

Strengthening Parliamentary Scrutiny and Lawmaking

Challenges and opportunities in the Western Balkans
and Eastern Neighbourhood

Regional conference | 8-9 April 2026
Prague, Czech Republic

Programme

Introduction

Parliaments play a vital role in ensuring that laws are prepared, scrutinised, and adopted based on the best available evidence, and are implemented effectively and on time to deliver intended policy objectives. To fulfil this role, parliaments need strong internal capacities and procedures to access, analyse, and use the best available information and evidence consistently throughout the whole legislative process. Effective government-parliament collaboration is equally essential, as most laws originate from the executive, which holds essential information and data that can help parliament to make informed decisions at the key stages of parliamentary deliberations and scrutiny.

Evidence-based lawmaking and parliamentary scrutiny is fundamental for the quality of public policy, the rule of law and public trust in democratic institutions. It is particularly critical for advancing EU accession processes and partnerships, which often place additional pressure on partner administrations to adopt and implement large volumes of complex legislation in a relatively short period of time. Instruments such as *ex ante* regulatory impact assessments (RIA), public consultations and stakeholder engagement, and *ex post* evaluation are key to ensuring that adopted legislation is aligned with national priorities and EU standards and work in practice.

Beyond adoption, parliaments have a key role in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of laws through post-legislative scrutiny (PLS) and other tools which help identify ineffective policies and laws that fail to deliver their original intended objectives. *Ex post* evaluation of laws is equally important for reducing unnecessary burdens and costs on the economy, advancing simplification, better regulation and burden reduction. Ultimately, through scrutiny and evaluation tools parliaments hold the Governments accountable and deliver better results.

Despite progress in recent years, parliaments in the region continue to face significant challenges in applying many of these tools effectively and in strengthening co-operation and co-ordination with governments. Addressing these gaps is essential for improving legislative quality and accountability.

Objective

This second regional conference on effective and evidence-based lawmaking and parliamentary scrutiny will be hosted by the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic. It will focus on key challenges parliamentary administrations face during legislative planning, preparation and scrutiny of draft laws, as well as challenges related to parliament-government collaboration and co-ordination. The objective is to foster dialogue and knowledge exchange among senior officials and representatives from Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Eastern Neighbourhood (Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine), as well as key experts and stakeholders from selected EU member states and institutions, and other partner organisations.

The conference will provide a platform for in-depth discussions on topics such as parliamentary procedures and capacities for research and analysis, legislative planning and government-parliament collaboration, use of RIA, stakeholder engagement, as well as artificial intelligence (AI) and other tools to advance the quality of parliamentary scrutiny and lawmaking in the region. It will also address challenges related to the status and management of parliamentary staff, recognising their crucial role in building the knowledge and expertise necessary for effective lawmaking. Findings from the most recent SIGMA Monitoring Reports and publications on these and other related topics, as well as presentations from the host parliament and partner organisations will be used to set the scene and facilitate thematic discussions. Participants will share experiences, best practices, and lessons learned from their national contexts and recent developments, contributing to a stronger collective knowledge base, to help advance reforms and EU integration processes. The conference will help to identify priorities for future reforms and explore innovative approaches to strengthen evidence-based lawmaking and legislative oversight.

Organisation and format

The regional conference is jointly organised by the SIGMA Programme, a joint initiative of the OECD and the EU, principally financed by the EU, the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), and GiZ (Eastern Partnership Regional Project for PAR), in close collaboration with the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic and with the support of the DG ENEST, European Commission.

Participation

About 60 senior parliament and government officials and experts from nine partner administrations from the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and the EU Eastern Neighbourhood (Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine), along with representatives from the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, the European Commission, ReSPA, the GIZ PAR Project, and the SIGMA Programme, will participate.

The main working language of the conference will be English. Simultaneous interpretation into selected local languages will be provided.

Dates, venue and registration

The conference will take place at the premises of the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic **Sněmovní 1 118 26 Praha 1 - Malá Strana Czech Republic on 8-9 April 2026.**

Registration will start **at 08:30 on Wednesday, 8 April 2026.** All participants must provide their passports at security to register and enter the conference venue. Coffee/tea breaks, and lunch will be provided at the conference venue on both dates.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence.

FINAL AGENDA

Tuesday, 7 April 2026

Arrival of participants. There are no activities planned during the day.

