



## British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union Newsletter November 2015

With BGIPU activities for the new Parliament now well underway, the Secretariat has welcomed the support of all members in the work of the Group in recent months. We have maintained a very active schedule of inward and outward visits in addition to additional conference commitments created by our support for both Speakers attendance at the World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in New York. We are advancing efforts to confirm an active programme into 2016 and look forward to convening the AGM to re-elect the Executive Committee and welcome some new members on 2 December.

**Rick Nimmo, Director**

### Conference on a gender sensitive Parliament for the UK

19 November 2015 - by *BGIPU*



BGIPU, in collaboration with Prof Sarah Childs (on secondment to the UK House of Commons from the University of Bristol), convened a one-day conference on 19 November to explore key perspectives on making the UK House of Commons a more gender sensitive Parliament. The conference was opened by the Speaker, Rt Hon John Bercow MP, and brought together international parliamentarians, academics and UK members and parliamentary staff to debate how a more gender sensitive House of Commons might be best achieved.

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### Annual Report of the BGIPU for 2015 published

10 November 2015 - by *BGIPU*



The Annual Report of the BGIPU for 2015 has been published on 10 November in advance of the 2 December Annual General Meeting. The Annual Report highlights that in 2015 BGIPU has received delegations to the UK Parliament from five parliaments and sent delegations to six countries. There have also been shorter visits by overseas MPs from nine countries to Westminster, UK participation in IPU Assemblies in Hanoi and Geneva and support for major inter-parliamentary events including the 4th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

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### 133rd IPU Assembly highlights challenges of current refugee crisis

17 October 2015 - by *BGIPU*



The 133rd Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly was convened in Geneva, Switzerland from 17 to 21 October bringing together nearly 700 parliamentarians from 135 parliaments, with 47 Speakers and some 220 women MPs. With the Parliament of Fiji re-joining the IPU, the Assembly saw the total IPU membership increase to 167 member parliaments. The key theme of the General Debate at the 133rd Assembly was, “The moral and economic imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration” on the difficult challenges facing many governments in addressing the current refugee crisis in Europe stemming from developments in the Middle East and North Africa.

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## UK parliamentary delegation sees advances in Angola

5 October 2015 - by *BGIPU*



In early October 2015, a BGIPU delegation went to Angola for a five day working visit. The purpose of this visit was to learn more about the Angolan parliamentary system and to meet counterparts in the National Assemblies as well as members of the government from key ministries to discuss the challenges Angola is facing and how the UK and Angola can work more closely together. The delegation was led by Lord Steel and included Pauline Latham OBE MP, John Mann MP, Baroness Hooper and Baroness Blackstone.

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## UK Delegation to Mexico highlights strong bilateral bonds

3 October 2015 - by *BGIPU*



A six-member inter-parliamentary delegation led by Rt Hon Sir Simon Burns MP visited Mexico from 3-9 October 2015 to meet parliamentary counterparts in the Congress of the Union. The visit included wide-ranging exchanges with Mexican Senators, a meeting with party whips from the recently elected Chamber of Deputies, a visit to Puebla State for meetings with university students and the State Governor and a number of cultural and trade events associated with the joint UK/Mexico dual year being held throughout 2015.

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## UK-Romania ties set to further strengthen

21 September 2015 - by *BGIPU*



A UK delegation led by Bob Blackman MP visited Romania 21-25 September to meet parliamentary counterparts and explore mutual bilateral interests. The delegation included Lord Davies of Stamford, Lord Harrison of Chester, Stephen Pound MP, Graham Jones MP and Philip Hollobone MP. Members concluded that there is perhaps too little knowledge in the UK about Romania but ties between both countries look set to strengthen, not least due to shared energy and defence interests and Romania’s increasing enthusiasm for English.

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## Exchange with Honduras highlights reform efforts and security challenges

14 September 2015 - by *BGIPU*



The British Group hosted a visit from a Honduran parliamentary delegation, led by the President of the National Congress of Honduras, Mr Mauricio Oliva Herrera. UK counterparts were interested to hear the success of efforts in Honduras to address levels of violence and crime and provide more stable governance. The delegation called for increased UK trade and investment to enhance economic growth and new opportunities for youth. A visit to Northern Ireland provided an opportunity for Honduran MPs to reflect on Northern Ireland's experiences and similar challenges they face in addressing conflict issues and advancing police reform.

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## Parliamentary visit from Ukraine further strengthening UK-Ukraine relations

7 September 2015 - by *BGIPU*



Following the successful outward visit to Kiev in February 2015, BGIPU hosted a delegation of Ukrainian parliamentarians, representing the different factions of the current coalition in the Ukrainian Rada, in Westminster during the week of 7th September 2015. The intensive but productive two day working programme included meetings with the Foreign Affairs and Defence Select Committees, FCO Minister Rt. Hon David Lidington MP, a Cross-Whitehall Roundtable and MOD officials.

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## Outcome of 4th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

2 September 2015 - by *BGIPU*



Parliamentary leaders from nearly 140 countries have pledged to do their utmost to reconnect people with democracy in an ambitious and far-reaching declaration adopted at the end of a three-day global summit in New York. More than 170 Speakers and Deputy Speakers acknowledged that extraordinary efforts would be needed to build a world that people want by turning the tide against the many challenges that undermine democracy, peace and development.

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### PLANS FOR FORTHCOMING BGIPU ACTIVITIES

BGIPU Annual General Meeting | 2 December

Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of COP21 | 5 and 6 December | Paris

Inward Delegation from Saudi Arabia | 7-11 December

