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Reference paper

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION /hereinafter - PBO/

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In the European Union, Parliamentary Budget Offices (PBOs) have only been established in a few countries. In the Anglo-American countries, the countries of South Eastern Europe and in some African states, this model is much more widespread. The following five countries in the EU have set up a PBO: Austria, Greece Ireland, Italy and Portugal.

The main characteristics of these parliamentary budget offices are shown in boxes below:

AUSTRIA

Year of establishment and Legal Basis:

2012

No establishment legislation, but references in other legislation (Fiscal Advisory Council and Productivity Board Act, Federal Statistics Act)

Political agreement between all Parliamentary Groups represented in the Austrian National Council

Statement of the Budget Committee of the Austrian Parliament of 10th November 2011

Mandate:

- Supporting the Budget Committee in form of written expertise, analysis and short studies on budgetary matters presented by the government according to Federal Organic Budget Act (e.g. draft fiscal framework and budget, budget execution reports, performance (outcome controlling) reports, debt reports, subsidies reports)
- Preparing (short) studies upon request of members of the Budget Committee (e.g. costings, distributional analyses)
- Supporting other parliamentary committees regarding impact assessment of new legislation (assessment of Government's mandatory impact assessment or autonomous analysis)
- Consulting Parliament on performance budgeting and the effective equality of women and men (gender budgeting)
- Ensure transparency by government-independent and objective analysis
- Participation in all meetings of the Fiscal Advisory Council and the Productivity Board in an advisory function

Main Products and Services:

Based on a Catalogue of Products & Services agreed between the Head of the PBO and the Budget Spokespersons of Parliamentary Groups:

- Written expertise, analysis and short studies on all budget-relevant draft documents presented by Government (e.g. Budget, MTEF, Stability Program)
- Support the Budget Committee to control budget execution (monthly reports on budget execution, reports on outcome controlling (performance reports), subsidy reports; reports on liabilities, financial debt, public enterprises etc.
- Analyses upon request of Members of the Budget Committee
- Analyses out of own initiative
- Preparatory and information meetings on budget issues with Parliamentary Groups or MPs
- Visualisation of the budget draft and actual budget execution

Independence:

No legally guaranteed independence; in practice functional independence (direct communication with MPs and Staff of Parliamentary Groups, no approval procedures for all analyses and information)

Leadership:

Individual leadership by the Head of the PBO

Head is appointed by the President of the National Council after consultation with the Budgets-Spokespersons of the Parliamentary Groups for five years (renewable)

Resources and Staff:

Budget incorporated in the Budget allocation of the Parliamentary Administration (no separate budget line).

Head of PBO involved in the selection of staff with final decision of the President of the National Council.

<p>Actually 8 staff in total: 6 academic experts with high qualifications in economics, fiscal policy and legal affairs, 2 assistants for data processing, report editing and general support services; Personnel support in peak workload periods (e.g Court auf Audit, National Bank, Institute for Economic Research) 2 additional economic experts envisaged in 2024</p>
<p>Access to information: No legal access to information; in practice usually comprehensive and timely provision of information and data by Government</p>
<p>Relationship with Legislature: PBO is Department within the Legal, Legislative & Research Services of the Parliamentary Administration with functional independence Participation of the Head of PBO in all meetings of the Budget Committee as permanent expert Members of the Budget Committee may request budget related studies from the PBO</p>
<p>Transparency and Communication: Publication of all results on parliament's homepage results in high media coverage</p>
<p>Webpage: https://www.parlament.gv.at/fachinfos/budgetdienst</p>
<p>Other Independent Fiscal Institutions or Parliamentary Budget Scrutiny Units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal Advisory Council (FISK) • Austrian Institute for Economic Research (WIFO)

GREECE

Year of establishment and Legal Basis:

2010
Fiscal Responsibility and Management Act (3871/2010)
Special Regulation of internal operation and organization of the State Budget Office (Resolution of the Speaker of the Greek parliament, 16074/2010)

Mandate:

