

Rules of Procedure of the Nordic Council (Helsinki, 22 February 1957)

Caption: On 22 February 1957, in Helsinki, the Nordic Council adopts its Rules of Procedure.

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Rules of Procedure for the Nordic Council

(as adopted by the Council February 22, 1957)

Article 1

Ordinary sessions and extraordinary sessions to be convened by resolution by the Council shall begin at such time as shall have been decided by the Council in pursuance of Article 4 of the Statute of the Nordic Council. The Council may, however, leave it to the Praesidium to fix the time for the opening of a session. In special circumstances, the Praesidium may, with the consent of all the delegations, fix a time and a place for the session which is different from that which the Council has fixed.

If at least two Governments or at least 25 elected delegates desire an extraordinary session to be convened, they shall submit a written request to that effect to the Praesidium. Unless the Council has decided otherwise, the extraordinary session shall be held in such place and begin at such time as the Praesidium may fix, if possible in consultation with the delegations.

The Praesidium shall see that the Governments and elected delegates and their deputies are advised of the time and place for a session three months before it begins. In special circumstances, notices convening extraordinary sessions may be sent out later.

Sessions will terminate when items included in the list referred to in Article 9 have been finally decided or deferred to a later session.

Article 2

The matters referred to in Article 9 of the Statute may be submitted to the Council by an elected delegate as a delegate proposal, by a Government as a Government proposal, by a notice of the type referred to in Article 11 of the Statute, or by a report on Scandinavian co-operation. Such communications shall be submitted through the country's secretariat.

A deputy delegate to the Council may, together with an elected delegate, submit a delegate proposal.

A delegate proposal or a Government proposal shall contain a proposal for a Council decision. A Government proposal may, however, merely contain a request for a statement,

Article 3

A Government proposal or a delegate proposal must be submitted to a secretariat not later than two months before an ordinary session begins in order to be eligible for consideration by that session. In special cases the Praesidium may reduce this period to one month, provided that this does not materially impair a necessary study. The notices and reports referred to in Article 2 shall be submitted to a secretariat not later than one month before the session begins. Government proposals and delegate proposals, together with such studies as the Praesidium may have found necessary as well as notices and reports, shall be forwarded to the Governments, delegates and deputy delegates as soon as possible and not later than three weeks before the session begins.

If the Council decides to hold an extraordinary session, a time limit shall also be fixed for raising any matter for consideration by that session. The Council may decide that only certain matters shall be considered by an extraordinary session.

Extraordinary sessions held in pursuance of Article 1, para 2, shall only deal with such matters as the Council has been convened to consider. All documents shall be circulated as soon as possible.

Regardless of the provisions of this Article, the Council may decide, by a majority of two thirds, to admit a matter for consideration.

Article 4

In deferred matters or in matters which have been brought before the Council in accordance with Article 3 by a Government proposal or a delegate proposal before the beginning of a session, a Government or a delegate may submit written proposals (proposals for amendment) up to the time when the matter is referred to a committee. In connection with a notice or a report, proposals (supplementary proposals) may be submitted in the same way, not later than seven days before a session begins. Rules governing the possibility of submitting proposals at a later stage will be found in Article 15.

Article 5

If a Government proposal or a delegate proposal or an amendment or a supplementary proposal is revoked, a delegate may, at the meeting in which the revocation is announced, adopt such proposal for consideration.

Article 6

On the basis of notices to the secretariats, which should be sent in not later than one week before the beginning of each session, a list of delegates shall be prepared for the session. The list of delegates shall be approved at the first meeting of the session. Should the need arise, the list shall be amended.

The list of delegates will be arranged alphabetically, Government representatives being listed first, followed by elected delegates. The delegates will take their seats in the meeting hall in that order.

Article 7

The President and Vice Presidents shall be elected at the first meeting of each session; in these elections, provision must be made for each country and for different political opinions to be represented in the Praesidium. Pending such election, the previous President shall preside over the deliberations.

Any person who presides over, or has previously presided over a debate on a matter, may take part in the decision, but not in the debate.

Article 8

The secretary of a session shall be the secretary of the delegation in whose country the session is held. Such additional personnel as the Praesidium may order shall assist in the execution of the secretarial duties.

Article 9

An agenda shall be adopted at the first meeting of a session. The agenda shall include matters raised in pursuance of Article 3 or deferred for the session; the Council may, however, omit notices when it finds that they do not require consideration by the session. Any matters admitted later shall likewise be included in the agenda.

Article 10

At the first meeting of a session the Council shall decide what standing committees shall be set up and appoint members for such committees. In such elections diversified representation on each standing committee shall be aimed at.

Each standing committee shall elect from among its members a Chairman and a Vice Chairman.

Article 11

Council meetings shall be held at such time as the Council or the Praesidium may decide.

Having regard to Council decisions, if any, on the consideration of matters, the President shall prepare an agenda for each meeting. However, the former Praesidium shall decide the agenda for the first meeting of a session. Questions concerning the Standing Orders for the current session may be raised without having been included in the agenda.

Meetings must be convened by announcements in the premises of the Council not later than at 4.p.m. on the day before the meeting or convened at a meeting not later than that day; in urgent cases meetings may be convened by personal communications to all delegates.

Article 12

The Council shall refer the matters included in the agenda to standing committees as soon as possible. Before a matter is referred to a standing committee, the Council delegates are entitled to comment on it. Subject, however, to unanimous decision by the Council, a matter may be decided without having been referred to a standing committee.

