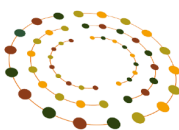




WYDE
Parliaments



INTER PARES
Parliaments in Partnership
EU Global Project to Strengthen the Capacity of Parliaments



Inter Pares Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2025

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NEW PUBLICATIONS



LAUNCH OF GUIDES ON CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT FOR PARLIAMENTS

On June 30, International Parliamentarism Day, Inter Pares launched the first of an eight-part parliamentary Citizen Engagement guide series, developed by Inter Pares and the International Parliament Engagement Network, with the support of the European Union. These guides offer practical insights and real-world examples from diverse parliamentary contexts – with the aim of supporting parliaments develop effective practices. Two guides are now online with the remaining six being launched over the next three months.

Jonathan Murphy, Head of Inter Pares, commented that “the Guides embody the spirit of Inter Pares, sharing best practices between parliaments from the European Union and globally, on the topic of engaging citizens in parliaments’ work, which is a fundamental requirement in building successful, responsive democracies. We’re delighted with the collaboration with the International Parliament Engagement Network, which brings together parliamentary officials from around the world to exchange on innovations and challenges in parliamentary citizen engagement’.

The first guide “Principles of Parliamentary Public Engagement,” provides eight core principles to foster genuine two-way engagement between parliaments and citizens. It’s packed with practical insights and examples to help strengthen parliaments’ links with citizens. It’s a must-read for policymakers, parliamentary staff, and civil society organizations committed to inclusive governance.

The second guide “Petitions and Citizens’ Initiatives,” explores how parliaments can enhance citizen engagement, from understanding the benefits of petitions to implementing effective systems and evaluating impact. The guide also provides real-world case studies - from Portugal to New Zealand - and a practical checklist.

Find the first and second guide on the [new landing page](#) and on the [Agora portal](#).

PARTNER PROFILE: BRIDGET KALABA

Deputy, Director, Parliamentary Reforms Department, National Assembly of Zambia



Q: What is your current role in your parliament, and what does a typical day look like?

A: I serve as Deputy Director in the Parliamentary Reforms Department of the Zambian Parliament. A typical day involves responding to official correspondence, attending meetings, developing and reviewing concept notes, proposals, and progress reports for different activities and projects. I am also actively involved in coordinating activities related to the Institutional Strategic Plan, particularly in planning, monitoring, and reporting on implementation progress. Additionally, I regularly

engage with both internal and external stakeholders on ongoing initiatives and prospective projects.

Q: How did you first become involved in parliamentary work - and what motivates you?

A: For the first 11 years of my career, I worked for two non-governmental organisations. During that time, I had the opportunity to appear before Parliamentary Committees, which sparked my interest in the inner workings of parliament. When a position was advertised for a role that aligned perfectly with my skills and passion, I applied and was fortunate to be selected. I am deeply motivated by a strong commitment to democratic governance, effective leadership, and meaningful engagement with diverse stakeholders.

Q: What is one project or initiative you're particularly proud of?

A: Since 2014, I have been involved in the European Union Support to the National Assembly project, and I am proud to witness the significant and tangible outcomes it has delivered. Notably, the project played a key role in the establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Office and in strengthening the capacity of both members of parliament and existing staff. It has also been instrumental in supporting the recently launched reform on sector budget analysis, marking an important step forward in enhancing parliamentary oversight and fiscal governance.

Q: How has international collaboration (like Inter Pares) influenced your work or perspective?

A: This experience has broadened my understanding of not only the role and work of parliaments, but also of different cultures and the value of continuous improvement in both my professional and personal life. I have come to appreciate that the Zambian Parliament is making significant strides in several key areas but I have also recognised that there is still room for growth, particularly in ensuring our parliament remains relevant, open, and accessible to the public.

Q: Who has been a mentor or inspiration to you in your career?

