

Cooperation of EU parliaments with the parliaments of candidate countries

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Parliaments in Partnership
EU Global Project to Strengthen the Capacity of Parliaments





About Inter Pares

Programme model and funding

- Funded by the European Commission DG INTPA, implemented by International IDEA.
- Peer-to-peer model leveraging expertise from EU Member State Parliaments (EUMSPs); 23 engaged to date.
- Demand-driven based on priorities of partner parliaments
- Since 2019 has supported 24 partner parliaments in emerging democracies.
- Budget: €10.5 million over two phases (2019-2023, 2023-2026).



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Key Objectives and Activities

- Strengthening parliamentary functions: representation, law-making, oversight, and budgeting.
- Enhancing parliaments' capacities on global challenges, focusing on youth and women's participation.
- Providing peer-to-peer exchanges, technical assistance, training, and parliamentary tool development.
- Supporting parliamentary research, digital transformation, and crisis governance.



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Some Headline Results and Impact

- 1,934 participants from partner parliaments engaged in activities.
- 400+ MPs and staff from EU parliaments participated in peer-to-peer exchanges.
- 125 knowledge products, handbooks, and guidelines produced.
- 96% of participants reported satisfaction with partnerships.
- 82% applied knowledge on cross-cutting issues (gender, youth, climate change).
- 5,200 participants engaged in global events and summer schools.



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Phase II Results Q1 2023 – Q3 2024

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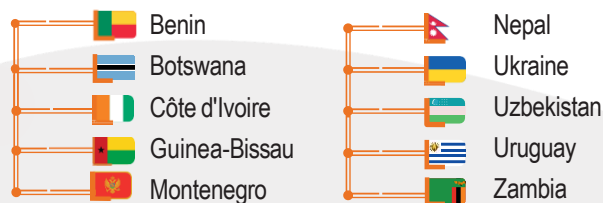
Outcome - Partnerships:

Improved Effectiveness, Accountability and Transparency in Partner Parliaments

52 partnership activities successfully finalised, including experience exchanges, in-person and online training, workshops, working group meetings and attachments

5 knowledge products resulting from partnership activities

10 partner parliaments in Phase II



5 scoping missions to **Benin, Nepal, Ukraine, Uruguay and Zambia**

3 baseline assessments conducted with **Botswana, Nepal and Zambia**

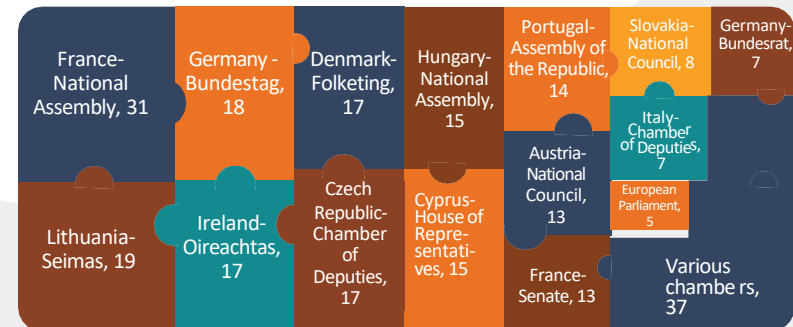
96% of post-activity survey respondents state that they **will be able to apply** what they learned in their day-to-day work



23 EUMSPs engaged with INTER PARES

253 Engagements: EUMSPs & EU Parliament **driving action** across all outcomes

(counts work planning meetings and ongoing and completed activities)



198 expert EUMSPs engaged in partnership activities

144 person-days EUMSPs offered

97% of post-activity survey respondents are **satisfied** with the training/activity they participated in



Why Parliamentary Strengthening

Montesquieu on why parliaments are essential to democracy

“In every government there are three sorts of power: the legislative; the executive in respect to things dependent on the law of nations; and the judiciary in regard to matters that depend on the civil law....

When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty; because apprehensions may arise, lest the same monarch or senate should enact tyrannical laws, to execute them in a tyrannical manner...

