



# **RULES OF PROCEDURE**

**2nd November 2024**



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### **Composition of the Assembly**



# **RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE ASSEMBLY**

## **PART I**

### **Composition, Aims, Membership and Officers of the Assembly**

#### **RULE 1**

##### ***Composition of the Assembly***

1. The Assembly shall be composed of members of parliament from countries which have signed the Helsinki Final Act (1975) and the Charter of Paris (1990) and are participating in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.
2. In accordance with Articles 1 and 13 of the Final Resolution of the Madrid Conference concerning the establishment of the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Assembly shall be composed of parliamentarians as set out in the Appendix to these Rules of Procedure.
3. The composition of the Assembly may be varied by a decision of the Assembly on proposal of the Standing Committee.
4. Each national Delegation should have both genders represented.

#### **RULE 2**

##### ***Responsibilities and Objectives of the Assembly***

The Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE shall:

- (a) assess the implementation of the objectives of the OSCE;
- (b) discuss subjects addressed during meetings of the Ministerial Council and the summits of Heads of State or Government;
- (c) develop and promote mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
- (d) support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in the OSCE participating States;
- (e) contribute to the development of the institutional structures of the OSCE and of relations and co-operation between the existing OSCE institutions.

## **RULE 3**

### ***Membership***

1. Members of the Assembly shall be Members of their National Parliaments.
2. For the purposes of these rules, a Member standing for re-election to a National Parliament will be considered a Member of that Parliament until the election is decided.
3. Following the new composition of a Parliament a Member may continue to be a Member of the Assembly until his or her successor in the delegation has been designated, for a maximum of six months, provided he or she is still a Member of a National Parliament.
4. Members of the Assembly shall be appointed by their National Parliaments. Parliaments may also, in addition to Members as provided by Rule 1, appoint alternate Members whose numbers shall not exceed the number of the Members. An alternate Member may take the place of a Member who is unable to attend a Session or Committee meeting of the Assembly and when the Secretariat has been duly informed of this by the Head of Delegation.
5. The credentials of Members shall be verified on the basis of official documents or communications supplied by their National Parliaments.
6. If the credentials of a Member are challenged, the President shall appoint a Credentials Committee which shall report its recommendations forthwith to the Bureau or the Standing Committee for decision.

## **RULE 4**

### ***Officers of the Assembly***

1. The Officers of the Assembly shall consist of the President, nine Vice-Presidents and the Treasurer.
2. The President for the two forthcoming years shall be elected by the Assembly before the close of the Annual Session.
3. The retiring President shall, ex officio, hold office as President Emeritus until the election of a President subsequent to his or her successor. If a President ceases to be a member of the Assembly or resigns during his or her term of office, the current President Emeritus shall remain in his or her position until a subsequent President completes his or her mandate and consequently takes office as President Emeritus. The Vice-Presidents shall be elected by the Assembly.
4. The Treasurer shall be elected in the same manner.
5. Candidates for the offices of President, Vice-President or Treasurer must be sponsored in writing by twenty-five or more Members and their candidatures verified by the Bureau, prior to submission to the Assembly.
6. The President shall hold office from the close of the Annual Session in which he or she is elected to the close of the second Annual Session following his or her election.
7. The Vice-Presidents shall hold office from the close of the Annual Session in which they are elected to the close of the third Annual Session thereafter, except when they are elected to fill a vacancy of an unexpired term.

8. The Treasurer shall hold office from the close of the Annual Session in which he or she is elected to the close of the second Annual Session thereafter.
9. In considering proposed candidates for the Offices of President, Vice-President and Treasurer, the Assembly shall take account of the national composition of the Assembly.

## **RULE 5**

### *Election of Officers*

1. The President shall be elected by secret ballot and each Member entitled to vote may cast one vote. If, on the first ballot, no candidate has obtained an absolute majority of the votes cast, a second ballot shall be held between the two candidates who obtain the most votes in the first ballot. The candidate who, on the second ballot, obtains the most votes shall be elected. In the event of a tie, the issue shall be decided by lot.
2. The Vice-Presidents shall also be elected by secret ballot. Each Member entitled to vote may cast as many votes as there are positions to be filled. The three candidates who obtain the most votes shall be elected for three years. If there are unexpired terms to be filled the candidates receiving the next highest number of votes shall be elected. In event of a tie the matter shall be decided by lot. If a Vice President ceases to be a member of the Assembly or resigns the resulting vacancy shall be filled at the next Annual Session.
3. The Treasurer shall be elected by secret ballot, in accordance with the procedure provided in paragraph 1 above.
4. Whenever, in an election, the number of candidates is the same or less than the number of positions to be filled, the candidates shall be declared to be elected by acclamation.
5. The Officers shall be elected by those Members present and entitled to vote in accordance with the provisions of Rules 31 to 33 below. All ballot papers bearing the names of persons who have been duly nominated as candidates shall be taken into account for the purpose of calculating the number of votes cast.
6. The President may be elected to the office only once and may not be re-elected. The Vice-Presidents may be re-elected once to the same office. The Treasurer may be re-elected twice to the same office.
7. A Vice-President who has served less than two three-year terms is eligible for re-election.
8. The Vice-President who has obtained the highest number of votes among the Vice-Presidents with greatest length of service, and, at a parity of votes, the eldest of them, may act as President when the latter is unable to exercise his or her functions, until the Assembly elects a successor at the next Annual Session.
9. If, for any reason, the Treasurer is unable to exercise his or her functions during the period of his or her mandate, the President shall act as Treasurer until such a time as a successor shall be elected by the Assembly at its next meeting and he or she shall hold office until the expiry of the mandate in question.

