

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

4 December 2021

Rule 1

Nature and objectives

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean ('PA UfM') is the parliamentary institution of the Barcelona process with consultative power and based on the Barcelona Declaration. It contributes to enhancing the visibility and transparency of the process and, consequently, bringing the Euro-Mediterranean partnership closer to the interests and expectations of the public.

2. The purpose of the Assembly shall be to bring parliamentary support, impetus and influence to the consolidation and development of the Barcelona process. It shall debate in public issues arising from the Barcelona process, in particular, and all matters of common interest that are of concern to the member countries.

3. Membership of the Assembly is voluntary, and the Assembly will maintain an open-minded approach to participation in its work. The seats which will possibly not be occupied remain at the disposal of the parliaments to which they have been allocated.

Rule 2

Composition

1. The members of the Assembly are parliamentarians appointed by the parliaments of the partner countries participating in the Barcelona process and the European Parliament.

2. The Assembly shall consist of 280 members, 132 EU members (81 members of the 27 EU national parliaments, on the basis of equal representation of 3 members per EU national parliament and 51 members of the European Parliament), 8 members from the parliaments of the European Mediterranean partner countries (2 members for each of the delegations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Monaco, and Montenegro), 130 members of the parliaments of the ten founding Mediterranean partners, on the basis of equal representation, and 10 members from the Mauritanian Parliament.

   Delegates shall be appointed, where possible, for a minimum period of one year.

3. The Assembly shall be composed of delegations from each national parliament and the European Parliament.

4. The member parliaments shall undertake to ensure that women parliamentarians are represented in their delegations, in accordance with the legal provisions of each country and shall promote gender balance in the appointments to the Assembly and its bodies.

Rule 3

Competences

1. The Assembly may adopt positions on all aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. It shall monitor the application of Euro-Mediterranean association agreements and adopt resolutions or make recommendations to the Ministerial Conference with a view to achieving the objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. When asked to do so by the Ministerial Conference, it shall issue opinions proposing, where appropriate, the adoption of relevant measures for each of the three aspects of the Barcelona process.

2. The deliberations of the Assembly shall not be legally binding.

3. On a proposal from the Bureau or the enlarged Bureau, the Assembly may decide to send ad-hoc delegations for a field mission; it is the Bureau that shall determine the setting-up, composition, mandate, and reporting obligations of such delegation.

4. The Assembly shall adopt a financial regulation laying down the basic rules governing the establishment and implementation of its operating budget and the fundamental budgetary principles.

5. The Assembly shall examine, at the plenary meeting following the closure of accounts, the reports on budget implementation and shall grant discharge to the Secretary-General and the Accounting Officer in respect of the administration thereof.

Rule 4

Presidency and Bureau

1. The Bureau of the Assembly shall consist of four members, two appointed by the parliaments of the Mediterranean partner countries of the European Union, one appointed by the EU national parliaments and one appointed by the European Parliament.

2. These appointments, including the order of rotation of members, shall be submitted to the Assembly for approval.

3. The term of office of the members of the Bureau shall be four years; this mandate is not renewable and is incompatible with the office of a member of a government. In the event of the resignation or termination of service of one of its members, the replacement shall be appointed for the remainder of the term of office.

4. The Assembly shall be chaired by one of the members of the Bureau, in rotation and on an annual basis, thus ensuring parity and alternate South/North presidencies. The three other members of the Bureau shall be Vice-Presidents.

5. The Bureau shall be responsible for coordinating the work of the Assembly. It is the body responsible to represent the Assembly for matters regarding relations with the other institutions.

6. The Bureau shall meet, on the initiative of the Presidency at least twice a year, with one of these meetings coinciding with the Assembly's plenary session. A quorum of the Bureau shall be attained when at least one member of its North component and one member of its South component are present.

7. The Bureau, following a decision by the Assembly to send an ad-hoc delegation, shall determine the setting-up, composition, mandate, and reporting obligations of such delegation. In urgent cases, the Bureau may take such decision on its own initiative.

