

**WORKING PARTY ON THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF
THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY
ASSEMBLY**

Athens, 22 March 2004

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

**submitted
by the Co-Chair of the Working Party on the EMPA
to Members of the Assembly
and adopted on 22 March 2004**

**following the Working Party's meeting
of 22 March 2004**

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 240 members, 120 European members (75 members of the EU national parliaments following enlargement of the Union to 25 States and 45 members of the European Parliament) and 120 members of the parliaments of the Mediterranean partner countries of the European Union, on the basis of equal representation.
3. The Assembly shall be organised on the basis 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.

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.

Rule 5

Parliamentary committees

1. The Assembly shall be organised in three parliamentary committees which are responsible for monitoring the three 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.

2. Each parliamentary committee shall consist of 80 members, 40 members from the Mediterranean partner countries of the European Union and 40 European members (25 members of the EU national parliaments and 15 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, in accordance with the criterion laid down in Rule 4(1) concerning the composition of the Bureau, from among its members a chairman and three vice-chairmen; 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.

4. Each parliamentary committee shall meet at least once a year.

5. The committees may meet between sessions of the Assembly.

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

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 7

Observers and guests

1. On a proposal from the Bureau, and pursuant to Rule 9(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 8

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 9

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.
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 adopt its decisions by a qualified majority of at least four-fifths of the votes of the

representatives from each of the two parties of the European component and of at least four-fifths of the votes of the representatives from the partner countries.

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 10

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 11

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 reports and draft resolutions for the Assembly.

Rule 12

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.

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 13(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 13(6) of these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 13

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 14

Secretariat

1. The Bureau and the other bodies of the Assembly shall be assisted in the preparation, proper conduct and follow-up of the Assembly's work, by a small-scale Secretariat composed of staff from each of the parliaments represented in the Bureau and coordinated by the staff member from the parliament whose representative in the Bureau holds the Presidency at the time.
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.

Rule 15

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.

22.03.2004