

THE ROLE OF IPEX

This short note summarises the key findings of the debate on the role of IPEX performed by the IPEX Board.

IPEX is a multifunctional platform supporting inter-parliamentary cooperation in the European Union by organising human resources and providing technical means for the electronic exchange of information on all EU-related parliamentary activities. While it is targeted at users in parliaments, most content is also opened to the public.

It started as a specific project launched by the EU speakers Conference (EUSC) in Rome in 2000 and then developed in accordance to precise objective and goals set out by the Speakers Conference itself. The current IPEX system was launched in 2006 in order to fully implement the mandate of the Speakers Conference in Rome in 2000.

The Guidelines for Interparliamentary Cooperation (GIC), adopted by the Speakers Conference in 2004 and amended in 2008, as well as the IPEX Guidelines, are the legal and political framework for the development and functioning of IPEX, stating *inter alia*, that “*The objective of IPEX is to support inter-parliamentary cooperation in the European Union by providing a platform for electronic exchange of information on all EU-related parliamentary activities.*”

Under this framework, it is possible to infer that IPEX is:

- 1) a multifunctional platform used by the network of EU parliaments to support the interparliamentary cooperation in the EU and facilitate the exchange of information and documentation also by means of the information supplied by a network of Correspondents;
- 2) a project not restricted to National Parliaments but which includes also - on equal footing - the European Parliament, as a member of the EU parliamentary community;
- 3) a system which supports all the EU related activities and tasks of National Parliaments and of the European Parliament: general scrutiny of EU documents, monitoring of subsidiarity of EU legislative proposals, including the early warning mechanism, political dialogue, interparliamentary cooperation but also common projects promoted by the Speakers Conference;
- 4) a website addressed primarily to parliamentary users (Members, staff and political groups) while being open, to the general public (academics or other interested persons). IPEX provides also the possibility to host the exchange of information on sensitive topics reserved to restricted users.

- 5) a platform with a threefold function: information channel, reference website and institutional repository of interparliamentary cooperation.

The effectiveness of IPEX as a multifunctional platform for interparliamentary cooperation will increase if each National Parliament is able to provide, according to the recommendations of the Speakers of the EU, information about EU related activities in English and/or French. At the same time all initiatives adopted in the EU Parliaments targeted at increasing the knowledge on IPEX among its potential users are welcome and represent a valuable way for expanding the usage and importance of IPEX in the EU decision making processes.