



# PARLIAMENT OF FINLAND 2009





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Front cover:

In 2009 the renewal of the northern wing facing the National Museum left its imprint on Parliament's facade.



# Speaker's Review

The events of 1809, when Finland became autonomous, were commemorated by Parliament in various ways last year. Important moments in Finland's national and political development that created the basis for Finnish independence were presented around the theme of Building the Nation.

Parliament's work was coloured by the global recession and the required counter-measures. Parliament approved a number of acts that will mitigate the effects of the recession and promote employment and investments. Hopefully something has been learned from the serious repercussions of the previous slump and the harshest impacts can be avoided better than in the 1990s.

In the European election that took place in June, three MPs won seats in the European Parliament. The new MPs who took their places started work at the beginning of the autumn term. After a process lasting several years, the Lisbon Treaty entered into force in December. In the near future the biggest challenge in EU matters is the creation of the new Europe 2020 programme concerning the future of the Union's economy to replace the Lisbon Strategy.

During the current electoral term Parliament's administration has been reformed and modernized. This project continued in 2009. The development of the operational and financial planning system proceeded, and personnel planning and reporting systems were further

improved. Financial planning and monitoring reforms have increased economic efficiency, which is visible in lower costs. The renewal of the Parliament buildings took nearly 15 per cent of the annual budget or about 11 million euros. Including the Parliamentary Office's operational and renewal expenses, Parliament cost 16.22 euros per citizen in 2009. Parliament also focused attention on reducing its environmental load by cutting paper and energy consumption in a rational way.

Parliament's international activities are highlighted by visits of Speakers and Heads of State. The bulk of international cooperation nevertheless took place in nearly six hundred meetings that were arranged in Finland and abroad during the year. The pollution of the Baltic Sea and global warming do not stop at national borders; consequently resolving problems requires political cooperation.

Parliament remained a popular place to visit last year. Over 36,000 people took guided tours of Parliament, and open house was also arranged in the Parliament Building and the Little Parliament annex. The Visitor's Centre in the annex broke the 100,000 visitor mark last spring. It is gratifying that so many people have found their way to the Visitor's Centre!

The old and beautiful Parliament Building is presently undergoing extensive renewal. We must take care of national property in



a way that is commensurate with its value. To minimize the costs of renting facilities, renewal work will be done in stages and Parliament's organization will largely operate on the premises during the project. The biggest visible change in connection with the renewal of the northern wing, which is now under way, is the construction of a new accessible entrance to Parliament. This will be opened in late summer 2010. In spite of the restrictions imposed by the renewal project, work in Parliament is continuing at a brisk pace, with MPs already looking ahead to the general election in spring 2011.

*Sauli Niinistö*



# Parliament's year coloured by recession

Parliament convened for its first plenary session in 2009 on Tuesday, 3 February. As the oldest MP, Jacob Söderman (Social Democratic Party) held the chair until the election of the Speakers. Sauli Niinistö (National Coalition Party) was reelected as Speaker, Seppo Kääriäinen (Centre Party) as First Deputy Speaker and Johannes Koskinen (Social Democratic Party) as Second Deputy Speaker.

The official opening ceremonies took place the following day. Parliament held 72 plenary sessions during the spring term from 3 February to 18 June and 58 plenary sessions during the autumn term from 8 September to 18 December 2009. Votes

totalled 924. Over half of these concerned the budget for the next year and were conducted in the last week

“Many proposals regarding the national response to the financial crisis were discussed in the Session Hall.”

before the Christmas break.

Parliament finished handling 260 government proposals during the

year. This is close to the long-term average.

Seppo Tiitinen, who has served as Secretary General since 1992, notes that the global recession has been directly visible in Parliament's agenda.

“And it should be. In Finland the previous recession provided some background on how to proceed and what to avoid. Many proposals regarding the national response to the financial crisis were discussed in the Hall. On the other hand there wasn't much else in the way of future-oriented reform programmes from the Government, since the focus was on dealing with the recession,” Tiitinen says.



The traditional worship service in connection with the opening of Parliament was arranged at the Helsinki Cathedral on 4 February 2009. In the foreground (left to right) are Second Deputy Speaker Johannes Koskinen, Speaker Sauli Niinistö and First Deputy Speaker Seppo Kääriäinen.



## University reform closes the circle

Despite this trend, Parliament still carried out a number of noteworthy reforms. Tiitinen mentions the Universities Act as an example.

”In the 1970s private universities were acquired by the state and now it’s the opposite. The circle is closing. Things go around and there’s very little new under the sun,” Tiitinen remarks.

