Information note for IPEX Correspondents' Meeting

Vienna, 14 -15 November 2019

New categories of Parliaments' EU relating information

in the reformed IPEX database

1. INTRODUCTION

The EU Speakers Conference invited IPEX to look into "an expansion in the exchange of information and documents on EU related activities of Parliaments in addition to the existing database"[1]. According to Secretaries General conclusions on IPEX, the IPEX platform should become a "one stop shop" of interparliamentary EU information exchange[2].

Based on this mandate, proposals submitted by the workgroups for implementing the Work Program 2017-20 of the **IPEX Digital Strategy**, identified additional information and papers from Parliaments to be published in order to:

a) expand the scope of national Parliaments' documents in the IPEX database, for ex. by introducing documents on general/horizontal issues or falling under the category of "own initiative" documents**[3]**,

b) introduce Parliaments' newsletters and research papers dealing with EU matters,

c) transform "News from Parliaments", containing mostly different types of information but also documents, into a searchable database.

These proposals result from input collected at the Stockholm 2018 Users Conference, the National Correspondents Meetings in 2017 and 2018, as well as from 3 working groups tasked with the implementation of the Work Programme 2017-20. They have been included in the report "Improvements resulting from different ideas proposed by the IPEX Workgroup on "Improving the IPEX Digital System"[4], approved by the Board at its meeting in Tallinn on 18 January 2019.

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[1] Conclusions of the EU Speakers Conference, Rome, April 2015, p. 7:
https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/dossier/files/download/082dbcc54ce35cd0014ce64535e5028a.do

[2] Conclusions of the Secretaries General, Vienna, January 2019, p. 2:
 https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/dossier/files/download/082dbcc5686db5be016870edf74a02fd.do

[3] An initial idea to apply a not defined category of "own initiative" documents, existing in the databases of the EC (NPs Opinions) and the EP (Connect), was abandoned. The WG PO3, after a detailed analysis, concluded that it should not be introduced into new database, because such a collective category (used differently by two institutions) is too vague and imprecise, and therefore it will not facilitate the interparliamentary exchange of information, which is the main goal of IPEX. The analysis conducted made it possible however to identify some gaps (like common parliamentary documents) and to confirm that some types of documents, being part of interparliamentary EU information exchange but absent on IPEX for technical reasons, should find their place in the modified IPEX platform.

[4] Report of the WG PO3, p. 5-8:
https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/dossier/files/download/082dbcc5682ac32801682e01037b03da.do

Taking the above into account, it needs to be highlighted that IPEX will have to deal with a new situation: **new records in the future database will not only be built upon an EU document but upon a national Parliament/Chamber document or information item[5]**. That is why the classification of parliamentary documents/information items is so important and shall be established in close cooperation with Correspondents.

2. PROPOSED CATEGORIES FOR THE PLANNED NEW PART OF THE IPEX DATABASE

A first level of classification for the new types of NPs' documents/pieces of information, shall allow to **differentiate between "document" and "information item". Therefore it should be considered and defined that**:

- **"document of NP"** includes any kind of resolution, decision, opinion etc. adopted by a Parliament/Chamber or its body in the course of appropriate parliamentary procedures, as well as any kind of letters or declarations signed on behalf of Parliament/Chamber or its body,
- **"information item"** describes only parliamentary activity or document(s), or contains an analysis of an issue for the use of Parliament, written inside the institution or outsourced (case of research papers). The "Information item" category includes newsletters (structured information), research papers as well as what can be called "information notes" (see the examples in point 4 below).

This division is important, since **a document expresses an official position of a given Parliament/Chamber** or its body while an information item does not. Such classification will allow identifying instantly what kind of paper we are dealing with.

Therefore, it is proposed to consider for the new content of the IPEX database **the following categories** of NPs' documents and parliamentary information items relating to EU matters – if decided so by Parliaments issuing them:

1) documents of individual national Parliaments/Chambers concerning EU general/horizontal issues (not only concrete EU documents as currently): resolutions, scrutiny documents, minutes, verbatim reports etc.

