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For democracy. For everyone.

# 139<sup>th</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 14-18.10.2018

## Panel discussion *What can MPs do to sort fact from fiction in the age of fake news?*

*Tuesday, 16 October 2018, 4.30 – 6.30 p.m.  
Salle Genève, CCV Annexe building, CICG*

Despite being named word of the year in 2017,<sup>1</sup> "fake news" is as old as news itself. Politicians have been using information for centuries as a means to further their objectives, with traditional media acting as a gatekeeper between propaganda and truth.

However, in the age of social media and unlimited free access to information, has something changed? Has the speed at which fake news spreads, its accessibility and increasing sophistication, the lack of transparency, the ease with which anyone can post anything anonymously, become a danger to democracies and its institutions? As the world's challenges grow increasingly complex and many citizens wish for simpler times, what is the responsibility of MPs to rely on facts rather than emotions to make their case? How to ensure that MPs have an ethical political discourse and use data responsibly to inform policy and their decisions? What is their responsibility with regard to informing the people they represent? With the increase of partisan news reporting as well as the rise of media which amplify misinformation, what can parliaments do to promote unbiased investigative journalism? What is the role of social media platform administrators? Should they filter fake news? What part does fake news now play in elections and how can the electorate sort fact from fiction? And what can parliaments do to help them?

In this panel discussion, the IPU will facilitate a debate between politicians, journalists and social media representatives to try and shed some light on the reality of a post-truth world.

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<sup>1</sup> Collins Dictionary