



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

THE ROMANIAN GROUP OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION AT ITS 125 ANNIVERSARY





Foreword



In 2016, we are proudly celebrating 125 years since the Romanian parliamentarians joined the IPU. Our longstanding experience in the first ever international parliamentary forum has been a rich and meaningful one. Since 1891, many of Romania's political personalities left their mark on the work of the IPU in areas such as the peaceful settlement of international disputes, the reduction of armaments, the development of international law and international criminal justice.

Over the years, in dramatically different historical and political contexts, the Romanian IPU Group continued to make its contribution to shaping the Union's evolution towards what it represents today: the global organisation of parliaments and focal point of parliamentary cooperation for peace, democracy, sustainable development, for a world grounded in respect for human rights and equality for all.

As members of the IPU since its early inception, we strongly support what we believe to be the Union's major assets nowadays: its universal vocation, an outstanding expertise in the strengthening of parliamentary democracy and the promotion of gender equality in politics, its contribution in mobilizing parliamentary action to achieve the new Sustainable Development Goals, its unique mechanism designed to protect the human rights of parliamentarians, and the special partnership with the United Nations, with a significant potential towards enhancing the parliamentary input in international processes, and the implementation of global decisions at country level.

At this anniversary moment, on behalf of all Romanian parliamentarians, Deputies and Senators, who constitute the Romanian IPU Group, I am honoured to reaffirm our commitment to uphold the role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union as key international actor and driving force of parliamentary democracy worldwide. In these challenging times, IPU's ideals and values and the goals it pursues are more relevant than ever.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ioan Stan', written in a cursive style.

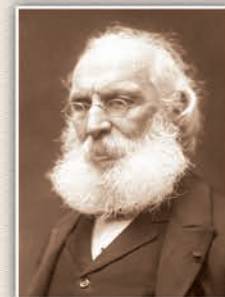
Deputy Ioan Stan
President of the Romanian IPU Group

IPU at a glance



William Randal Cremer
(1828 - 1908)

Established in 1889 in Paris, on the initiative of two parliamentarians promoters of peace, Sir William Randal Cremer (United Kingdom) and Frédéric Passy (France), IPU was the first permanent forum for political multilateral negotiations, whose aim was to promote arbitration of conflicts and world peace, based on parliamentary support.



Frédéric Passy
(1822 - 1912)

The Union contributed significantly to the development and codification of international law, particularly in the field of arbitration. It played an important part in the setting up, in 1899, of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, and worked for the establishment, in 1920, of the League of Nations, predecessor of the United Nations. The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded eleven times to leading personalities of the IPU, including its co-founders, during the first forty years of existence of the Union. Over time, IPU's mission evolved towards advancing democracy and inter-parliamentary relations.



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

Today, IPU is the global organization of parliaments. The Union acts as focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy. To that end, the IPU:

- Fosters contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
- Considers questions of international interest and concern and expresses its views on such issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians;
- Contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights - an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development;
- Contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.

As of January 2016, 167 parliaments are members, and 10 regional parliamentary assemblies are associate members of the IPU.

The IPU **Assembly** (formerly, the Inter-Parliamentary Conference) is the principal statutory body that expresses the views of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on political issues. Four plenary **Standing Committees** assist the Assembly in its work: Standing Committee on Peace and International Security; Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade; Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights; Standing Committee on UN Affairs.



The **President of the IPU** is the political head of the organization. Elected by the IPU membership through its Governing Council, for a three-year mandate, the President is also the *ex officio* President of IPU's Governing Council and the Executive Committee. The current IPU President is Saber Hossain Chowdhury, member of the Parliament of Bangladesh, with an extensive parliamentary and governmental experience and a prodigious activity in the field of inter-parliamentary relations.

The **Governing Council** is the plenary policy-making body of the IPU. A number of **committees and working groups** are subordinated to it: Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians; Committee on Middle East Questions; Group of Facilitators for Cyprus; Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law; Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians; Gender Partnership Group, and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU.

The **Executive Committee** oversees the administration of the IPU and provides advice to the Governing Council on matters relating to affiliation and reaffiliation to the Union, fixes the date and place and establishes the provisional agenda of Council sessions, proposes to the Council the annual work programme and budget of the Union, controls the administration of the Secretariat and its activities in the execution of the decisions taken by the Assembly and the Council.