## **RULE 6**

### ***Bureau***

1. The Bureau shall consist of the President, the Vice-Presidents and the Treasurer, the Officers of the three General Committees and the President Emeritus. The President Emeritus shall, ex officio, be a non-voting Member of the Bureau.
2. The Bureau shall meet at the invitation of the President, or at the request of two-thirds of the voting Members of the Bureau. The President shall take the Chair of the Bureau. In the absence of the President, a Vice-President designated by the President shall take the chair and may exercise the same rights. In the absence of such designation, the Chair shall be held by the Vice-President qualified under Rule 5, Paragraph 8.
3. The Bureau shall be responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the Standing Committee are carried out and ensure the efficient operation of the Assembly in between meetings of the Standing Committee, including approval of the annual audited accounts. It shall consider the preparations for the Annual Sessions, Winter and Autumn Meetings and for Extraordinary Sessions.
4. The Bureau shall take decisions by two-thirds majority of the votes cast.
5. Unless the Bureau decides otherwise, its meetings shall be closed to the public.

## **PART II**

### **Duties of the President, Discipline and Order**

#### **RULE 7**

##### ***President***

1. The duties of the President shall be to call and preside over meetings of the Assembly; to guide the debates of the Assembly; to ensure observance of the Rules, maintain order, call on speakers, open and close debates, ascertain whether a quorum exists, put questions to the vote and announce the results of votes; to perform a similar role in relation to the Standing Committee, and the Bureau, to refer business to the appropriate Committees and to act as the highest representative of the Assembly.
2. When chairing the Assembly, the President shall not speak in the debate. If he or she speaks in a debate on a particular subject, the President may not resume the Chair until that debate is over. When the President himself or herself is not in the Chair, he or she shall designate a Vice-President to preside in his or her place until such time as he or she resumes the Chair.
3. The duties of the President shall also include to initiate and undertake contacts and dialogue as well as participate in meetings and fora which would promote the aims and policies of the Assembly. In the performance of these duties the President may appoint, at the appropriate level, others to assist or act on his or her behalf. The President of the Assembly shall take gender balance into account when making such appointments. Such persons will report to the President. The President will report on these activities to the Standing Committee.

#### **RULE 8**

##### ***Vice-Presidents***

When chairing the Assembly, the Vice-President shall perform the same duties as the President. He or she shall also be subject to the restriction in Rule 7(2) above.

## **RULE 9**

### ***Maintenance of Order***

1. The President shall call to order any Member of the Assembly who causes a disturbance during the proceedings.
2. If the offence is repeated, the President shall again call the Member to order and cause the fact to be recorded in the Minutes of Proceedings.
3. In the event of a further offence, the President may, after naming him or her, exclude the offender from the Chamber for the remainder of the sitting.
4. In serious cases the President may propose that the Assembly pass a vote of censure, which shall involve immediate exclusion from the Chamber of a named Member for the remainder of the session. The Member upon whom a vote of censure is proposed shall have the right to be heard.
5. The vote of censure shall be taken without debate by show of hands.
6. Words or expressions whose meaning bears an affront to the dignity of peoples, or which are otherwise contrary to the good conduct of debates or cast aspersions on the honourable behaviour of Members shall not be in order.

## **RULE 10**

### ***Public Order in the Chamber and Galleries***

1. No person shall enter the Chamber for any reason, except Members, Members of the Ministerial Council, Delegation Secretaries and Members of the staff whose duties require their presence there, and invited guests approved by the President.
2. The persons duly invited by the Assembly or the President shall be admitted to the galleries.
3. Members of the Public admitted to the galleries shall remain seated in silence. Any person acting in contravention of this Rule shall be ejected by order of the President.

## **PART III**

### **Sessions and Meetings**

#### **RULE 11**

##### ***Annual Sessions***

1. The Assembly shall meet once a year in an Annual Session for no more than five days during the first ten days of July.
2. The dates, duration and location of the Annual Sessions shall be determined by the Standing Committee and normally brought to the attention of Members six months in advance and, in any case, not less than four months beforehand by the Secretariat.
3. An Annual Session shall consist of meetings of the Standing Committee, General Committees and plenary meetings of the Assembly.
4. The Annual Session shall sit in public unless it otherwise orders.