“The reform improves the preconditions for students, teachers and research.”

The Universities Act was handled by the Committee for Education and Culture, which is chaired by Raija Vahasalo (National Coalition Party). The committee heard over eighty experts and exceptionally requested two statements from the Constitutional Law Committee in order to formulate the Act as well as possible.



The beginning of Finland’s period of autonomy in 1809 was commemorated in special events in Finland and Sweden. Speaker Sauli Niinistö and Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden attended the opening ceremonies at the Swedish Riksdag in Stockholm on 15 January 2009.

”Universities are no longer state accounting agencies. The state provides basic financing, but universities can also collect money from outside. The reform improves the preconditions for students, teachers and research,” Vahasalo sums up.

The reform replaced civil-service

relationships with contractual relationships for university personnel, who opposed the move. Vahasalo sees no reason for concern.

”Nowadays civil-service and contractual relationships are quite similar in terms of benefits,” Vahasalo says.

## New MP surprised by work load

Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner (True Finns) is a first-term MP who comes from Porvoo.

Workdays in Parliament are very busy, since MPs have to get briefed on complicated subjects in a short time. Different meetings and occasions take up several hours a day. Ruohonen-Lerner is a member of the Legal Affairs Committee, deputy member of the Office Commission and vice chair of her parliamentary group.

”Politics is long-term work. The best place to influence matters is in committees and working groups. In the election and party financing commission, for example, I was able to take part in preparing legislation to reform election and party financing.”

In legislative work Ruohonen-Lerner would like to see government proposals submitted to Parliament more evenly throughout the year.

”If there are lots of things on

the table at the same time and they are handled too quickly, legislation may contain gaps that people can take advantage of, contrary to the legislator’s intention. In my opinion the experts that are heard in committees should stick to the timetable. It’s frustrating if a committee has a large number of experts and there are only a couple of MPs left, since most have had to rush to the next committee meeting or other occasions,” she reflects.



## Two windows for regional state administration

One of the biggest legislative packages ever handled by Parliament concerned the reform of regional state administration. Two government proposals comprising nearly 1,300 pages were submitted to the Administration Committee for this purpose.

”The point of departure was

”Since this involved a decades-long reform, there should have been more time for discussion.”

that the reform should clarify state administration from citizens’ viewpoint. After the reform there are just two windows for doing business: Regional State Administrative Agencies and Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment,” explains committee chair Tapani Tölli (Centre Party).



One of Parliament’s tasks is to oversee the Government and its activities. During question time MPs can ask ministers about matters that fall within their purview. MP Jutta Urpilainen (Social Democratic Party) has the floor.

The reform of regional state administration crystallizes one perennial problem between Parliament and the Government. From Parliament’s perspective many complicated legislative packages have to be handled in too big a hurry, since government proposals are submitted on a ”get this done as

soon as possible” basis.

”Since this involved a decades-long reform, there should have been more time for discussion. Of course it also takes time for the Government to prepare matters,” admits Tölli, whose party is in the coalition Government.

## Numerous enquiries concerning Lex Nokia

In 2009 Parliament also gave its final approval to an amendment to the Act on Data Protection of Electronic Communications that has been dubbed ”Lex Nokia”. This caused by far the most enquiries to MPs.

”Opponents of the amendment networked on the Internet. I believe this affected the number of messages,” says MP Kari Kärkkäinen (Christian Democratic Party).

The furor over election financing that began the year before continued last year. In the spring Parliament approved legislation that prevents candidates from circumventing limits on election financing and sets ceilings for individual contributions in different types of elections.

Towards the end of the year Parliament passed legislation allowing a further extension of shop opening hours. Kärkkäinen

voted against the bill.

”I’m afraid that some local shops will be forced to close if large supermarkets are open for business on Sundays. The extension of opening hours presents new challenges for small and medium-sized family firms. The new opening hours will also reduce the time that families can spend together,” he explains.



## Moderate increase in the budget

The recession particularly coloured the work of the Finance Committee, which is responsible for handling the budget.

”Economic uncertainty has made us more cautious. The focus has been on economic sustainability and the long term, including investments in businesses’ competitiveness and the lengthening of careers,” notes committee chair Hannes Manninen (Centre Party).

Seats on the Finance Committee are sought after and important, since the committee is the best place to influence the budget. Every MP has the right to submit budgetary motions, but without the approval of the Finance Committee they wind up among the roughly one thousand motions that are rejected each year.

