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

Doc. 16292
04 November 2025

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

Report[1]
Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities
Rapporteur: Ms Victoria TIBLOM, Sweden, European Conservatives, Patriots & Affiliates

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1. Reference to committee: Bureau decision, Reference 4876 of 11 April 2025.

A. Draft resolution[2]

1. The actions and decisions of the Parliamentary Assembly shall be based on clear, consistent and effective parliamentary rules and procedures. The Assembly 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 address specific problems.

2. Having regard to the above considerations and in order to give effect to Resolution 2394 (2021) "Gender representation in the Parliamentary Assembly", the Assembly must amend its provisions relating to gender representation. The Assembly formally undertook in that resolution to increase the minimum representation of each sex in its delegations to 40% as from the opening of its 2026 session. In recognition that our societies are composed of an equal number of men and women, the Assembly should strive for an equal number of men and women, as is the case for national parliamentary delegations to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, whilst keeping the minimum at 40% as agreed in 2021. It is also appropriate to ensure that these figures are applied consistently and coherently across the work of the Assembly for various types of compositions of delegations, committees and where possible other representative roles.

3. Pursuant to its Resolution 2394 (2021), the Assembly decides to amend its Rules of Procedure as follows:

3.1. replace Rule 6.2.b with the following text:

"Each national delegation shall include at least 40% men and 40% women in both its overall composition and amongst the representatives, whilst striving for equal representation. For the following delegations, specific provisions apply, as follows:

- delegations with 4 members (2 representatives and 2 substitutes) shall have a minimum of one woman and one man, including at least one woman and one man as representatives;

- delegations with 6 members (3 representatives and 3 substitutes) shall have a minimum of 2 women and 2 men, including at least one woman and one man as representatives;

- delegations with 8 members (4 representatives and 4 substitutes) shall have a minimum of 3 women and 3 men, including at least one woman and one man as representatives.";

3.2. at the end of Rule 44.2, insert the following text:

"For each seat, the national delegation shall appoint a full member and an alternate.

Delegations shall strive for equal representation between women and men, whilst ensuring a minimum of one third of each sex in their appointments to each committee.";

3.3. delete the second sentence of Rule 44.5;

3.4. replace Rules 44.3.a. and b. with the following text:

"44.3.a. For the Monitoring Committee, the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities and the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights, the Bureau shall appoint the members (and in the case of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights also alternates) on the basis of candidatures presented by the political groups and taking into account gender balance and regional balance, by applying the apportionment ratio based on the D'Hondt method. Two additional appointments to the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities are allocated from among members of the Assembly who do not belong to any political group.

44.3.b. At the beginning of each ordinary session, each political group shall present candidatures to each of these committees, striving for equal representation between women and men, whilst ensuring at least one third of each sex in their nominations to each committee. The political groups shall nominate the members with a view to ensuring a fair representation of national delegations where applicable. The Bureau shall appoint members, striving for equal representation between women and men, whilst ensuring that each committee includes at least one third of each sex.";

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 1 October 2025.

3.5. at the end of Rule 44.4.a. insert the following text:

"An ad hoc committee should include at least 40% of each sex, whilst striving for equal representation between women and men.";

3.6. renumber Rule 44.4.c as Rule 44.5 and replace its second sentence with the following text:

"An ad hoc committee should include at least 40% of each sex, whilst striving for equal representation between women and men.";

3.7. delete the footnote to Rule 44.4.c;

3.8. at the end of Rule 44.4.c insert the following text:

"However, reports on the observation of elections may be presented to the Assembly or the Standing Committee.";

3.9. in Rule 46.1 replace the words "while taking into account the principle of gender equality" with the following words:

"whilst striving for equal representation between women and men";

3.10. in Rule 50.1 replace the fourth sentence with the following:

"A committee shall include at least one third of each sex among its rapporteurs, whilst striving for equal representation between women and men.";

3.11. at the end of Rule 62.5, insert the following text:

"The delegation shall include both women and men among its representatives, and strive to ensure equal representation between women and men, whilst ensuring a minimum of 40% of each sex in its composition.";

3.12. in Rule 63.2, replace the final sentence with the following text:

"The delegation shall be composed to ensure a fair representation of the political parties or groups within their parliament. The delegation shall include both women and men among its representatives, and strive to ensure equal representation between women and men.";

3.13. in Rule 64.4, replace the final sentence with the following text:

"The delegation shall be composed to ensure a fair representation of the political parties or groups within their parliament. The delegation shall include both women and men among its representatives, and strive to ensure equal representation between women and men.".

