



British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union Newsletter April 2017

As the UK faces a snap general election on 8 June, with Parliament prorogued in advance of dissolution, this BGIPU newsletter contains summaries and links to all our remaining events of the 2015-17 Parliament since the end of 2016. The BGIPU Secretariat would like to express our gratitude to all members for their contributions to our work as we suspend our activities in advance of the general election. We wish all House of Commons members the very best wishes for their future, be they standing down or seeking re-election. We look forward to welcoming new members and providing all members in both Houses with an extensive, timely and relevant programme for the remainder of 2017/18.

Rick Nimmo, Director

World MPs in drive to end extreme inequalities

5 April 2017 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



Expressing grave concern with the extreme political, social and economic inequalities prevalent in the world, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has called for immediate action to reverse this trend and leave no one behind. In a declaration issued at the close of the 136th IPU Assembly in Dhaka, Bangladesh, IPU Members highlighted that "extreme inequalities" come at a high cost to society, stalling economic growth, undermining the democratic process and social cohesion and increasing the risk of violence and insecurity.

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MPs respond to looming famine in Africa and Yemen

4 April 2017 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The global parliamentary community has called for urgent international action to save millions of people from famine and drought in parts of Africa and Yemen. In an emergency item adopted 4 April at the 136th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Organization's Members committed to pressuring their governments to fund humanitarian relief operations to avert this crisis.

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World's MPs to tackle rising economic, political & social inequalities

1 April 2017 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



Taking decisive actions to end economic, political and social inequality will be the focus of deliberations for the more than 650 MPs from 132 countries meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 1-5 April 2017. Parliamentarians, including 53 Speakers of Parliament, will make concrete proposals on a range of issues, from ending rising inequality

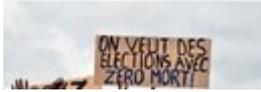
to promoting women's access to financing, during the 136th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (#IPU136) hosted by the Bangladesh Parliament.

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2016 Annual Report on the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1 April 2017 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*

Annual Report
2016



The IPU Annual Report offers a summary of the salient events and meetings. Richly illustrated with photographs, this publication provides a vital overview of the activities of the world organization of parliaments. The final section covers more institutional aspects such as financial records, the composition of the standing committees and the list of members.

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IPU deplores attack on UK Parliament

23 March 2017 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The IPU strongly condemns the attack on the Parliament of the United Kingdom on 22 March. We deplore the senselessness of the violence and the extensive number of casualties. We also convey our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives. In a letter to the Speakers of the UK House of Lords and House of Commons, IPU President Saber Chowdhury and Secretary General Martin Chungong have expressed deep dismay at this gratuitous attack on a bastion of democracy and conveyed the solidarity of the global parliamentary community.

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New IPU Map shows women's representation in politics stagnates

15 March 2017 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The number of women in executive government and in parliament worldwide has stagnated, with only marginal improvements since 2015, according to the data contained in the Women in Politics 2017 Map launched today by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women. The Map, which presents global rankings for women in the executive and parliamentary branches of government as of 1 January 2017, shows slow progress towards gender equality in these areas at regional and national levels.

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IPU at CSW 61: Empowering Parliaments to empower Women

13 March 2017 - by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger CBE*



From 13-17 March, BGIPU sent a parliamentary delegation to the 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations in New York. "Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work" was the 2017 priority theme of this year's Commission, with parliamentarians from over 150 countries convening to debate the issue.

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More ambition needed to enhance women's representation in parliament

7 March 2017 - by



More ambitious measures and stronger political commitment are needed to enhance women's representation in parliament and keep pace with the significant progress achieved worldwide over the last decade, says the IPU. "Women in Parliament in 2016: The year in review" released ahead of International Women's Day on 8 March calls for renewed momentum to ensure women's voices everywhere are included in decision-making processes underscoring that women's political empowerment cannot be taken for granted.

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Strong prospects for bilateral relations with Hungary after Brexit

27 February 2017 - by *Rt Hon John Whittingdale OBE MP*



A UK delegation led by Rt Hon John Whittingdale OBE MP visited Budapest from 27 February to 2nd March to meet Hungarian counterparts. Much of the discussion focussed on Brexit and the likely future relations between Britain and Hungary, and the UK and the EU more generally. Hungary regards Britain as a strong ally in the EU. While sharing many of the UK's criticisms of the way that the Commission works, Hungary's attitude to the EU is heavily influenced by the challenge they face from economic migration.

