



IPEX National Correspondents Meeting 2021

28 and 29 October 2021 (Hybrid - Bundesrat, Berlin)
Report

On 28 and 29 October 2021, the German Bundestag and the Bundesrat hosted jointly the annual IPEX National Correspondents Meeting. The meeting took place in hybrid format: 31 participants joined the meeting in person in the Bundesrat building in Berlin, 36 further participants joined the meeting via the WebEx platform. After the Correspondents Meeting in Vienna in November 2019, it was the first opportunity uniting IPEX Correspondents and members of the IPEX Board partially physically after nearly two years.

After the roll-out of IPEX v3, the IPEX National Correspondents Meeting was the moment to officially launch the new IPEX website in a modern design and to get acquainted to its new functionalities. Furthermore, in accordance with the work program for the German IPEX chairmanship, participants discussed with representatives of the scientific community the question how to foster the dialogue with the scientific sphere and searched way to improve the quality and quantity of information provided on IPEX via sharing best practices amongst Correspondents.

Due to the hybrid format, no parallel sessions could be organized. All sessions had been centralized into the plenary meetings, allowing all participants to fully join the meeting, regardless of their actual location.

The meetings were co-chaired by Ms. Daniela KROLL and Mr. Michael HOESSL.

Thursday, 28 October 2021

Opening of the 2021 IPEX National Correspondents Meeting

The 2021 IPEX National Correspondents Meeting was officially opened by the Deputy Secretary General of the Bundesrat, Mr. Georg KLEEMANN, and the Director General for Parliament and Members of the German Bundestag, Ms. Ruth LANG.

Mr. KLEEMANN pointed in his welcome address the many considerable changes that happened since the last IPEX National Correspondents Meeting in Vienna two years ago out. Concerning IPEX, such change was the roll-out of IPEX v3 that happened before summer recess. The meeting would focus on getting Correspondents familiar with the new system and its performances. Moreover, he underlined that the direct



participation aspect, applied in the Conference on the Future of Europe, also guided the drafting of the 2021 National Correspondents Meeting agenda, allowing Correspondents to have an immediate say on the new IPEX v3. Therefore, this year's Correspondents Meeting aimed to discuss on improving quality and quantity of information provided on IPEX - with external actors as well as internally amongst Correspondents.

Ms. LANG underlined in her welcome address the significant development IPEX had made during the last years, which allowed finally the official launch of IPEX v3. She underlined that the Correspondents have been central for developing IPEX v3 and encouraged them to open and critical discussions about the website, since the current version was still work in progress. Ms. LANG also stated that IPEX needed content of the highest quality and called for more uniform rules for the provision of information in IPEX v3. Finally, she suggested to engage in a more intensive and direct dialogue with the different user groups of IPEX.

Mr. KLEEMANN and Ms. LANG then declared the official launch of IPEX v3. Mr. KLEEMANN seized the opportunity to thank sincerely Mr. Jerry HILBERT from the European Parliament and the IPEX Information Officer, Mr. Calin-Mihai RACOTI, for their outstanding efforts during the process of development of IPEX v3. Moreover, he thanked the European Parliament and in particular its Secretary General for funding the IPEX v3 project.

Session I: State of play and how to use IPEX v3 - part 1

In the first Session of the 2021 IPEX National Correspondents Meeting, Mr. Jerry HILBERT (European Parliament) reported to the Correspondents about the way the development of IPEX v3 had taken. Mr. HILBERT showed the evolution since the first idea of creating an information portal in the year 2000 over the last 20 years to the "One Stop Shop" for inter-parliamentary activity IPEX has become, fit for mobile devices and user friendly. Even though the way to IPEX v3 might sometimes have been bumpy and although the currently running version of IPEX may not be perfect - Mr. HILBERT reminded participants that it was nevertheless the best version of IPEX ever available up to now.

The IPEX Information Officer, Mr. Calin-Mihai RACOTI, pointed in his presentation the importance of content out. Therefore, he explained to Correspondents how to use the IPEX website and showed about their unique ability of uploading information - being the only source to do so on behalf of their respective parliaments. Furthermore, he explained the use of keywords, the managing of information and how to publish News including pictures from the back office, as well as how to publish documents



in the new “Own Documents”-Section. Mr. HILBERT added that, due to cache-action, some changes completed in the back office might need up to 15 minutes to be published as well on the front office. Asked about the use of keywords, Mr. RACOTI explained that it was up to National Parliaments to select amongst the existing keywords in order to label information published on IPEX. If necessary, the IPEX Information Officer could amend the list of keywords by adding new ones.

Session II: How to use IPEX v3 - part 2

The second session of the 2021 IPEX National Correspondents Meeting was opened by reports from the chairs of the different Working Groups.

