



CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES  
ROMANIA

# Translating international human rights commitments into national realities: The contribution of parliaments to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council



Seminar for parliaments from Central and Eastern Europe  
organized jointly by the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament and the  
Inter-Parliamentary Union

17-18 February 2014 - Bucharest (Romania)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE SEMINAR

Parliaments and the United Nations Human Rights Council are natural partners. Without parliamentary action - be it passing laws or overseeing government action - very few recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the mechanism whereby the Council examines the human rights situation in all UN Member States, will actually be implemented. Indeed, the mandate entrusted to parliaments to legislate and hold governments to account for their actions is of paramount importance to the work of the Human Rights Council.

In recent years, the IPU has made it a priority to raise awareness among parliaments about the Council and its UPR and the contribution they can make to it. The IPU systematically informs parliaments of the forthcoming examination of their countries' national reports. The IPU organizes capacity-building workshops for parliamentarians to enhance their understanding of the UPR and their role. A survey recently conducted by the IPU found that many parliaments are still unfamiliar with the work of the Council or its UPR. The tide is turning, however, and parliaments are increasingly taking an active interest in the work of the Council.

On 29 May 2013, the Human Rights Council, with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), held a panel discussion in Geneva to address the contribution of parliaments to promoting human rights at the national level and to the work of the Council. The participants concurred that parliaments had a critical part to play in ensuring respect for human rights domestically and that parliaments and the Human Rights Council stood to gain much from closer cooperation. To this end, participants recommended action to:

- Further enhance awareness among members of parliaments of the existence of the Human Rights Council and its UPR and the need for their full involvement in its work;
- Foster greater involvement of members of parliament in the three different reporting stages of the UPR; and
- Promote the adoption, by the Human Rights Council, of practical steps to engage with parliaments and to take their work into account.

The regional seminar aims to inform participants about how the Council functions and alert them to the importance of becoming more involved. The meeting aims to identify good parliamentary practices in working with the Council and in promoting human rights more generally, including by engaging effectively with other stakeholders such as civil society.

### 2. VENUE, DATE AND PROGRAMME

The seminar will be held on 17 and 18 February 2014 in the Parliament of Romania (Palace of Parliament), Nicolae Bălcescu Hall, level P (ground level). Access to the seminar venue is from the official entrance C1 located on Constitution Square, and all badges and seminar documents should be collected from the registration area located in front of Nicolae Bălcescu Hall (level P). The programme of the seminar is attached.

### 3. PARTICIPATION

This seminar is open to the parliaments from Central and Eastern Europe. These parliaments are invited to send a delegation of four members at most, gender-balanced and reflecting the political representation of the parliament. It is recommended that the members of the delegation work directly on human rights issues in their parliaments.

### 4. ORGANIZATION OF PROCEEDINGS

In keeping with IPU practice, all participants will have equal speaking rights. In order to ensure that the discussions are as fruitful and constructive as possible, the following rules will apply:

- (a) There will be no list of speakers on any agenda item. After the experts have introduced an agenda item, the floor will be open to participants for questions and comments.
- (b) Experience has shown that this kind of meeting does not lend itself to the reading out of prepared statements. Subject to arrangements that the Chair may make to suit the circumstances, oral contributions may not exceed **three minutes**. Participants may speak several times on each item, particularly to respond to other statements.
- (c) A Rapporteur will sum up the work of the seminar at its concluding session.

The seminar proceedings will be conducted in English, French and Romanian.

### 5. DOCUMENTS

Participants will receive hard copies of the experts' presentations as they become available.

To the extent possible and for the information of participants, the IPU Secretariat will make available background documentation on the topics under discussion.

Participants wishing to distribute relevant documentation to their colleagues will be required to provide it in sufficient quantities and place it on a table set aside for the purpose.

