



The Central American Parliament



PARLACEN

www.parlacen.int



Content

- What is the PARLACEN?
- History
- Member and Observation States
- Competences and Tasks
- Bodies
- Objectives



What is the PARLACEN?



- It is the regional and permanent organ of political and democratic representation of the System of Central American Integration (SICA) with the fundamental objective of realizing the integration of the Central American countries
- The members of parliament are elected democratically.
- The PARLACEN is composed of 20 directly elected representatives from each member state plus the former presidents and vice presidents of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic.



What is the PARLACEN?

- The main tasks of the Central American Parliament are
 - to carry out an efficient leadership that concentrates on the strengthening of representative democracy in Central America.
 - to promote the cooperation of the many institutions dealing with the process of integration.
 - to continually work in the course of sustainable development towards a modern, just society that stands in solidarity and warrants peace and respect for Human Rights.
 - to realize the integration of Central American states



What is the PARLACEN?

- The PARLACEN's special competences are
 - to propose drafts of treaties and agreements in order to secure the progress of the Central American integration.
 - to propose legislation in matters of the Central American integration
 - to act as the only political forum that represents the broad range of ideological movements of the region.



The Strategic Aim

- To enhance the political will and commitment of political, economic and social actors who are of major importance to the process of regional integration.
- To promote peace, democracy and the respect for Human Rights



The Character of the PARLACEN

With regards to its legal nature the PARLACEN acts as the regional and permanent organ of political and democratic representation of the SICA with the aim of realizing the Central American integration. It wants to achieve a peaceful coexistence within the framework of security and social welfare, not only based on a representative and participative democracy, but also in pluralism, in the respect for national legislation and International Law.



Democratic Legitimation and Political Representation

- Next to the European Parliament the PARLACEN is the world's second regional parliament that performs political representation. It is fully democratically legitimated due to the direct election of its representatives.



History

- The thought of integration and the idea of establishing a regional parliament had been pursued for already 180 years.
- In 1986 the presidents of the Central American countries agreed on founding the PARLACEN at a meeting in Esquipulas, Guatemala.
- In 1987 the Constitutive Treaty of PARLACEN and other political entities was signed.
- PARLACEN was officially established in Guatemala-City in 1991. Local departments are located in the capital of each member states and in the Dominican Republic.



Members and Observation States

Member states

- Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama and Dominican Republic

Observation states

- Mexico, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and the Republic of China in Taiwan



Competences and Tasks

- **Competences**

- Propose legislation in matters of integration
- Democratic control of the integration process
- Initiatives to deepen and consolidate integration



Competences and Tasks

■ **Tasks**

- To further and steer the process of integration to the possibly broadest cooperation between the Central American states.
- Proposing drafts of treaties and agreements, which are to be negotiated between the Central American states, as well as forming an opinion of what the SICA proposes.
- Creating special commissions to analyze the disagreements between the states which could affect further integration.



Competences and Tasks

▪ **Tasks**

- Support the consolidation of a democratic, pluralistic and participative form of government in the Central American states.
- Contribute to the strengthening of full validity of International Law.
- Take notice of the election of the executive authorities of the SICA and inaugurate the elected
- Being informed about the budgets of the integration entities



Bodies

- Plenum
- Board of Parliament
- Secretariat



Plenum

- The Plenum is the highest body of the Central American Parliament and is formed by all representatives.



Board of Parliament

- The Board of Parliament is the executive body implementing the decisions that emanate from the Plenum. It is the PARLACEN's administrative body.
- The Board of Parliament is elected by the Plenum for a period of one year and is composed of one president, five vice presidents and six secretaries.

Policy Board of Parliament 2012-2013



PRESIDENT

Leonel Búcaro
El Salvador

VICEPRESIDENTS

Luis Castilla
Panama

Roberto Alejos
Guatemala

Armando Bardales
Honduras

Silvia García
Dominican Republic

Daniel Ortega Reyes
Nicaragua

SECRETARIES

Hermes Flores
El Salvador

Aixa Marilú Aguilar
Guatemala

Carlos Vargas
Honduras

Said Zabala
Nicaragua

Cirilo Salas
Panama

Martha Pérez
Dominican Republic

The Policy Board of Parliament



Consists of the President of the Central American Parliament, who presides, a secretary of the policy board, who certifies the minutes of the sessions, and a president or representative of each parliamentary group.

Groups with more than fifteen members are entitled to two representatives, maintaining one vote per group.



Secretary Office

- The Secretary Office is the technical-administrative organ of the PARLACEN. Under the control and leadership of the Board of Parliament it assists the Commissions, the Plenum and the Board of Parliament in technical and logistic matters.

The secretariat splits into three secretariats, which have the following functions and responsibilities:

- The Secretariat for Parliamentary Affairs
- The Secretariat for Administration and Finance
- The Secretariat of the Board



The Commissions

- The Commissions are supposed to conduct studies and research within their sphere of competence or on matters assigned to them by the Board of Parliament. The results of these studies are always documented in a report or survey.



The Commissions

The working commissions of the Central American Parliament are split into:

- **Permanent commissions:** unlimited duration, each commission designed to work on their respective commission affairs.
- **Extraordinary commissions:** set up by the Plenum for matters of special importance and institutional significance for the PARLACEN and for the process of integration.
- **Special commissions:** set up by the Board of Parliament to handle special affairs.



The commissions

The permanent commissions are the following:

- Commission of Agriculture, Fishing, Environment and Natural Resources
- Commission of Urban Development, Public Participation
- Commission of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
- Commission of Women, Children, Youth and Family
- Commission of Monetary Affairs and Finance
- Commission of Tourism



The Commissions

- Commission of International Relations and Migration Affairs
- Commission of Health, Social Security, Population, Labour and Corporation Affairs
- Commission of Peace, Public Security and Human Rights
- Commission of Integration, Trade and Economic Development
- Commission of Legal Affairs, Integration Law and Regional Institutions
- Commission of Politics and Party Affairs
- Commission of Indigenous Peoples and Afro Descendants



Parliamentary Groups

- The parliamentary groups reflect the ideological lines of the members of the Central American Parliament and are organized according to the political orientation of their parties.
- **Requirements:** To form a parliamentary group a minimum of ten members that represent at least two countries are required.



Parliamentary Parties

Four parliamentary groups act in the PARLACEN:

- The Democratic Alliance
- The Parliamentary Group of the Lefts
- Centre-Democratic Integration
- Central American and Caribbean Innovation Group



Objectives

- The political and social democratization and the strengthening of political institutions
- Solving economic, social and ecological problems
- Youth and childhood affairs
- Concerns of migration
- Culture and regional identity
- Organizing public policy
- Democracy and participation of the people
- Pursuing economic and commercial agreements and proposals
- Providing suggestions to solve frontier problems in order to prevent a delaying of the process of integration



PARLACEN...

- ...is in a position to decide on reforms of its Constitutional Treaty, which became effective on September 7th of 2010 and plays a decisive role in the deepening of integration being the political and permanent organ with democratic legitimation. It contributes to the welfare of the citizens of the region using its competences e.g. legislation in matters of integration, parliamentary control of the integration entities, supervising the election of its executive authorities and its budget.



PARLACEN...

- ... supports a comprehensive conception of Central American integration and refuses to realize this through an intergovernmental process.
- ... stands for an integral conception of Central American development and integration, for the benefit of its peoples in the political, economic, social and cultural domain. PARLACEN strongly opposes the idea of reducing integration to a mere economic dimension and free trade.