The **Meeting of Women Parliamentarians** promotes contacts and coordination among women parliamentarians on topics of common interest, as well as parity and partnership between men and women, and women's participation and equitable representation within the IPU.

Six **geopolitical groups** are active within the IPU: Africa, Arab Group, Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Twelve Plus.



The **Secretary General** manages the IPU Secretariat, staff and budget in addition to implementing the decisions of the Governing Council and Assembly. The current IPU Secretary General is Martin Chungong (Cameroon), who dedicated his professional life to promoting parliamentary democracy world-wide.

The **Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments**, created in 1939, is a consultative body of the IPU, which examines the law, procedure, practice and working methods of different parliaments and proposes measures for their improvement.



The IPU supports the efforts of and works in close **co-operation with the United Nations**. The Union participates in the sessions and the work of the UN General Assembly with Permanent Observer status, and enjoys the right to distribute its official documents in the General Assembly. Resolutions on the *cooperation between UN, IPU and national parliaments* are debated upon and adopted every two years, during the UN General Assembly sessions.

The *Conferences of Speakers of Parliament* organized by the IPU with UN support in 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015, confirmed the commitment of parliaments, represented at the highest level, to cooperate closely with the United Nations in addressing the challenges facing international community.

During IPU's annual *Parliamentary Hearings at the United Nations*, parliamentarians engage in interactive debates with UN officials, representatives of UN diplomatic community, scholars and leading academics, on topical issues of the international agenda.

In addition to the political contribution that the IPU makes to the United Nations, the two organizations are working together through joint activities involving numerous UN specialized agencies and programmes, with a particular focus on democracy, human rights, women's issues and child protection, HIV/AIDS, international trade, and sustainable development.

IPU has its headquarters in Geneva and a Permanent Observer Office to the United Nations in New York.



Romania at the IPU



Senator V.A. Urechia
(1834-1901)

The Parliament of Romania joined the IPU in 1891, at the **third Inter-Parliamentary Conference** in Rome. The Romanian delegation included 26 Deputies and Senators and was led by Senator Vasile Alexandrescu Urechia, a prominent politician, historian and writer, founding member of the Romanian Academy, with an impressive 34-year long parliamentary experience (1876-1901) in the Assembly of Deputies and Senate.



Proceedings of the third Inter-Parliamentary
Conference (Rome, 1891)

At the next Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Bern, 1892), when the *Inter-Parliamentary Bureau for International Arbitration* was created, Senator V.A. Urechia, Leader of the Romanian Parliamentary Section of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference, became member of the Bureau, as representative of the parliaments of Romania, Greece and Serbia.

Throughout the following five decades, the Romanian parliamentarians had a remarkable contribution in advancing IPU's goals. A prominent figure during the interwar period was Vespasian V. Pella, member of the Assembly of Deputies, Vice-President of the Romanian IPU Group, member of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, an eminent jurist, professor, politician and diplomat, one of the founders of international criminal law and an ardent champion of international criminal justice. As he noted in 1939, the IPU offered him the most enabling environment to develop his own concepts on "the new pacifying missions" of international criminal law.



(1897-1952)

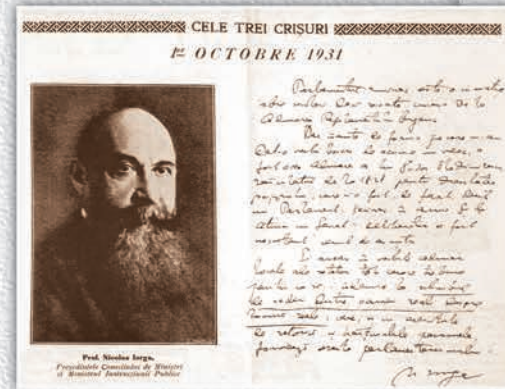
“Faced with the realities of the present day and the uncertainty of the future [...], it is in the interest of all - weak and strong States alike – to unite and thus to ensure effective prevention and repression of wars of aggression by a common force which would always be greater than that at the disposal of some of those States. It is only then that justice will stretch its protecting wings over the weak nations, while force will rise up threateningly before those who wish to resort to violence in an attempt to disturb international order.

