

June 10, 2019

ParlAmericas and the Transparency and Access to Public Information Network (RTA) meet to make progress on consolidating parliamentary transparency

On Monday, May 13 and Tuesday, May 14 of this year, a delegation of parliamentary staff from the national legislatures making up ParlAmericas' Open Parliament Network exchanged experiences and ideas on how to strengthen transparency and access to public information in collaboration with access to information commissions that are members of the RTA. The objective was to begin to define a Toolkit on this topic. The initiative received support from the EuroSocial+ program, with meetings held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in connection with the XVII Meeting of the RTA.

On Monday, May 13, presentations were given on the progress made on transparency by participating parliaments, which included the experiences of Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Paraguay, and Spain. Representatives of the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAIP) from Honduras and the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and the Protection of Personal Data from Mexico also shared their perspectives on the topic and actions put in place to guarantee that parliamentary information is available. This meeting was also attended by Members of Congress Gerardo Martínez and Eli Santos from Honduras and representatives of the National Directorate on Community Relations and Citizen Participation from the Ministry of the Interior, Public Works and Housing of Argentina; the Council for Transparency from Chile; the Institute for Access to Public Information of El Salvador; the Council on Transparency and Good Governance from Spain; the Department of Governmental Transparency of the Ministry of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic; and the Agency for Electronic Government and Information and Knowledge Society (AGESIC) from Uruguay; as well as the Open Government Partnership and the EuroSocial+ program.

On Tuesday, May 14, a workshop was conducted with only the participating parliamentary representatives, in which challenges, areas of work, and tools that could be included in the toolkit were identified in order to facilitate the toolkit's effective implementation in the parliaments of the region. There was also a panel held as part of the XVII Meeting of the RTA where the achievements made in the RTA-ParlAmericas project were presented and a discussion about the challenges relating to the consolidation of access to information and parliamentary transparency took place.

“Guaranteeing transparency is the first step that needs to be built up in order to move on to the other pillars of open parliament, and, as such, enable national legislatures to succeed in strengthening their role in representation, legislation, and oversight for the benefit of citizens,” highlighted María Liz Sosa, Director General of Legislative Strengthening of the Chamber of Senators of Paraguay. The results of these meetings will be shared in the future with the other parliaments in the region to allow them to contribute to the development and validation process of the parliamentary transparency toolkit.