



## **Committee approves Status of Visiting Forces Agreement with the Philippines**

The Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee has recommended that Australia ratify a Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA) with the Philippines. The Agreement is a reciprocal document affording the same rights to Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel in the Philippines and armed forces of the Philippines personnel in Australia. The SOVFA will be binding in international law and will strengthen Australia's already strong defence relationship with the Philippines.

The Committee also recommended that Australia ratify a Social Security Agreement with Japan. The Agreement between Australia and Japan will improve access to the age pension for people who have moved between Australian and Japan during their working life.

Report 89 also contains the Committee's discussion on the Social Security Agreement with Greece. The Committee previously recommended the ratification of the Agreement between Australia and Greece in Report 88 to allow implementation to proceed quickly. The Agreement with Greece differs from Australia's other bilateral social security agreements in that for the first time, many former Australian residents already living permanently in Greece without the Australian Age Pension will be able to claim the Age Pension upon commencement of the Agreement. Australia will treat Australian residents in Greece as being a resident of Australia so that the person can lodge a claim for an Australian pension. The person's "period of insurance" in Greece may be added to his or her Australian residence period so that the person can meet the minimum residence qualifications to receive an Australian pension.

Report 89 is available on the Committee's website:  
[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm) or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

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