



## British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union Newsletter April 2019

This BGIPU newsletter contains summaries and links to events which have occurred since late 2018 following the election of our new Executive Committee for 2019 under the incoming Chair, Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP. In recent months, BGIPU hosted three timely inward visits from European counterparts Netherlands, North Macedonia and Slovakia and undertook a visit to Ethiopia to review significant reform efforts underway there. In a busy period for Parliament focused on Brexit, BGIPU sent delegations to IPU events in New York including the UN/IPU Parliamentary Hearing and the Commission on the Status of Women as well as participating in the 140th IPU Assembly held in Doha. We are moving forward with an ambitious 2019 Forward Programme, including celebration of the IPU's 130th anniversary and related events from 30 June this year into 2020.

Rick Nimmo  
Director, BGIPU

### MPs engage in world's biggest parliamentary diplomacy platform

6 April 2019 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



Parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy were at the forefront of 140th IPU Assembly in Doha, Qatar, as over 800 MPs from 160 countries convened in the world's biggest platform for global parliamentary exchange. In the final Doha Declaration endorsed at the Assembly, MPs from national parliaments underlined the critical role of education to enhance peace, security and the rule of law as well as support democracy and human rights.

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### IPU calls for actions to defend persecuted MPs worldwide

6 April 2019 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



At the 140th IPU Assembly in Doha, Qatar, the global parliamentary community strongly condemned human rights violations against MPs worldwide. At the Assembly, the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the only international body with an exclusive remit to support MPs in danger, recommended action in the cases of 187 parliamentarians in a dozen countries whose human rights have been violated.

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### One in five ministers is a woman says new IPU/UN Women Map

12 March 2019 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



Women's representation in political decision-making continues to rise slowly, with slight improvements since 2017, according to the data presented in the 2019 edition of the biennial IPU-UN Women map of Women in Politics. The map was launched at a press conference during CSW63 at the UN in New York. The map, which presents global rankings for women in the executive and parliamentary government branches as of 1 January 2019, shows the proportion of women ministers is at an all-time high at 20.75%.

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## Peers play key role for UK at CSW63 at the United Nations

11 March 2019 - by *Baroness Hodgson of Abinger CBE*



From 11 to 15 March 2019, the UK Parliament was represented at the 63rd session of the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW 63) at the UN in New York by Baroness Hodgson, Baroness Gale and Baroness Watkins from the UK House of Lords. The 63rd session had the priority theme of "Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls".

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## MPs from Slovakia get a box seat on the Brexit process

11 March 2019 - by *BGIPU*



From 11 to 13 March, a parliamentary delegation from Slovakia visited the Palace of Westminster led by the Chair of the EU Committee, Mr Lubos Blaha accompanied by 5 other members. The visiting delegation benefited greatly from this visit at a pivotal time in the Brexit process and had access to many key players on all sides of the debate. It gave them important views of the difficult issues facing the UK Parliament and underscored that Slovakia stands ready to support the UK as a reliable friend whatever the eventual outcome.

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## Women's political leadership: Striving for a 50% balance in 2030

8 March 2019 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



Women's leadership and the equal participation of women and men in public affairs and decision-making are matters of human rights which are key elements of democracy and lasting peace, and prerequisites for achieving sustainable development. Our societies will not enjoy human rights, peace, sustainable and inclusive development, if they are not grounded in effective gender parity, if they do not benefit from women's leadership and the empowerment of women and girls as expressly recommended by the CEDAW Committee.

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## Well-designed quotas lead to significantly more women MPs

5 March 2019 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*

According to the IPU's yearly analysis, the share of women in national parliaments increased by nearly one percentage point last year, from 23.4 per cent in 2017 to 24.3 per cent in 2018. This 0.9 percentage point increase confirms the continuing rise of women in parliament, at a



slightly faster rate of change compared to previous years. Countries with well-designed gender quotas elected significantly more women to parliament than those without, respectively, 7 points more in single or lower chambers, and 17 points more in upper chambers.

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## Exchange serves to strengthen links with North Macedonia

4 March 2019 - by *BGIPU*



A parliamentary delegation from North Macedonia visited the UK for a three day visit from 4 to 6 March. This visit cemented the already strong links between the Parliament of North Macedonia and the UK Parliament and was a very timely visit given that the Prespa Agreement had recently been agreed and the bilateral dispute between Greece and North Macedonia was now resolved.