In practice the Finance Committee also decides on budget changes. In 2010 more funds will go to young people’s workshops, libraries, universities, financial crime investigators, environmental organizations and public transport as a result of Parliament’s decisions.

The state budget for 2010 totals slightly over 50 billion euros. The



Parliament’s decisions are prepared in committees, which generally meet before a plenary session. The Transport and Communications Committee held nearly a hundred meetings in 2009.

“Committee work has been more disciplined than in the past. Funds have been targeted to job creation and investments supporting employment.”

additional funds that were approved by Parliament came to 41 million euros, which is less than in good times.

”Committee work has been more disciplined than in the past. Funds have been targeted to job creation and investments supporting employment,” Manninen points out.

Type of matter / Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Government proposals	232	280	181	236	289
Government reports	6	8	3	8	9
Government statements			1		2
Interpellations	5	7	1	3	3
Prime Minister’s announcements	3	4	4	1	2
Union matters	53	80	52	86	90
Legislative motions	161	186	145	137	127
Petitionary motions	118	167	64	78	91
Budgetary motions	1 269	1 580	1 069	1 088	1 109
Supplementary budgetary motions	69	126	40	115	84
Written questions	1 101	1 206	637	1 066	1 119



## Relocation attracts criticism

The Audit Committee supervises the financial management of the state and compliance with the budget. In 2009 the committee examined tax revenue projections and the relocation of government jobs to the regions, among other things.

The committee's nearly 10,000-page report on relocation is the most extensive study on this subject to date and did not make pleasant reading for the Government.

"The principle in relocation is right, but the results are in conflict with productivity, economy and good personnel policy. The committee's positions differed from those taken by the Government, but the committee's task is to evaluate and honestly report what has happened. This is what parliamentary oversight is about," says committee chair Matti Ahde

(Social Democratic Party).

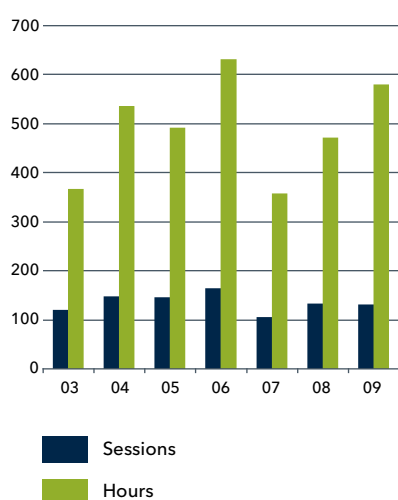
The Audit Committee is Parliament's newest committee. It went into operation in 2007.

"A key objective and measure

"The principle in relocation is right, but the results are in conflict with productivity, economy and good personnel policy."

of success is effectiveness. This has been visible in the utilization of the report on tax revenue projections. The Ministry of Finance has paid attention to the report and a real dialogue between the ministry and the committee has evolved."

Total number of plenary sessions and their total duration 2003–2009



The committees held the following number of meetings and drafted the following number of reports and statements in the 2009 session:

2009 parliamentary session	Meetings	Reports	Statements*
Grand Committee	54	1	3
Constitutional Law Committee	94	12	40
Foreign Affairs Committee	101	12	11
Finance Committee	48	47	19
Audit Committee	64	5	6
Administration Committee	110	23	27
Legal Affairs Committee	90	18	28
Transport and Communications Committee	97	33	30
Agriculture and Forestry Committee	97	12	31
Defence Committee	60	4	9
Education and Culture Committee	98	12	20
Social Affairs and Health Committee	97	55	22
Commerce Committee	113	30	39
Committee for the Future	54		8
Employment and Equality Committee	89	12	25
Environment Committee	98	12	39
Total	1 364	288	357

\* Almost half of the statements concerned EU matters.





## A busy year for the EU

The effect of the European election that took place in June was most directly visible in the departure of three MPs for the European Parliament. The Lisbon Treaty, which after many stages entered into force in December, will have little impact on parliamentary work.

National parliaments' possibility to take a position on whether a Commission proposal infringes the principle of subsidiarity, which means that decisions should be made as close as possible to citizens, is nothing new for Parliament. Up to now if Parliament had opposed a proposal for this reason, this would have become Finland's position, according to which the Government is bound to act. Finland has only one position in EU affairs, which

the Government represents in the way approved by Parliament.

Last spring the Government sub-

"The instrument is good - you just have to know how to play it."

mitted a report on EU policy to Parliament. This was discussed by Parliament in all the committees and twice in plenary session.

