

Rules of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments¹

[Madrid 27 November 2021]

Aims

Rule 1

The Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments is a consultative organism of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in accordance with Section VIII, Article 29 of the Statutes of the Union. It aims:

- to facilitate personal contacts between its members;
- in conjunction with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to co-operate with those Parliaments which request legal and technical assistance and support;
- to study the law, practice and procedure of Parliaments;
- to propose measures for improving the working methods of different Parliaments;
- to secure co-operation between the services of different Parliaments.

Rule 2

Each member of the Association shall furnish information about the law, practice, procedure, working methods and organisation of their own Parliament and the administration of parliamentary services, for any inquiry by the Association or at the request of any other member.

Organs (new)

Article 2^{bis}

The organs are the Association, the Executive Committee and the Bureau.

Composition

Rule 3

(1) The Association shall consist of Secretaries General and Deputy Secretaries General of national Parliaments, whether or not such Parliaments are affiliated to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and of any other Parliaments or Assemblies that are affiliated to the Inter-Parliamentary Union as full members.

(2) Secretaries General and Deputy Secretaries General of international parliamentary assemblies may be admitted as associate members.

(3) Where a Secretary General or Deputy Secretary General is unable to take part directly and personally in the work of the Association, the Association may admit as a member a high officer of that Assembly who will act under the authority of the Secretary General.

Rule 4

A Secretary General of a parliamentary assembly is a person who is in charge of parliamentary services.

¹ In the present rules, the terms “member, secretary general, observer, Vice-President, secretary” are gender neutral.

Rule 5

(1) The Association shall decide upon applications for membership on a report from the Executive Committee.

(2) The procedure set out in 5(1) will apply to suspension of members.

Rule 6

(1) If a member is unable to attend a session, meeting or sitting of the Association, he/she may nominate as a substitute another member of his/her parliamentary staff.

(2) Any such nomination shall be communicated to the President of the Association in writing not later than the opening of a sitting to which it applies. It shall remain valid for that session or meeting only.

Rule 7

No Assembly may be represented by more than two members at any one time.

Rule 8

(1) The Association may confer honorary membership upon a former member of the Association who has rendered it important services at the proposal of the Executive Committee, either of its own motion or at the request of any member.

(2) Honorary membership can only be conferred on former members of the Association or former co-secretaries of the Association.

(3) When it is proposed that honorary membership be conferred on a former member of the Association, the Executive Committee will take into consideration:

- Active participation in the activities of the Association, including the preparation of Questionnaires and Reports, moderating general debates, presenting Communications or other presentations;
- Regular attendance at Association meetings and participation in discussion of draft Questionnaires and Reports, general debates, topical discussions or Communications or other presentations;
- Active participation, as an elected Member of the Executive Committee or a joint secretary, in the deliberations of the Bureau or the Committee; or
- Other considerations that the Executive Committee believes form a valid basis for consideration by the Association for the conferral of honorary membership of the Association.

Rule 9

The Association may, taking into account the principles and conditions set out in the Statute of the IPU, at the proposal of the Executive Committee, admit observers by reason of their particular status or technical expertise.

Rule 10

(1) When the affiliation of a Parliament to the Inter-Parliamentary Union has been suspended because it is in arrears in the payment of its contribution to the Union, a member from that Parliament may continue to be a member of the Association.

(2) When the affiliation of a Parliament to the Inter-Parliamentary Union has been suspended because the Parliament has ceased to function, the Executive Committee shall report to the Association at the earliest opportunity on the eligibility of any member from that Parliament to remain a member of the Association.

SESSIONS

Rule 11

(1) In every year the Association shall meet in session concurrently with the Assemblies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and at the same place.

(2) It may also meet otherwise, concurrently with meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Council of the IPU, and at the same place.

(3) The Association may also hold exceptional meetings in co-operation with the IPU.

Rule 11^{bis}

(1) Meetings and exceptional meetings as defined in 11(2) and 11(3) may take place in hybrid format (where participation at the meeting is both physical and virtual) or through exclusively electronic means without holding a physical meeting.

