

Parliamentary Responses to COVID-19

Week of 18 – 24 April 2020

Countries (A to Z)	Parliamentary Responses to COVID-19	Relevant links
Angola	Parliament submitted a new tax bill, reducing the Industrial Tax rate to 25%, and the rate of the Agricultural and related sector from 15% to 10%.	https://macauhub.com.mo/2020/04/22/pt-governo-de-angola-submete-ao-parlamento-propostas-de-lei-do-sistema-tributario/
Arab Parliament	The Arab Parliament called on the UN, human rights bodies and the Red Cross to compel Israel to release Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons, as the virus spreads among several detainees.	https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200418-arab-parliament-calls-for-releasing-palestine-prisoners-in-occupation-prisons-amid-spread-of-coronavirus/
Albania	Parliament approved an extension of the state of emergency to June 23. Among the most notable measures implemented, is a curfew from 5.30 pm to 5.00 am.	https://seenews.com/news/albania-extends-state-of-emergency-over-coronavirus-spread-696143
Bangladesh	Parliament went into session for the shortest time in its history due to a constitutional obligation.	https://www.thedailystar.net/country/news/js-goes-7th-session-very-brief-period-1894237
China	The top body of China's parliament, The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, will meet April 26-29, to deliberate on various proposed legislations.	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-politics-parliament/china-parliaments-top-body-to-meet-from-april-26-to-april-29-idUSKBN21Z150
Denmark	As of April 20, parliament is slowly reopening, with party groups allowed to meet in large rooms and with respect for social distancing.	https://www.ipu.org/country-compilation-parliamentary-responses-pandemic
Egypt	The Healthy Affairs Committee submitted a bill to amend law on health precautions, including regulations to prevent the spread of infections during burial rites. It includes a fine for any individuals that fail to use a mask or protective supply outside of their residence.	https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200423-egypt-parliament-presents-bill-to-amend-law-on-health-precautions-and-control-infectious-diseases/
European Parliament	The European Parliament approved a €3.08 billion package to support healthcare systems in EU member states, in particular to allow states to purchase urgent medical supplies. Funds are also destined to repatriate citizens, help Greece with migratory	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/priorities/eu-response-to-coronavirus/20200415IPR77110/covid-19-meps-free-up-over-EU3-billion-to-support-eu-healthcare-sector https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/priorities/eu-

Parliamentary Responses to COVID-19

Week of 18 – 24 April 2020

	<p>pressures, and Albania for post-earthquake reconstruction.</p> <p>Parliament also passed a resolution calling for a massive recovery and reconstruction package, to be financed by the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), existing EU funds, and 'recovery bonds.</p> <p>MEPs called for a EU Coronavirus Solidarity Fund for unemployment, of at least €50 billion.</p>	<p>response-to-coronavirus/20200415IPR77109/covid-19-meps-call-for-massive-recovery-package-and-coronavirus-solidarity-fund</p>
France	<p>The National Assembly will vote on the governments' plan to launch a contact tracing app to fight the coronavirus, amidst criticism. A debate will be held April 28-29 without a vote.</p>	<p>https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-france-privacy/french-parliament-to-vote-on-covid-19-tracing-app-idUSKCN22319G</p>
Germany	<p>The Chancellery and Merkel's coalition have agreed on a \$10.8 billion stimulus package, to include state wage support and a reduction on value-added tax for restaurants.</p>	<p>https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-22/merkel-s-coalition-at-odds-over-next-stage-of-crisis-response</p>
India	<p>Parliament is considering a VC debate to discuss new economic packages as demanded by several states, and a possible roadmap to ease the lockdown.</p>	<p>https://www.newsnation.in/india/news/parliamentary-panel-on-home-seeks-to-discuss-covid-19-issues-on-april-28-258415.html</p>
Italy	<p>The Prime Minister gave his word to parliament on April 21 to provide an additional \$52.3 billion economic stimulus package for the country by the end of the month.</p>	<p>https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-italy-lockdown/italy-set-to-ease-coronavirus-lockdown-from-may-4-conte-idUSKBN223004</p>
Japan	<p>On April 22, parliamentary affairs heads of the opposition parties agreed to pass a fiscal 2020 supplementary budget to finance emergency stimulus measures in April. The package is expected to include a cash handout of 100,000 Yen (US \$ 927).</p>	<p>https://www.nippon.com/en/news/yj2020042200528/japan-parliament-to-pass-fy-2020-extra-budget-within-april.html</p>
Kenya	<p>The National Assembly adopted tax law amendments that allow employees earning less than 24,000 shillings (US \$223) per month 100% tax relief.</p>	<p>https://www.kbc.co.ke/national-assembly-tax-laws-bill/</p>