When that day comes, none will deny the great contribution which the Inter-Parliamentary Union has made to the coming of a truly new era of thought and action in the sphere of the organization of peace!”

Vespasian V. Pella - “The Inter-Parliamentary Union and International Penal Law”, article published on the occasion of IPU’s 50th anniversary (1939)

In 1931, the Parliament of Romania hosted the **27th Inter-Parliamentary Conference** in Bucharest. The National Group was chaired by Dimitrie Pompeiu, President of the Assembly of Deputies and eminent mathematician, while the President of the Senate was Mihail Sadoveanu, well-known politician and one of the most prolific Romanian writers. Prof. Nicolae Iorga, Romania’s greatest national historian, President of the Council of Ministers at that time, greeted the participants on behalf of the Government.

Nicolae Iorga - “The origins of Parliament”, article published in “Cele trei Crișuri” culture magazine, no. 9-10 (September/October 1931) dedicated to the Bucharest Inter-Parliamentary Conference



“The direct, ongoing contact with the nation is, unfortunately, nothing but a utopia; it is only through intermediaries designated by popular suffrage that the required connection between the holders of administrative power and those whose action they are called to guide can be maintained. These representatives of the political nation may belong to different parties or represent classes that go through a phase of violent antagonism; nevertheless, the human being is built in such a way that it suffices to get together and then, in certain fields and at certain times, solidarity will prevail.”

Nicolae Iorga - Inaugural speech at the 27th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Bucharest, 1931)



Proceedings of the 27th Inter-Parliamentary Conference at the Palace of the Assembly of Deputies (Bucharest, 1931)

Henri La Fontaine, Member of the Belgian Senate, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate in 1913, addressing the 27th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Bucharest, 1931)



The Conference debated upon *the preparation of the 1932 General Disarmament Conference, the protection of mothers and children, agricultural questions, and the European Federal Union.*

The next IPU meetings that took place in Romania were the **spring session of the Study Committees and of the Inter-Parliamentary Council**, in 1974, and the **Inter-Parliamentary Colloquium “A new system of international economic relations”**, in 1975. Also, in 1974 the Romanian IPU Group had the initiative to publish its own Bulletin.

After the fall of the totalitarian regime, the Romanian IPU Group representing a democratically elected body resumed its activity within the IPU on the occasion of the 84th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Punta del Este, 1990). Since then, the Romanian parliamentarians have taken an active part in most of IPU's sessions and specialized meetings, with substantive contributions to the debates and the drafting of resolutions on a wide range of subjects related to peace and international security, democracy, human rights and gender equality, sustainable development, education and culture.



In 1995, the Parliament of Romania hosted the **94th Inter-Parliamentary Conference**, Romania being the only country from Central and Eastern Europe to organize an IPU session after 1989. The Bucharest Conference's proceedings took place at the Palace of Parliament and were attended by delegates representing 118 national parliaments, three parliamentary assemblies and various international organizations. At the opening ceremony, the President of Romania, Ion Iliescu, the President of the Senate, Oliviu Gherman, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Adrian Năstase, elected President of the Conference, and Senator Ion Solcanu, President of the Romanian IPU Group, as well as the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, Ahmed Fathy Sorour, and the UN Under-Secretary General and Special Representative for Public Affairs, Joseph Verner Reed, delivered inaugural addresses.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Teodor Meleșcanu, and of Labour and Social Protection, Dan Mircea Popescu, spoke before the participants during the *General debate on the political, economic and social situation in the world*, and the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. The Conference's agenda included three topical items: *parliamentary action to fight corruption; implementation of the commitments adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen; the comprehensive ban of all nuclear weapons testing.*



Inaugural Ceremony



General debate

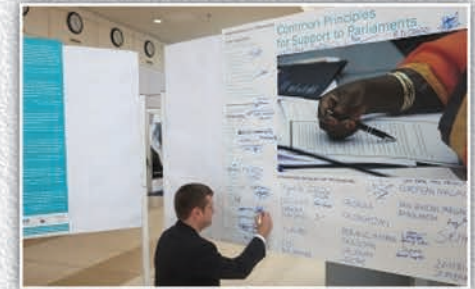


Opening ceremony of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

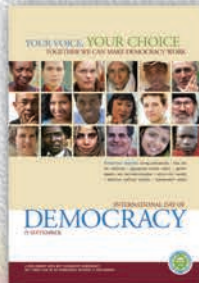
The Romanian IPU Group has actively participated to reflection processes aimed at enhancing IPU's role and relevance in relation to its member parliaments and the United Nations, while being a firm supporter of IPU's initiatives and projects promoting representative democracy with stronger parliaments, and an increased parliamentary dimension of international relations.



