs a tenancy agreement for the office on his/her own behalf, for a fixed period of time no longer than the MP's term of office. MPs may

also set up joint offices and make a written agreement specifying the rules of operation and management of tangible assets and financial assets allocated to such an office. A copy of the agreement must be sent to the MP Support Office.

The seat of an MP's office may not be located on a property owned by the MP or member of the MP's family or on a property to which he/she has some other legal title. In rare cases, the Speaker of the Sejm, following a reasoned request from the MP, may agree to an MP's office being established on the MP's own property, but in this case, neither the rent for the premises or the utility bills may be paid from the allowance received for running an MP's office. The Chancellery of the Sejm insures the premises and equipment of MPs' offices in the cases of contingent events, theft, and acts of vandalism.

MPs receive financial resources to run their offices once they have commenced their mandate (have taken an oath), starting from the day on which the office is established and once they have notified the Chancellery of the Sejm of this fact. The lump-sum allowance for running an office (figure from 2017) is PLN 14,200 monthly (~3,200 EUR), regardless of the number of offices established. An MP who has been officially certified as having a significant degree of disability may approach the Speaker of the Sejm for an increase of this allowance by 50%, attaching a copy of the disability certificate. Expenses incurred by the MP from the lump-sum allowance must be documented with VAT invoices or bills, and must be recorded in a form entitled 'MP's Travel for the Month'.

The lump-sum allowance may not be used to finance any political parties, NGOs, or foundations, or to finance the operations of MPs' or parliamentary caucuses and groups, or charitable activities and sponsorship (except for financing small tangible prizes such as diplomas, cups, medals and books), nor for financing election campaigns.

The lump-sum allowance may not be used to finance liabilities under contracts signed by the MP with his/her family members or relatives.

Funds for running an MP's office are subject to annual reporting. MPs disclose their expenses by groups of items, as defined in the report template. The reports are public and are published on the Sejm's website. *Failure to meet the reporting deadline will result in the suspension of the lump-*

*sum allowance, pending the submission of the report.*

The MPs' offices are furnished with IT equipment and with access to the Internet at the expense of the Chancellery of the Sejm.

The service provider offers free-of-charge hardware and software support. An MP's office may report a failure by phone or e-mail.

If the MP's office is moved to a new location, the service provider is obliged to transfer the services to the new location within 14 days of the notification of the relocation.

During the term of office, the Chancellery of the Sejm covers MPs' expenses related to the renovation of MP's offices and additional equipment. Re-elected MPs receive a maximum of PLN 6,500 (~1,500 EUR), whereas newly elected MPs are assigned PLN 11,000 (~2,500 EUR) for this purpose.

In order to clear the allocated funds, the Chancellery of the Sejm must receive the original invoices or bills. In the case of payments by bank transfer, the bank transfer confirmation must be attached. Neither the funds for renovation, additional equipment, nor the lump-sum allowance may be used to finance expenses that significantly increase the value of the premises or elements that cannot be dismantled later (fitted air conditioners, shower cubicles, etc.).

The assets transferred by the Chancellery of the Sejm and those purchased by MPs from the sums allocated for running their offices are owned by the Chancellery of the Sejm. The MPs bear financial responsibility for the condition of these assets.

An MP may employ staff in his/her office in accordance with the rules set out in the *Act the performance of the mandate of a Member of Parliament and Senator* and its secondary legislation, in which case MPs carry out the duties of an employer laid down in the Polish Labor Code.

MPs are under obligation to provide the Speaker of the Sejm with data concerning the employees of their office and social assistants. These data are public and are published on the Sejm's website.

The parliamentary MP Support Office carries out inspections at MPs' offices. During the inspection,

the financial documentation of the office is checked. As part of the inspection, the financial documentation is compared against the reports submitted.

The records of financial documents and assets are also inspected, as well as the agreements/contracts signed by the MP including the lease agreement for the office premises, contracts of employment, and civil-law contracts (the so-called contracts of mandate and contracts for the performance of specific work).

