

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND EU NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

EN



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



European Parliament

PARLIAMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



The functioning of the European Union is founded on representative democracy.



705 seats*



Citizens are directly represented at Union level in the European Parliament.

Member States are represented in the European Council by their Heads of State or Government and in the Council by their governments, themselves democratically accountable either to their national Parliaments, or to their citizens.



Council of the European Union

National Parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union by...



...being informed by the EU institutions and having draft EU laws forwarded to them.



...ensuring that the principle of subsidiarity is respected.



...taking part in the evaluation mechanisms for the area of freedom, security and justice and being involved in the political monitoring of Europol and the evaluation of Eurojust.



...taking part in the revision procedures of the EU Treaties.



...being notified of applications for accession to the EU.



...taking part in interparliamentary cooperation between national Parliaments and with the European Parliament.



The European Parliament and national Parliaments shall together determine the organisation and promotion of effective and regular interparliamentary cooperation within the EU.



A conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs (COSAC) may submit any contribution it deems appropriate for the attention of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. That conference shall in addition promote the exchange of information and best practice between national Parliaments and the European Parliament.

* As from 1 February 2020, the European Parliament has 705 seats following the UK's withdrawal from the EU on 31 January 2020.

**DIRECTORATE FOR RELATIONS
WITH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS**

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

**Relations between the European Parliament
and the EU national Parliaments**

This annual activity report of the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments provides an overview of the activities and main political developments in interparliamentary cooperation with national Parliaments in 2021 in the area of institutional cooperation, legislative dialogue and joint parliamentary scrutiny. This cooperation involved 39 national Parliaments and Chambers across the 27 Member States and the European Parliament.

This is a publication of the European Parliament's Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments, which constitutes part of the European Parliament's Directorate-General for the Presidency.

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Foreword by the European Parliament's Vice-Presidents responsible for relations with EU national Parliaments

At the time of this report's publication, Europe is facing unprecedented challenges due to the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine. The terrible war being waged by the Kremlin against the Ukrainian population has upended the post-1991 European security order. In this context, the European Union has been united in its goal to safeguard peace, security, democracy and freedom in Europe, and has taken strategic and decisive action that suggests it has started evolving into a genuine defence and security player.

The second year of the COVID-19 pandemic marked another challenging year for the European Parliament and interparliamentary cooperation. Much like in 2020, the constraints of the pandemic forced us parliamentarians to meet mostly remotely via videoconferencing technology.

As in 2020, the Conference on the Future of Europe was at the heart of interparliamentary debates last year. Both national Parliaments and the European Parliament have been cooperating closely on the Conference and played a key role in this debate on shaping Europe's future. They have worked together to defend the interests of citizens to play their part in reshaping the EU's policies and institutions, as well as the role of Parliaments as the elected representatives of their citizens.

Other topics, such as the evolution of the pandemic and how the EU should tackle the ensuing social and economic crisis with post-pandemic recovery plans, were also widely discussed at our meetings.

All interparliamentary activities had to be held either completely remotely or in a hybrid format¹, despite the initial intention of both the Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies to hold events in person. The epidemiological situation made it impossible for meetings to be organised in this way.

Despite all of these constraints, interparliamentary cooperation and legislative dialogue with the EU's national Parliaments continued to be ramped up, and interparliamentary events generally involved exceptionally high participation by the Members of both the European and national Parliaments.

Clearly, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to pose organisational challenges for the smooth running of interparliamentary conferences. However, the organisers – the European Parliament and the parliaments of the Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies – successfully tackled the inherent practical challenges of remote or hybrid meetings and built on their recent experiences with this novel format, which made for well-attended and lively meetings. The frequency and intensity of interparliamentary activities notwithstanding the resurgence of the COVID 19 pandemic illustrates the importance of interparliamentary cooperation, as exchanges of views among Members of the European and national Parliaments is one of the linchpins of modern parliamentarianism. Furthermore, we are firmly convinced that strengthening the role of our parliaments as representatives of citizens and further enhancing interparliamentary cooperation is vitally important to the future of European democracy.

¹ With some Members of the organising Parliament, i.e. the European Parliament or the Presidency Parliament, being present in person, and other parliamentarians participating remotely.

State-of-the-art IT solutions have enabled us to continue and even ratchet up our exchanges, and we recognise that videoconferencing technology, when appropriate, provides an opportunity to reduce the carbon footprint of parliamentary meetings, thereby helping to achieve Europe's sustainability and climate targets. However, we are all convinced that there is no technological solution that can replace face-to-face meetings. Let us sincerely hope that 2022 will see an end to the pandemic and a return to in-person interparliamentary meetings, visits and other activities.

We would like to thank former First Vice-President Roberta Metsola for her dedication and input in the European Parliament's relations with national Parliaments and congratulate her for her election as President of the European Parliament in January 2022.

As Vice-Presidents for relations with national Parliaments, we encourage interparliamentary dialogue and are convinced that the European Parliament and the EU's national Parliaments remain key partners in shaping Europe's future. We are committed to continuing our work with national parliamentarians to ensure that the EU remains a peaceful and prosperous place for its citizens.



Othmar Karas, EP First Vice-President, and Dita Charanzová, Vice-President, EP premises in Strasbourg

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Othmar Karas
EP First Vice-President

Dita Charanzová
Vice-President

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND MAIN TOPICS ON THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY AGENDA IN 2021

The work of the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments in 2021 was conducted under the political leadership and guidance of David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, First Vice-President, together with Vice-President Dita Charanzová, responsible for relations with national Parliaments, and Antonio Tajani, Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) and the Conference of Committee Chairs.

From the outset, the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic was expected to be a politically challenging one. The pandemic was on everyone's minds, notably as regards how to deal with its economic and social aftermath, achieve a green, digital and sustainable recovery and ensure parliamentary scrutiny in this respect. Other highly pertinent topics discussed at numerous meetings included the EU's migration policy, the state of the rule of law in the Member States and the EU's security and external action in an ever more volatile international environment, to name but a few.

During the course of the year, Parliaments exchanged views and experiences on measures to combat new waves of the pandemic, including the EU's vaccination strategy, where they reiterated their support for a united EU approach to COVID-19 vaccines, the EU Digital COVID Certificate and the new futureproof EU health security framework – the European health union – which is designed to improve the response to cross-border health crises, improve disease prevention and step up cross-border cooperation.

The state of play of the Conference on the Future of Europe and parliaments' expectations about its outcome figured on the agendas of interparliamentary meetings, together with the worrisome developments of rising energy prices in the second half of the year, and the serious consequences of such for businesses and consumers.

As in 2020, due to the outbreak of the pandemic, the adoption of political texts, which are usually the subject of intense negotiations during meetings, was replaced by other procedures. In the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs (COSAC), both the Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies presented letters to the EU institutions summarising the parliamentary initiatives undertaken during their respective Presidencies. As the Speakers Conference was also held remotely, 'Conclusions of the Presidency' replaced the conventional conclusions. Nevertheless, two reports were adopted by the Conference:

- a report on enhanced interparliamentary cooperation through modern technology;
- a report by the Working Group on Updating the Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation (IPC) Guidelines.

The IPC for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) also opted for a final statement by the Co-Chairs instead of conclusions, which were deemed too difficult to adopt via a remote meeting.

Despite the initial intentions of both the Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies, all COSAC meetings, IPCs and events organised by the European Parliament, including interparliamentary committee meetings (ICMs), the European Parliamentary Week and the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol (JPSG), had to be organised in a remote or hybrid format owing to the epidemiological situation, which did not allow large meetings to be held in person in the Presidency capitals or in Brussels.

Continuing the trend from 2020, there was a further increase in the number of interparliamentary meetings held in 2021. The number of participants from both the European and national Parliaments also increased significantly.

This increase in participation seems to have been largely facilitated by the opportunity to take part in remote meetings without having to travel. The second year of the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of digital tools even further, perhaps reflecting a trend for how interparliamentary meetings may be organised in future, as the format could remain hybrid in the medium or even longer term in the post-pandemic period. However, as has been expressed in several interparliamentary forums, there is a common understanding that there is no technological solution that can replace face-to-face meetings and that physical meetings should resume as soon as the epidemiological situation allows.

Due to the COVID-19 situation and the rules in force in the European Parliament, no incoming delegations or visits took place in 2021. However, a number of exchanges did take place remotely between Members of the European and national Parliaments. There were also no bilateral visits from EU national Parliaments to the European Parliament's premises.

The European Parliament intensified its relations with national Parliaments through formal and informal exchanges between its Vice-President responsible for relations with national Parliaments and for COSAC and several COSAC Chairs and their respective EU affairs committees.

Owing to the constraints of the pandemic, videoconferencing proved to be a particularly successful and efficient format for informal briefings, ad hoc meetings and targeted exchanges with high-level speakers, although Members of both national Parliaments and the European Parliament have spoken of how they have missed more interactive face-to-face exchanges and personal contacts. This tool is expected to remain an important method of communication for targeted and direct bilateral exchanges, although it will never be able to replicate the added value of face-to-face meetings.

The health crisis has also resulted in increased online and electronic (written) exchange of information between Parliaments, in particular within the framework of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) and the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange (IPEX) network. The more than 80 % increase in the number of submissions received under Protocol 2 to the Treaties between 2020 and 2021 may be explained by the fact that the EU institutions and national Parliaments had adapted to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by 2021 and were working at their full legislative capacity.

Indeed, national Parliaments made quite a large number of contributions under Protocol 2, notably in response to a number of legislative proposals on the environment, justice and home affairs. Statistics confirm that EU national Parliaments use the Protocol as a means to express their views on the substance of proposals more often than on subsidiarity. This could reflect their desire to be more closely involved in the substance of the legislative process.

The number of contributions submitted under the Informal Political Dialogue also increased significantly – from 179 in 2020 to 222 in 2021 (+24 %) – most likely because the Commission was very active in proposing new legislation in 2021 in response to the pandemic.

2021 also marked the launch and implementation of IPEX v3. One of the major innovations of the new platform is the fact that it enables parliaments to upload new kinds of documents, and not necessarily those linked to the subsidiarity parameter (reasoned opinions or contributions under the informal political dialogue). Known as own-initiative documents, these aim to encourage interparliamentary cooperation in a number of areas such as: i) the multiannual financial framework, ii) the EU's international agreements, iii) the Commission Work Programme, iv) parliamentary contributions to the work of the Conference on the Future of Europe and v) initiatives in the area of the Democracy Support Network.

Traditionally, interparliamentary cooperation focuses on political and institutional issues and discussions. The Early Warning System, linking national Parliaments to the EU legislative process

through the subsidiarity check, has sparked an extensive legislative dialogue that goes well beyond subsidiarity. During recent years, attention has also been given to parliamentary scrutiny and oversight of European executive action and agencies, in particular in the field of justice and home affairs. Parliamentary cooperation is also developing in the field of the EU's external policies, mainly in the framework of CFSP/CSDP, but also in parliamentary diplomacy, democracy support and cooperation in multilateral and even global forums, to promote European values and interests. In 2021, the following recurrent topics were raised in several interparliamentary fora and bilateral discussions:

i. The EU's response to the pandemic and the recovery plans

Throughout the year EU parliamentarians debated the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and in particular the EU's response to its global resurgence and new emerging variants. They also reflected on how to address the social and economic fallout from the pandemic through investment, competitiveness and skills and on how to deliver a sustainable and green recovery.

Irene Tinagli, Chair of the EP Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON), and Luís Capoulas Santos, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic at the ECON Interparliamentary Committee Meeting 'Resilience and Recovery from the COVID-19 crisis', 22 February 2021

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This issue dominated discussions at the European Parliamentary Week and was one of the main subjects of the COSAC Chairpersons' Meeting under the Portuguese Council Presidency. More specifically, the role of national Parliaments in implementing the national recovery and resilience plans featured as one of the highlights of the COSAC Plenary Meeting.



ii. The Conference on the Future of Europe

Members of the European and national Parliaments continued to reflect on the future of Europe in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe, which is due to conclude its work in 2022. The latest developments of the Conference and the importance of the parliamentary dimension in its processes and discussions were highlighted during a number of interparliamentary meetings, notably the COSAC Plenary Meeting on 29 and 30 November 2021.



Charles Goerens, Vice-Chair of the EP Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO), Gašper Dovžan, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, and Guy Verhofstadt, Co-Chair of the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe at the AFCO Interparliamentary Committee Meeting 'The expectations of national Parliaments for the Conference on the Future of Europe', 9 November 2021

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iii. The rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights

As respect for the rule of law became a cross-cutting priority in all EU policies, this was also reflected in various interparliamentary debates, taking into account the crucial role of national Parliaments in the protection and enforcement of the EU's values and laws, and in the priorities of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council.

In this context, discussions also centred on the impact on democracy and fundamental rights of the pandemic measures taken by many governments, in particular with a view to ensuring scrutiny of the executive to be exercised by Parliaments. In this perspective, on 9 December, the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) organised an ICM on the situation of the rule of law in the EU. The meeting was split into two panels, one dedicated to an exchange of views on the Commission's annual Rule of Law Report for 2021, and one entitled 'The way forward on the Mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights'. The issue of applying conditionality rules to link the disbursement of EU funds to respect for the rule of law was also widely debated. Moreover, the COSAC Chairpersons' meeting held on 19 July 2021 also discussed European values and the rule of law in the Union.



Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Chair of the EP Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), and Didier Reynders, European Commissioner for Justice, at the LIBE Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the situation of the rule of law in the EU, 9 December 2021

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iv. The green and digital transitions

The green and digital transitions are a key priority of the von der Leyen Commission and were one of the main subjects of the debates, not least during the 2021 European Parliamentary Week. The need for common EU rules on accessible and human-centric technologies that respect EU values as well as EU plans to deploy digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, supercomputing and data platforms more widely were also debated.

The European Parliamentary Week also had a greener focus in 2021, with particular emphasis on climate change and its increasingly prominent role in the EU's economic, budgetary and social policies.

Ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, parliamentarians advocated accelerating climate action worldwide and called for the EU to remain a world leader in combating climate change. They also stressed the need for a fair transition to a green economy.

v. Migration

Migration remained high on the agenda last year. Since the German Council Presidency, remote High-Level Conferences on Migration and Asylum have been organised by the European Parliament in conjunction with each Presidency and the Trio Parliaments. The French Parliament will organise one such event during the French Presidency.

vi. The role of the EU in the world

As the dire economic, social, political and geopolitical consequences of the pandemic continued to have an impact on key aspects of the EU's CFSP and CSDP, the EU's security environment also continued to deteriorate in 2021 and was one of the most keenly debated topics in interparliamentary forums on foreign policy issues.

In the framework of IPC CFSP/CSDP, the exchanges focused on the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic as a game changer in the international environment and a catalyst of change in the global order. Members partaking in this cooperation stressed the fundamental importance of the EU's internal resilience, of developing new partnerships and of strengthening the EU's multilateral vision worldwide, while welcoming the Team Europe and Coronavirus Global Response initiatives, which are helping partner countries to tackle the impact of the pandemic.

They called for the Member States to show genuine political will to push on with EU foreign policy goals and counter third countries' attempts to divide the EU, and noted that there is still considerable untapped potential in combining and integrating all strands of the EU external action – including both hard and soft power – to achieve the goals of the CFSP and CSDP.

Brexit and the first year of the new EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement was another cross-cutting and recurrent topic.

1. INSTITUTIONAL INTERPARLIAMENTARY BODIES

1.1 Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs (COSAC)



COSAC, or the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs, was established in November 1989 in Paris. It is unique in that it is the only interparliamentary forum enshrined in the Treaties (Protocol No 1 on the role of national Parliaments in the European Union). The national Parliament of the Member State holding the rotating Council Presidency plays a leading role in defining the direction and work of COSAC. A Presidential Troika, of which the European Parliament is a permanent member, supports it. The Presidency relies on the organisational backing of a small secretariat, hosted by the European Parliament and led by an official seconded from a national Parliament ('Permanent Member'). See www.ipex.eu

The Portuguese Assembly of the Republic inaugurated the parliamentary dimension of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council with the Chairpersons' meeting on 11 January 2021. Both this meeting and the LXV COSAC Plenary meeting were held remotely, despite the initial intentions of the Presidency to hold the events in person, which was unfortunately rendered impossible by the epidemiological situation.

The Chairpersons' meeting held in January focused on ways to respond to the pandemic, including moving towards building a European Health Union, addressing the impacts of the health crisis and promoting recovery in the EU. The recovery and resilience plans were a focus of attention for the Portuguese Presidency and the subject of extensive discussions. Parliamentarians also debated the other Portuguese priorities, such as bolstering the European social model and EU fundamental values and how to promote Europe's autonomy while remaining open to the world.

