



**WYDE**  
Inter Pares



**INTER PARES**  
Parliaments in Partnership  
*EU Global Project to Strengthen the Capacity of Parliaments*



## Inter Pares Newsletter

Fall / Winter 2025

### Table of Contents:

- New Publications & Resources
- Partner Profile
- Recent Partnership Activities
- Recent Events
- New Blogs
- Follow Us: Social Media

## NEW PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES

### LAUNCH OF EIGHT GUIDES ON CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT FOR PARLIAMENTS



Trust in democracy is declining worldwide, and parliaments — the essential link between citizens and state decision-making — are no exception. While citizen engagement is more critical than ever, practical, actionable guidance for how parliaments can effectively involve the public has been hard to find.

To meet this urgent challenge, International IDEA's Inter Pares — Parliaments in Partnership project and the [International Parliament Engagement Network \(IPEN\)](#), with support from the European Union, co-created a series of eight interactive [Guides on Citizen Engagement for Parliaments](#). They include the following:

- [Principles of Parliamentary Public Engagement](#)
- [Youth Guide](#)
- [Petitions and Citizens' Initiatives](#)
- [Education Programmes](#)
- [Public Consultations](#)
- [Parliament as a Space and Place](#)
- [Deliberative Engagement](#)
- [Engaging Underrepresented Groups](#)

These guides are more than a resource; they are toolkits built on extensive global research, with the aim of shifting the focus from “citizens as spectators” to “citizens as active participants.” Recognizing that citizen engagement is core to democratic resilience, these guides offer a wide range of actionable, evidence-based frameworks for meaningful interaction, deliberation, and co-creation.

*“At the heart of the lack of engagement with parliaments is a growing lack of understanding how they are important in a functioning democracy. I’m excited how these guides tackle rebuilding this trust and how they show us to think smart about the use of our resources.” — Caroline Wallis, Research lead/Kaiarahi Tira Rangahau, Parliament of New Zealand*

For members of parliament, parliamentary staff, civil society and international development partners, and scholars, this suite provides a holistic roadmap for innovation, helping parliaments worldwide redefine their role in this challenging era. Please find the additional resources on the Guides:

- **BLOG:** [The New Playbook: Eight Ways Parliaments Can Rebuild Trust Through Citizen Engagement](#)
  - **PODCAST:** [Beyond the Walls - Rethinking Parliament as Public Space](#) - featuring:
    - Professor Cristina Leston-Bandeira, Chair of IPEN, and Professor of Politics at the University of Leeds
    - Anna-Maria Pawliczek, Senior Officer, Division Int 4, International Exchange Programs, International Parliamentary Cooperation, German Bundestag
  - **VIDEO** (2.5 min): [Introduction to the Citizen Engagement Guides](#) — featuring parliamentary practitioners from across the globe sharing what excites them most about the Guides, including:
    - Alisson Bruno Dias de Queiroz, Coordenador do Programa e-Cidadania, Federal Senate of Brazil
    - Caroline Wallis, Research Lead, Parliament of New Zealand
    - Alistair Stoddart, Senior Participation Specialist, Scottish Parliament
  - **Op-Ed:** [Bringing Citizens' Voices Into Parliament](#) — The Parliamentarian, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Issue Three, 2025)
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## YOUTH PARLIAMENTARY ACADEMY TOOLKIT:



The [Youth Parliamentary Academy \(YPA\) Toolkit](#) is a practical guide developed by International IDEA under the Inter Pares program, funded by the European Union.

It is designed to help parliaments plan and deliver their own YPA — a four-day programme that brings together around 20 young people to learn about democratic principles, parliamentary processes, and leadership skills; while offering young participants direct engagement with members of parliament and parliamentary staff, equipping them with knowledge, practical skills, and opportunities to influence parliamentary thinking.

### The Toolkit includes:

- Guidance for parliamentary staff on setting objectives, selecting participants, building a balanced programme, and ensuring effective follow-up. Sample materials and annexes such as model programme, pitch templates, registration and consent forms, evaluation surveys, and a planning timeline.
- Lessons learned from the first YPA, hosted by the National Assembly of Zambia in 2024, with participation from Austria and Ireland.

By using the Toolkit, parliaments can adapt the YPA model to their own contexts, foster inclusive dialogue with youth, and strengthen democratic engagement. Please find the additional links:

- [Annexes: YPA Toolkit](#)
- [Candidate Selection Tracker](#)

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## PARLIAMENTARY BRIEF: Parliamentary Monitoring Organization - Partners in Parliamentary Strengthening

In order to deepen public trust and enhance democratic effectiveness, parliaments around the world are aiming to become truly 'open' - a goal that lies in collaboration and continuous strengthening.

The new Parliamentary Brief: "Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations (PMOs): Partners in Parliamentary Strengthening," developed by International IDEA's Inter Pares project, explores the crucial, collaborative relationship between legislatures and PMOs to enhance transparency, accountability, and participation. Engaging PMOs helps parliaments design more discerning indicators of performance and provide context for stronger public dialogue.