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Poland seeks continued strong relations with UK after Brexit

27 February 2017 - by *BGIPU*



During a very productive bilateral visit, a delegation from the Sejm of Poland heard from UK counterparts of the strong commitment across the political spectrum to ensuring EU nationals would continue to be welcome to stay and contribute to the UK following Brexit. In return, the visiting delegation admitted that while Poland would be losing a key ally in the EU, the UK's departure would not prevent both sides seeking to find new opportunities to expand and strengthen already strong bilateral relations for the future.

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Visit to Berlin: Learning about German perspectives on Brexit

13 February 2017 - by *Rt. Hon Stephen Timms MP*



From 13 to 16 February the Rt. Hon Stephen Timms MP led a delegation to Berlin, accompanied by Mark Hendrick MP (Labour), Iain Stewart MP (Conservative) John Nicolson MP (SNP), Baroness Hooper, Lord Shinkwin (Conservative), and the Earl of Listowel (Crossbench). The aim of the visit was to discuss the future bilateral relationship in the context of the UK's decision to leave the EU, but also to get an insight into the German domestic political situation ahead of general elections in September 2017, and to discuss current global affairs.

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Key role for UK in supporting Kosovo's EU ambitions

12 February 2017 - by *Martin Vickers MP*



Kosovo's leaders show real desire to reach the governance standards demanded if they are to achieve their aim of EU membership. This will likely be a long process, not least given the potential for tense relations with Serbia to prolong the journey but they were committed to make significant efforts in support of the goal. The UK can have an effective role in supporting and guiding them towards becoming a fully-functioning Western-style democracy and our strong support for Kosovo continues to be important and widely welcomed in the country.

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IPU concerned about ongoing efforts to silence MPs

8 February 2017 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has again expressed concern about continued human rights violations against MPs worldwide and the lack of respect for their parliamentary immunity. During its January 2017 session, IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians adopted decisions on the cases of 227 MPs from 16 countries. Over 100 MPs are from just three countries, Malaysia, Nicaragua and Turkey. The Committee has elected a new President in the person of Ms. Fawzia Koofi (Afghanistan).

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Argentina visit shows improved bilateral relations

30 January 2017 - by *BGIPU*



During the week of 30 January BGIPU hosted a high profile delegation from Argentina led by the Speaker of the Senate Senator Federico Pinedo who was accompanied by a cross party delegation composed of Senator Carmen Lucila Crexell, Senator Rodolfo Julio Urtubey, Ms Margarita Stolbizer MP, Mr Eduardo Amadeo MP, and Mr Alejandro Grandinetti MP. The visit focussed on the bilateral relationship, particularly with regards to trade, but also how cooperation in other areas, such as science and education, can be improved.

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2017 Parliamentary Hearing at the UN will focus on oceans

20 January 2017 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The 2017 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations on 13-14 February 2017 will focus on SDG 14 of the new Sustainable Development Goals: the conservation and sustainable use of oceans. A World of Blue: Preserving the oceans, safeguarding the planet, ensuring human well-being in the context of the 2030 Agenda will bring together parliamentarians, experts and UN officials and will make recommendations to restore the oceans to health.

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Visit by Uruguayan Speaker highlights close friendship

16 January 2017 - by *BGIPU*

On 16th and 17th January, BGIPU hosted the Speaker of the Uruguayan Lower House of Representatives, Dr Gerardo Amarilla, for a brief visit to Westminster. Speaker Amarilla was accompanied by Mr



Jorge Gandini MP, who will take over the position as Speaker in 2018, as well as Mr Oscar Piquinela, Secretary of the IPU Group and Head of International Relations. The visit followed an outward BGIPU visit to Uruguay in September 2016, where Speaker Amarilla hosted the group in the Uruguayan General Assembly.

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FORTHCOMING BGIPU ACTIVITIES

137th IPU Assembly, St Petersburg, Russian Federation | 14-18 October 2017