

Parliamentary diplomacy: the role of international assemblies

REPORT¹

*submitted on behalf of the Committee for Parliamentary and Public Relations
by Mrs Squarcialupi, Rapporteur*

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¹ Adopted unanimously by the Committee on 9 May 2000.

² Adopted by the Assembly on 6 June 2000 (4th sitting).

³ Adopted by the Assembly on 6 June 2000 (4th sitting).

RECOMMENDATION 670

on parliamentary diplomacy: the role of international assemblies

The Assembly,

- (i) Observing that parliamentary democracy has to develop in step with changes in society and technological advances so that the wishes of the electorate are better understood and given more effective expression;
- (ii) Persuaded of the need to provide parliamentarians with increased opportunities to discuss their ideas with a view to solving problems common to the same geopolitical region;
- (iii) Convinced that the WEU Assembly's many years of experience of debate on European security and defence issues has helped create a legacy of parliamentary cooperation and diplomacy that should not be fragmented,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Recognise, in the context of reform of the European institutions, the indispensable need for a parliamentary dimension to the debate on the Common European Security and Defence Policy and the importance of parliamentarians being able to exchange ideas at a multilateral European level;
2. Work to promote institutional assemblies providing a framework for the development of common policies, in which members of parliament of the countries concerned could contribute to the search for solutions by engaging in discussion and dialogue with other national representatives.

RESOLUTION 102*on parliamentary diplomacy: the role of international assemblies*

The Assembly,

- (i) Aware that modern society is increasingly having to contend with the phenomenon of globalisation and that new challenges have to be met in framing individual national policies;
- (ii) Convinced that if parliamentarians are to be able to fulfil their remit more effectively, they must have increased opportunities to meet on a more structured basis – such as in international assemblies – and exchange information on problems that are prevalent in a wider geographic context;
- (iii) Persuaded that the democratic dialogue, in which parliaments are the interface between the electorate and government, cannot focus solely on national interests since these tie in with and depend on broader geopolitical interests,

INVITES THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

1. To support the development of parliamentary cooperation networks with the assemblies of other countries and with the inter-regional and international assemblies of which they are members;
2. To join initiatives designed to promote exchanges between parliamentarians interested in the same subjects and to support endeavours in “parliamentary diplomacy” that are developing under joint programmes, particularly as regards collective security and crisis resolution;
3. To strengthen the administrative procedures and support services necessary for the efficient organisation of a permanent system of contacts and exchanges between national, inter-regional and international parliamentary assemblies.

Explanatory Memorandum

(submitted by Mrs Squarcialupi, Rapporteur)

I. Introduction: a new requirement stemming from globalisation

1. In recent years the increasing globalisation of problems with all its attendant implications has given rise to a new phenomenon in parliamentary assemblies faced with the task of deciding how best to modernise and fulfil a political mandate that has traditionally been confined to individual institutions. Parliaments accordingly intend to take an increasingly active part in evaluating national policy options in areas that include foreign policy, which has hitherto been regarded as a preserve of government.

2. At the same time, society too has undergone radical change and the public at large is taking a growing interest in policy, particularly foreign policy, as it is aware of the extent to which it is affected by the policies of neighbouring or partner countries and has an impact on everyday life. Increasingly, the electorate looks to parliamentarians to ensure that its expectations are met and to influence choices made by the executive. Many people take the view that, compared with governments, parliamentary institutions are unable to take decisions within time-frames that are becoming increasingly tight and that their role is inevitably being whittled down to that of a representative body incapable of finding solutions to problems. Despite being the fora in which the expectations of the electorate are given expression, parliaments are cut off from the real world and because they find it impossible to assess all the facets of the problems they should be addressing, they are considered by some to be institutions that belong to the past.

3. The need for contact among parliamentarians, which has given rise to a number of initiatives over the years, is now being addressed in a more structured and better organised manner in that parliamentary cooperation has been superseded by “parliamentary diplomacy”. This term covers both institutional links of a traditional kind as well as those formed spontaneously and then institutionalised, thus enabling parliamentarians, acting within their remit, to tackle major problems which transcend national borders. The objective is to launch initiatives designed to influence political decisions by the executive and pave the way for practical solutions. Having recourse to more direct, less formal methods of communication in the form of exchanges of views among parliamentarians is one way of achieving this objective.

