

INFORMATION NOTE

The in-person segment of the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament (13SWSP), convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in close cooperation with the United Nations and the Austrian Parliament, will take place in Vienna (Austria) on 6 September 2021. The Summit will precede the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (5WCSP), which will also be held in-person in Vienna from 7 to 8 September 2021.

The Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament brings together women in the highest parliamentary decision-making positions to shape the parliamentary agenda based on emerging political, economic, environmental and social issues that require united and gender-responsive solutions. In this endeavour, it offers a forum for women leaders to network and exchange views and experiences.

The in-person segment of the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament on the theme *Women at the centre: From confronting the pandemic to preserving achievements in a gender-responsive recovery* will take stock of, recognize and pay tribute to women from all walks of life who have been instrumental in confronting the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also identify ways and means of preserving and consolidating women's achievements and furthering progress in a gender-responsive recovery agenda, leaving no woman and no girl behind.

As the Summit will precede the 5WCSP, the outcomes of its deliberations will feed into the proceedings of the 5WCSP, thus offering an opportunity to make gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls a priority on the agenda of all parliaments.

PARTICIPATION

The Summit is open to national parliaments of countries that are recognized by the United Nations and/or Members of the IPU and that are presided over by a woman Speaker or President. In the case of bicameral parliaments, the Summit is open to women Speakers of both chambers.

Women Speakers who are unable to attend the Summit **may only be replaced by a female deputy Speaker.**

The Summit is also open to the regional and international parliamentary assemblies and organizations that are Associate Members of the IPU and that are presided over by a woman President.

A limited number of high-level international experts will be invited to attend the Summit and inform its key themes as special guests.

SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF DELEGATIONS

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing regulations in place in Austria, the size of delegations to the Summit of Women Speakers of parliament and to the 5WCSP is limited to four persons (Woman Speaker plus three others, MPs and/or staff) or six persons in the case of bicameral parliaments. Seating arrangements at desks will be made according to this formula.

Delegations from regional and international parliamentary assemblies and organizations that are Associate Members should be composed of no more than two persons..

ORGANIZATION OF PROCEEDINGS

Women Speakers of parliament and women Presidents of regional and international parliamentary assemblies that are Associate Members of the IPU are invited to take part in the debates.

The Summit will start with an opening session followed by a keynote address. Two sessions of debate will focus respectively on *Women in the pandemic: A tribute to everyday heroes* and *Women in the post-pandemic recovery: Preserving achievements, furthering progress*. The Summit will end with a closing session.

The debate sessions will follow an innovative format inspired by the Doha Debates as a way of stimulating lively exchanges among the women Speakers and Presidents. The Doha Debate format involves focusing on controversial motions, with some participants speaking in favour and others against.

Once the speakers have presented an outline of their arguments, a moderator will put questions to them, following which the floor will be opened for comments. At the end of the debate, the moderator will sum up key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

A list of the motions to be debated is provided in advance and women Speakers shall indicate the motions to which they would like to contribute by filling out the sign-up form (attached and available at <https://www.ipu.org/event/13th-summit-women-speakers-parliament-2021#event-sub-page-documents/>). The contributions to motions (for or against) shall be limited to three minutes each. In addition to their contribution to one or more chosen motions, women Speakers and Presidents may also make spontaneous contributions by answering questions and making comments on the motions being debated. Such additional contributions shall be limited to one minute each.

SPEAKING RIGHTS AND ORDER

Each woman Speaker of parliament or President of a regional or international parliamentary assembly that is an Associate Member of the IPU shall in principle be entitled to deliver remarks for or against the motion(s) that they have selected in advance. Written statements and, if necessary, pre-recorded videos should be submitted in advance to enable the IPU Secretariat to share them with the interpreters and the IPU Communications Team.

The moderator shall call to order any speaker who does not respect time limitations, fails to keep to the subject under discussion or prejudices the debate by using abusive language. The moderator may, if necessary, withdraw permission to speak, and may request the speaker withdraw the objectionable words and/or have them struck from the record.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

An outcome document will be issued after the Summit. It will contain a summary of the conclusions and a series of actionable recommendations of the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament.

The outcome document will feed into the proceedings of the 5WCSP with a view to prioritizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

CULTURAL PROGRAMME

In order to allow inter-parliamentary dialogue to continue outside the formal setting of the Summit of Women Speakers of parliament, Viennese culture and hospitality will provide an additional basis for the Conference and be an integral part of the programme, as well as of the formal reception. For private guests accompanying Women Speakers of Parliament, an optional programme will be available showcasing the history, beauty and cultural opportunities of Vienna and its surroundings. Preparations for this programme are underway.