4. The Assembly also agreed to a number of minor modifications to the Rules of Procedure as follows:

4.1. in Rule 14.3, first sentence, and in Rule 16.1, replace the word "twenty" with the word "nineteen";

4.2. in the complementary texts on "Election of Assembly Vice-Presidents" (Appendix IX, part 1), under group I, replace the word "six" with the word "five";

4.3. in Rule 48.4, replace the first sentence with the following sentence:

"Members of the Assembly may attend meetings of committees of which they are not members without the right to vote. They can speak if called by the chairperson of the committee."

4.4. In Rule 48.5 replace the words "appointed to a committee may participate in its meetings" with the following words:

"may participate in the meetings of one of the first six committees listed in Rule 44.1".

5. In order to rebalance the workload and mandates of committees, the Assembly amends the Terms of Reference of Assembly Committees (Appendix VII to the Rules of Procedure), part B "Specific terms of reference of Assembly Committees" as follows:

5.1. in "I. Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy (AS/Pol)":

5.1.1. delete paragraph 3;

5.1.2. in paragraph 6, delete "and in the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)";

5.2. in “III. Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development (AS/Soc)”:

5.2.1. in paragraph 1, delete the words “economic co-operation and development”;

5.2.2. delete paragraph 4;

5.3. replace the entry for “IV. Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons (AS/Mig)” with the following text:

“IV. Committee on Migration, International Protection and Economic Co-operation (AS/Mig)

Number of seats: 81

Terms of reference:

1. The committee shall consider all relevant matters relating to (i) migration, international protection and displacement, and (ii) economic co-operation and development. It shall work and propose legal and political solutions and actions for closer European co-operation in these fields, as well as, when relevant, with non-European countries, in keeping with the human rights and humanitarian values of the Council of Europe.

2. The committee shall in particular:

i. consider questions relating to migration, including the rights of migrants during the migration process, and co-operation between countries of origin, transit and destination;

ii. consider issues linked to international protection, in particular the asylum process in Europe and the rights of asylum seekers and refugees;

iii. consider the situation of internally displaced persons in Europe and their rights and humanitarian needs;

iv. consider community relations in multicultural societies, including the situation and integration of migrants and their social, economic and civil and political rights;

v. consider humanitarian law and humanitarian issues;

vi. consider questions relating to population, demography, nationality and stateless persons;

vii. consider questions relating to economic co-operation and development;

viii. prepare reports on the activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). For the preparation of the reports and the debates in the Assembly, the committee maintains relations with the OECD and with parliaments of non-member states for the purpose of their participation in those debates;

ix. prepare reports on the activities of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). For the preparation of the reports and the debates in the Assembly, the committee maintains relations with the EBRD and with parliaments of non-member states for the purpose of their participation in those debates;

x. report regularly on the activities of the Council of Europe Development Bank.

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

4. The committee shall share the Assembly representation in the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre).”;

5.4. in “V. Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media (AS/Cult)”, paragraph 4, delete “and the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)”.

6. The Assembly decides that the amendments to the Rules of Procedure contained in paragraph 3.1 of this resolution shall enter into force at the opening of the January 2027 part-session. All other amendments to the Rules of Procedure set out in this resolution shall enter into force at the opening of the January 2026 part-session.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Victoria Tiblom, rapporteur[3]

1. Introduction

1. On 11 April 2025, a report on the modification of various provisions of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure was referred to the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities (hereafter the Rules Committee). This reference concerned, in particular, follow-up to Resolution 2596 (2025) "Respect for the Rule of Law and the fight against corruption within the Council of Europe", follow-up to Resolution 2394 (2021) "Gender representation in the Parliamentary Assembly", as well as other elements necessary to consider, including amendments consequential to the Russian Federation's expulsion from the Organisation and follow-up to Resolution 2615 (2025) "Promoting inclusive participation in parliamentary life: gender equality, accessibility and inclusive policies".