Parliamentary Responses to COVID-19

Week of 18 – 24 April 2020

	Employees earning over \$223 will pay a maximum of 25% corporate taxes, down from the usual 30%.	
Lebanon	<p>Parliament resumed on April 21st after a month, and approved an IBRD loan for the strengthening of Lebanon's health system, as well as several non-coronavirus related bills.</p> <p>On April 22, parliament adjourned without voting on an anticipated \$800 million economic support package.</p>	<p>https://www.arabnews.com/node/1662671/middle-east</p> <p>https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/not-enough-lebanese-mps-to-vote-on-urgent-aid-for-country-s-poorest-1.1010206</p>
Russia	Pressure is mounting to push for a bill to re-criminalize domestic abuse while the country is in lockdown, amid fears of a resurgence.	https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/04/22/russia-seeks-protections-for-domestic-abuse-victims-during-coronavirus-lockdown-a70071
South Africa	South Africa's President announced a \$26 billion coronavirus rescue package to parliament. The package includes 250,000 food parcels for citizens and financial grants for child support and for unemployed citizens.	https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/south-africas-president-announces-26-billion-coronavirus-rescue-package
Spain	Spanish lawmakers approved an extension of the state of emergency for the third time to May 9.	https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-22/spanish-lawmakers-approve-state-of-emergency-extension-to-may-9
United States	<p>The Senate passed a \$484 billion stimulus package on April 21, of which \$380 billion will support small businesses, and \$75 billion for hospitals, and \$25 billion for disease testing.</p> <p>E-voting has not been allowed for Congress, who have needed to fly from their respective constituencies to vote.</p>	https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/21/senate-coronavirus-relief-package-197983
United Kingdom	<p>Parliament returned on April 21, by way of hybrid parliament, a historic first. The House will allow up to 50 MPs to enter, while up to 120 MPs will be able to connect virtually.</p> <p>No point of order is to be raised, and MPs will only be given the opportunity to speak if listed prior.</p>	https://www.ipu.org/country-compilation-parliamentary-responses-pandemic

Parliamentary Responses to COVID-19

Week of 18 – 24 April 2020

Parliamentary Organizations (A to Z)	Parliamentary responses to COVID-19	Relevant Links
Climate Parliament	Climate Parliament is conducting virtual parliamentary Roundtables to exchange national experiences on Covid-19, and explore the climate and energy aspects of the crisis.	
Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe	<p>PACE President has launched #PACEvoices as a social media thread to connect with fellow MPs in times of physical distancing.</p> <p>“We are more than 600 women and men from 47 countries, all elected members of parliament (...) Coronavirus may distance us, but it cannot silence us.”</p>	https://pace.coe.int/en/news/7853/covid-19-assembly-president-launches-pacevoices
Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA)	The OSCE parliamentarians endorsed a UN call for a global ceasefire amid the global pandemic.	https://www.oscepa.org/news-a-media/press-releases/2020/osce-parliamentarians-endorse-un-sg-s-global-ceasefire-call-discuss-european-response-to-covid-19-pandemic-and-plan-pa-activities
Joint statement: Presidents of PACE, NATO PA & OSCE PA	<p>The Presidents of PACE, NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly issued a joint statement to address the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close co-ordination with parliaments at national and international level is necessary for democracy and effective public policy responses. • Parliament must continue to function for democratic control and as guardian of democratic values, processes and freedoms. • All three parliamentary assemblies stand ready to provide platforms for legislators to share experience and best practices for the crisis, to promote resilience and quick response from national parliaments. 	https://pace.coe.int/en/news/7854/covid-19-joint-statement-on-the-role-of-parliaments-in-a-time-of-pandemic
Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)	<p>PAM have called for urgent action to combat the surge of domestic violence during the crisis in the region.</p> <p>Once restrictions of movement are lifted, PAM will hold a dedicated meeting on the role of parliamentarians in preventing and combatting violence against women.</p>	https://www.pam.int/default.asp?m=news&id=907

Parliamentary Responses to COVID-19

Week of 18 – 24 April 2020

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)	IPU provides an overview of parliamentary responses, along with a practice Q&A on remote working tools for parliaments to function during the crisis.	https://www.ipu.org/parliaments-in-time-pandemic
---------------------------------	---	---