8. The Bureau shall adopt the annual draft budget, which shall be submitted by the Secretary General in due course before the beginning of the financial year to which it reffers, following the procedure provided by Rules 9 and 18 of the Financial Regulation and Article 4 of the Statute of the Secretariat.

The draft budget shall have executive effect and it shall be submitted to the Assembly, who shall adopt it definitively at its next plenary meeting, by decision taken in line with the Rule 10.3.

The Assembly may, where necessary, adopt detailed rules for the implementation of the financial regulation referred to in Rule 3.4 and acting on the advice of the Secretary General, may adopt provisions for the enforcement of this Regulation.

Rule 5

Parliamentary committees

1. The Assembly shall be organised in five parliamentary committees which are responsible for monitoring the following aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership:

(a) committee on political affairs, security and human rights;

(b) committee on economic and financial affairs, social affairs and education;

(c) committee on improving quality of life, exchanges between civil societies and culture;

(d) committee on Women's Rights in the Euro Mediterranean Countries;

(e) committee on Energy, Environment and Water.

The Guidelines for the meetings of the parliamentary committees of the PA UfM are defined in Annex 1. The Guidelines are approved by the Bureau and are attached as an annex to the Rules of Procedure.

2. Parliamentary committees shall consist of 56 members, including 28 members from the Mediterranean partner countries of the EU and 28 European members (19 members of the EU national parliaments and 9 members of the European Parliament).

The 27 delegations of the EU national parliaments may express their interest in three

committees. The 4 delegations of non- EU national parliaments may express their interest in 2 committees. Each EU delegation may only send 1 member per committee. The European Parliament shall submit a proposal to the Secretariat for the balanced distribution of its members among the 5 committees. The delegations of the Mediterranean partner countries shall submit to the Secretariat their proposals for the balanced distribution of their members among the 5 committees.

The Secretariat of the Assembly shall endeavor to accommodate the preferences of delegations as far as possible. It shall endeavor to ensure that each EU national delegation is represented in at least one of its committees of choice. As regards members of the European Parliament and of the delegations of Mediterranean partner countries, the Secretariat shall ensure a balanced distribution of the respective delegations among the 5 committees. Members may change committee provided that the balance between the delegations is respected and provided they find a member of the committee in question who wishes to change places. The Secretariat shall be informed thereof.

In order to ensure that all delegations from each of the two components of the Assembly, namely the European component and the Mediterranean partners' component, are represented in a standing committee, delegations may appoint substitute members.

The permanent substitutes, representing absent members, shall be entitled to attend and speak at committee meetings. However, they will be allowed to vote only if full members from the same constituent part are absent, namely the Mediterranean partners' component and, within the EU component, the EU national parliaments and the European Parliament. In case of a substitute voting for a full member of another delegation of the same component, the substituted delegation will have to give its agreement prior to the vote. The number of votes cast from each of these three sides, namely the Mediterranean partners', the EU national parliaments, and the European Parliament, may not exceed the total number of full members of each of them for that respective committee.

3. The Bureau appoints from among the members of each Committee a chairman and three vice-chairmen and the Assembly approves these appointments, considering the criterion laid down in Rule 4.1 and in accordance with the structure adopted by the plenary upon the proposal of the Bureau; their term of office shall, in principle, be four years. The office of committee chairman and vice-chairman shall not be compatible with the office of President of the Assembly.

Committees Chairs may prepare draft recommendations on specific items within the remits of their Committees for adoption by their respective Committees and by the Assembly.

Committees may appoint rapporteurs on specific items. The rapporteurs will report to the committee concerned.

Committees shall examine questions and documents which are referred to them by the Assembly.

4. Committees shall meet, on the initiative of their chairs at least twice a year, with one of these meetings coinciding with the Assembly's plenary session, and in respect of the appropriations entered in the Assembly's annual budget.

5. The committees may meet between sessions of the Assembly.

Provisions of rule(s) 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 and 10.2, 10.3, 10.4 shall apply also to committee meetings.

6. The Assembly may decide to set up ad hoc committees, if necessary. The Bureau of the Assembly shall determine their composition and Presidency, ensuring a balance and parity between the two sides.