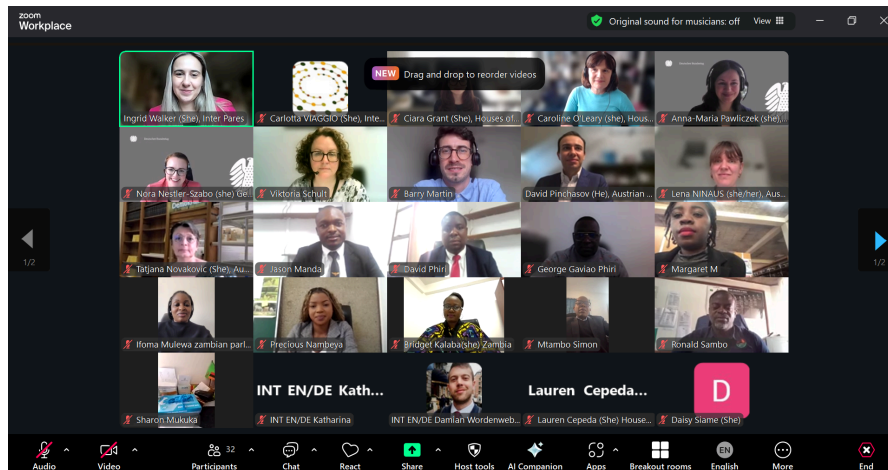
A: The Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, Rt. Honourable Ms Nelly B. K. Mutti, SC, MP, has been a great source of inspiration. As the first female Speaker of the Zambian Legislature and a distinguished State Counsel, she has broken significant ground in both law and governance. Her leadership not only paves the way for greater female representation but also inspires me and countless women in Zambia and beyond to believe in the ability of women to lead, influence policy, and shape the future.

Q: What book, podcast, or movie has recently inspired you?

A: "The Beautiful Game" is a powerful film inspired by the Homeless World Cup, a global tournament that brings together homeless individuals from around the world to compete in grassroots football, using sport as a tool to combat homelessness and stigma. Set in Rome, the story follows an English team as they pursue victory and personal redemption. The film inspires me to believe that when given an opportunity, people can rise above their challenges through diligence and consistency.

RECENT PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES WORKSHOP:



On June 27, Inter Pares brought together colleagues from the National Assembly of Zambia, the Austrian Parliament, the German Bundestag, and the Irish Houses of the Oireachtas for a powerful exchange on inclusive parliamentary development practices for persons with disabilities.

This peer-to-peer dialogue showcased concrete actions that parliaments are taking -- from inclusive recruitment, accessibility initiatives, to sign language interpretation and innovative visitor services -- to ensure citizens with disabilities are represented in democratic processes and in parliamentary practices.

"When parliaments actively implement initiatives to ensure individuals with disabilities can participate fully, they uphold the principles of equality and inclusivity. Ensuring that all citizens are represented strengthens democracy, promotes diverse policymaking, and ultimately leads to better outcomes for society as a whole." -- Ingrid Walker, Programme Manager, Inter Pares

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FEDERAL PARLIAMENT OF NEPAL AND IRISH HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS: SUPPORT IN SETTING UP THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE

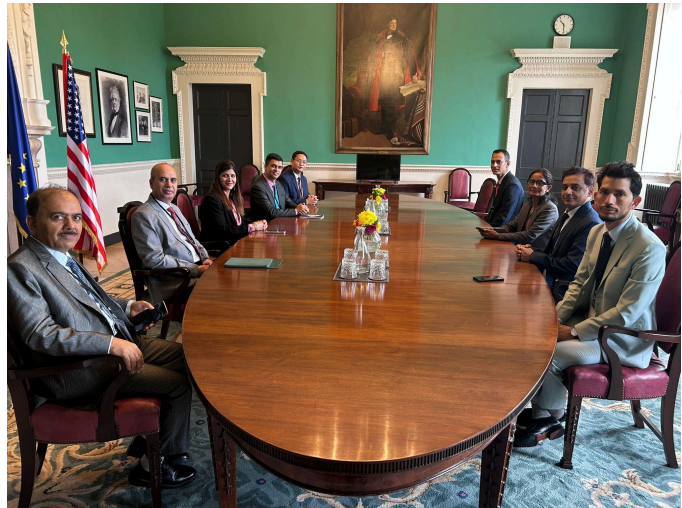


In early 2024, Inter Pares launched its partnership with the Federal Parliament of Nepal designed around several priorities. These included establishing a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) – drawing on the knowledge and best practices of similar institutions within the European Union (EU).

The Irish Houses of the Oireachtas has actively supported this initiative through sharing its hands-on experience and expertise. Since the beginning of the partnership, a series of

peer-to-peer exchanges took place between the Nepali and Irish colleagues, including a mission by the Irish PBO's leadership to Kathmandu in October 2024. The visit aimed to identify opportunities and discuss ways forward for setting up a new PBO unit in the Parliament.

Following these exchanges, the Federal Parliament of Nepal made significant progress toward achieving its objective. In January 2025, it established a PBO, assigning around 10 staff members from its committees and research service to the new office. With support from the Irish colleagues, the Nepali PBO team drafted a roadmap outlining its mandate and a work plan for 2025. The Parliament reinforced its commitment by allocating a dedicated budget line for the PBO in its annual budget. By spring 2025, the office had begun producing its first reports.



