

BEYOND THE INTERNET:  
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

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What role does ICT play in the work of a European parliamentarian? How can parliamentarians make effective use of the opportunities to communicate with citizens provided by new media such as the Internet? MPs from across the EU, members of the European Commission, and researchers from the UK, Belgium, and Germany discussed these and other questions at a workshop in the European Parliament last week.

The EPRI Knowledge\* workshop participants agreed to:

1. call for research gathering together best practice from civil society and representative bodies outlining experiences and current practices which would then provide a clear set of targets to enhance political participation by the next European Parliament elections.
2. establish a core group of participants in the EPRI Knowledge network, which will feed into the annual EPRI conferences, hosted by different parliaments in Europe.
3. create a 'blog' for workshop participants (and others) to continue the dialogue.

Edith Mastenbroek MEP, along with two co-hosts Alexander Nuno Alvaro MEP and Piia-Noora Kauppi MEP provided the arena for the participants to discuss some of the ways in which they work with new Information and Communication Technologies in their roles as representatives, party actors, and legislators.

The next EPRI workshop will take place in the UK, and is foreseen to be linked to the Ministerial eGovernment conference hosted by the British Presidency of the European Union at the end of November of this year. The next EPRI conference will take place in the last quarter of 2005. Previous conferences have been attended by approximately 100 MPs from across the EU. More details will be posted on the project website in due course: <http://www.epri.org>

For workshop details [http://www.epri.org/epriweb/contents/First\\_EPRI\\_Workshop.php](http://www.epri.org/epriweb/contents/First_EPRI_Workshop.php)

To view (and participate in!) the blog <http://epri.blogspot.com>

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\* EPRI Knowledge is a 36 month-project funded under the European Commission's Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme. It is a successor to the first European Parliaments Research Initiative project dating back to 1999. It aims at raising awareness of, and supporting decision making on IST subjects, among parliamentarians across the EU, at European, national and regional levels.