Rule 6

Ad-hoc delegations

1. The Bureau shall set up, either following a decision by the Plenary or, in case of urgency, on its own initiative, ad-hoc delegation(s) and decide on the nature, duration, number of members, composition, mandate and reporting obligations of such delegation(s).

2. When taking such decision, the Bureau shall bear in mind and seek to ensure that the principles of the Barcelona process are respected, and in particular the North/South Mediterranean equilibrium, adequate representation of the three components of the Assembly, mutual understanding and transparency, without preliminary exclusion and safeguarding total impartiality.
The Bureau shall also designate the member who will be the Head of Delegation.

3. In accordance with its remit, the delegation will submit for approval by the Bureau its work programme.

The Bureau, should the need arise, may also decide on further implementing provisions enabling the delegation to carry out its mandate.

4. The travel expenses for the members of such delegation shall be borne by their respective national Parliaments.

5. The Head of Delegation shall draft a report on the activity and results of the delegation, which shall be submitted to the PA UfM Bureau and, subsequently, to the Assembly.

Rule 7

Relations with the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of foreign ministers, the European Commission and the Union for the Mediterranean

1. The role of the Assembly shall be complementary to the other institutions of the Barcelona process.

2. The representatives appointed by the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of foreign ministers and by the European Commission shall attend the Assembly's meetings and shall be entitled to speak.

3. The Assembly shall work in close cooperation with the Union for the Mediterranean and its Secretariat in Barcelona for the enhancement of the regional cooperation, dialogue and the implementation of concrete labelled projects and initiatives in the region.

Rule 8

Observers and guests

1. **Observers**
On a proposal from the Bureau, and pursuant to Rule 10(3) of these Rules of Procedure, the Assembly may grant permanent observer status at its meetings to:

- the representatives of the national parliaments of the countries of the Mediterranean region which are not members of the EU and that have not subscribed to the Barcelona process;
- the representatives of the national parliaments which are not Mediterranean, but which are candidate countries, provided that the European Union has officially commenced discussion and negotiations with the country concerned in view of its accession to the European Union;
- the institutionalised consultative bodies and financial bodies of the Union for the Mediterranean;
- the regional inter-parliamentary Assemblies of more than one Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean which request such status.

Other organisations may also be invited by the Bureau to attend a meeting of the Assembly.

2. The permanent observers shall be entitled to speak. They may only do so subject to the discretion of the President as to the distribution of speaking time, in order to ensure the smooth running of the meeting.

3. **Guests**
Other organisations may also be invited by the Bureau to attend a meeting of the Assembly. The guests may sit in the Assembly without the right to speak unless invited to do so by the President.

Rule 9

Conduct of proceedings

1. The proceedings of the Assembly shall be public, except where otherwise decided.

2. Members of the Assembly may speak when authorised to do so by the President of the sitting.

3. The President of the sitting shall open, suspend and adjourn sittings; he or she shall ensure observance of these Rules, maintain order, call upon speakers, limit speaking time, put matters

to the vote, announce the results of votes and close the sitting. In agreement with the members of the Bureau, he or she shall rule on any matter arising in the course of the proceedings that is not covered by these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 10

Debates and decision-making

1. The Assembly may adopt resolutions and make recommendations relating to the Union for the Mediterranean for the attention of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference and the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European External Action Service.

2. Amendments to a text tabled for debate and adoption by the Assembly shall be submitted in writing by a deadline to be announced by the President of the sitting.

   Each amendment may only relate to one paragraph. No amendment shall be admissible if it does not directly relate to the text which it seeks to amend. An amendment shall lapse if it is inconsistent.
   a) Amendments shall have priority over the text to which they relate and shall be put to the vote before that text.
   b) If two or more mutually exclusive amendments have been tabled to the same part of a text, the amendment that departs furthest from the original text shall have priority and shall be put to the vote first. If it is adopted the other amendments shall stand rejected. If it is rejected, the amendment next in priority shall be put to the vote and similarly for each of the remaining amendments. Where there is doubt as to priority, the President shall decide. If all amendments are rejected, the original text shall be deemed adopted unless a separate vote has been requested within the specified deadline.
   Acting upon the request of a Committee that has adopted a text on the basis of consensus, the Bureau may decide not to open a deadline for amendments to the plenary.

