

Proposed amendments to the rules to extend interpretation of ASGP debates into Arabic and Spanish

Dear Mr President,

The Rules of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) stipulate in article 29, line 1, that the Association's working languages are the official languages of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, namely French and English. This provision, while practical and in line with current practice, nevertheless limits access and full participation for some members who are not proficient in these languages.

Since my involvement in the work of the ASGP, I have observed that this linguistic restriction hinders the ability of many Arabic and Spanish-speaking members to express themselves and engage even though their contributions could greatly enrich our discussions and the quality of our work.

In order to partially remedy this situation, the establishment of informal working groups has enabled Arabic and Spanish speakers to express themselves more freely and to share their experiences. The results have been very encouraging, confirming the need for greater consideration of these languages within our Association.

With recent technological advances, notably the development of remote interpretation and the development of artificial intelligence in the field of automatic translation, providing simultaneous interpretation not only in French and English, but also in Arabic and Spanish, is now conceivable without a significant increase in the budget allocated for this purpose. Such a measure would enable our Association to harmonise its rules with those of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, thereby guaranteeing greater inclusiveness and a more balanced debate.

Consequently, and in accordance with article 31 of the ASGP rules, I propose that the Executive Committee examine the technical and financial feasibility of amending article 29 of the rules as set out below:

| Article 29 (current version) | Article 29 (proposed changes) |
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| (1) The languages used at meetings of the Association or the Executive Committee shall be the official languages of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, English and French. | <i>unchanged</i> |
| (2) All Questionnaires, Reports and other documents of the Association shall be drawn up in the official languages of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. | <i>unchanged</i> |
| (3) If a member cannot use one of these languages, he/she may use an interpreter at his/her own cost who shall interpret into one of the official languages. | <i>New:</i> (3) The Association will provide simultaneous interpretation of debates in the official languages of the IPU, as well as Arabic and Spanish. |
| | <i>New</i> |

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| | (4) If a member does not speak one of these languages, he may call upon, at his own cost, an interpreter who is able to translate into one of the languages mentioned in line (3). |
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Please bring these proposals to the attention of the Assembly in the manner in which you deem appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Philippe Schwab