"Representation of minorities in the Romanian Parliament"
- case study (2010),
IPU-UNDP project



Launching of the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments (132nd IPU Assembly, Hanoi, 2015)



"In its endeavour to find the most accurate definition of a democratic parliament, the IPU has identified the following indispensable characteristics: representativeness, transparency, accessibility, accountability and effectiveness. The extent to which a parliament integrates these values represents, undoubtedly, the best health indicator of a democratic society. Therefore parliaments have to reflect seriously on the continuous need of reforming themselves by adapting and improving their work modalities and procedures, and making them better known and better understood. Democratisation involving the strengthening of the parliamentary institution is not a one-time approach, but a permanent process of vital importance to young and old democracies alike".

Declaration on behalf of the Executive Bureau of the Romanian IPU Group, presented in the plenum of the Senate on the occasion of the first International Day of Democracy - 15 September 2008

Besides their participation in IPU's plenary bodies, over the last 25 years the Romanian parliamentarians held positions in the Bureaus of IPU's Standing Committees for Peace and International Security and for Democracy and Human Rights, the Coordinating Committee of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, the former IPU Committee for Sustainable Development, and the Preparatory Committee of the first Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments. Also, they contributed as panelists, key-note speakers and rapporteurs in international and regional inter-parliamentary meetings on *parliamentary action to eliminate landmines* (1997); *special measures to ensure equality, including positive action* (2001); *national legislation and policies against child trafficking* (2003); *accession to the EU-the role of parliament* (2004); *participation of minorities and indigenous peoples in politics* (2010); *human trafficking* (2010); *gender equality, education, maternal, new born and children health* (2011); *contribution of parliaments to the work of the UN Human Rights Council* (2014); *the Sustainable Development Goals* (2015).

In 2014 and 2015, the Parliament of Romania hosted two ***IPU regional seminars for Central and Eastern European countries***, which examined the role of parliaments in *translating international human rights commitments into national realities*, and in defining and promoting the new *Sustainable Development Goals*.



Proceedings of the 2014 Bucharest Seminar on the role of parliaments in translating international human rights commitments into national realities



Opening session of the
2015 Bucharest Seminar on the SDGs

Following the adoption of the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda, on the initiative of Deputy László Borbély, Vice-President of the Romanian IPU Group, the Parliament of Romania and the IPU have agreed to jointly organize in Bucharest, in April 2016, a third regional seminar aimed at identifying concrete lines of parliamentary action for achieving the SDGs at national, regional and global levels. On this occasion, a joint solemn plenary sitting of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate is convened to adopt a Declaration on the SDG and celebrate Romania's 125 year-long participation in the IPU.

The Secretaries General and Deputy Secretaries General of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate contributed to the work of the ASGP with inputs to the reports and general debates, communications, background documentation on specific aspects of the activity of the two Chambers, participation in the ASGP Executive Committee.

Bilateral exchanges at the level of National Groups included visits of delegations of the Romanian IPU Group in China, Thailand, Argentina and Venezuela (1991), Cyprus (1995), Syria (1998), and United Kingdom (1998 and 2014), and visits to Romania by delegations of the Turkish IPU Group (1991), the Australian IPU Group (1994), the Malaysian IPU Group (2007), and the British IPU Group (1994 and 2015).



