



**Proposal to the Secretaries General of EU Parliaments**  
THE APPOINTMENT AND CO-FINANCING OF AN IPEX INFORMATION  
OFFICER

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The IPEX (Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange) website was officially launched at the meeting of Speakers of EU parliaments at its meeting in Copenhagen in 2006.

Since its official launch the website has grown from a user base of 25 daily users to over 200.

In addition to hosting the definitive calendar of interparliamentary cooperation, the database contains over 2500 Commission documents and over 9600 pages uploaded by the national parliaments<sup>1</sup>.

The availability of an electronic platform which allows national parliaments to exchange EU information will become increasingly important with the ratification and implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon. The Treaty not only strengthens the supervisory role of the national Parliaments, it provides for a concrete mechanism for the control of the principle of subsidiarity. Although the provisions for the control of the principle of subsidiarity is an individual right of the national parliaments, it is essential that MPs and officials from the national parliaments can access information concerning the control procedures and decisions of other national parliaments.

This proposal seeks to strengthen the integrity and quality of the IPEX website through the appointment and financing of an IPEX Information Officer, whose primary responsibility will be to ensure the updating and maintenance of the IPEX website.

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<sup>1</sup> Some parliamentary pages contain numerous documents. Therefore the number of parliamentary documents either contained on or linked from IPEX exceeds 20.000.

## **Current situation**

Since the launch of the IPEX website Parliaments participating on the IPEX Board have financed an IPEX Information Officer. The officer is responsible for ensuring that all Commission proposals and communications are uploaded to the database immediately following their adoption. In addition, the officer is responsible for the coordination and training of IPEX Correspondents from each national parliament, and ensures the timely updating the calendar of Interparliamentary cooperation.

The Danish Parliament unilaterally financed the position from September 2006 to June 2007 while the Italian (both Chambers), Finnish and Swedish Parliaments have each contributed to financing the position allowing for the position to continue until the end of 2008.

The practical administration of the position is performed by the Danish Permanent Representation in Brussels, while the officer has worked under the authority and supervision of the IPEX Board and Central Support.

The European Parliament provides office space, telephone and IT services and equipment to the IPEX officer. The EP has pledged to maintain this arrangement for as long as it is required.

Due to the increasing importance of the IPEX website, and in order to foster solidarity between national parliaments, a permanent solution is proposed whereby the position will be jointly financed by the national parliaments.

## **The Proposal**

1. The Secretaries General of the Parliaments of the European Union agree to the principle of establishing a joint financing scheme amongst parliaments for the position of IPEX Information Officer.
2. The Secretaries General encourage each parliament to participate in the scheme.
3. Member States with two parliamentary chambers may divide their contribution between two chambers – allowing each chamber to pay a portion of the contribution.
4. Parliaments who wish to participate should send letter of intent to the IPEX Board by June 1, 2008.

5. After a minimum of 14 Parliaments have submitted a letter of intent, the scheme shall be implemented.
6. The scheme shall be implemented for a two year period – after which the Secretaries General shall review the scheme and decide whether to renew it.
7. Provisions concerning administration, salary, work conditions, academic qualifications, and contributions from parliaments are published in the annex of this decision.
8. Amendments to this decision and its annex shall be taken by the Secretaries General.
9. The Speakers of EU parliaments shall be informed of this decision prior to its implementation.

## ANNEX

### **I. Job description and qualifications**

The IPEX Information Officer shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Ensure the publication of all Commission documents to the IPEX website immediately after their adoption;
2. Ensure that all Commission documents are published with the necessary meta-data which will allow for their indexing on the IPEX website;
3. Ensure that all relevant dates are provided;
4. Ensure the timely update of the Calendar of Interparliamentary Cooperation;
5. Ensure the integrity of the links section of the IPEX website;
6. Answer questions and provide training to IPEX Correspondents in the member states;
7. Work with the IPEX Central Support with regards to the daily maintenance and control of data integrity on the website;
8. Work with the IPEX Central Support on the further development of the website,
9. Report to the IPEX Board on the use of the website;
10. Report any deficiencies with regards to the functioning of the website to the IT department of the European Parliament (which is responsible for the technical maintenance and development of the site);
11. Cooperate with the Representatives of National Parliaments in Brussels and the COSAC Secretariat.