There would be an end of every thing, were the same man, or the same body, whether of the nobles or of the people, to exercise those three powers, that of enacting laws, that of executing the public resolutions, and of trying the causes of individuals.”

The spirit of the laws, 1748



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Parliaments and Economic Outcomes

- Parliamentary regimes are associated with faster economic growth and greater stability compared to presidential systems.
- Well-functioning parliaments contribute to economic policy stability.
- Parliamentary systems foster stronger, more inclusive institutions, contributing to economic stability.
- Democracies with strong parliamentary institutions tend to create policies that promote long-term growth.
- Parliamentary institutions provide mechanisms for better economic oversight and accountability.

Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2020). 'Institutions as the Fundamental Cause of Long-Run Growth,' Handbook of Economic Growth

Persson, T., & Tabellini, G. (2004). 'Constitutional Rules and Economic Policy,' American Economic Review.

Gerring, J., Thacker, S. C., & Moreno, C. (2018). 'Are Parliamentary Systems Better?,' Public Choice.



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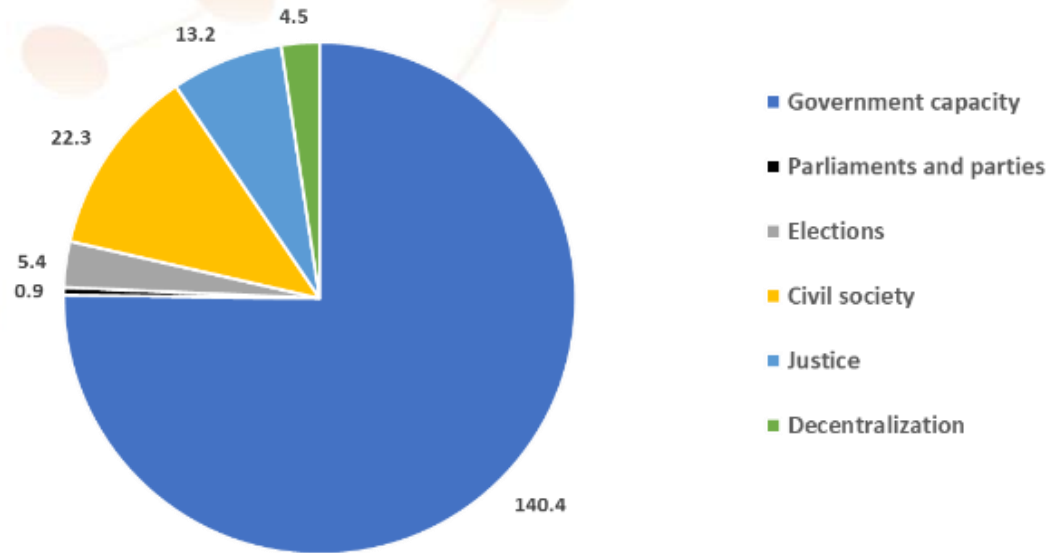