- Monitoring of State Budget's implementation
- Monitoring the implementation of the fiscal policies and reforms adopted by the Hellenic Parliament (laws and Economic Adjustment Program)
- Analysis and evaluation of the components of the state budget, and of the public revenues and expenditure forecasts, as well as analysis of long-term sustainability of public finances and report to the related Parliamentary Committees for any delays
- Supervision of the compliance with the budget targets set out in medium-term fiscal strategy and on the assumptions underlying the macroeconomic estimations and budgetary forecasts, which define the overall harmonization of fiscal policy of the general government with the principles and procedures of the "Fiscal Responsibility and Management Act"
- Scientific support of the Speaker and the Chairmen of the related with public finances Parliamentary Committees

Main Products and Services:

- Quarterly and annual reports on the fiscal situation to the relevant parliamentary Committees
- Opinion on the annual (draft and final) budget
- Interim reports on special topics (e.g. economic effects of COVID-19, reform of the European fiscal framework)

Independence:

Head (Coordinator) of the PBO has to be a person with acknowledged prestige, scientific training and professional experience in areas linked to the responsibilities of the PBO. Appointment is preceded by a public call for expressions of interest.

The Coordinator reports directly to the President of the Parliament.

Members of the Scientific Committee are academics and must have acknowledged prestige and scientific training or professional experience in areas related to the responsibilities of the PBO.

Leadership:

Individual administrative leadership by the Head (Coordinator) of the PBO

Head (Coordinator) is appointed by the Committee on the Standing Orders of the Hellenic Parliament following a proposal by the Speaker of the Parliament for five years (once renewable).

Scientific Committee with four members selected by the Special Commission of review and of the general state balance sheet and control of the implementation of the state budget (for three years renewable). Scientific Committee delivers opinions on issues requested and approves the quarterly and annual reports of the PBO. The Head of PBO and the members of the Scientific Committee are academics and employed on a part time basis.

Resources and Staff:

Budget is part of the overall budget of the Parliament, but the PBO independently disposes of an allocated budget.
The Head (Coordinator) of the PBO has the sole responsibility to hire staff (with the agreement of the Scientific Committee)
Around 10 staff in total (excluding Coordinator and Scientific Committee)

Access to information:

The Ministry of Finance along with other Ministries and General Government entities are legally obliged to provide the PBO with the essential figures in a timely manner. Memoranda of Understanding are agreed with the Ministry of Finance and other bodies.

Relationship with Legislature:

The PBO is an internal parliamentary unit in the level of a Directorate, affiliated directly to the Speaker of the Parliament
The Scientific Committee delivers opinions on issues requested in writing by the President of the Parliament, the Office Coordinator or the responsible Parliamentary Committees and approves the quarterly and annual reports submitted the relevant parliamentary Committees. The PBO may issue interim reports on special topics. All reports are presented in the Budget Committee.

Transparency and Communication:

All reports and financial transactions of the PBO are published on the Parliament's website. Reports are published in Greek and in English. The Coordinator communicates with the media and the PBO sends press releases. The PBO has a Press Officer and a high media coverage.

Webpage:

<https://www.pbo.gr/en-gb/>

Other Independent Fiscal Institutions or Parliamentary Budget Scrutiny Units:

- Hellenic Fiscal Council

IRELAND

Year of establishment and Legal Basis:

2017

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2018

Mandate:

- Provide fiscal & economic analysis to Members that is independent and non-partisan.
- Provide analysis of the macro-economic situation and developments affecting public finances including the financial implications of proposals.
- Support the Houses of the Oireachtas and Oireachtas Commission in relation to fiscal issues and the management of the public finances.
- Provide analysis to support parliamentary engagement with the budgetary process and to promote greater budget transparency and accountability.

Main Products and Services:

- Research tied to the economic and budgetary cycles e.g. PBO's Quarterly Economic and Fiscal Commentary
- Pro-active research on economic and fiscal issues
- Fiscal or budget related research at committee request
- Committees Briefings on request
- (Confidential) Policy Costings services
- Briefing Papers
- Working Papers
- Interactive data exploration and infographics

Independence:

The PBO is an independent and specialist organizational unit within the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (Parliamentary Administration). Independence is not legally guaranteed, but the PBO has analytical independence and the flexibility to undertake self-initiated analysis in the areas covered by its mandate.

