



Summary of agenda and key decisions from the spring session

Geneva (24-26 March 2024)

1. Orders of the Day

The spring session was attended by 110 secretaries general and deputy secretaries general from 82 different parliaments, 30 new members joined the Association.

The agenda for the Geneva session included the following three general debates:

- The relationship between the academic world and parliaments
- Who controls time in parliament?
- Keeping the permanent record of debates in parliament: what are the tools of today and tomorrow?

There were three themes on the agenda; 'In the news and innovations at parliament', 'Parenthood and parliament' and 'Parliament's framework and tools for efficiently scrutinising Government spending?' which inspired communications from 17 members of the Association. Speaking notes and PowerPoint Presentations are published on our website here: [Geneva, Switzerland \(March 2024\)](#)

A report on the proceedings will shortly be available in the '[ASGP Review: Constitutional and parliamentary information](#)' section of our website.

2. Elections

Mr Pedro Agostinho de Neri, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Angola was elected to the role of ordinary member of the Executive Committee. The composition of the Executive Committee is available on the website [here](#).

At the Autumn session, elections will be held for a new **President of the Association**, 1 new **Vice-President** of the Association and **1 ordinary member of the Executive Committee**.

3. Progress on ASGP projects

Ms Barbara Dithapo, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Botswana, presented initial findings from the questionnaire on 'Welcoming new members of Parliament.' The questionnaire received 78 responses with European parliaments overrepresented in the results. The Executive Committee decided to extend the deadline for completing the questionnaire to Monday 3 June 2024.

The Executive Committee has decided to trial sending a quarterly newsletter with news from ASGP member parliaments. Innovative projects in your parliament can be sent to the ASGP address: asgp@parliament.uk

4. Collaboration with the IPU

The ASGP received updates from the IPU on its [Women in Parliament Report](#), the 10th Anniversary of the Common Principles and work by the Centre for Innovation in Parliaments on 'Using generative AI in parliaments'. The PowerPoint presentations on these topics are available on the website here: [Geneva, Switzerland \(March 2024\)](#)

5. Draft agenda for the Geneva session (October 2024)

The provisional dates for the autumn session are 14 to 16 October 2024. There will be a joint ASGP-IPU session led by Mr Andy Richardson and an event to mark the 85th anniversary of the Association. Below is the provisional agenda:

General debates

1. The involvement of citizens in direct democracy by Parliament (eg. Citizens Assembly, petitions)

- Does your parliament use direct democracy approaches to engage citizens in the work of Parliament? What are the risks and benefits of these approaches?
- Does increasing use of direct democracy by parliaments indicate a crisis of faith in representative democracy?
- How do Parliament's manage the expectations of citizens who contribute to new tools such as citizen's assemblies or online petitions?

2. Parliamentary Travel: adapting rules and procedures to an increasingly smaller world

- How can travel rules be adapted to accommodate the increased frequency of international engagement for parliamentarians?
- How to ensure cost-effectiveness of parliamentary travel, considering the need for both fiscal responsibility and effective international engagement?
- Are there reporting requirements for parliamentarians to detail the purpose, outcomes, and expenses associated with their travel?
- Who authorizes parliamentary travel? What rules are in place for per diem rates, travel class and funding limits?

3. How can Secretaries General benefit from Artificial Intelligence whilst avoiding the risks?

- Does your parliament have a legal framework or internal guidance to regulate the use of artificial intelligence in the country, or internally within parliament? Do you have a team, committee or specialist group working on the issue of AI within your parliament?
- Does your parliament use AI applications developed in-house in your parliaments, or do you use external service providers?
- What software do you use to communicate internally between staff and Members and how is cyber security assured?

Themes

1. In the news and Innovations at Parliament

2. Managing conflicting competencies between parliamentary committees