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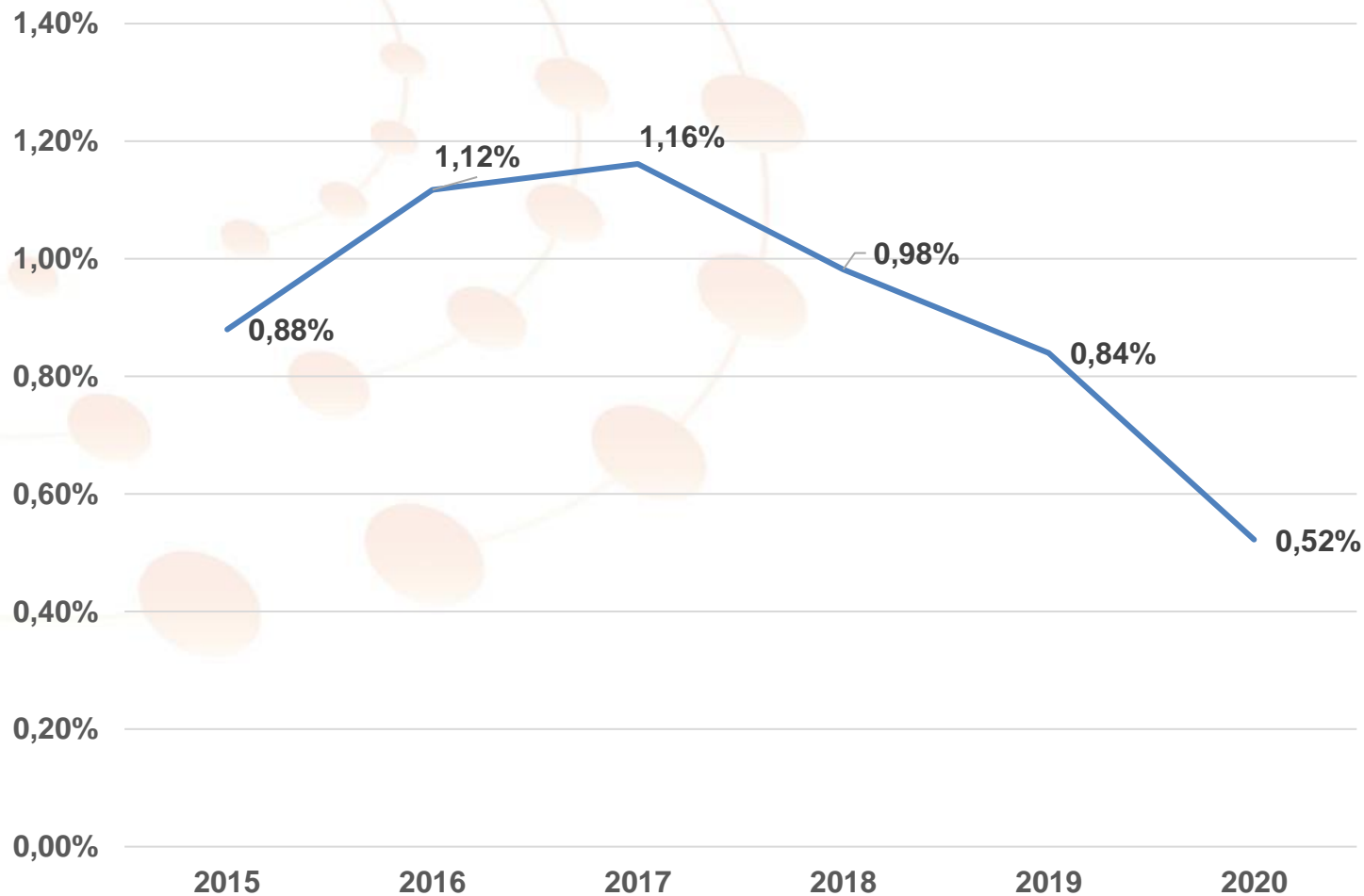


Parliamentary Development tiny proportion of International Development Spending

Development Aid to governance by sector
US\$ Billions, 2000-2020 IATA Data



Support to Parliaments and Parties as Overall Share of DAC Governance Funding



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Focus on Partnerships with Accession Parliaments

Montenegro and Ukraine

Montenegro

Key Details

- Partnership: Feb 2021 – Jul 2023
- Aimed to enhance oversight & legal harmonization
- 14 activities (virtual & in-person)
- 8 EU national parliaments contributed expertise
- EUMSPs MPs and staff contributed their expertise and time without charge
- Inter Pares covered all out of pocket expenses (travel, interpretation, etc.)