DAY 1

Wednesday, 8 April 2026

Venue: Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic Sněmovní 1, 118 26 Praha 1 - Malá Strana

08:30 – 09:30 **Registration and welcome coffee**

09:30 – 10:00 **Session 1: Opening Remarks by the Organisers**

Speakers:

- Mr Martin Plíšek, Secretary General (SG), Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
- Mr Giulio Venneri, Deputy Head of Unit, DG ENEST, European Commission
- Ms Maja Handjiska-Trendafilova, Director of ReSPA
- Mr Gregor Virant, Head of the SIGMA Programme
- Ms Sandra Fuhr, Project Manager, EaP PAR, GIZ (via video)

10:00 – 10:20 **Session 2: Setting the Scene - State of Play and Current Challenges of Evidence-based Lawmaking and Parliamentary Scrutiny in the Region**

The session will present the Principles of Public Administration and highlight key findings from recent SIGMA regional studies on parliaments and country monitoring reports. It will also present selected indicators and general statistics on laws to set the context for the thematic discussions that follow.

Speaker:

- Mr Bagrat Tunyan, SIGMA Programme

10:20 – 10:50 **Session 3: Czech Experience in Evidence-based Lawmaking and Parliamentary Scrutiny**

The session will discuss the experience of evidence-based lawmaking and parliamentary scrutiny in the Czech Republic. It will highlight internal procedures and approaches, as well as specific tools used to ensure effective lawmaking and parliamentary scrutiny, and lessons learnt from the Czech approach for other parliaments.

Speakers:

- Mr Štěpán Pecháček, Parliamentary Institute

10:50 - 11:15 *Group photo and coffee break*

11:15 – 13:00 **Session 4: High-level Panel with the Secretaries General (SGs) of Parliaments: Key Challenges the Parliamentary Administrations Face in Advancing Evidence-based Lawmaking**

This high-level panel will discuss key challenges parliamentary administrations face in planning, preparing, and scrutinising draft laws, and how their procedures can better support effective and evidence-informed scrutiny, better regulation, and simplification principles. It will address issues such as the challenges related to excessive use of non-standard procedures, difficulties with MP-initiated legislation,

and additional pressures risks related to laws aiming to align with the EU acquis, as well as the extent of parliamentary involvement in ex post evaluation.

Speakers:

- Mr Davit Arakelyan, Secretary-General, National Assembly of Armenia
- Ms Gordana Živković, Secretary of the House of Peoples, Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Mr Boban Stanišić, Secretary-General, Parliament of Montenegro
- Mr Nikola Gjoshevski, Deputy Secretary-General, Parliament of North Macedonia
- Mr Artem Yanchuk, Deputy Secretary-General, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Moderator:

- Ms Egle Rimkute, SIGMA Programme

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch Break

14:00 - 15:30

Session 5: High-level Panel with Senior Parliament and Government Officials: Enhancing Parliament-Government Collaboration for Better Lawmaking

This high-level panel will bring together Secretaries General and senior officials from parliaments and governments to discuss the key challenges in ensuring effective collaboration and co-ordination throughout the legislative cycle, from preparation of draft laws to scrutiny, approval and ex post evaluation. It will explore challenges and obstacles to smooth parliament-government co-operation and practical ways to address them. The session will also examine the availability, quality, and flow of data, documents and information between the executive and the legislative branches, and how these influence the effectiveness of parliamentary scrutiny of government-sponsored legislation.

Speakers:

- Mr Robert Vidović, Secretary-General, Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ms Tamara Gheorghîța Deputy Secretary-General of Parliament, Moldova
- Mr Arben Loshi, Director, Research and Analysis, Parliament of Kosovo
- Ms Julia Çela, Director General, European Integration Service, Parliament of Albania
- Ms Irena Vučić Popović, Deputy Secretary-General of the Government of Montenegro
- Mr Saša Marković, Assistant Secretary-General, General Secretariat of Government, Serbia

Moderator: Mr Péter Vági, SIGMA Programme

15:30 – 15:45

Coffee Break

15:45 – 16:45

Session 6: Evidence-based Lawmaking in the European Parliament and Post-legislative Scrutiny (PLS)

This session will present and discuss the procedures, analytical tools and support services used by the European Parliament Research Services (EPRS) to enhance the quality of laws and advance better regulation within the European Parliament. It will also explore the importance of ex post evaluation and PLS in improving the quality, effectiveness and impact of laws and public policies, building on the experiences of selected OECD countries.

Speakers:

- Mr Wolfgang Hiller, Former Director, Impact Assessment and Foresight, European Parliament Research Services, External Expert
- Mr Franklin De Vrieze, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, External Expert

Moderator: Ms Nataliia Gnydiuk, GiZ

16:45 - 17:00

Closing

--- End of Day 1 ---

DAY 2

Thursday, 9 April 2026

Venue: Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic Sněmovní 1, 118 26 Praha 1 - Malá Strana

08:30 – 09:00

Registration and Welcome Coffee

09:00 – 09:30

Session 7: Evidence-based Lawmaking, Better Regulation and Simplification in the EU and OECD Member States

This session will present the main findings and conclusions from the OECD 2025 Better Regulation Practices Across the EU study, as well as provide insights from the international symposium on “Simplification for Success”(S4S). It will aim to highlight opportunities to advance simplification, better regulation and administrative burden reduction through improved implementation of regulatory management tools.

