

**WORKING GROUP 4 ON FINANCING OF THE ASSEMBLY  
AND REVISION OF THE EMPA RULES OF PROCEDURE**

**Meeting of 7 March 2007 in Brussels**

**Minutes**

The meeting of the EMPA Working Group "Rules of Procedure" opened at 9.30 a.m., with Mr. Edward McMILLAN-SCOTT Vice-President of the European Parliament, Chairman, in the chair.

The meeting was attended by: Petros-Pavlos ALIVIZATOS (Greece), Mr. Omar ADKHIL (Morocco), Mr. Kader ARIF (European Parliament), Mrs. Tana DE ZULUETA (Italy), Mr. Tahar KAMMOUN (Tunisia), Mrs. Jamila MADEIRA (European Parliament), and Mrs. Tokia SAIFI (European Parliament).

**1. Adoption of draft agenda**

The draft agenda was adopted.

**2. Adoption of the minutes of the meeting on 28 June 2006 in Paris**

The minutes of the meeting on 28 June 2006 in Paris were approved.

**3. Chairman's announcements**

The Chairman informed the members on the EMPA Bureau's decision of 10 February 2007 (in Tunis) to extend the mandate of the Working Group for a further year, until March 2008. He also raised the issue of a possible change of the WG's status so that it became a permanent one, taking into account the need for improvements and modifications to the Rules of Procedure of the EMPA. That issue remained, however, a competence of the EMPA Bureau and could be addressed by it in the future.

The Chairman asked participants whether there were any objections to a representative of the press attending the meeting. No objections were raised.

The Chairman informed participants on the tasks entrusted to the WG by the Bureau requesting that the WG put forward proposals with a view to modifying the EMPA Rules of Procedures in order to address the following topics:

- setting up of ad-hoc delegations
- the redistribution of seats of the Assembly allocated to the EU national parliaments in order to take account of Bulgaria's and Romania's accession

- the requests by the Transitional Arab Parliament and the European Economic Social Committee(EESC) to be granted permanent observer status with EMPA

Mr. McMillan-Scott also informed the Members that he had been invited by Mr. Mebazaa, the EMPA President, to report to the EMPA Bureau on 17 March, in Tunis, on the activity and results obtained so far by the Working Group, so that proposals might be put to the Plenary for approval. In context, he informed the members that he would not be in a position to attend either the EMPA Bureau meeting or the Plenary meeting in Tunis, due to prior commitments (the Conservative Party Spring Forum in the UK to be held on the same days). He added that he would address the EMPA Bureau with a written report.

#### **4. Exchange of views and decisions to be taken with a view to the report to be presented to the EMPA Bureau and Plenary**

##### **Ad-hoc delegations**

The Chairman introduced the working document on a proposal on the new provisions to be included in the Rules of Procedure with regard to the conditions for the setting-up, composition, mandate, and reporting obligations of ad-hoc delegations.

The Working Group agreed by consensus to propose a modification to the Rules by adding new paragraphs, respectively, to Rule 3 (competence of the Assembly to set up ad hoc delegations) and to Rule 4 - "Presidency and the Bureau" - areas in which the Bureau has competence to take decisions, aimed at including a reference to the setting up of such delegations.

Furthermore, it reached consensus on the proposal to add a new Rule 6 which spells out detailed provisions on the principles to be applied by the Bureau when determining the setting-up, composition, mandate, and reporting obligations of such delegations, namely: North/South Mediterranean balance, adequate representation of the three components of the Assembly, mutual understanding and transparency, no preliminary exclusion and safeguarding total impartiality.

##### **Modification of the Rules of Procedure following the 2007 EU enlargement**

The WG reached consensus on the proposal by the Chairman aimed at modifying Rule 2.2 by deleting the reference "the EU enlargement to 25" , with a view to simplifying the text while at the same time allowing for solutions that could apply to new situations as they may emerge in case of future EU enlargements..

The Tunisian delegation withdrew a proposal it had made prior to the meeting aimed at raising the total number of EMPA members by 20 (10 + 10 seats to be allocated respectively to the components from the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean). The WG agreed that the total of 240 members for EMPA should be maintained, in accordance with the recommendation by the Bureau.

The distribution of seats between the EU national parliaments within the Northern Mediterranean component of the EMPA, following the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU, was then discussed. Ms. De Zulueta stressed that, in her opinion, a reduction in the number of seats currently allocated to each of the EU national Parliaments' delegations (3) would result in a limitation to the plurality of the views expressed in terms of political positions, a situation which , in turn, may affect the richness and quality of the debate within the Assembly. The issue of how exactly to

work out the allocation of the 75 seats among EU national Parliaments delegations was postponed pending further discussion.

The Working Group reached consensus however on a proposal to be submitted to the EMPA Bureau allowing for a temporary solution to be applied during the forthcoming Plenary meeting in Tunis. That "flexible solution" provided for the Bureau to allow, temporarily, that the seats allocated to other European national Parliaments delegations', on which delegates were not appointed, be used by the Romanian and Bulgarian delegations so that they may attend the EMPA Plenary as full members.

Observer status requests from European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and from the Transitional Arab Parliament

The Working Group decided by consensus to recommend to the Bureau that, in line with Rule 7.3, the EESC be granted "permanent observer" status.

The request from the Transitional Arab Parliament was left for further consideration alongside other requests to which a "permanent guest status" could be granted.

Improving the effectiveness of the functioning of the EMPA (tasks, structure, and decision-making procedures of the EMPA bodies)

The Working Group confirmed the consensus reached on the amendments approved during the two previous meetings (in Brussels, on 31 January 2006, and in Paris, on 28 June 2006) (amendments 2, 4, 7 part I, 10, 12 part II, 14, 16, 25, 29 part II, 32, 34, 36, 42, 47). The Working Group accepted by consensus some of the proposals left pending after the meeting in Paris on 28 June 2006 (amendments 12 part I with an addition, 29 part I modified on Rule 9.4, 30 modified on Rule 10.1), and decided to forward them to the EMPA Bureau, together with the amendments confirmed.

The issues concerning the required quorum enabling the Assembly to deliberate and the decision-making procedure by majority vote in case there was no consensus (Rule 9.3) were also discussed, but no consensus was reached and they were therefore postponed.

As regards the questions of financing of the Assembly and the creation of an autonomous secretariat, the Chairman explained that not all delegations had sent replies to the questionnaire that was circulated in summer 2006 and, among the answers received, there were some (4) delegations that had expressed reservations. Thus, in the absence of consensus the discussion on these issues should be deferred to a later stage.

Amendments 5 and 6 part II, requesting "the respect for the principle of gender mainstreaming" (Rule 2, "Composition" of the Assembly, and Rule 4, "Presidency and Bureau") were rejected.

The meeting closed at 5.00 p.m.