(2) The Executive Committee will determine the form and conditions for holding hybrid or virtual meetings. They will take into account organisational and technical constraints.

Rule 12

The President shall convene each session or meeting of the Association in a circular which shall set out the draft Agenda for the session or meeting. The draft Agenda shall set out the order and timing of contributions and other matters.

Rule 13

A representative of the Union shall be heard if he/she so wishes at full sessions and other meetings of the Association.

Executive Committee and Bureau

Rule 14

(1) The Executive Committee shall consist of:

- eleven elected members: the President of the Association, the two Vice-Presidents and eight other members who shall be elected by the Association.

(2) All the elected members of the Executive Committee must belong to different Parliaments.

(3) The Executive Committee is composed of men and women, if possible, gender balanced.

(4) Regard shall be given, as much as is possible, to different official languages and geopolitical groups.

Rule 15

The Bureau shall consist of the President, of the Vice-Presidents, and two joint secretaries who shall be appointed by the President.

Rule 16

(1) When Rule 10(2) applies, a member from that Parliament cannot be a candidate for election to any post on the Executive Committee.

(2) If at the time of the suspension a member from that Parliament is a member of the Executive Committee, his membership of the Executive Committee shall cease forthwith and the post become vacant.

Rule 17

(1) Any elected member of the Executive Committee, who is not present at any meetings of the Executive Committee, during two successive sessions of the Association under Rule 11(1) will be considered to have vacated his/her seat from the start of the next session or meeting unless the Executive Committee decides otherwise. A list of those attending shall be prepared at each sitting of the Executive Committee.

(2) The President shall remind in writing any elected member of the Executive Committee who is not present at any meetings of the Executive Committee during a session of the Association under Rule 11(1) of the provisions of paragraph (1) of this Rule, unless the President has received apologies from the elected member and these apologies have been accepted by the Executive Committee. Where apologies have been received and accepted, the relevant session of the Association shall not be counted for the purposes of paragraph 17(1).

Rule 18

(1) Candidates for election to the Executive Committee must be nominated in writing in a set form by a time to be laid down by the Executive Committee. Such nominations must be accompanied by a formal acceptance by the candidate.

(2) Members under the provisions of rule 3(3), associate members and observers shall not stand for election.

(3) No member shall be a candidate for election to an office which they have occupied at any time during the preceding two years, or for election as President if they have ever previously served as President.

(4) No member shall be a candidate for election as President if another member from the same nation has served as President at any time during the preceding five years.

(5) No member shall be a candidate for election as Vice-President if another member from the same nation has served as President or Vice-President at any time during the preceding two years.

(6) No member shall be a candidate for election as ordinary member if other members from the same nation have served as elected members of any category for six or more of the preceding eight years.

(7) The members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for a period of three years or six consecutive sessions under the terms of 11(1).

(8) Elections will take place at the sessions held under 11(1).

(9) At the opening of a session, the Association shall decide on a report from the Executive Committee upon the number and timing of elections to be held at that session, including any consequential elections that may be anticipated. Elections may stand postponed to a future session.

(10) No more than two members of the bureau shall be elected at a single session.

(11) Terms of office shall take effect from the day after the close of the session at which elections take place and shall terminate at the close of the session at which new elections take place.

Rule 19

(1) If a vacancy occurs during the term of office of a member of the Executive Committee, an election to fill the vacancy for a new full term of office shall be held.

(2) If the President is absent or a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the duties of President shall be carried out temporarily by the earlier elected Vice-President. Otherwise, the duties will be carried out by one of the other members of the Executive Committee, chosen on the same basis. In case of equality of seniority of election, the oldest member will take precedence.

Rule 20

Each elected member of the Executive Committee shall have a vote. If the votes are equal, the President shall have a second, casting vote.