Leadership:

Individual administrative leadership by the Director of the PBO. Its organizational structure comprises the economic and fiscal analysis unit and the costings and modelling unit, each led at principal officer level. Secretary General of Parliaments assigns a member of the staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service who has the requisite knowledge, skills and qualifications as the Director of the Office.

PBO has an external advisory group of academic and private sector experts who help the PBO with pro-bono technical and methodological assistance.

Resources and Staff:

Budget incorporated in the Budget allocation of the Parliamentary Administration (no separate budget line).

Secretary General of Parliaments assigns to the PBO as many members of the staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service as he considers appropriate to execute the specified functions.

Actually around 22 staff members in two main teams.

Access to information:

Legally guaranteed access to information. Director may request in writing a Minister of the Government or other body to provide to him or her such information as he or she considers necessary for the performance of PBOs functions.

Relationship with Legislature:

PBO is an organizational unit within the Houses of the Oireachtas Service. PBO has to fulfil requests for analysis from either House of the Oireachtas or its Committees (particularly the Budget Oversight Committee) if the area is related to its mandate. Engagement with Oireachtas Committees includes briefing Members on matters of economic, budgetary and fiscal importance.

Transparency and Communication:

Reports and research are published on Parliament's website following presentation to the legislature. Due to a more restricted mandate relating to supporting the Houses of the Oireachtas and especially the Budget Oversight Committee the public appearance is limited.

Webpage:

<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/how-parliament-is-run/houses-of-the-oireachtas-service/parliamentary-budget-office/>

Other Independent Fiscal Institutions or Parliamentary Budget Scrutiny Units:

- Irish Fiscal Advisory Council

ITALY

Year of establishment and Legal Basis:

2014

Constitution (Article 5.1(f) of Constitutional Law No. 1 of 20 April 2012) and establishment legislation (articles 16 to 19 of Law No. 243/2012)

Mandate:

- Independent Fiscal Institution according to EU economic governance framework (Council Directive 2011/85/EU on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States)
- Compliance with fiscal rules
- Assessment of macroeconomic projections
- Assessment of the macroeconomic impact of major legislative measures
- Budgetary forecasting and policy costing
- Activation and use of the corrective mechanism and deviations from targets arising from exceptional events
- Long-run sustainability analysis
- Active promotion of transparency
- Other matters of economics and public finances pertinent to the analyses, audits and assessments referred to

Main Products and Services:

- Endorsements of macroeconomic forecasts
- Assessments of the compliance with fiscal rules
- Fiscal forecasts and forecasting and monitoring of trends in the Italian economy and public finance
- Assessment of the budget and budget policy documents
- Micro- and macroeconomic analyses on topics relevant to public finance-related issues on its own initiative or at the request of parliamentary committees
- Reports on recent economic developments
- Focus Papers (address important and timely issues that contribute to the discussion on economics and public finance)
- Working Papers (policy papers or technical and institutional analyses conducted by the PBO)
- Interactive visualizations and Infographics
- Parliamentary Hearings

Independence:

Legal framework includes appropriate safeguards for functional autonomy. The office shall enjoy full autonomy and independence in its judgements and assessments. PBO adopts an annual "programme of activities" or work plan. Legislative mandate provided to the PBO permits it to perform both proactive and directed work.

Leadership:

PBO has a collegial governance structure, or governing board, with three members, one of whom holds the position of Chair. Board members are appointed for one six-year term only. Chair and members of the governing board are selected by the Presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies from a shortlist proposed by the responsible parliamentary committees. The Chair has certain prerogatives and responsibilities, including convening board meetings and setting the agenda; representing the PBO externally; testifying on behalf of the PBO at parliamentary hearings; presenting the annual PBO work program to the Budget Committees; and appointing the PBO Director General from among the PBO staff. The Director General will supervise PBO operations. The Board has established a Scientific Committee (actual 15 members).

