



**Parliament of Montenegro
Parliamentary Institute
Research Centre**

Research paper:
Setting up and Financing of MP Groups

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** The contents of this document do not reflect the official views of the Parliament of Montenegro.*

This paper provides information related to forming and manner of financing of MP Groups¹, based on the data collected through the ECPRD Network (The European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation). The first part of the document provides a short overview of information, based on previously conducted research², related to forming of MP Groups in all EU member states (with the exception of Latvia, Malta, Ireland and Slovenia³), Norway and Switzerland. Information on financing and status of MP Groups, referred to in the second part of the document, was also collected from the ECPRD⁴ Network.

1. Forming of MP Groups

Regulatory models for forming of MP Groups vary among parliaments. All parliaments share one thing in common, i.e. the right to form an MP Group, which is founded on the principle of free exercise of mandate. The only exceptions are the parliaments of Spain and Italy, where membership in an MP group is mandatory. MPs who do not wish to join a political group, are obliged to take membership in a so-called “technical group” (*gruppo misto* or a mixed group). There is no clear link between regulations which regulate forming of MP groups and those that regulate elections.

The minimum requirement needed to form an MP Group is, in the most cases, somewhere between 2% and 5% of the total number of MPs, the greatest number of cases being between 3,2% and 4,2% or 5% (2,7% in the National Council of the Parliament of Austria). The exceptions include Sweden and Portugal where the minimum number of MPs needed for forming of an MP group has not been envisaged, and some of the smaller parliaments such as the parliaments of Luxemburg and Cyprus, as well as some upper chambers. This is similar to Finland and the Netherlands, where the minimum number of MPs needed for forming of an MP Group is one.

In most countries, rules on forming of MP Groups are a constituent part the of rules of procedure, while in certain countries (Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Hungary and Cyprus) these rules are defined within constitution.

In a number of parliaments, the right to set up an MP Group is granted to MPs belonging to the same political party. In several parliaments, MPs belonging to different political parties may establish an MP Group, in accordance with the procedure on recognition and consent (Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Slovak Republic).

¹ *Parliamentary group, party group, parliamentary fraction* are all commonly used English terms, but in accordance with Montenegrin parliamentary practice, the term *poslanički klub* (MP Group) was used.

² ECPRD Request no. 2159 *Parliamentary Groups: Formation and Status*, December 2012 (Final Summary)

³ When preparing this research apaper, Croatia was not an EU member state. Practice of the Parliament of the United Kingdom was also omitted from this part of the document, due to its specific system, which is not familiar with the notion of MP Groups, as accepted by the majority of parliaments, other than with the so-called all-party groups enjoying a special status; which will be further addressed in the second part of the document.

⁴ ECPRD Request no. 590 *Subsidies for financing of parliamentary groups*, June 2006

In the Czech Republic (Chamber of Deputies), Estonia, Hungary, Norway, Sweden and Spain, MP groups may be formed only at the beginning of parliamentary term. In all other parliaments, an MP Group may be set up at any given time, although this is not a common practice (for instance, such cases were registered in Germany 50 years ago).

The possibility of withdrawal from an MP Group exists in all parliaments. Italy and Spain are the exception, where MPs, upon withdrawal from an MP Group, are obliged to enter into another group or the so-called technical group. Entering into other MP Groups is prohibited only in certain parliaments, for instance in Bulgaria.

In order to withdraw from an MP Group or enter into another MP Group, it is necessary to submit a notification and a formal request. Responses submitted by a majority of parliaments state that an MP Group is disbanded if the number of MPs is reduced below the prescribed minimum (however, on the basis of the context, it can be concluded that this is the case with all the parliaments, A/N).

Withdrawal from or disbandment of an MP Group does not necessarily affect the composition of committees (Belgium and Sweden).

In the follow-up, there is a tabular representation of the total number of MPs, minimum number of MPs needed in order to form an MP Group, the possibility of setting up an MP Group at the beginning of or during the term, information regarding recognition of newly-formed MP Group through a separate act, and existence of special rules governing withdrawal from an MP Group or entering into an MP Group.

The complete document in Montenegrin language can be found at: <http://www.skupstina.me/images/dokumenti/biblioteka-istrasivanje/2015/3.pdf>