



**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**



**RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE
EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

**as modified by the EMPA Plenary
on 28 March 2008**

Rule 1

Nature and objectives

1. The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly ('EMPA') is the parliamentary institution of the Barcelona process with consultative power and based on the Barcelona Declaration. It contributes to enhancing the visibility and transparency of the process and, consequently, bringing the Euro-Mediterranean partnership closer to the interests and expectations of the public.
2. The purpose of the Assembly shall be to bring parliamentary support, impetus and influence to the consolidation and development of the Barcelona process. It shall debate in public issues arising from the Barcelona process, in particular, and all matters of common interest that are of concern to the member countries.
3. Membership of the Assembly is voluntary and the Assembly will maintain an open-minded approach to participation in its work. The seats which will possibly not be occupied remain at the disposal of the parliaments to which they have been allocated.

Rule 2

Composition

1. The members of the Assembly are parliamentarians appointed by the parliaments of the partner countries participating in the Barcelona process and the European Parliament.
2. The Assembly shall consist of no more than 260 members, 130 European members (81 members of the EU national parliaments and 49 members of the European Parliament) and 130 members of the parliaments of the Mediterranean partner countries of the European Union, on the basis of equal representation. Delegates shall be appointed, where possible, for a minimum period of one year.
3. The Assembly shall be composed of delegations from each national parliament and the European Parliament.
4. The member parliaments shall undertake to ensure that women parliamentarians are represented in their delegations, in accordance with the legal provisions of each country.

Rule 3

Competences

1. The Assembly may adopt positions on all aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. It shall monitor the application of Euro-Mediterranean association agreements and adopt resolutions or make recommendations to the Ministerial Conference with a view to achieving the objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. When asked to do so by the Ministerial Conference, it shall issue opinions proposing, where appropriate, the adoption of relevant measures for each of the three aspects of the Barcelona process.

2. The deliberations of the Assembly shall not be legally binding.
3. On a proposal from the Bureau, the Assembly may decide to send ad-hoc delegations.

Rule 4

Presidency and Bureau

1. The Bureau of the Assembly shall consist of four members, two appointed by the parliaments of the Mediterranean partner countries of the European Union, one appointed by the EU national parliaments and one appointed by the European Parliament.
2. These appointments, including the order of rotation of members, shall be submitted to the Assembly for approval.
3. The term of office of the members of the Bureau shall be four years; this mandate is not renewable and is incompatible with the office of a member of a government. In the event of the resignation or termination of service of one of its members, the replacement shall be appointed for the remainder of the term of office.
4. The Assembly shall be chaired by one of the members of the Bureau, in rotation and on an annual basis, thus ensuring parity and alternate South/North presidencies. The three other members of the Bureau shall be Vice-Presidents.
5. The Bureau shall be responsible for coordinating the work of the Assembly. It is the body responsible to represent the Assembly for matters regarding relations with the other institutions.
6. The Bureau, following a decision by the Assembly to send an ad-hoc delegation, shall determine the setting-up, composition, mandate, and reporting obligations of such delegation.

In urgent cases, the Bureau may take such decision on its own initiative.

Rule 5

Parliamentary committees

1. The Assembly shall be organised in four parliamentary committees which are responsible for monitoring the following aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership:
 - (a) committee on political affairs, security and human rights;
 - (b) committee on economic and financial affairs, social affairs and education;
 - (c) committee on improving quality of life, exchanges between civil societies and culture;
 - (d) committee on Women's Rights in the Euro Mediterranean Countries.

The Guidelines for the meetings of the parliamentary committees of the EMPA are defined in Annex 1. The Guidelines are approved by the Bureau and are attached as an annex to the Rules of Procedure.

2. Parliamentary committees shall consist of 70 members (Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights; Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education; Committee on Improving Quality of life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture) or 50 members (Committee on Women's Rights in the Euro Mediterranean Countries), 35, respectively 25, members from the Mediterranean partner countries of the EU and 35, respectively 25, European members (22, respectively 15, members of the EU national parliaments and 13, respectively 10, members of the European Parliament).

Committee members shall be appointed by the delegations from each national parliament and the European Parliament.

3. Each parliamentary committee shall elect from among its members a chairman and three vice-chairmen, considering the criterion laid down in Rule 4.1 and in accordance with the structure adopted by the plenary upon the proposal of the Bureau; their term of office shall, in principle, be two years. The office of committee chairman and vice-chairman shall not be compatible with the office of President of the Assembly

Committees appoint rapporteurs on specific items of their agenda. The rapporteurs will report to the committee concerned.