During the COSAC Plenary meeting from 31 May to 1 June 2021, with Prime Minister António Costa in attendance, Members of the European Parliament and national Parliaments took stock of the Portuguese Council Presidency and debated the topic of a social Europe and the outcomes of the Porto Summit. They also exchanged views on the implementation of the national recovery and resilience plans and the importance of parliamentary scrutiny in this respect. A further session was devoted to the Conference on the Future of Europe, where the Co-Chairs of the Conference's Executive Board Guy Verhofstadt MEP and Commissioner Dubravka Šuica set out how the Conference would be organised and the steps taken so far. The session was co-moderated by Antonio Tajani, Chair of the EP Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO), who provided substantial impetus ahead of the Conference by talking about AFCO's work



Roberta Metsola, EP First Vice-President at the LXV COSAC Plenary Meeting, 31 May – 1 June 2021

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In July 2021, the Presidency of COSAC passed to the National Parliament of Slovenia which, due to the continuing constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, also had to convene COSAC events remotely.

The Chairpersons' meeting took place on 19 July 2021. The Slovenian Presidency continued work on the need for the EU to show resilience, recovery and strategic autonomy to deal with the pandemic, as well as reflecting on the future of Europe in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe. All of these topics were debated by parliamentarians during the Chairpersons' meeting, as well as the situation of European values and the rule of law in the EU, security in the EU and stability in its neighbourhood. The Commissioner for the Internal Market, Thierry Breton, was invited to present the Commission's new EU cybersecurity strategy, which aims to bolster Europe's collective resilience against cyber threats and enable EU citizens and businesses to benefit from trustworthy and reliable services.



COSAC Chairpersons' Meeting, 16 July 2021

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The LXVI COSAC was held remotely in late November. The Slovenian Presidency of the Council was debated in the presence of the Slovenian State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A debate on the European perspective of the Western Balkans attracted a lot of interest, with the majority of speakers speaking in favour of supporting this process while noting the need for full compliance with the criteria and required reforms, particularly in the area of democracy and the rule of law. Parliamentarians also exchanged views on the future role of young people in EU decision-making processes and once again discussed the latest developments of the Conference on the Future of Europe and the importance of the parliamentary dimension in its processes and discussions.

The Slovenian Presidency also successfully completed the appointment of a new permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2022-2023.

Neither the LXV nor the LXVI COSAC plenaries adopted a contribution in the form of a political declaration. Following the example of the Croatian and German Presidencies during the COVID-19 period of 2020, both the Portuguese and the Slovenian Presidencies presented a letter addressed to the EU institutions summarising the parliamentary initiatives undertaken during their respective Presidencies.

Once again, EU-UK relations had to be negotiated in 2021, this time in the framework of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The COSAC Presidential Troika continued to extend invitations to the UK Parliament at the request of the UK House of Lords and House of Commons in the interest of maintaining fruitful interparliamentary relations.

Also this year, the convenience of organising meetings remotely via videoconferencing technology enabled additional meetings to be held to complement the COSAC Chairpersons and Plenary meetings. Following the example of Croatia and Germany, both Presidencies this year continued to organise informal exchanges of views for the COSAC Chairs with high-level speakers, specifically European Commissioners. Presidential Troika meetings were also organised well in advance of the main COSAC meetings, instead of just the evening before.

See Annex I for the COSAC events and meetings.

Main developments in 2021:

- COSAC exchanges increased in 2021, with yet more informal exchanges of views with high-level speakers from the European Commission;
- Owing to the epidemiological situation, which did not allow for large meetings to be attended in person in the Presidency capitals, all COSAC meetings in 2021 had to be held remotely;
- The European Parliament intensified its working relations and cooperation under COSAC, making significant and regular appearances at COSAC meetings.

1.2 Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments (EUSC)

The Stockholm Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments were adopted in 2010. They provide for one annual meeting of the Speakers, organised by the Member State holding the second semester Presidency in a given year, to take place during the spring Presidency of the following year. This Conference adopts non-binding Presidency conclusions. It also has the task of overseeing the coordination of interparliamentary EU activities.

The EUSC agenda is prepared by the Meeting of the Secretaries-General of the EU Parliaments. See www.ipex.eu

Following the cancellation of the 2020 EU Speakers Conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the German Presidency took the initiative of organising the 2021 conference remotely from Berlin in May 2021.

The conference was shortened to half a day and opened with a welcome address by Wolfgang Schäuble, President of the Bundestag, and Reiner Haseloff, President of the Bundesrat. The European Parliament was represented by First Vice-President Roberta Metsola.

The Speakers debated the topic 'Digitalisation and the changing public sphere – risks and opportunities for representative democracy'. During the debate, First Vice-President Metsola underlined the need to protect the integrity of European elections and further enhance the transparency of the EU. She described the Conference on the Future of Europe, with its strong parliamentary dimension, as an opportunity to encourage greater public participation in the EU.

As the Speakers Conference was held remotely, no conclusions were adopted; these were replaced by 'Conclusions of the Presidency', coordinated with the other members of the Troika (Finland, Slovenia and the European Parliament).

Nevertheless, the meeting provided an opportunity for the adoption of two reports that had had to be postponed from the 2020 conference, which was cancelled due to the pandemic. Both reports had been unanimously adopted by the Meeting of the Secretaries-General in March 2021:

- Report on enhanced interparliamentary cooperation through modern technology;
- Report by the Working Group on Updating the Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation (IPC) Guidelines.

At the EU Speakers Conference in Vienna in April 2019, a request was submitted to the Finnish Presidency to organise a working group to put forward a proposal to update the 2008 Guidelines for Interparliamentary Cooperation in the European Union. The working group was also asked to report on how to make better use of modern communication methods to facilitate interparliamentary cooperation.

The working group presented its findings at the Meeting of the Secretaries-General of the EU

Parliaments in Helsinki (26 and 27 January 2020). However, owing to the cancellation of the EU Speakers Conference in May 2020, the reports could not be adopted, so the Finnish Parliament requested that the German Presidency of the Speakers Conference bring forward the document to the meeting of the Speakers in May 2021.

Report on interparliamentary cooperation through modern technology

The report on interparliamentary cooperation through modern technology was originally prepared by the working group for early 2020, before the rapid changes brought about by the coronavirus pandemic in the use of IT technology. The German Presidency, with the agreement of the Finnish head of the working group, recognised the need to amend the report to reflect the lessons learned from the pandemic. A revised text was therefore submitted to the meeting of the Secretaries-General on 29 March 2021. This was amended further before being adopted by the Speakers Conference on 14 April 2021.

The final report, which was adopted unanimously by the Speakers Conference, includes the following recommendations:

- Noting that there can be no question of replacing the interparliamentary conferences established as the permanent framework by Article 2 of the Guidelines for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation in the EU unless it is impossible to organise a physical meeting, in which case technology can offer a reliable and valid alternative;
- Observing that videoconferencing, when appropriate, provides an opportunity to diminish the carbon footprint of meetings, thereby helping to reach Europe's sustainability and climate targets;
- Observing that technology permits the replacement of some non-core meetings, e.g. for preparatory or administrative purposes or of officials, by teleconferencing, through collaborative workspaces or other technical means;
- Encouraging parliaments to facilitate interparliamentary videoconferences through mutual assistance and close IT-technical cooperation to make videoconferences more efficient and a predictable instrument for the future, while at the same time strengthening Europe's digital sovereignty and resilience, and upholding EU data protection regulations;
- Noting that where technologies are used to replace or enhance meetings, they should embody the same values of collaboration, inclusiveness, participation and openness that have traditionally characterised interparliamentary conferences, including the language arrangements;
- Encouraging parliaments, when planning ICT procurement, to consider the requirements of interparliamentary communication and the aim of strengthening Europe's digital sovereignty and resilience as a factor when setting specifications.

Report on updating the Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation (IPC) Guidelines

The mandate of the working group established by the Finnish Presidency at the request of the EU Speakers Conference in Vienna in April 2019 was to adapt the Lisbon Guidelines for Interparliamentary Cooperation in the EU to the existing conditions. The Lisbon Guidelines, which provide a general framework for interparliamentary cooperation, were approved in 2008 before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. They had become outdated and did not reflect subsequent developments in interparliamentary cooperation.

The working group was invited to prepare a report for the EU Speakers Conference in Helsinki in 2020 on the following subjects:

- A technical adaptation of the Guidelines to the existing conditions, including a more stringent use of references to the Treaties and a linguistic review of the Guidelines as a whole;
- Inclusion of existing conference formats in the Guidelines, such as the Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union, the Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy, and the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol;
- Better use of modern communication methods to facilitate interparliamentary cooperation.

The EU Speakers Conference also asked the Finnish Presidency to prepare a suitable common understanding on the Interparliamentary Committee Meeting to be organised by the European Parliament on the evaluation of Eurojust, as provided for by the Eurojust Regulation, so that the Helsinki Speakers Conference could reach conclusions on these matters.

The Vienna mandate was carefully followed with a technical and linguistic draft update of the Guidelines. The post-Lisbon developments, in particular new interparliamentary conferences and joint scrutiny and evaluation in justice and home affairs, are recorded in a coherent manner. The structure of the draft Guidelines is more informative. References to legal bases and the rules of procedure of each interparliamentary body were added.

The updated guidelines were adopted unanimously by the Speakers Conference.

Main developments in 2021:

- The Speakers Conference was held remotely following its cancellation in 2020;
- ‘Conclusions of the Presidency’ were adopted in lieu of the conventional Conclusions;
- The report on interparliamentary cooperation through modern technology was adopted;
- The report on updating the Guidelines for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation was also adopted.

2. INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCES (IPCs)

2.1 European Parliamentary Week (EPW), the Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU and the European Semester Conference (IPC SECG)

The Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU (established in accordance with Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union [Fiscal Compact]) provides a framework for debate and exchange of information and of best practices in implementing the relevant provisions and for cooperation between EU national Parliaments and the European Parliament.

The European Semester Conference provides an opportunity to exchange information on best practices in implementing the European Semester cycles and to strengthen cooperation in order to scrutinise the actions of the executives at national and European level.

Together they make up European Parliamentary Week (EPW), bringing together parliamentarians from all over the EU to discuss economic, budgetary and social matters. The two conferences have earned a regular place in the calendar of interparliamentary activities and are consolidated forums for interparliamentary debate in these important policy areas.

The 2021 European Parliamentary Week, co-organised by the European Parliament and the Portuguese Parliament, took place on 22 February 2021 in Brussels. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was held remotely via videoconferencing technology. It was the 10th edition of the conference and was attended by approximately 140 parliamentarians from the 27 EU Member States and four candidate and observer countries to discuss economic, budgetary, environmental and social matters. More than 60 Members represented the European Parliament. The large number of participants is testament to the success, relevance and need for parliamentary exchange of the proposed topics in today's difficult times.

The debates were dominated by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the EU's economies and their recovery. The conference kicked off with an opening plenary session including a high-profile international and European panel that included David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament, Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, President of the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic, Charles Michel, President of the European Council, Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, António Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN, Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, and Christine Lagarde, President of the European Central Bank.

During the panel discussion, Members of the European and national Parliaments considered the preparation of national recovery and resilience plans. Parliamentarians from the Presidency Trio (Germany, Portugal and Slovenia) and three European Parliament rapporteurs on the Recovery and Resilience Fund shared their views and reservations regarding the deployment of this new financial instrument.

The plenary discussions were followed by four simultaneous interparliamentary committee meetings organised by the European Parliament's Committee on Budgets (BUDG), Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON), Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) and Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI).

During the ECON interparliamentary meeting, the debate focused on the need to maintain expansionary fiscal policies while rethinking the existing economic models. It was pointed out that the pandemic could be an opportunity to tailor EU economies to make them more sustainable and

conducive to growth. The main message for national Parliaments during the debate in the BUDG interparliamentary meeting was the need to swiftly ratify the Own Resources Decision in order to roll out the recovery plan. Discussions at the EMPL meeting focused on how to implement the 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights in order to bring about a swift end to the current crisis. Members stressed that the social dimension should be at the heart of the national recovery and resilience plans, while supporting the digital and green transition.

The European Parliamentary Week had a greener focus in 2021, with particular emphasis on climate change and its increasingly prominent role in the EU's economic, budgetary and social policies. This shift was reflected by the first ever edition of a fourth Interparliamentary Committee Meeting organised by the ENVI Committee, where participants exchanged ideas on possible synergies between the European Green Deal and the path towards building a more resilient European health union. MEPs and national parliamentarians focused on the promotion of sustainable growth as a guiding principle for the recovery and resilience plans in order to use the current pandemic crisis as a catalyst for building back our economies in a greener way.

As is customary in the second half of the year, the **16th IPC on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU** took place in the capital of the Council Presidency (Ljubljana, Slovenia), on 28 September 2021. The meeting was held remotely from the Slovenian National Assembly. During the conference, the representatives from national Parliaments and the European Parliament, together with representatives from the European Commission and the Eurogroup, discussed current financial and economic issues in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first panel included an exchange of views on financing the pandemic exit strategy, with an emphasis on new own resources and the digital services tax. Participants expressed support for establishing new own resources in the EU budget for the stable funding and implementation of EU policies and objectives.

The keynote speakers for the second topic discussed the challenges and opportunities of Europe's economic recovery and renewal, namely effectively channelling funds into the implementation of the NextGenerationEU recovery instrument. During the debate, a few representatives from Member States outlined their national plans for NextGenerationEU and described the instrument as an opportunity to achieve EU goals and policies aimed at future generations, with a particular focus on the digital and green transitions and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

These discussions continued at the next European Parliamentary Week held in Brussels on 15 and 16 March 2022.



European Parliamentary Week poster, 2021
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Main developments in 2021:

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme for the remote European Parliamentary Week was held on just one day, and also included the European Semester Conference and the Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU. This year's edition also had a greener focus, with the addition of a fourth ICM by the ENVI Committee focusing on climate change and its increasingly prominent role in the EU's economic, budgetary and social policies;
- Exchanges during both meetings centred on the impact of COVID-19 on the EU economies and the exit strategy from the crisis;
- Remote participation and the relevance of topics enabled key high-level speakers and more parliamentarians to take part, who used the opportunity to debate with the high-level representatives of institutions and other stakeholders.

2.2 Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (IPC CFSP/CSDP)

Established by a decision of the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments in 2012, the Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (IPC CFSP/CSDP) is the interparliamentary platform for debate on the EU's foreign, security and defence policy. Organised twice a year by the Parliament of the EU Member State holding the rotating Council Presidency, in close cooperation with the European Parliament, the conference is regularly attended by parliamentarians from across the EU. In addition, the European Parliament's AFET Committee frequently invites national Parliaments to its meetings in Brussels, complementing interparliamentary dialogue in this vital policy area.

In 2021, the 18th session of the IPC CFSP/CSDP took place in Lisbon (3-4 March) in a remote format and the 19th session remotely in Ljubljana (9 September). The EP delegations to both meetings were composed of Members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and its Subcommittee on Security and Defence, and were chaired by David McAllister, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

124 parliamentarians from EU national Parliaments attended the IPC CFSP/CSDP in Lisbon via videoconferencing technology, together with an EP delegation of 14 MEPs. The conference attracted high-level speakers and included fruitful exchanges on various foreign affairs and security matters. The Co-Chairs agreed not to adopt conclusions, opting for a final statement instead. The IPC began with a keynote speech by Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of NATO, followed by a discussion. The conference was then divided into three sessions: the first was entitled 'Defending Europe: EU-NATO Cooperation and the Strategic Compass'; the second was a discussion with Josep Borrell, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; and the third centred on a comprehensive EU strategy for Africa.

In their final statement, the Co-Chairs underlined the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic was continuing to have economic, social, political and geopolitical consequences that would affect key aspects of the EU's CFSP and CSDP. They considered the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic a game changer in the international environment and a catalyst of change in the global order. The statement stressed the fundamental importance of the EU's internal resilience, of developing new partnerships and strengthening the EU's multilateral vision on a global scale.



David McAllister, Chair of the EP Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, at the Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy, 3-4 March 2021, Lisbon

© Parlamento Portugal

The Co-Chairs underscored the need to quickly adapt the EU's response to this new geopolitical reality and recalled that the EU is the 'partner of choice' for third countries, guided by the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. They called for the Member States to show genuine political will to push on with EU foreign policy goals and counter third countries' attempts to divide the EU.

During the second half of 2021, 88 parliamentarians from the Parliaments of 27 EU Member States and the European Parliament, observer and candidate countries and 78 staff members attended the **19th IPC CFSP/CSDP** in Ljubljana remotely. The European Parliament delegation was composed of nine MEPs and five other members of staff. Due to the pandemic, the conference was held in a hybrid format with both online and in-person participation. It lasted one full working day instead of the usual two days set aside for full in person meetings.

The conference began with a speech by Borut Pahor, President of Slovenia, followed by four sessions entitled 'Priorities of the CFSP/CSDP': a discussion with VP/HR Josep Borrell; 'New challenges, old patterns: rethinking the EU's foreign policy approaches in a multipolar world'; 'Enhancing the Regional Partnership with the Western Balkan countries through the CSDP'; and 'Capability Development for the EU's Civil Protection and the Solidarity Clause: Integrating the Military'



Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy, 9 September 2021, Ljubljana

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The participants noted how the pandemic had revealed gaps between European countries in economic and health provisions. They therefore underlined the need to enhance resilience by providing a first aid mechanism and being prepared for crisis management scenarios so as not to be weakened by a new crisis. They also underscored the need for the early detection of cyber threats. It was stressed that the EU should strengthen multilateralism and multi-polarity. At the same time, the EU should seek to protect itself while contributing to global peace as a reliable partner, as international threats show that solidarity is very much a necessity.