If any irregularities are found during an inspection of an MP's office in the report submitted by the MP, the MP is under the obligation to submit a correction within 30 days of the receipt of the written description of the deficiencies found. Failure to comply with the deadline for submitting the correction of the report means that the lump-sum allowance for running the MP's office is suspended until the correction is submitted.

*The Polish legislation related to the establishment, operation, and winding up of MPs' offices is listed below:*

- Act of 9 May 1996 on the performance of the mandate of a Member of Parliament and Senator (Polish Official Journal of 2011, No. 7, item 29, as amended)
- Ordinance of the Speaker of the Sejm No. 8 of 25 September, 2001 on the organizational and technical conditions for the establishment, operation and winding up of MPs' offices,
- Ordinance of the Speaker of the Sejm No. 5 of 21 September 2001 on the procedure for the payment of additional annual salary to staff of parliamentary caucus offices and parliamentary group offices and staff of MPs' offices and on the procedure of calculating and paying awards for long-term service and gratuities in connection with the termination of the Sejm's term of office,
- Ordinance No. 1 of the Chief of the Chancellery of the Sejm of 30 January 2004 on the models of ID cards for the staff of MPs' offices and for MPs' social assistants,
- Attachment to Ordinance No. 17 of the Chief of the Chancellery of the Sejm of 31 May 2011, as amended, on the detailed rules for managing the assets owned by the Chancellery of the Sejm and used in MPs' offices. [Source: presentation \(2019\)](#)

**Serbia:** In 2009, the National Assembly and NDI launched a pilot project of opening parliamentary

constituency offices at the local level. These offices are envisaged as a place where citizens can voice their opinions on certain issues and civic initiatives in direct communication with MPs. The goal of such communication is to motivate and develop cooperation between MPs and citizens. This brings the Assembly's work and activities closer to citizens achieving a higher degree of transparency and increasing the responsibility of the elected representatives to the people. There are 42 offices in districts and provinces of the Republic of Serbia.

It is also possible for MPs to arrange meetings with citizens in the parliament building. MPs may meet citizens in their office at the National Assembly or at the premises of the parliamentary groups.

**Slovakia:** Parliamentary groups are allocated financial resources from the budget of the Chancellery of the National Council. The Speaker of the National Council shall decide the financial limit for the relevant financial year, taking into account the number of members of individual parliamentary groups. From these resources, parliamentary groups shall reimburse expenses related to their activities.

The Rules of Management of Parliamentary Clubs provides the list of expenditures of the parliamentary group that are liable to financial monitoring.

The Act on the salaries of certain constitutional officials regulates MPs' salaries. The salary is composed of three parts: basic salary, flat-rate compensation (depending on permanent residence of MPs), and a fee for a function (e.g. function of a committee chair). MPs may use these resources to cover the costs related to their communication with voters, if they decide to do so. [Source: survey response](#)

**Slovenia (National Assembly):** According to the *Deputies Act* (Article 29), Members' offices are established in the constituencies and each Member is entitled to a monthly lump sum to cover expenses incurred in the performance of his/her duties in connection with his/ her work in the constituency.

In accordance with Article 35 of the Slovenian Deputies Act, deputy offices with the necessary professional and administrative staff are established in constituencies. This area is

regulated in more detail by the *Resolution on the organization of deputies' offices of the National Assembly* of April 12, 2012, which came into force on January 1, 2013. According to the Resolution, the establishment of a deputy's office in one constituency is envisaged for each deputy and, within the available funds, a deputy may organize a larger number of offices. Several members may have a joint office on the same premises. The establishment of such an office is coordinated by the deputies themselves. The deputy shall find the location for the deputy's office, and the staff member who will perform professional and administrative tasks for him or her in the office shall be selected by the deputy. The deputy shall submit a proposal to the competent service in the National Assembly in accordance with which the competent service shall prepare a lease agreement or the employment contract.

Premises for parliamentary offices are rented furnished for a certain number of days per month (i.e. an occasional use of premises for a certain number of days and hours per month, preferably rented in the premises of municipalities or administrative units). In accordance with the National Assembly's annual work program, Mondays are scheduled for the work of deputies in such offices (except in the week when a regular monthly session of the National Assembly is scheduled), so no sessions of the National Assembly and working bodies are usually convened on these days. An amount of 180 EUR is provided to the deputy per month for the operation of the office, which is primarily intended to cover the rent and operating costs and, if sufficient, the labor costs of professional and administrative staff and material costs.

