

CHANCELLORY OF SEJM  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

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# OPENING REMARKS

**RYSZARD STEMPOWSKI**

*Chief of the Chancellory of Sejm  
of the Republic of Poland*

Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Staff Members:

I am sincerely pleased to welcome you very cordially as guests of the Chancellory of Sejm of the Republic of Poland. You may know, Ladies and Gentlemen, that some Parliaments have responded to our invitation by sending Members of Parliament to this conference, to be exact: Members of Parliament in Moldova and Ukraine, and I welcome them most heartily. I welcome the representatives of cosponsors of this conference, Ms. Kristie Walseth, Chief of Staff, Special Task Force on Development of Parliamentary Institutions in Eastern Europe, US Congress, and Mr. Robert Ramsay, General Director for Studies, European Parliament. And again, I welcome you, fellow participants from Central and East European parliamentary services, and to be more specific, from Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Ukraine. I welcome fellow participants from the parliamentary services in Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America and from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, European Centre for Research and Parliamentary Documentation, International Institute for Democracy. I welcome special observers from offices of the National Assembly of the People's Republic of China. I welcome participants from the Chancellory of the Polish Senate, and, last but not least, let me mention my staff members and colleagues from the Chancellory of Sejm. The organizers of this conference work under supervision of Director General for Sejm Analyses, Dr Grudziński. Well, quite a long list, may I say, and if I may sound a personal note, the very fact that we have met is a significant event, and I do hope the contributions to be made will enrich our respective experiences. You may expect a variety of information to be offered and views to be expressed, for this selection of participants is very pluralistic and in more than one way so. During this brief conference the participants will have opportunities to discuss a wide spectrum of questions related to parliamentary services. We shall be sharing the experiences of the new democracies, we shall be sharing the experiences of those from the developed parliamentary institutions of Europe and America. We shall learn how to better serve our Parliaments. I do not know, however, if the conference would take place in such a shape were it not for the generous support from the US Congress and the European Parliament. Let me share my time for these opening words and yield to Kristie Walseth.

# INTRODUCTION

RYSZARD STEMPOWSKI

*Chief of the Chancellory of Sejm*

## MODERNIZING PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

Every reformer must resist the temptation to overrate the results of his work, at the same time he may not presume to formulate universal principles. I shall therefore contain myself to sharing my experience with you, hoping that these remarks may be useful to others in their difficult work, while your welcome criticism may assist me in finding better ways of guiding the work we have been doing in Chancellory of Sejm for two years now. (Following the motion by the Parliamentary Civic Committee, i.e. the then Solidarity Caucus, I was appointed Chief of the Chancellory of Sejm by the Presidium of Sejm on June 1, 1990).

The major systemic change in Poland is related to the role of Sejm; the role of Sejm services being determined by the former. The Sejm is no longer a rubber stamp for the decisions taken by the leaders of a hegemonic political party; it has now resumed its role of law-maker, while the dominant party disappeared altogether. It was a truly revolutionary change and it resulted in the Chancellory of Sejm having to abandon its previous role of a passive Sejm attendant, and moving into role of the active support agent in the law-making process in Sejm.

My modernization project provided for a redefinition of Chancellory tasks, Chancellory restructuring and personnel changes. I shall elaborate very briefly on the topics.

The Chancellory of Sejm should be defined as an integrated and full-fledged Sejm service system for legal, organizational, logistical, advisory and financial matters.

In this connection the redefinition of functions of the Chancellory of Sejm and its operation, as well as related modes primarily led towards introduction of the following rules: (A) The rule of political impartiality of the Chancellory of Sejm (it should manifest itself in attitudes of each of its employees, in an evenhanded approach of the Chancellory of Sejm in respect of every M.P. and each political party in Sejm, making staffs to the party caucuses subject to the caucuses respectively, hiring Members' assistants by Members themselves). (B) The rule of information self-reliance of the Sejm (building its own body of experts). (C) The rule of full budgetary autonomy (the budget of the Chancellory of Sejm, i.e. of Sejm, should be decided by the Sejm alone, and the appropriation should be adequate; the salaries of members of Presidium of Sejm and of the Chief of the Chancellory of Sejm should be fixed by the Sejm; the salaries of employees of the Chancellory of Sejm might not be

subject to the governmental limitation). (D) The rule of maximizing legislative assistance (among others, through employing of computer systems and strengthening of legal expertise support). (E) The rule of conformity to market principles (viz. running the restaurant, hotel and provision of other services to the Members). (F) The rule of decentralized management (a condition to increase efficiency).