Speaker:

- Mr Daniel Trnka, Deputy Head of the Regulatory Policy Division, OECD

09:30 – 11:00

Session 8: Importance of Government Legislative planning and Co-ordination for Effective Parliamentary Agenda-Setting and Scrutiny

The session will emphasise the importance of effective legislative planning and closer parliament- government co-ordination to enable parliament plan and conduct its scrutiny work effectively, ensure timely EU law harmonisation, and enhance consultation on draft laws. Most approved government-sponsored laws in the region are not included in official legislative plans and are often processed through shortened/urgent procedures, creating additional risks for evidence-based lawmaking and quality of laws. The session will start with a presentation on Czechia’s experience in legislative planning and co-ordination, particularly its experience of “preliminary consultation” with parliamentary committees and discuss selected experiences from countries of the region.

Speakers:

- Mr Serhii Kotsurak, Director-General, Directorate for Strategic Planning and Interaction with the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, other state bodies, Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (SCMU)
- Mr Eris Çela, Director, RIA and Public Consultation Directorate, Prime Minister’s Office of Albania
- Mr Štěpán Růt, Government Analytical Unit, Government Office of the Czech Republic
- Ms Lilia Dabija, Deputy Secretary-General of the Government, Moldova
- Ms Anahit Stepanyan, Head of the Department for Relations with the National Assembly, PM Office, Armenia
- Mr Martin Kuta, Parliamentary Institute, Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic

Moderator: Ms Jelena Mrdak, ReSPA

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 – 13:00

Session 9: Building Stronger Capacities for Effective Parliamentary Scrutiny and Lawmaking through Professionalisation of Staff

This session will examine how stronger staff professionalisation can enhance evidence-based parliamentary scrutiny and lawmaking. It will discuss the principles of public service and human resource management and how these apply to parliamentary administrations, including legislative frameworks, the need to safeguard political neutrality, and approaches to recruiting, developing, and retaining skilled staff.

Speakers:

- Ms Tetiana Topolianska, Acting Head, Main Legal Department, Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine
- Mr Aleksandar Đorđević, Head of the European Integration Department, the National Assembly of Serbia
- Ms Tatiana Malai, Deputy Head of the General Legal Directorate, Parliament of Moldova
- Ms Heghine Khachikyan, Deputy Chief of Staff, National Assembly of Armenia
- Ms Holta Nika, Director, Technical Secretariat, Committee for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Parliament

Moderator: Mr Lech Marcinkowski, SIGMA Programme

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch Break

14:00 – 15:00

Session 10: The Future of Lawmaking: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emerging Technologies for Better Parliamentary Scrutiny and Laws

This session will explore how artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and other emerging technologies can enhance the quality, efficiency, and transparency of parliamentary lawmaking and scrutiny. It will examine both the opportunities and risks these tools bring, including implications for legislative analysis, drafting, and oversight. The session will start with a presentation of the Guidelines for AI in Parliaments, and feature examples from selected parliaments in the region, showcasing new solutions and practical applications involving AI or other technologies supporting legislative work.

Speakers:

- Mr Franklin De Vrieze, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, External Expert
- Short presentations from selected administrations on the use of AI and other technologies and tools in lawmaking and parliamentary scrutiny

Moderator: Mr Giulio Venneri, DG ENEST, European Commission

15:00 – 15:15

Closing remarks

- Mr Giulio Venneri, DG ENEST, European Commission
- Mr Martin Kuta, Parliamentary Institute, Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
- ReSPA/GiZ/SIGMA Programme

15:15 – 16:30

Tour of the parliament building

--- End of Day 2 and Conference ---

Participants

Albania

Ms Julia Çela	Director General, European Integration Service, Parliament
Ms Holta Nika	Director, Technical Secretariat of the Committee for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Parliament
Mr Eris Çela	Director, RIA and Public Consultation Directorate, Prime Minister's Office
Mr Keidi Dizdari	Cabinet of the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers

Armenia

Mr Davit Arakelyan	Chief of Staff - Secretary General, National Assembly
Ms Heghine Khachikyan	Deputy Chief of Staff, National Assembly
Mr Tatul Soghomonyan	Head of Secretariat of the Staff of the National Assembly
Mr Gegham Tovmasyan	Head, Regulatory Impact Assessment Department, PM Office (PMO)
Ms Anahit Stepanyan	Head, Department for Relations with the National Assembly, PMO