#### **RULE 12**

##### ***Winter Meetings***

1. The Assembly shall meet once a year in a Winter Meeting for no more than three days during the first two months of the year.
2. Unless the Standing Committee decides otherwise, the Winter Meeting will take place in Vienna.
3. The Winter Meeting shall consist of meetings of the Standing Committee and the General Committees of the Assembly.
4. The Winter Meeting shall sit in public unless the Standing Committee otherwise orders.

## **RULE 13**

### ***Autumn Meetings***

1. The Assembly shall hold its Autumn Meeting once a year for no more than three days.
2. The Autumn Meeting shall consist of meetings of the Standing Committee and Special Conferences.
3. The Autumn Meeting shall take place in one of the OSCE participating or Partner States, as decided by the Standing Committee.
4. The Autumn Meeting shall be open to the public, unless a meeting decides otherwise.

## **RULE 14**

### ***Mediterranean Forum***

The Assembly shall hold a Mediterranean Forum once a year, preferably in conjunction with one of the other statutory meetings of the Assembly.

## **RULE 15**

### ***Extraordinary Sessions***

The Assembly may be convened in Extraordinary Session by the President at the request of two-thirds of the Members of the Standing Committee.

## **RULE 16**

### *Agenda*

1. There shall be an Agenda of the Annual Session, proposed by the President, after consultation with the Bureau, for approval by the Standing Committee. The Assembly may amend the Agenda. National delegations may submit proposals for the general theme of the Annual Session for consideration by the Bureau. The final Agenda shall be adopted by the Assembly. The President shall also propose an Agenda for the Winter Meeting and the Autumn Meeting. The Standing Committee at the Winter Meeting and the Autumn Meeting will approve its agenda on the proposal of the President by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. The General Committees during the Winter Meeting will approve their agendas on the proposal of their Chairs. The Bureau may also propose issues to be included in the agendas of the General Committees. The draft agendas, proposed by the Bureau and the Chairs, will be communicated to the National Delegations normally six weeks before the opening of the Annual Session or the Winter and Autumn Meetings.
2. The Agenda of each Annual Session shall include consideration of the reports of the three General Committees and approval of their draft resolutions.
3. Each substantive Agenda item of the Annual Session shall concern issues relevant to the OSCE Process.
4. The General Rapporteur of each General Committee shall submit to the Annual Session a report on the subject area accompanied by a draft resolution 6 weeks before the Annual Session. The International Secretariat, after having translated the reports and the draft resolutions into all six OSCE languages, shall communicate these documents to all National Delegations for distribution to their Members.
5. The Agendas of each Winter Meeting shall include reports from the Ministerial Council and senior OSCE officials. It will also include an evaluation of the activities of the OSCE. The Winter Meeting may also discuss other issues relevant to the OSCE.
6. The General Committees will not pass political resolutions during the Winter Meetings, but they may propose such resolutions to be passed by the Standing Committee.

## **RULE 17**

### ***Minutes of Proceedings***

The Minutes of Proceedings of the Annual Sessions, Winter Meetings, Extraordinary Sessions, the Standing Committee, the Bureau, and the General Committees, recording attendance and decisions reached, shall be kept by the Secretariat. Upon completion, National Delegations will receive a copy of these minutes.

## **RULE 18**

### ***Reports of Debates***

A summary report of debates in the plenary session, recording subjects addressed and Members participating will be kept by the Secretariat.

## **RULE 19**

### ***Register of Attendance***

Each National Delegation shall submit an official list of its Members to the Secretariat before each Annual Session, Winter Meeting, Autumn Meeting and other meetings.

## **PART IV**

### **Questions, Rules of Debate and Voting**

#### **RULE 20**

##### ***Questions***

1. Members of the Assembly may put questions to the OSCE Ministerial Council or to any other Minister addressing the Assembly.
2. The questions must be signed by a Member, and must be communicated to the President prior to the address, or, at the discretion of the President, taken orally after the address.
3. The President of the Assembly will decide on the orderliness of questions. The President will also determine the order in which questions are called.
4. There will be a time limit of five minutes for the putting and answering of a question.
5. When a question is not reached in the question and answer session, the Secretariat shall make every effort to ensure that a written reply is obtained. The President may decide to distribute the reply to National Delegations.
6. A delegation may submit, through the International Secretariat, one written question a year – of maximum 300 words – to be answered by the Chairman-in-Office within 6 weeks. When a written question stays unanswered, the President of the OSCE PA shall focus the attention of the OSCE Chairmanship upon it and report back to the Assembly at its next meeting.