As a follow-up and concluding activity under this Priority, Inter Pares, in collaboration with the Irish Parliament, organized a three-day study visit to the Houses of the Oireachtas in Dublin from 16 to 18 July 2025. A nine-member delegation from the Federal Parliament of Nepal, including the Secretary General and the newly appointed Head and staff of the PBO, participated.

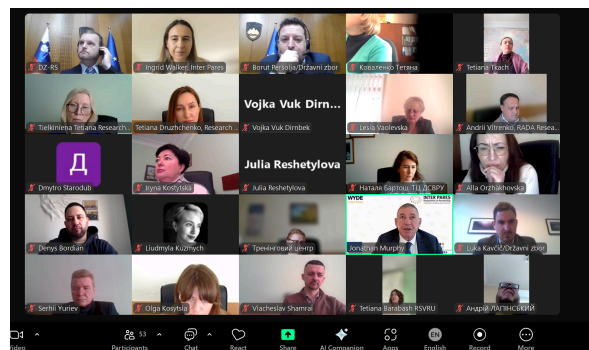
The programme aimed to deepen the delegation's understanding of the Irish PBO's mandate, structure, operations, services, and long-term strategic vision. Sessions also covered Ireland's budgetary process and how the PBO integrates into the broader fiscal framework. Additional focus areas included collaboration with research services and committee secretariats, as well as the use of strategic communications and data visualization to make complex financial information accessible to all members of parliament.

The Nepali delegation also presented their recent experience in setting up a PBO – which led to an intensive dialogue with Irish counterparts on effective PBO practices, common challenges, and key considerations for future operation.

These activities and robust dialogues facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experience between two parliaments, establishing a solid foundation for future collaboration.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE: WEBINARS ON EU INTEGRATION

The Inter Pares Partnership with the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine focuses on three key priority areas: budget oversight, EU integration and strategic foresight. Between April-June, as part of the series of online seminars on chapters of the EU acquis, organised together with the Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, we explored budget oversight and financial control, public administration reform, transparency and lobbying, together with the Czech Chamber of Deputies, the French Senate and the German Bundestag, respectively – as well as a deep-dive into the role of parliament in EU integration as a whole with the National Assembly of Slovenia.



Seminars will continue from September onwards, on the remaining chapters of the EU acquis, and we invite all EUMSPs to reach out if they wish to contribute.

Upcoming: A research workshop on the role of parliamentary research services in EU integration will take place in Kyiv between 11-12 September celebrating three years since the establishment of the VRU Research Service. We hope to be able to stream the event online – stay tuned for further information.

PEER-TO-PEER EXCHANGE ON FIELD VISITS:

On 12 June, Inter Pares and the National Assembly of Benin brought together representatives from the Belgian House of Representatives and Belgian Senate, along with the French Senate to share experiences on how parliamentary visits can strengthen oversight, transparency, and citizen trust.

From village visits and radio shows in Benin, to digitally streamed hearings and consistent reporting in Belgium, and the structured oversight missions in France, each parliament adapts field visits to its institutional context — but all agree: they are essential to accountability and participation.



STRENGTHENING LAWMAKING AND OVERSIGHT: BRINGING TOGETHER NEPAL'S PARLIAMENT, EUMSP PARTNERS AND EXPERTS

From 23 to 25 May, Inter Pares hosted an intensive workshop in Kathmandu with Members and staff of the Federal Parliament of Nepal, representatives from EU Member States Parliaments – France (National Assembly), Germany (Bundesrat), Hungary, Ireland and Italy (Chamber of Deputies), and national and international expert scholars. The workshop focused on how parliaments can improve lawmaking, legislative oversight, and the real-world impact of policies on the lives of citizens.



A particular focus was on delegated legislation, with the session supported by comparative studies of the use of delegated legislation in Nepal, across the European Union (EU) and beyond. This is a particularly relevant theme in Nepal as legislation has recently been passed regulating delegated legislation for the first time, which is in the process of implementation.

FROM DIALOGUE TO IMPACT: CONCLUDING A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PARLIAMENT OF UZBEKISTAN

From 28 to 30 April 2025, Inter Pares concluded its partnership with the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan through a dynamic, three-day event held in Brussels – generously hosted by the Belgian Senate, the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, and the European Parliament.

