Parliamentary Assembly
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Resolution 2551 (2024)[1]

Modification of various provisions of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly reiterates that its actions and decisions shall be based on clear, consistent and effective parliamentary rules and procedures. It recalls that it has regularly amended its rules in recent years in order to accommodate changes in parliamentary practice, clarify the rules and procedures where their application or interpretation has raised difficulties, or to address specific problems. It therefore intends to take due account of proposals submitted by its members, national delegations, political groups and committees, and make the necessary adjustments to its Rules of Procedure.

2. Having regard to the above considerations, the Assembly decides to amend its Rules of Procedure as follows:

2.1. with regard to the procedure for examining amendments in a plenary sitting:

2.1.1. modify Rule 34.7.*a* by adding the following sentence after the first sentence:

"The President chairing a sitting shall strictly interpret Rule 34.7.a on the consideration of oral amendments.";

2.1.2. modify Rule 34.9 by adding the following sentence after the first sentence:

"If a committee has not been able to take a position on amendments to its report that have been tabled, the floor shall be given to the rapporteur.";

2.1.3. in order to strengthen the competence of committees when taking a position on amendments tabled, amend the first sentence of Rule 34.11 as follows:

"Following a proposal presented by the chairperson of the committee seized for report, amendments which have been unanimously approved by the committee shall be declared as adopted by the Assembly, unless ten or more members of the Assembly object.";

2.2. with regard to the speaking time in plenary sittings:

2.2.1. as regards the speaking time of rapporteurs, in the complementary texts "Additional provisions relating to Assembly debates", modify paragraph 2 and paragraph 3 of "iv. Speaking time" as follows:

"2. Rapporteurs shall have a total of ten minutes, of which, indicatively, seven minutes for the presentation of the report and three minutes for the reply at the end of the debate. The co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee shall have five minutes each to present their report and five minutes to reply, to be shared between them.

Rapporteurs may, after the first round of speakers on behalf of the political groups, request the floor to reply; this speaking time shall be deducted from the time of reply at the end of the debate.

1. *Assembly debate* on 24 June 2024 (16th sitting) (see Doc. 15996, report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, rapporteur: Ms Ingjerd Schie Schou). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 24 June 2024 (16th sitting).

3. Rapporteurs for opinion shall have the same speaking time to present the opinion as the speakers registered for the debate concerned. Rapporteurs of the Bureau ad hoc committees on the observation of elections shall have five minutes to present the report.";

2.2.2. as regards current affairs debates, in order to harmonise speaking time for statements with that laid down in other provisions, amend Rule 53.4, as follows:

"A current affairs debate may not exceed one and a half hours. It shall be opened by a member chosen by the Bureau, who shall have a total of ten minutes, of which, indicatively, seven minutes for the introduction of the debate and three minutes for the reply at the end of the debate.";

2.2.3. as regards questions of procedure, in order to harmonise the speaking time with that laid down in other provisions, in Rule 35.7, replace the words "not more than two minutes" by "*not more than 30 seconds*";

2.3. with regard to the notification of substitutes, replace Rule 40.1 with the following sub-paragraph:

"Only those representatives or, in their absence, the substitutes duly designated by the national delegation not later than 24 hours before the debate concerned, who have signed the register of attendance, shall be entitled to vote.";

2.4. with regard to the threshold for the formation of a political group:

2.4.1. in Rule 19.2, replace the words "28 members", by the words "*26 members*";

2.4.2. in Rule 19.4, after the words "in Rule 19.2", add the words "on the date of 30 June, or which has fewer than 20 members for a period of three successive months";

2.4.3. in Rule 19.7, after the words "as a reference date", add the words "to verify that the conditions stipulated in Rule 19.2 are met, as well as";

2.5. with regard to the content of text proposals and written declarations tabled by members, replace the last sentence of Rule 25.2 and the second sentence of Rule 56.2 with the following sentence:

"They shall also address areas falling within the Council of Europe's sphere of competence and shall not contain racist, xenophobic or intolerant language or words and expressions whose meaning constitutes an affront to human dignity.";

2.6. with regard to the possibility for several members to table a written question to the Committee of Ministers:

2.6.1. in Rule 61.1, replace the first sentence with the following sentence:

"Representatives and substitutes or several representatives and/or substitutes may at any time address to the Committee of Ministers, or to its Chairperson-in-office, written questions that have a bearing on matters within the competence of the Committee of Ministers.";

2.6.2. in Rule 61.2, replace the sentence "Representatives and substitutes may also submit written questions." with the following sentence:

"Representatives and substitutes or several representatives and/or substitutes may also submit written questions.";

2.7. with regard to the bureaux of committees, in Rule 46.3, add the following words at the end of the second sentence: "*only if the candidature respects the agreement reached*", and a new sentence as follows: "*If it proves impossible to reach an agreement by consensus, the agreement should be obtained among the political groups by a qualified majority of two thirds.*";

2.8. in order to clarify the committee decisions subjected to quorum requirements, after Rule 47.3, add the following new sub-paragraph:

"47.4. A committee with 81 or 85 seats may adopt a motion for a recommendation or resolution with no fewer than 20 members voting in favour of the motion; a committee with fewer seats shall adopt motions for recommendations or resolutions with the requisite quorum as defined in Rule 47.3. Declarations by committees shall be adopted with the requisite quorum as defined in Rule 47.3.";

2.9. with regard to references to committees, at the end of Rule 26.3, add the following sentence: "If a draft report adopted by a committee proposes any amendments to the European Convention on Human Rights, the Bureau shall request an opinion from the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights on this draft report.";

2.10. with regard to reports prepared under the urgent procedure, the first sentence of Rule 50.4 should be amended by adding, after the word "rapporteur", the words "*, except when prepared under the urgent procedure*".