3. The Assembly shall act by consensus and in the presence of half of the delegations plus one within each of the two component parts of the Assembly, namely, the European component and that of the partner countries.

   When it is not possible to reach a consensus, the Assembly shall take its decisions by a qualified majority of at least two-thirds of the votes of the members present from each of the two shores of the Mediterranean, in the presence of at least half of the members plus one of the two components of the Assembly. The Chair shall establish such a presence before the vote begins.

4. Each delegation shall have a number of votes equal to the number allocated to it and, during the vote, shall have the right to express reservations and/or to abstain constructively. Rule 14.3 shall apply in particular cases.

5. In exceptional cases, the Bureau may decide alternative modalities of the voting procedures when the physical presence of the members cannot be ensured.

Rule 11

Meetings and agendas

1. The Assembly shall meet at least once a year in the place chosen at each meeting by the plenary sitting. Special arrangements must be made when the meeting of the Assembly cannot take place with the physical presence of the members (e.g. virtual meeting) or when the meeting of the Assembly takes place in a country which does not have official diplomatic relations with one of the member countries of the Union for the Mediterranean and of the Assembly.

2. The draft agenda shall be drawn up by the Bureau and adopted by the Assembly in plenary sitting at the start of its work.

3. The draft agenda shall be forwarded by the President to the parliaments represented in the Assembly at least one month before the opening of the session.

4. Any delegation may ask for an additional item to be entered on the agenda. The Bureau shall propose to the plenary sitting, the addition of supplementary points.

5. At the request of the Bureau, the President may convene an extraordinary session of the Assembly; if additional budgetary resources are necessary, the approval of the Assembly shall be required.

6. The Bureau may agree urgently on statements concerning any matter relating to the Mediterranean Partnership and in response to any natural emergency, the onset of a crisis or the outbreak of a conflict concerning which it is considered appropriate or necessary to issue an institutional call urging those involved to refrain from violence and/or to engage in political negotiations, or for solidarity with the persons and countries affected. Such statements should be based on any existing resolutions and recommendations adopted by the Assembly and should be sent as soon as possible to all members of the Assembly for information. Statements are to be made public by the Presidency.

Rule 12

Drafting committee and working groups

1. The Assembly may decide to set up a drafting committee to prepare resolutions, recommendations and opinions. The members of the drafting committee shall be designated by common accord; it shall comprise, on the one hand, at least five members from the EU national parliaments and the European Parliament and, on the other, at least five members from the parliaments of the Mediterranean States participating in the Barcelona process.

2. The Bureau, after consulting the parliaments represented in the Assembly, may set up working groups whose membership and powers it shall determine. The working groups may be instructed to draw up draft reports and draft resolutions for the Assembly, subsequent to the approval of these texts by the relevant committees. The number of working groups shall not exceed two per year. Second part of Rule 5 paragraph 5 applies, mutatis mutandis, to working group meetings.

Rule 13

Languages

1. The official languages of the Assembly are the official languages of the European Union and Arabic, Hebrew and Turkish.

2. The official documents adopted by the Assembly shall be translated into all the official languages of the Assembly.

3. Working documents will be made available to members in French, English and Arabic, as working languages, by the parliament organising the meeting.

   The draft agenda, the programme, the committee reports and resolutions or declarations of the committees, the draft final declaration, the rules of procedure and the list of participants shall be the only official documents of the Assembly and will be distributed upon registration.

4. During debates in the Assembly interpretation shall be provided into eight languages, including the working languages, without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 14(6) of these Rules of Procedure when meetings of the Assembly are held at the European Parliament.

   Meetings of parliamentary committees and, where appropriate, working groups, shall be conducted in the above working languages, without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 14(6) of these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 14

Expenditure: funding of organisation, participation, interpretation and translation costs

1. Expenses relating to the functioning of the Assembly and its activities shall be covered by the Assembly's annual budget, with the exception of members' travel and subsistence expenses.