## **RULE 21**

### ***Supplementary Items***

1. The agenda of the Annual Session may be supplemented by an item or a motion on any matter within the competence of the OSCE, which does not relate directly to subjects proposed by the General Rapporteurs to the three General Committees. Such a supplementary item shall be in the form of a draft resolution with signatures of at least twenty Members representing at least four different countries. In addition, a Member of the Assembly cannot be a co-sponsor of more than four supplementary items. The first signatory of a supplementary item will be its principal sponsor. A supplementary item must be received by the Secretariat after the General Rapporteurs have submitted their reports, but at least 35 days before the opening of the first plenary session. The Standing Committee may place only fifteen supplementary items on the agenda of the Annual Session. The Standing Committee shall decide by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast whether to include a supplementary item on the agenda of the Annual Session, subject to the following provision. If more than fifteen supplementary items receive a two-thirds majority in the Standing Committee, a ballot shall be held to determine which items are placed on the agenda. Each member of the Standing Committee present shall have no more than fifteen votes. The fifteen supplementary items receiving the highest number of votes shall be placed on the agenda of the Annual Session. The Standing Committee shall then decide by a majority of votes cast whether to refer a supplementary item to the competent Committee or to submit it to the plenary. In any discussion under this paragraph, debate shall be limited to one speaker against if any of placing the supplementary item on the agenda of the Annual Session (or of referring the item to the Plenary or to the Competent Committee), and one speaker in favour. Each speaker may speak for no more than two minutes.
2. If more than one supplementary item is presented on the same issue, the President may ask the principal sponsors of the draft resolutions on the same issue to hold consultations in order to present a compromise draft resolution. If such a compromise draft resolution is received at the Secretariat at least fourteen days before the opening of the first plenary session with signatures of the principal sponsors and at least ten signatories of each of the two or more draft resolutions in question, it shall be presented to the Annual Session as a supplementary item, and all of the original draft resolutions on the same issue shall fall. The principal sponsors of the draft resolutions shall be the principal co-sponsors of the compromise draft resolution, listed according to alphabetical order. If there is no agreement on a compromise draft resolution, the original draft resolutions shall proceed to the Standing Committee for decisions whether to include one or more of them on the agenda of the Annual Session, in accordance with Rule 21.1.
3. Supplementary Items which obtain the level of support required by Rule 21.1 and obtain the two-thirds majority support to be placed on the agenda of the Annual Session but which are nonetheless not placed on the agenda following balloting and have no amendments meeting the requirements of Rule 22.1, shall be referred directly to the plenary or competent Committee. The principal sponsor of such an item or in case of absence of the principal sponsor another sponsor may speak for one minute in support, another member may speak for one minute against, and immediately thereafter it shall be put to the vote without further debate. Such items shall not be amendable. If carried the item shall be included in the final document.
4. Supplementary items which have been debated at the previous Annual Session shall not be considered eligible for debate. In special circumstances, where an item is deemed urgent and topical the President in consultation with the Vice Presidents may place it on the agenda of the Annual Session for debate. The President's decision shall be binding upon the Assembly and not debatable.

## **RULE 22**

### *Amendments*

1. Amendments to the draft resolutions presented by the General Rapporteurs or to supplementary items shall be submitted in writing and signed by at least five Members representing at least two participating States. A Member of the Assembly may not sign more than four Amendments to a draft resolution presented by the general Rapporteur or to a supplementary item. Amendments to the draft resolutions prepared by the General Rapporteurs shall be received at the Secretariat with the required signatures at least fourteen days before the opening of the first plenary session. Amendments to supplementary items shall be received at the Secretariat with the required signatures at least seven days before the opening of the first plenary session. The first signatory of an Amendment will be its principal sponsor.
2. The Amendments will be considered in the same Committee in which the resolution, or supplementary item, to which the Amendment relates, is considered. The Chair of the Committee shall decide whether the Amendment is in order. If the Chair decides that the Amendment is not in order because it is not relevant to the Committee's area of competence or is not a compromise amendment in accordance with Rule 23, any sponsor of that Amendment may refer the matter to the President. The President will determine which Committee is competent to deal with the Amendment.
3. Each Amendment may only relate to one paragraph.
4. The Amendments are put to the vote before the text to which they relate and following the order of paragraphs of the said text.
5. If two or more Amendments relate to the same paragraph, they will be voted upon according to the order in which they appear in the initial text starting with entirely suppressive Amendments followed by partially suppressive, modified and additional Amendments.
6. A sponsor of an Amendment or in the absence of a sponsor any Member may move an Amendment.
7. The Chair may group the Amendments for discussion in the order outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this Rule. The sponsors of such Amendments will be called upon in turn to present their respective Amendments.
  - (a) The principal sponsor of an Amendment or in his or her absence another sponsor of the Amendment, may withdraw the Amendment at any time before it is voted upon, provided there are no objections.
8. When Amendments are being considered, unless the Chair decides otherwise, the only Members who may speak shall be the mover of the Amendment, or another Member speaking in its favour, one Member opposed to the Amendment and the General Rapporteur or the Committee Chair. Members shall speak for no more than five minutes.
9. The procedure foreseen for the examination of Amendments by the General Committees is also applicable for the Assembly as far as Amendments to supplementary items submitted directly to the Assembly are concerned.
10. Manuscript or oral amendments may only be considered if there is unanimous agreement by the members of the Committee or plenary present.