2. Modifications relating to gender within the work of the Parliamentary Assembly

2.1. Rule 6.2.b: Gender in the composition of national delegations and giving effect to paragraph 7 of Resolution 2394 (2021) "Gender representation in the Parliamentary Assembly"

2. Resolution 2394 (2021) established the current provisions relating to gender within the Assembly. In doing so, it built on successive resolutions of the Assembly.[4] In its paragraph 1, Resolution 2394 (2021) recalled that "The sharing of responsibilities in political and public decision making between women and men is an inherent element of any true and effective democracy, a matter of equity and justice, and responds to the necessarily legitimate aspirations that have been expressed in our societies for decades". It noted that "our societies are composed of an equal number of men and women" and thus "combining this reality with political representation and establishing parliamentary parity are legitimate objectives".

3. Resolution 2394 (2021), established the current text of Rule 6.2.b. of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure which sets out the gender requirements for each national delegation and which currently provides:

> *"Each national delegation must include both women and men among its representatives. As long as women are under-represented in the Assembly, each national delegation shall include a percentage of women as members that is at least equal to the percentage in its parliament or, if this is more favourable to the representation of women, ensure gender representation as follows:*
>
> *- delegations with 2 seats (4 members) shall include at least one woman as representative;*
>
> *- delegations with 3 seats (6 members) shall have a minimum of 2 women, including at least one woman as representative;*
>
> *- delegations with 4 seats (8 members) shall have a minimum of 3 women, including at least one woman as representative;*
>
> *- delegations with 5 seats (10 members) shall have a minimum of 3 women, including at least 2 women as representatives;*
>
> *- delegations with 6 seats (12 members) shall have a minimum of 4 women, including at least 2 women as representatives;*
>
> *- delegations with 7 seats (14 members) shall have a minimum of 5 women, including at least 3 women as representatives;*
>
> *- delegations with 10 seats (20 members) shall have a minimum of 7 women, including at least 4 women as representatives;*
>
> *- delegations with 12 seats (24 members) shall have a minimum of 8 women, including at least 4 women as representatives;*

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3. The explanatory memorandum is drawn up under the responsibility of the rapporteur.

4. Resolution 2290 (2019) "Towards an ambitious Council of Europe agenda for gender equality" (Rapporteur: Ms Elvira Kovács, Serbia, Group of the European People's Party), Resolution 2111 (2016) "Assessing the impact of measures to improve women's political representation" (Rapporteur: Ms Elena Centemero, Italy, Group of the European People's Party), Resolution 1781 (2010) "A minimum of 30% of representatives of the under-represented sex in Assembly national delegations" (Rapporteur: Mr John Greenway, United Kingdom, Conservative), Resolution 1585 (2007) "Gender equality principles in the Parliamentary Assembly" (Rapporteur: Ms Ana Catarina Mendes, Portugal, Socialist Group).

- delegations with 18 seats (36 members) shall have a minimum of 12 women, including at least 6 women as representatives."

4. Paragraph 7 of Resolution 2394 (2021), however, further provides "The Assembly therefore formally undertakes to increase the minimum representation of each sex in its delegations to 40% as from the opening of its 2026 session." In order to give full effect to this resolution of the Assembly, it is therefore necessary to amend Rule 6.2.b of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure.

2.2. Drafting options for Rule 6.2.b.

5. I note that, as was cited in Resolution 2384 (2021), "our societies are composed of an equal number of men and women", it therefore is natural that the Assembly should strive for an equal number of men and women. I note that the Inter-Parliamentary Union uses language aiming at 50% in that it states that it will "strive to ensure equal representation".[5] Therefore, I propose that in the Assembly strive to ensure equal representation (i.e. 50%) whilst fixing 40% as a minimum for each sex. Further, I consider it important that women are not merely within the national delegation but are also representatives within the national delegation – and this is in keeping with the spirit of Resolution 2384 (2021).

6. Finally, I recognise that for delegations with 8 members (4 representatives) or fewer, this cannot be split easily into a minimum of 40% as this leads to an inflexible requirement of 50% for each sex within the delegation. This resulting inflexibility could prove problematic in practice. I therefore propose bespoke requirements for these delegations that is somewhere between the existing requirements and 50%.

