

INTER PARES

EU Global Project to Strengthen
the Capacity of Parliaments

INTER PARES is the European Union's global flagship programme for strengthening the capacities of parliaments in emerging democracies, funded by the European Commission and delivered by International IDEA. INTER PARES is part of the European Commission's WYDE initiative (Women and Youth in Democracy). The first phase of the project ran from 2019-2023 (€5 million) and was renewed for a second phase from 2023 – 2025 (€5 million).

The peer-to-peer model leverages the rich and diverse expertise from European Union Member State Parliaments (EUMSPs) and builds a coordinated network of parliamentary expertise within EUMSPs, beyond traditional support mechanisms, aiming to build stronger parliaments in all regions of the world. The project engages with parliaments, both at the political level, with elected Members of Parliament (MPs), as well as at the administrative level, with the staff of parliaments' secretariats, which are the "backbone" of effective parliaments.

The project primarily supports parliaments' capacities to fulfil their core democratic functions:

- representing the diverse perspectives of citizens in decision-making;
- proposing, amending, adopting and scrutinising legislation;
- holding government and other state institutions democratically accountable;
- scrutinizing and adopting the national budget, overseeing its execution and audit;
- institutional strengthening to enable parliaments to function effectively, transparently and accountably.

The establishment and curating of peer-to-peer partnerships, collaborative identification and dissemination of good practices in strengthening democratic parliaments, and the development of knowledge products on parliamentary development all contribute to the project's goal of enhancing parliamentary functions and, by extension, democratic governance.

OBJECTIVES



Supporting the effective, accountable and transparent functioning of parliaments in partner countries.



Strengthening global parliamentary development and inter-parliamentary cooperation.



Enhancing parliaments' capacities to address a series of critical global challenges, with a strong focus on youth and women political participation.

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Funded by the European Union, WYDE initiative

Managed by the European Commission in coordination with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Parliament

Implemented by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), leveraging the expertise of EU Member State parliaments

Budget: EUR 10 million

Implementation period: 2019-2022 (Phase I) and 2023-2025 (Phase II)

ACTIVITIES

Supporting the effective, accountable, and transparent functioning of parliaments in partner countries

INTER PARES aims to increase capacities of partner parliaments to perform their core functions of representation, law-making, oversight and budgetary prerogative and to perform effectively as public administrations through:

- The 22 partner parliaments supported during the project include Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, The Maldives, Montenegro, Nepal, Niger, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Zambia;
- 23 EUMSPs have joined in partnerships;
- Peer-to-peer exchanges and assistance;
- Knowledge exchanges, training, hands on technical assistance and mentoring;
- Co-production of parliamentary handbooks and tools;
- Innovative approaches, including, experiential learning and mentoring aligned to parliamentary calendar, sequenced and modular approaches.

Enhancing parliaments' capacities to address a series of critical global challenges, with a strong focus on youth and women political participation

The project produces knowledge, exchanges, and fosters changes to help parliaments:

- Engage youth;
- Promote gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE);
- Protect and foster human rights;
- Engage with citizens and civil society;
- Mitigate climate change and promote environmental protection;
- Harness the opportunities and address the challenges of digital technologies;
- Manage crises and engage in foresight and anticipatory governance;
- Foster global connectivity and infrastructure networks.

Strengthening global parliamentary development and inter-parliamentary cooperation

Acting as a knowledge hub and convener, INTER PARES fosters networks on parliamentary development and inter-parliamentary cooperation at the global and regional levels, by:

