



The Central American Parliament



PARLACEN

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What is *PARLACEN*?



- It is the regional and permanent organ of political and democratic representation of the System of Central American Integration (SICA) with the main purpose to realize the Central American integration.
- The members of parliament are elected democratically.
- *PARLACEN* consists 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.

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What is PARLACEN?

- The main tasks of the Central American Parliament are
 - to carry out an efficient leadership which 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 towards the sustainable development of a modern, righteous and joint society in which peace and the respect of human rights are guaranteed.
 - To realize the integration of Central America



What is PARLACEN?

- PARLACEN's special powers are
 - to formulate political motions and treaties in order to secure the progress of the Central American integration.
 - to propose legislation related with the Central American integration
 - to act as the only political forum to include all the ideological movements of the region www.parlacen.int



The strategic aim

- Enhancing the political will and the commitment of political, economical and social players who are of major importance to the process of regional integration.
- To promote peace, democracy and human rights



The Character of PARLACEN

The judicial characterization of the PARLACEN defines it as regional and permanent organ of political and democratic representation of the SICA with the aim to realize the Central American integration and the peaceful coexistence within the scope of security and social welfare which relies on the representative and participative democracy, on pluralism, on the respect of legislation, on the field of integration, on the national legislations and on the human rights.

Democratic legitimation and political representation



- Besides the European Parliament PARLACEN is the world's second regional parliament performing political representation. It is fully democratically legitimated due to the direct election of the members of parliament.

History



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



Member 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



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Competences and tasks

- **Competences**

- Propose legislation concerning the integration
- Democratic control of the integration
- Initiatives to deepen and amplify the integration



Competences and tasks

▪ **Tasks**

- Promoting the process of integration and leading the way to the greatest possible cooperation between the Central American states.
- Proposing draft treaties and agreements which are to be negotiated by the Central American states and forming an opinion of what the SICA proposes
- Creating special commissions to get to know the discordances between the states who could affect the integration



Competences and tasks

▪ **Tasks**

- Helping to consolidate a democratic, pluralistic and participative form of government in the Central American states.
- Promoting the validity of international law.
- Knowing the nominations and sworn in of the executive authorities of SICA
- Knowing the budgets of the institutions of SICA

Bodies

- Plenum
- Board of Parliament
- Secretariat



Plenum



- The plenum is the highest body of the Central American Parliament and consists of all the representatives.



Board of Parliament

- The board of parliament is the executive body which carries out the decisions made by the plenum. Further more it is the parliament's administrative body.
- The board of parliament which is elected annually consists of one president, five vice presidents and six secretaries.

Board of Parliament 2009-2010



PRESIDENT
Jacinto Suárez Espinoza
Nicaragua

VICEPRESIDENTS

Nidia Díaz
El Salvador

Jorge Mario Búcaro
Guatemala

Víctor Manuel Galdámez
Honduras

Román Sandoval
Panamá

Sebastino Brito Hernández
Dominican Republic

SECRETARIES

Carlos Morales Estupinián
El Salvador

Jorge Francisco Gallardo
Guatemala

Ramiro Colindres Ortega
Honduras

María Haydee Osuna
Nicaragua

Sandra Iberia Noriega
Panamá

Rafael Gamuni Cordero
Dominican Republic

The extended board of parliament



- The extended board of parliament additionally consists of the parliamentary parties' representatives. Each parliamentary party sends either its president or director.

The extended board of parliament's competences are for example:

- Selecting and working out the topics which are to be discussed at the meetings of the plenum.
- Controlling the progress of outstanding reports.
- Working on all inquiries.

Secretariat



- The secretariat is the technical and administrative body of PARLACEN. Under the board of parliament's control and leadership it assists the commission, the plenum and the board of parliament in technical and logistic tasks.

The secretariat consists of:

- The secretariat for parliamentary affairs
- The secretariat for administration and finance
- The secretariat of the Board of Parliament

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The commissions

- The commissions' function is to carry out studies and investigations which concern their competences or which are demanded by the board of parliament respectively the extended board of parliament. The results of these studies are always documented as a report or survey.



The commissions

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

- **Permanent commissions:** unlimited duration, each commission works on studies concerning its certain scope.
- **Specific commissions:** appointed by the plenum, these commissions work on matters with special importance for the Central American Parliament and the process of integration.
- **Special commissions:** appointed by the plenum for special tasks.



The commissions

The permanent commissions are the following:

- Commission of politics and party affairs
- Commission of peace, security, human rights and ethnic groups
- Commission of monetary and finance
- Commission of education, culture, sports and technology
- Commission of integration, trade and economic development
- Commission of agriculture, stock-farming, fishing, environment and natural resources

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The commissions

- Commission of women, children, youth and family
- Commission of urban development and public participation
- Commission of health, social security, population, labour and corporations
- Commission of legal affairs, integration law and regional institutions
- Commission of international relations
- Commission of tourism



Parliamentary groups

- The parliamentary groups reflect the different political views of the members of the Central American Parliament who organize themselves according to their party's political opinions.
- **Requirements:** To form a parliamentary group a minimum of ten members who represent two or more countries is required.



Parliamentary parties

Six parliamentary groups act in
PARLACEN:

- The Democratic Centre (CD)
- The Democratic Alliance of Central America (ADC)
- The parliamentary group of the Lefts (GPI)
- Democratic Convergency of Central America (CDC)
- Democratic Integration
- Central American and Caribbean Innovation Group

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Objectives

- The political and social democratization and the strengthening of political institutions
- Solving the 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 set the reforms of its constitutional treaty, which become effective on the 7th of September 2010, into practice, to play a decisive role in the deepening of the integration and as the political and permanent organ with democratic legitimation to carry out its attributions for the welfare of the citizens of the region with its competences like legislation in the field of integration, parliamentary control of the institutions of the integration, knowing of the election of its executive authorities and its budget.

PARLACEN...



- ... supports a common concept for the Central American integration and seeks to realize this concept through an international process.
- ... proposes a broad concept for the development and the integration of Central America on a political, economical, social and cultural level - for the benefit of the citizens. PARLACEN strongly opposes a mere economic union between the Central American states which would reduce the integration to free trade agreements.

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