

## Rules of procedure of the Chamber of Regions (2000)

**Caption:** Rules of procedure of the Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), adopted by the Chamber in 2000.

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## Rules of procedure of the Chamber of Regions (2000)

### A. Functions and membership of the Chamber of Regions

#### Rule 1 – Functions of the Chamber of Regions

1. The Chamber of Regions shall participate in the exercise of its functions entrusted to it by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) in accordance with Article 2 of Statutory Resolution (2000) 1.
2. It represents the interests of the regional authorities in the member States of the Council of Europe.

#### Rule 2 – Composition of the Chamber of Regions

1. The Chamber of Regions shall have the same number of seats as the Congress itself.
2. Each member State shall, when it announces the composition of its delegation to the Congress, name the representatives and substitutes who are members of the Chamber of Regions. Representatives must be from authorities placed between central government and local authorities and enjoying prerogatives either of self-organisation or of a type normally associated with the central authority and having a genuine competence to manage, on their own responsibility and in the interests of their populations, a substantial share of public affairs, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. If a country has authorities which cover a large area and exercise both local and regional responsibilities, representatives of such authorities shall also be entitled to sit in the Chamber of Regions. A list of these authorities shall be provided in the context of the national appointment procedure. Member States which do not have regional authorities within the meaning of this paragraph shall be able to send representatives to the Chamber of Regions and its organs in an advisory capacity <sup>1,2</sup>.
3. The Bureau of the Chamber of Regions shall examine the validity of these nominations and inform the Bureau of the Congress of its conclusions before the opening of each ordinary session as soon as possible.

### B. Structures of the Chamber of Regions

#### Rule 3 – Structures

The structures of the Chamber of Regions shall be the Bureau, the chamber of the Standing Committee, the committees and the *ad hoc* working groups of the Chamber.

##### I. Bureau

#### Rule 4 – Inaugural sitting

1. The Chamber shall elect its new President at the opening sitting of each ordinary session for which national delegations are renewed.
2. Pending the election of the new President, the sitting shall be chaired by the oldest member present (provisional President). In this period, the only debate permitted shall be speeches relating to the election of the President of the Chamber.

#### Rule 5 – Election of the President

1. Each member of the Chamber of Regions having the status of representative may stand for the office of President. The candidature shall be notified in writing to the Secretariat of the Chamber, at the latest three hours before the ballot is scheduled.

2. The President of the Chamber of Regions shall be elected by secret ballot. Two members of the Chamber who are not standing for office of President shall act as tellers, chosen via the drawing of lots from amongst the Chamber members.

3. If no candidate has received an absolute majority of the votes cast by members of the Chamber on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held. The candidate shall be elected who has received the relative majority of votes cast. In the event of a tie, lots shall be drawn.

### **Rule 6 – Election of the Vice-Presidents 3**

1. Following the election of the President, the Chamber shall choose seven Vice-Presidents from among its members, as far as possible ensuring balanced geographical distribution between the member States.

2. Members from the same member State as the President of the Chamber may not stand for the office of Vice-President.

3. Candidatures must be notified in writing to the Secretariat of the Chamber, at the latest three hours before the scheduled opening of the ballot.

4. The election of the Vice-Presidents shall be conducted by means of a single, secret ballot. The seven candidates shall be declared elected who obtain the largest number of votes. Should two or more of these seven candidates belong to the same national delegation, the candidate who has obtained the most votes shall be declared a Vice-President. The other candidate or candidates from this national delegation shall no longer be considered when determining the candidates who have obtained the most votes. In the event of a tie lots shall be drawn.

5. The Vice-Presidents shall take precedence in accordance with the number of votes cast for each candidate even if there have been only seven candidates. In the event of a tie lots shall be drawn.

### **Rule 7 – Membership and term of office**

1. The President and the Vice-Presidents shall constitute the Bureau of the Chamber of Regions. The President shall represent the Chamber of Regions in dealings with other institutions and organisations. He may delegate individual functions to a Vice-President of his choice.

2. The President and the Vice-Presidents shall exercise their offices for the duration of two ordinary sessions, i.e. until the opening of the next ordinary session for which national delegations are renewed.