Committees shall examine questions and documents which are referred to them by the Assembly.

4. Each parliamentary committee shall meet at least once a year.
5. The committees may meet between sessions of the Assembly.

Provisions of rule(s) 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 and 10.2., 10.3, 10.4 shall apply also to committee meetings.

6. The Assembly may decide to set up ad hoc committees, if necessary. The Bureau of the Assembly shall determine their composition and Presidency, ensuring a balance and parity between the two sides.

Rule 6

Ad-hoc delegations

1. The Bureau shall set up, either following a decision by the Plenary or, in case of urgency, on its own initiative, ad-hoc delegation(s) and decide on the nature, duration, number of members, composition, mandate and reporting obligations of such delegation(s).
2. When taking such decision, the Bureau shall bear in mind and seek to ensure that the principles of the Barcelona process are respected, and in particular the North/South

Mediterranean equilibrium, adequate representation of the three components of the Assembly, mutual understanding and transparency, without preliminary exclusion and safeguarding total impartiality.

The Bureau shall also designate the member who will be the Head of Delegation.

3. In accordance with its remit, the delegation will submit for approval by the Bureau its work programme.

The Bureau, should the need arise, may also decide on further implementing provisions enabling the delegation to carry out its mandate.

4. The travel expenses for the members of such delegation shall be borne by their respective national Parliaments.
5. The Head of Delegation shall draft a report on the activity and results of the delegation, which shall be submitted to the EMPA Bureau and, subsequently, to the Assembly.

Rule 7

Relations with the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of foreign ministers and the European Commission

1. The role of the Assembly shall be complementary to the other institutions of the Barcelona process.
2. The representatives appointed by the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of foreign ministers and by the European Commission shall attend the Assembly's meetings and shall be entitled to speak.

Rule 8

Observers and guests

1. On a proposal from the Bureau, and pursuant to Rule 10(3) of these Rules of Procedure, the Assembly may grant permanent observer status at its meetings to:
 - the representatives of the national parliaments of the countries of the Mediterranean region which are not members of the EU and that have not subscribed to the Barcelona process;
 - the representatives of the national parliaments which are not Mediterranean, but which are candidate countries, provided that the European Union has officially commenced discussion and negotiations with the country concerned in view of its accession to the European Union;
 - the institutionalised consultative bodies and financial bodies of the process of Barcelona;
 - the regional parliamentary and intergovernmental organisations which request such status.

Other organisations may also be invited by the Bureau to attend a meeting of the Assembly.

2. The permanent observers shall be entitled to speak.

Rule 9

Conduct of proceedings

1. The proceedings of the Assembly shall be public, except where otherwise decided.
2. Members of the Assembly may speak when authorised to do so by the President of the sitting.
3. The President of the sitting shall open, suspend and adjourn sittings; he or she shall ensure observance of these Rules, maintain order, call upon speakers, limit speaking time, put matters to the vote, announce the results of votes and close the sitting. In agreement with the members of the Bureau, he or she shall rule on any matter arising in the course of the proceedings that is not covered by these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 10

Debates and decision-making

1. The Assembly may adopt resolutions and make recommendations relating to the Barcelona process for the attention of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference and the Council of the European Union and the European Commission.
2. Amendments to a text tabled for debate and adoption by the Assembly shall be submitted in writing by a deadline to be announced by the President of the sitting.

Each amendment may only relate to one paragraph. No amendment shall be admissible if it does not directly relate to the text which it seeks to amend. An amendment shall lapse if it is inconsistent.

a) Amendments shall have priority over the text to which they relate and shall be put to the vote before that text.

b) If two or more mutually exclusive amendments have been tabled to the same part of a text, the amendment that departs furthest from the original text shall have priority and shall be put to the vote first. If it is adopted the other amendments shall stand rejected. If it is rejected, the amendment next in priority shall be put to the vote and similarly for each of the remaining amendments. Where there is doubt as to priority, the President shall decide. If all amendments are rejected, the original text shall be deemed adopted unless a separate vote has been requested within the specified deadline.

Acting upon the request of a Committee that has adopted a text on the basis of consensus, the Bureau may decide not to open a deadline for amendments to the plenary.

3. The Assembly shall act by consensus and in the presence of half of the delegations plus one within each of the two component parts of the Assembly, namely, the European component and that of the partner countries.

When it is not possible to reach a consensus, the Assembly shall take its decisions by a qualified majority of at least two-thirds of the votes of the members present from each of the two shores of the Mediterranean, in the presence of at least half of the members plus one of the two components of the Assembly. The Chair shall establish such a presence before the vote begins.

