


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


Deutscher Bundestag



## Parliamentary Development Community of Practice – Online Seminar

### Session 1: Peer-to-peer Parliamentary Strengthening

#### Concept note

#### What, when, and where?

1. This is the first of a series of online seminars being organized by the AGORA global knowledge platform on parliamentary development. The seminars are sponsored by AGORA's Community of Practice (CoP) working group, bringing together leading actors in parliamentary development from around the world.
2. This first CoP Session will be held online, **on November 17, 2021, from 15:00 to 18:00 CET (Brussels time)**. It is being co-ordinated by the German Bundestag and INTER PARES.
3. The focus of this session is on **Peer-to-Peer Parliamentary Strengthening**: the role of Parliaments – both through activities of members and parliamentary administrations – in supporting demand-driven parliamentary strengthening.
4. The objective of the online seminar is to share innovations and challenges in peer-to-peer parliamentary strengthening, and to showcase innovative use of interactive digital learning and communications tools including online polling, an interactive whiteboard, and online networking platforms. We hope that this will be a first step in a series of peer-to-peer practitioners' exchanges.

#### Why?

5. Liberal democracy is under stress all over the world. Populism and autocratic tendencies threaten our societies. Parliaments are the foremost institutions not only to secure good governance through oversight, but to generate legitimacy to representative government as such. Parliaments are in good contact with each other through various means and bodies, they try to exchange knowledge and mutual good practices.
6. While Parliaments thus engage in a wide range of parliamentary diplomacy, our focus is particularly on their institutional strengthening activities – building the technical capacity of Parliaments to effectively carry out their constitutional roles. Parliamentary staff and MPs have a unique practical understanding and knowledge of how Parliaments function, and the challenges and opportunities for institutional strengthening.
7. Peer-to-peer parliamentary strengthening (PPPS) is a growing but still relatively new field. It will benefit from development of working definitions, common objectives, and cross-fertilisation of ideas and practice innovations, including on the following issues and challenges:
  - a. It is a siloed field where there is often lack of knowledge about others doing peer-to-peer parliamentary strengthening
  - b. PPPS depends on political and institutional support, but there are few career incentives for either elected officials or parliamentary administrators to prioritise this work, even though Parliaments are at the core of representative democracy: the tragedy of the commons?

- c. How can the vocation of peer-to-peer parliamentary strengthening be enhanced and embedded within parliamentary life, both for MPs and parliamentary staff?

### How?

8. This will be an interactive session, making use of simple online collaborative tools and technologies. The session structure will include:
  - a. Short Introduction
  - b. Case studies/good practice examples shared by the selected presenters (see point 7)
  - c. Interactive break
  - d. Breakout sessions
  - e. Presentations from breakout sessions and open discussion
  - f. Closing remarks and next steps

### How can you contribute your ideas in the seminar?

9. We sent a call for proposal for short presentations from parliamentary officials and/or MPs on themes related to peer-to-peer parliamentary strengthening. Specific topics and approaches that will be discussed might include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Innovative approaches to effective capacity development;
  - b. Moving beyond a teacher-student dynamic in peer-to-peer parliamentary support;
  - c. Sharing parliamentary knowledge across different parliamentary systems: approaches, advantages, limitations, drawbacks;
  - d. Institutionalizing international parliamentary development as a core function of Parliaments;
  - e. Advocating for enhanced donor support to parliamentary strengthening;
  - f. Delivering donor-funded parliamentary development without compromising Parliaments' independence and overturning the executive oversight relationship;
  - g. Effectively integrating peer-to-peer support between elected officials and between parliamentary administrations;
  - h. Assessing and measuring impact of parliamentary development work

### What will happen afterwards?

10. We'll send out a report on the seminar along with contact details of all participants to assist follow-up and future collaboration.
11. Other Parliaments will be invited to host a next online seminar of this Peer-to-Peer Parliamentary Strengthening CoP group. The AGORA secretariat will provide back-office support: topic selection and format to be determined by the Parliament organizer(s).

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