Generally speaking, work still needs to be done by future Presidencies to reform the IPC to make plenary debates more interactive by using the 'catch the eye' procedure, to keep one slot on the agenda for a debate on a current topic, and to draw up a handbook of best practices, while also incorporating new features and building on the experiences of the remote meetings held during the pandemic. With the remote and hybrid formats ill-suited to workshops and side events, MPs and MEPs were unable to conduct soft policy discussions, and it was impossible to keep up personal contacts and contacts from political groups. Conversely, during the pandemic the final statement by the Co-Chairs, which in normal times would generate less debate, became the most important outcome and proof that work on the IPC has continued to go on.

Main developments in 2021:

- The COVID-19 pandemic continued to pose organisational challenges to the smooth running of interparliamentary conferences. However, technical facilities allowed for the successful implementation of a hybrid IPC format, connecting parliamentarians and officials in real time from national Parliaments remotely with the Chair and Members physically present in the meeting room;
- Furthermore, co-chairing was set up for when the two Co-Chairs were in two separate locations, with live interpreting provided;
- The IPC was successfully retained as one of the interparliamentary events of the rotating Presidency.

3. INTERPARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT IN THE AREA OF FREEDOM, SECURITY AND JUSTICE

3.1 Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol

JPSG on EUROPOL



Article 88 of the TFEU allows national Parliaments for the first time to scrutinise jointly with the European Parliament an EU agency operating in the area of freedom, security and justice. On the basis of the Europol Regulation², the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) on Europol was established in 2017 to ensure that Europol is fully accountable and transparent. The main responsibilities of the JPSG are outlined in Article 51 of the [Europol Regulation](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32016R0794) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32016R0794>), which defines its role in politically monitoring Europol activities with particular focus on the impact of those activities on the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons.

The JPSG is an innovative institutional set-up for parliamentary scrutiny and holds two meetings per year: in the first half of the year, at the Parliament of the country holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU, and in the second half of the year, at the European Parliament.

For the second consecutive year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the JPSG meetings were held via video conference. The organisers successfully tackled the inherent practical challenges and built on their recent experiences with this novel format, which made for well-attended and lively meetings. Those efforts ensured the continued good functioning of the JPSG and provided all JPSG members with the possibility of participating fully in its work. Notwithstanding the more compact format, the traditional structure of the meeting, the debate time and the participation of high-level speakers could be assured.

The **eighth meeting** of the JPSG was co-organised by the Portuguese Parliament on 1 and 2 February 2021, via video conference. This remote online meeting was co-chaired by the European Parliament from Brussels and by the Portuguese Parliament from Lisbon.

The Executive Director of Europol, Catherine De Bolle, informed delegates about Europol's activities between September 2020 and February 2021. The European Data Protection Supervisor, Wojciech Wiewiórowski, presented the latest developments and findings regarding Europol's data protection obligations. The first thematic debate centred on crime and digital resilience, which is one of the Commission's top priorities in a digital and connected Europe and a crucial issue for Parliaments and societies alike.

The focus of the second part of the meeting was the revision of the Europol Regulation and on strengthening Europol's mandate, with statements by high-level speakers including Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, and Eduardo Cabrita, the Portuguese Minister for Home Affairs and Chair of the EU Home Affairs Council. The panel was followed by a thematic debate entitled 'The impact of COVID-19 on the internal security of the EU – the role of law enforcement cooperation'.

² Regulation (EU) 2016/794 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol).

The most notable procedural development was the extension of the mandate of the JPSG Working Group on pending matters subject to further revision in the JPSG Rules of Procedure. Given the online format and related time constraints, there were written contributions by the Chairperson of the Europol Management Board and the Chair of the Europol Cooperation Board in lieu of their regular interventions.

The **ninth meeting** of the JPSG was organised by the European Parliament in Brussels on 25 and 26 October 2021, and took place remotely due to the pandemic. It was co-chaired by the Slovenian Parliament as part of the parliamentary dimension of the Slovenian Presidency.

In line with standard practice, the agenda included presentations by the Executive Director of Europol and the European Data Protection Supervisor. The keynote speeches were delivered by the European Commissioner for Home Affairs and Aleš Hojs, Minister of the Interior of Slovenia.

Thematic debates with the participation of the European Public Prosecutor's Office and high-profile experts from national authorities addressed topics such as financial crime, corruption and the protection of the EU's financial interests. The second major topic of discussion concerned cooperation in the fight against online child abuse, including cooperation with third countries, private individuals and NGOs.

Alongside its scrutiny work, the JPSG continued to discuss procedural issues on pending matters. The last amendments to its Rules of Procedure were adopted by consensus and came into force on 26 October 2021. These latest changes concerned the JPSG observer to the Europol Management Board meetings and the revision clause.

Main developments in 2021:

- Ensuring business continuity of the JPSG on Europol: the JPSG asserted itself in 2021 as a demanding and engaged partner committed to supporting the agency's mission of providing sound law enforcement and protecting citizens and societies, especially at a time of organised crime, corruption and extremism, made all the worse by the pandemic. Delegates advocated strengthening Europol's mandate and enhancing inter-agency cooperation on justice and home affairs based on the rule of law;
- Adapting the agenda to reflect latest developments (the pandemic, the revision of the Europol Regulation); designing suitable formats for exchanges and remote meetings and ensuring the proper follow-up;
- The JPSG adopted its revised Rules of Procedure.



Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Co-Chair of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group and Chair of the EP Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, and Robert Tekavec, Head of the Juvenile Crime Section, General Crime Division, Criminal Police Directorate, Slovenia, during the ninth meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol

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3.2 Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the evaluation of Eurojust

Since its creation in 2002, Eurojust has become a central player in judicial cooperation in criminal matters. In line with Article 85 of the TFEU, the EU regulations governing Eurojust must also 'determine arrangements for involving the European Parliament and national Parliaments in the evaluation of Eurojust's activities'. In 2018, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a new [Regulation on Eurojust](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32018R1727) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32018R1727>)³ with a view to providing a single, renewed legal framework for a new fully-fledged Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust).

In order to increase the transparency and democratic oversight of Eurojust, the regulation provides for a mechanism for the joint evaluation of Eurojust's activities by the European Parliament and EU national Parliaments⁴. The evaluation should take place within the framework of an Interparliamentary Committee Meeting (ICM) organised by the European Parliament at its premises in Brussels, with the participation of members of the competent committees of the European Parliament and of EU national Parliaments.

The first ICM on the evaluation of Eurojust's activities was organised on 1 December 2020 at the European Parliament in Brussels by the European Parliament's LIBE Committee, in cooperation with the German Parliament.

For logistical reasons the second annual ICM, which was due to take place at the end of 2021, had to be postponed for a few weeks but finally took place on 1 February 2022. There is clear interest from both the European Parliament and the national Parliaments in continuing with this annual exercise, which could be expanded in future, possibly in a separate format, to include oversight of the newly created European Public Prosecutor's Office.

³ Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 on the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), and replacing and repealing Council Decision 2002/187/JHA (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 138).

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 deals with those arrangements in point 62 of its preamble and in Article 67.

4. INTERPARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND OTHER INTERPARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

4.1 Interparliamentary Committee Meetings (ICMs)

Interparliamentary Committee Meetings (ICMs) are the standard type of meeting organised by the European Parliament for focused exchanges between sectoral committees on key legislative and political issues under Articles 9 and 10 of Protocol 1 to the Treaties. The calendar of ICMs is transmitted by the President of the European Parliament to the Speakers of all national Parliaments each semester.

The committees of the European Parliament organise up to 20 ICMs per year, inviting the corresponding committees of the EU national Parliaments to engage in focused debates. ICMs have proven to be a valuable way for Members of the European Parliament to share views with their national counterparts. ICMs are not only a forum for exchange on legislative issues, thereby contributing to better law-making, but also a platform on which to discuss political issues of common interest and to meet with Commissioners and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. ICMs are co-organised on the initiative of one or more committees of the European Parliament with the support of the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments.

In 2021, 15 ICMs were co-organised by 12 different parliamentary committees^{5,6}, providing for debates between 841 Members of national Parliaments and 307 Members of the European Parliament. All ICMs in 2021 took place in a hybrid format and were held in accordance with the sanitary restrictions put in place by the European Parliament in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the MEPs and speakers joined from the European Parliament's premises in Brussels, while national Parliament Members and the majority of guest speakers participated online.

Four ICMs were organised by the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON), the Committee on Budgets (BUDG), the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) in the framework of **European Parliamentary Week (EPW)** on **22 February**⁷.

The **FEMM** ICM entitled 'We are strong: women leading the fight against COVID-19', which also celebrated **International Women's Day**, was held online in the European Parliament in Brussels on **4 March**. It discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the need for gender equality and women's economic empowerment in order to build resilient societies, improve standards on employment, social security and pensions for all women, especially in female-dominated sectors, and – more generally – how to reform models in the provision of care and the value of work, including unpaid care work. At the same time, participants considered how the decision-making process for enacting and lifting the crisis measures and throughout all stages in devising, adopting and implementing the recovery plans demonstrated the need for equal representation between women and men in positions of leadership.

⁵ Calendar of interparliamentary activities with national Parliaments 2021: [first semester](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/235467/Calendar_1st_semester_2021_rev07.pdf) (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/235467/Calendar_1st_semester_2021_rev07.pdf)

⁶ Calendar of interparliamentary activities with national Parliaments 2021: [second semester](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/242828/Revised_Calendar_2nd_semester_2021_25.11_.pdf) (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/242828/Revised_Calendar_2nd_semester_2021_25.11_.pdf)

⁷ More information about the EPW is available in Chapter [2.1](#)

The ICM by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (**AFCO**) on the reform of the European electoral law and on Parliament's right of inquiry took place on **22 June** remotely from the European Parliament in Brussels. Guest speaker Věra Jourová, Vice-President of the Commission for Values and Transparency, sought to emphasise that the Commission was following developments on this file closely.

The Special Committee on Beating Cancer (**BECA**) invited members of national Parliaments to attend an ICM via videoconference entitled 'Turning the tide on cancer: the view of national Parliaments on the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan' on **27 September**. The meeting provided a good forum for debate on the committee's draft report and the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

On **8 November**, the Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age (AIDA) organised an ICM remotely from the European Parliament in Brussels. Entitled 'Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Decade', the meeting was opened by Dita Charanzová, Vice-President of the EP.



Dita Charanzová, EP Vice-President, at the AIDA Interparliamentary Committee Meeting 'Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Decade', 8 November 2021

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On **9 November**, another **AFCO ICM** was held to discuss the expectations of national Parliaments for the Conference on the Future of Europe. During the meeting, MEPs, MPs from national Parliaments and the three Co-Chairs of the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe discussed potential future pathways for the Conference.

The Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation (**INGE**) invited MPs from national Parliaments to attend an ICM held via videoconferencing technology at the European Parliament in Brussels on **9 November**. The first panel for discussion, entitled 'Foreign Interference in Democratic Processes in the EU', was opened by Stefano Sannino, Secretary-General of the European External Action Service.



Raphaël Glucksmann, Chair of the EP Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation (INGE), and Stefano Sannino, Secretary-General of the European External Action Service at the INGE Interparliamentary Committee Meeting 'Foreign Interference in Democratic Processes in the EU', 9 November 2021

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On **18 November**, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (**AGRI**) organised an Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on ‘The development of CAP strategic plans in each Member State’. Again, due to the COVID-19 restrictions at the time, the meeting was held at the European Parliament in Brussels and remotely via videoconference.



Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the development of CAP strategic plans in each Member State, 18 November 2021
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Another **ICM** organised by the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (**FEMM**) was held on **30 November** on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November), and included the following sessions: sexual violence as a weapon of war (jointly with the Subcommittee on Human Rights [DROI]); combating violence against women and girls with disabilities; cyber-violence (jointly with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, [LIBE]); and the Istanbul Convention (Jointly with LIBE). Professionals from various backgrounds gave presentations on their respective areas of expertise. Contributions by members of national parliaments and MEPs contributed to lively exchanges of views. The ICM was concluded with an address by Roberta Metsola, First Vice-President of the EP.



Evelyn Regner, Chair of the EP Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Chair of the EP Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, and Roberta Metsola, EP First Vice-President, at the FEMM Interparliamentary Committee Meeting ‘Eliminating Violence against Women’, 30 November 2021
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On **9 December**, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) co-organised an ICM on the situation of the rule of law in the EU. The meeting was split into two panels: one dedicated

to an exchange of views on the Commission's annual Rule of Law Report 2021 and another entitled 'The way forward on the Mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights'.

The participation of Members of national Parliaments in the ICMs saw a dramatic increase of some 170 % – from 302 parliamentarians in 2020 to 816 in 2021. There was also a substantial increase (+ 64 %) in participation among Members of the European Parliament – from 207 in 2020 to 340 in 2021.

The second year of the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of digital tools even further. The significant jump in participation by Members of both the national Parliaments and the European Parliament seems to have been facilitated mainly by the opportunity to participate in meetings remotely without having to travel.

There are a number of positives to remote meetings, including ICMs: in not having to travel, more speakers and participants are available, including high-level participants, which means a lower carbon footprint, and it is often a more cost-effective and time-efficient way to hold meetings for all concerned.

On the other hand, there is considerably less interaction between Members, debates and exchanges are rendered less lively and more difficult, and there is a lack of informal discussions, in situ bilateral meetings and networking possibilities with no coffee breaks, dinners or lunches. ICMs are also shorter as the meeting rooms have to be disinfected for sanitary purposes, while full interpreting cannot always be guaranteed.

A list of the ICMs organised by European Parliament Committees in 2021 and more detailed statistics can be found in Annex II.

Main developments in 2021:

- One possible explanation for the large number of ICMs in 2021 is the postponement of numerous meetings from 2020. In addition, several temporary committees were approaching the end of their mandates;
- The participation of national MPs in ICMs increased by 170 % compared to 2020, most likely due to remote participation;
- All ICMs took place in a hybrid format, with some MEPs taking part in person at the European Parliament's premises in Brussels and others remotely, alongside their counterparts from national Parliaments.

4.2 High-Level Conference on Migration and Asylum

Refugee movements and migration are at the centre of global attention, and have come to be seen as one of the major challenges facing the EU in recent years. The continued arrival of migrants and asylum seekers in the EU has exposed a series of deficiencies and gaps in EU policies on asylum, external borders and migration. Launched in 2020 by the Parliaments from the German, Portuguese and Slovenian Presidency Trio, the cycle of High-Level Interparliamentary Conferences on Migration and Asylum in Europe served to foster parliamentary discussions and promote a broad dialogue on all aspects of migration. These conferences have acknowledged the important role of Parliaments in this area and the need to fine-tune common ideas to deliver solid, lasting solutions to migration challenges, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Two High-Level Conferences were held in 2021, in cooperation with the respective Presidency Parliaments.

Based on their Work Programme of 18 June 2020 and the Declaration issued by the Parliaments of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia on 29 June 2020, the Trio Parliaments launched an initiative to hold three High-Level Interparliamentary Conferences on Migration and Asylum, to be organised by the European Parliament in Brussels in cooperation with the respective Presidency Parliaments.

The aim of these conferences was to generate a wide-ranging discussion among parliamentarians on the Commission's proposals on migration and asylum, to promote an understanding of the respective positions on these issues with a view to advancing a common EU policy on migration and asylum, and to contribute to the relevant Council negotiations.

The second High-Level Conference was held on 14 June 2021 at the European Parliament in Brussels (video conference with remote participation), under the joint auspices of the European Parliament and the Portuguese Parliament and in cooperation with the other two Parliaments in the Presidency Trio (Germany and Slovenia).

The conference was well attended, including 155 Members of the European and national Parliaments and officials and several EP committees and subcommittees (DEVE, AFET, DROI, LIBE). Particular focus was placed on the external dimension of asylum and migration policies: forging comprehensive partnerships with countries of origin and transit, tackling root causes of migration, and promoting a stable socio-economic environment in third countries.

Discussions also centred on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migration and asylum policies and the external dimension of such. Notable participants included António Vitorino, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration, Branko Grims, Chair of the Committee on Internal Affairs of the Slovenian National Assembly, Eduardo Cabrita, Portuguese Minister for Home Affairs (intervening on behalf of the Portuguese Council Presidency), and Detlef Seif, Member of the German Bundestag.

The third edition of the conference was held remotely on 10 December 2021 from the European Parliament in Brussels. The meeting was attended by around 70 Members of the European and national Parliaments and included Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the Commission, Dr Stanislav Raščan, State Secretary of the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Isabel Meirelles, MP from the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic, Fabrice Leggeri, Executive Director of Frontex, Evelien van Roemburg, Head of Oxfam's EU Office, on behalf of CONCORD (the European Confederation of NGOs for Relief and Development), Nina Gregori, Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office, and Catherine Woollard, Director of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles.

The conference was divided into two sessions: one on multi-dimensional cooperation in forging tailored migration partnerships with third countries, and another on the internal dimension of migration and asylum in the EU a year after the proposal of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.