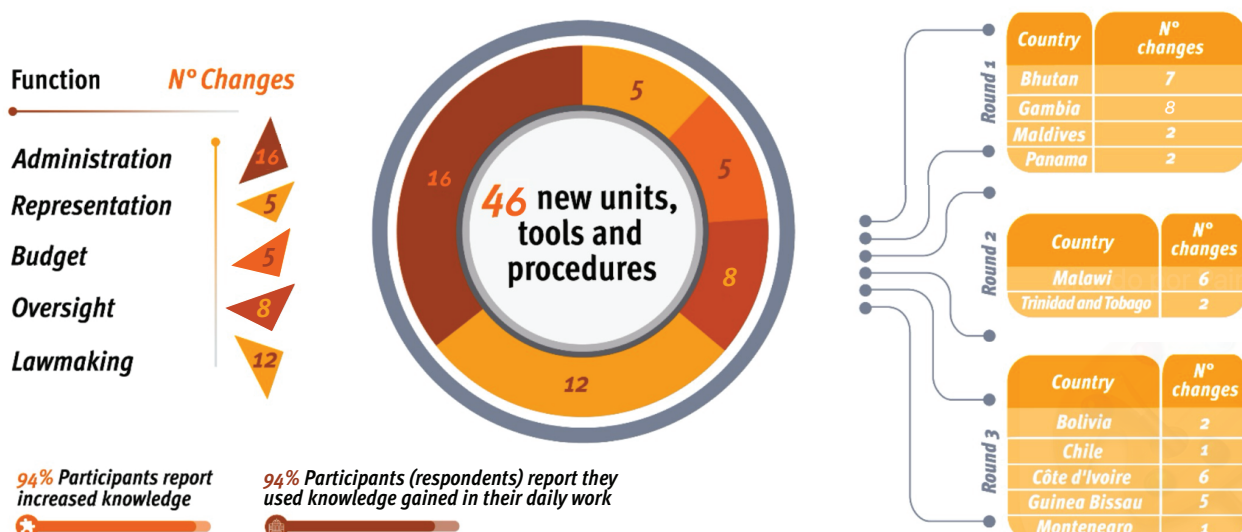
- Collaborating with international organizations like the IPU, Parlatino, SADC Parliamentary Forum and others to co-create publications and joint initiatives;
- Managing the AGORA knowledge hub and the Parliamentary Development Community of Practice;
- Organizing 5 annual Summer Schools on parliamentary functions and issues;
- Preparing 11 e-Learning courses on topics ranging from legislative drafting to environmental protection and climate change, to representation and gender;
- Increasing global access to research, new knowledge, good practices and innovative tools on parliamentary matters and support approaches;
- Preparing and disseminating knowledge products, including reference materials for parliaments and development partners like, *Beyond Numbers: Stories of Gender Equality*, *Effective Human Rights Engagement for Parliamentary Bodies*, *The EU Handbook on Supporting Parliaments Worldwide* (both forthcoming), *Quick Guides for Enhancing Citizen Engagement*, the *Indicators for Democratic Parliaments*, and guides and handbooks for partner parliaments.

RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS

Partner parliaments have so far introduced a total of 46 changes in processes, tools, or structures related to their core functions. Several partner parliaments, including in Bhutan, Bolivia, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Maldives, Malawi, Montenegro, Panama, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago, exhibited significant improvements and modifications in different core functions of the parliament, contributing to the project's overall success.

Partner parliaments also introduced changes in procedures and tools to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and to enhance citizen engagement, and 82% of participants said that they have used new knowledge and skills related to crosscutting issues like gender, youth, and climate change.

Partner Parliaments are establishing new units and developing new procedures to enhance their functions



The project has also had success fostering collaboration among Parliaments, academics and practitioners, and contributes to the EU's role as a key partner in the field of parliamentary development. Three dozen new inter-parliamentary cooperation initiatives have been fostered, including the revival of the AGORA parliamentary information hub and the Parliamentary Development Community of Practice which has become a major convening point for discussions in the field. The Project has produced over 125 publications which have been downloaded by more than 875,000 unique individuals.

90% of participants report using knowledge on cross-cutting issues

Issues addressed in Partner Parliaments or at global level

6 out of 6 issues addressed in partner parliaments and globally

- ➔ Gender equality
- ➔ Human rights
- ➔ Citizens' engagement
- ➔ Youth
- ➔ Environment
- ➔ Digital technologies



11 changes achieved in partner Parliaments on cross-cutting themes



82% of respondents said they used knowledge gained



96% reported satisfaction with partnerships (93% EUMPs)



Gender and citizen engagement are both the top issues addressed (in 7 parliaments each)



875 000 unique users downloading INTER PARES knowledge products

ABOUT INTER PARES



*22 partner parliaments
in developing democracies
and 23 EUMSPs engaged
in multiple partnerships*

- **78** Global conferences;
- **11** Online e-learning courses on parliamentary functions;
- **5** Summer Schools offered annually for parliament staff from around the world;
- **125** Knowledge products produced and disseminated.



1,934

*participants from partner
parliaments in INTER
PARES activities*



400+

*MPs and staff from EU
parliaments participated in
peer-to-peer work*



5,200 participants

*in global events and summer
schools*



125

*knowledge products,
handbooks and guidelines
produced*

The second phase of INTER PARES (2023 – 2025) is funded as part of the European Commission's Women and Youth in Democracy Initiative (WYDE). The initiative seeks to strengthen the rights, empowerment, and participation in public and political life of youth and women as key actors of development and change. WYDE promotes political pluralism and the inclusiveness of democratic processes. An important thrust of these efforts is to strengthen the capacity of parliaments as core institutions of democratic governance.

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