3. By adopting Resolution 2492 (2023) "Assessing the functioning of the partnership for democracy", the Assembly demonstrated its clear intention to reaffirm its strong commitment to developing co-operation with neighbouring regions as a means of consolidating democratic transformations and promoting stability, good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Therefore, the Assembly needs to fully implement its earlier decisions taken in Resolution 2492 (2023) by adapting its Rules 17 and 64, as well as its "Guidelines for questions to guest speakers" in the complementary texts, accordingly, as follows:

3.1. after Rule 17.3, insert the following new sub-paragraph:

"17.4. The chairpersons of partner for democracy delegations or, in their absence, a member of the delegation duly designated shall be invited to attend meetings of the Standing Committee without the right to vote.";

3.2. at the end of Rule 64.6, add the following sentence:

"Their names shall be published on the website and in the Assembly list after the list of members for each committee, under the heading 'partners for democracy'.";

3.3. after Rule 64.6, insert the following new sub-paragraphs:

"64.7. On a proposal by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, the Bureau may decide to grant some additional rights to partner for democracy delegations which have shown outstanding results in achieving the goals of the partnership and participate fully in the work of the Assembly. The decision of the Bureau shall be ratified by the Assembly at the beginning of a new session (in January) and shall be valid for the duration of the session (one year), with the possibility or not of extension at each following session depending on the results and according to the same procedure. Such additional rights for the delegations and their members may include:

64.7.1. the right to table motions for recommendations and resolutions, subject to co-signature by a member of the Assembly, with both names appearing as authors of the motion;

64.7.2. the right to table amendments, subject to co-signature by a member of the Assembly, with both names appearing as authors of the amendment;

64.7.3. the right to request current affairs debates and to be chosen to open such debates. If such a request is made by an individual member of a partner for democracy delegation, it should be subject to co-signature by a member of the Assembly, with both names appearing as authors of the request, and to having the support of 19 more members of the Assembly. If a request is made by a partner for democracy delegation, it should be supported by a political group, a national delegation or a committee, as provided by Rule 53.2;

64.7.4. the right to table written declarations, subject to co-signature by a member of the Assembly, with both names appearing as authors of the written declaration;

64.7.5. the right to be appointed as rapporteur for information reports which do not contain a draft resolution and/or recommendation.";

3.4. in the complementary texts relating to Assembly debates, in "vi. Guidelines for questions to guest speakers", amend the first sentences of paragraphs 7 and 8, as follows:

"7. Representatives and substitutes and members of partner for democracy delegations may put written questions to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for oral answer."

"8. Representatives or substitutes and members of partner for democracy delegations may put spontaneous questions to guest speakers when this is provided for in the agenda of the part-session or authorised by the President of the Assembly during a sitting."

4. The Assembly decides to adjust the terms of reference of certain committees, in the complementary texts, as follows:

4.1. under "B. Specific terms of reference of Assembly Committees – I. Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy (AS/Pol)":

4.1.1. at the end of paragraph 6, add the following words:

"and in the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)."

4.1.2. after paragraph 6, add the following new paragraph:

"7. The committee shall represent the Assembly in, and follow the work of, the relevant expert committees of the Council of Europe.";

4.2. under "B. Specific terms of reference of Assembly Committees – VII. Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs (AS/Pro)", add the following new paragraph 7:

"7. The committee shall represent the Assembly in, and follow the work of, the relevant expert committees of the Council of Europe."

5. The Assembly decides to amend certain provisions relating to the functioning of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee):

5.1. with regard to the duration of the references for periodic review reports by the Monitoring Committee, at the end of Rule 26.4 add the following sentence:

"References to the Monitoring Committee for periodic review, as defined in paragraph 8 of the terms of reference of the Assembly Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee), shall lapse after three years.";

5.2. with regard to access to the meetings of the Monitoring Committee, replace Rule 48.8 with the following:

"Secretaries of political groups may attend the meetings of committees of the Assembly, except for those of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights. Secretaries of national delegations may attend the meetings of committees of the Assembly, except for those of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights and of the Monitoring Committee.";

5.3. with regard to the appointment of co-rapporteurs by the Monitoring Committee, at the end of paragraph 11.1 of Resolution 1115 (1997) (modified), add the following words "*– no co-rapporteurs shall be a chairperson of a friendship group in his/her national parliament of the state being monitored.*"

6. Finally, the Assembly decides to amend the following complementary texts:

6.1. in the "Additional provisions relating to Assembly debates", "ii. List of speakers", replace paragraphs 2 and 3 with the following paragraph:

"2. As soon as the draft agenda of the part-session has been published, and up to the closing date, names of members of the Assembly may be entered online via the Pace-apps platform, or, in the event of malfunctioning of the application, sent by e-mail (Table.Office@coe.int), by secretaries of national delegations or secretaries of political groups, to the Table Office of the Parliamentary Assembly. Names may not be entered on the list of speakers for a debate under urgent procedure or a current affairs debate until a specific request is placed on the draft agenda.";

6.2. with regard to the "Modalities for the election procedure of judges to the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights", Appendix X.iv, paragraphs 3 and 4, delete the words "*on the ballot paper*".

7. The Assembly also calls the committees to review the terms of reference of their networks, alliances or other bodies to allow the members of partner for democracy delegations to be included in their composition.

8. The Assembly decides that the amendments to the Rules of Procedure set out in this Resolution shall enter into force upon their adoption.