4. Civil society has consequently invaded what were previously technical and bureaucratic preserves and its collective demands are given expression via the ballot box. This development, which would appear to be an attempt to make up for the democratic deficit in international relations, is an indication of the fact that citizens have woken up to a number of problems and want to see more direct contacts established between their own members of parliament and other elected representatives. As representative bodies, the challenge facing modern-day parliaments is to express people’s expectations, analyse problems in depth and propose strategic legislative solutions, while steering government action in the direction of specific projects.

II. Genesis and development of parliamentary cooperation in international assemblies

5. Traditionally, parliaments have always maintained relations on the basis of reciprocal courtesy. These used to take the form of invitations, visits and fact-finding missions mainly for the speakers of assemblies or their representatives. But parliamentarians who had no official duties were not really involved in such outside contacts until 1889 when two members of parliament, William Randal Cremer (United Kingdom) and Frédéric Passy (France), convened the first “interparliamentary” conference in Paris, which was attended by nine countries. Today the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has 139 members and a permanent secretariat at its headquarters in Geneva. It holds two conferences a year on themes of common interest. The purpose of the IPU is to promote contacts, coordination and exchanges of views between parliaments and parliamentarians from all its countries by studying international issues, with a view to triggering action in national assemblies. It is not governed by an international treaty but a series of agreements concluded between parliaments has gradually led to the creation of a coherent structure that can meet the stated need for closer links between members of all the assemblies involved. Throughout the 20th century, the IPU weathered the many institutional changes that took place worldwide to become a forum in which its members reflect many different political and parliamentary cultures. It has played an important role in establishing contacts with third world countries, which have gradually built up their constitutions taking western assemblies as their models. During the cold war the IPU’s conferences enabled representatives from the two blocs to keep in touch and engage in dialogue in the margins of official negotiations. The IPU was also a

forum in which alliances were put to the test and in which the many African, Asian and South American countries decided which of the world leaders they should side with. The results of its work were so encouraging for the development of multilateral relations that the plan to transform the Union into a United Nations parliamentary assembly was given quite a favourable reception.

6. This experience made parliamentarians aware of the need to exchange ideas and information. In no time at all the importance of forging links around major policy issues became apparent and international relations became a branch of parliamentary activity in its own right.

7. Thus it was that when international cooperation bodies were formed in the 1950s, the need to involve members of the various parliaments led to the creation of an assembly composed of parliamentary delegates, first of all in the Council of Europe and later in the ECSC (where it was transformed into the European Interparliamentary Assembly which was later to become the European Parliament, whose members are elected by direct universal suffrage). In July 1955 the Assembly of Western European Union was created in pursuance of Article IX of the modified Brussels Treaty. Its members were to be the same as those of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. Shortly afterwards, even though the Washington Treaty contains no reference to it, the North Atlantic Assembly was set up with a similar structure. In 1991, the Charter for a new Europe, which was subscribed under the auspices of the Paris Conference, led to the creation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Two years later, in 1993, the Parliamentary Conference of the Central European Initiative was established. Other European parliamentary assemblies are the Baltic Assembly and an assembly bringing together the three Benelux countries. Finally, following the changes that took place in eastern Europe, two other assemblies were created: the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) and the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (IPA) for members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

8. There is also the special case of the Conference of the Parliaments that came into being by virtue of Declaration No. 14 appended to the Maastricht Treaty. The idea behind this Conference of the Parliaments of the EU member states and the European Parliament, also called "assises", was that it should be consulted on the main features of the European Union and on strategic options for key phases of special significance. The Conference was convened only once, at the Assises held in Rome from 27-30 November 1990, in the context of the process of European integration that resulted in the Maastricht Treaty. A document adopted in the form of a final declaration set out the main orientations for economic, social and institutional policy in the new-look European Union.