The position shall be filled by a candidate with a solid knowledge of EU documents, as well as the two working languages of IPEX: English and French.

An advanced academic degree is not required for the position (a Bachelor degree is sufficient).

The IPEX Board shall be responsible for hiring and administering the official. The Central Support or its members oversee the daily supervision of the official.

## **II. Duration**

The duration of the position should take into account the need for a stable information officer; however the position should not be considered a career track. The contract should be for a two year period.

## **III. Administration**

All costs shall be covered by joint contributions from the national parliaments.

The daily administration shall be the responsibility of the IPEX Board (Central Support).

For the first two year period, the Danish Permanent Representation will continue the daily administration of the position.

Contributions to the scheme from participating parliaments shall be transferred to the Danish Folketing which will in turn transfer the money to the Danish Permanent Representation in Brussels.

#### **IV. Office**

The European Parliament shall provide the IPEX officer with appropriate accommodation, computer and telephone. The European Parliament shall be exempt from having to contribute financially to the position.

#### **V. Salary and Costs**

The common financing shall include:

- Salaries and salary-linked payments
- IPEX office costs and other IPEX expenses.  
While the European Parliament provides the IPEX information officer with furnished office space free of charge the running of the IPEX office results in a limited number of overhead costs such as travel expenses for participation in IPEX meetings which do not take place in Brussels, office equipment.
- A 5 % administration fee imposed by the Danish Permanent Representation for administering the position.

The position shall be filled by a candidate who is locally employed in Belgium.

The IPEX officer shall receive the following pay:

Gross salary pr. year	Additional costs / end of year supplement etc.	Administration	Total
28.000	13.680	1524	43204

An additional 2.000 EUR shall be shared to cover travel costs and as well as other office related costs not covered by the European Parliament.

The IPEX Board shall administer this budget post.

#### **VI. Calculation of the amount to be shared**

The eligible costs should be subject to a maximum limit set for a two year period and shall not exceed 45204 EUR/year for the first two years.

Contributions shall be calculated as equal fractions of the total amount where each parliament is responsible for an equal share; however member states with two parliamentary chambers may share the costs.

If only one parliamentary chamber wishes to participate in the scheme in bicameral member states, said chamber may decide to pay 50 % of the total cost per parliament.

**VII. Minimum number of participants**

The participation of a minimum number of Parliaments will assume a widespread support of the importance of IPEX and will reduce the amount of the fraction of each participating parliament. Therefore a minimum of 50 % of all parliaments (14) shall agree to the scheme before it can be implemented.

In this regard member states where only on chamber participates shall be counted as 0.5.

Excluding candidate countries and the European Parliament, there are currently 27 parliaments which may participate in the scheme. The Following table illustrates the maximum/minimum costs per year/per chamber.

With 14 parliaments contributing (max cost per chamber)	With 20 Parliaments	With 27 Parliaments contributing
3229 EUR	2260 EUR	1674 EUR

**VIII. Entry into force**

The proposal shall be adopted by the Secretaries General at their forthcoming meeting in April 2008. Each chamber shall send a letter of intent to the IPEX Board in advance of the meeting of EU Speakers in June 2008. The scheme shall enter into force on 1 January 2009.

If at least 14 parliaments send a letter of intent to the IPEX Board, the scheme shall be considered as formally being ratified.

Before January 1, 2009, participating parliaments shall transfer their first yearly contribution to the Danish Folketing.

Before January 1, 2010, participating parliaments shall transfer their second yearly contribution to the Danish Folketing.

If more parliaments join the scheme, the IPEX Board shall inform all parliamentary chambers, and the yearly financial contribution shall be adjusted accordingly.

After two years starting from the entry into force of the scheme, the IPEX Board shall review the financial scheme and submit a report to the Secretaries General. The Secretaries General shall review the report and consider a continuation of the scheme after 2010, including appropriate changes to the IPEX guidelines.