



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

**130**  
years of  
empowering  
parliamentarians

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## Guidance: Parline Correspondents

### Who are Parline Correspondents and what do they do?

Parline Correspondents are staff members of national parliaments who act as the IPU focal point for Parline within each chamber or parliament. Their main role is to make sure that all data in Parline for their parliament is up-to-date and correct. This includes:

- completing (or coordinating completion of) [questionnaires](#) that the IPU sends to parliaments to gather or verify data in Parline
- proactively informing the IPU of any changes that impact their parliament's information in Parline; see the [Checklist](#), which details updates that should be sent to the IPU every time there is a change
- providing feedback and suggestions for improvements to Parline.

### Why is a Parline Correspondents Network necessary?

Parline is unique as a free public resource that comprises information on all national parliaments around the world, regardless of their IPU membership status. It is frequently used by parliaments for research, correspondence and briefing purposes, and supports their day-to-day work. It also provides information to citizens, academics, journalists and international organizations, thus enhancing knowledge, transparency and comparative research on parliaments.

The composition, working methods and structure of parliaments are ever-changing. Around 70 parliamentary chambers are renewed every year. Some 100 new or re-elected Speakers and secretaries general are recorded in Parline annually. Yet those are only a small part of the 600+ data fields for each of the 270+ chambers included in Parline.

***We count on parliaments to take ownership of their own data in Parline and to provide regular updates to the IPU.***

The latest changes made to Parline have provided improved capacity to compare data across parliaments for more than 100 data points. This includes the historical record of annual activities for the first time.

However, the quality of Parline is contingent upon the quality of the data provided by parliaments. ***Parline is a collective effort. The Parline Correspondents Network ensures shared responsibility for Parline, and the integrity and timeliness of the data it houses.***

We look forward to working with and growing the Parline Correspondents Network.

For more information, please contact [parline@ipu.org](mailto:parline@ipu.org).

### **What is the ideal profile of a Parline Correspondent?**

Each parliament can decide who to designate as Parline Correspondent. The person should be very familiar with the parliament, and very comfortable working with data. Being precise and details-oriented are great qualities for a Parline Correspondent!

In many cases, this role might be suitable for someone working in the parliamentary library or research services.

### **Why should this role be added to the person's job description?**

By including the role of Parline Correspondent in a job description, the task is recognized as being significant. The parliament knows who to speak with about its data in Parline. The Parline Correspondent is acknowledged and recognized for their work. The IPU has more certainty about who to contact in the parliament.

### **What is the difference between a Parline Correspondent and an IPU Group Secretary?**

It depends. Some parliaments may prefer to designate the IPU Group Secretary as the Parline Correspondent. After all, the IPU Group Secretary is already in very regular contact with the IPU, knows the organization and the people, etc.

But IPU Group Secretaries already have a lot of other responsibilities. Being a Parline Correspondent implies an additional responsibility for collecting and communicating data about the parliament. That role could fit better with a member of the parliamentary administration who is already doing this work as part of their job, for example from the parliamentary library.

Each parliament has to decide how to organize its work. If the roles of IPU Group Secretary and Parline Correspondent are held by different people, they will need to find a good way of working together, and keep each other in the loop.

Currently, around 35 per cent of those in the Parline Correspondents Network are both the Parline Correspondent and the IPU Group Secretary.

### **Can one parliament have more than one Parline Correspondent?**

Yes. Particularly in bicameral parliaments, each chamber may wish to designate its own Parline Correspondent. That is up to the parliament to decide.

### **How long does the role of Parline Correspondent last?**

The IPU has been collecting data on parliaments since the 1960s and expects to continue doing so for the foreseeable future. So the role of Parline Correspondent is an ongoing one. Each parliament can choose whether to keep the same person as Parline Correspondent or rotate the role every year or two. Please let the IPU Secretariat know at [parline@ipu.org](mailto:parline@ipu.org) if you have specific arrangements regarding the role.

### **How often will the IPU contact the Parline Correspondent?**

The IPU will contact the Parline Correspondents at different times during the year to request data, clarify information reported, or verify that data in Parline is still up-to-date.

The [Checklist](#) provides an overview of the regular schedule and the data that Parline Correspondents should provide.

The IPU Secretariat may also contact Parline Correspondents on an ad hoc basis to collect or check information for thematic areas covered by the IPU's programme of work (e.g. Speakers of parliament, gender, youth, human rights).

### **How much time will the Parline Correspondent need to spend on this?**

In one year, it is estimated that a Parline Correspondent might spend up to five days on Parline duties. In other words, this is a very small part of a regular staff position.