9. All these various assemblies, which have been copied the world over by similar regional bodies, are fora for multilateral consultation which are now well structured and organised. Each member parliament appoints a delegation which regularly attends plenary sessions and meetings of specialised committees. The pattern of work is similar to that of national assemblies. These institutions have a key role to play in terms of raising parliamentarians' awareness and keeping them informed about matters relating to the objectives of the various organisations of which they are a part. They are also a vehicle for achieving consensus and exerting influence over legislative procedures and choices made by national governments. It is in international assemblies bringing together many countries that the views of parliamentarians and public opinion are given expression. The decisions they adopt are a pointer for policy choices reflecting the interests of the various parties. For all these reasons it is incumbent upon such assemblies to make the move from parliamentary cooperation towards parliamentary diplomacy. The analysis of problems in a concern to prevent them from escalating often results in an endeavour to find solutions by common agreement which tend to blur the differences between national interests in economic, legislative and policy areas. This gradually leads to a collective conscience developing around shared interests, which simplifies preparatory work in the run-up to formal negotiations between governments. Because such work is of a less official nature, it is a valuable adjunct to contacts established earlier on in the process which can build on the analysis of possible solutions.

III. From parliamentary cooperation to parliamentary diplomacy: the protagonists in national parliaments

10. Faced with the explosion in communications and the globalisation of problems, international assemblies rapidly started taking other initiatives covering areas in which there was still no forum with the relevant competence and looked for opportunities to discuss ideas. The institutions stepped up their contacts at all levels and established new forms of structured and regular liaison. The situation could be likened to a pyramid with international activities of assembly presidents at the top, those of specialised committees and parliamentary groups in the middle and formal relations between support services at the bottom.

11. Initially, it was assembly presidents who helped to build up a network of contacts between the institutions on a bilateral or multilateral basis. Thanks to the personality of each – they were frequently politicians of some international standing – a new representative role has emerged in recent times, placing more importance on missions and visits to heads of state and government. Increasingly, it is the task of such missions to make preliminary contacts between parliaments even before official relations are established. This is particularly the case in countries transformed by war or its effects, or by attempts to overthrow the government.

12. With the establishment of the Conference of Speakers, courtesy visits and meetings between the speakers of parliaments were organised at regular intervals. Conferences are now held annually on subjects of common interest and particularly on issues concerning future relations with countries belonging to clearly delimited geographic areas (the European Union, eastern Europe or the Mediterranean). The first conference was convened in 1963 at the initiative of the President of the European Parliament, Gaetano Martino, but conferences began to be held on a more regular basis from 1975. The system was changed in 1980 to one in which a conference confined to the three countries of the EU troika plus the European Parliament alternates on a yearly basis with a larger conference involving all members plus the presidents of international assemblies (Council of Europe, WEU). A significant development was the holding of conferences on the development of relations with countries belonging to the Central European Initiative (Trieste 1997, Graz 1998) and on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Palermo 1996 and 1998, Athens 1997, Palma de Majorca 1999). A further development was the creation of a standing parliamentary Mediterranean Forum which constitutes the parliamentary dimension of the Barcelona Conference. Closer contacts were established in Helsinki in 1997 between the speakers of the parliaments of the EU member states and subsequently gave rise to the creation of an interparliamentary working group on the harmonisation of legislative arrangements and the simplification of national and Community legislation.

13. The first instance of institutionalised relations between parliamentary bodies can be seen in the Conference of European Affairs Committees of the Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC), which was established in 1989 following a proposal submitted by the President of the French National Assembly to the Conference of Speakers in Madrid. In view of how important it is for parliamentarians working on subjects of common interest to establish permanent ties with their counterparts in other assemblies, the protocol appended to the Amsterdam Treaty on the role of national parliaments in the European Union makes specific provision for dialogue between COSAC and the European institutions via a reciprocal exchange of information. COSAC meets twice a year at the parliament of the country holding the EU's rotating presidency.

14. The foreign affairs committees of the national parliaments have traditionally been extremely active in establishing bilateral contacts with similar bodies in other countries. In all parliaments they have consistently been the committees entrusted with the task of representation, which is often confined to reciprocal protocol visits. The huge increase in the number of exchanges and contacts eventually led, in 1995, to the creation of the Conference of Chairmen of the Foreign Affairs Committees of the Parliaments of the European Union and the European Parliament, which meets twice a year at the parliament of the country holding the EU's rotating presidency. In recent years the Conference has welcomed observers from countries which have applied to join the European institutions. The meetings that were held with a view to ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty were particularly interesting as were those in which discussions took place *inter alia* on the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal, NATO enlargement, relations with eastern European countries and changes to the UN Security Council.

15. Political groups have also taken advantage of the possibilities they have in international assemblies (such as those of WEU and the Council of Europe) to organise their activities in the same way as they do in national parliaments. Thus they have created international groups on the basis of political party affinity which meet in the margins of sessions to agree on a line of policy, appoint their representatives and agree on candidacies for internal posts in the parliamentary assemblies.