Read the [paper](#) for key recommendations on fostering constructive partnerships and strengthening democracies.



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## NEW E-LEARNING COURSE ON OPEN PARLIAMENTS

Take the next step in your professional development with our new, free e-learning course on Open Parliaments!



The course will equip you to:

- **Master the core concepts:** Gain a solid grasp of transparency, accountability, and participation in an open parliament context.
- **Understand the evidence:** Review the global evidence base and our evolving understanding of these issues.
- **Build an action roadmap:** Develop a practical roadmap of actions you can take to implement reforms in your parliament.

[Enroll now here.](#)

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## PARTNER PROFILE:

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### **GIOVANNI RIZZONI: Head of the Unit for Parliamentary Cooperation and Capacity Building at the Italian Chamber of Deputies**



*From 23 to 25 May, Giovanni Rizzoni (center at the microphone) represented the Italian Chamber of Deputies at the Inter Pares hosted workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal, with the Members and staff of the Federal Parliament of Nepal, representatives from the European Union Member State Parliaments, including France (National Assembly), Germany (Bundesrat), Hungary, Ireland, Italy, and local and international experts. /Photo courtesy of Inter Pares*

**Q: How did you first become involved in parliamentary work — and what motivates you?**

**A:** I have been working in the Italian Chamber of Deputies' administration for many years and in different positions. My job has provided the invaluable opportunity to see democracy in action. I am fascinated by how a very complex institution like parliament manages to find a political synthesis on any kind of topic every day.

**Q: How has international collaboration (like Inter Pares) influenced your work or perspective?**

**A:** Today, you really cannot do your job effectively without knowing the best practices of other parliaments. I greatly benefited from initiatives like Inter Pares as formidable incubators of cooperation projects with other Parliaments: as they contribute to creating a real community of professionals committed to supporting parliamentary democracy in and beyond Europe.

**Q: What book, podcast, or movie has recently inspired you?**

**A:** The movie "The darkest hour" by Joe Wright: a marvellous description on how the British Parliament and Winston Churchill faced one of the worst moments in the history of the country. For a



lighter touch, I would mention ‘The Favourite’ by Yorgos Lanthimos: a wild and hilarious metaphor on the rise of the parliamentary system in early 18<sup>th</sup> century England.

**Q: If you weren’t working in parliament, what would you be doing?**

**A:** I don’t know, but I’m sure it would be a far less interesting job.

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## RECENT PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES:

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### ENHANCING PARLIAMENTARY EFFECTIVENESS: THE ROLE OF RESEARCH SERVICES IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION



On 11–12 September 2025, the Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and Inter Pares, Parliaments in Partnership co-hosted the workshop “Enhancing Parliamentary Effectiveness: The Role of Research Services in European Integration,” in Kyiv, Ukraine.

The event marked the 3rd anniversary of the Verkhovna Rada’s Research Service which provides Members of Parliament with independent, fact-based analysis to support better laws, stronger oversight, and Ukraine’s EU integration. Inter Pares partners gathered from the European Parliamentary Research Service and the parliaments of Austria, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic.

In his opening, Ruslan Stefanchuk, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, underlined the vital role of research in supporting lawmakers during wartime and on the path to EU membership.

Jonathan Murphy, Head of Programme of Inter Pares, captured the spirit of the occasion: “Three years is a significant milestone, but to build and to sustain such a vital institution amidst the brutal, unprovoked aggression that Ukraine has faced is a truly extraordinary achievement. It's a testament to your unwavering resilience, your dedication, and your profound belief in the future of a sovereign, democratic Ukraine. In these dark times, the light of democracy needs to burn brighter than ever.”

The workshop laid the groundwork for an Analytical Report on the role of parliamentary research in European Union integration.

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## **DEMOCRACY IN ACTION: HIGH-LEVEL PARLIAMENTARY WORKSHOP ON STRATEGIC PLANNING IN ZAMBIA**

From 17-18 September in Lusaka, the Parliamentary Strategic Planning High-Level Workshop, was co-hosted by Inter Pares and the National Assembly of Zambia. It brought together parliamentary clerks, secretaries general, and senior staff from 11 parliaments across Africa, Europe, and North America.

The event was officially opened by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, Rt. Hon. Nelly B. K. Mutti, who

underscored the urgency of strategic planning not as a bureaucratic exercise, but a commitment to transformation, anchored in national context and citizens' needs.



*“In an era where Parliaments face unprecedented challenges from fast-evolving technologies and rising citizen expectations to economic pressures and climate shocks, clarity of vision and strategic direction are more critical than ever” — Rt. Hon. Kelly B. K. Mutti.*

Through fishbowl-format sessions, the workshop covered the full cycle of strategic planning — from baseline analysis, vision and objectives, implementation, costing, to evaluation and communication.

*Highlights also included:*

- Peer-to-peer discussions on balancing administrative priorities and political ownership

- Strategies for funding, adaptation, and continuous improvement
- A visit to the National Assembly of Zambia to see strategic planning in action

The workshop concluded with a shared commitment to co-produce the **first global Handbook on Parliamentary Strategic Planning**, creating a practical resource for parliaments worldwide. It also highlighted how strategic planning is democratic — and essential for *responsive, accountable, and resilient institutions*.