4. Each delegation shall have a number of votes equal to the number allocated to it and, during the vote, shall have the right to express reservations and/or to abstain constructively.

Rule 11

Meetings and agendas

1. The Assembly shall meet at least once a year in the place chosen at each meeting by the plenary sitting. Special arrangements must be made when the meeting of the Assembly takes place in a country which does not have official diplomatic relations with one of the member countries of the Barcelona process and of the Assembly.
2. The draft agenda shall be drawn up by the Bureau and adopted by the Assembly in plenary sitting at the start of its work.
3. The draft agenda shall be forwarded by the President to the parliaments represented in the Assembly at least one month before the opening of the session.
4. Any delegation may ask for an additional item to be entered on the agenda. The Bureau shall propose to the plenary sitting, the addition of supplementary points.

Rule 12

Drafting committee and working groups

1. The Assembly may decide to set up a drafting committee to prepare resolutions, recommendations and opinions. The members of the drafting committee shall be designated by common accord; it shall comprise, on the one hand, at least five members from the EU national parliaments and the European Parliament and, on the other, at least five members from the parliaments of the Mediterranean States participating in the Barcelona process.
2. The Bureau, after consulting the parliaments represented in the Assembly, may set up working groups whose membership and powers it shall determine. The working groups may be instructed to draw up draft reports and draft resolutions for the Assembly, subsequent to the approval of these texts by the relevant committees. The number of working groups shall not exceed two per year. Second part of Rule 5 paragraph 5 applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to working group meetings.

Rule 13

Languages

1. The official languages of the Assembly are the official languages of the European Union and Arabic, Hebrew and Turkish.
2. The official documents adopted by the Assembly shall be translated into all the official languages of the Assembly.
3. Working documents will be made available to members in French, English and Arabic, as working languages, by the parliament organising the meeting.

The draft agenda, the programme, the committee reports and resolutions or declarations of the committees, the draft final declaration, the rules of procedure and the list of participants shall be the only official documents of the Assembly and will be distributed upon registration.

4. During debates in the Assembly, each member may speak in one of the official languages of the Assembly, interpretation being provided into the working languages only, without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 14(6) of these Rules of Procedure when meetings of the Assembly are held at the European Parliament.

Meetings of parliamentary committees and, where appropriate, working groups, shall be conducted in the above working languages, without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 14(6) of these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 14

Expenditure: funding of organisation, participation, interpretation and translation costs

1. The parliament that is organising a session of the Assembly or a meeting of one of its committees shall be responsible for the practical arrangements for the session or meeting.
2. The Assembly may, on a proposal from the Bureau, decide that a contribution from the other parliaments that are members of the Assembly is necessary to cover the costs incurred in organising a session of the Assembly or a committee meeting.
3. The travel and accommodation expenses of participants shall be borne by the institution of which they are members.
4. The organisation and costs of interpretation into the working languages of the Assembly shall be met by all the delegations.
5. When a session of the Assembly or a committee meeting is organised by the European Parliament, it shall be responsible for the practical arrangements and interpretation costs depending on requirements and the facilities available.

6. The cost of translation of the official documents adopted by the Assembly into the official languages of the European Union shall be defrayed by the European Parliament. The translation of these documents into Arabic, Hebrew and Turkish shall be the responsibility of the parliaments in which these languages are used.
7. Each delegation shall be responsible for the translation into at least two working languages of the documents it submits.

Rule 15

Secretariat

1. The EMPA General Secretariat, based in Brussels, should consist of senior staff (2), experts (maximum 2) and highly trained and skilled personnel (maximum 10). The posts of Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General are the senior staff. The Secretary General's term is 4 years, renewable once. Selection shall be made by means of an open procedure. Equity shall be applied by appointing a Secretary General from the one shore and a Deputy Secretary General from the other shore, alternating. The overall composition of the Secretariat has to be balanced.
2. The salaries and other expenses of the staff of the Secretariat shall be borne by their respective parliaments.
3. The parliament which is hosting a session of the Assembly or a meeting of one of its committees shall provide assistance with the organisation of these meetings.
4. The translated versions of the reports shall be sent to delegations as soon as possible before the Plenary Sitting.

Rule 16

Amendment of the Rules of Procedure

1. Any delegation may propose amendments to these Rules of Procedure. Such proposed amendments shall be translated and forwarded to the Bureau, which shall submit them to the next plenary sitting.
2. Amendments to these Rules of Procedure shall be adopted by consensus.
3. Unless otherwise specified with the approval of the Assembly, amendments to these Rules of Procedure shall enter into force at the following session.