



A Digital Strategy for IPEX

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2 Introduction

At their last meeting held in Luxembourg on 15 February 2016, the Secretaries General, after having endorsed the note on the Role of IPEX, in their conclusions on IPEX “call on the IPEX Board to present proposals for the definition of a digital strategy, meant to provide IPEX with a comprehensive and efficient strategy with the view of a mid-term work programme to be carried out by the rotating presidency”.

The main goal established for IPEX by the Speakers Conference is mentioned in the IPEX Guidelines:

“The objective of IPEX is to support interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union by providing a platform for the electronic exchange of EU-related information between Parliaments in the Union (...).”¹

PROCEDURAL ISSUES

Adoption

The IPEX Digital Strategy (described in this document) has been drafted by the working group established for the purpose by the Board². This document takes into account the outcome of consultations with the National Correspondents.

The final draft, after having been approved by the IPEX Board at its meeting on 27 January 2017 in Luxembourg, is presented by the IPEX Board to the Secretaries General for adoption at their meeting of 20-21 February 2017.

The Digital Strategy (DS) is implemented through a 3-year Work Programme (WP).³

The 3-year Work Programme is adopted by the IPEX Board after the adoption of the IPEX Digital Strategy by the Secretaries General.

Implementation

The **Board** is responsible for the implementation of the Digital Strategy and Work Programme. The **National Correspondents** take active part in the implementation of the DS and WP. The DS and WP implementation constitutes a regular point on the NCs meetings agenda.

¹ IPEX Guidelines, Rome 2015

² The WG was established on 2 October 2015 in Brussels and enlarged on 1 July and 21 October 2016 in Luxembourg.

³ The Working Group has drafted a first version of this WP – in compliance with the content of the proposed Digital Strategy – simultaneously with the process of finalising the Digital Strategy.

Financing

For any action or activity included in the Work Program affecting the IPEX Digital System the following procedure will be launched:

1. The European Parliament - which is hosting the IPEX Digital System - will perform an evaluation of the activity, both in terms of technical feasibility and in terms of the estimated costs for the implementation;
2. If the evaluation of the activity shows that it can be performed at no or little cost (for example: editorial activities that can be carried out by the Information Officer, actions to be performed by the National Correspondents, etc.) the IPEX Board may request to start the activity;
3. If the analysis identifies that a financial effort is required, the Board submits to the Secretaries General for approval a proposal for the activity and the suggested co-financing scheme for its execution. The Secretaries General decide if and how to ensure co-financing by IPEX member parliaments of the proposed activity. Only when it has been decided (and covered), the IPEX Board will ask to start the activity.

Monitoring

The constant monitoring of the implementation of the DS and WP is the responsibility of the **IPEX Chairs** in the framework of their **annual IPEX reports** submitted to the Secretaries General – with regard to the parts carried out by a given IPEX Board Chairmanship. The reports cover also issues relating to the compliance of the executed tasks with the objectives defined in the IPEX WP and DS.

The report presenting the implementation of the DS and WP takes into account information in this regard submitted in writing by NCs. The organisation and editing of the NCs contribution to the implementation report are the duty of the IPEX Chair preparing the report.

The Secretaries General carry out the general review and assessment of the Digital Strategy after the end of the first full 3-year WP period, on the basis of a proposal submitted to them by the IPEX Board and drafted by a working group set up by the IPEX Board.

Revision and amendments

The revision of this Digital Strategy is the responsibility of the Secretaries General of the European Union Parliaments.

The amendments to the Work Programme are the responsibility of the IPEX Board.

3 The Digital Strategy

The IPEX Digital Strategy:

a) is a comprehensive plan that will guide the decisions of the IPEX Board regarding the future development of IPEX. After its adoption by the Secretaries General of EU parliaments, the IPEX Digital Strategy will be complemented by a 3-year Work Programme which will ensure continuity in the management of projects that span over more than one (rotating) chairmanship and will indicate:

- the priorities
- the projects and activities to be undertaken
- the timeframe for individual projects.

b) outlines the **strategic approaches** to be taken **for achieving and implementing the IPEX goals, as established by the Speakers Conference and further explained by the Secretaries General in the IPEX basic documents⁴, in relation to the target IPEX audience, and the information and services provided by IPEX.**

c) defines **the guiding provisions on the short-term maintenance and upkeep of the website**, including the process and actors (workflow) for validation of current changes and updates, taking into account the “IPEX general editorial rules” adopted by the Board.⁵

d) identifies how to **actively involve National Correspondents in the achievement of the DS goals.**

e) describes **relations with other actors** and platforms in the framework of EU information exchange

f) identifies the relevant actions for the **promotion of IPEX** and presents possibilities for further development of communication.

