



## eRepresentative: A Web-Based Deliberation and Participation Platform for Elected Representatives

### *USER INTERFACE REQUIREMENTS*

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## Project Description

Project Acronym: eRepresentative  
Project website: <http://www.erepresentative.org/>  
Contract Number: FP6-2004-IST-4, 26985  
Duration: 2 years  
Partners: Catalanian Parliament, Dutch Parliament, Hungarian National Assembly, Lithuanian Parliament, Westmeath County Council, Napier University ITC, HP, ScytI and Gov2U



## Objectives

- understand what it means to be a mobile elected representative and model the associated legislative services needed by them and the tasks they need to undertake
- appreciate and model the information and information systems associated with legislative scrutiny of legislation and policy
- specify and develop a virtual desktop environment for secure mobile working
- deploy the "eRepresentative" desktop in a number of elected assemblies at national, regional and local level
- critically evaluate its potential and usefulness for elected representatives and the impact on assembly legislative services

## The eRepresentative Desktop

- Work remotely, safely and easily on the legislative process,
  - for example drafting a law, discussing amendments and voting.
- Smart technology to manage data overloads
- Enable seamless use of 'virtual' desktop with current Parliaments' systems and workflow
- Innovative, user-friendly and mobile-capable security for collaboration on legislative documents, while meeting needs for integrity, authenticity and privacy

## eRepresentative innovations

- eRepresentative focuses on effective & efficient remote, secure personalised handling and delivery of information for elected assemblies
  - Allowing representatives to work away from Parliament with more robust security
  - standardisation of information interfaces enabling the interconnection of diverse legislative systems
  - Intelligent agents delivering real-time assembly information
  - Secure remote access to information supporting multi-channel access modes in collaborative environments
  - Stimulate inter-assembly collaboration by enabling them to share documents

## User Interface Requirements

We will describe the situations during which the system could be used and then broadly define how this would be achieved based on consultations interviews with elected Representatives and members of assembly personnel from the five participating assemblies

## An Inter-parliamentary search agent

- Elected representatives indicated that it would be helpful to be able to know how other European member states have handled similar policy issues and have subsequently legislated on those.
- It was therefore decided that the eRepresentative system should provide representatives the facility to find, store and retrieve documents from other European assemblies, according to user-defined relationships with current legislative issues or proposals. Search results could then be shared among identified colleagues.
- Overall, an inter-parliamentary search agent would increase representatives' opportunities to consider matters related to draft proposals, drawing on other parliaments' experiences.

## Committee event notifications

- This system function would serve the users by providing them with notifications (i.e. an e-mail reminder and/or short message on their mobile phone) about different committee events.
- Examples of committee events could be the publication of the committees' agenda before a session, the minutes scripted after a session has been held, or the time remaining in a committee's schedule allowing for the submission of amendments for selected legislative proposals.
- Notifications could also be sent on the time remaining to support an amendment or a legislative proposal.
- In terms of benefits, the system would increase the time available to Representatives to consider amendments and their colleagues' positions on related issues.



## Following committee meetings legislative actions

- Parliamentarians need to closely follow committee work when unable to participate in committee sessions.
- The aim is to provide timely information on the status of legislative proposals and all related amendments, however the emphasis in this case is on the history of changes to these, the positions of party groups and their members, and any related comments that may be politically or legislatively useful.
- This function would provide a useful, organised record of committee session outcomes and would also increase the effectiveness of the time available to representatives, in-between committee sessions, to consider amendments and their colleagues' positions on related issues.



## A secure discussion space

- All participating assemblies with the exception of one identified the provision of a secure discussion space for representatives as a prospectively useful function for the collaboration of elected members.
- The function would provide the facility to share and invite comments on agreed issues or proposals and background information.
- The provision of this function would enable committee members (or colleagues) to be better prepared for meetings by increasing opportunities to share and consider others' positions, and views of interest groups on issues at hand. It would also support party groups in commonly forming views on proposals prior to their formal introduction to the parliament.





## E-voting for individual secret ballots in plenary sessions

- The provision of an e-voting facility for plenary sessions was the main requirement of one Parliament.
- The purpose of this function is to provide members with the ability to record their vote electronically and remotely, on matters appropriately decided by individual ballot.
- Voting, counting and scrutinising could be performed through a secure e-voting platform giving representatives the opportunity to remotely cast a vote when they are unable to attend plenary sessions.



## *Remote e-polling for committees*

- Two Parliaments also welcome the provision of a remote e-polling facility to support committee decisions.
- This function aims to enable committee members to remotely vote, or indicate their preference, to other members of the committee.
- Committee members could be allowed remote participation in the decision to support an amendment or legislation at a committee stage although not physically present in that committee session.
- That would enable committee members who are unable to be present at meetings to perform their role and submit their opinion in a definite form.



## Decision support requirements

- Six additional decision support requirements were identified during the same interviews with representatives and assembly personnel of the participating assemblies.
- The decision support requirements are relevant to the six main functions of the eRepresentative system

## Decision support requirements

- Representatives could use the system to formulate an opinion on whether to introduce an amendment, suggest its modification or support it at a committee session
- Representatives could use the system to indicate their support for draft legislation Representatives could use the system to indicate their support for introducing an amendment at a plenary session or support a legislative proposal



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