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ms Gordana Živković	Secretary of the House of Peoples, Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Mr Mirza Imamović	Secretary of the Common Service, Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Mr Dražen Mustapić	Secretary of the House of Representatives
Mr Robert Vidović	Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Mr Jure Zovko	Head of Office, SG of the Council of Ministers (TBC)
Ms Azra Berković	Head, Department for Public Finance, Economy and Environment, Legislative Office of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ms Olja Golijanin	Protocol Officer, Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Kosovo*

Mr Arben Loshi	Director, Directorate for Research and Analysis, Parliament
Ms Zoja Osmani	Director, Directorate for Legal Services and Approximation of Legislation, Parliament
Mr Mentor Borovci	Director of Law Office, Office of Prime Minister
Mr Naser Canolli	Director of Office Gazette, Office of Prime Minister

Moldova

Ms Tamara Gheorghiuța	Deputy Secretary-General of Parliament
Ms Tatiana Malai	Deputy Head of the General Legal Directorate, Head of the Public Law Department, Parliament
Ms Lilia Dabija	Deputy Secretary-General of the Government
Ms Nicoleta Popa	Deputy Head, Public Administration Department

Montenegro

Mr Boban Stanišić	Secretary-General, Parliament
Ms Dragana Bošković	Head of the Legislative Department, Parliament
Mr Mirko Milošević	Head of the Service for Media, Communications and Audiovisual Technologies, Parliament
Ms Irena Vučić Popović	Deputy Secretary-General of the Government of Montenegro
Ms Nina Vujović	Adviser to the Secretary General of the Government

The Republic of North Macedonia

Mr Nikola Gjoshevski	Deputy Secretary-General, Parliament
Ms Hristina Sofronijoska	State Advisor, Legislation, Parliament
Mr Hasim Murtezani	Deputy Secretary General of the Government
Mr Nimetulla Ademi	Adviser, General Secretariat of the Government

Serbia

Mr Aleksandar Đorđević	Head of the European Integration Department, the National Assembly
Ms Mia Milovanović	European Integration Department, the National Assembly
Mr Saša Marković	Assistant Secretary-General, General Secretariat of Government

Ukraine

Mr Artem Yanchuk	Deputy Secretary-General, Verkhovna Rada
Ms Tetiana Topolianska	Acting Head, Main Legal Department, Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada
Mr Serhii Kotsurak	Director-General, Directorate for Strategic Planning and Interaction with the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, other state bodies, Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (SCMU)
Ms Olena Biedova	State Expert, Directorate for Strategic Planning and Interaction with the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, other state bodies, SCMU

Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic

Mr Martin Plíšek	General Secretary
Mr Štěpán Pecháček	Parliamentary Institute
Mr Martin Kuta	Parliamentary Institute
Ms Soňa Šteigerová	Parliamentary Institute
Ms Kateřina Havránková	Parliamentary Institute
Ms Lucie Lochmanová	Parliamentary Institute
Ms Klára Ibrahim	Parliamentary Institute
Dr. Petr Zlatohlávek	Media and Marketing Department
Ms Gabriela Pavlíčková	Media and Marketing Department

Government Office of the Czech Republic

Mr Štěpán Růt	Government Analytical Unit, Government Office
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European Commission

Mr Giulio Venneri	Deputy Head of Unit, DG ENEST
Ms Vanessa Miani	Public Administration Reform Team, DG ENEST

GIZ

Ms. Nataliia Gnydiuk	Component Co-Lead, Regional Project “Public Administration Reform in the Eastern Partnership Countries III”
Ms. Natalia Kapanadze	PR/Communication specialist, Regional Project “Public Administration Reform in the Eastern Partnership Countries III”

ReSPA

Ms Maja Handjiska-Trendafilova	Director
Mr Boris Ristović	Programme Manager
Ms Jelena Mrdak	Programme Manager
Ms Vanja Mašanović	Programme Assistant

OECD/SIGMA

Mr Gregor Virant	Head of Programme
Mr Bagrat Tunyan	Professional Team Lead, Policy Development and Strategic Planning
Mr Péter Vági	Regional Manager, IPA (Western Balkans and Türkiye)
Ms Egle Rimkute	Regional Manager, European Neighbourhood East
Mr Lech Marcinkowski	Professional Team Lead, Public Service and HRM
Ms Raija Talus	Programme Co-ordinator
Mr Daniel Trnka	Deputy Head, Regulatory Policy Division, OECD

SIGMA External Experts

Mr Frankin De Vrieze

Head of Practice, Accountability, Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)

Mr Wolfgang Hiller

Former Director of Impact Assessment and Foresight, European Parliamentary Research Service, European Parliament,