

## Rules of procedure of the Committee of the Regions (17-18 May 1994)

**Caption:** First Rules of procedure adopted by the Committee of the Regions at its third Plenary Session on 17 and 18 May 1994 and approved by the Council at its 1 759th meeting on 25 May 1994.

**Source:** Official Journal of the European Communities (OJEC). 27.05.1994, n° L 132. [s.l.].

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**Publication date:** 21/10/2012

**Rules of procedure adopted by the Committee of the Regions at its third Plenary Session on 17 and 18 May 1994; approved by the Council of the European Union at its 1 759th meeting on 25 May 1994**

**Title I**

**Organization of the Committee**

**Chapter 1**

**Constituent bodies of the Committee**

**Rule 1**

The constituent bodies of the Committee shall be the Plenary Assembly, the Bureau, and the Commissions. The Committee shall be assisted by a General Secretariat.

**Chapter 2**

**Installing the Committee**

**Rule 2**

The Committee shall be convened, after each four-yearly replacement, by the oldest member within a maximum period of one month following notification to the members of the Committee of their appointment by the Council. The first meeting shall be chaired by the oldest member present assisted by the four youngest members present and the Secretary-General of the Committee, who shall constitute the interim officers.

**Rule 3**

At the said meeting, the interim Chairman shall inform the Committee of the notification he has received from the Council concerning the appointment of members of the Committee and shall declare the Committee duly installed for the next four-year period.

**Rule 4**

During the first meeting held pursuant to Rule 2, the Committee, chaired by the interim officers, shall elect its Bureau for the two years from the date of installing of the Committee referred to in that Rule.

The interim officers shall continue their functions until the result of the election of the Bureau of the Committee is declared. No topic other than election of the Bureau of the Committee may be discussed under the chairmanship of the interim officers.

**Chapter 3**

**Plenary Assembly**

**Rule 5**

1. The Chairman of the Committee shall convene the Plenary Assembly at least once every three months. The timetable of meetings shall be fixed by the Bureau at the beginning of each year.

2. At the request of at least 32 members, the Chairman shall be obliged to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Plenary Assembly within one month.

**Rule 6**

1. The draft agenda shall be prepared by the Bureau and forwarded by the Chairman to the full and alternate

members of the Committee as early as possible and usually one month before the start of a plenary session, together with the draft opinions of the Commissions. Documents for discussion must be available in good time in all the official languages.

2. At the start of each session the Plenary Assembly shall adopt the agenda. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Bureau no later than one working day before the start of the plenary session. This rule shall also apply to the inclusion of urgent debates on the agenda.

3. Members may hold preparatory meetings.

#### **Rule 7**

The Plenary Assembly may hold a valid debate if a majority of the members of the Committee is present. However, the quorum shall be verified only if at least ten members so request. If there is no quorum, voting shall be postponed until the next meeting, when the Plenary Assembly may hold a valid debate whatever the number of members present.

#### **Rule 8**

1. The Plenary Assembly shall decide by a majority of votes cast, save where otherwise provided in these Rules.

2. At the request of at least 32 members, the Plenary Assembly may decide to vote by secret ballot.

3. Votes on appointments shall be by secret ballot.

4. Amendments to draft opinions must be supported by at least six members and be submitted to the Bureau no later than 24 hours before the start of the plenary session. Compromise amendments tabled at a plenary session must be supported by at least six members.

#### **Rule 9**

1. The Chairman, after consulting the Bureau, shall designate the Commission which is to be responsible for drawing up an opinion; in urgent cases the Bureau shall be informed at the next meeting. By the same token, one or more Commissions may be invited by the Chairman to give a supplementary opinion.

2. Only the Commission responsible for the main opinion shall report to the Committee. It shall however enclose with its opinion the supplementary opinions which any other Commissions have been requested to give.

3. In urgent cases where the position of the relevant Commission is unanimous, this draft opinion may be transmitted to the Council and the Commission for information, on the understanding that it will be submitted for adoption without debate at the next Plenary Assembly.

#### **Rule 10**

1. The Committee, acting at the request of a Commission, the Bureau or of at least 32 members, shall give an opinion on its own initiative if it considers this appropriate.

2. Proposals for such opinions put forward by members of the Committee must be submitted to the Bureau no later than 72 hours before the start of a plenary session.

#### **Rule 11**

Rule 10 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* in cases where the Economic and Social Committee has been

consulted and the Committee of the Regions, acting under the third paragraph of 198c of the Treaty establishing the European Community, considers that specific regional or local interests are involved.

#### **Rule 12**

Representatives of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be entitled to attend plenary sessions. They may take the floor.

#### **Rule 13**

1. As a general rule, speaking time in plenary sessions shall be limited. The time limits shall be decided by the Bureau prior to each debate; the Chairman shall be responsible for laying down the implementing arrangements.

2. Before the closure of a Plenary Assembly session the Chairman shall announce the time, place and any items already on the agenda for the next session.

