

The 5th meeting of the Association of European Senates
Prague, October 6. - 8., 2003

Questionnaire for the 5th session of the Association of European Senates

A different composition of the chambers in bicameral parliaments

as a precondition for their efficiency?

**Modes of constitution, conditions of membership,
terms of office, dissolution.**

1. How have the constituent assembly, possibly Constitutional law theoreticians in your country justified the existence of two chambers at the time of the creation of a bicameral system and how has this justification evolved in time? How is it today?
2. Who does the second chamber of your Parliament represent: citizens, administrative units (regions), communes and towns, interest groups or other groups?
3. Was the debate on the ways to constitute the chambers of your Parliament accompanied by reflections about the usefulness of the differentiation of the composition of the chambers, if you like the differentiation of their representation titles?
4. What are the differences (common features) between the chambers of the Parliament in your country?
 - a. How are both chambers of your Parliament constituted? Which electoral system is being used, do you have the institute of virile or appointed members; are appointed members called for life or always for a given period of time?
 - b. To what extent are the conditions of the exercise of the right to vote and to be elected, or the conditions of appointment for both chambers of your Parliament different?
 - c. How many members do the chambers of your Parliament have? Is the number of members defined directly by the Constitution, by special statute or otherwise?
 - d. Are the chambers of your Parliament re-elected partly or as a whole? If they are re-elected partly, what are the terms of office and how do the parts look like?
 - e. How long are the terms of office of both chambers of your Parliament? Is the new constitution (new election) of the second chamber linked in any way to the constitution of the first chamber?
 - f. May the chambers of your Parliament be dissolved? If yes, may it happen at the same time or as well separately? Are the reasons for the dissolution different in each chamber?
5. Can you in a long-term perspective compare the effective composition of both chambers of your Parliament, i.e. especially the differences of the political make-up, possibly the share of women or selected professional categories?
6. Does the changing composition of both chambers (congruency or lack of it) reflect upon the activity of the second chamber, i.e. on one hand on its activity in the legislative process or in fulfilling control functions, on the other hand on its successfulness? Does the first chamber of your Parliament perceive the divergent positions of a coincidentally composed second chamber in a more "favorable" light than it would when the second chamber is composed differently? Is the nature of the proposed amendments of the second chamber adopted in times of a coincident composition of the chambers different from those adopted in a period when the composition of both chambers is diverse?

The basic meaning of the present questionnaire is to gather more or less factual data about European second chambers that shall be useful for the organizers of the Prague meeting for the preparation of the basic comparative material that the participants shall receive as part of the minutes of the 5th session of the Association. As the hosts of the meeting we would wish as well that the presented addresses be rather a reflection with a historic perspective than a mere factual overview.

Send us, please, the answers before mid -August to the e-mail address kyselaj@senat.cz.