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EU Parliaments Involved: Oversight

- Austrian National Council: Budget Office & MP Orientation
- Czech Chamber: Oversight & Committee Reports
- France Senate: Security & Defence Oversight
- Greece: Oversight & MP Orientation
- Croatia & Hungary: Committee Report Enhancement



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EU Parliaments Involved: Legal Harmonization

- Croatia: Work Planning & Training
- Czech Chamber: Workshops & Reports
- Hungary: Training & Budapest Mission
- France (both Chambers): Tables of Concordance & Attachments
- Italian Chamber: Legal Harmonization Attachments



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Results & Impact

- 146 participants trained, including 28 MPs
- 97% of staff reported knowledge improvement
- 55% applied new knowledge in daily work
- 93% satisfaction from MNE & EU participants
- 3 recommendation reports prepared



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Lessons Learned

- Peer-to-peer exchange was highly effective
- Relevance for Montenegro as an EU candidate country
- Political stability is crucial for success
- Flexibility & adaptive implementation needed



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Ukraine

Key Details

- Partnership in Ukraine was launched in April 2023 to enhance the Verkhovna Rada's (VRU) capacity to perform its constitutional roles during wartime and to support the EU accession process.
- 19 EU Member State Parliaments (EUMSPs) and the European Parliament are actively engaged in supporting the initiative.
- The project focuses on seven key areas, with an initial emphasis on EU integration and budgetary processes.



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Ukraine

19 EU national parliaments

7 priorities

 challenges

PRIORITIES	EUMSPs
1 – EU integration	Austria-National Council, Croatia-Parliament, Czech Republic-Chamber of Deputies, Denmark-Folketing, Estonia-Riigikogu, France- National Assembly, France-Senate, Greece-Hellenic Parliament, Hungary-National Assembly, Italy-Chamber of Deputies, Italy- Senate, Lithuania-Seimas, Poland-Senate
2 – The budget process (including potential establishment of a PBO)	Austria-National Council, Germany-Bundestag, Czech Republic-Chamber of Deputies, Denmark-Folketing, Estonia-Riigikogu, France-National Assembly, France-Senate, Greece-Hellenic Parliament, Hungary-National Assembly, Italy-Chamber of Deputies, Italy-Senate, Lithuania-Seimas, Poland-Senate, Ireland-Oireachtas, Sweden-Riksdag
3 – Code of ethics for MPs	Germany-Bundestag, Cyprus-House of Representatives, Estonia-Riigikogu, France-National Assembly, France-Senate, Lithuania- Seimas, Greece-Hellenic Parliament, Sweden-Riksdag
4 – Research and analytical capacity	Austria-National Council, Germany-Bundestag, Czech Republic-Chamber of Deputies, Denmark-Folketing, Estonia-Riigikogu, France-Senate, Hungary-National Assembly, Italy-Chamber of Deputies, Italy-Senate, Ireland-Oireachtas, Lithuania-Seimas, Slovenia-National Assembly, Sweden-Riksdag
5 – Parliamentary civil service	Austria-National Council, Germany-Bundestag, Czech Republic-Chamber of Deputies, Denmark-Folketing, Estonia-Riigikogu
6 – Foresight	Czech Republic-Chamber of Deputies, Denmark-Folketing, Estonia-Riigikogu, France-National Assembly, Lithuania-Seimas
7 – Post-Legislative Scrutiny	Austria-National Council, France-National Assembly, France-Senate, Lithuania-Seimas, Greece-Hellenic Parliament, Sweden- Riksdag



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Strengthen VRU in budget process

- March 2024 peer-to-peer workshop in Prague provided insights into parliamentary budgetary processes across Europe, 12 EUMSPs and SAOs exchanged with VRU MPs and staff.
- A study visit to Berlin offered firsthand exposure to Bundestag budget practices.
- May 2024 workshop in Brussels, in collaboration with the European Parliament, trained 10 VRU and Audit Chamber staff in fiscal policy oversight.
- January 2025 mission of Budget Committee MPs and staff to Austrian Parliament to address specific PBO implementation questions
- INTER PARES continues to mobilize EUMSP support to help establish a Parliamentary Budget Office.



