



British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union Newsletter April 2013

The BGIPU has been maintaining a very busy programme of events since the start of 2013 with four inter-parliamentary delegations, participation in IPU-related meetings, including the 128th Assembly in Quito in late March, and regular events for BGIPU members in the Palace of Westminster. To gain a better appreciation of the range and scope of our activities so far this year, please see the links to reports below.

Rick Nimmo
Director, BGIPU

UK delegation plays leading role in 128th IPU Assembly deliberation

22 March 2013 - by *BGIPU*



The 128th IPU Assembly in Quito, Ecuador from 22 to 27 March 2013 was attended by more than 1350 participants from over 118 parliaments. The UK delegation was prominent and active throughout the Assembly, including as a member of the Emergency Item Drafting Committee, as moderators of panel discussions, in detailed Committee work and in a range of targeted bilateral exchanges.

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WTO and Parliaments - Parliaments should be active in debating global trade developments

13 March 2013 - by *BGIPU*



BGIPU convened a roundtable discussion on 13 March to discuss multilateral trade with a specific focus on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the role of Parliaments. The meeting heard perspectives from Lord Harrison and Baroness Hooper who represented the BGIPU at the 2012 session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO in Geneva held 15-16 November 2012 which was jointly organized by the IPU and the European Parliament.

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Visit of the Speaker and Delegation of the Majlis Ash-Shura, Saudi Arabia

4 March 2013 - by *BGIPU*

A delegation from the Majlis Ash-Shura of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia led by the Speaker, H.E. Dr. Abdullah Bin Muhammad Bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, undertook an inter-parliamentary visit to the UK Parliament



from 4-6 March 2013. Accompanying the Speaker were Shura Council Members, Hamza Bin Hussein Al-Sharif, Zuhair F. J. Al-Harthy, Saud Bin Abdulrahman Al-Shammari, Dr. Said Abdulla Al-Shaikh and Dr. Omar Bin Ibrahim Rajab and two of the recently appointed 30 women members of the Council, Thuraya Bint Ahmed Obeid and Dr. Nihad Mohammed Al-Jishi and parliamentary officials.

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A fascinating and informative BGIPU visit to the next country to join the European Union

4 March 2013 - by *BGIPU, Lord Harrison*



Our visit to Zagreb was timely, given Croatia's imminent entry into the European Union as its 28th member. Our party's interests ranged widely in the educational, cultural, community and civil stability fields. Trade, tourism, economic matters featured strongly with a natural UK bent. The sub-set of Scottish (and Yorkshire!) interests played well against complementary Croatian regional concerns.

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BGIPU ensures UK Parliamentary voice is heard at CSW 57 in New York

4 March 2013 - by *BGIPU, Roberta Blackman-Woods MP*



The BGIPU was represented at CSW 57 in this year at the United Nations HQs by Roberta Blackman-Woods MP (chair of the 2012 International Parliamentary Conference on Gender & Politics) and Mary Macleod MP (UK Minister for Women and Equalities), to enable them to engage with counterpart parliamentarians on key gender equality issues, particularly the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

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Bahrain delegation visit UK Parliamentarians in Westminster and Portsmouth

25 February 2013 - by *BGIPU*



The BGIPU hosted a delegation from Bahrain to Westminster in March. The visit was a key opportunity to engage with parliamentary counterparts from Bahrain on bilateral interest between our two countries and Bahrain's 6 perspectives on developments in the Middle East region. The visit also provided an important opportunity to seek perspectives on ongoing human rights concerns in the country in the context of a broader discussion about governance and justice issues.

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BGIPU gets an insight into the fast changing geopolitics of Central America

11 February 2013 - by *BGIPU, Stewart Jackson MP*



From tourism and tax reform to wealth distribution and from new global trading relationships to diversifying from agriculture, the BGIPU delegation, led by the Vice Chair of the BGIPU visited the Legislative Assemblies of Costa Rica and El Salvador to learn about both countries' broader geopolitical priorities

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Lecture: Parliaments and soft power diplomacy

29 January 2013 - by *BGIPU*



In a roundtable session chaired by Baroness Hooper, BGIPU members heard from John Warne of the British Council about the importance of utilising 'soft power' tools, including cultural diplomacy, people-to-people links and educational exchanges to bolster the UK's political, strategic, trade and economic interests in the world. The discussion also highlighted the important role that inter-parliamentary diplomacy can play in advancing the UK's international interests.

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BGIPU FORTHCOMING LOOK

The BGIPU have a number of events and programmes planned for the Spring as follows;

BGIPU Inward Delegation from **Senegal** | 22 - 26 April 2013

BGIPU Day in Parliament with **Ukrainian Parliamentarians** | 23 April 2013

BGIPU Lunchtime Lecture: **Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism** | 9 May 2013 | 12.00 | IPU Room

BGIPU Lunchtime Lecture: **Violence Against Women in Politics** | 6 June 2013 | 12.00 | IPU Room

BGIPU Inward Delegation from **Bolivia** | 17 – 21 June 2013 (Dates TBC)

BGIPU Inward Delegation from **Somalia** | 8 - 12 July 2013

If you would like to register your interest in any of the above events or would like further information please contact the [Secretariat](#)