Third High-Level Interparliamentary Conference on Migration and Asylum

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Main developments in 2021:

- The aim of these High-Level Conferences – stimulating an interparliamentary discussion on all aspects of migration – was achieved. The debates were considered very insightful, with a variety of stakeholders providing a holistic view on the topic. This year, two conferences closed the cycle that had been initiated by the Trio Parliaments in 2020;
- Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the events were held remotely from the European Parliament in Brussels and the co-hosting Presidency Parliaments.

4.3 Interparliamentary cooperation in the field of EU external action and multilateral parliamentary assemblies

Alongside the consolidated expertise developed through committee-based cooperation, the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments has regularly provided ad hoc support and facilitated relations with EU national Parliaments in the EU's external action for the purposes of specific multilateral events. Over the years, this support has encompassed the Ukraine Week, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, and the parliamentary dimension of G7 Summits. In 2021 the Directorate intensified its work on structured frameworks for cooperation with national Parliaments on non-committee-based activities and events in various fields of EU external action. Specific initiatives were organised in cooperation with the EP Directorate-General for External Policies (DG EXPO) in areas including fundamental rights and democracy, parliamentary diplomacy, democratic governance and capacity development, mediation, multilateral forums and electoral observation. These activities were carried out in close cooperation with DG EXPO and the EP Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support (DG ITEC).

Over the past few years, the European Parliament and the EU national Parliaments have intensified their exchanges on the EU's external action, both in terms of frequency and variety. The Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments contributed to the participation of the EP's institutional representatives in several such events, including the Ukraine Week (2016), the 10th Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP 10, 2018), the parliamentary dimension of the G7 Summit (2019) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (2019). These experiences prompted the Directorate to reflect on the possibility for more structured, continuous cooperation between the EP's competent bodies and their counterparts in the national parliaments.

This exercise consists in making use of the sources of information and exchanges in the interparliamentary networks⁸ with a view to facilitating regular and mutually beneficial staff dialogues and voluntary coordination in several fields of activities in the EU's broadly defined external action. This centres on activities away from the committees, mainly fundamental rights and democracy, multilateral forums, parliamentary diplomacy and capacity-building.

Two video conferences convened by the EP's DG EXPO – one held jointly for colleagues from national Parliaments on 22 September 2020 on democracy support and capacity-building and a 'Friday Talk' session on 30 October 2020 entitled 'National Parliaments - Partners, not Rivals' – demonstrated how consolidating structured frameworks of cooperation with national Parliaments in the field of external policies can be a useful and opportune endeavour.

In the context of the EP's Presidency of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, in 2021 the Directorate organised and facilitated a number of meetings involving our colleagues from the EP Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly and representatives from the

⁸ See also the contribution on IPEX namely on the development of the DSN section on IPEX V3.

national Parliaments in order to exchange information and discuss initiatives on political priorities and administrative procedures.

Several multilateral interparliamentary meetings and conferences, COSAC meetings and other conferences sponsored by the Presidency parliaments in 2021 witnessed interesting debates on EU-US relations, cooperation with African countries, the situations in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia, and the EU's role and actions vis-à-vis these issues. EU-UK relations and the Western Balkans were also a regular topic of discussion, further attesting to the need for and potential added value of new forms of regular interparliamentary exchanges in this area.

In 2021 the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments, in cooperation with the EP's DG EXPO and DG ITEC, increased its efforts with a view to the launch of the EP-NP Network on Democracy Support, Human Rights and Capacity-Building and the dedicated subsection on the new Version 3 of IPEX.

In view of the mutual interest for both the EP and national parliaments and their shared conviction on the benefits of regular cooperation and exchanges, the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments, with the sponsorship of the Director-General of the EP's Directorate-General for the Presidency, has promoted a strategic project for establishing and consolidating enhanced forms of exchange and coordination between members of the EP administration and corresponding services in the administrations of the national parliaments on selected issues and multilateral events. This enhanced cooperation will be pursued further between 2022 and 2024 and will seek to take advantage of the possibilities offered by the different platforms of exchange with national parliaments (IPEX and the network of Parliament representatives).

Main developments in 2021:

- Establishment of a joint set of goals for DG EXPO and the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments for the launch of a strategic objective for 2022-2024 within the remit of interparliamentary cooperation with national parliaments on activities and events additional to committee work;
- Completion of a structured network and communications on democracy support between the administrations of the EP and the national Parliaments in order to increase the impact and efficiency of parliamentary diplomacy, in particular within our immediate neighbourhood in the Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership countries and even in Africa. Completion of a dedicated section for this on IPEX v3.

4.4 Bilateral visits and other bilateral exchanges

Bilateral visits from EU national Parliaments to the European Parliament are a constantly evolving tool and format for interparliamentary dialogue. This format is highly focused, tailor-made, flexible, and cost- and time-efficient. It allows for discussions on issues of concern to individual national Parliaments.

In addition, other bilateral exchanges of views can be a useful form of small-scale interparliamentary cooperation when parliamentarians need to initiate collaboration, concentrate on specific topics, or deepen collaboration in concrete areas of mutual interest.

Bilateral visits are traditionally an important form of interparliamentary cooperation. Meetings take place at various levels and in various formats, from the highest-level political discussions to technical staff level study visits.

Due to the COVID-19 situation and the rules in force in the European Parliament, no incoming delegations or visits took place in 2021. However, a number of exchanges were held remotely between Members of the European Parliament and the national Parliaments.

The First Vice-President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, accepted invitations from several COSAC Chairs and their committees to organise a number of exchanges and visits. One such exchange was held via videoconference with the Croatian COSAC Chair and the EU Affairs Committee in the Croatian Parliament in April 2021. As far as the epidemiological situation allowed, First Vice-President Metsola accepted invitations from the COSAC Chairs of the Lithuanian, Estonian and Slovenian Parliaments to visit their Parliaments and Chambers, where she held exchanges of views with the chairs and their EU affairs committees. The First Vice-President's final visit in 2021 took her to the Polish Senate.

A list of bilateral visits and exchanges can be found in Annex III.

Main developments in 2021:

- Due to the epidemiological situation and the rules in force in the European Parliament, there were no bilateral visits from EU national Parliaments to European Parliament premises;
- Videoconferencing was the principal format of bilateral exchanges in 2021. This tool is expected to remain an important communication method for direct and targeted bilateral exchanges in the future;
- The European Parliament intensified its relations with national Parliaments, holding formal and informal exchanges between its Vice-President responsible for relations with national Parliaments and for COSAC and several COSAC Chairs and their respective EU affairs committees.

5. LEGISLATIVE COOPERATION WITH EU NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

5.1 Early Warning System and Protocol No 2 to the Treaties

Under the principle of subsidiarity (enshrined in Article 5 of the TEU), in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence the Union must act only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, but can be better achieved at Union level. Under the principle of proportionality, the content and form of Union action must not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties.

National Parliaments ensure compliance with the principle of subsidiarity in accordance with the procedure set out in Protocol No 2 to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. This Protocol sets out a review mechanism, the Early Warning System (EWS). Under this mechanism national Parliaments may, within eight weeks from the date of transmission of a draft legislative act, send to the Presidents of the institutions a reasoned opinion stating why they consider that the draft in question does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity.

5.1.1 Early Warning System

With regard to the EWS, submissions from EU national Parliaments are considered under the following categories⁹ :

1. Reasoned opinion: if submitted under that heading and received within the eight-week deadline referred to in Article 6 of Protocol No 2 to the Treaties¹⁰, and raising the issue of non-compliance with the principle of subsidiarity.
2. Contribution: where the submission does not fulfil the above criteria.

When reasoned opinions represent at least one third of the votes allocated to the national Parliaments, the draft legislative act must be reviewed (yellow card). The institution that produced the draft act may decide to maintain, amend or withdraw it, giving reasons for that decision. For draft acts relating to police cooperation or judicial cooperation in criminal matters, the threshold is lower (one quarter of the votes).

If, in the context of the ordinary legislative procedure, national Parliaments with at least a simple majority of the votes challenge the compliance of a legislative proposal with the principle of subsidiarity, the Commission must review its proposal and decide whether to maintain, change or withdraw it. If it decides to maintain its proposal, the matter is referred to the legislator (the European Parliament and the Council) and the Commission must justify its decision (orange card procedure).

⁹ See Conference of Committee Chairs document of 15 December 2010: 'Common approach for the treatment at committee level of national Parliaments' reasoned opinions and all other contributions of national Parliaments'.

¹⁰ Article 6 of Protocol No 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality: 'Any national Parliament or any chamber of a national Parliament may, within eight weeks from the date of transmission of a draft legislative act, in the official languages of the Union, send to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission a reasoned opinion stating why it considers that the draft in question does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity. It will be for each national Parliament or each chamber of a national Parliament to consult, where appropriate, regional parliaments with legislative powers'.

If the legislator considers that the legislative proposal is not compatible with the principle of subsidiarity, it may reject it subject to a majority of 55 % of the Members of the Council or a simple majority of the votes cast in the European Parliament. To date, the yellow card procedure has been triggered three times¹¹, while the orange card procedure has never been triggered.

Within the European Parliament, the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) is the committee responsible for monitoring compliance with the principle of subsidiarity of reasoned opinions¹². Every six months a member of the committee is appointed as standing rapporteur for subsidiarity on the basis of rotation among the political groups.

Nacho Sánchez Amor (S&D) and Gilles Lebreton (ID)¹³ fulfilled the role of standing rapporteurs for subsidiarity for the year 2021. The JURI Committee also regularly draws up a report on the Commission's annual report on subsidiarity and proportionality.

5.1.2 EU national Parliaments' submissions

In 2021, the European Parliament received 226 submissions from EU national Parliaments under Protocol No 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. 24 submissions were reasoned opinions and 202 were contributions.

In 2020, the European Parliament received 124 submissions. 13 were reasoned opinions and 111 were contributions.

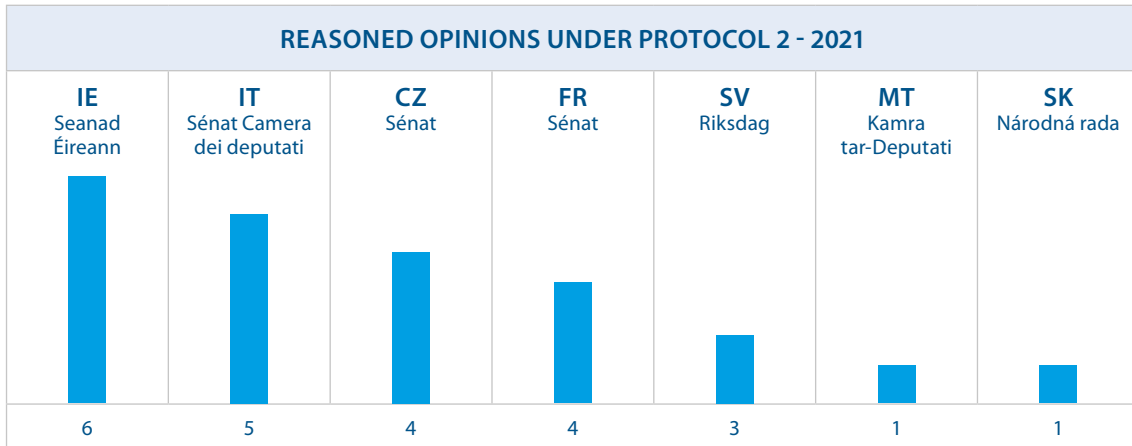
The more than 80 % increase in the number of submissions received between 2020 and 2021 may be explained by the fact that the European Parliament and the national Parliaments had adapted to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 and were working at their full legislative capacity, including legislation on health and economic measures related to the pandemic.

¹¹The yellow card procedure was used in 2012 with regard to a Commission proposal for a regulation concerning the exercise of the right to take collective action within the context of the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services ('Monti II'). The Commission ultimately withdrew its proposal, though it took the view that the subsidiarity principle had not been infringed. It was used again in 2013 following the submission of the proposal for a regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office. The Commission decided to [maintain the proposal](https://europa.eu/!CG8j48) (https://europa.eu/!CG8j48), arguing that it was in line with the subsidiarity principle. It was further used in 2016 against the [proposal for a revision of the Directive on the Posting of Workers](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016PC0128&qid=1469715330216&from=EN) (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016PC0128&qid=1469715330216&from=EN). The Commission gave extensive [reasons](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0505&qid=1469715692305&from=EN) (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0505&qid=1469715692305&from=EN) for maintaining its proposal, given that it did not infringe on the principle of subsidiarity, the posting of workers being, by definition, a transnational issue.

¹²Section XVI of Annex VI to the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament stipulates that the Committee on Legal Affairs is responsible for 'the interpretation, application and monitoring of Union law and compliance of Union acts with primary law, notably the choice of legal bases and respect for the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality'.

¹³'Socialists and Democrats' and 'Identity and Democracy' are political groups in the European Parliament.

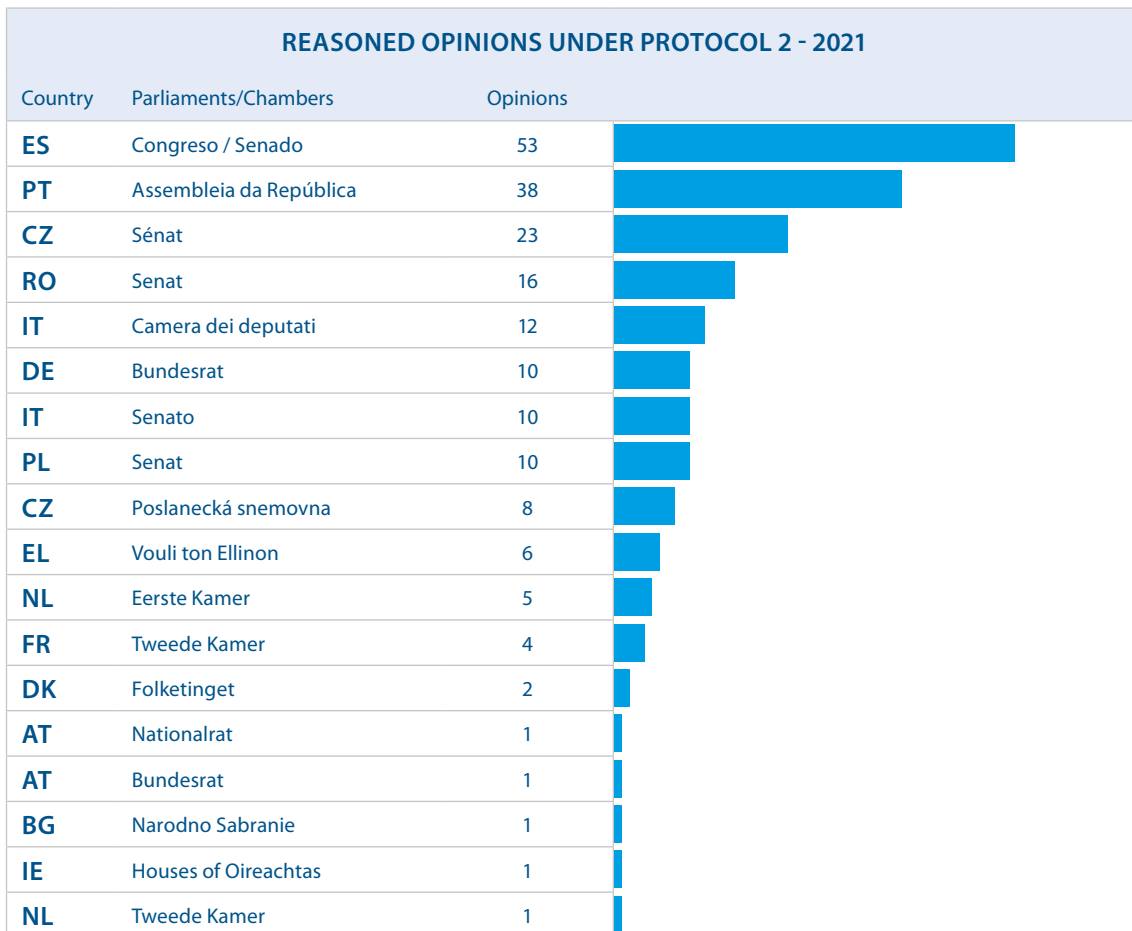
Reasoned opinions by Parliament/Chamber



A total of 24 reasoned opinions received in 2021, graph showing submissions by Parliament/Chamber

In 2021, seven out of 39 Parliaments/Chambers submitted reasoned opinions and 18 submitted contributions. The most active Parliaments in sending reasoned opinions were the Irish Senate, with six reasoned opinions, and the Italian Chamber of Deputies, with five. As for contributions, the most active Parliaments/Chambers were respectively: the Spanish Parliament, with 53 submitted contributions, and the Portuguese Parliament, with 38. See the statistics for 2021 in Annex IV.