The deputy does not receive these funds directly, but the National Assembly pays the landlord in accordance with the concluded lease agreement or pays a person who performs professional and administrative tasks for the deputy's office on the basis of an employment contract. All other obligations related to the work of a deputy in a constituency are covered from the monthly lump sum, which amounts to EUR 500 to 800 per month per deputy – depending on the distance of the deputy's permanent residence to the seat of the National Assembly. [Source: Deputies Act, parliamentary website](#)

## Annex 11 – MPs’ office space

### Country Overview

**Albania:** The Deputy and Vice-Deputy speaker of the Parliament, chairpersons of commissions/committees, and heads of parliamentary groups have their own offices. MPs share office space with collaborators. The allocation of office space for MPs is regulated by *Law no. 8550 on “The status of MPs” from 1999*.

Source: [survey response](#)

**Czech Republic:** According to the Act no. 236/1995 Coll. – On Salary of the Representatives of the State (Section 10.1), the deputy has the right to “an adequately equipped office” in the constituency. The Office of the Chamber of Deputies also provides the deputy with a workspace on the premises of the Chamber of Deputies. Sharing office space with collaborators is a common situation in the Chamber of Deputies. Source: [survey response](#)

**Estonia:** Every MP has a personal cabinet (size of the cabinets is between ten and 30 sqm). MPs do not share offices with their collaborators. In addition, every parliamentary group – faction – has its own office. The size of the office(s) of the factions depends on the number of its members.

The allocation of rooms is not regulated by legal act or internal rules; instead, it respects convention and agreements. The rooms are allocated by the Chancellery of the Riigikogu to the factions as well as the MPs for one term. Offices for MPs are allocated by faction. MPs can also swap offices with other members of the same faction, but they cannot swap with members of other factions. The general principle is that the faction with the most seats receives the biggest rooms and the smallest faction receives the smallest office. If an already represented faction wins more seats at the elections, but wishes to remain in their former, smaller offices, this is also theoretically possible, though other factions must agree with the decision. Source: [survey response](#)

**Hungary:** Each Member of the Hungarian National Assembly has his/her own office, and thus, they are not shared with fellow Members. Their offices in parliamentary premises are 18.6 sqm on average.

According to Section 111 (1) of the Act XXXVI of 2012 on the National Assembly:

*At the seat of the constituency of the Member, or in the settlement chosen by the Member within the constituency, or in the case of a Member elected in an individual constituency of the capital, at the place chosen by the Member within the constituency, or in the case of a Member elected on the national list, in the settlement chosen by him/her, the Member shall be entitled to office accommodation located in one or more pieces of real estate suitable for performing the Member’s activities, provided by the Office of the National Assembly.*

*For each Member, the office provided shall include office furniture and equipment of appropriate standard, as well as covering the costs related to running the office or offices – in particular the purchase of natural gas, electricity, water supply, distant heating, sewage, and waste management services. Additionally, telephone, internet, broadcasting, and telefax services to be used by the Member for his/her work as the Member of the National Assembly are also covered.*

There is a constraint in this regard, under which provisions of paragraph one shall not be implemented by way of using a real estate owned by any Member, a Member’s close relative, or by a person who is to assist the Member and financed by the Office of the National Assembly or their close relatives, or by way of:

- a) a real estate owned by a public limited company owned in a share of at least 5%
  - b) a real estate owned by a company (other than a public limited company) owned in any share
  - c) a real estate owned by
    - ca) a public limited company owned in a share of at least 5% by a company specified in point b) owned
    - cb) a company (other than a public limited company) owned in any share by a company specified in point b) owned by the above persons.
- In addition to the provisions of paragraph (1a), the provisions of paragraph (1) shall not be implemented by way of using a real estate owned or managed by a party, or owned by a company

in which the close relative or partner of any Member or a person who is to assist Members and financed by the Office of the National Assembly or his/her close relative or partner is an executive officer, general manager, managing director, or the member of the company's supervisory board.