Rule 21

The Executive Committee shall:

(a) initiate subjects of study, consider proposals for Questionnaires and draft Questionnaires and appoint Rapporteurs;

(b) decide about specific topics to be presented and discussed in the course of the forthcoming sessions or meetings;

(c) propose the agenda for sessions or other meetings of the Association;

(d) take any necessary steps to ensure the execution of the Association's decisions;

(e) approve the draft annual budget for the forthcoming year and present it to the Association for its endorsement; and take note of the audited accounts for the previous year;

(f) decide the place and date of exceptional meetings referred to in 11(3);

(g) consider and submit to the Association proposals to amend the Rules of the Association;

(h) propose arrangements for the holding of elections in accordance with; and

(i) report on issues relating to membership of the Association in accordance with Rules 5, 8 and 10.

Rule 22

(1) The Executive Committee shall meet on being convened by the President. The Committee shall meet at least twice at the time of each session of the Association.

(2) The Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union or his representative may be heard at meetings of the Executive Committee at his request.

(3) The Executive Committee may also sit and make decisions using electronic means of communication.

Decisions and methods of voting of the Association

Rule 23

Only decisions taken at a session or other meeting of the Association shall bind the Association. Apart from in exceptional circumstances the Association shall not adopt a Report and authorise its publication until after it has been considered at least one session.

Rule 24

(1) Observers and Associate Members shall not take part in votes or in elections.

(2) Observers may speak only with the permission of the President.

Rule 25

The majority required to adopt any proposal submitted to the Association shall be a majority of votes cast.

Rule 26

The President shall have a vote but no casting vote. If the votes are equal, the proposal shall not be carried.

Minutes and publications

Rule 27

The minutes of sessions of the Association shall be kept in the official languages of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and made available to members of the Association by the Joint Secretaries.

Rule 28

(1) The Association shall be responsible for the publication and distribution, on its website, of the Review "Constitutional and Parliamentary Information" in the official languages of the IPU.

(2) The following shall be published in "Constitutional and Parliamentary Information":

- the consolidated text of the Rules of the Association when amendments to the Rules of the Association have been adopted by the Association
- the consolidated text of the Working Methods when changes to the Working Methods have been adopted by the Association
- Reports adopted by the Association
- the minutes of meetings of the Association held under 11(1)
- Communications and contributions presented at meetings, where these have been provided in the two official languages of the IPU;

As well as, on the decision of the President, whether or not following a proposal from a member:

- new or revised Constitutions

- other constitutional or parliamentary information of interest to members of the Association.

(3) The Association shall also ensure the distribution and publication of information on its Internet site.

Languages

Rule 29

(1) The languages used at meetings of the Association or the Executive Committee shall be the official languages of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, English and French.

(2) All Questionnaires, Reports and other documents of the Association shall be drawn up in the official languages of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

(3) If a member cannot use one of these languages, he/she may use an interpreter at his/her own cost who shall interpret into one of the official languages.

Budget

Rule 30

(1) The President shall submit to the Executive Committee of the Association the draft budget for the forthcoming year which he/she has prepared in consultation with the Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and after having been heard by the Executive Committee of the Union, if the budget estimates of the Association do not correspond to those proposed by the Secretary General of the Union.

(2) The budget shall be submitted for ratification at the earliest opportunity.

(3) Each Chamber represented in the Association shall contribute annually to the budget of the Association a sum to be fixed by the Association.

(4) Observers and Associate Members shall pay a contribution equal to half of the least expensive category of subscription of members.

(5) Any member of the Association in arrears in the payment of subscriptions a) shall have no vote in the Association, and b) will forfeit rights to membership of and

election to the Executive Committee, if the amount of arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due for the preceding two full years.

(6) When a member or associate member of the Association is three years in arrears in the payment of subscriptions, the Executive Committee shall take a decision on the suspension of the affiliation of that member or associate member to the Association.

(7) The Executive Committee may decide to waive the application of rules 30(5) and 30(6) if it is satisfied that the failure to pay subscriptions is due to conditions beyond the control of the member of the Association.

Amendments of the Rules of the Association

Rule 31

(1) Any member may propose an amendment to the Rules of the Association. A proposal to amend the Rules of the Association shall be considered by the Executive Committee before being submitted to a vote by the Association.

(2) The members of the Association may be informed by the President of any proposals to amend the rules which are sent to the Executive Committee before such proposals are discussed by the Executive Committee.