Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1220 (2000)[1]

Reform of the Assembly's working methods and its committee structure

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly refers to its Resolution 1177 (1999) of 26 January 1999, in which it decided to adapt its own priorities and structures to the new challenges facing the Council of Europe in a multi-institutional Europe.

2. The Assembly considers that to achieve this objective, it needs to improve the efficiency of its debates and its working methods and rationalise its committee structure, particularly in terms of how the committees operate and their composition.

3. The Assembly therefore decides to reduce the number of committees from 14 to 10. For this purpose, the Committee on Science and Technology will be merged with the Committee on Culture and Education (under the new title Committee on Culture, Science and Education), while the Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Food will be merged with the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities (under the new title Committee on Environment and Agriculture). The activities of the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations concerned with relations with national parliaments and the public will be transferred to the Bureau, while those concerned with the functioning of democratic institutions will be transferred to the Political Affairs Committee. In addition, each Assembly committee will be responsible for relations with non-governmental organisations in the relevant fields. While the Bureau will be responsible for the political negotiations with the Committee of Ministers, the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development will take over the responsibilities of the Committee on the Budget, in particular for preparing the Assembly's opinions on the Council of Europe's budget and on its own expenditure.

4. The Assembly also considers it necessary to alter the composition of committees and the allocation of seats among national delegations, on the basis that every member of the Assembly should be able, in principle, to be a full member of at least one committee.

5. The following committees will have 76 seats: the Political Affairs Committee, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, the Monitoring Committee, the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development and the Committee on Environment and Agriculture. But the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities and the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men will each have 46 seats.

6. France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United Kingdom will have four seats in committees with 76 seats and two seats in the two committees with 46 seats. Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine will have three seats in committees with 76 seats and one seat in the two committees with 46 seats. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland will have two seats in committees with 76 seats and one seat in the two committees with 46 seats. Albania, Andorra, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Norway, San Marino, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" will have one seat in each committee. The special rules concerning the allocation of seats in the Monitoring Committee and the appointment of its members will remain unchanged.

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1. Assembly debate on 26 June 2000 (17th Sitting) (see Doc. 8750, report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities, rapporteur: Mr Vis). Text adopted by the Assembly on 28 June 2000 (20thSitting).

7. The Assembly therefore decides to amend its Rules of Procedure as follows (the changes to the current wording are underlined):

i. Replace Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure as follows:

"43.1. At the beginning of each ordinary session the Assembly shall set up the following general committees:

1. Political Affairs Committee (76 seats);[2]
2. Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights (76 seats);
3. Committee on Economic Affairs and Development (76 seats);
4. Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee (76 seats);
5. Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography (76 seats);
6. Committee on Culture, Science and Education (76 seats);
7. Committee on Environment and Agriculture (76 seats);
8. Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (46 seats);
9. Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities (46 seats);
10. Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) (76 seats).[3]

43.2. France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United Kingdom shall have four seats in each of the first seven committees and two seats in the next two committees.

Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine shall have three seats in each of the first seven committees and one seat in the next two committees.

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland shall have two seats in each of the first seven committees and one seat in the next two committees.

Albania, Andorra, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Norway, San Marino, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' shall have one seat in each of the first nine committees.

43.3. On the basis of the candidatures proposed by the political groups, the Bureau shall nominate the 76 members of the Monitoring Committee by applying the apportionment ratio based on the so-called 'D'Hondt principle'. These nominations shall be submitted to the Assembly for ratification.[4] In the event of objection, the matter shall be referred back to the Bureau, which may submit revised nominations to the Assembly.

43.4.a. The Assembly may also set up ad hoc committees for specific purposes. A motion to set up an ad hoc committee shall be referred to the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities for report. (unchanged)

43.4.b. An ad hoc committee shall cease to exist after its report has been considered by the Assembly. (unchanged)

43.4.c. Subject to ratification by the Assembly or the Standing Committee, the Bureau of the Assembly may also set up ad hoc committees reporting to it, in which case it shall prescribe their duration, terms of reference and composition. An account of their work shall be given to the Assembly as part of the Progress Report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee.[5] (unchanged)

43.5. Substitutes, like Representatives, may be appointed members of a committee. Besides the full members, an equal number of alternates of the same nationality shall be appointed for each committee except for the Monitoring Committee.[6] (unchanged)

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2. See also rule 17.5.
3. Plus the chairs of the Political Affairs Committee and the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, ex officio members.
4. See Resolution 1115 (1997), p ... below.
5. Except for reports on the observation of elections, which may be presented to the Assembly or the Standing Committee (see Bureau decision, 14 September 1998).
6. See Resolution 1115 (1997), p ... below.

43.6. Without prejudice to Rule 43.3, 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, failing that, the Bureau proposals for their composition. Any disputed nominations shall be forwarded by the President of the Assembly to the national delegation concerned. If confirmed proposals or new proposals are disputed, the Assembly or the Standing Committee shall decide [...].

43.7. Where a seat is vacant on a committee other than the Monitoring Committee, it may be provisionally occupied by a Representative or Substitute from the national delegation to which the seat is allotted, the Representative or Substitute being appointed by the chairperson of that delegation."

ii. Replace Rule 47.6 as follows:

"Meetings of the Joint Committee, the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities […] and the Monitoring Committee shall not be open to members of observer and special guest delegations. Nor can these delegations attend meetings of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, or any of its sub-committees, when they are examining budgetary or administrative questions connected with the Council of Europe, or when they are discussing the powers of the Assembly in relation to the Council's budget."

iii. Replace Rule 48.3 as follows:

"A committee of 76 seats may not appoint more than three standing sub-committees, and a committee of 46 seats may not appoint more than two, unless authorised by the Bureau of the Assembly with a two-thirds majority."[7]

In the case of the committees listed in Rule 43.1 as Nos. 6 and 7, the decision of the Bureau of the Assembly shall be taken by a majority vote.

8. This resolution shall enter into force at the first part of the 2001 session of the Assembly (22 January 2001).

7. This provision does not apply to the Monitoring Committee. See Resolution 1115 (1997), p. ... below.