Resources and Staff:

Legislation sets out the exact funding levels and funding mechanism for the PBO. PBO operates in accordance with an annual work plan. Law stipulates that the PBO shall act with complete autonomy in the selection of its staff, basing its choices solely on merit and competence and its own operational needs. Around 30 staff in total with the possibility of secondment of staff from the administrations of Senate and the Chamber of Deputies or the Government. Staff is organized in three departments (Macroeconomic analysis department, Public finance department, Sectoral analysis department)

Access to information:

According to Law 243/2012 all government entities, public authorities and entities that belong to public holdings must ensure the PBO's access to all databases regarding economic or public finance issues. Memoranda of Understanding for the access to data or information have been established with different Institutions.

Relationship with Legislature:

The PBO is an independent institution attached to the parliament. Parliamentary committees with responsibility for budgeting or public finances may request analyses, reports or other services from the PBO. The Chair may testify before parliamentary committees.

Transparency and Communication:

Legislation provides that the analyses and reports of the PBO are to be published on the organisation's website. This extends to the underlying methodologies for these reports, including the structure and assumptions of fiscal forecasting and costing models. The PBO has direct contact with the media, with the Chair in the role of spokesperson, and issues regularly press releases.

Webpage:

<https://en.upbilancio.it/>

Other Independent Fiscal Institutions or Parliamentary Budget Scrutiny Units:

Chamber of Deputies and Senate have set up in 1989 two exclusively assigned in-house units for specialised, non- partisan, technical support to legislators

- State Budget Department
- Senate Budget Service

PORTUGAL

Year of establishment and Legal Basis:

2006

Law governing the Organization and Modus Operandi of the Departments and Services of the Assembly of the Republic (Law no. 77/88, of 1 July 1988; amended by Law no. 13/2010, of 19 July 2010)

Resolution of the Assembly no. 53/2006, of 7 August 2006, amended by Resolution no. 57/2010, of 23 June 2010, and no. 60/2014, of 30 June 2014

Mandate:

The Portuguese Parliamentary Budget Office (Technical Budget Support Unit - UTAO) directly supports the Parliament's Budget and Finance Committee:

- Studies and technical working documents (periodical reports) on public budgetary and financial management within the scope of the following matters:
 - Technical analysis of government bills on the State Budget and amendments;
 - Technical analysis of the Stability Programs;
 - Technical monitoring of the budgetary execution for all public administrations;
 - Technical assessment of the General State Accounts;
 - Assessment and monitoring of public debt and economy's financing
 - Assessment and monitoring of Public-Private Partnerships and State-owned Enterprises;
 - Evaluation of audited final accounts of Central Government
- On-demand requests from the Budget and Finance Committee
- Requests from other parliamentary committees or from individual parliamentarians via the Budget and Finance Committee
- Studies on the PBO's discretion on the fiscal framework, structural reforms and other
- Policy costings

Main Products and Services:

- Periodical regular reports
 - Stability Program
 - Draft budget
 - Government accounts (national accounting and public cash accounting)
 - Public debt and economy's financing
 - Public-Private Partnerships and State-owned Enterprises
 - Audited final accounts of Central Government
 - PBO's Activity Reports and Activity Plans
- Non-periodical reports and studies
 - On-demand by parliamentary Committees (e.g. costings)
 - At PBOs discretion (e.g. on fiscal framework, structural reforms)

