

八年並不是一段短時間

Eight years is not a short period of time

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任期限制有助於引入新成員與新思維。

Limits on the number of years of service can help bring in new blood and fresh ideas.

由選舉產生的公職人員，應否有任期或年期的限制？這個問題不少民主國家一直都在激烈辯論，其中包括美國。很多人都知道，美國國會議員現在並沒有任期限制，然而知道以下事實的人卻遠少得多：被一七八九年的《美國憲法》所取代的《邦聯條例》，本來對國會議員的任期是有限制的，只是在《美國憲法》中刪除了而已。

八年及六年規定

有趣的是，大約在十年前，議會也曾有過一番類似的辯論。在二零零六年的特別會員大會上，《議會會章》通過了好些修訂，其中之一就是由二零零六至零七年度起，所有業界理事(主席除外)的任期不得超過連續八年，此後必須卸任一年才可再擔任理事。這些修訂獲得通過前，修章委員會與理事會在兩年間經過反覆討論後才予以採納的。反對這項「八年規定」的理由是，判斷選舉產生理事稱職與否的最佳裁判應該是選舉。可是，這一理由卻不敵支持的主要論據：理事會經常有新人加入，從而有新思維以資考慮，這是極其重要的。

其後在二零零九年，管治委員會提出，既然業界理事的任期已有年限，而各委員會也都需要有新思維，因此委員會的成員也應有任期的年限。這項提議理事會很快就通過了，因此由二零零九至一零年度起，所有委員會的成員(包括召集人)，最多只可連續出任委員六年，之後就要卸任一年，才可再次出任委員。

理事會及委員會的成員必須強制卸任的辯論雖然暫告止息，但稍後議會要定下未來的職能時，或許又會再次辯論起來了。 

Should a limit on the number of terms or years of service be set for elected public officials? This question has been hotly debated in many democracies, including the United States. While many people know that there are no term limits for members of the US Congress, much fewer know that there were actually congressional term limits in the Articles of Confederation, which was replaced by the US Constitution of 1789, where such limits were omitted.

Eight-year and six-year rules

Interestingly, the TIC also had a similar debate about 10 years ago. Among the many amendments to the TIC's M&A adopted in 2006 by an Extraordinary General Meeting was one which required that **starting from 2006/2007, all trade directors (except the Chairman) have to step down for one year after eight consecutive years if they wish to continue to serve on the Board afterwards**. Prior to the adoption of the amendments, the Constitution/By-law Committee and the Board of Directors had repeatedly discussed them for two years before finally endorsing them. The major reason for the "eight-year rule", which triumphed over the counter-argument that elections should be the best judge of the competence of elected directors, was that it is vitally important to have new blood on the Board regularly so that fresh ideas are available for its consideration.

And then in 2009, the Governance Committee proposed that there should also be a limit on the number of years of service for Committee members as there was already one for trade directors, and the Committees also need to have new ideas regularly. The proposal was adopted by the Board quickly, and therefore **with effect from 2009/2010, members of all Committees (including the convenors) can serve at most for six consecutive years, after which they have to take a one-year break before resuming the positions again**.

Although the debate about mandatory retirement from the Board and the Committees has been settled for now, it may emerge again when the TIC decides its future roles some time later. 