

Greeting Message of the IAO Secretary General
to the 141st Plenary Session of the IPU

Honourable Ms. President,
Honourable Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to represent the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO) under the observer status at the 141st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly, conveying the greeting message of the IAO Secretary General, Dr. Andreas Michailidis and the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Sergei Gavrilov.

The Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy is a political organization established in 1993, seated in the Hellenic Parliament in Athens and currently is consisted by official Parliamentary delegations of twenty five countries, as well as five groups of deputies from other parliaments.

Concerning this year's General Debate topic, namely "*the role and mechanisms of parliaments in strengthening international law and the contribution of regional cooperation*", I am particularly pleased, to recall the positions that the IAO has formulated for many years. The IAO in all circumstances endeavors to strengthen its faith in the principles and values of both international and European legal order, as well as the principles and values of international and regional cooperation. In addition, our Organization, since its establishment, believes in and promotes the independent parliamentarism, which per se strengthens international law.

National and international parliamentary institutions are constantly contributing in formation, dissemination, consolidation and application of the principles and rules of international law. Both national and international legislator is regarded as enforcers of international law and supporters of the international legal order. At national level, Parliaments as the legislative authorities of the States are responsible for the acceptance and incorporation of the rules of international law into the domestic legal order. At international level, interparliamentary organizations, as institutions intertwined with international cooperation contribute to the strengthening of international law.

This contribution is multilevel, especially in the field of sources of international law. In many cases the acts of interparliamentary institutions contribute to the formulation and confirmation of international customary law, namely the consolidation of a consistent, uniform and long-term practice, accompanied by *opinio juris*. Moreover, we cannot ignore their contribution in formulation of the international case law. The reference of acts of parliamentary institutions in the jurisprudence of international judicial organs in order to establish a legal position is a characteristic example of the mentioned above, and that is the case of reference of resolutions of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

(PACE) by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and also reference of resolutions of the European Parliament (EP) by the European Court of Justice (ECJ).

Last but not least, the strengthening of international law in its institutional dimension is of paramount importance. In short, the establishment of subsidiary bodies and fact-finding commissions, as well as the “good services” that international parliamentary bodies can provide, have proven to be particularly important for the control of certain basic rules of international law, such as the field of international protection of human rights.

Undoubtedly, national and international parliamentary bodies enforce regional cooperation, in order to promote common interests and create the conditions for a healthy regional governance, enabling human development and international peace and security.

With these words, I close my greeting message and wish you every success in your work and a fruitful Session.

The IAO Secretary General
Dr. Andreas Michailidis

Thank you.