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Ukraine EU Accession Support

- A two-day workshop (June 2024) engaged 200 VRU representatives on Ukraine's EU accession negotiations.
- 12 EU national parliaments (15 chambers) shared their direct experiences with EU accession.
- March 2025 workshop co-organized with European Parliament for Ukrainian MPs on effective communication of EU accession process and opportunities.
- Q2/Q3 2025 workshop and study tour will provide comparative examples of parliamentary committees' roles in EU integration.



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Oversight, Foresight, Research Capacity

- February 2024, INTER PARES supported the German Bundestag in organizing a peer-to-peer study visit for VRU parliamentary administrators.
- Topics included parliamentary oversight, committee work, and civic engagement.
- November 2024 workshop in Kyiv on parliamentary foresight, involving Lithuanian Seimas (in person), Danish Folketing, French National assembly, European Parliament
- Internship of VRU foresight research staff at Lithuanian Seimas, Q2 2025



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Some Challenges

Montenegro

- Political instability affected implementation
- Changes in government & parliamentary boycotts
- Staff focus exchanges and institutional development effective but several activities wth MPs had to be cancelled due to boycotts etc.

Ukraine

- War – travel inward and outward difficult, impact on reform focus, state decision-making more centralised, etc.
- EU accession process under development, specific VRU role not yet clear
- Change in US foreign aid policy and programmes likely to affect international support to parliamentary strengthening



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**Shout-outs to our
EU Member State Parliament Partners**

Hungarian National Assembly

- Supporting the partnerships with Montenegro, Uzbekistan and Ukraine
- Key partner with the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan on IT systems and financial oversight
- Supported the Parliament of Montenegro on EU integration and legal harmonisation, including through hosting a study visit
- Always engaged, responding to our ad-hoc requests as well on various themes, from sharing the ParLex system to research methodologies



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Accolades continued ... 2

Austrian National Council

- Excellent support for Montenegro, Ukraine and Zambia on oversight, legislative scrutiny, youth and education programmes
- The Austrian PBO is also one of the most sought after PBO model among partner parliaments

Czech Chamber of Deputies

- Valued partnerships with the National Assembly of Malawi, Montenegro, Libya, Ukraine
- The Czech Parliamentary Institute has been fantastic in sharing their knowledge and expertise on research methodologies, budget scrutiny, EU integration and Acquis, communication and education programmes across different partnerships



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Accolades continued ... 3

French National Assembly and French Senate

- Close partners since 2019;
- Engaged with Niger before the coup, Cote d'Ivoire, Uzbekistan, Botswana
- Benin - upcoming

German Bundestag and German Bundesrat

- Hosting the Steering Committee Meeting in 2024
- Supporting partnerships with Ukraine, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire and with Benin as an upcoming partnership



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Accolades continued ... 4

Ireland House of the Oireachtas

- Successful Inter Pares partnership with the National Assembly of the Gambia, which resulted in the financial autonomy of the Assembly – the Houses of the Oireachtas also supported the National Assembly of the Gambia in introducing a Code of Conduct for Members which the NA had never considered before
- The Irish PBO is also always happy to share their expertise either on an ad-hoc basis, or as part of peer-to-peer engagement such as in Nepal and Ukraine

Lithuanian Seimas

- Very engaged with Uzbekistan and Ukraine (foresight, research, EU integration)
- Managed to open up groundbreaking cooperation with Uzbekistan



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Honourable mentions: Croatia and Cyprus

Croatia

- Worked intensively with Montenegro and hosted a fellowship for a parliamentary staffer from the Parliament of Montenegro on EU acquis compliance; fellowships were hosted also by the Italian Chamber of Deputies, French National Assembly and Senate, and the Czech Parliament

Cyprus

- Has become gradually more engaged through the partnerships with Uzbekistan and Botswana and we really appreciate it, given that it is a small parliament with limited resources

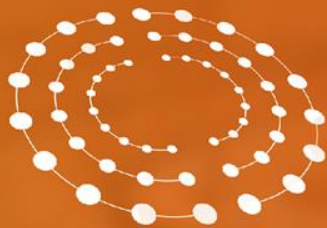


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Thank you!

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