### **Chapter 4**

#### **Members of the Committee**

#### **Rule 14**

Any full member prevented from attending a plenary session may be replaced by an alternate member within his national delegation. An alternate member can stand in for one full member only. The alternate member shall exercise the same powers as a full member at the relevant meeting. The General Secretariat must be notified of the delegation of vote.

The Bureau shall establish the arrangements for the part attendance of duly authorized alternate members at plenary sessions.

#### **Rule 15**

1. The term of office of a Committee member shall be terminated by resignation, death or *force majeure*. The successor shall be appointed for the remainder of the term.

2. Any resignation must be notified to the Chairman of the Committee, who shall refer the matter to the Council, which shall confirm the vacancy and implement the replacement procedure.

#### **Rule 16**

Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 14, the right to vote may not be delegated.

#### **Rule 17**

The privileges and immunities of full members and alternate members shall be in accordance with Article 11 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Communities.

#### **Rule 18**

The Bureau shall lay down the implementing arrangements regarding Committee members' travel and subsistence expenses, in compliance with the provisions laid down under the budget procedure.

### **Chapter 5**

#### **Bureau and Chairman**

**Rule 19**

1. The Bureau shall be elected for two years. It shall consist of thirty members including the Chairman, the first Vice-Chairman and one member per country having the rank of Vice-Chairman. The composition of the Bureau shall take account, as far as possible, of the geographical balance of the European Communities.
2. The Chairman and the first Vice-Chairman shall be elected by the Plenary Assembly, without discussion, by an absolute majority of the votes cast in a secret ballot. The election shall take place only if two-thirds of the members are present. The election of the Chairman and the first Vice-Chairman shall take place in separate ballots. The other members of the Bureau, elected by the same ballot procedures, may be grouped into one list.
3. In the absence of a single list each member shall be elected by separate ballot by an absolute majority of the votes cast in the first ballot and by a relative majority in the subsequent ballots.

The Bureau shall draw up the list of the twelve members having the rank of Vice-Chairman; it shall submit the list to the Plenary Assembly for endorsement.

**Rule 20**

In the event of termination of Committee membership or of resignation from the Bureau, a member of the Bureau shall be replaced for the remainder of his term of office in accordance with the procedures laid down in Rule 19.

**Rule 21**

At the time of the Committee's four-yearly replacement, the Bureau shall take responsibility for current business until the first meeting of the new Committee.

**Rule 22**

1. The Bureau shall be responsible for preparing the decisions for submission to the Plenary Assembly and for the continuity of action of the Committee.
2. The Bureau shall prepare, organize and coordinate the work of the Plenary Assembly and the Commissions. In this connection it may invite other members of the Committee, by virtue of their expertise or mandate, and persons not belonging to the Committee, to attend its meeting.

Representatives of the Council or the Commission may attend Bureau meetings.

3. The Bureau shall give instructions determining the procedure for implementing the provisions of these Rules of Procedure, in full compliance with the latter and with the language arrangements laid down by Council Regulation No 1/58 of 15 April 1958.
4. The Bureau shall ascertain what action has been taken on the Committee's opinions; a report shall be presented to the Plenary Assembly by the Chairman or one of the Bureau members at the beginning of each session. For the purposes of that report, the Council and the Commission shall be invited to inform the Committee of the action they have taken on Committee opinions.
5. The Bureau shall adopt the draft estimates of revenue and expenditure which it shall submit to the Plenary Assembly in accordance with Rule 32.

**Rule 23**

The Bureau shall be convened by the Chairman at least once every three months and whenever the

Chairman deems necessary, or at the request of at least six of its members. A quorum shall exist if at least one half of its members are present. It shall decide by a majority of the votes cast.

#### **Rule 24**

1. The Chairman shall direct the work of the Committee.
2. The Committee shall be represented by its Chairman.
3. If the Chairman is absent, he shall be represented by the first Vice-Chairman; if the first Vice-Chairman is absent, the Chairman shall be represented by one of the Vice-Chairmen.

### **Chapter 6 Commissions**

#### **Rule 25**

1. The Plenary Assembly shall set up standing and temporary Commissions and Subcommissions, to prepare its work. It shall decide on their composition and powers.
2. The standing Commissions may set up, on a proposal from one half of their members or the Bureau, any standing or temporary Working Party that they deem useful.

#### **Rule 26**

Each Commission shall appoint a Chairman and at least two Vice-Chairmen.

#### **Rule 27**

1. The composition of the standing Commissions shall reflect the national composition of the Committee.
2. The members of the Commissions may be represented by their alternates.
3. The members of the Commissions may be accompanied by an expert.
4. Members of the Committee must belong to a minimum of one and a maximum of two Commissions. Exceptions may be made by the Bureau for members belonging to the smaller national delegations.

#### **Rule 28**

The Plenary Assembly shall set up the Commissions at its first session after each four-yearly replacement.