3.1 Target audience

While IPEX is open to the general public, Members and their assistants, political groups and parliamentary civil servants of the Parliaments in the EU are the main target groups of IPEX. Actions undertaken in view of the further development of the platform will therefore mainly focus on the needs of these categories of users.

⁴ IPEX Guidelines, Rome 2015; Guidelines for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation in the European Union, Lisbon 2008; Speakers Conference and Secretaries General meetings conclusions on IPEX; the note “Role of IPEX”, Luxembourg 2016

⁵ “IPEX general editorial rules” are published on the subpage “IPEX for Correspondents”

3.2 Types of information to be exchanged

IPEX as a network of people and as a multifunctional platform shall provide the following types of information:

- I1. proposed EU legal acts and other documents transmitted to NPs by EU institutions;
- I2. *Lettres de saisine* and information about indicative deadlines for subsidiarity scrutiny calculated on the basis of the *Lettres de saisine*;
- I3. documents and information from National Parliaments concerning general scrutiny of EU documents;
- I4. reasoned opinions and other relevant information from National Parliaments concerning the subsidiarity control;
- I5. news from Parliaments, including structured information (e.g. bulletins);
- I6. information and documents of interparliamentary cooperation, including a Calendar of events;
- I7. relevant contact information;
- I8. basic information about national parliaments and their EU-related procedures;
- I9. glossary of terms used on IPEX (subject to regular updating);
- I10. research papers from EU parliaments;
- I11. impact assessment reports of the proposed EU legislation;
- I12. information from National Parliaments concerning the parliamentary dimension of EU Council Presidencies.

3.3 Services to be provided

IPEX as the main comprehensive platform providing for the electronic exchange of EU information, the IPEX digital System has to ensure the following services:

- S1. sharing in near real time the scrutiny status of EU documents in NPs, including general scrutiny and subsidiarity control;
- S2. sharing in near real time the parliamentary activity related to EU matters in the parliaments members of IPEX;
- S3. sharing a Calendar of interparliamentary cooperation events;
- S4. hosting websites:
 - of IPCs established by the Speakers,
 - of joint parliamentary scrutiny bodies (EP plus NPs) established by EU legislation according to the conclusions of the EUSC held in Nicosia in 2013;
- S5. providing information customised for the user profile (setting alerts, storing searches, etc.);
- S6. allowing for multiple access levels according to users profiles;

- S7.** searching the website;
- S8.** functioning as an institutional repository of interparliamentary cooperation;
- S9.** fulfilling a general reference function.

3.4 Tools and methods for promoting IPEX

In order to promote the usage of IPEX and to ensure the continued utility of the IPEX network and database the Digital System includes the following elements:

- P1.** implement a Search Engine Optimization strategy;
- P2.** promote cross linking;
- P3.** ensure the greater accessibility⁶ of the IPEX website;
- P4.** provide direct and online training to parliamentary staff;
- P5.** create and distribute promotional material.

3.5 Guiding provisions on the short-term maintenance of the website

Short-term maintenance covers any aspect for keeping the IPEX digital system operational, as well as guaranteeing that their content is accessible, up to date and complies with the standards set for the IPEX platform, taking into account “IPEX general editorial rules” adopted by the Board. More precisely this covers:

M1. Server and hosting environments

All technical aspects concerning the functioning of IPEX digital system are entrusted to the European Parliament.

IT services of the EP may act autonomously (without intervening in the IPEX content) to take any action that is necessary to keep IPEX digital system operational or, taking into account available resources, improve its performance.

M2. Accessibility and access control

The access control and user management is executed by the IPEX Information Officer, in accordance with the IPEX Guidelines (Art. 9 (2b)) and decisions of the IPEX Board.

The IPEX Information Officer, in line with the IPEX Guidelines and other instructions received from the IPEX Board, grants or restores users' access rights to the IPEX digital system.

M3. Information and content management

The management and supervision of content published throughout the IPEX digital system is ensured by the IPEX Information Officer, acting under the

⁶ <http://www.w3.org/WAI/> - accessed on 4 January 2017

supervision of the IPEX Board, as well as by the IPEX Correspondents on their national Parliaments' pages (the pages with national Parliaments' exclusive ownership).

The Information Officer and IPEX Correspondents ensure that the documents/information published on IPEX website are in line with *IPEX general editorial rules* :

- 1) the Information Officer ensures the coherence with *IPEX general editorial rules* of all publications of the entitled stakeholders⁷, subject to the reservation in point 2 below,
- 2) the national Correspondents are responsible for their national Parliaments' pages.

