



Resolution 1143 (1997)¹

Working methods and frequency of meetings of the Standing Committee

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly notes that the introduction in 1993 of a fourth annual part-session formally entailed the need for the Standing Committee to meet at least four times a year, notably for the purpose of adopting the agenda and drawing up the draft order of business for each part-session of the Assembly (Rule 16, paragraphs 4 and 6, of the Rules of Procedure).
2. The Assembly notes that the Bureau already prepares a draft agenda and proposes a preliminary draft order of business for each part-session. Furthermore, in 1995 and 1996, the Assembly instructed the Bureau to adopt the agenda and draw up the draft order of business instead of the Standing Committee, when the latter did not meet before the September part-session. In any case, the draft order of business is adopted in the last resort by the Assembly at the opening of each part-session. Furthermore, the inclusion of the leaders of the political groups as members of the Bureau with voting rights has meant that it has enhanced its legitimacy to act as steering body for the Assembly. Therefore, the Rules of Procedure should be adapted to allow the Bureau to adopt the agenda and draw up the draft order of business for each part-session.
3. The Assembly furthermore notes that due to this increase in the number of part-sessions, it is becoming increasingly difficult to organise Standing Committee meetings under satisfactory conditions and to comply with the stipulated deadlines for the distribution of the reports placed on the agenda of the Standing Committee (Rule 47, paragraph 8). Consequently, it has also become necessary to reduce the deadlines for the communication of the agenda and the draft order of business.
4. The Standing Committee should nevertheless continue to play a major role in reducing the Assembly's agenda by dealing with items which can be referred to it.
5. In order for the Standing Committee to maintain its important role, the Assembly considers that at least two meetings of the Standing Committee should be held every year and notes that additional meetings can be convened whenever necessary.
6. When a committee's report is on the agenda of a meeting of the Standing Committee, the rapporteur is formally invited to attend this meeting. In this context, the chairman of the committee concerned shall be reminded that it is important that he himself attends the meeting or is replaced by one of the vice-chairmen.
7. When the Standing Committee does not meet in between two part-sessions, the Bureau should be able to approve changes in the composition of committees in order to ensure the continued participation of a national delegation in the ongoing activities of a committee.
8. The Assembly therefore decides to amend as follows its Rules of Procedure:
 - a. In Rule 16, replace paragraph 1 by the following text: "The Bureau shall adopt the Agenda for each part-Session."
 - b. Rule 16, replace paragraph 4 by the following text: "The Agenda shall be communicated to Representatives and Substitutes at least three weeks before the opening or resumption of the Session."

1. See [Doc. 7873](#), report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, rapporteur: Lord Russell-Johnston. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 7 November 1997.



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- c. In Rule 16, replace paragraph 6 by the following text: "The Bureau shall draw up the draft order of business for each part-Session, showing at which sittings the items on the Agenda are to be considered. This draft shall be communicated to Representatives and Substitutes at least three weeks before the opening or resumption of the Session."
- d. In Rule 42, paragraph 3, replace the words "The Standing Committee shall be convened (...) at least three times a year" by the following text: "The Standing Committee shall be convened by the President of the Assembly whenever he deems it necessary and at least twice a year."
- e. In Rule 42, paragraph 4, sub-paragraph b, delete the words "and the Agenda of part-Sessions"
- f. In Rule 42, paragraph 4, delete sub-paragraph c which states "draw up the draft order of business of part-Sessions".
- g. In Rule 43, amend paragraph 5, so that it reads as follows: "Candidatures for membership of the committees shall be addressed to the President of the Assembly, who shall submit to the Assembly, the Standing Committee or the Bureau proposals for their composition. The Assembly or the Standing Committee shall decide by secret ballot disputed nominations for one or more seats in a committee."
- h. In Rule 47, paragraph 8, replace the words "three weeks", in the first sentence by the words "two weeks" so that it reads as follows: "If the Committee decides to have one of its reports examined by the Standing Committee, all members of the Assembly shall be so informed and supplied with that report not less than two weeks before the meeting of the Standing Committee."