The Office of the National Assembly provides this benefit for the Member from the oath-taking of the Member until the termination of his/her mandate, together with the administrative tasks necessary for it. The Office of the National Assembly may use a monthly amount of no more than 70% of the remuneration for this purpose.

As already mentioned, a parliamentary group's operation shall also be carried out by staff members employed by the Office of the National Assembly working in the offices of the parliamentary groups. According to Section 114 (1):

*For the purpose of securing the operation of the parliamentary group and the activities of its Members, the parliamentary group shall be entitled to:*

*a) have offices free of charge in the House of Parliament or in the Office Building of the National Assembly;*

*b) office furniture and equipment necessary for the operation of the parliamentary group and the activities of its Members;*

*c) have the costs of operating the offices under point a) covered.*

The independent Member shall be entitled to have the conditions referred to in paragraph one secured to him or her. To cover the expenses referred to in paragraph one b) and c), the parliamentary group and the independent Member shall be entitled to use an expenditure per Member equal to 20% of the remuneration on the account of the budget of the Office of the National Assembly.

The distribution of offices shall be allocated by the Office of the National Assembly to the parliamentary groups after the election, in accordance with the results of the election and before the inaugural sitting. Then it is up to the parliamentary groups to decide how the Members' offices are allocated within the buildings. This is done only in accordance with established tradition and practice and is not regulated by a separate law or regulation.

However, such practices were overridden as there were quite a few changes in the parliamentary groups during the cycle, with several Members moving to another group, or becoming independent.

Such changes caused some difficulties in the allocation of office spaces, as the rooms were allocated to the political groups, meaning that they typically remained in the use by the political groups even after the Member became independent. This meant that a new room had to be found for the MPs who had become independent, which is not necessarily easy in the allocation either because the Office tries to avoid situations where the governing majority and opposition MPs are side by side. As a result, some MPs (3-3 Members) currently have a shared office. [Source: survey response](#)

**Kosovo:** The Kosovo Assembly doesn't provide offices for each MP other than the Speaker and Vice Speakers, committee chairs and heads of parliamentary groups. There are meeting rooms for each MP group, so MPs mostly use the premises/meeting room of their parliamentary group. The allocation of office space for MP groups is decided by the Presidency based on the Rules of Procedure. [Source: survey response](#)

**Montenegro:** Office space capacities in the Montenegrin Parliament are very limited, thus, MPs do not have their own office space, other than the Speaker and Vice-Speakers of the Parliament. Some committee chairs have their own office space but, in general, committee chairs share offices with committee staff members. Other MPs share office space allocated to MP groups with their fellow Members from the same MP group. Allocation of the office space to MP groups is not regulated. In practice, offices are allocated depending on the size of the MP group. [Source: survey response](#)

**North Macedonia:** Each MP in the North Macedonia parliament has his/her own office space, which is not shared with collaborators. The MPs use offices in the building of the Assembly which are at their disposal for work and meetings in accordance with the *Act on the Internal order of the Assembly*. [Source: survey response](#)

**Poland** has no offices in the parliamentary building. Detailed information about constituency

offices can be found under Part 4. [Source: presentation \(2019\)](#)

**Serbia:** An MP has the right to use the premises made available to him/her for work and for meetings with citizens. The MP shares his/her office with associates. In accordance with the Decision on the Internal Order in the National Assembly, the use of working premises in buildings of the National Assembly shall be regulated by *an act of the Secretary General*. [Source: survey response](#)

**Slovakia:** The *Act on the salaries of certain constitutional officials* stipulates that the Chancellery shall provide each MP with an office in the parliamentary premises; thus, each MP has his/her own office space. They can share their office with their assistants.

The allocation of office space to the parliamentary groups is also regulated by the *Decision of the Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic of 21 October 2010 on the Rules of Management of Parliamentary Clubs*. Thus, the Chancellery provides offices for parliamentary groups and MPs on the premises of the National Council, which are equipped with basic office furniture and basic technical equipment (computer, printer, copier, scanner, fax machine), television, radio, and refrigerator. [Source: survey response](#)

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