Erkki Tuomioja (Social Democratic Party), the chair of the Grand Committee, points out that the committee spends much of its time in a dialogue with ministers according to meetings of the Council of the European Union. All EU matters are considered by the Grand

### In 2009:

- Finland commemorated the beginning of its period of autonomy in 1809.
- Parliament decided on the direction of Finland's security and defence policy in the coming years when it approved a Government report in June.
- Former President Martti Ahtisaari, who won the Nobel Peace Prize, addressed MPs on 15 April.
- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Parliament on 26 May.

## Five new MPs

Several changes took place in the composition of Parliament during the year. After the death of Susanna Haapoja (Centre Party) in May, her place was taken by Lasse Hautala (Centre Party).

Three MPs were elected to the European Parliament in June: Timo Soini (True Finns Party), Heidi Hautala (Greens) and Liisa Jaakonsaari (Social Democratic Party). They were replaced by Pietari Jääskeläinen (True Finns Party), Timo Juurikkala (Greens) and Raimo Piirainen (Social Democratic Party). The fifth new MP, Kalle Jokinen (National Coalition Party), started work on 9 September instead of Jari Koskinen, who was appointed to the board of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.



Pietari Jääskeläinen (True Finns Party), Timo Juurikkala (Greens) and Raimo Piirainen (Social Democratic Party) started work as MPs at the first session of the autumn term on 8 September.



## Seats in the Parliament:

Centre Party Parliamentary Group 51

National Coalition Party Parliamentary Group 51

Social Democratic Parliamentary Group 45

Left Alliance Parliamentary Group 17

Green Parliamentary Group 14

Swedish Parliamentary Group 10

Christian Democratic Parliamentary Group 7

True Finns Party Parliamentary Group 5

Total 200 seats

Committee, but the special committees are responsible for studying draft legislation in greater detail.

The Lisbon Treaty gives the European Parliament more power and expands qualified majority voting in the Council, which must be taken into account if Finland wants to have a say in EU matters. In addition to the EU's institutions, this requires interacting with the other member states and their parliaments.

Tuomioja mentions the regulation on public access to documents as a good example. Finland wanted to prevent reform from going in a direction that would weaken openness and for this purpose it took an active role, including the arranging of a seminar in Brussels by the Ministry of Justice and Parliament.

Tuomioja would like to see more solidarity among the Nordic countries, so that if something is important for one on the Nordic countries, the others will support it.

Tuomioja chaired a working group on the handling of EU matters in Parliament. The working group did not propose changes in the system but did call for procedures to be improved. The Finnish



Political lines concerning matters that are under consideration in Parliament are drawn in the parliamentary groups. Minna Sirnö (left) and Merja Kyllönen confer with Martti Korhonen before a meeting of the Left Alliance Parliamentary Group on 26 November.

system has much to offer and has been a model for many other member states. "The instrument is good - you just have to know how to play it," Tuomioja says. ■

## Administrative reform makes veteran reporter chuckle

When the new Parliament convened, veteran reporter Pekka Vuoristo was no longer in the gallery. Vuoristo, who is known for his laconic and prickly writing style, retired last autumn and traded political journalism for "being a grandfather".

Vuoristo covered Parliament for Helsingin Sanomat (Finland's biggest newspaper) for nine years. From that time he particularly remembers the resignation of Prime Minister

Anneli Jäätteenmäki in summer 2003.

"Nothing surpasses that dramatic day of changing developments when Prime Minister Anneli Jäätteenmäki resigned. Some people claim that the southern media dictated the script, but we had a big enough job just keeping up. It was a rare treat to see how a minister can lose the backing of a parliamentary majority."

In Vuoristo's opinion the most

interesting parliamentary news last year concerned internal administrative reform.

"For someone who enjoys a good show, the most exciting news came in December, when the struggle over the administrative model finally ended. It's interesting on how many fronts the Speaker has tried to do something about Parliament's old ways of doing things, although he has had very few troops at his disposal."



# Parliament's international relations

In today's world fewer and fewer problems can be resolved through national decisions. Political cooperation is needed across borders. Interparliamentary organizations offer MPs in different countries an opportunity to promote important things such as human rights or environmental protection. Finnish MPs are active in ten interparliamentary organizations.

A good example of the need for cooperation is the Baltic Sea. Eutrophication or oil spills do not stop at the limits of territorial waters. Protecting the environment requires political will on the part of all the coastal states.

One arena for discussions is the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, which includes 11 national and 11 regional parliaments

as well as five interparliamentary organizations.

"Its uniqueness and strength lie in the fact that all the Baltic Sea states are involved, including Russia," says Christina Gestrin (Swedish People's Party), who is in her second year as chairman of the BSPC.

