



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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## Regional Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals for the Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe

### *Building strong foundations for sustainable development*

**Bucharest, 18 and 19 April 2016**

#### **Concept note**

In September 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will inform their development agendas and policies over the next 15 years. The SDGs consist of 17 goals and 169 targets, which are available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>.

The success of the SDGs will transform the world and the lives of the people. IPU Members have committed to taking the necessary action to carry forward this vision. Under the auspices of the IPU, parliaments have committed to translating the SDGs into enforceable domestic laws, to holding governments to account and pledged to aligning budgets with national sustainable development plans. They have highlighted the need for parliaments and decision-making processes to be strengthened so they are fit for purpose in realizing this commitment.

The Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe first met to discuss concrete steps to help implement the SDGs in their countries and the region on the occasion of a Regional Seminar held in Bucharest in June 2015. On this occasion, they adopted an outcome document that calls for concrete parliamentary action in a number of key areas, including through adoption of sustainable development strategies and tackling environmental risk and climate change. They also agreed to meet regularly in order to examine progress on the SDGs and the role they each play in their implementation - <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/Bucharest15/outcome.pdf>.

#### **Format, objectives and expected outcomes of the seminar**

The seminar will follow up on the conclusions of the 2015 event and will aim to further define the opportunities and challenges facing parliaments in exercising their role in the implementation of the SDGs. The discussions will be facilitated by experts and through tools developed by IPU.

A discussion on SDG 16, which highlights the importance of governance, inclusion, participation, rights and security for the achievement of sustainable development, will centre on how parliaments will be able to institutionalize the global goals so as to capture the synergies and build coherence at the policy level. To be able to do this, each parliament will need to evaluate its own institutional processes. Special emphasis will therefore be placed on assessing the needs of parliaments to exercise their legislative, oversight, budgetary and representative function and thereby

effectively translate the global commitments into a meaningful change on the ground.

Through the prism of environmental challenges facing the region, the discussion will help shed light on some of the governance gaps in the respective countries which make the response to this issue particularly difficult. In this context, the participants will discuss the underlying challenges as well as the enabling factors that have the potential to improve the policy response. Special attention will be placed on the role that parliaments can play in ensuring a new culture of environmentally responsible citizens through education and prevention.

**Venue and dates:** Bucharest, Palace of Parliament, 18 and 19 April 2016

**Draft Agenda:** The agenda will be developed jointly by the IPU and the Parliament of Romania.

**Participation:** This seminar is open to the following parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, FYR of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Turkey, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Hungary and Romania. The parliaments of the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan will also be invited to attend.

**Language:** The working languages will be English, French, Russian and Romanian.