Read more in our new blog:

- [Cooperation in Action Four Lessons from the First Inter-Parliamentary Strategic Planning Workshop in Zambia](#)

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## DEMOCRACY STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH CAPACITY IN BENIN AND BEYOND

On 22 September, the Inter Pares partnership held its first meeting on Research Centres and Methodologies, as part of the partnership with the National Assembly of Benin.

The exchange brought together experts from five parliamentary research services — the Parliamentary Institute of Benin (IPaB), the German Bundestag, the Italian Chamber of Deputies, the Czech Chamber of Deputies, and the Slovak National Council.

Participants discussed:

- Structures and mandates of parliamentary research services
- Research workflow, products and ensuring neutrality and transparency in research
- Preparing for a study visit to the Czech Parliament in Prague
- Joint preparation of a research related document (handbook or tool)

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**The vision is that the Parliamentary Institute of Benin, by 2026, will be a functional and efficient structure that supports the Parliament in its mission of representation, voting on the law and controlling government action.**

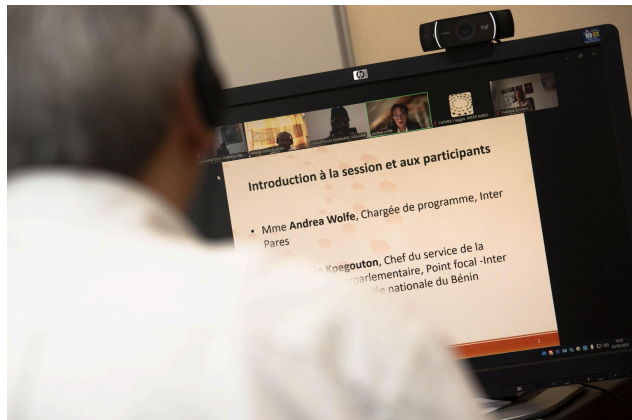
– The National Assembly of Benin

This meeting was a key step toward strengthening IPaB's role as a professional and functional parliamentary research institute by 2026. Inter Pares looks forward to continuing this exchange of expertise and supporting the Beninese Parliament in strengthening evidence-based lawmaking.



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## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PARLIAMENTARY NETWORKS



On 23 September, the National Assembly of Benin, the Belgian House of Representatives, and the French National Assembly joined Inter Pares in a thematic exchange on youth engagement.

**Key Focus:** Parliamentary networks in Benin are crucial platforms for reflection, advocacy, and citizen engagement. This session highlighted how youth engagement connects parliaments and citizens, and how networks can advance civic education, social inclusion, and participation.

Shared goals across Benin, Belgium, France highlighted the following key recommendations:

- 🌐 Promote civic education and strengthen democratic literacy
- 🎤 Empower young people to share their voices and perspectives
- 👏 Encourage active citizenship and a sense of responsibility
- 🏛️ Bridge youth and parliaments through meaningful, real-world experience

Different models, complementary strengths:

- **Benin:** The Youth Parliament, a formal simulation of parliamentary procedure, with ordinary sessions twice a year.
- **Belgium:** A flexible portfolio of visits, workshops, and youth parliaments, and guided visits to parliament reaching 34,000 young visitors annually.
- **France:** The Children's Parliament, a school-year project where classes draft and debate bills, with some inspiring real laws.

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## RECENT EVENTS:

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## INTERNATIONAL IDEA CHAMPIONS DIALOGUE AND RESILIENCE AT IPU-UNDP CONFERENCE



At a high-level workshop in Geneva, representatives from International IDEA—including Katarzyna Gardapkhadze, Director of Global Programmes, and Jonathan Murphy, Head of Programme, Inter Pares—stressed that resilient democracies depend first and foremost on resilient parliaments.

Bringing together MPs and parliamentary experts, the event highlighted how good-faith dialogue, inclusive leadership, and proactive institutional strategies are essential for parliaments to withstand today's pressures—from polarization and public distrust to cyber risks and foreign interference.

International IDEA emphasized that resilience is not about parliaments “bouncing back” but transforming forward: strengthening women's leadership, reconnecting with disillusioned youth, and taking early action to prevent institutional capture. The core takeaway: parliaments must serve as stabilizing, forward-looking anchors of democracy in turbulent times. Learn more [here](#).

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### NEW BLOGS

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## NOT ‘JUST PART OF THE JOB’: HOW PARLIAMENTS ARE COUNTERING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS

Violence against women in politics (VAWP) is driving women out of public life and weakening democracy, a reality highlighted by the resignation







of a high-profile Dutch Deputy Prime Minister. To combat the staggering statistics - like the 85% of European women MPs who've experienced abuse - parliaments are now taking decisive action. They are breaking the silence, strengthening laws to close gaps like online abuse, and making institutions safer with new protocols, training, and resources to de-normalize violence as "just part of the job". Discover the three practical ways in our [new Medium blog](#) on how parliaments are protecting today's women leaders and inspiring the next generation.

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