## **RULE 23**

### *Compromise Amendments*

1. A compromise amendment may be submitted in writing and signed by at least ten Members, representing at least three participating States, including at least two principal sponsors of amendments already submitted in accordance with Rule 22 on the same issue to the same draft resolution. Any compromise amendment shall be submitted no later than 10 a.m. on the day before the Assembly or relevant Committee starts consideration of amendments.
2. Voting on compromise amendments will take place before voting on amendments, which they intend to replace. If the compromise amendment carries, the original amendments, which were the subject of the compromise, will be dropped.

## **RULE 24**

### *Validation of Signatures*

1. The signatures of Members of the Assembly who signed a supplementary item or an amendment in accordance with the Rules of Procedure are valid provided they register for the Annual Session; the Secretariat shall maintain a list of registered participants subject to approval by the Standing Committee.
2. In the event that a Member of the Assembly who registered for but cannot attend the Annual Session due to unavoidable obligations, his or her signatures shall remain valid provided that the President of the Assembly and the Secretary General are notified in writing by the Head of a Delegation before the Standing Committee meeting.

## **RULE 25**

### *Procedural Motions*

1. At the plenary, Standing Committee or General Committee, if the Chair is willing to accept such a motion, a Member shall have a prior right to speak having made a motion:
  - (a) to postpone the consideration of an item;
  - (b) to remove an item from the agenda;
  - (c) to suspend the sitting;
  - (d) to close the debate.

None of these procedural motions may be moved more than once during the course of a sitting.

2. Any of the above motions, if accepted by the Chair, shall take precedence over the main question, the debate on which shall be suspended while they are being considered.
3. In the debate on the above matters, the following only shall be heard: the proposer of the motion, one speaker against the motion, and the General Rapporteur or the Chair of the General Committee or another competent Committee concerned.

4. A majority of two-thirds of the votes cast is required for the motion under this Rule to be adopted.
5. In addition, a Member shall have a prior right to speak if he or she asks leave to raise a point of order. A point of order must be confined to raising only questions of procedure for a ruling from the Chair. The time limit for points of order shall be one minute.
  - (a) If a Member wishes to challenge a ruling by the Chair, such challenge must be made immediately following the ruling.
6. When a supplementary item in the plenary or competent Committee is postponed to the following year's Annual Session, all amendments, made in accordance with Rule 22, are withdrawn. During the following year's Annual Session the Standing Committee will consider the postponed supplementary item in accordance with the provisions of Rule 21.1. New amendments for the following year's Annual Session may be presented in accordance with Rule 22.

## **RULE 26**

### *Urgency*

1. Questions of urgency may be placed on the agenda of the Assembly at any time on the proposal of the Standing Committee, or in the absence of a meeting of the Standing Committee, on the proposal of the Bureau. Such questions of urgency must be pertinent to the OSCE process and relate to an event which has taken place or come to public knowledge less than twenty-four days before the opening of the first plenary session.
2. Such question of urgency shall be in a form of a draft resolution and it shall be signed by at least twenty-five Members representing at least ten countries. The first signatory of the draft resolution shall be the principal sponsor of the question of urgency.
3. In the event of the Standing Committee or the Bureau deciding not to recommend the inclusion of such an item on the agenda, the proposers shall have the right to appeal in writing to the Assembly, which may decide by a majority of two-thirds of the Members of the Assembly to place the proposal on the agenda.

## **RULE 27**

### *Right to Speak*

1. No Member may speak unless called upon to do so by the President. Members shall speak from their place and shall address the Chair; the President may invite them to come to the rostrum.
2. Except for the Chair and General Rapporteur of the General Committee, Members wishing to speak in a general debate shall enter their names in a register provided for that purpose not later than one hour before the announced time for the opening of the sitting. In all cases, the Chair shall determine the order in which Members shall be called to speak. The Chair may close the list when the number of speakers multiplied by five minutes exceeds the time available for the session. Alternatively, the Chair may reduce the time limit for each speaker to less than five minutes in order to allow more Members to participate in the debate.
3. A speaker may not be interrupted. He or she may, however, with the permission of the Chair, give way during his or her speech to allow another Member to put to him or her a question on a particular point in his or her speech. Interventions under this procedure must be short. Any point of order shall be taken at the end of a speech.
4. If a speaker is irrelevant, the Chair shall call him or her to order. If a speaker has already been called to order twice in the same debate, the Chair may, on the third occasion, forbid him or her to speak during the remainder of the debate on the same subject.
5. Members of the Ministerial Council may speak in debates with the permission of the Chair. General Rapporteurs on a question under discussion shall be allowed to speak whenever they wish. Staff Members or others assisting the National Delegations should not speak at official meetings of the Assembly on behalf of a Member or National Delegation.
6. The Chair may decide to allow a Member to make a personal statement. There shall be no debate on such a statement.

7. Unless the Chair decides to grant additional time, no Member may speak for more than five minutes or for no more than one minute on a point of order.
8. Points of order shall only be raised by Members of the Assembly.

## **RULE 28**

### *Languages of the Assembly*

The official languages of the Assembly are English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish.

