



## British Group Inter-Parliamentary Newsletter July 2018

This BGIPU newsletter contains summaries and links to events which have occurred since the start of 2018/19 Financial Year up to the summer parliamentary recess. BGIPU has been very busy with a range of bilateral activities in the Palace of Westminster and delegation visits abroad. There were also important multilateral events including marking the very first celebration of the International Day of Parliamentism on 30 June 2018 which coincided with the founding anniversary of the IPU in 1889. Over the summer break, the Secretariat will be preparing for a diverse range of high-level activity, including the International Parliamentary Seminar on the Western Balkans from 10-12 September, further intensive bilateral exchanges, the IPU Assembly in Geneva in October and our AGM on 27 November.

Rick Nimmo, Director

### Parliaments around the world stand up for human rights

11 July 2018 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



Parliaments around the world are increasingly prioritizing human rights and rightly so. Parliaments are uniquely positioned to close the gap between the work of UN human rights mechanisms and implementation at the national level. A recent report from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on parliaments' contributions to the work of the Human Rights Council highlights some good practices to help parliaments better protect and promote human rights.

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### Austrian MPs get timely update on UK Brexit plans

2 July 2018 - by *BGIPU*



On 2-3 July BGIPU hosted a small cross party delegation from Austria for a timely visit to see a snapshot of the state of the UK's Brexit process moving forward and hear a wide variety of perspectives on the likely end state for a post-Brexit Britain. It was equally useful for UK members to hear about the key issues and challenges being experienced by Austria including the socio-economic impacts and political changes being created by migration pressures on Europe.

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### #WorldParliamentDay: Are parliamentary democracies in danger?

30 June 2018 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*

As the world celebrates for the first time, on 30 June, the International Day of Parliamentism, data on parliaments shows a mixed picture. The International Day of Parliamentism is an opportunity to celebrate



parliaments as the cornerstone of democracy and as institutions designed to improve the lives of the people they represent. In an age of many problems – from climate change, mass movements of people, to the rise of populism and autocracy – the world needs its parliaments more than ever before.

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## Visit by Uruguayan Speaker consolidates close bilateral relations

18 June 2018 - by *BGIPU*



From 18-20 June, BGIPU hosted the Speaker of the Uruguayan House of Representatives, Mr Jorge Gandini, for a 3 day programme at Westminster. Mr Gandini was accompanied by his party colleague Mr Gustavo Penades MP and Mr Roberto Chiazzaro MP, Member of the ruling Frente Amplio Party. The visit reinforced the already close relationship between the two countries and showed how helpful and important regular personal contact remains in the field of parliamentary diplomacy.

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## UK Parliament welcomes Anwar Ibrahim after pardon

12 June 2018 - by *BGIPU*



At an event arranged by the Chair of the APPG for Human Rights, Rt Hon Ann Clwyd MP, and attended by members of the APPG for Malaysia led by its Chair, Sir William Cash MP, the UK Parliament warmly welcomed the recent full pardon of Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. In his comments to MPs and Peers, Mr Anwar recognised the important role parliamentarians had played in supporting his struggle for justice, particularly through the work of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

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## BGIPU visit explores stronger links with Belarus

28 May 2018 - by



From 28th May to 1st June BGIPU Vice-Chair Rt Hon John Whittingdale OBE MP led a cross-party delegation of six MPs to Belarus, the second only since Independence. The programme was busy and varied, including meetings with counterparts, government representatives, and visits to manufacturing facilities, the Opera House, Nesvizh Castle and meetings civil society. The delegation left with the impression that Belarus is a country somewhat overlooked by the UK both politically and economically and were determined to change that.

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## UK commitment to Balkans to the fore in visit to Bosnia & Herzegovina

27 May 2018 - by *BGIPU*

A BGIPU delegation, led by our Chair Nigel Evans MP, visited Bosnia & Herzegovina during the Whitsun Recess (27th May – 1st June) to meet with parliamentary counterparts. This visit consolidated the close links between the UK Parliament and the various Parliaments of Bosnia and



Herzegovina, and was an important precursor to BGIPU's upcoming International Seminar on the Western Balkans in September.

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## UN resolution strengthens the role of parliaments in global governance

22 May 2018 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The United Nations General Assembly has adopted its latest resolution on the interaction between the United Nations, parliaments and the IPU. The resolution, co-sponsored by over 90 UN Member States, reaffirms the commitment of all parties to continue efforts to bridge the democracy gap between the international agenda and its implementation at the national level. The resolution recognizes particularly the work of the IPU in mobilizing parliamentary action to implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

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## Insights on Brexit as Lithuania reaffirms partnership with UK

14 May 2018 - by *BGIPU*



From 14-18 May a cross-party parliamentary delegation from Lithuania led by former Prime Minister Mr Andrius Kubilius MP from the opposition Homeland Union and five colleagues visited UK Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. The delegation visited at a pivotal time in parliamentary consideration of the EU Withdrawal Bill and was able to gain significant insights into not only the process but many of the motivations behind Brexit. They also shared common perceptions with UK counterparts on the hybrid and multi-dimensional threat posed by Russia.

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## UK's Lord McConnell attends the Development Cooperation Forum

21 May 2018 - by *Lord McConnell*



Chair of the APPG on the UN Global Goals, Lord McConnell attended the Development Cooperation Forum at the UN HQ in New York 21-22 May 2018 with BGIPU support. Having also attended previous meetings, he found that there continues to be a wide acceptance of the Global Goals and a willingness to talk about building national strategies and domestic capacity to deliver them. But he sees insufficient progress on data collection, measuring results, and targeting resources requiring further attention and prioritisation.

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## Renewing old acquaintances with Liberian counterparts

7 May 2018 - by *BGIPU*



From 7-11 May 2018, a parliamentary delegation from Liberia visited the UK for a five-day visit. This visit was key in re-establishing ties between the Liberian Parliament and the UK Parliament, especially given that Liberia – although not currently a Member of the IPU – was one of the original founding member parliaments of the organisation in

1889. This visit was a notable success with the delegation expressing a keen desire to rejoin the IPU.

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#### **FORTHCOMING BGIPU ACTIVITIES**

BGIPU Charity Quiz | 5 September 2018

International Parliamentary Seminar on the Western Balkans | 10-12 September 2018

Outward delegation visit to Cuba | 17-21 September 2018

Outward delegation visit to Vietnam | 1-5 October 2018

139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly | 14-18 October 2018 | Geneva