



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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# 138<sup>th</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

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Governing Council  
Item 14  
Assembly  
Item 8

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1 February 2018

## Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules

### COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE IPU BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BELGIAN IPU GROUP

Brussels, 1 February 2018

Dear Madam President,

The executive body of the Belgian Inter-Parliamentary Group has examined yesterday the amendments to the Statutes and Rules presented by yourself and by Vice-President Kosachev.

We congratulate you on having started off your presidency with a thorough examination of the IPU Statutes and Rules and with these important proposals to make our organization more effective and more efficient.

However, we are surprised at the procedure that is being followed. Given the far-reaching nature of your proposals, we believe it is far too early to come up with specific text changes to be submitted to the Governing Council and the Assembly. In our opinion, the ideas behind your text proposals should first be thoroughly discussed in the Executive Committee and in the geopolitical groups. Only after such discussion has shown that there is a sufficient consensus about the reforms you are proposing – or, quite possibly, a clarified/revised version of them as a result of that discussion – can we think about approving the appropriate text changes. This is how we proceeded, for instance, with the amendments aimed at strengthening the participation of young parliamentarians in the Assemblies that will come up at our next Assembly in Geneva.

As it is, Members are required to submit any sub-amendments before those substantive discussions on the measures proposed have taken place. The background notes provided by the IPU Secretariat on the six main topics covered by the proposed amendments are certainly helpful in assessing them, but they cannot replace a discussion on their merits. So far, we have not even heard the arguments of the proponents of the amendments. What is the use of each Member individually couching its opinion on the measures proposed (supposing it does not amount to a simple approval or rejection) in sub-amendments, when these may no longer even be pertinent, once the issues have been discussed?

Moreover, some of the measures proposed have important financial consequences. According to the estimate provided by the IPU Secretariat, the extra cost of the proposal to move from two to five official languages represents the equivalent of nearly 30 per cent of the current core budget of IPU, i.e. the total amount of contributions paid by Members.



#IPU138

The Belgian Group believes it is not sound policy to consider adopting a reform before having secured the required financing. We very much doubt that the latter can be achieved by the next Assembly in Geneva.

For these reasons, Madam President, the Belgian Group requests that the amendments to the Statutes and Rules submitted by yourself and by Mr. Kosachev, and any sub-amendments that may be presented by Members, should not come up for decision in the Governing Council or the Assembly during the next Assembly in Geneva. Indeed, we believe that even a discussion in the Governing Council is of little use until the preliminary substantive discussions in the Executive Committee and the geopolitical groups have led to some definite conclusions.

With kind regards,

(Signed)

Pol Van Den Driessche, Senator  
Chairman of the Belgian IPU Group