## **RULE 29**

### *Interpretation*

1. Speeches delivered in one of the official languages shall be simultaneously interpreted.
2. Speeches may be made in a language other than one of the official languages. In such cases the speaker himself or herself shall be responsible for arranging for simultaneous interpretation into one of the official languages.
3. The provisions of this Rule shall also apply to the Standing Committee and the General Committees.

## **RULE 30**

### *Organisation of Debates*

The President may, at his or her discretion, propose to the Assembly a programme and timetable for a specific debate or time-limits on speeches.

## **RULE 31**

### ***Right to Vote***

1. Each Member has a single vote.
2. Members shall not vote by proxy.
3. A Member who has an unavoidable obligation to leave an Annual Session before the day of the election of a President, Vice-President and a Treasurer has the right to vote earlier provided that he or she has notified in writing the Assembly President accordingly. Early voting shall start only when all candidates have been duly nominated.

## **RULE 32**

### ***Methods of Voting***

1. The Assembly shall vote by show of hands except in cases where a roll-call vote or secret ballot is required. Only affirmative and negative votes shall count in calculating the number of votes cast. The number of abstentions shall be recorded.
2. The Assembly shall vote by roll-call when one third of its membership so requests.
3. The roll shall be called in French alphabetical order. The Chair shall be responsible for the counting of votes and shall announce the result. The Head of each National Delegation or his or her duly appointed deputy shall announce the voting of the Delegation. If a National Delegation's vote is questioned, the Chair shall immediately appoint two tellers, not of that Delegation, to determine the validity of the vote that was announced.
4. In the case of election of officers, voting will take place in accordance with Rule 5 above. Three tellers shall be appointed by the Chair. All duly appointed candidates or those that represent them have the right to monitor voting procedure, the counting of the ballot papers and the tabulation of the votes in all polling places. Only those ballot papers bearing the names of persons who have been duly nominated as candidates shall be taken into account for the purpose of calculating the number of votes cast. The Chair shall announce the result.
5. The Chair may with the consent of the Assembly put paragraphs or resolutions, or a number of paragraphs thereof to the vote en bloc, but any member may request a separate vote on each or a particular paragraph.

## **RULE 33**

### *Majorities*

The majorities required, except as otherwise provided, are the following:

- (a) a majority of the votes cast, meaning more than half of the votes cast;
- (b) in the case of election of officers, as provided in Rule 5.

## **RULE 34**

### *Quorum*

1. Decisions in the Assembly, Standing Committee, General Committee or Bureau can only be taken when a majority of Members are present. The Chair shall determine the presence of a quorum.
2. In the absence of a quorum, the vote shall be postponed. The Standing Committee shall decide whether the business lost through lack of quorum should be put to the vote at the next session of the Assembly.

## **PART V**

### **Committees**

#### **RULE 35**

##### ***Standing Committee***

1. There shall be a Standing Committee consisting of the President of the Assembly, the Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, the Officers of the General Committees and the Heads of National Delegations. Members of the Bureau may not vote unless they are acting in the capacity of the Head of a Delegation.
2. When a Head of Delegation changes between Annual Sessions, the newly appointed Member may sit on the Standing Committee provided that his or her credentials are verified on the basis of official documents or communication supplied by his or her National Parliament.
3. In the absence of the Head of a National Delegation, his or her place may be taken by a duly designated Member of the same Delegation, who shall exercise the full powers of a Member of the Standing Committee.
4. The Standing Committee shall prepare the work of the Assembly in between sessions, having the right to meet between sessions. It shall take such action as it deems necessary for the activities of the Assembly to be carried on during the Assembly's sessions. The Standing Committee may adopt resolutions to be forwarded to the Ministerial Council of the OSCE.
5. The Standing Committee may appoint Ad Hoc Committees for specific purposes, prescribing their term of office, composition and mandate. Gender equality shall be taken into account when appointing Chairs and Members to Ad Hoc Committees.
6. Unless otherwise stipulated in these Rules, decisions in the Standing Committee shall be taken according to the principle of consensus-minus-one until such time as the Ministerial Council of the OSCE shall agree to act by consensus-minus-two, at which time the Standing Committee shall adopt the same rule.
7. The Standing Committee shall sit in public unless it otherwise orders.