<p>Independence: UTAO operates under the guidance of the Budget and Finance Committee that approves UTAO’s annual work program. UTAO’s staff is subject to the approval of the Budget and Finance Committee, and secondments only last until the end of the legislature. UTAO is legally obliged to act with strict impartiality and objectivity, in compliance with technical criteria that shall be duly set out in detail.</p>
<p>Leadership: Individual leadership by the Head (Coordinator) of the UTAO (full time). Nomination by the legislature from short list of potential candidates. UTAO’s Head is typically seconded under an informal and tacitly renewed arrangement, but not supported in legislation.</p>
<p>Resources and Staff: No separate budget appropriation, UTAOs operating costs are funded from the administrative budget of Parliament. UTAO has no autonomy to make spending decisions. Around 7 staff in total. Staff often is seconded from other government-funded bodies and secondments only last until the end of the legislature. UTAO’s Head does not have full control over the hiring process for its staff. Limited resources and lack of staff compared to allocated functions.</p>
<p>Access to information: UTAO may ask (with the consent of the Budget and Finance Committee) departments, services and bodies of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration for all lacking information including those regarding the state’s business sector, and the departments, services and bodies mentioned are legally obliged to provide them in a timely manner. UTAO has agreed on standardized routine data requests with key departments in the Ministry of Finance.</p>
<p>Relationship with Legislature: UTAO is a specialized unit within the Parliament’s Directorate of Parliamentary Support (DAP) and functions under the Speaker of the Parliament. It operates under the guidance of the Budget and Finance Committee.</p>
<p>Transparency and Communication: All reports are made available to the public on the Parliament’s website, but UTAO does not manage its online presence. Head (Coordinator) of the UTAO repeatedly makes public statements, but limited visibility due to a more restricted mandate relating to supporting the Budget and Finance Committee at Parliament.</p>
<p>Webpage: https://www.parlamento.pt/OrcamentoEstado/Paginas/UTAO_UnidadeTecnicaApoioOrcamental.aspx https://www.parlamento.pt/sites/EN/Activity/Paginas/UTAO.aspx</p>
<p>Other Independent Fiscal Institutions or Parliamentary Budget Scrutiny Units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portuguese Public Finance Council

INDEPENDENT FISCAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION */hereinafter - IFIs/*

According to the EU economic governance framework, the member states of the European Union have to be set up Independent Fiscal Institutions (IFIs). In the EU legislation (especially Council Directive 2011/85/EU on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States) they are defined as functionally independent non-partisan public bodies, other than the central bank, government or parliament, aimed at promoting sustainable public finances through various functions, including monitoring compliance with fiscal rules, production or endorsement of macroeconomic forecasts for the budget, and/or advising the government on fiscal policy matters. Supreme Audit Institutions are included in this definition if their activities go beyond the accounting control and cover any of the tasks mentioned above.

All Member States of the European Union therefore have established an IFI, but only a few have a Parliamentary Budget Office. Only in Italy the PBO also fulfils the function of an Independent Fiscal Institution according to the European legislation. In the other European countries that have a PBO, there are therefore also IFIs that fulfil the mandatory tasks in accordance with the European fiscal framework. All Member States shall ensure that the Independent Fiscal Institutions are (I) producing, assessing or endorsing annual and multiannual macroeconomic forecasts; (II) monitoring compliance with country-specific numerical fiscal rules, (III) assessing the consistency, coherence and effectiveness of the national budgetary framework and (IV) upon invitation, participate in regular hearings and discussions at the national Parliament.

Mandates of IFIs in the European Union typically consist of all or some of the following tasks and activities:

- **Macroeconomic forecasting:** IFIs may produce or endorse official macroeconomic forecasts. The use of independent forecasts shall ensure an unbiased approach in budget preparation. The euro-area EU Member States in which the official forecasts underpinning budgetary planning are not produced independently are required by the Two-Pack to have those forecasts endorsed by IFIs before they are formally incorporated into the budget.
- **Budgetary forecasting (production/endorsement):** IFIs may produce or endorse budgetary forecasts which are mainly used as a numerical benchmark to assess the compliance of government's plans with fiscal rules. Several IFIs are entrusted with the responsibility to officially endorse the government's budgetary forecast.
- **Assessment of public finances and especially of compliance with fiscal rules** is recognised as a core mission of an IFI as a fiscal watchdog. IFIs review governments' annual or medium-term budget proposals and the long-term sustainability of public finances and related risks. Assessments typically include judgment on whether the fiscal rules have been followed in the past or whether the projected budgetary developments are in accordance with requirements.
- **Support of legislature in analysing the budget and other budget related documents:** This task is performed in particular by Parliamentary Budget Offices and requires close working relationships with the legislature. It can also include the preparation of studies on budget-related topics at the request of a parliamentary committee or individual members of parliament.
- **Policy costing** by providing estimates of the budgetary impact of new policy initiatives or specific measures envisaged by fiscal authorities. IFIs either analyse the impact assessments submitted by government bodies or prepare them themselves (e.g. at the request of members of parliament). Policy Costing usually requires access to non-public tax databases or detailed base data which only relevant line ministries responsible for spending programmes can provide.