7. Consequently, I propose that Rule 6.2.b of the Rules of Procedure be deleted and replaced with the following text:

"Each national delegation shall include at least 40% men and 40% women in both its overall composition and amongst the representatives, whilst striving for equal representation. For the following delegations, specific provisions apply, as follows:

- Delegations with 4 members (2 representatives and 2 substitutes) shall have a minimum of one woman and one man, including at least one woman and one man as representatives;

- Delegations with 6 members (3 representatives and 3 substitutes) shall have a minimum of 2 women and 2 men, including at least one woman and one man as representatives;

- Delegations with 8 members (4 representatives and 4 substitutes) shall have a minimum of 3 women and 3 men, including at least one woman and one man as representatives."

8. In table form, the minimum requirements would be the following:

Size of delegation	**Minimum number of men and women in delegation**	**Minimum number of men and women as representatives**
4 members (2 representatives)	1 man and 1 woman	1 man and 1 woman
6 members (3 representatives)	2 men and 2 women	1 man and 1 woman
8 members (4 representatives)	3 men and 3 women	1 man and 1 woman
10 members (5 representatives)	4 men and 4 women	2 men and 2 women
12 members (6 representatives)	5 men and 5 women	3 men and 3 women
14 members (7 representatives)	6 men and 6 women	3 men and 3 women
20 members (10 representatives)	8 men and 8 women	4 men and 4 women
24 members (12 representatives)	10 men and 10 women	5 men and 5 women
36 members (18 representatives)	15 men and 15 women	8 men and 8 women

2.3. Gender representation and committees

9. In line with the spirit of Resolution 2384 (2021), as well as Resolution 2594 (2025) "Modification of various provisions of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure", which introduced necessary changes to the gender requirements for Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, it is coherent to review the functioning of other gender requirements within the Assembly.

5. Article 10 of the Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union "Member Parliaments and Associate Members shall include men and women parliamentarians in their delegation and shall strive to ensure their equal representation."

10. In this respect, it is natural that there should not only be efforts to attain equal representation (with a minimum of 40% of women) in national delegations, but there should be equivalent aims for the composition and work of committees, where much of the work of the Assembly is done. As the Assembly has previously stated, ensuring the involvement of men and women in political and public decision making is "an inherent element of any true and effective democracy".[6] Ensuring the perspectives of both women and men in committees is thus essential to ensuring balanced perspectives in political and public decision making. I therefore propose that the Rules of Procedure relating to gender on committees are adapted, in line with the amendments to the overall composition of the Assembly.

11. I have separated the consideration of the gender composition of committees as between "thematic general committees"; whose members are nominated by national delegations (i.e. the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy; the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights; the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development; the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons; the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media; and the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination) and "institutional general committees", whose members are nominated by political groups (i.e. the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities; the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights; and the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Members States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee)).

2.3.1. The composition of thematic general committees

12. Rule 44.2 of the Rules of Procedure sets out the number of seats that each national delegation shall have in the thematic general committees. I propose clarifying the wording of Rule 44.2 by specifying that each national delegation has an equal number of alternates and full members (which is currently spelled out in Rule 44.5). Whilst I considered proposing that national delegations should have a minimum of 40% of each sex in their appointments to each committee, whilst striving for equal representation, in effect this leaves little flexibility for preferences and expertise in different fields as it is effectively a mandatory requirement of 50% for each committee. I therefore instead propose requiring that delegations strive for equal representation between women and men, whilst ensuring a minimum of one third of each sex in their appointments to each committee. As a consequence of the above, in Rule 44.2, at the end, I suggest the following text be inserted:

"For each seat, the national delegation shall also have an alternate.

Delegations shall strive for equal representation between women and men, whilst ensuring a minimum of one third of each sex in their appointments to each committee."

13. In consequence of the above, the second sentence of Rule 44.5 should be deleted (for the alternates of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights, see below in relation to Rule 44.3.a).