In her presentation, the chair of the WG Content, Ms. Maria SCHININÀ (Italian Chamber of Deputies), pointed out the fact that IPEX was not only a database, but as well a network of people. Therefore, she judged the possibility to meet in person for the 2021 National Correspondents Meeting as crucial. She then showed examples from a guide for Correspondents her Working Group had produced and highlighted the use of three new sections available on IPEX v3, namely the “Own Documents”-section, the section on “Research”-documents and on the section dedicated to the Conference on the Future of Europe. With regard to this last section, IPEX v3 should serve as a centralized point of information about the role of national parliaments in the Conference on the Future of Europe and therefore complete the Conference’s own platform. Once finished, the guide will explain the use of the different sections and guide Correspondents through the work with IPEX. Ms. SCHININÀ said, the guide was foreseen to be approved by the IPEX Board on its meeting in January 2022. Co-Chair Daniela KROLL emphasized that these new sections had also been established due to the wish of National Correspondents. Now available, the sections need to be filled up with life in order to avoid being empty shells.

Ms. Tuula ZETTERMAN (Swedish Riksdagen) as Co-Chair of the WG Promotion of IPEX underlined that IPEX v3 had reached a technical level in development facilitating promotional activities in an unprecedented manner. However, the promotion of IPEX by the Correspondents themselves had to be considered as crucial as well. Her WG had produced promotional videos and so-called “How to”-videos, that explained different steps in using IPEX v3, especially to Correspondents. Moreover, a just finished promotional brochure had been distributed to Correspondents in Berlin and would be made available for the use of all Correspondents via file sharing, offering them the possibility to print the amount of brochures desired. Finally, Ms. ZETTERMAN pointed out the availability of an e-mail-signature for IPEX Correspondents.



Ms. KROLL seized the opportunity to thank all members of the different Working Groups and especially the chairs of the Working Groups for the great amount of efforts and work they were dedicating to IPEX v3.

Finally, Mr. RACOTI elaborated on the issue of the so-called double dossiers and explained to Correspondents the context and how to solve double entries. At the same time, he pointed out the importance of taking care of the problem by Correspondents, in order to ensure reliable information being available on IPEX.

Friday, 29 October 2021

Session III: How to improve the information provided on IPEX? - The view from outside

In Session III, two academic experts and their work were introduced by Ms. Christine CLAASZEN (Bundesrat). The academics presented and discussed their experience with IPEX v3 and suggested ways for improvements: Dr. Diane FROMAGE (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellow at Sciences Po Law School, Paris) referred to her academically research on national and regional parliaments and her experience of working with IPEX since the release of its first version. She said that she uses IPEX primarily to search for Reasoned Opinions and Opinions. She highlighted the news section and the section on inter-parliamentary cooperation and conferences as very important for her work. She accented the need to keep information on the IPEX database in English and “100% reliable”, which meant to keep all uploaded information up to date and complete and preferably linked to the source, so that IPEX could be a reliable “one-stop-shop” used by academics. Dr. Martijn HUYSMANS (Assistant Professor, University of Utrecht) reported that he started working with IPEX in 2015 and used mainly the political dialogue for his research on the Early Warning System (EWS) and effectiveness of Reasoned Opinions. He noted that he missed the overview of all parliaments on the front page in IPEX v3, displayed in the former version but welcomed especially the news sections and new technical solutions. He pointed out that according to his research, Reasoned Opinions were recognized and considered by the Commission, even if they did not reach the significant number of parliaments. He highlighted the need to have transferrable data (e.g. Excel files) to analyze them statistically.

In the discussion, especially Ms. Maria SCHININÀ (Italian Chamber of Deputies), commented that a guide for the National Correspondents was in preparation to ensure a consistent database. Mr. Calin RACOTI (IPEX Information Officer) added that it was



a wish for a long time to enclose a short English summary to reasoned and other opinions when uploaded.

Session IV: Exchange on how to improve the information provided on IPEX? - The view from inside

During the exchange amongst IPEX National Correspondents in Session IV, Ms KROLL re-emphasized the importance of good quality of the information provided on IPEX. IPEX as key-tool for information concerning inter-parliamentary cooperation depended a lot on accurate, reliable information. By providing relevant, high-quality information in a timely manner, IPEX would attract further users from a broader sphere.

Correspondents discussed in a comparative approach how and which information should be uploaded on IPEX, as well as how the process of providing information within each national parliament and on IPEX could be improved. Amongst the proposals that were discussed appeared the call for uploading information in a short period of time after deliberations in the national parliaments; for providing English versions of the documents or at least English summaries; for keeping up-to-date the information in the course of parliamentary deliberations; for linking internal databases towards IPEX; and for publishing information on parliamentary activity even if in the end no document could be published.

Closing of the meeting

Ms. KROLL thanked all participants for fruitful discussions and the lively exchange over the last two days. She stressed the responsibility of IPEX Correspondents to upload content to the new website in order to fill it with life and make it the source of information it was dedicated to be. Mr. HOESSL called on Correspondents to keep in mind as well the requests from the representatives of academia, as well as proposals from the best practices-exchange amongst Correspondents in order to facilitate the exchange on IPEX and make it a reliable and frequently used source of information.

The Co-Chairs thanked all participants - present in person in Berlin and joining virtually - for having taken the time to join the meeting and to lively exchange. Moreover, the Co-Chairs thanked all colleagues from the Bundesrat staff who had actively contributed in the good course of the meeting.