Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1529 (2006)[1]

Open and transparent voting in the Parliamentary Assembly

Parliamentary Assembly

1. In a democracy, which is fundamentally based on public debate and discussion, the accountability of parliamentarians is an essential requirement and one of its basic features. Democracy means that parliamentarians must answer for their actions to the institution they serve and to which they are accountable, although they are above all answerable to their electorates. Consequently, information on their activities and actions must be effectively available to the public.

2. The general public, and more particularly the electorate, the media and various lobbies, are expressing a definite and growing interest in ascertaining the opinions voiced by representatives on specific crucial issues and how they have voted on them. This holds not only for the national level but also for international parliamentary institutions. The publication of votes and the individual parliamentarian's explanation of his or her vote correspond to this need for transparency, which the development of electronic facilities and the Internet are helping to meet.

3. The Parliamentary Assembly considers that it is important to respond to the public demand for greater transparency in the decisions taken by the Assembly. Making votes public means making known not only the actual results but also the manner in which individual members have voted, and this is a vital part of such transparency.

4. The Assembly takes note of the Bureau's decision at its meeting on 6 September 2006, which was a first step in the right direction, to allow the names of members voting in the Assembly to be made public via the Assembly website from the October 2006 part-session onwards.

5. The Assembly considers that it is important to have a clear, precise rule, understood by all, applying to all members in a standard manner. Therefore, the Assembly feels that it is necessary:

5.1. to publish numerical results of votes on texts for adoption in the minutes of proceedings of the sitting;

5.2. to publish in electronic form on the Assembly website the results of all voting, whether on texts for adoption, amendments, procedural motions, etc., stating the names of voters and the manner in which they voted.

6. Consequently, the Assembly decides to amend the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly as follows:

6.1. to replace Article 39.4 with the following text:

"Only affirmative and negative votes shall count in calculating the number of votes cast. The President shall declare the voting closed and announce the result, which may not subsequently be modified. In case of an electronic vote, the numerical result shall be displayed publicly in the Chamber; the numerical results of votes on draft resolutions, recommendations and opinions to the Committee of Ministers shall also be recorded in the minutes of proceedings of the sitting."

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 17 November 2006 (see Doc. 11076, report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities, rapporteur: Mr Cebeci).

6.2. to insert the following new paragraph after Article 39.4:

"Where the vote takes place by means of the electronic voting system, members' individual votes shall be made public."

6.3. to replace Article 39.5 with the following text:

"Voting by roll call can only be requested if the electronic system cannot be used for technical reasons. It will be taken if at least one sixth of the Representatives of the Assembly authorised to vote, belonging to at least five national delegations, so request.[1]

1. The number of Representatives of the Assembly authorised to vote shall correspond to the number of seats allocated to each of the member states under Article 26 of the Statute of the Council of Europe, and to which appointments were made in accordance with Article 25 of the Statute and Rules 6 to 11 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, excluding Representatives who have been deprived of their voting rights in the Assembly or whose voting rights have been suspended under Rule 7.3, 8.5 or 9.4. If the number of Representatives authorised to vote is not divisible by six, the number obtained as a result of the division is rounded down."

6.4. to replace Article 39.7 with the following text:

"Voting by roll call shall proceed in the alphabetical order of the Representatives' names. Voting shall be by word of mouth and shall be expressed by 'Yes', 'No' or 'abstention' only. The President shall ask whether all members have been called before declaring voting closed and announcing the result. The votes are recorded in the minutes of proceedings of the sitting in the alphabetical order of the Representatives' names."

7. The Assembly decides that the new provisions will come into force at the opening of the January 2007 part-session.