In addition to environmental issues, MPs monitor what the governments in the Baltic Sea states are doing to prevent human trafficking and smuggling.

"This is a common concern and problem for all of us. The BSPC has established two working groups, one to study human trafficking and the other the implementation of the Programme for the Protection of the Baltic Sea. Their reports will be discussed at the 2010 conference in Mariehamn," Gestrin adds.

## Nordic cooperation is visible in everyday matters

Thanks to the Nordic Council, citizens of Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland have been able to travel in the Nordic region without a passport since the 1950s. Subsequently some of the Nordic countries have joined the European Union, but the need for cooperation has not declined. On the contrary.

"When EU directives are implemented, we should see what the other Nordic countries are doing to avoid additional border obstacles. We haven't done so well in this respect," says Paavo Arhinmäki (Left Alliance), the chairman of the Finnish delegation to the Nordic Council.

Those attending the special anniversary session of the Council of Europe in Helsinki on 18 May 2009 included (left to right) Ms Päivi Hirvelä, Judge of the European Court of Human Rights; Mr Pekka Hallberg, President of the Supreme Administrative Court of Finland; MP Sinikka Hurskainen (Social Democrat), the chairperson of the Finnish Delegation to the Council of Europe; President of the Republic Tarja Halonen; Mr Lluís Maria de Puig, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; and EU Commissioner Olli Rehn.





MPs Cheryl Gallant of Canada and Peter Bottomley of the UK took part in a visit to Finland that was arranged by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly on 21-24 September. NATO parliamentarians visited the Crisis Management Centre in Kuopio and the Karelian Air Command in Rissala, to which they flew on a military transport plane.

anniversaries by hosting a meeting of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, a seminar on the Baltic Sea and a special anniversary session that was opened by President of the Republic Tarja Halonen.

### **Finnish MPs make new conquests**

Last spring MP Hannes Manninen (Centre Party) became the first Finn to be elected as chairman of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.

Another new conquest for Finnish MPs came at the European Security and Defence Assembly when Tuija Nurmi (National Coalition Party) was elected as the ESDA's first Finnish rapporteur.

On the basis of Nurmi's report the Assembly recommended to the EU and the Western European Union that the members of both organizations should give preference to European suppliers in procuring armoured vehicles and thus support the European defence industry.

Other forms of Parliament's international cooperation are Speakers' conferences and exchanges of visits. Over a hundred delegations of MPs or parliamentary officials from different parts of the world visit Finland each year. ■

### **In 2009:**

- The Speaker visited Poland, Germany, Russia and Turkey.
- Finland received visits from the Parliamentary Speakers of Georgia, the Czech Republic, Canada, China, Kosovo and the National Assembly of Québec.
- Finnish MPs participated actively in the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.
- Parliament and the World Bank Institute arranged a seminar for MPs from Latin America in Helsinki on 27-29 November 2009. The subject was budgetary power and parliamentary oversight.
- Nearly 600 meetings were arranged in Finland and abroad within the framework of Parliament's international activities.

All the same, Arhinmäki believes that work in the Nordic Council is meaningful.

"Activity aimed at eliminating border obstacles is the most concrete work affecting citizens' daily lives that takes place in interparliamentary organizations. It involves social security, pensions, taxes, the right to use a car in another country and such simple things as allowing a security company to carry euros from Ikea in Haparanda to a bank in Tornio. Before they had to go all the way to Stockholm," Arhinmäki explains.

### **Council of Europe celebrated its 60th anniversary**

Last year marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Council of Europe and the 20th anniversary of Finland's accession to it. The Council of Europe is the oldest political cooperation and human rights organization in Europe.

The Finnish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe marked the two



# Pioneering environmental work

The Parliament of Finland is the second national parliament in the EU to have an approved environmental programme, in addition to the Scottish Parliament. It received an ISO 14001 certified environmental handbook in 2008. The handbook describes Parliament's environmental principles and operating procedures.

"The environmental handbook will be implemented according to the principle of constant improvement. This means the job is never finished but there is always room for improvement," says MP Erkki Pulliainen (Greens).

Pulliainen is a veteran of Parliament's environmental work, since he was previously in charge of a project that examined the state of environmental matters. He also chaired a working group that drafted an environmental programme for Parliament.

"The biggest difficulty has been to get people working in Parliament involved in environmental work. Changing attitudes and procedures that have become established over the years is challenging," he notes.

The Yrtti group, which is headed by Environmental Manager Jukka Savola, will monitor compliance with the principles in the environmental handbook. The objective is to complete the first monitoring report in 2010.