3. If the President of the Chamber declares that he is permanently unable to carry out his duties or ceases to be a member of the Chamber of Regions, the first Vice-President of the Chamber shall exercise his functions until the opening of the next ordinary session. If national delegations are not renewed for this ordinary session, a new President shall be elected in the manner described in Rule 5. He shall exercise his functions until the opening of the next ordinary session for which national delegations are renewed.

4. Paragraph 3 of this Rule shall apply *mutatis mutandis* when one of the Vice-Presidents declares that he is permanently unable to carry out his duties or ceases to be a member of the Chamber of Regions.

5. Paragraph 3 shall also apply in case a new election becomes necessary following Rule 13 (2) of the Rules of procedure of the CLRAE.

### **Rule 8 – Functions and organisation of meetings**

1. The Bureau of the Chamber of Regions shall be responsible for the preparation of sessions. In addition, it shall carry out all functions assigned to it by these Rules of procedure, the chamber of the Standing

Committee or the Chamber itself.

2. The Bureau of the Chamber of Regions may meet only during the meetings of the Bureau of the Congress<sup>4</sup>.

## II. Chamber of the Standing Committee

### **Rule 9 – Membership**

1. The members of the Standing Committee of the CLRAE who belong to the Chamber of Regions shall form the chamber of Regions of the Standing Committee of the CLRAE, hereinafter referred to as “chamber of the Standing Committee”.

2. The President of the Chamber of Regions shall chair the chamber of the Standing Committee.

### **Rule 10 – Functions and organisation of meetings**

1. The chamber of the Standing Committee shall be responsible for ensuring the continuity of the work of the Chamber of Regions and for acting on its behalf between sessions.

2. In addition, the chamber of the Standing Committee shall exercise all functions assigned to it, in compliance with these Rules of procedure, by the Chamber of Regions or by the Bureau of the Chamber of Regions.

3. The chamber of the Standing Committee may meet only during the meetings of the Standing Committee of the Congress<sup>4</sup>.

## III. Committees of the Chamber of Regions

### **Rule 11 – Committees of the Chamber of Regions**

The Rules of procedure of the Congress on statutory Committees shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the committees of the Chamber of Regions, unless provided otherwise by the present Rules of procedure.

## IV. *Ad Hoc* working groups

### **Rule 12 – Setting up**

1. The Bureau of the Chamber of Regions may exceptionally set up *ad hoc* working groups to deal with matters that, in the opinion of the Bureau of the Congress, fall exclusively within the competence of the Chamber of Regions.

2. The terms of reference of an *ad hoc* working group are, in particular:

a. the preparation of reports,

b. the organisation of conferences,

c. follow-up to co-operation projects or to specific intergovernmental activities of the Council of Europe.

**Rule 13 – Membership**

1. An *ad hoc* working group shall consist of a maximum of eleven full members and an equal number of alternates. Full members and alternates must be members of the Chamber.
2. The Bureau shall nominate members on the basis of proposals made by the national delegations represented in the Chamber. In nominating the members of a working group the Bureau shall take account, in addition to the candidates' experience and knowledge of the subject at hand, of the requirement that there be a fair geographical distribution of seats among national delegations represented in the Chamber's working groups.
3. A member of a working group who is unable to attend a meeting shall inform the Secretariat so that he or she may be replaced.

**Rule 14 – Length of mandate**

1. A working group shall cease to exist when it has fulfilled its mandate.
2. If a working group has been unable to fulfil its mandate by the next ordinary session for which the national delegations are renewed, or if this mandate entails ongoing activities, the newly elected Bureau may exceptionally set up a new working group with the same mandate in order to continue the work carried out up to that point in time. The nomination of members and alternates for these working groups shall be carried out in accordance with Rule 12 of these Rules of procedure.

**Rule 15 – Chairman and Deputy Chairman**

1. A working group's first meeting shall be chaired by the oldest member present, until a Chairman is elected.
2. The working group shall elect its Chairman and Deputy Chairman. The member obtaining the majority of votes cast shall be declared elected. The election shall take place by a show of hands or, if requested, by secret ballot.
3. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of a working group shall remain in office until the working group has fulfilled its mandate or, at the latest, until the opening of the next ordinary session for which the national delegations are renewed.
4. If the Chairman is unable to attend a meeting of the working group, the Deputy Chairman shall carry out his duties.

