



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

Meeting of 12 September 2007 in Brussels

Minutes

The meeting of the EMPA Working Group "Rules of Procedure" opened at 10.15 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), Tana de Zulueta (IT, Chair of the Culture Committee), Patrick Moriau (BE), Robert del Picchia (FR), Abdelhamid SAADAoui (Morocco), Tahar Kammoun (Tunisia, accompanied by Mr. Tarek Ben M'Barek- expert, member of the "Rules" Working Group under the EuroMed Forum).

1. Adoption of draft agenda

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the meeting on 27 June 2007 in Brussels

The minutes of the meeting on 27 June 2007 in Brussels were approved.

3. Chairman's announcements

The Chairman informed the members that, as decided on 27 June 2007, the meeting was a follow up to the circulation of the "Questionnaire on Possible Financial Resources for a Future EMPA Budget", in order to take a decision on a recommendation to be made to the Bureau on the question of financing of the Assembly. He reminded participants that the Bureau, at its meeting on 18 May 2007 in Athens, set up the deadline of 14 September for the WG to put forward such a recommendation.

The Chair also informed the members that, as agreed by the Working Group on 27 June 2007, the questionnaire was re-circulated to the EMPA member Parliaments. He reminded members that it was also agreed that the recommendation to be made to the Bureau would be based on the majority answers from a majority of member Parliaments. Mr McMillan-Scott underlined that, though not all of the member Parliaments replied within the deadline of 5 September set up by the WG, however, 20 replies were received out of the 37 member Parliaments, and that 13 of the 20 replies were in favour of the principle of financing the EMPA through contributions from national Parliaments, six were opposing it, and one was neutral. Therefore, with a majority of 13 positive answers of a majority of 20 replies, the Chairman concluded

that the Working Group was in a position to make a proposal to the Bureau on the topic under discussion.

The members were reminded the EMPA Bureau decision on 18 May 2007 to endorse the WG's technical proposal for the setting-up of a small-scale EMPA secretariat, to be based in Brussels and composed of administrators seconded by the Parliaments members to the EMPA Bureau. The European Parliament would provide the necessary infrastructure for such a secretariat. The EMPA Bureau's decision would be submitted to the next EMPA Plenary for approval.

A draft simulation of the overall costs necessary to cover the activities of the Assembly, based on the 2006 prices as experienced by the European Parliament, was also presented to the participants to the meeting. The Chairman indicated that, according to the Bureau's agreement, the staff salaries and the operating costs for the Secretariat would be contributed by the Parliaments members at any time in the Bureau, and thus should not be included in the overall financing.

The Chair also pointed out that, for the European Parliament, a long term commitment implies a need for a legal base and, taking the advice of the EP's legal services, such a treaty base would be needed.

As a working method, the Chairman proposed the members to discuss a draft letter he had prepared, identifying the key issues of the matter and summarising the decision of the Working Group. No objections were raised on the suggested working procedure.

4. Exchange of views on the financial resources of the Assembly

As proposed by the Chairman, the participants held an exchange of views based on the draft letter proposed by the Chair to be sent to the EMPA Presidency and, consequently, to the Bureau.

In the discussion some delegations (IT, FR) emphasized the need to indicate a concrete breakdown of contributions per country in order to allow the parliaments know what would be the quota (the approximate amount) they should contribute and which is the basis for the calculation of that quota.

Moreover, representatives of some delegations (IT, as well as Mr. Adnan Mansour, the Ambassador of Lebanon, assisting the meeting) underlined that the lack of answers to the questionnaire did not necessarily mean an opposition to the principle of financing the EMPA through contributions from the member Parliaments. They felt that the lack of answer by the deadline was rather related to particular situations in their countries or Parliaments and thus their answers were still to be awaited.

While reiterating their support for the principle of EMPA finances being covered by the member Parliaments' contributions, and specifically 1/3 of the amount by Southern side Parliaments and 2/3 by European side Parliaments, the Tunisian delegation presented orally a proposal for the calculation of the individual contributions from the member Parliaments which uses the UN-IPU model. Mr. Kammoun presented examples of the contributions of individual member Parliaments. The Tunisian delegation gave an undertaking to send the table of calculation as quickly as possible after the day's meeting.

The recommendation of the Working Group, based on the majority answers from a majority of the EMPA member Parliaments, was thus agreed upon in the form of a letter to the EMPA Bureau accompanied by the necessary adjustments proposed to the Rules of Procedure which were annexed.

5. Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting would be held before the end of the year, possibly in conjunction with the Political Committee's meeting, in order to ensure the attendance necessary to discuss the complex questions of quorum and decision making procedure to the Assembly as well as the issue of permanent observer/guest status.

The meeting closed at 1.00 p.m.



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



Working Group 4 on Financing the Assembly and Revision of the EMPA's Rules of Procedure

The Chair

Ms. Anna BENAKI
President of the Hellenic Parliament
President of the EMPA
Vouli ton Ellinon
11 Avenue Vassilissis Sofias
G-10021 Athens
GREECE

12 September 2007

Dear Ms. President,

Proposals of the Working Group on Financing the Assembly and Revision of the EMPA Rules

At its Athens meeting on 18 May 2007 the Bureau of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) requested Working Group 4 on Financing the Assembly and Revision of the EMPA Rules (WG) to make proposals on the issue of financial resources of the Assembly by 14 September 2007.

1 At its meeting on 27 June 2007 the WG had agreed to reiterate the invitation to delegations who had not replied to the Questionnaire on **financing of the Assembly** to send their answers by the first week of September. The Questionnaire was circulated again to all delegations, together with the working document on "Simulation for the calculation of the draft estimates of the EMPA annual expenditure" (attached: drafted on the basis of data related to the European Parliament's expenditure for the year 2006). At the 27 June meeting, the WG took the decision to submit a proposal to the Bureau based on the majority answers from a majority of member Parliaments (total 37) from each side of the Mediterranean.

At its meeting on 12 September 2007 the Working Group took note of the 20 replies received by then from national Parliaments, a majority of EMPA member Parliaments. It considered that a recommendation could now be made to the Bureau.

Of the answers received, 13 were in favour of the financing of the Assembly through contributions from the member Parliaments. In addition, 8 delegations proposed financial contributions on the basis of GDP, one on the basis of population and one on the principle of equality. This majority was reflected in the Working Group's discussion and forms its recommendation.

The Parliaments of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean shall bear 1/3 and the Northern Parliaments 2/3 of the costs (of which the European Parliament contributes 1/3). The Working Group took note of a draft calculation from the Tunisian delegation (attached) which uses the UN – IPU model and assumes that all the member Parliaments contribute.

2 As a result, the Working Group proposes a **modification to the Rules of Procedure** (Rule 14 - "Expenditure: funding of organisation, participation, interpretation and translation costs") through the addition of the following paragraph to Rule 14:

"On a proposal from the Bureau the Assembly shall adopt an annual budget and decide, according to its procedures, on the contributions from each of the member Parliaments on a proportional basis necessary to cover its costs."

along with the necessary adjustments of the wording of the other paragraphs (deletions/modifications - see Annex).

3 The Working Group also considered and supported the decision by the EMPA Bureau on 18 May 2007 for the setting-up of a modest **Brussels based EMPA secretariat** composed of 2+2 administrators seconded by the four Parliaments at any time in the EMPA Bureau, including the European Parliament as a permanent member of the Bureau. This will be submitted for the Assembly's approval in March 2008. However, the decision implies that the staff salaries and the operating costs for the Secretariat would not be included in the overall national Parliaments' contributions (the EMPA Budget), but would be contributed by the Bureau Parliaments, except for any costs of living/displacement adjustments, which would be covered by the EMPA Budget.

4 For the long-term application of these decisions, a treaty base may be necessary for certain parliaments and the Bureau is invited to take the necessary steps to inform the appropriate bodies, governments and parliaments.

5 The Working Group also noted that other issues, including the quorum and the decision making procedures, as well as the status of observers and guests remain to be discussed and proposes a further meeting, before the end of the year, possibly in conjunction with the Political Committee's meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Edward McMillan-Scott
Vice-President of the European Parliament

Annex: New text of Rule 14 as proposed by the WG

Attached: "Simulation for the calculation of the draft estimates of the EMPA annual expenditure"

Cc: Members of the EMPA Bureau:
Mr. Hans-Gert Poettering
Mr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour
Mr. Fouad Mebaaza

Annex 1

Text of Rule 14 to be modified as follows:

-1. "On a proposal from the Bureau, the Assembly shall decide on the contributions from the member parliaments necessary to cover the costs incurred in organising its activities on an annual basis."

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.
3. The travel and accommodation expenses of participants shall be borne by the institution of which they are members.
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 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.