The Yrtti group will also make sure that environmental matters



**Deputy Head Custodian Tapani Korhonen sorts documents before a plenary session. The distribution of documents has been cut back in order to reduce paper consumption.**

are taken into consideration in renewing the Parliament buildings. Parliament's biggest waste category is paper. The group has accordingly urged measures to save paper.

Parliament has in fact reduced paper consumption considerably. Written questions, reports and international treaties are examples of documents that are no longer distributed automatically to all MPs. All documents are printed on paper that complies with the requirements in the EU environmental system and has a PEFC label, using both sides of the paper. Electricity consumption has also been reduced. In 2009 consumption fell by about five per cent. ■

## The environmental working group's eco-tips:

- Don't print e-mails or documents unnecessarily.
- If you print something, use both sides of the paper.
- Switch off the lights if you leave a room for 15 minutes.
- Turn off your computer at the end of the day.
- Sort material for recycling.
- Use e-mail to share information, distribute publications only to those who want them.



# New accessible entrance to Parliament

## Stages of the renewal project:

- Planning began in 2006.
- Pekka Helin & Co was selected as the architect in 2007.
- The kitchen in the Parliament Building was repaired in 2007.
- The renewal of Northern Wing and the construction of a new entrance will cost about 12 million euros without VAT.

The first major stage in the renewal of the Parliament buildings began after Midsummer, when the northern office wing and the old housing wing next to it became a work site. Around one hundred MPs and personal assistants packed up everything in their offices before the 2009 summer break and moved to temporary rooms.

The biggest visible change in this stage of the project will be a new accessible entrance to Parliament. The entrance will face Mannerheimintie and will be opened in late summer 2010 after refurbishing has been completed. Conference rooms and other facilities for visitor services will be located near the entrance.

Building technology will be renewed in the office wing. Although offices will have the same general look after refurbishing,

a new cooling system will be installed inside structures. New sealed windows that are impact resistant and considerably better at keeping out solar heat will be installed. Improving energy efficiency has been an important part of the project in other ways as well.

The renewal project will be carried out in stages, one building or section at a time. To cut costs, Parliament will mainly operate in its own facilities during the renewal project.

The main building is scheduled for renewal in the middle of the next electoral term. The goal is to complete the renewal of the Parliament buildings for the most part by 2017, when Finland will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its independence. Building conservation perspectives will be taken into account in all stages of the project. ■



**A new accessible entrance is being built in the old housing wing, along with facilities for visitor services.**



# “I might come back for a plenary session”

Tens of thousands of citizens come in direct touch with Parliament each year through guided tours and events that are open to the public. The Parliament Information Office also answers questions regarding parliamentary work that it receives by e-mail or phone.

In 2009 around 36,500 people took guided tours of Parliament. This included more immigrants than ever before. The number of immigrant groups has been increasing for several years, and in 2009 immigrants accounted for 4% of the groups visiting Parliament.

Paola Gomez Burgos, an 18-year-old student at Helsinki Diakonia College who comes from Bolivia, took a guided tour in December 2009 together with some of her student friends.

“The visit was exciting, since the building is valuable for both Finns

and foreigners,” she said at the end of the tour.

Gomez Burgos has not followed politics actively, but the visit sparked her interest. “I might come back for a plenary session,” she added.

Nearly all the guided tours that are arranged for immigrants are in plain language. Visitors learn about parliamentary work, elections and citizen participation during tours. Services in plain language are being steadily developed.

The Visitor’s Centre that opened in the Little Parliament annex in 2004 broke the 100,000 visitor mark last spring. Visitors can learn more about Parliament by watching videos or picking up brochures that are on display. Events, lectures and theme days related to parliamentary work are also arranged at the Visitor’s Centre. ■



A guided tour of Parliament sparked Paola Gomez Burgos’ interest in coming back for a plenary session.

## There are many ways to learn about Parliament

All plenary sessions of Parliament are open to the public. The door to the public gallery opens 15 minutes before the start of a session.

Guided tours can be booked by calling +3589 432 2027 or e-mailing oppaat@eduskunta.fi. The minimum group size is 6 persons and the maximum 25 persons. Individuals are wel-

come to participate in guided tours on the weekend. Information concerning tours is available at [www.eduskunta.fi](http://www.eduskunta.fi).

Brochures published by Parliament are available in several languages at the Visitor’s Centre or the Library of Parliament, free of charge. They can also be ordered from [information@parliament.fi](mailto:information@parliament.fi).