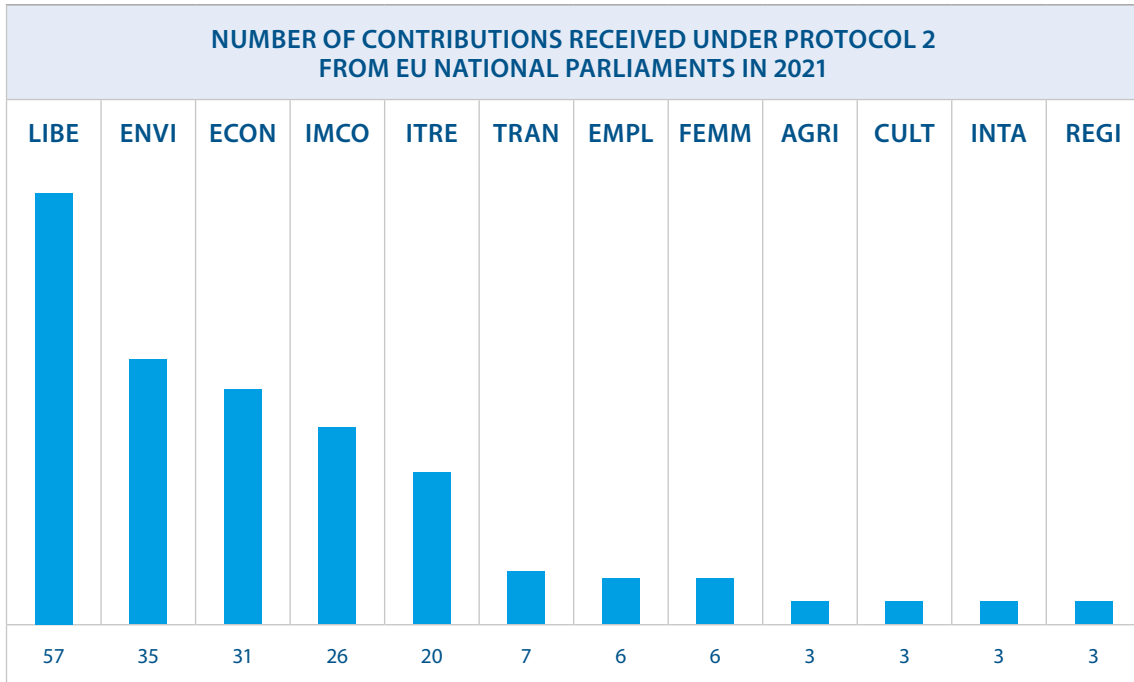
Contributions by Parliament/Chamber



A total of 202 contributions received in 2021, graph showing submissions by Parliament/Chamber.

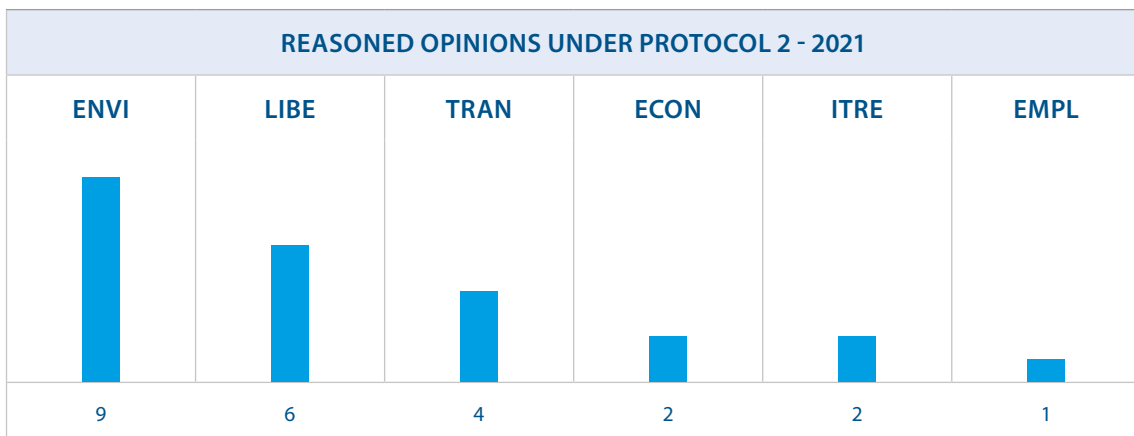
The committees that received the most submissions were the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (six reasoned opinions and 57 contributions), the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (nine reasoned opinions and 35 contributions), and the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (two reasoned opinions and 31 contributions).

Contributions by committee



Number of contributions received in 2021, by committee.

Reasoned opinions by committee



Number of reasoned opinions received in 2021, by committee.

Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, a total of 1 054 draft legislative acts have been transmitted to national Parliaments for examination under the terms of Protocol No 2. In response, the European Parliament has received 3 681 submissions from national Parliaments. Out of these, 511 are reasoned opinions (14 %) while the remaining 3 170 are contributions (86 %).

These statistics confirm that EU national Parliaments use Protocol No 2 as a means to express their

views on the substance of proposals more often than on subsidiarity. This could reflect their wish to be involved more closely in the substantive legislative process.

The Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments ensures that all submissions transmitted by national Parliaments are made available to Members, political bodies and European Parliament services and provides them, in particular rapporteurs, with specific expertise and briefings on EU national Parliaments' submissions throughout the legislative cycle, which have been used as input for drafting committee reports and for trilogue negotiations with the Council. The Directorate provides facts, figures and statistics on the number and nature of these documents on a monthly basis via its State of Play Note on Protocol 2 of the Lisbon Treaty, and also manages the CONNECT database¹⁴, which contains all reasoned opinions and contributions received from national Parliaments.

Main developments in 2021

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both the EU institutions and the national Parliaments continued to adjust their legislative working methods for a second successive year. This may be observed in the field of legislation, where the substantial number of new proposals adopted saw a commensurate response from the national Parliaments under Protocol 2 in rather a large number of contributions, not least in response to a raft of proposals in the areas of health, the environment, justice and home affairs.

5.1.3 Monthly State of Play Note

The Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments produces a monthly State of Play Note on reasoned opinions and contributions submitted within the scope of Protocol No 2. This Note, transmitted to Members, the relevant services of the European Parliament and national Parliaments, gives an overview of all submissions received since the previous Note and refers to all legislative files which are on the agenda of the upcoming European Parliament plenary session. The Note is also included in the meeting file for the European Parliament's Conference of Committee Chairs. The State of Play Note is also published on the Directorate's website ahead of each European Parliament plenary session.

5.2 Informal Political Dialogue and Protocol No 1 to the Treaties

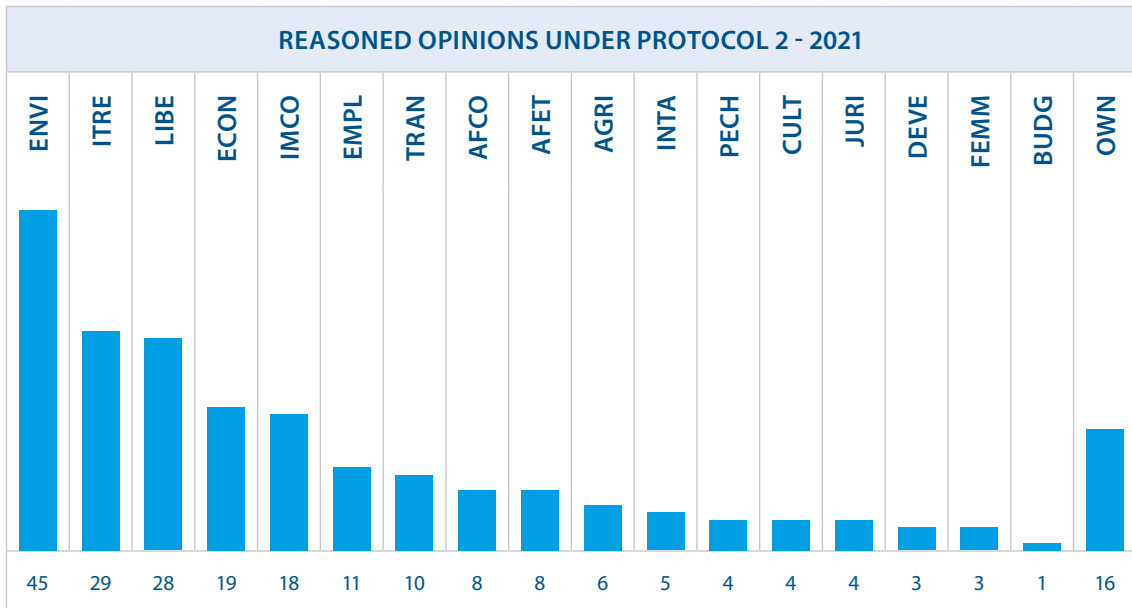
Protocol No 1 to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that EU national Parliaments may comment on legislative files falling under the exclusive competence of the EU as well as on non-legislative documents, for example relating to ongoing debates at European level, Commission Green/White Papers or communications from the Commission. These contributions are handled under the Informal Political Dialogue (IPD).

In 2021, EU national Parliaments continued to make active use of this tool, sending in 222 contributions. In this context, the three most active Parliaments/Chambers in 2021 were the Spanish Parliament (60), the Czech Senate (27) and the Romanian Chamber of Deputies (24).

¹⁴See more under Chapter 7.2.

CONTRIBUTIONS UNDER INFORMAL POLITICAL DIALOGUE - 2021			
Country	Parliaments/Chambers	Contributions	
ES	Congreso / Senado	60	
CZ	Sénat	27	
RO	Camera Deputa ilor	24	
IT	Assembleia da República	16	
RO	Senat	16	
CZ	Poslanecká snemovna	13	
FR	Sénat	11	
IT	Camera dei Deputati	11	
DE	Bundesrat	10	
NL	Eerste Kamer	10	
FR	Assemblée Nationale	7	
NL	Tweede Kamer	5	
BE	Sénat	2	
PL	Senat	2	
SK	Národná rada	2	
AT	Nationalrat	1	
DE	Bundestag	1	
FI	Eduskunta	1	
LT	Seimas	1	
IE	Houses of Oireachtas	1	
SE	Rigstag	1	

The four committees that received the most IPD contributions were the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) with 45, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) with 29, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) with 28, and the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) with 19.



Since 2009, the European Parliament has received around 2 666 contributions from EU national Parliaments under Protocol No 1, which have also been published in the CONNECT database. Detailed statistics on the contributions received under the IPD in 2021 are available in Annex V.

Main developments in 2021:

- The number of contributions submitted under the Informal Political Dialogue increased by 24 %, from 179 in 2020 to 222 in 2021. The most likely reason for this is that the Commission was very active in proposing new legislation in response to the COVID 19 pandemic;
- National Parliaments provided more summaries in English with their submissions under both Protocol No 2 and Protocol No 1, facilitating the work of the legislators.

6. NETWORKS AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

6.1 Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange (IPEX)



The EU Information Exchange (IPEX) supports interparliamentary cooperation by providing a platform and a network for the electronic exchange of EU-related information between Parliaments in the EU. IPEX was launched as an initiative of EU national Parliaments and was developed with the technical assistance of the European Parliament. Today, 39 Chambers of 27 national Parliaments and the European Parliament are using IPEX in their daily activities. IPEX is subject to continual improvement to meet the changing needs of its users. The ultimate goal is to make IPEX a one-stop shop for interparliamentary activities.

IPEX has been characterised as a tool, a platform and a network. These three definitions show that the instrument has evolved. Its development from a tool to a network has been slow, but it is now achieving its aim.

2021 saw the launch and roll-out of the new IPEX platform. This was the main objective of the year for the Directorate's Institutional Cooperation Unit, for colleagues who developed the new website from the EP Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support (DG ITEC), for the IPEX Chairmanships and all IPEX stakeholders in general. Originally planned for the first half of 2021, under the Chairmanship of the Finnish Parliament, the roll out of the new IPEX platform was delayed by several months. The development time was impacted by working pressures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. IPEX version 3 (v3) only received the green light from the IPEX Board in July 2021 under the German Chairmanship. The new IPEX website was officially launched on 28 October in Berlin during the meeting of IPEX correspondents hosted by the German Bundesrat.

IPEX working groups dedicated a large part of their time to preparing the website launch. The Working Group on Content described the new sections on IPEX v3 in a guide for the IPEX correspondents and added explanatory texts to make the website more user-friendly. The Working Group on Training prepared training material that was used during seminars to familiarise IPEX correspondents with the new website. The correspondents were also offered online training sessions by the IPEX information officer. The Working Group on Promotion and Social Media produced new promotional material, including an IPEX brochure, videos and a Twitter campaign, in order to advertise the launch of IPEX v3.

Both the Finnish and German chairmanships devoted themselves entirely to the successful launch of the new platform. In addition, both chairmanships continually sought to develop new formats of internal exchange and communication (the IPEX NOW forum and the proposal for a steering working group tasked with monitoring possible technical issues and rectifying them in line with the principles of the IPEX digital strategy and IPEX Guidelines).

These new formats for internal discussions will help identify the best possible ways to consolidate the network at a time when physical meetings are proving extremely difficult, if not impossible. They should also facilitate new frameworks for discussion within the IPEX governance structures on how a new platform with significantly upgraded capacities ought to function, and any other related issues.

One of the major innovations of IPEX v3 enables parliaments to upload new kinds of documents to the platform that are not necessarily linked to the subsidiarity parameter (reasoned opinions or contributions under the political dialogue). Known as own-initiative documents, these are designed to encourage interparliamentary cooperation in areas such as:

- the multiannual financial framework;
- the EU's international agreements;
- the Commission Work Programme;
- parliamentary contributions to the work of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The ability to upload these new texts is directly linked to one of the EP's priorities for interparliamentary cooperation: promoting closer coordination among parliaments and with the EP in the framework of parliamentary diplomacy and the role of parliaments in the promotion of the fundamental values of the EU through external action.

Last year, our Directorate's Institutional Cooperation Unit devoted most of its energy to the launch of the IPEX section on the Democracy Support Network, which had begun in late 2020. This could only be achieved thanks to the constant and mutual support of the whole Directorate, the Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support (ITEC), the Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union (EXPO), the IPEX chairmanships, the IPEX board members, the information officer and the entire IPEX network. The Democracy Support Network section marks the beginning of new and enhanced forms of cooperation with national Parliaments, which is one of the strategic objectives for 2022-2024, jointly sponsored by DG Presidency and DG EXPO and implemented by the Directorate for Relations with national Parliaments in close coordination with the responsible services within DG EXPO¹⁵.

IPEX currently publishes more than 105 000 pages issued by national Parliaments and the EU institutions, holding scrutiny-related information in almost 89 000 documents produced by national Parliaments and linked to some 16 618 dossiers.

In 2021, 300 732 unique visitors landed on the IPEX website. There were 21 838 014 page views and 30 217 045 hits. The upgrade to v3 of IPEX in July 2021 and the changes to how the system operates had a considerable impact on the number of recorded visits, which may explain why the figures are lower than previous years.

The new website offers the opportunity to open up IPEX to the outside world to an even greater extent. The German Chairmanship was very keen on deepening the exchange with researchers who use the IPEX database for scientific purposes. The IPEX website offers excellent opportunities for studying parliamentary activities in the EU, including interparliamentary work.

Main developments in 2021:

- Launch of v3 of the IPEX Platform;
- Approval of the (rolling) Work Programme for the next three years of activities;
- Publication of the section on the Democracy Support Network.

¹⁵See the note on DG EXPO Cooperation.