## **RULE 36**

### *General Committees*

1. The Assembly shall have at least three General Committees which shall include:
  - (a) The General Committee on Political Affairs and Security;
  - (b) The General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment; and
  - (c) The General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions.
2. Membership of General Committees shall be ratified by the Standing Committee or the Bureau. All Members of the General Committees shall be nominated by the National Delegations ensuring a balanced composition of the General Committees. Members of the Assembly shall be Members of at least one General Committee. In a General Committee each National Delegation will have as many votes as it would be entitled to if the full number of Members to which it is entitled were present. An absent Member's seat in a General Committee may be taken by another Member of the same National Delegation. However, no Member may cast more than one vote at a time.
3. The Bureau of each General Committee shall be composed of a Chair, Vice-Chair, and General Rapporteur. The General Committee Bureau may meet in between sessions of the Assembly.
4. Nominations submitted by Heads of Delegations for membership of the General Committees shall be addressed to the President of the Assembly and shall divide each Delegation by equal numbers to the extent possible among the General Committees.
5. General Committees shall elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a General Rapporteur, who are the Officers of General Committees, at the close of the sitting at each Annual Session for the following year. Candidates shall be sponsored in writing. Unless the General Committee decides otherwise, they shall be nominated before the opening of the last scheduled meeting of the General Committee during the Annual Session. The General Committee Officers shall be elected by a majority of votes cast in a secret ballot. If no candidate has obtained a majority, a second ballot shall be held between the two candidates having obtained the highest number of votes in the first ballot. In the event of a tie, the issue shall be decided by lot. If there is only one candidate nominated for an office the candidate shall be declared elected by acclamation. In the event of a vacancy arising during the course of the year, the President may appoint a substitute.
6. Where a seat on a General Committee is vacant because a Member ceases to be a Member of the Assembly, it may be provisionally occupied by a Member from the National Delegation to which the seat is allotted, the Member being appointed by the Head of that National Delegation.

## **RULE 37**

### *Powers and Duties of Committees*

1. Committees may examine OSCE issues relevant to their area of competence.
2. Committees shall examine all matters referred to them in accordance with Rule 16 above and all proposals and questions submitted to them in pursuance of a decision taken by the Assembly, the Standing Committee, the Bureau or the President.
3. General Committees shall examine the reports submitted by the General Rapporteurs and shall act upon the draft resolutions.

## **RULE 38**

### *Procedure in General Committees*

1. A General Committee shall meet when convened by its Chair during Annual Sessions, Extraordinary Sessions and Winter Meetings.
2. A General Committee may appoint a sub-committee determining its composition and order of reference. The number of Members of a sub-committee may not exceed a third of the Membership of the full Committee.
3. Any two or more General Committees or sub-committees may hold a joint meeting for the examination of subjects coming within their competence.
4. Rules of the Assembly shall apply to General Committees with the following modification:
  - (a) A General Committee shall vote by show of hands, unless ten Members request a vote by roll-call. The roll shall be called in French alphabetical order.
  - (b) A General Committee may deliberate when one-third of its Members are present, but elections or the vote on a resolution as a whole shall not be valid unless the majority of the Members of the Committee are present.
5. The Chair of the General Committee may take part in discussions and may vote, but without having a casting vote.
6. General Committee meetings shall be open unless a General Committee decides otherwise. Members may attend meetings of any General Committee even though they are not Members of it, but they may not vote or take part in its discussions unless the Chair has been officially notified that the Member is in fact replacing a Member of the Committee who is unable to be present.
7. The conditions in which any person who is not a Member may be heard by a General Committee shall be decided by that General Committee. If the General Committee agrees, such a person may take part in the discussions at the discretion of the Chair.
8. Minutes of proceedings of each meeting of a General Committee shall be kept.

## **RULE 39**

### ***Reports of General Committees***

1. The General Committees shall elect a General Rapporteur, who shall be responsible for the preparation of a report for the Committee and for introducing a draft resolution based on the report. The Committee will discuss the report and adopt the resolution for the approval of the Assembly. The final report of a Committee shall comprise a substantive text.
2. Only the substantive text is voted upon by the Assembly. It must be presented in the form of a draft declaration, based upon resolutions adopted by the General Committees.
3. Before the Assembly considers a final text it shall be examined by the Drafting Committee, composed of representatives of the three General Committees appointed by the Committee Chairs and such other members as the President may decide. The President shall appoint the Chair of the Drafting Committee. Should the Drafting Committee find any recommendations forwarded to it to be redundant, repetitive or contradictory, it may alter the text to avoid such redundancies, repetitions, or contradictions.

## **PART VI**

### **Organization of the Assembly**

#### **RULE 40**

##### *Secretariat*

1. The Secretary General shall be elected, on the proposal of the Bureau, by the Standing Committee by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast by secret ballot. The election shall be for five years and may be renewable twice by a majority of the votes cast by secret ballot in the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee may in exceptional circumstances, on the proposal of the Bureau, consider further renewal of the term in office of the Secretary General by a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast by secret ballot. The Standing Committee will set his or her duties, remuneration and conditions of employment consistent with the annual budget.
  - (a) The Bureau shall take steps to ensure that in the interests of transparency before the election or re-election of the Secretary General and the senior appointments referred to in Rule 40.3 the posts shall be advertised outside and within the organisation, and that all applications received are considered by the Bureau before a recommendation to or election by the Standing Committee.
2. In the exercise of his or her duties, the Secretary General shall be responsible to the President and to the Assembly.
3. The Standing Committee shall confirm by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast the senior appointments made by the Secretary General to the two posts of Deputy Secretaries General, one of whom shall be designated as Finance Officer.
4. The Secretary General and the members of the Secretariat shall not engage in any action incompatible with their positions as international civil servants.
5. The Secretariat shall be located in Copenhagen.