   (eg., Opinion of the EUAC of the French Senate on the simplification of the European law, 16.02.2017[6]; House of Lords report: "UK-EU relations after Brexit", 08.06.2018[7]),

2) common parliamentary documents: letters/declarations/proposals of several Parliaments/Chambers or conclusions of interparliamentary EU fora that are not hosted on IPEX (*an important category since it shows a certain level of interparliamentary cooperation*)

   (eg., Joint Parliamentary Declaration on the Future of the CAP for 2020 of the EUACs of the French and Italian Senates, Agriculture Committees of the Polish Senate and the lower house of the Irish Parliament, 11.04.2017[8], Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group Parliaments Speakers/Presidents, 02.03.2018[9]),

3) documents concerning EU documents not included currently in IPEX Documents database

   (eg., Czech Senate opinion on the decision of the European Council establishing the composition of the European Parliament, 17.05.2018[10], Foreign and European Affairs Committee of the Italian Chamber of

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[5] The term "information item" is used in this text as synonymous with "piece of information".
[6] In the Connect - OWN(2017)0048: http://www.connefof.europarl.europa.eu/connefof/app/1723?lang=en&p=1
[7] In the Connect - OWN(2018)0092: http://www.connefof.europarl.europa.eu/connefof/app/2041?lang=en&p=1
[8] In the EC database:
https://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/relations/relations_other/npo/docs/poland/own_initiative/oi_common_agriculture_policy_for_2020/oi_common_agriculture_policy_for_2020_senate_opinion_en.pdf
[9] In the EC database:
https://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/relations/relations_other/npo/docs/poland/own_initiative/oi_v4_countries_joint_statement_parliamentary_cooperation/oi_v4_countries_joint_statement_parliamentary_cooperation_sejm_opinion_en.pdf
[10] In the Connect - OWN(2018)0090: http://www.connefof.europarl.europa.eu/connefof/app/2019?lang=en&p=1

Deputies document on EU priorities for the 67th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, 2012[11]),

4) information items: newsletters (or any structured information), research papers, and "information notes"[12] which may comprise: announcements of future events, summaries of meetings, info about adopted parliamentary documents (ROs, resolutions, decisions) etc.,

5) links to transmissions of NPs' debates (plenary, committees),

6) other (?).

This new part of IPEX database should follow the same basic rule as the current Documents database: **every Parliament/Chamber is owner of the content that it has published. Common documents can be linked to multiple national Parliament pages**. The decision to upload documents/information is always up to Parliaments, but must be in line with the guidelines decided by the IPEX Board.

3. DEBATE WITH CORRESPONDENTS

As mentioned in the Introduction, it is **the first time when IPEX records will be based on the documents/information from Parliaments/Chambers** (not on EU documents as it happens now). It means that more than 40 persons will be uploading and indexing. So, general **guidelines concerning uploading/indexing** prepared together with Correspondents shall be foreseen.

The Parliaments should upload their documents/information items, in accordance with general guidelines, while providing the following mandatory elements:

- o **codes of categories** to be agreed:
  - documents: "individual document concerning general issues", "common document",
  - information items: "information note", newsletter, research paper, links, others;
  From the formal description point of view the most important is a division into 2 categories: documents and information items, the further classification of information items into subcategories being very helpful,
- o **keywords of Basket II**[13] - reflecting topics important from Parliaments' point of view; a rolling list to be established and managed by the Board, for ex.: Annual Work Program, Multiannual Financial Framework, European Semester, Brexit; the keywords of Basket II will allow to show automatically recent parliamentary documents and information items relating to them on the IPEX front page,
- o **Eurovoc[14] descriptors**; Eurovoc - multilingual (23 languages), multidisciplinary thesaurus covering the activities of the EU, a tool for subject indexing and therefore enabling to carry out searches using a controlled vocabulary.

Taking into account results of the debate on the reform of the IPEX website, especially the requests from Correspondents and Users to have more EU related parliamentary information searchable and archived on IPEX, the Board would like **to discuss the proposed new categories with the national Correspondents at their meeting in November 2019**.

The result of the discussion with Correspondents and their replies to the planned questionnaire should allow establishing a list of categories of objects described in the database that will be reflected in new types of records and types of relations between them, subject to approval by the Board

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[11] In the Connect – OWN(2013)0011: http://www.connefof.europarl.europa.eu/connefof/app/719?lang=en&p=1

[12] The different subcategories of "information notes" listed in point 4 are currently published in the section "News from Parliaments" but they do not constitute a database (they are not searchable).

[13] See the WG PO3 report „Collection of improvements for proposal to the Board", p. 7
https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/dossier/files/download/082dbcc5682ac32801682e01037b03da.do

[14] Eurovoc: https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-vocabularies/th-dataset/-/resource/dataset/eurovoc?target=About