### **Chapter 7 Administration of the Committee**

#### **Rule 29**

1. The Committee shall be assisted by a General Secretariat headed by a Secretary-General, who shall discharge his duties under the direction of the Chairman, representing the Bureau.
2. The Secretary-General shall attend the meetings of the Bureau in an advisory capacity and shall keep the minutes of those meetings. The Secretary-General shall be responsible for giving effect to decisions taken by the Bureau or the Chairman pursuant to these Rules of Procedure.
3. The Secretary-General may delegate his powers within the limits decided by the Chairman.

4. He shall give a solemn undertaking, before the Bureau, to discharge his duties conscientiously and with complete impartiality.

5. The Bureau, acting on a proposal from the Secretary-General, shall organize the General Secretariat in such a way that it can ensure the efficient functioning of the Committee and its constituent bodies and help the members of the Committee in the performance of their duties.

### **Rule 30**

1. In accordance with Protocol No 16 to the Treaty, the General Secretariat of the Committee of the Regions and the General Secretariat of the Economic and Social Committee shall use joint technical services. Detailed arrangements shall be defined by agreement between the two Committees.

2. Matters relating to the joint services shall be regulated by the Secretaries-General acting in agreement.

### **Rule 31**

1. The powers which the Staff Regulations of Officials of the Communities confer on the appointing authority shall be exercised as follows:

— for the Secretary-General, by the Council, acting on a proposal from the Bureau, as regards application of Articles 1, 13, 15 (second paragraph), 16, 22, 29, 30, 31, 32, 38, 40, 41, 49, 50, 51, 78, 87, 88, 89 and 90 of the Staff Regulations and by the Bureau as regards application of the other provisions;

— for officials in Grades 6 to 8 of Category A and of the Language Service and for officials in Categories B, C and D, by the Secretary-General;

— for other officials, by the Bureau acting on a proposal from the Secretary-General.

2. The powers which the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the Communities confer on the authority competent to conclude contract of employment shall be exercised as follows:

— for staff in Grades 6 to 8 of Category A and of the Language Service and for temporary staff in Categories B, C and D, by the Secretary-General;

— for other staff, by the Bureau acting on a proposal from the Secretary-General;

— for special advisers (Private Office), by the Chairman in accordance with the conditions set out in Article 82 if the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants.

### **Rule 32**

1. The Secretary-General shall submit the preliminary draft estimates of the Committee's revenue and expenditure for the following financial year to the Bureau. The Bureau shall submit this draft to the Plenary Assembly.

The Plenary Assembly shall adopt the draft estimates of the Committee's revenue and expenditure and forward them to the Commission and, for information, to the Council and the Parliament in good time to ensure that the deadlines laid down in the financial provisions are met.

2. The Committee's budget shall be implemented in accordance with the Financial Regulation.

## **Title II**

### **Procedures within the constituent bodies of the Committee**

## **Chapter 8**

### **The work of the Commissions**

#### **Rule 33**

The Commissions shall be set a time limit for producing a draft opinion.

#### **Rule 34**

1. The dates of meetings and their agendas shall be set by the Chairman of each Commission acting in agreement with the Vice-Chairmen.

2. A Commission shall be convened by its Chairman or at the request of one quarter of its members.

#### **Rule 35**

1. A quorum shall exist in Commissions if more than one half of their members are present.

2. Each member of a Commission shall have a vote. Decisions shall be taken by a majority of the votes cast.

#### **Rule 36**

1. The proceedings of the Plenary Assembly shall be open to the public, unless the Assembly decides otherwise.

2. Each Commission Chairman shall propose, depending on the agenda for the meeting, that it be open to the public or otherwise.

#### **Rule 37**

In specific cases and with the agreement of the Bureau, a Commission may hold a public hearing or invite outside speakers by virtue of their expertise with regard to one or more items on the agenda.

#### **Rule 38**

Representatives of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission may attend the deliberations of the Commissions and reply to questions from their members.

#### **Rule 39**

Each Commission, acting on a proposal from its Chairman, shall appoint a Rapporteur for each draft opinion. Where the urgency procedure is invoked, the Committee may appoint a Rapporteur-General; furthermore, an opinion which has been adopted unanimously by a Commission may be adopted without debate at the plenary session.

#### **Rule 40**

The General Secretariat shall draw up the minutes of the deliberations of the Committee's constituent bodies.

#### **Rule 41**

The Committee's opinions shall be published in *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

## **Chapter 9**



## **Cooperation with other Institutions**

### **Rule 42**

The Committee's opinions shall be sent to the Council and the Commission.

## **Chapter 10 Other provisions**

### **Rule 43**

1. The Plenary Assembly shall decide by a majority of its members if there is a need to amend these Rules of Procedure, either in part or in full.
2. It shall appoint an *ad hoc* commission to draw up a report and a draft text as a basis for the adoption of new rules by a majority of its members.
3. After approval by the Council acting unanimously, the new rules come into force on the day after their publication in the Official Journal.

### **Rule 44**

These Rules of Procedure shall enter into force the day after their publication in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.