### 6. REGISTRATION

Invited parliaments are requested to send their list of participants attending the seminar **no later than 16 December 2013**, using the enclosed Registration Form to the following addresses:

<p><b>Parliament of Romania</b> <b>Chamber of Deputies</b> Mrs. Daniela Georgian Secretary of the Romanian Delegation 2-4 Izvor str., District 5, Bucharest, Romania Tel: + 4021 414 15 48 / Fax: +4021 414 18 77 Email: <a href="mailto:ipu2014@cdep.ro">ipu2014@cdep.ro</a></p>	<p><b>With copy to:</b> <b>Inter-Parliamentary Union</b> 5, Chemin du Pommier Case postale 330, 1218 Grand-Saconnex Geneva, Switzerland Tel: + 41 22 919 41 50 / Fax: + 41 22 919 41 60 Email: <a href="mailto:postbox@mail.ipu.org">postbox@mail.ipu.org</a></p>
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### 7. HOTEL ACCOMMODATION AND RESERVATIONS

The Chamber of Deputies (Parliament of Romania) has made a block reservation for three nights (16, 17 and 18 February 2014) at the hotels indicated below. Participants are kindly asked to complete the Hotel Registration Form and return it as soon as possible and **no later than 15 January 2014**.

Hotel	Room type	Price in euros per room / per night (incl. breakfast & VAT)		Complete and return this form to:	With copy to
		Single	Double		
<b>JW Marriott Bucharest Grand Hotel 5 *</b> <i>10 minutes' walk from the Palace of Parliament</i>	Standard Room	<input type="checkbox"/> 98 €	<input type="checkbox"/> 114 €	Email: roxana.popescu@marriott.com Fax: + 402 1 403 00 01	<b>Parliament of Romania Chamber of Deputies</b> Fax: + 402 1 414 21 49 Email: <a href="mailto:ipu2014@cdep.ro">ipu2014@cdep.ro</a>
<b>Parliament Hotel 4 *</b> <i>5 minutes' walk from the Palace of Parliament</i>	Standard Room	<input type="checkbox"/> 75 €	<input type="checkbox"/> 85 €	Email: <a href="mailto:sales@parliament-hotel.ro">sales@parliament-hotel.ro</a> or Fax: + 402 1 411 99 91	
<b>Ibis Hotel 3 *</b> <i>10 minutes' walk from the Palace of Parliament</i>	Standard Room	<input type="checkbox"/> 49 €	<input type="checkbox"/> 58 €	Email: reservations.parlament@ibishotels.ro Fax: +402 1 401 10 10	

We recommend that you send credit card information by fax/email to the hotel only. Please note that the Chamber of Deputies of Romania does not require a copy of credit card information. You are kindly requested to send a **copy only** to the host parliament

Reservations received after that date cannot be guaranteed and will depend on room availability. Requests for hotel reservations will be treated on a first-come-first-served basis. Participants are kindly asked to settle their bills directly with the hotel concerned.

## 8. TRAVEL, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

All participants are kindly requested to provide the details of their arrival and departure (date, time, flight no., etc.) on the Registration Form.

The Romanian Chamber of Deputies will welcome delegates upon their arrival at the International Airport Henri Coanda and arrange their transfers to and from the airport. Transfers for delegates between their hotels and the official seminar venue and related events will be provided by the host parliament.

Parliaments participating in the seminar should make their own travel arrangements. They will have to bear the travel costs and the costs related to their delegates' participation.

Transport schedules will be available at the Information Desk in the Palace of Parliament and in the hotels mentioned above.

## 9. VISAS

A valid passport is required to enter Romania, except for nationals of EU countries, who may enter Romania with a valid national ID card.

To obtain visas or further information on customs regulations, delegation secretaries/participants are advised to contact the Embassy of Romania in their respective countries.

## 10. REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION DESK

A Registration and Information Desk will be available to participants at the seminar venue, in front of Nicolae Bălcescu Hall (level P) on 17 and 18 February. It will operate from 8.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on 17 February and from 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on 18 February.

## **11. SECURITY**

The national authorities will take all the necessary security measures. Participants are required to wear their identity badges at all times when they are at the seminar venue.

Participants are kindly required to show a valid ID (passport or identity card) when entering the Palace of Parliament. For security reasons, participants should be prepared for identity checks when entering the Palace of Parliament.

## **12. WEATHER CONDITIONS**

To check the weather in Bucharest, please see [www.accuweather.com](http://www.accuweather.com).

## **13. CURRENCY REGULATIONS**

The local currency is RON. The exchange rate is about 4,5 RON = 1 EURO.

Major international currencies can be exchanged at banks, exchange offices and hotel and most major credit cards are widely accepted.

## **14. MEDICAL FACILITIES**

During the seminar, first aid facilities will be available at the venue. All other medical services and prescriptions will be at the participants' own expense.