Visit of the Secretary General of IPU
Bucharest, 2014



132nd IPU Assembly
Hanoi, 2015



Visit of the British IPU Group
Bucharest, 2015



122nd IPU Assembly, Bangkok, 2010



132th IPU Assembly
Hanoi, 2015



Photo
Gallery



130th IPU Assembly
Geneva, 2014



Parliamentary Briefing at the UN General Assembly
High Level Meeting on AIDS, New York, 2011



127th IPU Assembly
Quebec City, 2012



129th IPU Assembly, Geneva, 2013



116th IPU Assembly
Nusa Dua, 2007



Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion
of the UN Climate Change Conference
Paris, 2015



Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion
of the 54th CSW session, New York, 2010



112th IPU Assembly
Manila, 2005



Annual Session of the
Parliamentary Conference
on the WTO, Geneva, 2006

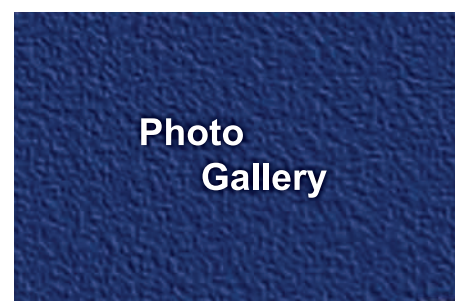


Photo
Gallery



Parliamentary Briefing at
the XVII International AIDS Conference
Mexico City, 2008



114th IPU Assembly, Nairobi, 2006



Parliamentary Conference
on the global economic crisis
Geneva, 2009



Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion
of the 51st CSW session
New York, 2007

THE ROMANIAN GROUP OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

According to the Statutes adopted by the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate in 1990, the Romanian IPU Group, fully sharing IPU's principles and objectives, upholds the participation of Romanian parliamentarians in bilateral and multilateral inter-parliamentary activities and their active collaboration with parliamentarians from other States, with a view to promoting the ideals of liberty and democracy, developing representative institutions, achieving the aspirations of peace, understanding and cooperation of all peoples in the world, in accordance with the goals endorsed by the United Nations.

The Group is composed of all members of the Parliament of Romania, Deputies and Senators, together with former Romanian parliamentarians with outstanding contributions to the work of the IPU, in the capacity of honorary members.

The Group's main governing bodies are: the **General Assembly**, which adopts/amends the Statutes of the Group, elects the President and the Steering Committee of the Group; approves the activity reports of the Group; the **Steering Committee** consisting of 25 members, whose membership reflects the political configuration of Parliament; the Committee elects the Executive Bureau of the Group, submits to the Standing Bureaus of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate proposals regarding the activity programme and the budget of the Group, the Group's representatives in IPU's Governing Council, the composition and mandate of the Romanian delegations to IPU Assemblies, the setting up and membership of Parliamentary Friendship Groups; at the same time, the Committee takes all other measures deemed necessary for the implementation of IPU's decisions and recommendations; the **Executive Bureau** consisting of the President of the Group, two Vice-Presidents, two Secretaries and a Treasurer, coordinates the activities of the Group, maintains contacts with other National Groups, the IPU's Secretariat, partner institutions in Romania and abroad, and prepares the proceedings of the Steering Committee and General Assembly. The work and functioning of the Group is supported by a **Technical Secretariat**.





Executive Bureau of the Romanian IPU Group, as of January 2016:

- President: Deputy Ioan Stan
- Vice-Presidents: Deputy Ionel Palăr
Deputy László Borbély
- Secretaries: Senator Dumitru Oprea
Deputy Ion Cristinel Marian
- Treasurer: Senator Șerban-Constantin Valeca

The Romanian IPU Group, through its Steering Committee, initiates and conducts the procedures related to the setting up, structure, size and membership of the **Parliamentary Friendship Groups**. At the end of the 2012-2016 legislature in the Parliament of Romania there are 91 Parliamentary Friendship Groups promoting parliamentary dialogue and exchanges with countries from all over the world. Each Group is led by an Executive Bureau consisting of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chair and a Secretary. The memberships of these Groups and of their Executive Bureaus are established through negotiations among parliamentary political groups so as to reflect the political configuration of Parliament.



Since 2004, the Romanian IPU Group has published a half-yearly **Information Bulletin** presenting news about the work of the IPU, the main activities of the Romanian Group and Friendship Groups, and various parliamentary diplomacy events with Romanian participation, which are organized under the aegis of the United Nations system.



A stylized, light blue graphic of a leafy branch with several leaves and small circular accents, positioned in the upper right corner of the page.

Publication produced by the Secretariat of the Romanian IPU Group
Senate of Romania, Palace of Parliament
Calea 13 Septembrie no. 1-3, Sector 5, 050711 BUCHAREST, Romania
Phone: 004 021 311 32 23; Email: grui@senat.ro

