



REVIEW OF THE BOOK “AN ALTERNATIVE GUIDE TO THE EFFECTIVE PARLIAMENTARIAN” BY VALERIU ANTONOVICI¹

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1. Introduction

In the current context of Romanian society, marked by a political dynamic often perceived as media spectacle rather than effective governance, Valeriu Antonovici's *An ALTERNATIVE Guide to the Effective Parliamentarian* stands out as a lucid and in-depth analysis of the role and functions of Parliament. The book constitutes a valuable tool not only for those aspiring to a political career, but also for citizens interested in understanding democratic mechanisms and the complex realities behind the political stage.

2. I had been waiting for such a book

From the perspective of a lecturer preparing future civil servants, advisers, or even parliamentarians, I consider this book to be compulsory reading. It offers a realistic perspective on the limitations and responsibilities inherent in the parliamentary role, dismantling the myth of absolute power and highlighting the importance of understanding legislative mechanisms, political negotiation, and communication skills.

Valeriu Antonovici approaches parliamentary democracy with remarkable honesty, avoiding idealisation and presenting a pragmatic picture of reality. The book highlights the gap between democratic theory and its manifestation in practice, emphasising the importance of transparency and accountability in parliamentary activity. The author demonstrates that a parliamentarian is not a simple decision-maker, but an actor constrained by a series of factors, including political parties, negotiations, and the existing legislative framework.

Beyond its theoretical dimensions, the book provides an anthropological analysis of the parliamentary role, exploring status, rituals, and the unwritten codes that govern this political elite. The author depicts Parliament as a closed group with its own hierarchies, rules, and mechanisms of socialisation, offering a fascinating insight into the institution's internal dynamics.

One of the book's major strengths lies in clarifying the parliamentarian's real role, clearly distinguishing it from that of a mayor or a benefactor. Valeriu Antonovici stresses that a parliamentarian's work consists of representation, debate, and law-making, not the resolution of local issues or the provision of individual favours. Consequently, the book encourages citizens to move beyond clichés and to understand democratic mechanisms beyond electoral promises.



3. Realism and good practice: how to be effective in Parliament

The book combines realism with practical advice, offering a useful guide for aspiring parliamentarians. The chapter on “how to look smarter in a meeting” is a telling example of this approach, highlighting the importance of appearances, timing, and the management of interpersonal relationships in politics.

4. Parliament: an open space or an exclusive club?

Valeriu Antonovici insists on the need for Parliament to function as a transparent and accessible institution, rather than an exclusive club. The author argues that transparency is essential to the functioning of democracy, enabling citizens to understand what their representatives do and to hold them accountable.

5. Conclusion: an essential book for strengthening democracy

An ALTERNATIVE Guide to the Effective Parliamentarian is a valuable book that deserves to be read not only by those aspiring to a political career, but also by all citizens interested in understanding democratic mechanisms and contributing to the consolidation of democracy. It offers a realistic, honest, and pragmatic perspective on the role of Parliament, dismantling myths and providing practical advice for effective civic participation.

In conclusion, I warmly recommend this book to my students and to anyone interested in a profound and realistic analysis of parliamentary democracy in Romania. It is essential reading for the formation of future leaders and for the consolidation of a democratic society.