16. The administrative support and documentation services in such assemblies have kept abreast of developments and the increasing need for external relations. They now constitute a large and active network that maintains links using modern technology and transmits a wealth of information to parliamentarians over successive legislative terms. At the same time they are a source of important information for the public. It is worth noting that the Association of Secretaries-General of Legislative Assemblies exists in the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary

Union and that the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) was created at the initiative of the Conference of Speakers.

IV. Objectives and achievements of parliamentary cooperation and diplomacy

17. Parliamentary diplomacy first found a home in the assemblies that are a part of international organisations. They were originally created for the purpose of giving political guidance and exercising democratic scrutiny over the activities of Councils of Ministers and specialised bodies. Such assemblies have made use of their structures to establish and development contacts in the various areas for which they are responsible. Their strength lies in their ability to adopt various documents since their rules of procedure define a series of texts (decisions, recommendations or reports) that can be transmitted to other institutions which are invited to reply. In addition to the fact that these texts make a useful contribution to preparatory work on decisions to be taken, they also send out political signals that are not to be underestimated.

18. International assemblies are meeting places not only for members but also for the representatives of associate, observer, partner or guest countries. This arrangement makes for a forum in which meetings take on an institutional nature and over the years it has led to bilateral and multilateral relations being established with many countries which would otherwise have been deprived of a whole series of regional and international links. In Europe the case of the United Kingdom can be cited as a good example: while it remained outside the European Community it was able to maintain a dialogue for many years with other countries in the Assemblies of WEU, NATO and the Council of Europe. This certainly helped to form a collective opinion favourable to the establishment of new relations. The countries of eastern Europe and the Mediterranean are in a similar situation today as they wait for the enlargement of western institutions. The work done in the specialised committees of each assembly gives parliamentarians the opportunity to learn about and assess the opinions of their counterparts in other bodies. Seeking consensus on matters that are discussed is an important part of diplomatic persuasion and the exchange of ideas. The results are subsequently reflected in national policy by means of the conventional relations that exist between parliaments and governments.

19. The WEU Assembly, established in pursuance of the 1954 modified Brussels Treaty, is an example of an international assembly that was expressly created as a permanent forum of consultation, bringing together the representatives of the member countries for the purpose of monitoring various government policies while at the same time preparing the ground for debates on common European security and defence issues. Over the years the Assembly has served to create ties between countries which, while they belong to the same geographic region, are not all members of the same political organisations. It has endeavoured, vis-à-vis the governments, parliaments and public opinion, to generate the will essential for developing a European security and defence policy and which is now producing concrete results. It is also thanks to the Assembly's many years of work that the seeds it sowed fell on fertile ground, thus enabling what began as ideas to develop more rapidly than might otherwise have been the case and be transformed into the important decisions taken in Cologne and Helsinki.

20. The United Nations General Assembly has also found a way of establishing a link with national parliaments by inviting a parliamentary delegation from each of its 183 member countries to attend its plenary sessions. In addition to circulating information about UN activities and programmes, it has created a network of contacts between government and parliamentary delegations which are extremely useful for verifying that positions are aligned and discussing points of views with other members.

21. Programmes have been set up and working groups given responsibility for studying problems to be resolved on a multilateral level. The area in which the largest number of initiatives have been taken is that of inter-regional relations, with the participation of guests from other interested countries.

22. Worthy of mention is the "Rose-Roth initiative". This programme was set up in 1990 in the US Congress for the purpose of supporting the participation of parliamentarians from eastern European countries in the activities of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Over 30 seminars have been held on subjects of common interest, the declared objectives being to promote a spirit of partnership and understanding between members of parliament, disseminate information and create the conditions for reaching agreement on important issues relating to the development of democratic relations. Seminars have been organised to train parliamentary and support staff from all the countries in order to promote the development of a collective conscience alert to the needs of an interdependent community.

23. The European Parliament recently took the initiative of launching a new programme of parliamentary diplomacy based on the "Royaumont process" which was a follow-up to the Dayton Accords and was intended to foster stability and good-neighbourly relations in south-east Europe.