The rule of evenhanded, i.e. apolitical or impartial approach, as reflected in the attitude of an employee, is not the question of the employee having no viewpoint of his own; conversely, a person with no bearings is liable to commit any self-serving villainy since his or hers opportunism – and let's admit no one is immune – will not be curbed by anything. What is important, though, his or her attitude should not affect services rendered to a Member or a parliamentary faction. As to the employees working for political caucuses, they should be assigned exclusively to these caucuses. When I came the situation was that all these people were the employees of the Chancellory of Sejm, with all consequences regarding their loyalty, control over them, their motivation, etc. The rule of impartiality of the Chancellory of Sejm implies also, that the Members' assistants working in their offices be only subordinate to the employing Members, while I have encountered the situation where all such assistants were on the staff of the Chancellory of Sejm. To be sure, a formation of the correct attitude of an employee is no simple matter and takes time. However, the work to change the status of a caucus employee and that of Member's assistant has encountered resistance, and I was able to tackle this part of modernization plan only in November 1991, at the beginning of the present term of the Sejm, the 1st term of a democratically elected Sejm. Only one parliamentary caucus preferred to retain, for the time being, its service in form of employees of the Chancellory of Sejm, both in caucus's offices and in individual Members' assistance.

The rule of information self-reliance of Sejm involved a substantial expansion and reform of the library, establishing of an archives and of Publishing Office and setting up of Bureau of Research, as well as better profiling of Bureau of Information, and wide application of computers. Our conference focuses on this very topic, and I shall leave it to my colleagues to elaborate on it. Suffice it to say, that even if there would be nothing more to the modernization of the Chancellory of Sejm, it would still make a very significant change in the Chancellory.

The rule of budgetary autonomy was already implemented in its basic part (a draft budget is passed by Presidium of Sejm on the motion of Chief of Chancellory of Sejm, the Finance Minister automatically incorporates this draft into the draft of the national budget, the Sejm passes the National Budget and thereby finally decides about its own expenses). However, an exclusion of remunerations drawn in the Chancellory of Sejm from under the control of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy became necessary, thus, it was possible to create a salary system that attracts the top quality people, and it shall remain this way until the civil service becomes a fact in this country. It should be stressed, that proper budgeting and budget performance is facilitated by audits by the Supreme Auditing Chamber, performed on request of the Chief of the Chancellory of Sejm. The budget autonomy made the modernization possible.

Maximizing the efficiency of legislative-process support is achieved by strengthening of legal service and, by and large, by producing of computer edited drafts (Members work on computer-processed text of a bill; amendments are entered and marked, possible Senate amendments are entered later on). Computerization of legislative process is but an aspect of a wider computerization of Sejm and Chancellory of Sejm proceedings.

The rule of decentralized management makes for a better use of the leading staff, makes our services more effective, permits the Chief of the Chancellory of Sejm to focus on fundamental matters. The rule became operative largely through setting up of new management level of General Directors, upgrading the importance of Directors of bureaus, improving the make-up of the leading staff, and establishing adequate procedures.

The macro-structure of Chancellory of Sejm and the ways it is managed, as well as re-definition of the tasks of the Chancellory of Sejm can be seen in the chart you have just received and in the new Statute of the Chancellory (Resolution of the Presidium of Sejm) and Rules of Organization of the Chancellory of Sejm (Executive Order of the Chief of the Chancellory of Sejm). The Statute and the Rules, impossible to describe here and now, specify in a new way the scope of responsibility of all directors and all statutory bodies as well as define the procedures. An appropriate Chancellory manual accompanied by the integrated file system will have come into force by the end of the year.

The most difficult task consists in personnel selection. The Chief of the Chancellory of Sejm supervises the staff and he is fully responsible for them. The basic principle of my policy is to apply the criterion of professional qualifications first of all, biographical lack of political support of communist order of the martial law being also positively perceived ("with no skeletons in the closet"). I am mainly focusing on the leading staff. I supplement this group with newcomers, often academics. Out of 37 present directors and deputy directors, only 7 have held similar positions before June 1, 1990. The Chancellory employs some 1200 people. The periodic rating system of the staff and their constant on-the-job training are the tasks to be taken up shortly.

Before I conclude, may I revert to the original proposition and emphasize that criteria for evaluation of parliamentary services are drawn up in the parliament, and not elsewhere, and the modernization process of the Chancellory of Sejm inevitably must – in the long run – be consonant with the evolution of the Sejm itself. The process to which I refer will soon come up for the in-depth-evaluation by the MPs. Results of such an evaluation will determine the subsequent course of modernization.

Preoccupation of the Chancellory of Sejm with day-to-day service to the Sejm, the shape of Chancellory as I initially found, other conditions of its modernization – related and unrelated – to the Sejm, and finally the limited capabilities of the modernizers themselves, all add up to make modernization process a protracted effort. Its duration may be reduced, if we have more strength to do what is possible, if we be more humble and desist from attempting the impossible, and if we have the wisdom to tell which is which.

# CHANCELLORY OF SEJM