The daily maintenance and monitoring of the timelines and accuracy of the information published throughout the IPEX digital system performed by the IPEX Information Officer comprises:

- a) monitoring and possible correction of the terminology in order to ensure the coherence of the names and terms published on the website - in accordance with *Glossary of terms used on the IPEX website*⁸,
- b) monitoring of the **technical correctness** of published documents and information - right form, also linguistic, in the right place, according to the template provided by *IPEX general editorial rules*,
- c) ensuring the translation of the agreed parts of the website in strict cooperation with IPEX Correspondents,
- d) checking the actuality and correctness of the links,
- e) asking the national Correspondents⁹ to take corrective actions on the content of the national Parliaments' pages if needed.

3.6 Relations with other actors in the framework of EU information exchange

External developments in the (digital) exchange of EU information can have an effect on IPEX as a digital platform and as a network. The IPEX Board should consider their impact on IPEX when necessary.

The IPEX Board key purpose in its external strategy is to ensure that the IPEX goals are met. The Board promotes IPEX as the main platform for EU interparliamentary information exchange between the Parliaments in the EU. Mutually beneficial interaction and cooperation with other platforms, forums and networks should be

⁷ The entitled stakeholders – apart from the IPEX Information Officer and national Correspondents – are: EC, EP, EIB, Presidencies of interparliamentary conferences or bodies hosted on IPEX website.

⁸ Glossary is published on IPEX website: “About IPEX” (Basic documents) section.

⁹ The National Correspondents, supported by the IPEX Information Officer, are responsible for the documents and information on national Parliaments' pages – uploaded by IPEX Correspondents manually and/or via XML feed.

considered and fostered by the Board whenever necessary and when this feeds into the evolving needs of the target IPEX audience.

IPEX current environment: the other stakeholders participating in NPs' EU information exchange

The IPEX Digital Strategy takes also into consideration the environment in which IPEX operates, which means databases or other digital tools containing the same documents and information of NPs as IPEX does or serving the same goal of exchange of information between EU Parliaments on EU affairs (ex. the EP statistics).

The NPs' documents uploaded into IPEX are – in parallel – forwarded into other EU databases, namely that of the Commission, European Parliament, Council (see the Annex 4.3). IPEX does link these databases to its website. However, in order to ensure the enhanced reliability of IPEX information, it is proposed to analyse relations between IPEX and other EU databases containing NPs documents, to ensure the role of IPEX as main source of information for its audience.

The reasons for such an analysis is to be found in the description of EU databases content (NPs documents) listed in Annex 4.3.

After such an assessment, involving the Board and National Correspondents (taking, if possible, into consideration also the planned 3 institutions database), its results in the form of specific expectations or requests in relation to other EU databases as well as in relation to IPEX itself are written down into the Work Programme.

3.7 Involving National Correspondents

Having in mind the fundamental role of national Correspondents as contributors of IPEX, with a view to achieve an even greater exchange of information through the website and giving the national Correspondents greater ownership in the project, their involvement should be based on an enhanced and structured dialog between them and the IPEX Board.

The enhanced dialogue, involving also the implementation of the Digital Strategy, could take the following forms:

- regular questions on concrete issues of the website (f.i. assessment of the functioning of certain mechanisms (ex. SRC)) – electronic form of questionnaires,
- regular updating of the Glossary (once a year, a method to be envisaged),
- reports at the Board meeting on the course of this dialogue.

The NCs take part in drafting the reports on the implementation of the DS in accordance with the procedure described in the paragraph “Monitoring”.