6.2 European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD)



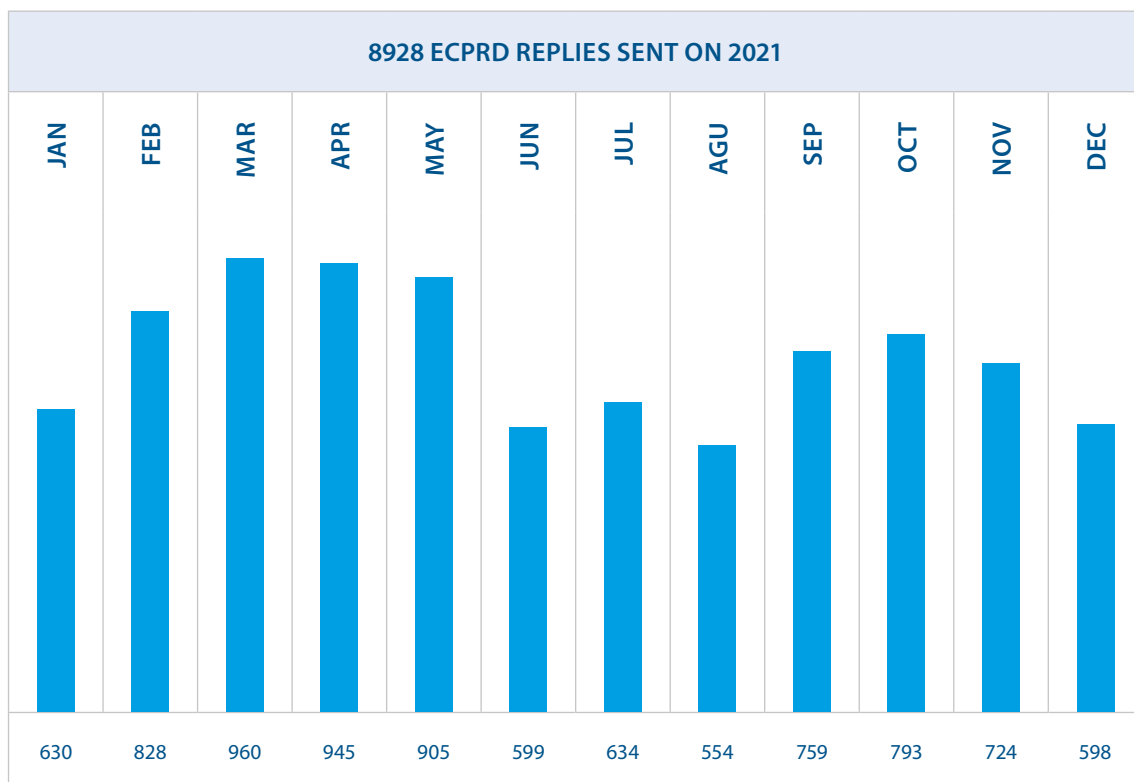
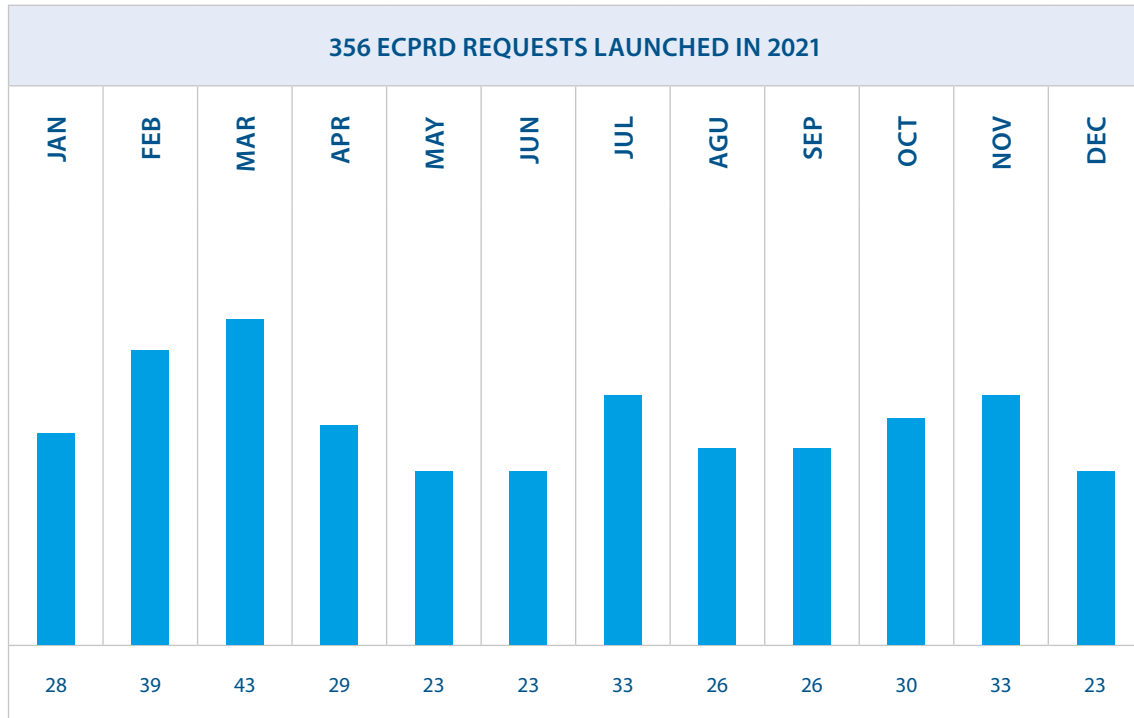
Managed jointly by the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the ECPRD comprises 66 parliamentary Chambers (39 in the EU) from 54 countries and the EU institutions. Almost 120 correspondents and deputy correspondents represent their respective Parliaments in the network and contribute to the main objectives of the ECPRD: promoting the exchange of information and good practice on subjects of common interest. The ECPRD promotes cooperation between member Chambers by initiating comparative requests and holding seminars.

COVID-19 continued to have a profound impact on the workflow of the ECPRD network in 2021. Its effects on the organisation of parliamentary work remained very significant, and numerous requests were sent to ascertain how other Chambers were dealing with the situation (see also Annex VI).

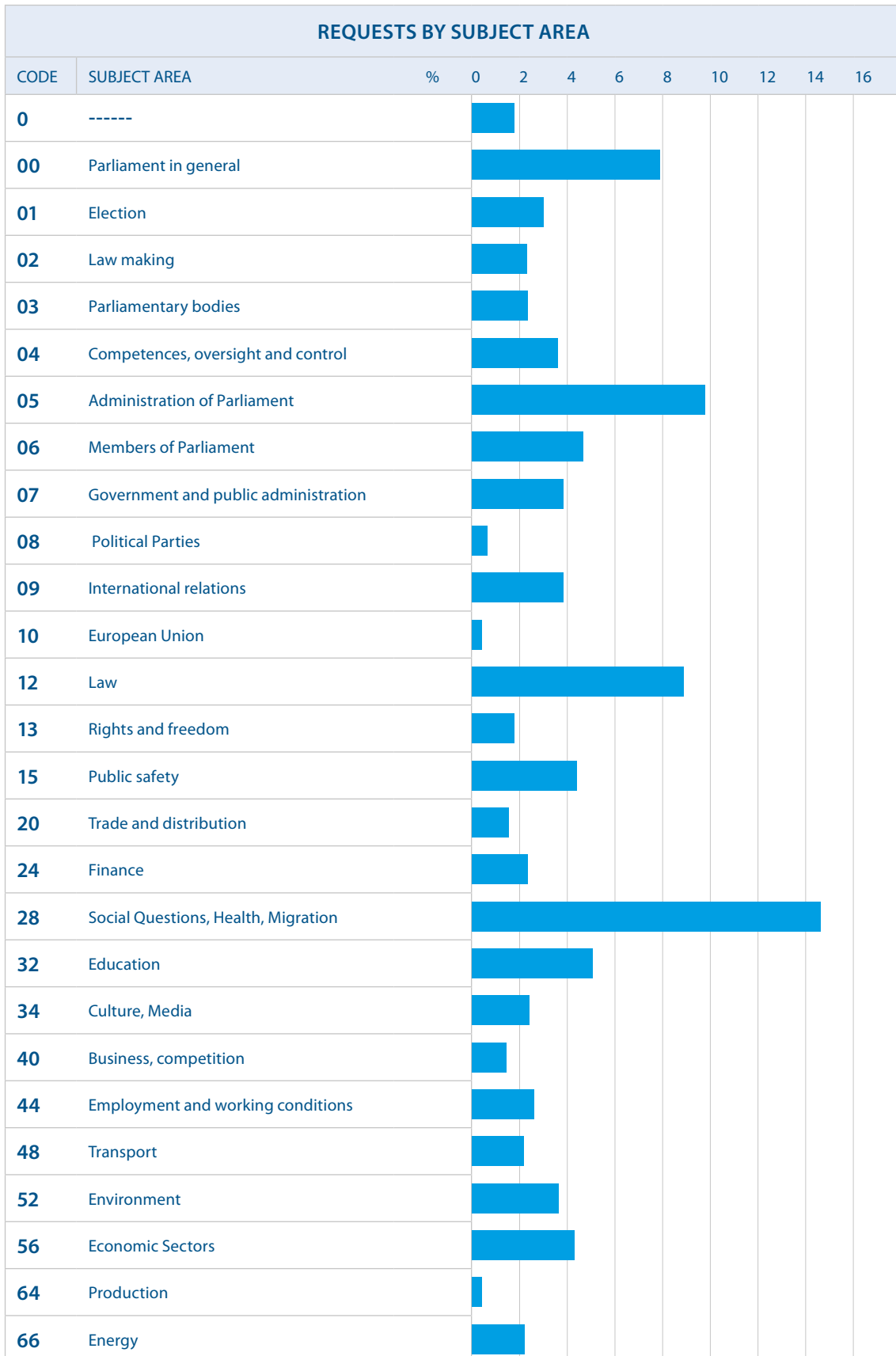
Nevertheless, given the epidemiological situation last year, and the fact that it remained impossible to hold international events in person, the ECPRD network continued to hone its experiences in organising virtual seminars and statutory meetings. While it was not possible to assure the crucial personal interactions for a network designed to promote the exchange of information and good practices, the remote format did enable many more meetings to be held and allowed numerous colleagues to participate from national parliaments who would not otherwise have been able to travel.

i. Comparative requests

In 2021, ECPRD member Parliaments submitted 356 comparative requests to the network, which resulted in 8 928 replies: a slight increase on 2020 (326 requests and 8 475 replies)



The requests for information covered many sectors, with particular importance attached to topics relating to the organisation of work and parliamentary administration and social and health issues. and parliamentary administration and social and health issues cooperation.



The Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments also provided support to European Parliament services by facilitating and transmitting their requests to the ECPRD network. In total, the

European Parliament submitted 14 requests to the ECPRD network in 2021. This represents a slight increase from 2020, which saw 12 European Parliament requests. The European Parliament provided 89 replies to requests from other ECPRD Parliaments, an increase on the 81 replies it provided in 2020, and even more compared to the 29 replies it provided in 2019 and the 31 in 2018.

ii. Final summaries

Final summaries are the best way of highlighting the immense number and usefulness of ECPRD requests and answers. New methods to encourage the drafting of final summaries have long been under consideration. In this regard, the new version of the ECPRD website, put online in October 2020 with the support of the European Parliament's IT services, aimed to modify the correspondents' dashboard in order to invite them to submit their final summaries and to give visibility to those uploaded to the ECPRD website. Following this reflection, in 2020, the ECPRD final summary rate increased considerably, with 41 % of requests leading to the publication of a reply analysis (compared to 16 % in 2019 and 11.3 % in 2018). Unfortunately, this figure fell back down to 21 % in 2021.

iii. Statutory meetings

The Executive Committee meetings were organised remotely on 18 March, 1 July and 23 September from the European Parliament. The main objective of these meetings was the preparation of the forthcoming Annual Conference. The Executive Committee also launched a reflection on the ECPRD's updated guidelines for making requests.

In light of the restrictions on meetings and travel that were still applicable in several parliaments due to COVID-19, and in order to prioritise the safety of all attendees, the Annual Conference of ECPRD Correspondents once again took place remotely, and was hosted by the House of Commons in London on 18 November 2021. Items on the agenda included a presentation by the Executive Committee of updated guidelines for ECPRD requests; cooperation between the ECPRD and the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) Parline data programme; reports by the ECPRD coordinators on past and future seminars and a presentation on improvements to the new ECPRD website. In addition, four new members were elected to the Executive Committee.

iv. Seminars

The COVID-19 pandemic once again affected again the organisation of ECPRD seminars. Seminars are an important opportunity for participants to engage in highly productive exchanges of information and good practice. Prior to 2020, all seminars were held in person and hosted by the national Parliaments that retained an interest in the particular topics under discussion. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 however, all meetings have been held remotely.

The annual seminar in the framework of the ECPRD Area of Interest 'Libraries, Research Services and Archives', organised in cooperation with the European Parliamentary Research Service and the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments, took place on 1-3 June 2021 as an online event entitled 'Parliamentary Research Services and Libraries: A year of hope and transition'. This remote seminar attracted 90 participants from 30 parliamentary Chambers and international organisations and offered a forum for exchange on the long-term effects of the coronavirus on working methods, and the response of parliamentary libraries to the crisis.

Rainer Wieland, Vice-President of the European Parliament, and Klaus Welle, Secretary-General of the European Parliament, addressed the seminar, giving their own views on how the European Parliament had continued its work during the pandemic.

The ECPRD Secretariat was also involved in the organisation of eight other ECPRD webinars (see Annex VI C).

Main developments in 2021:

- Enhanced cooperation between the EP's Economic Governance Support Unit and the ECPRD Economic and Budgetary Area of Interest and between the European Parliamentary Research Service and the ECPRD Parliamentary Libraries, Research and Archives in areas of common interest and investigation;
- Updated ECPRD Guidelines for Making Comparative Requests adopted by the ECPRD Annual Conference;
- Increased participation in webinars.

6.3 Presidency Parliament Support Programme

The European Parliament has constantly promoted close cooperation between its own administration and those of national Parliaments, in particular in the preparatory phase of the parliamentary dimension of each EU Council Presidency. The European Parliament offers each incoming Presidency Parliament the opportunity to participate in a programme organised for staff in Brussels with a view to preparing activities in the context of the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency. The European Parliament can provide the Presidency Parliament with a tailor-made support programme, on the basis of specific requests, needs and priorities. This initiative offers an opportunity to network and build personal contacts with all those involved and allows for the effective sharing of information and expertise, thus facilitating further work and ensuring consistency. The European Parliament may contribute to the cost of the programme on a shared basis with the corresponding national Parliament.

In recent years, a number of EU Member States have held the EU Council Presidency for the first time. Parliaments from these countries were particularly interested in the European Parliament's Presidency Parliament Support Programme. Indeed, since it proved such a helpful tool during the Presidencies' preparatory phase, and in view of the continuous developments in interparliamentary cooperation, the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments decided to extend the programme to all future Presidencies. In recent years, EU Council Presidencies have laid extra emphasis on and invested more in the parliamentary dimension, to increase the number of events, meetings and initiatives they hold during their Presidency semester, as compared to a decade ago.

The Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments worked on adapting the Presidency Parliament Support Programme to the particular circumstances under which travel and in-person meetings were restricted in 2021, and offered 'virtual visits' to the upcoming Slovenian and French Presidencies.

The programme for officials from the Slovenian Parliament, most of whom were based in Ljubljana, was based on a series of remote meetings rather than the usual visit to Brussels. Five meetings took place in March and April 2021. They featured exchanges with a number of colleagues from the secretariat of the European Parliament, who shared their experiences on the organisation of different events and activities: the visit of the Conference of Presidents to the Presidency capital, the Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Cooperation and Governance; COSAC meetings; the Conference on CFSP/CSDP; the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol and the Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on Eurojust.

The aim of these meetings was to establish the necessary contacts between officials from the Presidency country and European Parliament staff and to provide the opportunity for initial exchanges of information on procedures, topics and agendas for future events and activities.

The French National Assembly and Senate were keen to liaise and learn from the experiences of European Parliament services in how to handle remote and hybrid meetings, especially those involving a large number of connections, participants and languages. However, owing to constraints related to the French presidential elections, no suitable date could be found for a Presidency Parliament Support Programme with the French Parliament, leaving time only for exchanges on technical issues.

Main developments in 2021:

- In the first semester of 2021, a fully online Presidency Parliament Support Programme was devised and offered to the Slovenian Parliament in order to prepare it for the Presidency in the second semester of 2021;
- Officials from the French National Assembly and Senate were particularly keen to learn from the experiences of the European Parliament in organising multilingual meetings in a remote format, involving numerous participants and numerous languages.

6.4 Network of EU national Parliaments' representatives in Brussels

The Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments welcomes and hosts the administrative representatives designated by the EU national Parliaments/Chambers to the European Parliament. Since 1991, with a view to strengthening interparliamentary cooperation within the EU, the European Parliament has offered representatives complimentary office space and other in-house facilities upon request, in its Brussels and Strasbourg premises.

EU national Parliaments send national officials to Brussels to facilitate relations with the EU. Currently, 55 staff from the 27 national Parliaments in the EU are occupying 43 offices in the European Parliament's premises¹⁶. These representatives are national officials who, in addition to administrative assignments, are tasked with mutual information sharing (in a two-way flow between the European Parliament and the EU national Parliaments), as a key factor in EU affairs.

The representatives work in the same building housing the Directorate. This creates numerous synergies and promotes easy exchanges. In 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Directorate and the representatives successfully moved to a predominant teleworking scheme, as did most of the European Parliament's administration, following instructions by the President of the European Parliament and its Secretary-General. This continued in 2021.

A list of the national Parliaments' representatives is available at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl/en/networks/representatives-of-national-parliaments.html>

Main development/challenges in 2021:

- The continuation of the predominant teleworking scheme due to the coronavirus pandemic.

¹⁶Situation as of 17 January 2022 including COSAC secretariat and IPEX information officer.

6.5 Staff seminars

As the European Parliament affirmed in its 2018 resolution on the implementation of the Treaty provisions concerning national Parliaments¹⁷, 'better interaction and improved exchange of information between MEPs and MPs and also between national Parliaments' civil servants could help to improve scrutiny of the European debate at national level and thus foster a genuinely European parliamentary and political culture'. In 2019, the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments organised a series of seminars for staff from EU national Parliaments/Chambers. Their aim was to bring together staff from national Parliaments and the EP in order to present and discuss relevant European topics, learn from each other and exchange best practices.

In addition to interparliamentary cooperation at political level, an important development in recent years was the organisation of staff seminars in order to facilitate technical exchanges at staff level. Staff seminars provide an important platform for Parliaments' administrations to hold more specific and focused exchanges on areas of common interest. They are a dynamic element of the work of both the EP and the EU national Parliaments.

