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



### **Parliamentary cooperation for sustainable development: Investing in climate change and water cooperation opportunities**

Regional seminar for Parliaments from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia  
organized jointly by the Hungarian National Assembly and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

**23–24 February 2017, Budapest (Hungary)  
Parliament Building**

## **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 align 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.

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our time. The increase in the earth's average temperature is now an indisputable fact, and it is clear that climate change is caused by humanity. Water is a renewable and vulnerable resource, and its limited availability is determining factor in terms of quality of life and economic change. Water resources need to be properly managed to safeguard their quality and quantity. Climate change also exacerbates the temporal and spatial distribution of water resources. It is also expected to affect available water resources and lead to less water being available. This is why an integrated approach concerning climate change and water management, that also takes sustainability into consideration, is particularly important.

The Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe discussed concrete steps to help implement the SDGs in their countries and the region in regional seminars hosted by the Parliament of Romania in 2015 and 2016. On both occasions they adopted outcome documents that call for parliaments in all countries to play a role in domesticating the SDGs and their targets. They also call for concrete parliamentary action in a number of key areas, including environmental risk and climate change.

As a precondition for successful engagement on the SDGs, the two outcome documents stress that parliaments need to be equipped in terms of institutional processes and capacities to do their part in implementing the SDGs. The parliaments of the region therefore decided to reconvene again in 2017 to continue to learn from each other, assess progress and develop further recommendations for parliamentary engagement with the SDGs.

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

The seminar will follow up on the conclusions of the 2015 and 2016 events 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 the IPU.

The seminar will serve to update the participants on implementation of the SDGs in their region and globally. Special emphasis will be placed on sharing experiences and increasing understanding about how parliaments in the region institutionalize the global goals, capture the synergies and build coherence at the policy level. IPU's self-assessment toolkit for parliaments will be presented as a tool to help parliaments identify what they can do better to

support SDG implementation.

Through the prism of climate change challenges facing the region, the seminar will focus on the key role of water as an enabler of sustainable development. Countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia are located mainly in the Baltic Sea, Black Sea and Caspian Sea basins. The majority of the water resources are of a transboundary nature, with many countries highly dependent on flows generated outside their boundaries.

The seminar will discuss ways in which water can support the sustainable development of the regions and strengthen cooperation among parliaments in this regard. In addition, the seminar will serve as a follow-up event of the 2016 Budapest Water Summit (BWS). The BWS in 2013 was an important event which initiated the inclusion of the water issue as a separate topic among the SDGs. The priority aim of the 2016 BWS is to promote the early implementation and successful fulfilment of water-related goals (SDG6).

**Venue and dates:** Budapest, Parliament Building, 23 and 24 February 2017

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

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

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