Together with parliamentarians, staff, and experts, we explored:

- ♦ The role of parliaments in budget formation and implementation; and
- ♦ How to build gender-sensitive parliaments



Different sessions of the workshop engaged the parliaments of Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany (Bundestag), Hungary, Italy (Senate) and Lithuania, as well as the European Parliament. Expertise was also provided by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Discussions covered a wide spectrum — from tools for budget scrutiny and oversight to strategies for mainstreaming gender equality and tackling gender-based violence. We shared challenges, successes, and lessons across borders. The exchange of

ideas, best practices, and experiences once again underscored the vital role of strong and inclusive parliaments in democratic development.

Over the course of this partnership, we jointly carried out 14 activities - in person and online - on themes ranging from budgeting and gender equality to youth participation and digitalization of parliamentary services.

As we conclude our current cooperation, we are confident that a new chapter is opening for a deeper and long-lasting dialogue between the parliaments of Uzbekistan, EU Member States and the European Parliament. This continued exchange will be vital to advancing the shared goal of strengthening parliamentary democracy. Learn more [here](#).

RECENT EVENTS

REIMAGINING PUBLIC FINANCE: A GLOBAL DIALOGUE WITH PARLIAMENTS

On 14 May 2025, AGORA's Parliamentary Development Community of Practice and the World Bank hosted a dynamic online workshop, [Reimagining Public Finance: A Global Dialogue with the Parliamentary Community](#). The event brought together parliamentary staff and experts worldwide to explore how public finance can better support inclusive development outcomes. Participants examined the role of parliaments in public finance management, as well as key bottlenecks and strategies to involve parliament and enhance public sector results in areas such as health, education, economic resilience, and climate action. For more information, please find the presentation slides [here](#).



DEMOCRACY IN ACTION: HIGHLIGHTS FROM BOTSWANA

On 19 March 2025, during the Inter Pares workshop in Gaborone, Botswana, members of parliament, parliamentary staff, local civil society organizations (CSOs), and international experts came together for the first formal



of

dialogue between the 13th Parliament of Botswana and civil society.

“Parliament must reflect the diversity of its society. CSOs are essential partners in making democracy inclusive and safeguarding citizens’ rights.” – Hon. Goretsetse Kekgonegile

This exchange laid the groundwork for more inclusive and responsive lawmaking in Botswana, and included the following key takeaways:

- Public engagement needs practical tools and approaches, not just legal frameworks
- Include underrepresented voices, not just the “usual suspects”
- Stronger civic education = stronger democracy
- A new Public Consultation Checklist is in the works!

RECENT BLOGS

MUTUAL LEARNING ABOUT PUBLIC POLICY EVALUATION

When parliaments collaborate across continents, everyone wins! In the latest ModParl, POPVOX Foundation Fellow Beatriz Rey talks with Mónica Rico Benítez of Inter Pares about a remarkable partnership between Côte d'Ivoire and France transforming how public policies are evaluated.

Read more [here](#).



PARTNERS IN PROGRESS: HOW INTER PARES COLLABORATES WITH PARLIAMENTS AROUND THE WORLD

In commemoration of International Day of Parliamentarism on June 30, Inter Pares reflected on the enduring role of legislatures in shaping democratic societies—and the power of peer-to-peer learning in advancing reform. From supporting The Gambia to establish parliamentary autonomy, to helping Côte d'Ivoire evaluate public policy through evidence-based oversight, to launching Zambia's first Youth Parliamentary Academy—Inter Pares is building a global



network of resilient, responsive parliaments.

[Read](#) how peer partnerships are driving change from the ground up.

LATEST E-LEARNING COURSES



EFFECTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS ENGAGEMENTS FOR PARLIAMENTS

Building on the IDEA Inter Pares toolkit [Effective Human Rights Engagement for Parliamentary Bodies](#), this new course, written by Professor Kirsten Roberts Lyer, from the Central European University, aims to provide those elected to or working in parliaments with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively engage with human rights issues and promote active human rights

engagement by their parliaments. Participants will learn about the role of parliament in promoting and protecting human rights, as well as the strategies, procedures and practices that promote effective human rights engagement.

📌 Access the e-course now on the [AGORA Portal!](#)

YOUTH PARTICIPATION: PATHWAYS FOR PARLIAMENTS



This course, which was written by Lotte Geunis, Parliamentary Advisor at Inter Pares and PhD Fellow at Maastricht University, has the following objectives:

- An overview of youth participation;
- Existing models of youth participation;
- An overview of youth participation across the core parliamentary functions.

📌 Access the e-course now on the [AGORA Portal!](#)