LANGUAGES

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided into and from Arabic, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

Speakers addressing the Summit in any other languages will need to have their individual statements translated into one of the six official languages.

DOCUMENTS

Electronic versions of the statements or presentations made will be provided to participants as they become available.

REGISTRATION

The registration deadline is **30 July 2021**.

Online registration for the Summit and the 5WCSP is opened since 4 June 2021. In order to make the necessary arrangements on the ground, in particular with regard to the COVID-19 situation, we would be most grateful if by 2 July you could indicate your intention to attend the Summit in Vienna in person (email to mgn@ipu.org with CC to postbox@ipu.org). More information about the Summit will be shared with you as it becomes available and posted on the event webpage at <https://www.ipu.org/event/13th-summit-women-speakers-parliament-2021>

Only one person should be designated as the delegation coordinator and have access to the system.

A provisional list of participants will be compiled based on the registrations received. Delegates will have an opportunity to check the accuracy of this list before the end of the Summit.

ENTRY PASSES

Due to strict security measures in effect at the Austria Center Vienna, every delegate to the Summit will need a 5WCSP identity badge in order to enter the ACV premises.

ACCOMMODATION

The Austrian Parliament has made provisional block bookings in several hotels in Vienna -see website of the host Parliament at [https://www.ipu2021vienna.at/or Annex](https://www.ipu2021vienna.at/or%20Annex) for more information)-both in the city centre and close to the Conference venue. September is a particularly busy month for hotels in Vienna. Delegates are therefore advised to make their hotel reservations as soon as possible. Delegations from countries with an embassy or permanent mission in Vienna are invited to contact them, as they are accustomed to receiving delegations to UN meetings and handling hotel reservations. In keeping with the practice of hotels in Vienna, only reservations made with a credit card guarantee will be confirmed.

IMMIGRATION FORMALITIES - VISAS

Austria is a member of the Schengen Area. Please note that nationals of certain countries require a Schengen visa to enter Austria. A list of these countries is available from the Federal Ministry of the Interior at:

[https://www.bmi.gv.at/202/Fremdenpolizei und Grenzkontrolle/Visumpflichtige Laender/start.aspx](https://www.bmi.gv.at/202/Fremdenpolizei%20und%20Grenzkontrolle/Visumpflichtige%20Laender/start.aspx) (website available in German only, although the documents linked to include an English translation).

You will find relevant information and practical references concerning entry into Austria or the Schengen Area as well as information about the application process at:

<https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/travel-stay/entry-and-residence-in-austria/entrance-and-residence/visa/>

You can find the Austrian representation in your country at: <http://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/embassies-consulates/search-for-austrian-representations/>

We advise you to apply for your visa in good time—in any case by 30 July 2021 at the latest— via the Austrian diplomatic representation competent for your place of residence.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are currently additional measures in place. Please find detailed information in the annex "Public Health Information".

NATIONAL SECURITY OFFICERS / FIREARMS REQUESTS

If national security officers travelling with Speakers intend to carry firearms during their stay in Austria, the following procedure applies:

- For security officers of Speakers from non-EU Member States, the competent Austrian embassy abroad will –provided it receives the request in good time –issue a permit entitling a national security officer to enter Austria with a firearm and to carry it during their stay. The permit must be carried when crossing the border and will be checked and completed by the border guards.
- For national security officers accompanying Speakers from EU Member States, no special permit is required for the import, possession and carrying of firearms. However, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs must be notified thereof by note verbale no later than two weeks before their arrival in Austria (Protocol Department of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, abti1@bmeia.gv.at, cc: Austrian Parliament werner.autericky@parlament.gv.at and Federal Ministry of the Interior/Federal Agency for State Protection and Counter Terrorism abt3@bvt.gv.at). The note verbale should include the personal details of each national security officer (date and place of birth, passport number and expiry date) as well as the type and serial number of the weapon, the amount of ammunition carried, the date of arrival and departure and the border crossing points.

Please note that only handguns and only one firearm per security officer will be authorized.

RADIO FREQUENCIES

If radio equipment is to be used during the Speaker's visit, an application to use specific frequencies must be submitted. Permission to use such frequencies must be requested by note verbale sent to the Protocol Department of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (abti1@bmeia.gv.at) no later than two weeks before arrival in Austria. The requested frequency as well as a possible alternative frequency, the transmission power, the time frame and approximate geographical indications (i.e. province) should be specified in the note verbale.