2. The conditions governing the drawing-up and implementation of the annual budget shall be laid down in the financial regulation referred to in Rule 3.4.

3. In the event of a delegation failing to honour its financial obligations to the Assembly, the following shall apply:

a. Should a delegation fail to honour its financial obligations to the Assembly within two months following the deadline for payment, the Secretary General shall inform the Presidency and request the Parliament concerned to pay its contribution within an additional deadline of two months. Once the additional deadline has elapsed, the measures described hereunder shall apply.
b. Should a delegation explicitly declare its unwillingness to pay its financial contribution, it shall lose its decision making rights as well as the right to hold posts of responsibility within all the bodies of the Assembly.
c. Should a delegation suspend its financial contribution for a period in excess of 12 months, it shall lose its decision making rights as well as the right to assume posts of responsibility within all the bodies of the Assembly. This shall occur following a decision by the Bureau, after having afforded the delegation the opportunity to justify its reasons.
d. In case the delegation concerned already holds such posts, it shall be replaced by another delegation from the same component of the Assembly, after a decision by the Bureau in consultation with the Chairs of the other bodies.
e. Should a delegation not contribute financially for two consecutive years, it may be suspended from the Assembly following a decision of the Plenary subsequent to a proposal from the Bureau.

4. The travel and accommodation expenses of participants shall be borne by the institution of which they are members.

5. The organisation and costs of interpretation into the working languages of the Assembly shall be met by the Assembly budget in the condition referred to in Rule 13.4.

Interpretation resources shall be acquired with due respect to the best public procurement practices and based on the principles of openness, transparency and non-discrimination.

In order to comply with the principle of annuity, reimbursement claims for interpretation costs must be submitted within six months of the event. If a claim should nevertheless be introduced after the six months have expired, it will be up to the authorising officer to consider all circumstances before taking a decision whether to reimburse the costs or not.

6. The cost of translation of the official documents adopted by the Assembly into the official languages of the European Union shall be defrayed by the European Parliament. The translation of these documents into Arabic, Hebrew and Turkish shall be the responsibility of the parliaments in which these languages are used.

7. Each delegation shall be responsible for the translation into at least two working languages of the documents it submits.

Rule 15

Secretariat

1. The Bureau and the other bodies of the Assembly shall be assisted in the preparation, proper management and follow-up of the Assembly's work by a permanent Secretariat coordinated and managed by the Secretary-General.

2. The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the Bureau for a period of two years renewable once. Officials may be seconded by the European Parliament and the parliaments of the Member States. Members of the EEAS and diplomatic staff of Member States may also be assigned to the Secretariat. The establishment plan of the permanent Secretariat shall consist of a maximum of seven posts, including the Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General and the Accountant. The Secretariat shall be based in Rome.

3. The Secretary General shall be responsible for the overall running of the Secretariat and for the discharge of all functions assigned. The Secretary General shall:

   a. review the draft annual budget of the PA-UfM, as prepared by the Accountant, and submit it to the Bureau for approval;

   b. execute the budget, manage the finances of the PA-UfM and be accountable for the use of the funds as approved by the Assembly;

   c. maintain the links with the other bodies of the Union for the Mediterranean;

   d. submit annual activity reports and financial accounts to the Bureau.

4. The salaries and other expenses of the staff of the Secretariat shall be borne by their respective parliaments or public administrations.

5. The parliament which is hosting a session of the Assembly or a meeting of the Bureau or one of its committees or working groups shall provide assistance with the organisation of these meetings.

6. The translated versions of the reports shall be sent to delegations as soon as possible before the Plenary Sitting.

Rule 16

Amendment of the Rules of Procedure

1. Any delegation may propose amendments to these Rules of Procedure. Such proposed amendments shall be translated and forwarded to the Bureau, which shall submit them to the next plenary sitting.

2. Amendments to these Rules of Procedure shall be adopted by consensus.

3. Unless otherwise specified with the approval of the Assembly, amendments to these Rules of Procedure shall enter into force at the following session.