

Can parliaments lead by example on the way to transparency and accountability?

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Lithuanian Parliament has just passed a resolution, which put the Government under an obligation to make opening government data a strategic governance priority in the upcoming years. While this indeed is a good move, the Parliament missed an opportunity to lead by example and open up its own data and so benchmark openness standards to other institutions at first place.

As representative bodies of government, parliaments should pay particular attention to transparency of its work and accountability of its members. Besides publishing parliamentary data online, it is also important to create venues for others to re-use data and educate citizens on parliamentary functions.

An international effort have been made to support parliaments in their way to opening more parliamentary information and creating more effective open data policies. From the work done up to now, it is becoming clear that when considering open data strategies, parliaments should at least touch upon aspects, such as: 1) creating an effective and efficient document management system; 2) implementing open standards and open license; 3) implementing open data policy;

There has also been a solid international effort to benchmark the most important parliamentary data that parliaments should avail. The three main bulks of parliamentary information include information on MPs and political parties, legislative information and budget and administrative management information. In addition, data falling within the scope of these categories and beyond should be provided in a structured way, machine-readable formats (XML, for instance) and it should also be openly licensed.

The abovementioned elements are the starting points for parliaments to get on their way to effective open data strategies. [The Declaration on Parliamentary Openness](#) has been helping many parliaments and parliamentary monitoring organizations in setting minimum openness and transparency standards and encouraging parliament and citizen communication.

The more detailed set of recommendations for parliaments as to which data and how it should be open, also how Declaration on Parliamentary Openness can assist in multi stakeholder effort towards implementing parliamentary openness strategies can be found in the recent topic report at the EPSI platform [here.](#)