2.3.2. The composition of institutional general committees

14. Rule 44.3.a of the Rules of Procedure sets out the method of appointment of the institutional general committees. Rules 44.3.a. and b. currently provide:

"44.3.a. On the basis of the candidatures presented by the political groups and taking into account gender balance and regional balance, the Bureau shall appoint 85 members of the Monitoring Committee, 30 members of the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities and 20 members (and their alternates) of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights by applying the apportionment ratio based on the so-called 'D'Hondt principle'. At the beginning of each ordinary session, the candidatures presented by each political group to each of these committees must include at least one-third women where the group holds at least three seats. The Bureau shall appoint members, ensuring that the committees concerned always include at least one-third women.

44.3.b. The Bureau shall appoint two additional members to the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities from among the representatives and substitutes of the Assembly who do not belong to any political group. The political groups shall nominate the members with a view to ensuring a fair representation of national delegations where applicable"

15. The drafting is currently quite cumbersome and the flow of the provisions between Rules 44.3.a and 44.3.b. is not obvious. Moreover, whilst the appointment criteria include reference to the Bureau taking into account "gender balance" and to the political groups including "at least one-third women", it seems

6. Resolution 2394 (2021).

appropriate to update these figures so that they are brought into line with the changes being made in consequence of Resolution 2394 (2021), using the same logic as for thematic committees above. I therefore propose that the candidatures presented by each political group to each of these committees must "strive for equal representation between women and men, whilst ensuring a minimum of one third of each sex in their appointments to each committee", and that appointments by the Bureau also ensure that the committees include at least one third of each sex, whilst striving for equal representation.

16. As a consequence of the above, I propose to replace the drafting of Rules 44.3.a. and b. with the following text:

> *"44.3.a. For the Monitoring Committee, the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities and the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights, the Bureau shall appoint the members (and in the case of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights also alternates) on the basis of candidatures presented by the political groups and taking into account gender balance and regional balance, by applying the apportionment ratio based on the D'Hondt method. Two additional appointments to the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities are allocated from among members of the Assembly who do not belong to any political group.*
>
> *44.3.b. At the beginning of each ordinary session, each political group shall present candidatures to each of these committees, striving for equal representation between women and men, whilst ensuring at least one third of each sex in their appointments to each committee. The political groups shall nominate the members with a view to ensuring a fair representation of national delegations where applicable. The Bureau shall appoint members, striving for equal representation between women and men, whilst ensuring that the committees concerned always include at least one third of each sex."*

2.3.3. The composition of ad hoc committees

17. Rule 44.4.c of the Rules of Procedure sets out the method of appointment of *ad hoc* committees of the Bureau (including *ad hoc* committees in charge of election observation). Rule 44.4.c. currently provides:

> *"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 ad hoc committee, with the exception of ad hoc committees in charge of election observation, shall include at least one-third women. An account of their work shall be given to the Assembly as part of the Progress Report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee."*

18. The drafting can give rise to confusion between ad hoc committees of the Assembly (dealt with in Rule 44.4.a. and b. and ad hoc committees of the Bureau (dealt with in Rule 44.4.c.). I propose splitting the provision concerning ad hoc committees, so that the provision relating to ad hoc committees of the Bureau is a separate provision (new Rule 44.5) to make clear that these are separate types of ad hoc committee.

19. Moreover, whilst the appointment criteria include reference to an ad hoc committee of the Bureau including "at least one-third women", there is no equivalent provision for ad hoc committees of the Assembly. I cannot currently see any reason why ad hoc committees for election observation should not strive to have an equal number of men and women. It seems therefore appropriate to update these figures to be in line with the changes being made in consequence of Resolution 2394 (2021) – i.e. striving for equal representation of men and women and ensuring a minimum of 40% of each sex.

20. I therefore propose:

– Adding to the end of Rule 44.4.a. the following: "*An ad hoc committee of the Assembly should include at least 40% of each sex, whilst striving for equal representation*."

– Renumbering Rule 44.4.c. as Rule 44.5. (and adjusting the rest of the numbering accordingly) and replacing its second sentence with: "*An ad hoc committee should include at least 40% of each sex, whilst striving for equal representation*."