The Economic Governance Support Unit continued to organise online staff seminars on sharing the latest information on the European Semester, including the economic priorities and strengthening cooperation on and improving understanding of the European Semester cycle through knowledge sharing and the exchange of best practices. In 2021 six seminars of this kind were organised.

Main developments in 2021:

- Continuing with online staff seminars in the field of economic governance, notwithstanding the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹⁷European Parliament resolution of 19 April 2018 on the implementation of the Treaty provisions concerning national Parliaments (OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 121).

7. TOOLS AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

7.1 Organisation of remote meetings and videoconferencing

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Parliament had used videoconferencing as a tool to facilitate interparliamentary cooperation. For a long time, the European Parliament has possessed technical solutions to enable videoconferencing with very high image and sound quality, as well as interpretation into several languages. However, before 2020 the use of videoconferencing was limited. At the start of the health crisis in 2020, the need to adapt and improve the way of working and cooperating from a distance led to a huge digital and technical leap in the organisation of remote parliamentary meetings. These continued to be used extensively as the health crisis continued in 2021.

The European Parliament, because of its specific composition of Members from 27 different countries, has long been aware of the benefits of videoconferencing: it enables more regular contact between parliamentarians while reducing travel time, costs and carbon footprint. All in all, videoconferencing is a cost-effective and environmentally friendly tool for organising meetings, so adequate resources were invested in supporting it. Moreover, considerable progress was made with digital technologies in 2020 and 2021.

The epidemiological situation in 2021 did not improve sufficiently to allow for a general resumption of travel or the organisation of large meetings in person. However, interparliamentary cooperation seemed not to be too negatively impacted, at least in terms of the number of meetings and activities organised. Most Parliaments put in place suitable technical solutions to support remote meetings, which was the standard channel for interparliamentary communication and cooperation.

Remote debates and hybrid meetings have almost become the norm, although Members of both national Parliaments and the European Parliament have been missing more interactive face-to-face exchanges and personal contacts. Remote meetings have also proven to be particularly efficient formats for informal briefings, ad hoc meetings and targeted exchanges with high-level speakers. In this context, it is worth mentioning that the EU Speakers Conference, which was organised remotely by the German Presidency in May 2021, adopted a document entitled 'Enhanced interparliamentary cooperation through modern technology', and discussed how digitalisation affects representative democracy.

As with the beginning of the pandemic, in 2021 the European Parliament continued to use a platform for multilingual meetings with interpreting provided for committee meetings and interparliamentary conferences.

Main developments in 2021:

- As with the previous year, remote meetings held via videoconferencing were the standard channel for interparliamentary communication in 2021, ranging from informal bilateral video meetings to complex high-level conferences involving numerous participants. Remote or hybrid meetings became the norm;
- Participation by MPs, MEPs and high-level speakers in remote meetings remained high, with the latter seemingly more readily available to take part in meetings held remotely rather than in-person exchanges;
- The European Parliament continued to improve its technical capacities in running remote meetings.

7.2 CONNECT – the European Parliament’s database of national Parliaments’ submissions

CONNECT

The Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments provides MEPs (in particular rapporteurs) and political bodies and services of the European Parliament with specific expertise on national Parliaments’ submissions under Protocol Nos 1 and 2 throughout the legislative cycle. In this context, the Directorate manages the [CONNECT](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl/en/subsidiarity-and-ipd/welcome) (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl/en/subsidiarity-and-ipd/welcome) database, which includes all documents received from national Parliaments since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty under Protocol Nos 1 and 2. Reasoned opinions related to the Early Warning System are available in all EU official languages.

As of 2017, the CONNECT database can be consulted on the Directorate’s website. All information in CONNECT, including reasoned opinions and contributions received from national Parliaments, is directly available in e-Committee, the common working space of DGs IPOL and EXPO, under the procedure to which they relate. This applies not only to reasoned opinions but also to all contributions received from EU national Parliaments.

CONNECT enables rapporteurs, Members, assistants and staff of the committee secretariats, as well as all external stakeholders, to have an up-to-date and complete overview of all submissions received from national Parliaments at any moment in a given legislative procedure. In 2021, a total of 345 submissions were received: 123 (36 %) were submitted within the framework of the Protocol No 2 subsidiarity checks and 222 (64 %) were contributions under the Informal Political Dialogue.

On 1 January 2022, a total of 6 347 submissions (reasoned opinions and contributions) from EU national Parliaments could be found in the CONNECT database. 3 681 (58 %) were submitted within the framework of the Protocol No 2 subsidiarity checks and 2 666 (42 %) were submitted under the Informal Political Dialogue.

Main developments in 2021:

- The CONNECT database was updated to make it compatible with automatically receiving submissions via the new National Parliaments Submissions (NPS) tool platform.

7.3 Directory of Corresponding Committees (CorCom)

CORCOM

The Directory of Corresponding Committees (CorCom) is an information resource on national Parliaments’ committees corresponding to the committees of the European Parliament. It also provides information about the different committee secretariats of EU national Parliaments and the EP. The information included in the Directory is provided by the Brussels-based permanent representatives of EU national Parliaments.

CorCom is a useful tool for establishing links between European Parliament committees and the corresponding committees of the national Parliaments. It also serves to identify the chairperson and secretariat of the committees, which is always particularly useful for enhancing cooperation between the European Parliament and the national Parliaments.

Following the adoption of a resolution in May 2009 on the development of the relations between the EU national Parliaments and the European Parliament under the Treaty of Lisbon¹⁸ (rapporteur: Elmar Brok), the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament were revised accordingly, and now state that 'a committee may directly engage in dialogue with national Parliaments at committee level within the limits of the budgetary appropriations set aside for that purpose. This may include appropriate forms of pre-legislative and post-legislative cooperation' (Rule 150(3)).

The CorCom application is continuously being improved and updated to meet the changing needs of its users. Within the past couple of years it has been converted into a web-based application¹⁹, and it is now much more user-friendly and comes with a whole range of new features. In 2021, there were 4 612 visits to the application from 264 users, with 187 059 individual hits on its web pages.

7.4 Publications of the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments

The Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments produces a number of publications.

*One such publication, *Spotlight on Parliaments in Europe*, summarises information on certain topical issues and is circulated among Parliaments in the ECPRD network.*

*The *Weekly Agenda* provides information about activities involving national Parliaments with a view to increasing the transparency and visibility of the numerous interparliamentary activities undertaken.*

*The *State of Play Note* provides information on the submissions received from national Parliaments.*

Spotlight on Parliaments in Europe summarises information on certain topical matters and is circulated among Parliaments in the ECPRD network.

In 2021, the Directorate prepared five issues:

- *Spotlight* No 33 – February 2021 – State of COVID-19 measures in parliaments;
- *Spotlight* No 34 – March 2021 – Gender impact assessment of legislation;
- *Spotlight* No 35 – July 2021 – Statute and funding of political parties and foundations;
- *Spotlight* No 36 – September 2021 – Organisation of Plenary sittings;
- *Spotlight* No 37 – December 2021 – Governmental obligation to provide adequate information on draft bills.

The publications are available on the [Directorate's website](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl/en/home/publications) (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl/en/home/publications>)

The Weekly Agenda is sent on Fridays by email to all Members and services of the European Parliament. In 2021, 41 *Weekly Agendas* were sent out. The publication covers interparliamentary events for the upcoming two weeks, such as bilateral visits, interparliamentary conferences and ICMs. Information is given on the date, location and EP services involved.

The Directorate produces a monthly *State of Play Note* on reasoned opinions and contributions submitted by national Parliaments (see Chapter 5.1.3).

It also operates a website providing information on its upcoming activities and publications.

¹⁸European Parliament resolution of 7 May 2009 on the development of the relations between the European Parliament and national Parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon (OJ C 212 E, 5.8.2010, p. 94).

¹⁹CorCom is for internal use only. It is available on the intranet of the European Parliament.

8. DIRECTORATE FOR RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

In spite of high hopes, 2021 did not see a return to normal. Like 2020, it proved a challenging year, albeit for different reasons in many respects. The Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments sought to ensure continuity of its activities in order to provide high-quality support to the Members of the European Parliament and its various partners, to continue to pursue institutional cooperation and legislative dialogue with the EU's national Parliaments, and to assist with numerous interparliamentary events.

The Directorate provides support for interparliamentary activities, contributes to the implementation of the Treaty provisions on interparliamentary cooperation and acts as a knowledge centre for information on EU national Parliaments. It represents the European Parliament in the administrative networks of interparliamentary cooperation. It manages relations with the officials who represent EU national Parliaments in Brussels and maintains close links with their administrations.

The Directorate is grateful for the continuous support of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General and all services in the European Parliament Directorates-General with which it cooperates.

Director: **Katrin Ruhmann**

The Directorate consists of two units:

Legislative Dialogue Unit

The Legislative Dialogue Unit is mainly responsible for political and legislative dialogue with national Parliaments. It plans, coordinates and organises interparliamentary meetings at committee level, including ICMs, European Parliamentary Week and the JPSG on Europol. It also ensures monitoring of the subsidiarity check and follow-up with rapporteurs and committees of the implementation of Protocol No 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. The Unit also organises thematic seminars bringing together European Parliament and national Parliament administrations, and is responsible for the CONNECT and CorCom databases.

Head of Unit: **Jesús Gómez**

Institutional Cooperation Unit

The areas of responsibility of the Institutional Cooperation Unit include multilateral regulated cooperation, i.e. the EU Speakers Conference, meetings of Secretaries-General of EU Parliaments and COSAC. The Unit also deals with established networks, in particular IPEX and the ECPRD, as well as handling cooperation with DG EXPO and coordinating the Presidency Parliament Support Programme and capacity-building visits.

Head of Unit: **Anne Louise MCLAUHLAN**

This report, as well as further information related to the European Parliament's relations with EU national Parliaments, can be found on the [European Parliament's website](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl/en/home/annual-reports) (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl/en/home/annual-reports)

ANNEXES

ANNEX I – COSAC meetings – Topics and keynote speakers 2021

COSAC event	Place, Date	Topics	European Parliament's keynote Speakers / panellists
COSAC Chairpersons' Meeting	Videoconference, 11 January 2021	I – Priorities of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union II – The European Union's Recovery and Resilience	
Informal exchange of views with Michel Barnier, Head of the Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom, and the Chairpersons of the Committees on European Affairs of EU National Parliaments and the European Parliament	Videoconference, 25 January 2021	EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement	
Informal exchange of COSAC Chairpersons with European Commission Vice-President Věra Jourová	Videoconference, 28 January 2021	The European Action Plan on Democracy	
Informal exchange of COSAC Chairpersons with European Commission Vice-President Stella Kyriakides	Videoconference, 8 February 2021	The European Health Union	
Informal exchange of views between Executive Vice-President of the European Commission Valdis Dombrovskis and COSAC Chairpersons and the European Parliament	Videoconference, 7 April 2021	Recovery and Resilience Facility and Trade Policy Review	
LXV COSAC Plenary Meeting	Videoconference, 31 May – 1 June 2021	I – The Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU II – Social Europe: what model for the triple economic, digital and climate transition? III – Implementation of the national recovery and resilience plans – the role of national Parliaments IV – Conference on the Future of Europe: state of play	Roberta Metsola, First Vice-President of the European Parliament Guy Verhofstadt, Member of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani, Chair of the AFCD Committee of the European Parliament
COSAC Chairpersons' Meeting	Videoconference, 19 July 2021	I - Priorities of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union II - Cybersecurity in the EU - Strengthening the Resilience of Critical Infrastructure and Cyber Defence	Roberta Metsola, First Vice-President of the European Parliament
Exchange of views between Margrethe Vestager, European Commission Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit For The Digital Age, and the Chairpersons of the Committees on European Affairs of EU national Parliaments and the European Parliament	Videoconference, 12 October 2021	Digital Services Package (Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act), Trade and Technology Council, OECD global minimum tax on corporations	
Exchange of views between Kadri Simson, European Commissioner for Energy, and the Chairpersons of the Committees on European Affairs of the EU national Parliaments and the European Parliament	Videoconference, 8 November 2021	Energy Transition	
LXVI COSAC Plenary Meeting	Videoconference, 29-30 November 2021	I - Achievements of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU II - Working Towards a European Perspective for the Western Balkans III - The Future Role of Young People in EU Decision-Making Processes and Beyond IV - Conference on the Future of Europe	Roberta Metsola, First Vice-President of the European Parliament Guy Verhofstadt, Member of the European Parliament

For more detailed information on the agendas of COSAC meetings as published by the Presidencies, please consult the IPEX website: www.ipex.eu

ANNEX II - Interparliamentary Committee meetings and Interparliamentary Conferences organised by the European Parliament in Brussels in 2021

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS							
Date	European Parliament committee	Event		National Parliaments			EP
		Type of meeting	Title of meeting	Members	Parliaments	Chambers	Members
22 February 2021	ECON ENVI EMPL BUG	European Parliamentary Week: Plenary session	European Semester Conference -Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU	155	26	36	12 in person + remote connection
22 February 2021	ECON	European Parliamentary Week: Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU	59	23	29	18 in person + remote connection
22 February 2021	BUDG	European Parliamentary Week: Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU	63	21	26	12 in person + remote connection
22 February 2021	EMPL	European Parliamentary Week: Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU	41	13	17	13 in person + remote connection
22 February 2021	ENVI	European Parliamentary Week: Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU	39	15	20	13 in person + remote connection
4 March 2021	FEMM	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	International Women's Day: 'We are strong: women leading the fight against COVID 19'	61	23	31	17 in person + remote connection
14 June 2021	LIBE / DEVE	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Second High-Level Conference on Migration and Asylum in Europe	55	27	36	48 in person + remote connection
22 June 2021	AFCO	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Reform of the European Electoral Law, right of inquiry of the European Parliament	38	25	34	24 in person + remote connection
25-26 October 2021	LIBE	Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group	Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL)	73	25	30	32 in person + remote connection
27 September 2021	BECA	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Turning the tide on Cancer: the view of national Parliaments on the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan	39	20	25	15 in person + remote connection
8 November 2021	AIDA	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Decade	46	23	28	9 in person + remote connection
9 November 2021	AFCO	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	The expectations of national Parliaments for the Conference on the Future of Europe	56	21	17	9 in person + remote connection
9 November 2021	INGE	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation	38	14	19	17 in person + remote connection
18 November 2021	AGRI	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	The development of CAP strategic plans in each Member State	54	23	30	30 in person + remote connection
30 November 2021	FEMM	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Eliminating violence against women	48	23	30	56 in person + remote connection
9 December 2021	LIBE	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting	Rule of law	49	21	17	14 in person + remote connection
10 December 2021	LIBE / DEVE	High-Level Conference	Third High-Level Conference on Migration and Asylum in Europe	57	25	28	13 in-person + remote connection
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS				971			352

ANNEX III – Visits of EU national Parliaments to the European Parliament in 2021 (including videoconferences facilitated by the Directorate)

VISITS OF EU NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN 2021				
Date(s)	Country and Chamber	Visiting Committee / Other	Whom the visitor met with at the EP	Type of visit / Location
5.1.2021	SLOVENIA – National Assembly	Marko Pogačnik, Chair of the European Affairs Committee	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Videoconference
8.1.2021	GERMANY – Bundestag	Gunther Krichbaum, Chair of the European Affairs Committee	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Videoconference
19.1.2021	LITHUANIA – Seimas	Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė, Chair of the European Affairs Committee	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Videoconference
22.1.2021	GREECE – Parliament	Nikitas Kaklamanis, Chair of the European Affairs Committee	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Videoconference
1.2.2021	GERMANY – Bundestag	Guido Wolf, Chair of the European Affairs Committee	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Videoconference
9.2.2021	FRANCE – Assemblée Nationale	Sabine Thillaye, Chair of the European Affairs Committee	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Videoconference
22.2.2021	POLAND – Senate, LITHUANIA – Seimas, LATVIA – Saeima, ESTONIA – Riigikogu and CZECH REPUBLIC – Senate	Bogdan Klich (Chair of Foreign and EU Affairs Committee of the Polish Senate); Laima Andrikiienė (Lithuania, VP of PACE); Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (Lithuania, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Chair of EU Affairs Committee), Rihards Kols (Latvia, Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee); Enn Eesmaa (Estonia); Pavel Fischer (Czechia)	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Videoconference
25.2.2021	FINLAND – Parliament	Satu Hassi, Chair of the European Affairs Committee	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Videoconference
17.3.2021	PORTUGAL – Assembleia da República	Committee on Budget and Finance	MEPs of the FISC Subcommittee	Videoconference
22.4.2021	CROATIA – Parliament	Chair and Members of the European Affairs Committee	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Videoconference
3.5.2021	LITHUANIA – Seimas	MPs of the Seimas	Raphaël Glucksmann MEP, INGE Chair	Videoconference
22.6.2021	SLOVENIA – National Assembly	Igor Zorčič, Speaker of the National Assembly, and Members of the European Affairs Committee of the Slovenian National Assembly and the Commission for International Relations and European Affairs of the Slovenian National Council	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Slovenia
6.9.2021	THE NETHERLANDS – Tweede Kamer	MPs (rapporteurs on WTO reform)	MEPs (rapporteurs on WTO reform)	Videoconference
23.9.2021	ESTONIA – Riigikogu	Hanno Pevkur, Vice-President of the Estonian Parliament (Riigikogu), and Members of the EU Affairs Committee, Environment Committee and Economic Affairs Committee	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Estonia
23-24.9.2021	LITHUANIA – Seimas	Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen, Speaker of the Seimas, and the Chairs and Members of the Committee on European Affairs, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on National Security and Defence, and the Committee on Human Rights of the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas)	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Lithuania
28.10.2021	POLAND – Senate	Committee on Foreign Affairs and the EU of the Polish Senate	First Vice-President Roberta Metsola	Poland

ANNEX IV – Early Warning System data

The Committee on Legal Affairs, which is responsible for issues in relation to compliance with the principle of subsidiarity within the European Parliament, has provided the following definitions for submissions from national Parliaments:

- **‘Reasoned opinions’** are submissions which indicate the non-compliance of a draft legislative act with the principle of subsidiarity and have been communicated to the European Parliament within the eight-week deadline referred to in Article 6 of Protocol No 2 to the Treaties.
- **‘Contributions’** indicate any other submissions which do not fulfil the criteria listed above for a reasoned opinion.

SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED FROM NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN 2021			
Member State	Parliament/Chamber	Reasoned opinions	Contributions
Austria	Nationalrat	0	1
Austria	Bundesrat	0	1
Belgium	Chambre des Représentants	0	0
Belgium	Sénat	0	0
Bulgaria	Narodno Sabranie	0	1
Croatia	Hrvatski Sabor	0	0
Cyprus	Vouli ton Antiprosópon	0	0
Czech Republic	Poslanecká sněmovna	0	8
Czech Republic	Senát	4	23
Denmark	Folketinget	0	2
Estonia	Riigikogu	0	0
Finland	Eduskunta	0	0
France	Assemblée Nationale	0	0
France	Sénat	4	4
Germany	Bundestag	0	0
Germany	Bundesrat	0	10
Greece	Vouli ton Ellinon	0	6
Hungary	Országgyűlés	0	0
Ireland	Seanad Éireann	6	0
Ireland	Houses of the Oireachtas	0	1
Italy	Camera dei deputati	5	12
Italy	Senato	0	10
Lithuania	Seimas	0	0
Luxembourg	Chambre des Députés	0	0
Latvia	Saeima	0	0
Malta	Kamra tad-Deputati	1	0
The Netherlands	Tweede Kamer	0	1
The Netherlands	Eerste Kamer	0	5
Poland	Sejm	0	0
Poland	Senat	0	10
Portugal	Assembleia da República	0	38
Romania	Camera Deputaţilor	0	0
Romania	Senat	0	16
Spain	Congreso / Senado	0	53
Sweden	Riksdag	3	0
Slovenia	Državni Zbor	0	0
Slovenia	Državni Svet	0	0
Slovakia	Národná rada	1	0
TOTAL		24	202

ANNEX V – Contributions under Protocol 1 – Informal Political Dialogue

This table lists EU national Parliaments' documents sent in response to draft legislative acts falling under the exclusive competence of the EU, as well as a large variety of non-legislative documents like Green/White Papers or communications from the European Commission falling under Protocol No 1 to the Treaties.

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN 2021		
Member State	Parliament/Chamber	Contributions
Austria	Nationalrat	0
Austria	Bundesrat	1
Belgium	Chambre des Représentants	0
Belgium	Sénat	2
Bulgaria	Narodno Sabranie	0
Croatia	Hrvatski Sabor	0
Cyprus	Vouli ton Antiprosópon	0
Czech Republic	Poslanecká sněmovna	13
Czech Republic	Senát	27
Denmark	Folketinget	0
Estonia	Riigikogu	0
Finland	Eduskunta	1
France	Assemblée Nationale	7
France	Sénat	11
Germany	Bundestag	1
Germany	Bundesrat	10
Greece	Vouli ton Ellinon	0
Hungary	Országgyűlés	0
Ireland	Houses of the Oireachtas	1
Italy	Camera dei deputati	11
Italy	Senato	0
Lithuania	Seimas	1
Luxembourg	Chambre des Députés	0
Latvia	Saeima	0
Malta	Kamra tad-Deputati	0
The Netherlands	Tweede Kamer	5
The Netherlands	Eerste Kamer	10
Poland	Sejm	0
Poland	Senat	2
Portugal	Assembleia da República	16
Romania	Camera Deputaților	24
Romania	Senat	16
Spain	Congreso / Senado	60
Sweden	Riksdag	1
Slovenia	Državni Zbor	0
Slovenia	Državni Svet	0
Slovakia	Národná rada	2
TOTAL		222

ANNEX VI – European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD)

A. Issues on which political bodies and administrative services of the European Parliament consulted the ECPRD network in 2021 through comparative requests:

1. Gender equality in parliamentary diplomacy
2. Update on request 4548: collaborative document to update the table: 'state of COVID 19 measures in parliaments'
3. Accessibility of the buildings of the national parliaments of the EU Member States
4. Statute and funding of political parties and foundations
5. National nomination procedures for members of the European Court of Auditors (ECA)
6. Gender mainstreaming survey
7. Organisation of plenary sessions
8. Assigned revenue, borrowing and lending
9. Incentives for increasing participation in plenary debates
10. Cybersecurity in parliament
11. IPU Parline and ECPRD networks
12. Modernisation of logistical services in parliaments
13. Stress-testing policies to promote their robustness and resilience
14. Update on request 4855: use of the EU Digital COVID Certificate in parliamentary proceedings

B. The European Parliament provided replies to requests from other ECPRD Parliaments on the following topics:

1. Parliamentary Secretaries [Whips]
2. The experience in the European Parliament on several issues related to the work of MEPs
3. Legislative regulation of hunting dogs
4. Update on request 4855: use of the EU Digital COVID Certificate in parliamentary proceedings
5. Stress-testing policies to promote their robustness and resilience
6. Inadmissibility of amendments outside the scope of a bill (legislative riders)
7. Corporate due diligence and accountability
8. Visitor centres
9. Non-compliance with a lawful order or demand of a law enforcement officer and others
10. Olympic champions being admitted to universities without having to pass exams
11. Subtitling of committee and commission meetings (for hearing-impaired persons)
12. Technical barriers to entry into parliamentary buildings
13. Rules for legal drafting and the law-making process
14. The reopening of library branches and the provision of on-site library services during COVID-19
15. Update on request 2413: 'The Cabinet of the President of Parliament'
16. The role of the Speaker / President of the House of Representatives
17. Parliamentary staff and blended or hybrid working policies
18. Use of the EU Digital COVID Certificate in parliamentary proceedings
19. New parliamentary session and measures in force
20. IPU Parline and ECPRD networks
21. Use of cannabis for human consumption
22. Parliamentary Archives – update of request 902
23. Medical negligence
24. Required voting majority when electing officials by Parliament

25. Family-friendly Parliament for MPs
26. Addressing of parliament by a foreign head of state/head of government
27. Antigen testing for COVID-19 in parliament
28. Standards for small agri-markets
29. Conditions and restrictions for the exercise of the parliamentary mandate
30. Investigations into bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct: 'cluster reporting'
31. Education code
32. Digitalisation of parliamentary documents – more questions
33. New legislative policy on administrative offences
34. Intangible means of encouraging Maecenas of culture
35. Public service media and media councils
36. Law-making process
37. Waiving/eliminating penalties when a minor/under-aged person refuses to have personal relations with one of their parents
38. MPs' obligation to receive their salary or remuneration
39. Institutes of parliamentary studies, parliamentarianism and legislative formation
40. ICT strategy
41. Restrictions on movement imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic
42. Digitalisation and virtual parliamentary work
43. Construction of sports facilities
44. Prohibition of sexual harassment
45. Remote committee meetings
46. Support for MPs and parliament civil servants who have been subjected to harassment on social media
47. The acquisition of farmland
48. Religious holidays and reasonable accommodations for religion
49. Filing an appeal in cassation (process in the court of last instance)
50. Well-being budgeting
51. Questionnaire related to the webinar entitled 'How to strengthen parliamentary control over budget processes: the relationship between parliaments, fiscal councils and audit institutions'
52. Urgent request: the role of the Parliament in the discharge/dismissal of the President of the Republic (Head of State)
53. Digital textbooks
54. Protocol function and policies in Parliament
55. Reducing violence and bullying among children
56. State funding of sporting organisations
57. Certain aspects of parliamentary activity between 1 March 2020 and 31 March 2021
58. Gender mainstreaming survey
59. Mandatory and conditional wearing of face masks in lower education (pre- and primary school)
60. Urgent: the rights and responsibilities of Deputy Chairpersons in national Parliaments
61. Parliamentary practice with regard to the UN 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals
62. Parliament's energy policy
63. Work carried out by Members' staff and the scrutiny thereof
64. Questionnaire related to the webinar entitled 'Online communications and adapting parliamentary communications during the pandemic'
65. Institutional communication
66. Access to the healthcare services for women with disabilities
67. Social media strategy in Parliament
68. Assumption and control of expenses related to the mandate of Members of Parliament (Prise en charge et contrôle des frais liés au mandat des parlementaires)

69. Role of Parliament in the development of regulatory impact assessments
70. Adapting and fitting out plenary meetings to cater for parliamentarians with disabilities
71. Breastfeeding and baby food circulation
72. Imposing alimony
73. Parliamentary data dashboard
74. Electronic archiving
75. Use of mobile electronic devices in plenary and at parliamentary bodies
76. Pastures regulation
77. Technology for video conferences and cloud services
78. Human resources development plan
79. Setting up a subcommittee within a parliamentary standing committee
80. Update on request 4548: collaborative document to update the table 'state of COVID 19 measures in parliaments'
81. Voting by secret ballot outside parliament
82. COVID-19 vaccination plan
83. Penitentiary regulations and prisoner health issues
84. Declaration of interests of experts heard in Parliament
85. Christmas trees in Parliament
86. Additional questions in relation to a request on the geographical location of the parliamentary library, archives etc. What is the significance of the location for the users, service and workflow?
87. Renegade procedure
88. Operations units in Parliaments

C. ECPRD seminars and statutory meetings in 2021

SEMINARS		
Meeting	Location	Date
Webinar – ‘What procedural changes introduced because of COVID-19 will be retained in your Parliament once the Pandemic is over?’ (Area of interest: parliamentary practice and procedures)	London / online	16.12.2021
Webinar – ‘Democracy without shortcuts – an exchange with political philosopher Cristina Lafont’ (Area of interest: parliamentary practice and procedures)	Vienna / online	2.11.2021
Webinar – how to strengthen parliamentary control over budget processes (Area of interest: economic and budgetary affairs)	Podgorica / online	8.7.2021
Webinar – Parliaments and the General Data Protection Regulation (Area of interest: parliamentary practice and procedures)	Vienna / online	14.6.2021
Webinar – ICT – Parliaments on the net 2021 – online communication and adapting parliamentary communication during the pandemic (Area of interest: ICT in Parliaments)	Helsinki / online	3.6.2021
Webinar – ‘A Year of Hope and Transition’ (Area of interest: parliamentary libraries, research and archives)	Brussels / online	1-3.6.2021
Webinar – ‘Parliamentary Involvement in the Definition of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans’ (Area of interest: economic and budgetary affairs)	Rome / online	23.4.2021
Webinar – ICT – electronic signatures and seals (Area of interest: ICT in Parliaments)	Brussels / online	15.3.2021
Webinar – Parliaments and the General Data Protection Regulation (Area of interest: parliamentary practice and procedures)	Vienna / online	18.1.2021

STATUTORY MEETINGS		
Meeting	Location	Date
Annual Conference of Correspondents	London / online	18.11.2021
Executive Committee Meeting	Brussels / online	23.9.2021
Executive Committee Meeting	Brussels / online	1.7.2021
Executive Committee Meeting	Brussels / online	18.3.2021

Glossary of terms and acronyms

AFCO: Committee on Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament.

AFET: Committee on Foreign Affairs, European Parliament.

AIDA: Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age, European Parliament.

BECA: Special Committee on Beating Cancer, European Parliament.

BUDG: Committee on Budgets, European Parliament.

CORCOM: The Directory of Corresponding Committees. An information source on national Parliaments' committees corresponding to the committees of the European Parliament. Provides information about the different committee secretariats of EU national Parliaments and the European Parliament.

COSAC: Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs. Treaty-based conference of Members of the European Parliament and Members of national Parliaments from parliamentary committees responsible for European Union affairs.

DEVE: Committee on Development, European Parliament.

DG EXPO: Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, European Parliament Secretariat.

DG IPOL: Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union, European Parliament Secretariat.

DG ITEC: Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support, European Parliament Secretariat.

ECPRD: European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation. Information exchange network for the administrations of Parliaments in Europe, functioning on the basis of comparative requests.

ECON: Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, European Parliament.

EMPL: Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, European Parliament.

EP: European Parliament.

EPW: European Parliamentary Week. The Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the European Union (IPC SECG) and the European Semester Conference bring together parliamentarians from all over the European Union to discuss economic, budgetary and social matters.

Eurojust: European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation.

Europol: The European Union's law enforcement agency.

EUSC: European Union Speakers' Conference. Annual meeting of the Speakers of the Parliaments of EU Member States, organised by the Parliament of the previous autumn's EU Council Presidency.

EWS: Early Warning System. A review mechanism set out in Protocol No 2 to the Treaties on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. It provides for national Parliaments to send a reasoned opinion to the Presidents of the institutions.

FEMM: Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, European Parliament.

ICM: Interparliamentary Committee Meeting. Meetings co-organised by committee secretariat(s) and the Legislative Dialogue Unit of the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments of the European Parliament. ICMs function as a forum for dialogue between Members of national Parliaments and MEPs.

INGE: Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation, European Parliament.

IPC CFSP/CSDP: Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy. Interparliamentary platform for debate on the EU's foreign, security and defence policy. Organised twice a year by the Parliament of the EU Member State holding the EU Council Presidency, in close cooperation with the European Parliament.

IPD: Informal Political Dialogue. The contributions of the EU national Parliaments under Protocol No 1 to the Treaties that comment on legislative files falling under the exclusive competence of the EU as well as on non-legislative documents such as white papers or communications of the European Commission.

IPEX: Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange. Platform for the mutual exchange of EU-related documents and information between national Parliaments and the European Parliament.

JPSG: Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol. Interparliamentary scrutiny group that ensures that Europol is fully accountable and transparent. The JPSG holds two meetings per year: one at the Parliament of the country holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU, and one at the European Parliament.

JURI: Committee on Legal Affairs, European Parliament.

LIBE: Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, European Parliament.

MPs: Members of (national) Parliament.

MEPs: Members of the European Parliament.

PESCO: Permanent Structured Cooperation in the area of security and defence policy, established by a Council decision on 11 December 2017 with 25 Member States. It offers a legal framework to jointly plan, develop and invest in shared capability projects, and enhance the operational readiness and contribution of armed forces.

Spotlight: Publications related to summaries on parliamentary procedures or practices and based on replies to requests sent to the ECPRD network.

TEU: Treaty on European Union.

TFEU: Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS OF THE EU MEMBER STATES

December 2021



directly elected



indirectly elected / appointed / other

 Belgique/België/ Belgien BELGIUM Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers/ Chambre des représentants/ Abgeordnetenversammlung 150  Senaat/ Sénat/ Senat 60 	 България BULGARIA Народно събрание (Narodno sabranie) 240 	 Česká republika CZECH REPUBLIC Poslanecká sněmovna 200  Senát 81 	 Danmark DENMARK Folketinget 179 
 Deutschland GERMANY Deutscher Bundestag 709  Bundesrat 69 	 Eesti ESTONIA Riigikogu 101 	 Éire/Ireland IRELAND Dáil Éireann 160  Seanad Éireann 60 	 Ελλάδα GREECE Βουλή των Ελλήνων (Vouli ton Ellinon) 300 
 España SPAIN Congreso de los Diputados 350  Senado 208  57 	 France FRANCE Assemblée nationale 577  Sénat 348 	 Hrvatska CROATIA Hrvatski sabor 151 	 Italia ITALY Camera dei Deputati 629  Senato della Repubblica 315  6 
 Κύπρος CYPRUS Βουλή των Αντιπροσώπων (Vouli ton Antiprosopon) 56 	 Latvija LATVIA Saeima 100 	 Lietuva LITHUANIA Seimas 141 	 Luxembourg LUXEMBOURG Chambre des Députés 60 
 Magyarország HUNGARY Országgyűlés 199 	 Malta MALTA Il-Kamra Tad-Deputati 67 	 Nederland THE NETHERLANDS Tweede Kamer 150  Eerste Kamer 75 	 Österreich AUSTRIA Nationalrat 183  Bundesrat 61 
 Polska POLAND Sejm 460  Senat 100 	 Portugal PORTUGAL Assembleia da República 230 	 România ROMANIA Camera Deputatilor 330  Senat 136 	 Slovenija SLOVENIA Državni zbor 90  Državni svet 40 
 Slovensko SLOVAKIA Národná Rada 150 	 Suomi/ Finland FINLAND Eduskunta 200 	 Sverige SWEDEN Riksdagen 349 	



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