## **RULE 41**

### ***Budget and Finance***

1. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer, assisted by the Secretary General, to present to the Standing Committee a draft budget for the following financial year. The financial year of the Assembly shall comprise the period from 1 October until 30 September of the following year.
2. The Treasurer shall circulate the draft annual budget to the Standing Committee after it has been discussed by the Bureau but not later than thirty days before the opening of an Annual Session. The Standing Committee shall approve the annual budget, which shall be made available to the Assembly at its Annual Session.
3. The audited accounts of the Assembly for the preceding financial year shall be presented to the Standing Committee by the Treasurer within six months of the end of that year.
4. In accordance with Article 10 of the Madrid Declaration, as amended by the Committee of Heads of Delegation on 13 January 1992, national contributions to the Budget of the Assembly shall be apportioned according to the formula used to divide the costs of the intergovernmental OSCE.
5. Where the Assembly's accounts show that a participating State has not made its due contribution for a period of 9 months, Members of its delegation shall not be allowed to vote until the contribution has been received.
6. The Treasurer and the Secretary General shall be responsible for the financial administration of the Assembly, having the right to sign on behalf of the Assembly in all financial matters.

## **PART VII**

### **Relations with Outside Bodies and Individuals**

#### **RULE 42**

##### ***Relations between the Assembly and Ministerial Council***

1. Reports of the General Committees and decisions of the Assembly shall be transmitted to the Ministerial Council for their consideration.
2. Any Member of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE shall have right of access to the sessions of the Assembly, to the Winter Meetings, to the Autumn Meetings, to the Standing Committee and to General Committees.
3. Progress reports or requests from the Ministerial Council may be placed on the Assembly's agenda.
4. Members of the Assembly may put written questions to the Chairperson-in-Office, other Members of the Ministerial Council and Heads of the OSCE institutions, at any time. Such questions shall be sent to the President. If the President considers that the question is in conformity with Rule 2 and is not in violation of the principles expressed in Rule 9.6, he or she will forward it to the person in question. The answer, which shall also be communicated to the Member through the President, may be sent, together with the text of the question, to all National Delegations for information at the request of the Member. A Member may not present more than three questions during each year. If the number of questions exceeds the recipient's capability to provide satisfactory answers within a reasonable time, the President will take appropriate measures and inform the Standing Committee about them.

#### **RULE 43**

##### ***Relations between the Assembly and National Parliaments***

Reports of the General Committees and decisions of the Assembly shall be transmitted to the National Parliaments of participating States by the Secretariat

## **RULE 44**

### *Secretaries of Delegations*

Delegations, observer delegations and Partners for Co-operation delegations may appoint delegation secretaries and if necessary members of the staff who shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Assembly and its Committees and shall have access to the Assembly chamber and to the Committee meeting rooms.

## **RULE 45**

### *Observers*

1. Provided notification has been given to the Secretariat, representatives of the following organizations may be admitted as observers: the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; the NATO Parliamentary Assembly; the Inter-Parliamentary Union; the European Parliament, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS; and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC).
2. Parliaments of the States which are Partners for Co-operation of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe may also be admitted as observers.
3. The names of observers under paragraph 1 of this Rule shall be notified to the Secretariat by the parliamentary bodies to which they belong.
4. Other persons may be admitted as observers subject to the discretion of the President or the Standing Committee.
5. Observers may sit in the Assembly without the right to speak unless invited to do so by the President.

## **PART VIII**

### **Rules of Procedure**

#### **RULE 46**

##### ***Amendment of Rules of Procedure***

1. The President may appoint a sub-committee to examine the Rules of Procedure and make recommendations to the Standing Committee.
2. When a Member of the Assembly submits amendments to the Rules of Procedure these amendments shall be submitted in writing and signed by at least eleven Members from at least three countries.
3. When the Standing Committee has amended the Rules of Procedure, its decision shall be reported to the Assembly. National Delegations shall be informed about this decision as soon as possible by the Secretary General. The decision by the Standing Committee to amend the Rules of Procedure shall come into force 30 days after its approval by the Standing Committee.

## APPENDIX

### Composition of the Assembly

**The numbers of Members representing each country shall be as follows:**

	COUNTRIES	SEATS	TOTAL
<b>A</b>	United States of America	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>B</b>	Russian Federation	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>C</b>	Germany, France, Italy and United Kingdom	<b>13</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>D</b>	Canada and Spain	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>E</b>	Belgium, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Türkiye and Ukraine	<b>8</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>F</b>	Romania	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>G</b>	Austria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland and Uzbekistan	<b>6</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>H</b>	Bulgaria and Luxembourg	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>I</b>	Serbia and Slovakia	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>J</b>	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Iceland, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan	<b>3</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>K</b>	Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS</b>		<b>323</b>

**The Holy See may send two representatives to the Assembly's meetings as guests of honour.**