– In order to tidy up the footnotes, the footnote to Rule 44.4.c should be deleted and an extra sentence added at the end of the paragraph to read "*However, reports on the observation of elections may be presented to the Assembly or the Standing Committee.*"

2.3.4. Roles in the bureaux of committees

21. Consideration should also be given to aligning the gender provisions in relation to roles within committees, including on the bureaux of committees. For example, Rule 46.1 provides:

> *"The Bureau of each committee shall consist of the chairperson and the three vice-chairpersons, normally elected at the first committee meeting of each ordinary session, while taking into account the principle of gender equality."*[7]

22. In keeping with the changes to the gender requirements identified above, consideration should be given to replacing the final words of Rule 46.1 "while taking into account the principle of gender equality" with the following words:

> *"whilst striving for equal representation between women and men".*

2.3.5. Rapporteurships

23. Consideration should also be given to aligning the gender provisions in relation to rapporteurships.

24. Rule 50.1 provides:

> *"A committee shall appoint one rapporteur for each subject, who shall be responsible for the preparation of the report of the committee and for presenting it to the Assembly. The Monitoring Committee shall appoint two co-rapporteurs. For the appointment of rapporteurs, the committees shall take into consideration the following criteria by order of priority: competence and availability, fair representation of political groups (based on the d'Hondt system), gender-balanced representation, geographical and national balance. A committee shall include at least one-third women among its rapporteurs. A member of the Assembly who is simultaneously rapporteur for five reports or opinions under preparation, on behalf of one or more committees, may not be appointed rapporteur. In the exercise of their duties, the rapporteurs shall comply with the rules set forth in the code of conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly. A rapporteur shall remain in charge of the follow-up to his or her report for a term of one year after the adoption of the text by the Assembly."*

25. Firstly, the drafting of this clause is quite long, making it difficult to read. In order to improve the readability of the provision I would propose dividing it into three sub-paragraphs – the first identifying that the committee appoints rapporteurs (the current first two sentences of Rule 50.1), the second detailing the criteria to apply in the appointment (the following sentences of Rule 50.1) and the third relating to rapporteur for follow-up (the final sentence of current Rule 50.1). Secondly, I propose separating out and enumerating the criteria – by order of priority, so that this is clearer.

26. Thirdly, it is appropriate to specify the gender requirement, as elsewhere for the Assembly, of striving for equal representation (among rapporteurships). I therefore propose to insert the following sentence "*A committee shall include at least one third of each sex among its rapporteurs, striving for equal representation.*" The text replacing Rule 50.1 would consequently read as follows:

> *"1. A committee shall appoint one rapporteur for each subject, who shall be responsible for the preparation of the report of the committee and for presenting it to the Assembly. The Monitoring Committee shall appoint two co-rapporteurs.*
>
> *2. For the appointment of rapporteurs, the committees shall take into consideration the following criteria by order of priority:*
>
> *(i) competence and availability,*
>
> *(ii) fair representation of political groups (based on the d'Hondt method),*
>
> *(iii) gender-balanced representation,*
>
> *(iv) geographical and national balance.*

7. The current figures are: Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy 2:2; Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights 2:2; Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development 2:2; Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons 2:2; Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media 2:2; Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination 4:0 (4 women and 0 men); Monitoring Committee 2:2; Committee in Rules, Ethics and Immunities 2:0 (2 men, 0 women and 2 vacant Bureau seats); Judges Committee 2:1 (2 women, 1 man and 1 vacant Bureau seat).

A committee shall include at least one third of each sex among its rapporteurs, whilst striving for equal representation. A member of the Assembly who is simultaneously rapporteur for five reports or opinions under preparation, on behalf of one or more committees, may not be appointed rapporteur. In the exercise of their duties, the rapporteurs shall comply with the rules set forth in the code of conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly.

3. A rapporteur shall remain in charge of the follow-up to his or her report for a term of one year after the adoption of the text by the Assembly."

2.4. The composition of special guest, observer and partner for democracy delegations

27. Rules 62, 63 and 64 of the Rules of Procedure, set out, respectively, the rules for special guest, observer, and partner for democracy delegations. There is a question as to whether gender requirements should apply similarly also to the composition of these delegations.

28. Special guest delegations are from national parliaments of European non-member States that have applied for membership of the Council of Europe. Given that the intention is that a special guest delegation is effectively preparing to become a member State national delegation, it therefore seems appropriate to apply very similar conditions as to gender representation to special guest delegations as to member State delegations.