**C. National delegations, Observers and Special guests****Rule 16 – National delegations**

The members delegated by a member State to the Chamber of Regions may form that member State's national delegation to the Chamber. Each national delegation shall nominate a spokesman or spokeswoman, who may issue statements to the Chamber and its Bureau on behalf of the delegation.

**Rule 17 – Observers**

1. The associations of local and regional authorities holding observer status with the CLRAE shall have the same status with the Chamber of Regions.
2. Other organisations may apply to the Chamber of Regions for observer status. If an application to this effect is received by the Bureau of the Chamber of Regions one month before the beginning of the next

ordinary session of the Chamber at the latest, the Chamber shall take a decision on the application at the beginning of its session. Otherwise, the chamber of the Standing Committee shall decide on the application and inform the Chamber of its decision at the beginning of its next ordinary session.

3. Rule 8.3 and 8.4 of the Rules of procedure of the Congress shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

### **Rule 18 – Special guests**

Rule 9.2 of the Rules of procedure of the Congress shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

## **D. Procedures in the Chamber of Regions and its structures**

### **I. Chamber of Regions**

#### **Rule 19 – Sessions**

1. The Chamber of Regions shall meet in ordinary session once a year at the Council of Europe's headquarters. This session shall take place immediately before and/or after the session of the CLRAE.

2. The Chamber may address a resolution to the Bureau of the Congress calling upon the latter to propose to the Committee of Ministers that the Chamber of Regions should convene for an additional session. The resolution shall contain both the probable time and place of the additional session and reasons indicating why it is required. The resolution shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

#### **Rule 20 – Session agenda**

The Bureau shall draw up the agenda for each session of the Chamber of Regions, in conformity with Article 9 of the Charter. Proposals of the chamber of the Standing Committee shall be taken into account as far as possible.

#### **Rule 21 – Urgent procedure**

1. The Chamber, its Bureau and its President may ask the CLRAE for urgent procedure.

2. At the request of the chamber of the Standing Committee or of ten members belonging to at least two national delegations, a question may be added to the agenda of the Chamber at its first sitting after the Bureau has given its opinion.

3. A request for urgent procedure shall be tabled two working days before the session at the latest.

4. In connection with a request for urgent procedure the following only shall be heard: a representative of the chamber of Regions of the Standing Committee or of the group of members which tabled the proposal, one speaker "against" and a representative of the Bureau of the Chamber speaking on behalf of the Bureau.

5. The adoption of urgent procedure shall require a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

6. A request for urgent procedure which has been accepted by the Chamber of Regions shall be referred to the competent committee or working group, which shall report back before the end of the session.

#### **Rule 22 – Order of business**

1. For each session, the Bureau shall draw up, in compliance with Article 9 of the Charter of the Congress, a draft order of business indicating during which sitting the questions on the agenda are to be discussed. This draft shall be communicated to the members of the Chamber at least one month before the opening of the

session. If the draft order of business contains reports to be adopted by the tacit adoption procedure, this must be clearly stated.

2. The draft order of business shall be submitted to the Chamber for approval at its first sitting <sup>(5)</sup>.

### **Rule 23 – Agenda of sittings**

At the end of each sitting, the Chamber, acting on a proposal by the Chair, shall fix the date, time and agenda of the next sitting, in compliance with the order of business adopted.

### **Rule 24 – Tabling of motions**

1. Each member of the Chamber of Regions may, during a session of this Chamber, table motions in the form of resolutions calling upon the Chamber of Regions and/or the regional authorities it represents to take action that falls within the competence of the CLRAE. Such motions shall be tabled in writing and be signed by at least ten members of the Chamber of Regions from at least two national delegations. They may contain an explanatory memorandum.

2. The Chairman shall decide whether such motions are in order. Motions which are in order shall be printed and distributed immediately.

3. Motions shall be admitted for further examination by a two-thirds majority of votes cast. For this decision, only one speaker “for” and one speaker “against” may be heard.

4. Motions admitted for further examination shall be transmitted for follow-up to the Bureau of Chamber of Regions, in accordance with Article 9 of the Charter.

### **Rule 25 – Publicity of debates**

1. The sessions of the Chamber of Regions shall be held in public.

2. After each session, a report summarising the debates shall be published in the official languages of the Council of Europe.