A matter which has been considered by a standing committee shall not be taken up for decision until the second day after the committee's report has been received by the Council. The Council may, however, decide that the matter shall be considered sooner.

The matter shall be decided upon the meeting for which the standing committee's report has been placed on the agenda, unless the Council decides to postpone it for a later meeting or a later session.

Questions which only concern the Council's activities may be decided upon without having been referred to a standing committee.

Article 13

To such extent as a standing committee may find necessary, it may elect a member to be its spokesman on any matter referred to it. A minority of a standing committee may also elect a spokesman.

A standing committee may invite an outside Council delegate and a Government representative who is not a delegate to the Council to take part in the committee's deliberations without, however, having any right to vote. The committee may also otherwise invite persons outside the Council to give information or make statements to it.

A member of a standing committee who is precluded by Article 10, para 2, of the Statute from taking part in the decision of a matter cannot take part in committee decisions either.

In the event of a tie in a standing committee, the Chairman shall have the casting vote. Any member of a standing committee is entitled to submit a proposal which dissents from that submitted by the committee.

Reports from a standing committee, accompanied by reservations (dissenting proposals), shall be submitted to the Council in writing.

Article 14

In the course of the Council's deliberations members will be permitted to speak in the order in which they have asked for the floor. The President may deviate from this order, subject to the approval of the Council.

On the President's proposal the Council may restrict speakers to limited periods in a debate. On the President's proposal, or on the proposal of five elected Council delegates, the Council may decide, by a majority of two thirds, to close the debate on a matter.

The proposals referred to in para 2 cannot be discussed.

Article 15

A recommendation on any matter included in the agenda may be debated within the framework of a Government proposal, a delegate proposal, an amendment, or a supplementary proposal, or otherwise in conformity with proposals which the Council has agreed to admit for consideration. Such agreement is also required when, in the course of a Council debate, a member submits a proposal for a recommendation which does not arise out of the report submitted by the standing committee.

Decisions on recommendations shall be taken by roll call according to the list of delegates. The delegates shall answer: "yes" or "no" or "abstain". Recommendations will be adopted when more delegates have voted for the proposal than against it.

If several incompatible proposals for a recommendation on a matter have been submitted, the President shall decide the sequence in which votes shall be taken. The President shall announce this sequence to the Council before the debate, if possible, and latest before the voting begins.

Article 16

In elections, voting shall be by closed voting slips if one elected delegate so desires. In the event of a tie, lots shall be drawn. The working committees of the delegations referred to in Article 25 shall submit proposals for elections held in pursuance of Article 7 and Article 10, para 1.

Article 17

In cases other than those referred to in Article 15 or 16, decisions shall be taken by open vote if more than one proposal has been submitted or if one elected delegate so desires. If for special reasons the Praesidium finds that a decision is not required, the President may omit taking a vote on the question under consideration.

An open vote is taken by the delegates rising from their seats. The vote shall show how many of the delegates present have voted either "yes" or "no" or have abstained. In the event of a tie, the President has the casting vote. If more than one vote has to be taken, the provisions of Article 15, para 3, shall apply.

If one elected delegate so desires, a vote shall be taken by roll call according to the rules of Article 15, para 2, instead of an open vote.

Article 18

The Council and the standing committees form a quorum when at least one half of the elected delegates or members are present. If under Article 10, para 2, of the Statute only members from certain countries take part in the consideration of the matter, the Council and the standing committees form a quorum when at least one half of the delegates or members elected from those countries are present.

Article 19

The secretary shall arrange for minutes to be kept of Council meetings; such minutes shall contain a shorthand report of the deliberations. The minutes shall be approved by the Praesidium.

The secretary shall arrange for the minutes to be printed, except for those parts which refer to meetings to which the general public is not admitted.

Article 20

Recommendations shall be signed by the President and countersigned by the secretary. The result of votes taken on proposals for recommendations shall be communicated to the Governments, whether such proposals have been adopted or rejected.

Article 21

The cost of printing and other common expenses referred to in Article 13 of the Statute shall be apportioned among the countries in proportion to the number of elected delegates of the Council. Each country shall, however, defray the special cost of meetings held in that country.

Article 22

During the periods between sessions the Praesidium shall be responsible for the conduct of the Council's current activities. The Praesidium shall report to each ordinary session on its activities since the last ordinary session.

The Praesidium shall lay down rules for the management of those activities and for the mutual co-operation of the secretariats for which the Praesidium is responsible under Article 8 of the Statute. The direct management of the secretariat of each country shall be undertaken by that country's representative on the Praesidium.

The Presidium may take decisions without holding a meeting, provided that all its members are in agreement.

Article 23

Persons other than delegates and deputy delegates can only be appointed members of a special committee in special cases. A special committee shall report on its activities to ordinary sessions.

Article 24

If a member of the Presidium or of a standing committee becomes temporarily or permanently unable to take part in the work between sessions or ceases to be a delegate to the Council, he shall be replaced by a delegate appointed by the delegation to which he belongs.

Between sessions a member of a special committee or his deputy shall be appointed by the delegation of his country.

Article 25

Each delegation shall elect a working committee which consults with the Praesidium and with the other working committees on questions concerning the Standing Orders for the Council's activities.

Article 26

In special cases, the Council may decide, by a majority of two thirds, to depart from the rules prescribed in the present Rules of Procedure.

The Rules of Procedure have been translated from the Danish text