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## Netherlands visit boosts relations in advance of Brexit

24 February 2019 - by *BGIPU*



A Parliamentary delegation from the Netherlands led by the President of the Senate made a timely visit to the UK from 25 to 27 February to discuss bilateral relations against the background of the UK's imminent departure from the European Union. The programme ensured the delegation met with as many relevant Select Committees as possible and that they heard from many UK Parliamentarians across the full scope of views regarding Brexit. Exchanges showed that bilateral relations remained very close and strong.

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## Annual Parliamentary Hearing: Emerging Challenges to Multilateralism

22 February 2019 - by *BGIPU, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



On 21 and 22 February, the IPU and the United Nations, represented by the President of the General Assembly, brought together some 240 parliamentarians from nearly 40 countries, as well as ambassadors, representatives from UN organizations, and experts for their annual parliamentary hearing in New York. The hearing focused on the key emerging challenges posed to the future of multilateralism.

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## UK delegation sees impressive transformation in Ethiopia

18 February 2019 - by



From 18 to 21 February, a BGIPU delegation visited Ethiopia as part of a scoping mission with the aim of boosting interparliamentary relations, including through inviting a parliamentary delegation from Ethiopia to visit London. The delegation, comprised Rt Hon Baroness Anelay DBE, Baroness Barker and Pauline Latham OBE MP, who saw that the UK continues to be a trusted partner for the country as Ethiopia undergoes profound political transition alongside economic and social transformation under the reform policies of Prime Minister Abiy.

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## Preparing for Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2020

8 February 2019 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The first Preparatory Committee for the Fifth Conference of Speakers was held in Geneva from 8 to 9 February 2019. The BGIPU Chair, Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP, is representing the Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt Hon John Bercow MP, on this Preparatory Committee. The Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments is scheduled to take place in 2020 and is expected to build on the outcomes from the previous sessions and further reinforce the parliamentary dimension of global governance.

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## IPU considers abuse of the human rights of MPs worldwide

8 February 2019 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians has released its latest decisions after considering the cases of 417 MPs from 37 countries at a meeting in Geneva last week. The Committee, the only international body with a special remit to defend persecuted MPs, took decisions on 126 MPs, most of which concern opposition MPs in Venezuela.

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## IPU calls for peaceful change and dialogue in Venezuela

26 January 2019 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The IPU expresses its grave concern about the escalating crisis in Venezuela. It reminds the authorities of their duty to guarantee the basic human rights of the people, including those of peaceful demonstration. The IPU continues to monitor carefully for any attacks against parliamentarians. The IPU appeals to all sides to intensify efforts, including meaningful dialogue, to find a peaceful and non-violent solution to the crisis, and to ensure humanitarian access for all Venezuelans.

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## Ready for another 130 years of empowering parliaments

7 January 2019 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



As the IPU enters its 130th year, the IPU President and Secretary General say the spirit of its founding members is still very much alive at a time when parliamentary democracy is threatened in many parts of the world. This year, we look forward to celebrating our anniversary with you, by looking back at our rich history, in order to guide and illuminate us for the future.

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## UK Parliament makes 'steady progress' on gender equality

20 December 2018 - by *BGIPU*

The UK Gender Sensitive Parliament Audit, published on 20 December 2018 finds that steady progress has been made in increasing the representation of women in both Houses of Parliament, but there are still too many barriers to women standing as MPs or putting



themselves forward to the House of Lords Appointments Commission. The audit was facilitated by the IPU and supported by the British Group IPU following the IPU's Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments and toolkit to evaluate gender sensitivity in parliaments.

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## Youth representation in parliament nudges up according to new IPU report

13 December 2018 - by *Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Geneva*



The global proportion of MPs under 30 has increased in two years from 1.9 per cent to 2.2 per cent according to the IPU's biannual report on Youth Participation in National Parliaments published today. Despite this increase, when compared with the half of the world's population that is under 30, the report reveals a sizeable deficit in the political representation of youth worldwide.

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### FORTHCOMING BGIPU ACTIVITIES

World Press Freedom Event | IPU Room | 8 May

"Africa Eye" event with BBC World Service | IPU Room | 14 May

John Smith Fellowship Day in Parliament | IPU Room | 18 June

International Parliamentary Seminar on Media Freedom | Attlee Suite PCH | 9-11 September

141st IPU Assembly | Belgrade, Serbia | 13-17 October