



# EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



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

### Meeting of 27 June 2007 in Brussels

#### Minutes

The meeting of the EMPA Working Group "Rules of Procedure" opened at 9.15 a.m., with Mr. Edward McMILLAN-SCOTT Vice-President of the European Parliament, Chairman, in the chair.

The meeting was attended by: Tokia Saïfi (European Parliament, Chair of the Political Committee), Jamila Madeira (EP), Hélène Flautre (EP), Carlos Carnero-Gonzalez (EP), Tana de Zulueta (IT, Chair of the Culture Committee), Petros-Pavlos Alivizatos (GR), Robert del Picchia (FR), Hashem ad Dabbas (Jordan, Chair of the Economic Committee, accompanied by Mr. Fakhri Daoud), Tahar Kammoun (Tunisia, accompanied by Mr. Tarek Ben M'Barek- expert, member of the "Rules" Working group under the EuroMed Forum);

Could not be present: Miloud Chorfi (Algeria) and Patrick Moriau (Belgium)

#### **1. Adoption of draft agenda**

The draft agenda was adopted.

#### **2. Adoption of the minutes of the meeting on 7 March 2007 in Brussels**

The minutes of the meeting on 7 March 2007 in Brussels were approved, no observations being raised by the end of the meeting.

#### **3. Chairman's announcements**

The Chairman informed the members on the letter sent by Mr. Mebazaa, President of the Tunisian Chamber of Deputies and member of the EMPA Bureau, expressing the reservation of the Tunisian delegation on the modification of the Rule 9.4 (concerning voting rights) as proposed by the WG. The Chairman suggested that this item be placed on the agenda of a future meeting.

The members took note of the letter from Ms. Saifi, Chair of the Political Committee, to the Bureau on the replacement of Committee Vice-Chairs; (see item 7 on the meeting's agenda).

The Chairman apologised for not being able, due to prior commitments, to attend the EMPA Bureau meeting of 17 March, in Tunis, where the proposals from the WG were presented and subsequently put to the Plenary for approval.

#### **4. Exchange of views on the allocation of EMPA seats to parliaments following Romania's and Bulgaria's accession to the EU**

The Chairman informed participants that the EMPA Bureau, at its meeting of 18 May 2007, in Athens, requested the WG to make proposals by 29 June 2007 concerning the allocation of EMPA seats to the parliaments of Romania and Bulgaria following the EU enlargement.

In line with the three criteria recommended by the Bureau (the North/South parity, maintaining the current ratio between EU National Parliaments and the EP delegation and the modification through an increase - if required - of the total number of 240 EMPA members), the Chairman presented the following proposal:

increase the total number of the EMPA members from 240 to 260 (130 for the European side and 130 for the Southern Mediterranean side) allocating 6 seats to the two EU National Parliaments concerned (3 for Romania and 3 for Bulgaria), 4 supplementary seats for the EP and 10 supplementary seats for the Parliaments of the Southern Mediterranean partners (1 seat per delegation).

The proposal also provides for membership to the EMPA standing committees to be modified as follows:

- for the Political Committee (currently having 80 members) an increase of 8 members (total 88) of which 1 Romania, 1 Bulgaria, and 2 European Parliament for the European side, and 4 for the Southern shore Parliaments.
- for each of the Economic and Culture Committee (each committee currently composed of 80 members ) an increase of 6 members (total of 86) of which 3 for the European side (1 Romania, 1 Bulgaria and 1 EP) and 3 for the Southern Mediterranean Parliaments.

In the context of the discussion on that proposal, Mr. Ad-Dabbas raised the issue of making provision for seat allocation to the Pan-Arab Parliament in view of its possible membership to the EMPA. The Chairman and the other participants took the view that the issue was not under consideration. The Chairman added that the question could be raised in future, if required and, possibly, in the event the Pan-Arab Parliament were set up through direct elections.

The Working Group approved the Chairman's proposal and agreed that it be forwarded to the Bureau.

#### **5. Exchange of views on the financial resources of the Assembly with a view to setting up an EMPA budget**

The Chairman reminded members that the questionnaire on this issue had been circulated to all the delegations of the Parliaments participating to the Assembly in July 2006. He mentioned that there were only 11 positive answers received so far (8 from the European side and 3 from the Southern Mediterranean) and 4 negative answers (3 from the EU side and 1 from the Southern Mediterranean side). Considering that a large number of delegations had not replied, he concluded that a majority view could not yet be established.