Under the programme weekly meetings are held between parliamentarians of the EU and Balkan countries in order to work on a project designed to establish a balance in the region in the framework of preparations for the future Intergovernmental Conference that will look into the matter. A programme of exchanges of parliamentary staff, trainees and documentation between foreign and European affairs committees has been drawn up with a view to making new contacts and circulating ideas among the different ethnic populations affected by civil war in order to restore a climate of reciprocal cooperation.

24. The standing parliamentary Mediterranean Forum has a similar programme which is also directed at regional problems. It brings together the parliaments of the countries which signed the Barcelona accords with the aim of working towards consensus on the various subjects of interest to the Mediterranean nations. Italy, which is particularly active in the forum, organises an annual conference with its partners, in which the results of work done by the various working groups are discussed before documents are prepared for the governments. The 1999 Palma de Majorca conference adopted a Declaration on Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary cooperation whose main purpose is to encourage the development of parliamentary dialogue; as part of the shift in civil society towards a community united by political, economic, social and cultural values, the parliaments undertook to take the measures necessary to create a free-trade area, promote a social welfare policy and speed up the ratification of bilateral agreements in that field. The programme also gave rise to the creation of the Forum of women parliamentarians and the Forum of young members of parliament.

25. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly specialises in the monitoring of elections, in the wider context of striving to further democratic values such as respect for civil rights and the creation of institutions representing the people. Parliamentarians in national delegations – which often include members of the foreign affairs committees of member countries – who monitor election campaigns and voting procedures do a good job in showing the advantages to be had from the establishment of relations between western countries and democratically elected governments. Delegations of the OSCE Assembly have also acted as mediators in regions blighted by conflicts, which have unfortunately been all too frequent in recent years, by sending missions to problem areas and in many cases offering to guarantee observance of fundamental rights in order to restore dialogue where it has been broken off.

26. Other assemblies, such as PABSEC or the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Assembly, are particularly active at an inter-regional level and have formed specialised working groups with a view to harmonising legislation and administrative procedures in areas of common interest such as the environment, transport, taxation and cross-border relations. Their work has often served as a basis for international treaties on such subjects. In the longer term the adoption by parliaments of the various countries of laws with an identical content, drawn up on a collegiate basis, should quite simply do away with the need for international treaties.

V. Information and reports on activities covered by parliamentary diplomacy

27. By nature, activities within the sphere of parliamentary diplomacy cannot be classified according to any uniform system, especially as they cover a considerable number of areas. It is only in international assemblies that work is organised in such a way as to lead to the adoption of documents on which votes are taken in accordance with conventional parliamentary procedure. They may take the form of reports, recommendations, resolutions, orders or decisions. The process leading to the finalisation of such texts is described in official reports which contain a record of the debates on them. In this way the common will of parliamentarians is given expression in texts that are sent to governments, institutions and other assemblies and can then be given a follow-up at national level. Although there is often no apparent link between such documents, they are nevertheless quite significant political pointers liable to influence choices in national policy which in their turn reflect solutions that have already been negotiated in the framework of parliamentary diplomacy.

28. Clearly, some areas are better suited to this approach than others. This is particularly the case of bilateral relations which develop as a result of specific concerns. While the multilateral approach, on the other hand, suffers from a certain lack of decision-making and occasionally from duplication, there is no doubt that convergence and collaboration are essential in contemporary society where problems are no longer confined to individual countries. However, a risk of multiplication exists, bringing with it problems in organising conferences that are becoming increasingly larger and more varied. Here too it would be preferable to maintain specialised assemblies with ties to parent organisations so as to combine the dissemination of information and

exchanges of views on international policy. This would then enable the ideas that are sown to bear fruit in the various countries and relevant sectors of activity.

29. One cause for regret is that the public at large is unaware of all this activity. The media do not receive the message unless parliamentarians make an effort to pass it on to them. But as members of parliament are so absorbed by their work, there is little time for them to spend on educating their constituents and establishing better contacts with journalists. Press releases are confined to new information about political stances on burning issues while more humdrum work producing less spectacular results is not really the scoop the press are looking for.

VI. Conclusions

30. Today it is no longer conceivable for parliaments to focus on national policy and leave it to governments to take decisions with wider implications. To do so would amount to relinquishing their role as the people's representatives and having no more to do than ratify decisions while cutting themselves off from the real problems. On the other hand, it would serve no purpose for parliaments to take advantage of their relations with the electorate only to set themselves up in competition to the executive, on the pretext of looking after the specific interests of the various sectors of society. In a balanced constitutional situation well tuned to the changes taking place in society, parliamentarians need to develop their skills at interpreting community expectations and bringing them to the fore by discussing them nationally and internationally, seeking arbitration and proposing practical solutions at national level.