- Analysis of long-run sustainability of public finances, in particular examining the long-term fiscal effect of effects of demographic developments. IFIs may properly integrate calculations and estimates in a broader narrative supporting the general objective of promoting sound public finances. Environmental aspects and the consequences of climate change may also be taken into account.
- Active promotion of fiscal transparency: Although many IFIs are pursuing this objective and are contributing to it in practice, in legislation of only a few countries there is an explicit mention about transparency as a self-standing objective for IFIs.
- Fiscal policy recommendations: Some IFIs are mandated to complement their compliance assessments with explicit recommendations on the fiscal stance, the composition (or the nature) of fiscal measures or the consequences of alternative policies. Making recommendations on fiscal policies to inform the public debate involves difficult judgements and requires a strong reputation.
- Costing of election platforms: Only few IFIs worldwide are entrusted with assessing the fiscal impact of election programmes, which may be scheduled before or after the election.

Current EU-IFIs can be categorized in three categories:

- (1) Fiscal Councils as Stand-alone institutions: Fiscal Councils often have a collegial leadership structure with a specific role of the chair. They usually have supporting offices of different sizes with analysts and secretarial staff. Council members may be full-time or part-time experts or academics. They have no organic link with policymakers beyond the appointment procedure and accountability mechanisms. Council members may have an academic background or also reflect the country's institutional landscape. Establishment laws often include explicit guarantees on their independence and the independence of Council members. To provide adequate resources they may be attached to the executive or other institutions like Central Banks while maintaining institutional independence.
- (2) Legislative or Parliamentary Budget Offices: They fulfil IFI responsibilities while also serving the analytical and research needs of the legislature. They may be an integral part of the Parliamentary Administration with specific legal or statutory guarantees of independence. They can, however also be set up as autonomous and independent bodies under the umbrella of Parliament with specific regulations on the appointment of the head of the PBO or the members in case of collective leadership.
- (3) Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) entrusted with IFI responsibilities: This arrangement is less common and requires a clear institutional segregation of audit tasks. While the work of SAIs and Fiscal Councils may overlap in some areas, including assessing compliance with fiscal rules, and thus generates economies of scale, SAIs have other distinct roles such as on performance audits of individual government entities. Fiscal councils, on the other hand, often contribute to the planning and formulation of policies and place a greater focus on economic evaluation and analysis. A clear institutional segregation of ex-ante IFI activities and the ex-post evaluation role of Supreme Audit Institutions is necessary.

In the European Union there are also different organizational models with regard to the leadership and the structure.