The Parliament Information Office, [information@parliament.fi](mailto:information@parliament.fi) or +3589 432 2020, 432 2021 and 432 2025, serves citizens in questions regarding Parliament and parliamentary work.

The Library of Parliament (Aurorankatu 6) is open to the public. Opening hours are posted on the library’s website at [www.parliament.fi/library](http://www.parliament.fi/library).



# Personnel, finances and administration

In addition to MPs and their assistants, Parliament employs 470 persons. This includes lawyers, carpenters, secretaries, clerks, custodians, data processors, librarians, security staff and computer technicians.

Two-thirds of the employees of the Parliamentary Office are women. The largest category of personnel is cleaners, who must attend to 47,100 square metres of floor space.

Nearly a fifth of the employees of the Parliamentary Office will

reach the age of 64 and are likely to retire by 2015. According to the personnel plan, for every two posts that become vacant, only one will be filled at most.

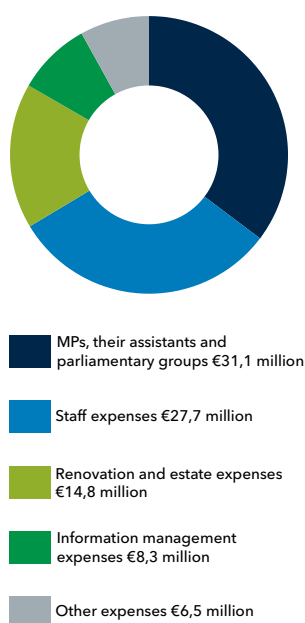
In 2009 Parliament saved money by not filling thirty vacant posts. Costs were also cut by closer monitoring of the budget. The Parliamentary Office's operational expenditure amounted to slightly over 43 million euros. Operational expenditure has fallen during this electoral term.

## The price of democracy: 16 euros per citizen

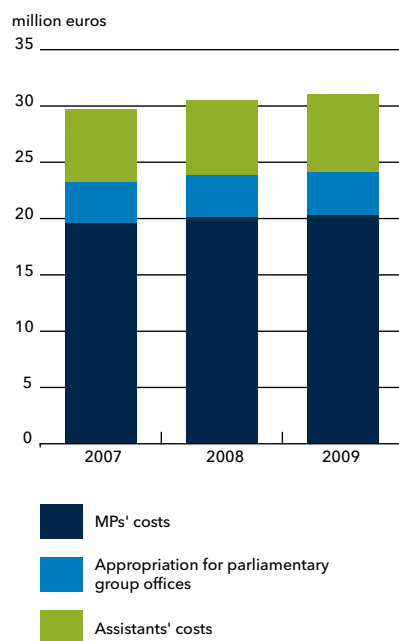
The Parliamentary Office's operational expenditure includes personnel, real estate and information management costs. Parliament's total costs also include MPs, their assistants' and political groups' costs. These have remained practically unchanged in recent years.

In 2009 Parliament's expenses totalled €88.4 million. As a legislative body Parliament cost €16.22 per citizen. This can be regarded as the price of democracy.

Parliament's expenses 2009 (total €88,4 million)



MPs', assistants' and group offices' costs



## Administrative reform continues

During the current electoral term Parliament's administration has been reformed and modernized. In 2009 the development of the operational and financial planning system proceeded, and personnel planning and reporting systems were further improved.

The Office Commission, which is headed by the Speaker and composed of MPs, directs, supervises and develops Parliament's administration and financial management. It appoints Parliament's highest officials and resolves significant matters regarding Parliament's administration and financial management.





Parliament has its own post office, which is staffed by parliamentary personnel. Marja Hatakka is shown here serving MP Arto Satonen (National Coalition Party).



In 2009 the Office Commission included Speaker Sauli Niinistö, Deputy Speakers Seppo Kääriäinen and Johannes Koskinen and MPs Tuomo Hänninen (Centre Party), Merja Kyllönen (Left Alliance), Petteri Orpo (National Coalition Party) and Heli Paasio (Social Democratic Party). Deputy

members were Erkki Pulliainen (Greens), Mikaela Nylander (Swedish People's Party), Kari Kärkkäinen (Christian Democratic Party) and Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner (True Finns Party).

The Central Office plans and prepares Parliament's plenary sessions, records minutes of sessions

and is responsible for producing, publishing and distributing parliamentary documents and translating them into Swedish. The Committee Secretariat takes care of preparing committee meetings and documents that are needed for decision-making in plenary session.