The WG agreed to the Chairman's proposal to reiterate the invitation to delegations who have not yet replied to send their answers as soon as possible (by the first week of September) so that the WG could make progress in discussing that item during its next meeting in September. That would enable the WG to submit to the EMPA Bureau a relevant proposal on this issue.

Some members of the Working Group suggested that the absence of an answer by a delegation could be considered as a position in favour of setting up an EMPA budget based on contributions from the Parliaments members to the EMPA.

The Chairman proposed to further discuss the issue at the WG's next meeting in September and to submit to the Bureau a proposal based on the answers from at least a simple majority of countries from each of the two sides of the Mediterranean. The participants agreed to the Chairman's proposal.

It was also decided to circulate to all the EMPA delegations a table summarising the answers to the Questionnaire received so far, as well as the working document on "Simulation for the calculation of the draft estimates of the EMPA annual expenditure", in order to help the member Parliaments formulate their positions.

#### **6. Follow-up to the Bureau's decision on the setting-up of an EMPA permanent secretariat**

The Chairman informed the participants on the EMPA Bureau decision on 18 May 2007 to endorse the WG's technical proposal, made in June 2006, for the setting-up of a small-scale EMPA secretariat, to be based in Brussels. The Working Group noted that the Bureau's decision provided also that this proposal would be submitted to the next ordinary EMPA Plenary in Athens, in March 2008, for approval with a view to enabling such a secretariat to be set up and running immediately after the approval by the Plenary.

Such a secretariat should be composed of administrators seconded by the Parliaments members to the EMPA Bureau. (2+2 administrators, 2 from the European side of which 1 from the EP and 1 from the EU national Parliament member to the EMPA Bureau and 2 from the southern shore Parliaments members to the Bureau).

Mr. McMillan-Scott emphasised the fact that the above-mentioned decision of the Bureau had as a result that the agreement between the EMPA Bureau members would be sufficient to finance the secretariat in the short term, pending formal adoption of a new financing proposal by the Plenary.

The WG agreed by consensus to the Chairman's proposal on a slight modification to be made to the current wording of Rule 15.1 adding that the secretariat will be "based in Brussels", thus confirming the WG's discussions over the last few months and adjusting the Rule in line with the Bureau's decision on 18 May 2007.

It was decided that this proposal will be forwarded to the EMPA Bureau with a view to it being submitted to the next EMPA Plenary for approval.

#### **7. Exchange of views on the replacement of Committee's Vice-Chairs unable to attend a Committee meeting**

In line with the Bureau's request, the Working Group discussed the conditions under which a Committee Vice-Chair, unable to attend a committee meeting, could be replaced by a member of the same delegation. This question had been raised by Ms Saïfi, Chairwoman of the Political Committee, by letter addressed to the EMPA Bureau.

The WG reached consensus on a proposal to be put to the Bureau for a provision to be added to the "Guidelines for the meetings of the parliamentary committees of the EMPA" allowing for such replacement by a Member of the delegation to which the Vice-Chair is a member. It was specified however that the replacement should be notified to the Committee Chair by the Vice-Chair concerned, in writing, prior to the start of the Committee meeting.

### **8. Exchange of views and possibly decisions on modifications of the "Guidelines for the meetings of the Parliamentary Committees of the EMPA"**

The WG discussed and reached consensus on a series of provisions to be added to the "Guidelines for the meetings of the Parliamentary Committees" aimed at improving the efficiency of EMPA committees' meetings.

Additions provide, among others, for:

the adoption by the Bureau of an EMPA programme of activities; the requirement, in case a vacancy is established, that the appointment of a replacement member by the delegation concerned be made within three months since the vacancy has been established; the convening of Committee meetings by the Chairs; the maximum number of Committee meetings per year (4 per Committee); the possibility for Committees to organise joint meetings on subjects of common interest; the appointment by Committees of representatives to attend conferences; the possibility to invite experts upon notification to the EMPA Bureau etc.

These proposals will be also submitted to the Bureau for approval.

### **9. Date and place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 12 September 2007, in Brussels.

The meeting closed at 1.00 p.m.