4 Annexes

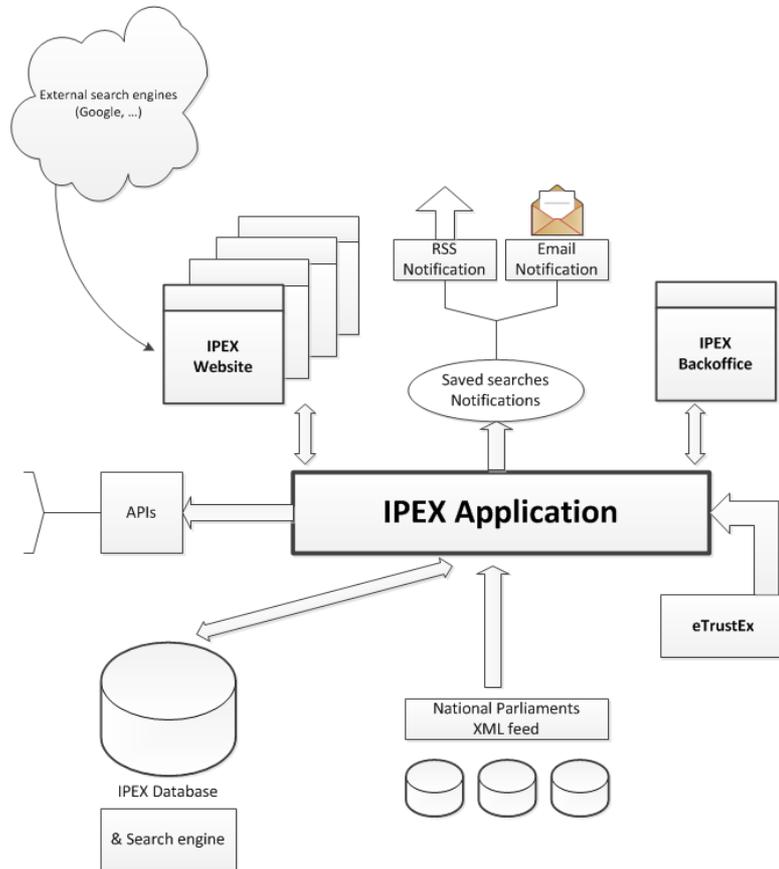
4.1 Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
IPEX platform	includes a digital system and a human network responsible for accomplishment of the IPEX tasks (mission)
IPEX digital system	is composed of the application, the database and the website – see below p. 4.2.
IPEX network	identifies the human actors of the IPEX platform, which contribute and interact to collect, produce, store, forward and publish relevant information
Database	technical element of the IPEX platform where the (mostly structured) information is stored, to be available for retrieval and use, with search function in the Documents database and Calendar
Website	the collection of webpages on the internet that is available when using a web browser to view www.ipex.eu
Application	a computer program that handles information to be stored into or retrieved from the database
General scrutiny	examination by national parliaments of proposed EU legal acts and other documents
Subsidiarity control	examination by national parliaments of the compliance of EU legislative proposals with the subsidiarity principle, according to <i>Protocol [no. 2] on the application of subsidiarity and proportionality principles</i> annexed to the TEU and TFEU
IPEX basic documents	for the purpose of this DS we intend by basic documents all the documents adopted by the Speakers Conference or Secretaries General dealing with the tasks of IPEX.
IPEX digital information channels	All digital channels through which IPEX publishes or communicates (IPEX Website, Social Media, etc.)

4.2 The IPEX digital system

According to the note on the “Role of IPEX”, IPEX is defined as “a multifunctional platform supporting inter-parliamentary cooperation in the European Union by organising human resources and providing technical means for the electronic exchange of information on all EU-related parliamentary activities”.

The “technical means” provided by the IPEX platform can be defined as the IPEX Digital System. The following diagram shows the main components of the IPEX Digital System and how they interact.



The diagram above is useful to understand the various elements that could be affected by the Digital Strategy and the Work Program (that is defined according to the DS itself).

4.3 IPEX relations with other actors¹⁰

Commission

- [National Parliament opinions and Commission replies](#) - European Commission's database containing reasoned opinions of national parliaments on subsidiarity, other opinions (political dialogue) sent to the European Commission and replies from the Commission (no search possibility)

European Parliament

- [European Parliament's register](#) - reasoned opinions of national parliaments can be found in the "Official documents forwarded by other institutions and by Member States" part, in the "National parliaments" section (the earliest was published on 22.07.2014).
- [Legislative Observatory](#) - reasoned opinions of national parliaments are published, together with other documents of the procedure, in *Documentation gateway - National parliaments* section, since July 2014. Records of procedures

¹⁰ Data concerning the content and functionalities of the databases and statistics – as of January 2017

from the years 2010 to 2013 contain only links to relevant *dossiers* in IPEX database (and not links to individual reasoned opinions).

Information about NPs' documents forwarded to the EP can be found in:

- [Statistics on subsidiarity checks](#) - EP's Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments publishes "State of play" before each EP plenary session and lists the documents received from national Parliaments that concern legislative proposals on the plenary agenda, as well as the documents received since the publication of the last note. Also annual Protocol 2 statistics are available – the last as of 3 June 2015.

Council

- [Public register of Council documents](#) - in this register reasoned opinions can be found by typing "reasoned opinion" in *Words in subject* part of the search form (the list contains only 35 results since 2010)

3 institutions – a possible future database:

- Future common database of legislatives dossiers (including trilogues) – upon the basis of Art. 39 of the *Interinstitutional agreement on better law-making* of 16 April 2016