### **Rule 26 – Duties of the Chair**

1. The President of the Chamber shall open, suspend and close the sittings of the Chamber while it is in session. He shall guide the debates, ensure observance of the Rules, maintain order, call on speakers, close debates, put questions to the vote and announce the results of votes. He may decide to check whether there is a quorum before proceeding with a vote by roll-call.

2. Whilst in the Chair, the President shall not take part in debates.

3. If the President of the Chamber is absent or temporarily unable to discharge his duties he shall be replaced by one of the Vice-Presidents, whom he shall appoint after consulting the Bureau.

### **Rule 27 – Public order in the meeting room**

Rule 17 of the Rules of procedure of the Congress shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

### **Rule 28 – Debates**

1. If various items on the order of business adopted by the Chamber provide for the application of the tacit adoption procedure, Rule 25 of the Rules of procedure of the Congress shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

2. Unless the Chamber decides otherwise, a debate shall be held on every item on the agenda on the basis of the report submitted by the competent body.

3. Reports shall be circulated to members of the Chamber at least twenty days before the opening of the session at which they are to be discussed with the exception of reports submitted under the urgent procedure laid down in Rule 21 of these Rules of procedure.

#### **Rule 29 – Amendments and sub-amendments**

Rule 26 of the Congress Rules of procedure shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

#### **Rule 30 – Right to speak and procedural motions**

Rule 27, except for paragraph 3 thereof, as well as Rule 28, of the Congress Rules of procedure shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

### II. Structures of the Chamber

#### **Rule 31 – Periodicity of meetings**

1. The structures of the Chamber of Regions shall meet if this is necessary for the proper exercise of their functions and possible given the financial resources available.
2. At the end of each meeting the members of the structure concerned shall determine by a majority of votes cast the time and place of the next meeting.

#### **Rule 32 – Invitations to meetings**

1. The Secretariat shall issue invitations to meetings of the structures of the Chamber, upon proposal by the Chairman of the structure concerned.
2. The invitation shall be transmitted to the members of the structure concerned two weeks before the beginning of the meeting at the latest. The draft agenda and the documents forming the basis of the deliberations shall be appended to the invitation.

#### **Rule 33 – Publicity of meetings**

1. The meetings of the structures of the Chamber of Regions shall take place in camera, unless the majority of the members of the structure concerned take a decision to the contrary in respect of all or part of the meeting.
2. The rights of the organisations granted observer status with the Chamber of Regions, according to Rule 17 of these Rules of procedure, shall not be affected by this provision.

#### **Rule 34 – Duties of the Chair – Public order in the meeting room**

1. Meetings shall be chaired by their respective Chair. Rule 26 of these Rules of procedure shall apply, with the proviso that the Chairman may also speak in the discussion without having to give up the chair.
2. Rule 27 (public order in the meeting room) of these Rules of procedure shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*.

#### **Rule 35 – Hearings**

1. Each structure of the Chamber of Regions may conduct hearings at its meetings.



2. The provisions of Rule 46 of the Rules of procedure of the Congress shall apply to these hearings *mutatis mutandis*.

### **Rule 36 – Advisers**

1. In principle, each member of a structure of the Chamber of Regions may invite not more than one personal adviser to the meetings of the structure. The costs of this adviser's participation shall not be met from the funds available to the Chamber.

2. If a representative or a substitute's motion has been referred to a committee of the Chamber or an *ad hoc* working group of which he or she is not a member, the group may invite the member to participate in its deliberations in an advisory capacity.

### **Rule 37 – Working group reports**

The provisions of Rule 41 of the Rules of procedure of the Congress on reports by the statutory committees shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to reports by the Chamber's *ad hoc* working groups.

## **E. Decisions**

### **Rule 38 – Approval**

1. The Chamber of Regions shall approve the recommendations, opinions and resolutions submitted to it for approval by its committees or its working groups.

2. The chamber of the Standing Committee shall approve the recommendations, opinions and resolutions submitted to it by committees or the *ad hoc* working groups of the Chamber of Regions, in accordance with Rules 11 and 37 of these Rules of procedure.

