



**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**



**GUIDELINES FOR THE MEETINGS OF
THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES
OF THE EMPA**

approved by the EMPA Bureau on 11 June 2008

The guidelines for the meetings of parliamentary committees allow the chairmen of the committees of the Assembly:

- on the one hand, **to lead discussions and decision-making more effectively** and,
- on the other, **to reinforce the strictly parliamentary nature of the committees** by moving away from the practices and methods associated with intergovernmental diplomatic conferences.

Committee meetings and membership

1. In line with the Assembly's programme of activities as approved by the EMPA Bureau, ordinary meetings of Committees shall be convened by their Chairman, upon consultation with the committee Vice-Chairs. Their number may not exceed four per year. Further meetings may be convened upon request from the Committee concerned and subject to authorisation by the EMPA Bureau.
2. In case a vacancy is established, the delegation to which the seat is allocated shall appoint a replacement member within three months at the latest. It shall notify the EMPA Presidency, the concerned committee's Chair and secretariat of the appointment.

Presidency and discipline

3. By analogy with the presidency of the Assembly, the chairman of a committee shall direct the proceedings, ensure the Rules of Procedure are observed, maintain order, give speakers the floor, declare discussions closed, establish the presence of a quorum, put issues to the vote and announce the outcome of votes.
4. If the chairman is unable to attend, he shall be replaced by the vice-chairman best able to ensure the smooth running of the meeting.
5. If he is unable to attend a committee meeting, a vice-chairman may be replaced by a member of his delegation, provided that he has informed the committee chairman of this substitution in writing.
6. No member may speak unless called upon to do so by the chairman of the committee. A speaker may not be interrupted except for points of order. If a speaker departs from the subject, the chairman shall call him to order and may, on the second occasion, forbid him to speak for the remainder of the debate on the same subject.
7. The chairman shall call to order any committee member who creates a disturbance during the proceedings. Should the offence be repeated, the chairman may exclude the offender from the room for the remainder of the sitting.
8. It shall be forbidden to use language that is insulting towards peoples or contrary to the open and respectful spirit of the debates.

9. Each delegate shall sign the register of attendance of a Committee meeting.
10. Different badges shall determine access to the meeting room and the duty areas within it. No one may occupy the seats reserved for committee members.
11. Officials of the national parliaments of the Barcelona Process member states and of the European Parliament, diplomatic representatives and members' personal advisers shall occupy the seats reserved for them in the room.

Internal regulations and decision making procedures in Committees

12. The Committees may discuss other items without report and advise the EMPA Bureau in writing that the said items were discussed.
13. Two or more Committees may, either on the initiative of their Chairpersons or at the suggestion of the EMPA Bureau, hold joint meetings on subjects of common interest to them, provided paragraph 1 of these guidelines is applied.
14. Subject to approval by the EMPA Bureau on a case by case basis, Committees may appoint representatives to attend a conference on a topic related to their field of interest, to undertake a study or fact-finding mission. Committees may, upon notification to the Bureau, invite experts to give their opinion on a topic under discussion if they consider such opinion necessary to the effective conduct of their work.

Substitutes and voting methods

15. Any full member who is unable to attend a committee meeting may be replaced by a substitute from the same component of the Assembly (i.e. the component of the Mediterranean partner countries, the EU National Parliaments component and the European Parliament component). The committee chairman shall be informed of any substitutions and they shall be indicated in the record of attendance attached to the minutes.
16. Within the committee, the substitute shall have the same rights and be subject to the same obligations as the full member.
17. The position of committee chairman may not be occupied by a substitute.
18. The committees shall normally vote by show of hands. If the result by show of hands is doubtful, there shall be a fresh vote by standing and sitting.
19. No one may speak in between the various stages of a vote.

Public debates

20. Committee meetings shall be public unless the committee decides otherwise.
21. All committees reserve the right to hold meetings, in specific cases, without the presence of anyone not belonging to the committee or its secretariat.
22. Meetings shall be systematically open to representatives of the Barcelona Process institutions, in particular the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, the Council of Ministers of the European Union and the European Commission. They shall be entitled to speak and may at any time ask the Chair for permission to make a statement. The Chair shall decide when the statement may be made.
23. The gallery shall be open to the public, who shall remain seated and keep silent. In the event of an excessive number of requests, priority shall be given to those made on behalf of committee members and by civil society representatives.
24. The minutes of each meeting shall be drafted by the committee's secretariat and distributed to committee members before the opening of the next meeting. At the beginning of each meeting, the chairman shall submit the minutes of the previous meeting to the committee for its approval.
25. At the chairman's request, the committee secretariat may take the floor.
26. These guidelines shall be applied in all cases where specific provisions are not provided for by the Rules of Procedure of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and where they do not contradict the Rules of Procedure.

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