



British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union Newsletter July 2016

Following a busy period in the UK Parliament, with political changes following the outcome of the EU Referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union, BGIPU will be working over the summer recess to confirm programmes for a wide range of inward and outward visit exchanges and UK participation in the 135th IPU Assembly in Geneva in October. Recent activities, and the welcome visit of the IPU Secretary General, have underscored the continuing importance and value of inter-parliamentary exchanges as an alternative form of contacts and dialogue for progressing UK interests abroad. Indeed, many members and other stakeholders have remarked how maximising our bilateral engagements will become even more important as the UK moves to exit the EU.

Rick Nimmo, Director

BGIPU supports launch of "The Good Parliament" report

20 July 2016 - by *BGIPU*



With the support of BGIPU, The Good Parliament report was launched in Parliament on 20 July 2016 by Professor Sarah Childs. The report shows Parliament's working practices still reflect the traditions and preferences of those who historically populated it and the report seeks to provide a blueprint for a more inclusive and representative UK Parliament. In welcoming the report, the Speaker of the House of Commons announced the establishment of a "Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion" to give consideration to its findings.

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IPU Secretary General visits UK Parliament to brief BGIPU

12 July 2016 - by *BGIPU*



The Secretary General of IPU, Martin Chungong, visited London on 12 July 2016 at the invitation of the BGIPU Chair, Mr Nigel Evans MP, and IPU Executive Committee member, Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger MP, to brief the BGIPU Executive Committee on IPU priorities as identified in its Draft IPU Strategy 2071-21. During his visit he also met the Chair of the International Development Committee and FCO Minister David Lidington among other high-level calls.

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Roundtable meeting on challenges facing the Balkans region

5 July 2016 - by *BGIPU*



On the 5 July 2016, BGIPU hosted a roundtable on the Balkans, bringing together Members from both Houses and Ambassadors from the region. Chaired by BGIPU Vice-Chair and Foreign Affairs Committee Member Mike Gapes MP, participants exchanged views on the challenges facing Balkan countries and the threat posed by extremism and terrorist groups such as Daesh. Members appreciated the opportunity to hear from representatives about the current political situation and challenges in their respective countries.

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World e-Parliament Conference 2016 concludes in Chile

28 June 2016 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The World e-Parliament Conference, held in the Chamber of Deputies in Valparaiso, Chile, featured the launch of the World e-Parliament Report 2016 and discussion of its key findings. During the conference, policy and technical tracks provided a forum for participants to exchange experiences on how ICT helps to improve representation, law-making and oversight, and to increase parliament's openness, accessibility, accountability and effectiveness. The event drew just over 200 participants from more than 50 countries.

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BGIPU sponsors EU Referendum Observation Mission

23 June 2016 - by *BGIPU*



With the support of BGIPU's Executive Committee, comprising members on all sides of the debate, BGIPU hosted a EU referendum observation mission from 22-24 June 2016. With outstanding assistance from staff of the Electoral Commission and borough polling officials, BGIPU welcomed parliamentarians and officials from IPU member parliaments in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Switzerland for a mission which responded to the strong interest of counterpart MPs to gain insights into the UK's historic EU referendum on 23 June.

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Parliamentary Conference on the WTO: What future for the WTO?

13 June 2016 - by *Gareth Thomas MP*



More than 400 parliamentary delegates from around 60 countries attended the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, co-chaired by the IPU and the European Parliament. The event, held in Geneva on 13-14 June, covered a wide range of topics under the theme "What Future for the WTO?" Parliamentarians raised a whole series of concerns – the need to champion stronger labour standards, environmental protection and the role trade can play in sustainable development.

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Joint BGIPU/CPA UK Diplomatic Reception for State Opening

18 May 2016 - by *BGIPU*



In partnership with CPA UK, BGIPU hosted its annual diplomatic reception on the occasion of the State Opening of Parliament on 18 May 2016. Speaking alongside his CPA UK counterpart, Ian Liddell-Grainger MP, the BGIPU Chair, Nigel Evans MP, took the opportunity to express gratitude for the support of the diplomatic corps for the work of UK inter-parliamentary bodies as well as thanking a representative of the FCO, PPS Pauline Latham MP, for the support provided by UK Ambassadors and diplomats abroad and FCO staff at home.

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Estonia visit reinforces its importance for Europe's future

9 May 2016 - by *Lord Harrison*



This was the first BGIPU visit to Estonia in 20 years and the focus was the UK's shared defence and security concerns with the country and how Estonia is developing into a model in terms of embracing new and innovative technologies. Key outcomes of the visit were that the UK can ill afford to neglect these small, but dynamic, EU countries which are so important to the future of Europe. In the immediate future, the UK can also do much to help support their forthcoming first EU Presidency and we should grasp that golden opportunity.

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BGIPU hosts signing ceremony for upcoming 136th IPU Assembly in Dhaka

28 April 2016 - by *BGIPU*



The formal agreement between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the National Parliament of Bangladesh on convening the 136th IPU Assembly in Dhaka was signed by The Hon Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, the Bangladesh Speaker, and the IPU Secretary General, Mr Martin Chungong, in the River Room of the UK House of Lords on 28 April 2016 in the presence of the BGIPU Chair and Officers. This signing ceremony formalised the decision taken in Lusaka in March 2016 to hold the 136th IPU Assembly in Dhaka from 1 to 5 April 2017.

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Nepal Speaker visit boosts bilateral dialogue

18 April 2016 - by *BGIPU*



A delegation from Nepal led by the recently elected speaker of their Legislature Parliament, Rt. Hon. Onsari Gharti Magar, visited 18 to 22 April with a delegation comprising five MPs and two senior officials. In a wide-ranging programme the delegation met many UK counterparts boosting the bilateral relationship, including discussing the UK's contribution to earthquake recovery, Prince Harry's recent visit and constitutional reform in Nepal. The Speaker also met both her counterparts prior to visiting Northern Ireland to look at peace

and reconciliation.

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FORTHCOMING BGIPU ACTIVITIES

BGIPU Charity Pub Quiz | Moncrieff's Café-Bar | 6 September | 5:45pm

Inward Delegation from Albania | 12-16 September

135th IPU Assembly | Geneva | 23-27 October

Inward Delegation from Argentina | 14-18 November

Inward Delegation from Iraq | 28 November – 2 December

BGIPU Annual General Meeting | IPU Room | 7 December | 4.00pm