Institutional Models of IFIs in the European Union					
Country	Institution	Fiscal Council	Parliamentary Budget Office	Audit Institution	Other
AT - AUSTRIA	Austrian Fiscal Advisory Council	x			
	Austrian Institute of Economic Research				x
	Parliamentary Budget Office		x		
BE - BELGIUM	High Council of Finance	x			
	Federal Planning Bureau				x
BG - BULGARIA	Fiscal Council of Bulgaria	x			
CY - CYPRUS	Cyprus Fiscal Council	x			
CZ - CZECH REPUBLIC	Czech Fiscal Council	x			
DE - GERMANY	Advisory Board of the Stability Council	x			
DK - DENMARK	Danish Economic Council	x			
EE - ESTONIA	Fiscal Council	x			
EL - GREECE	Hellenic Fiscal Council	x			
	Parliamentary Budget Office		x		
ES - SPAIN	Independent Authority for Fiscal Responsibility	x			
FI - FINLAND	National Audit Office of Finland			x	
FR - FRANCE	High Council of Public Finance			x	
HR - CROATIA	Fiscal Policy Commission	x			
HU - HUNGARY	Fiscal Council of Hungary	x			
IE - IRELAND	Irish Fiscal Advisory Council	x			
	Parliamentary Budget Office		x		
IT - ITALY	Parliamentary Budget Office		x		
LT - LITHUANIA	National Audit Office of Lithuania (Budget Monitoring Department)			x	
LU – LUXEMBOURG	National Council of Public Finance	x			
LV - LATVIA	Fiscal discipline council of the Republic of Latvia	x			
MT - MALTA	Malta Fiscal Advisory Council	x			
NL – NETHERLANDS	Council of State - Advisory Division	x			
	Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis				x

PT - PORTUGAL	Portuguese Public Finance Council	x			
	Parliamentary Budget Office		x		
RO - ROMANIA	Fiscal Council	x			
SE - SWEDEN	Swedish Fiscal Policy Council	x			
SI - SLOVENIA	Fiscal Council	x			
SK - SLOVAKIA	Council for Budget Responsibility	x			

Fiscal Councils are the dominant model with regard to the responsibilities under EU legislation. However, in several EU countries there are other IFIs that share or complement the IFI-specific tasks. In some countries, there are Parliamentary Budget Offices in addition to the Fiscal Councils to strengthen budget oversight at parliament (e.g. Austria, Ireland, Portugal), in others the macro forecasts for the budget are carried out by separate institutions (Belgium, Netherlands).

In a few cases, the functions of an IFI have also been assigned to a Supreme Audit Institution, although here too the models in the individual countries that have adopted such a solution (Finland, France and Lithuania) are organised differently.

The Box below provides an example (Finland), when an IFI was established in a Supreme Audit Institution (SAI).

FINLAND - Supreme Audit Office (Fiscal Policy Monitoring and Audit Unit)

Legal Basis:

Constitution and Act of the National Audit Office. In the Fiscal Policy Act the National Audit Office (NAO) is mandated to monitor compliance with the rules laid down in Law No 869/2012, and is enabled to issue assessments on the need for corrective policies. According to the Rules of Procedure of the NAO the Fiscal Policy Monitoring and Audit Unit (FPMAU) is within the NAO in charge of monitoring and evaluating fiscal policy. The entity is headed by a director.

Mandate:

- Compliance with fiscal policy rules
- Assessment of macroeconomic projections
- Assessment of budgetary forecasting and policy costing
- Assessment of preparation and implementation of the General Government Fiscal Plan
- Assessment of fiscal policy stance
- Active promotion of transparency
- Normative recommendations

Independence:

Independence of the National Audit Office is guaranteed according to Section 90 of the Constitution and the Act on National Audit Office

Leadership:

The Director of the Fiscal Policy Act is appointed by the Auditor General. The Fiscal Policy Monitoring Team is managed day-to-day by a Principal Fiscal Policy Auditor.

Resources:

NAO's Rules of procedure states that NAO must allocate in its personnel and budget plan adequate personnel and other resources to the FPMAU for fiscal policy evaluation and assessment. Within the overall NAO budget, a specific item has been assigned to the FPMAU for fiscal policy evaluation. Around 5 staff in total.

Access to information:

The Constitution guarantees NAO's right to receive all information and documents necessary for the performance of its duties from public authorities and other entities subject to its control.

Relationship with Legislature:

Legislation requires the NAO to submit a report on its activities to the Parliament each year and separate reports as necessary. The FPMAU leadership appears few times a year before parliamentary committees. The Rules of Procedure of the NAO authorize the Director heading the FPMAU to decide on the reports and statements to be submitted to the Government.

Transparency and Communication:

The right for the NAO to report freely and to communicate publicly is guaranteed. The FPMAU releases twice a year monitoring reports, which are published on its dedicated web page within NAO's website.