31. There is no doubt that the institutions best placed to meet this requirement are international assemblies bringing together parliamentary delegations composed of members of national parliaments whose job it is to ensure that there is a two-way flow of information between the electorate, individual parliaments and international assemblies. They are the proper vehicle for relaying the results of international debate to their own parliaments, thereby complementing national debate with a wealth of expertise and practical proposals.

32. In view of the useful purpose they serve, initiatives in this field should be encouraged, in particular by strengthening organisations and support services in order to focus efforts, improve contact networks, do away with the root cause of problems and prevent fragmentation.

APPENDIX

International parliamentary assemblies and associations and their member states
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Parliamentary Assembly of Western European Union (WEU)

Members (10) Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom.

Associate members (6) Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Turkey.

Associate partners (7) Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

Observers (5) Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Guests (3) Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Members (40) Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of), Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia (Federation of), San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

Observers (3) Canada, Israel, Mexico.

Guests (3) Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia Herzegovina.

European Parliament

Members (15) Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Members (19) Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

Associate members (16) Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of), Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine.

Observers (11) Australia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, European Parliament, Israel, Japan, Morocco, OSCE Assembly, Sweden, Tunisia, WEU Assembly.

**Parliamentary Assembly of the
Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**

Members (55) Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of), Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia (Federation of), San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Yugoslavia (suspended).

African Parliamentary Union

Members (34) Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Saõ-Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA)

Members

Amazonian Parliament

Members (8) Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam, Venezuela.

Andean Parliament

Members (5) Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela.
Associate members (1) Panama.

Interparliamentary Council against Antisemitism

Members

Arab Interparliamentary Union

Members (19) Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

Consultative Council of the Arab Maghreb Union

Members (5) Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia.

Asian and Pacific Parliamentarians Union

Members (25) Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Chili, China (Peoples' Republic of), Colombia, Fidji, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia (Federation of), Singapore, Thailand, United States of America, Vietnam.

Interparliamentary Organisation of the Association of South-Eastern Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Members (9) Brunei, Burma, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.
Associate partners (2) China (Peoples' Republic of), Russia (Federation of).
Observers (2) Cambodia, Papua New Guinea.

Baltic Assembly

Members (3) Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Assembly

Members (3) Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) (Karadenis Ekonomik Isbirliđi-KEI Assembly)

Members (11) Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia (Federation of), Turkey, Ukraine.
Observers (7) Austria, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Tunisia.

Central American Parliament

Members (6) Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Salvador.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Central European Initiative

Members (16) Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of), Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Ukraine.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Members (52) Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria (suspended), Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint-Vincent & Grenadines, Santa Lucia, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinity and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Special members (2) Nauru (soon to be member), Tuvalu.

Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States

Members (12) Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Moldova, Russia (Federation of), Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation (PAEAC)

Members (18) Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

International Assembly of French-speaking countries

Members (62) Albania, Alberta, Andorra, Benin, Brazzaville, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, European Parliament, France, French Community of Belgium, Gabon, Geneva, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haïti, Hungary, Jersey, Jura, Laos, Lebanon, Louisiana, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maine, Mali, Manitoba, Mauritania, Mauritius, Moldova, Monaco, Morocco, Niger, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Poland, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Romania, Rwanda, Santa Lucia, Senegal, Seychelles, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Val d'Aoste, Valais, Vanuatu, Vaud, Vietnam.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Members (139) Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chili, China (Peoples' Republic of), Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Equador, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kirghizstan, Korea (Democratic Peoples' Republic of), Korea (Republic of), Kuwait, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of), Malaysia, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia (Federation of), Rwanda, Salvador, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Surinam, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzanian United Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Associate members (5) Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Andean Parliament, Central American Parliament, European Parliament, Latin American Parliament.

Latin American Parliament

Members (21) Argentina, Aruba, Brazil, Bolivia, Chili, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Dutch Antilles, Equador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Salvador, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Nordic Council

Members (5) Denmark (including the Faroe Islands and Greenland), Finland (including the Aland Islands), Iceland, Norway, Sweden.

Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)

Members (12) Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of), Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, United States of America.

Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Members (8) Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, United States.