3. Where a committee of the Chamber or a working group decides to submit one of its reports to the chamber of the Standing Committee, all members of the Chamber should be informed and placed in possession of that report not less than one month before the relevant meeting of the chamber of the Standing Committee. They may submit reasons for the report to be debated in plenary session and any such request shall be granted if submitted by ten members of the Chamber belonging to at least two national delegations and received by the Secretariat a clear week before the meeting of the chamber of the Standing Committee.

4. In case of urgency, the Bureau may take the decisions foreseen in paragraph 3.

### **Rule 39 – Voting procedure**

1. Rule 30 of the Rules of procedure of the Congress applies *mutatis mutandis* to the voting procedure in the Chamber of Regions. However, this is subject to the proviso that a vote by roll call shall be carried out when ten or more members of the Chamber of Regions from at least two national delegations request it.

2. Voting in the structures of the Chamber of Regions shall take place by a show of hands if these Rules of procedure do not contain any provision to the contrary.

3. In general, decisions shall be taken by consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved on the report as a whole, minority opinions have to be recorded in the report.

### **Rule 40 – Quorum**

1. The Chamber of Regions shall be considered to have a quorum unless it has been established – either at the request of ten members belonging to at least two national delegations or as a result of a roll call or secret

ballot – that less than a third of the members are present.

2. A structure of the Chamber of Regions may deliberate and make decisions when one-third of its members are present but it may not vote on a report as a whole unless the majority of its members are present. These provisions shall not apply to committees and to working groups.

3. In the absence of a quorum, the Chairman shall terminate the sitting immediately and announce the date of the next sitting.

#### **Rule 41 – Majorities**

1. Decisions on recommendations and opinions addressed to the Committee of Ministers and/or the Parliamentary Assembly shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

2. Other decisions shall be taken by a majority of the votes cast, provided that no other requirement is laid down in these Rules of procedure.

#### **Rule 42 – Transmission to the Standing Committee**

The recommendations, opinions and resolutions approved by the Chamber of Regions or by the chamber of the Standing Committee shall be transmitted to the Standing Committee of the Congress for adoption, according to Rule 11 of the Charter.

#### **F. Working languages and documents**

##### **Rule 43**

Rules 33, 48, 49, 51, 52 and 53 of the Rules of procedure of the Congress shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

#### **G. Amendments to the Rules of procedure**

##### **Rule 44 – Revision of the Rules of procedure**

Rule 57 of the Rules of procedure of the Congress shall be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*.

#### **Appendix – Practical arrangements for the election of Vice-Presidents of the Chamber**

1. Such elections shall be held in the following places:

- if the Chamber is meeting in the Hemicycle: in the area behind the President's rostrum;
- if the Chamber is meeting in a meeting room in the Palais de l'Europe: at the entrance to the room.

2. A specific time-limit shall be set for these elections, but:

- the meeting shall not be interrupted following the announcement of the start of the voting, after a possible brief presentation of the candidates and the appointment of two tellers by drawing of lots;
- the members of the Chamber shall not be called to vote individually, but rather shall place their ballot papers in the ballot box at any time within the specified time-limit.

3. The register of voters and the ballot box shall be placed on a table in one of the above-designated places; there shall be a second table on which members can fill out their ballot papers.
4. The members of the Chamber shall sign the register of voters in the presence of a member of the Secretariat.
5. In cases of doubt or dispute about a member's entitlement to vote, the matter shall, if necessary, be submitted to the President, who shall take the final decision; no points of order shall be permitted.
6. After verification that a member is entitled to vote, he or she shall be issued with a ballot paper.
7. Voters shall place their ballot papers in the ballot box.
8. On expiry of the specified time-limit, the President shall ask whether any more members wish to vote and, when all the votes have been cast, shall declare the voting closed.
9. Ballot papers shall be counted outside the meeting room directly after the vote, under the supervision of the two tellers assisted by the Secretariat.
10. The result shall be announced by the President, if possible before the close of the sitting or else at the opening of the following sitting.
11. The notices of proceedings shall contain detailed information on the running of the election.

1 This provision does not affect the participation of these representatives as full members of the plenary Congress and its organs.

2 See Article 2.4 of the Charter.

3 See Appendix to these Rules of procedure for procedural details of such elections.

4 See Article 4.2. of Statutory Resolution (2000) 1.

5 See Article 41.7 of the Congress Rules of procedure.