

PRESS RELEASE

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Latin American parliamentary staff participated virtually in the 2nd Meeting of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament

On January 22, 2021, parliamentary staff from 15 countries in Latin America participated in a virtual meeting to reflect on the progress of legislative openness in the hemisphere and contribute to the current process of reviewing and updating the ParlAmericas [Road Map towards Legislative Openness](#). The meeting also featured a presentation of the renewed methodology of the Latin American Legislative Transparency Index, developed since 2011 by the [Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency](#).

Senator Blanca Ovelar (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas, opened the meeting by highlighting that “parliamentary staff are key actors to anchor all the essential ideas that our mission promotes and to guarantee the institutionalization of all efforts towards opening parliaments.”

The first part of this activity was dedicated to advancing the process of updating the Road Map towards Legislative Openness. It was introduced by Ms. Rocío Noriega, Advisor to the Bicameral Transparency Group of the National Congress of Chile, who highlighted the usefulness of the Road Map to “facilitate the understanding of the concept of an open parliament and its pillars,” in addition to its value “during the preparation and implementation of action plans and commitments in the region.”

After a presentation on the [results of a survey developed to guide the review of the Road Map](#) by Ms. Emilie Lemieux, Deputy Director of Open Parliament and Sustainable Development at ParlAmericas, participants were divided into five working groups to further share experiences and explore ideas and good practices to strengthen this publication. These working groups were led by officials from the hemisphere's parliaments: Mr. Waldir Bezerra Miranda, Deputy Secretary General of the Board of Directors of the Federal Senate of Brazil, led the working group on transparency and access to public information; Mrs. María Liz Sosa, Director General of Legislative Strengthening and External Cooperation of the Senate of Paraguay, led the working group on accountability; Mr. Juan Carlos Chavarría, Director of the Department of Citizen Participation of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, led the working group on citizen participation; Ms. Rocío Noriega led the working group on ethics and probity; and Mr. Mauricio Sarabia, General Coordinator of Planning of the National Assembly of Ecuador, was in charge of the working group on strategic planning.

The second part of the meeting focused on the presentation of the new methodology of the Latin American Legislative Transparency Index by the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency and EUROsociAL+ and saw representatives of civil society organizations and international organizations join the conversation. Ms. Analina Montes, General Manager of the National Congress of Honduras, welcomed this segment of the meeting on behalf of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament and highlighted the value of the index and the importance of collaboration with civil

society during the co-creation of open parliament action plans and commitments: “ParlAmericas established a Memorandum of Understanding with the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency that includes civil society organizations in the region in order to continue consolidating closer collaborations between parliaments and civil society.” These were accompanied by welcoming remarks from Mr. Marcelo Espinel, Project Director of the Citizenship and Development Foundation, and Mr. Borja Diaz Rivillas, Good Governance Official of the Democratic Governance Area at EUROsociAL+.

[Mr. Roger Celi](#), Coordinator of the Legislative Area of the Citizenship and Development Foundation, the coordinating organization of the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency, and [Mr. Raúl Ferrada](#), EUROsociAL+ Consultant for the project to renew the Latin American Legislative Transparency Index, presented on the updates to the index and answered questions from participants.

Closing the meeting, Ms. María Gabriela Graell, Director of International Relations of the National Assembly of Panama, highlighted the importance of complementary tools such as the ParlAmericas Road Map towards Legislative Openness and the Legislative Transparency Index, and the relevance of spaces such as the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament for the exchange of ideas: “It is a joy to know that this network continues to strengthen and has been well received, allowing more parliaments and a broader range of internal departments to get involved and further engage in supporting open parliament initiatives.”

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