The Security Department's most

## No change in MPs' pay

MPs' pay was not increased in 2009. MPs receive a starting salary of 5,860 euros a month. After three electoral terms this rises by nearly 500 euros. The Speaker receives 10,800 euros and the Deputy Speakers 9,000 euros a month. Committee, subcommittee and parliamentary group chairs receive a monthly supplement ranging from

435 to 1,090 euros. MPs' pay is taxable income. Separate remuneration is not paid for attending committee meetings or for late night or weekend sessions.

In addition to salary, MPs receive compensation for expenses ranging from 990 to 1,810 euros a month, depending on where they live and whether they have a second home in the

Helsinki metropolitan area.

A three-person remuneration committee appointed by the Speakers decides on MPs' pay. The chair from 1 October 2008 to 30 September 2012 is Pekka Tuomisto, with Maj-Len Remahl and Seppo Riski as members.

In the budget expenditure for Members of Parliament includes MPs' pay, compensation for expenses and travel in Finland.

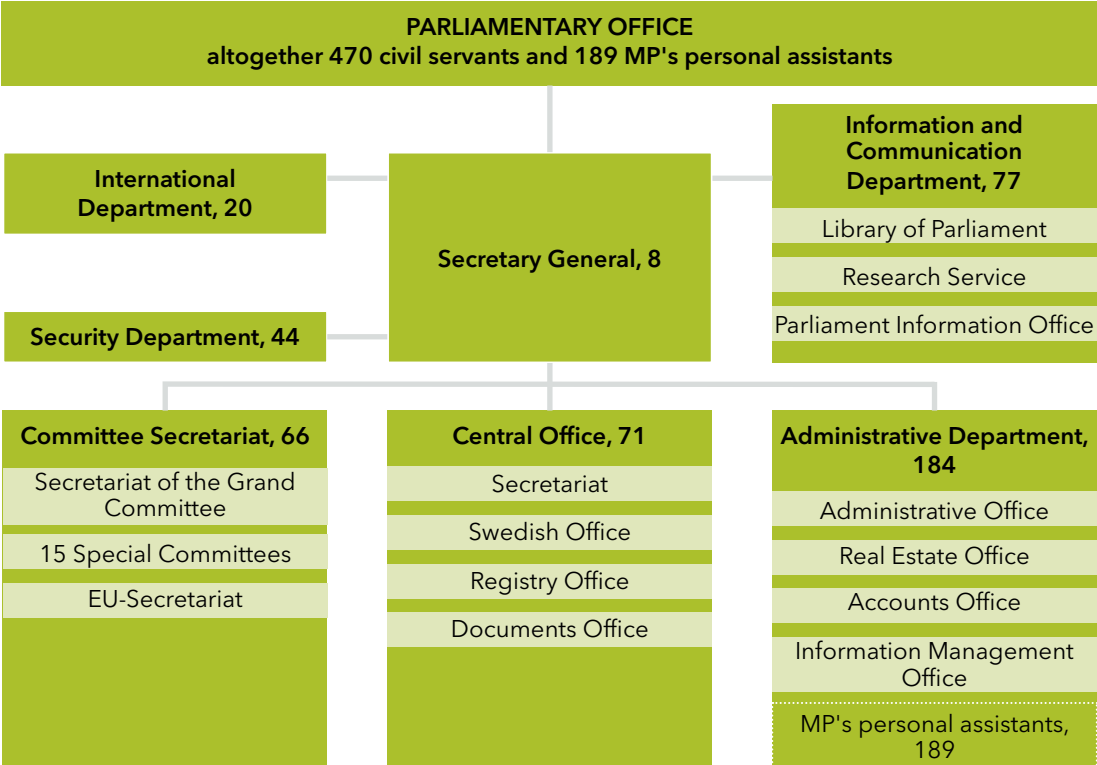


The Central Office's assistants also work as session technicians. They turn on MPs' microphones in the order decided by the Speaker. In addition technicians monitor sound and video and record sessions. The Registry Office prepares minutes of plenary sessions from recordings.

visible task is security checks for persons visiting Parliament, but it is also responsible for the functioning and development of Parliament's security system as a whole. The Information and Communication Department includes the

Library of Parliament, the Research Service and the Parliament Information Office. The International Department takes care of relations with international organizations and other parliaments. The Administrative Depart-

ment is responsible for administrative matters such as finances, real estate, information technology and personnel administration as well as the preparation of matters for the Office Commission. ■



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Back cover:  
Nearly 36,500 visitors took guided tours of Parliament in 2009. Information officer Mar-Leena Kolehmainen shows a group of school children a scale model of Parliament.