29. As a result, Rule 62.5, relating to special guests delegations, could be amended by inserting the following sentence at the end:

"The delegation shall include both women and men among its representatives, and strive for equal representation, whilst ensuring a minimum of 40% of each sex in the composition of its delegation."

30. Rule 63, relating to observers, already includes gender requirements for observer delegations, in that the last sentence of Rule 63.2 provides:

"Insofar as the number of their members allows, the delegations shall be composed to ensure a fair representation of the political parties or groups within their parliaments and to include at least the same percentage of the under-represented sex as is present in their parliaments, and in any case one representative of each sex".

31. In light of the above proposals, it seems only appropriate to update this text accordingly. However, I propose not to include the final phrase requiring a minimum of 40% given the different nature of observer delegations. In consequence, the proposed change for observer delegations would be, in Rule 63.2, to replace the final sentence with:

"The delegation shall be composed to ensure a fair representation of the political parties or groups within their parliament. The delegation shall include both women and men among its representatives, and strive to ensure equal representation.".

32. Rule 64, relating to partner for democracy delegations, already includes gender requirements for partner for democracy delegations, in that the last sentence of Rule 64.4 provides:

"Insofar as the number of its members allows, the delegation shall be composed to ensure a fair representation of the political parties or groups in that parliament and to include at least the same percentage of the under-represented sex as is present in the parliament and in any case one representative of each sex".

33. In light of the above proposals, it seems only appropriate to update this text accordingly. However, I propose not to include the final phrase requiring a minimum of 40% given the different nature of partner for democracy delegations. As a consequence, the proposed change for partner for democracy delegations would be, in Rule 64.4, to replace the final sentence with:

"The delegation shall be composed to ensure a fair representation of the political parties or groups within their parliament. The delegation shall include both women and men among its representatives, and strive to ensure equal representation.".

3. Modifications concerning the streamlining of the Rules of Procedure and the split between General Principles, Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and Rules of Committees

34. Part of the reason that the committee was seized for this report was as follow-up to Resolution 2596 (2025) "Respect for the rule of law and the fight against corruption within the Council of Europe" in which the Assembly resolved to "revise the structure of its Rules of procedure to make it more coherent, accessible, and user-friendly" (§5.1). This follows the explanatory report to Resolution 2551 (2024) "Modification of various provisions of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure" which called for "significant editorial work" to be undertaken "to make the Rules of Procedure more reader-friendly and ensure coherence" (Doc. 15996, §77). These explicit references highlight the recognition of the need to restructure and streamline the Rules of Procedure. The aim is to ensure that the Rules are coherent and user-friendly, reflecting the standards expected of a parliamentary institution devoted to upholding respect for the rule of law.

35. At its meeting of 25 June 2025, the Rules Committee heard a presentation by the Secretary General of the Assembly and considered a memorandum prepared by her on the "streamlining of the Rules of Procedure". At this meeting, the committee agreed to assign the mandate for this work to the Secretary General.

36. In producing this report, I have sought to be alive to considerations of streamlining and coherency in my proposals. For example, in my proposed drafting for the gender requirements I have sought to ensure a coherent and consistent drafting approach across the various provisions of the Rules of Procedure, whilst aiming to minimise, where possible, overly lengthy drafting or unnecessary footnotes. This approach demonstrates that the exercise of streamlining the Rules of Procedure should prove beneficial.

4. Other modifications

4.1. Modifications consequential to the Russian Federation's expulsion from the Council of Europe

37. The necessary changes to the Statute and the Rules of Procedure were made in 2022 following the expulsion of the Russian Federation from the Council of Europe. However, two small consequential amendments still fall to be made:

– Rule 14.3 and Rule 16.1 should be amended to state that there are "nineteen" rather than "twenty" vice-presidents.

– The complementary text on "Election of Assembly Vice-Presidents" (Appendix IX) should be modified to provide that group I should have "five" rather than "six" seats.