FLIGHT CLEARANCE

Delegations arriving in government, military or custom aircraft must request diplomatic overflight and landing clearances by note verbale sent to the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (exportkontrolle@bmeia.gv.at, cc: abti1@bmeia.gv.at). The note verbal must include the following information: arrival date and time, handling company, aircraft registration number, flight number (if applicable) and full details of all passengers as well as their passport numbers.

SECURITY

Security at the ACV and during the social events will be subject to strict criteria and regulations. One such regulation obliges all Conference participants to display their identity badges visibly upon entering and at all times while on ACV premises and at the sites of social events. No weapons are allowed at the conference venue and at the sites of social events. More information concerning security will be provided in the coming months. Transportation As with previous IPU Speakers' Conferences, transport and escort arrangements are the responsibility of the respective delegations. Please coordinate with your embassy or permanent mission. The Austrian Parliament will provide escorted bus transfers to and from the social events.

TRANSPORT

Transport and escort arrangements are the responsibility of the respective delegations. Please coordinate with your embassy or permanent mission. The Austrian Parliament will provide escorted bus transfers to and from the social events.

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

last updated: 20 May 2021

The Austrian Parliament will take all necessary measures to guarantee a safe and comfortable stay in Austria during the Conference. Therefore, we have included comprehensive security and health provisions in our planning in order to meet the necessary requirements. Nevertheless, we will need the **support of all participants** in our joint endeavour for a safe and successful Conference, including early registration, respect for the COVID safety measures in force, and implementation of our regulations.

Please note that the COVID regulations are under constant monitoring and subject to ongoing developments. We will communicate major changes on the Conference websites.

Current public health situation in Austria

After an extended lockdown period, the public health situation in Austria is improving. On 19 May 2021, the most recent regulations regarding the COVID safety measures came into force. As a result, following the reopening of shops and service providers, Austrian gastronomy, cultural institutions, cultural and recreational businesses, and sports venues have also reopened.

Proof of a low epidemiological risk must, however, be presented for access to certain areas of public life, including hotels, restaurants or bars, evidenced by a negative coronavirus test, proof of vaccination or a certificate of past COVID-19 infection.

Please find detailed information about the reopening steps as well as FAQs regarding the coronavirus and other relevant information on the website of the Austrian Ministry of Health (<https://www.sozialministerium.at/en/Coronavirus/Information-in-English.html>).

Entry regulations for Austria

Due to the ongoing pandemic, Austria has entry and travel regulations in force which stipulate clear restrictions and requirements.

However, exceptions to these regulations apply, for example, if there are compelling reasons for the travel in the interest of the Republic of Austria or if the travel is performed for professional/business purposes.

As a result, **Speakers of Parliaments and their delegations (1+3, or 2+4 for bicameral parliaments) who are registered to participate** in the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament and/or the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament **will be permitted to travel to and enter Austria for the purpose of the Conference**. For further accompanying persons, please contact your respective embassies concerning travel and entry requirements.

Please note that it will be necessary to explain and prove the reason for your travel to the authorities when entering the country. We therefore strongly recommend **carrying a printed version of the invitation and/or conference registration with you when travelling**. In order to facilitate the entry procedure, we will communicate the list of registered delegations to the relevant Austrian authorities in advance, with the agreement of the participants. You will receive more information about data protection during registration itself, which will be processed by the IPU.

If your travel to Austria involves **transit** through other countries, we advise you to contact your respective embassies in advance to prepare necessary entry/transit requirements. Furthermore, it is advisable to contact the relevant airlines in advance to be informed about potential boarding requirements.

In the interest of public health and security among the international community, we also strongly advise delegations to undergo a correctly performed and recognized COVID test before their journey to Austria and to carry with them a negative molecular biological test certificate for SARS-CoV-2 (in German or English).

In any event, **proof of a low epidemiological risk (a negative coronavirus test, proof of vaccination or a certificate of past COVID-19 infection) must be presented for access to hotels, restaurants and other areas of public life in Austria, on the basis of the current regulations. You will, therefore, need corresponding certifications for your stay in Austria.**

Coronavirus safety measures at the Conference venue

The Austrian Parliament will define and arrange situation-adjusted coronavirus safety measures at the Austria Center Vienna (ACV). More detailed information will be announced at a later date.

In light of the continuously evolving situation, we are making every effort with all of the authorities involved to provide frequent updates.