4.2. The right for members of the Assembly to speak in meetings of committees of which they are not members

38. Rule 48.4 of the Rules of Procedure provides:

> *"Members of the Assembly may attend meetings of committees of which they are not members but without the right to speak or vote. However, only members of the Monitoring Committee and members of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights may attend meetings of their respective committees."*

39. This provision that members may not have the right to speak does not correspond to needs or realities. For example, some rapporteurs for opinion attend meetings of the committee seized for report and take the floor to explain their amendments or perspectives. In addition, for important reports touching the vital interests of some delegations, the chairperson of a national delegation may attend and speak to the relevant committee. The practice is that members of the Assembly who are not members of the committee can speak when authorised by the chairperson of that committee. Moreover, the usual practice is that the chairperson authorises it. I therefore propose amending Rule 48.4 to reflect the reality. Consequently, the first sentence of Rule 48.4 should be deleted and replaced with the following:

> *"Members of the Assembly may attend meetings of committees of which they are not members without the right to vote. They can speak if called by the chairperson of the committee."*

4.3. The right for members of special guest, observer and partner for democracy delegations to attend committee meetings

40. Rule 48.5 of the Rules of Procedure provides:

> *"Subject to paragraph 6 below, members of special guest, observer and partner for democracy delegations appointed to a committee may participate in its meetings and speak if called by the committee chairperson; they shall not have the right to vote. However, a committee may decide in advance that members of such delegations may not attend a meeting or part of a meeting."*

41. Members of special guest, observer and partner for democracy delegations are not "appointed" to a committee. Therefore, it is not appropriate to refer to "appointment" in Rule 48.5. Some of these delegations make a *de facto* repartition, but that is an internal matter for the delegation; from the perspective of the Assembly, they are not "appointed".

42. As a consequence, Rule 48.5 should be amended to replace the words "appointed to a committee may participate in its meetings" with the following words:

> *"may participate in the meetings of [a thematic committee/one of the first six committees listed in Rule 44.1.]".*

4.4. Follow-up to Resolution 2615 (2025) "Promoting inclusive participation in parliamentary life: gender equality, accessibility and inclusive policies"

43. Paragraph 14 of Resolution 2615 (2025) "Promoting inclusive participation in parliamentary life: gender equality, accessibility and inclusive policies" provides:

> *"The Assembly invites the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities and the Bureau of the Assembly to consider taking the necessary steps to enable the online participation in committee meetings of members who are unable to attend in person due to care responsibilities, including caring for children under the age of three."*

44. Although I have stood ready to take action further to Resolution 2615 (2025) in the context of this report, I understand that consideration of these matters has taken place within the scope of the report "Increasing members' active participation in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly" (Rapporteur: Ms Petra Bayr, Austria, SOC). I therefore do not consider it necessary to introduce specific amendments.

4.5. Written Declarations

45. In discussions the committee discussed an issue with written declarations. Written declarations, as set out in rule 56, are not positions of the Assembly, nor of a committee, but solely of the 20 members or more that sign the declaration. As such, there is often little debate, fact-checking, or quality-control as to the substance or veracity of the content of a written declaration. Written declarations are, of course, binding only on the members who sign them. However, because of the way that they are presented, the fact that they are published as Assembly documents and that they are provided for in the Rules of Procedure means that they are sometimes confused with Assembly declarations and positions. The Assembly on occasion receives complaints about the content of such written declarations – especially where they might be misleading or incorrect – and this damages the reputation and credibility of the Assembly.

46. The views expressed in committee discussions included those who considered that written declarations could nonetheless be a useful tool to express a minority view or to react quickly to a developing issue. However, it could be appropriate to consider whether more could be done to make clear that written declarations bind only those Assembly members that sign them, and I invite the Secretariat to consider how best to make this clearer on the face of the documents.

4.6. The terms of reference of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

47. It is necessary to keep the terms of reference of the Assembly's committees under review to ensure an appropriate workload as between committees. At present the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons has a very restricted mandate compared to other committees within the Assembly. It is also noteworthy that since the abolition of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, economic affairs have been dealt with variously in the Committee for Political Affairs and Democracy (in relation to relations with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Bank

for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)) and the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development as concerns economic co-operation and development and reporting on the activities of the Council of Europe Development Bank.

48. In order to rebalance the workload of committees, the Secretariat have therefore proposed to rename the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, the “Committee on Migration, International Protection and Economic Co-operation”. The remit of the committee would henceforth cover economic co-operation and development as well as migration and international protection (including asylum and displacement). The terms of reference of committees contained in the appendix to the Rules of Procedure would need to be amended accordingly.