

**EN**

**IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS

OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

**FEBRUARY 2021**

**PRELIMINARY REMARKS**

1. In accordance with Rule 8(4) and Rule 77(2a) of the Rules of Procedure adopted by the Committee on 5 July 2006 and last amended on 28 January 2021 (present Rule 86(3)), the bureau of the European Economic and Social Committee has adopted the implementing provisions which follow.
2. The numbering and rule references used in these implementing provisions correspond to those in the Rules of Procedure.
3. This edition has been produced by the general secretariat of the European Economic and Social Committee and incorporates the various amendments approved by the Committee bureau.

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**TITLE I**

**ORGANISATION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Chapter I**

**INSTALLATION OF THE COMMITTEE IN OFFICE**

**Rule 1**

1. *The first meeting shall be chaired by the oldest member present, assisted by the secretary-general of the Committee.*
2. *The maximum period referred to in the Rule 1(2) of the Rules of Procedure (hereafter RP) is that for the holding of the first meeting.*
3. *At this meeting, the interim president shall acquaint the Committee with the communication which he has received from the Council with respect to the appointment of the members of the Committee, and shall declare the Committee installed in office for the new five-year term.*

Chapter II

BUREAU

**Rule 4**

1. The bureau shall comprise a president, two vice-presidents, the three group presidents, the section and consultative commission presidents and a variable number of members, totalling no more than the number of Member States.
2. In any event, the overall and geographical balance between the groups shall be respected, guaranteeing at least one, and a maximum of three, representatives from each Member State.
3. The following functions may not be exercised by the same person: Committee president or vice-president, group president, section or consultative commission president or vice-president of the observatories.

**Rule 7**

1. *The election panel, comprising one representative from each Member State, shall collect the nominations put forward by the groups for bureau membership and for the presidential election.*
2. *The election panel shall submit the nominations to the assembly for a vote.*

Rule 9

1. *The bureau shall draw up the annual schedule for the meetings of the Committee and its constituent bodies in the course of the second half of the preceding year and identify the political priorities of the Committee. The main religious feasts shall be taken into account when drawing up the schedule. In particular, no meetings shall be scheduled during the Catholic and Orthodox Easter holiday periods, unless all the members concerned are in agreement.*
2. *The bureau shall monitor action taken on Committee opinions on the basis of a detailed, pre-established Commission report, in line with the provisions of the protocol on cooperation between the EESC and the Commission adopted in September 2001, last amended on 22 February 2012.*
3. *Upon the expiry of each five-year period the president and the bureau shall remain in office until the Committee has been renewed in order to take the steps necessary to handle current business.*
4. *Without prejudice to the procedure referred to in Rule 86 of the Rules of Procedure, which applies in the event of substantial changes being made to the Rules, the bureau may, with the agreement of the groups, adopt minor changes to the Implementing Provisions.*

**Rule 10**

The president shall inform the bureau in good time and as fully as possible of any cooperation agreements that he has concluded on the basis of a mandate obtained under RP Rule 10. The texts concluded and the documents accompanying them shall be forwarded to the bureau in the language versions that were available at the time they were concluded; any translations can follow at a later date. The full Committee shall be informed in an appropriate manner of the agreements concluded.

**Rule 11**

1. *The commission for financial and budgetary affairs (hereafter CAF) shall operate within the framework of the financial rules and without prejudice to the powers of the responsible budgetary authorities (bureau, president), according to its own procedural rules as adopted by the commission and validated by the bureau and the plenary session.*
2. *The CAF shall prepare any draft decision having financial implications for adoption by the bureau and not regarded as forming part of day-to-day management.*
3. *In addition to its role in advising the president and the bureau, the CAF may also advise any other EESC body on financial matters.*
4. *As part of the annual budgetary procedure, the CAF shall determine the timetable for the preparation of the budget and shall provide guidance to the secretary-general on the broad strategy with regard to the budget estimates and the introductory memo for the budget. Subsequently, the CAF shall authorise the draft budget and the introductory memo submitted by the secretariat. It shall then forward them to the bureau for discussion and approval.*
5. *The CAF is tasked to advise on the supervision of the discharge process, working closely with the secretary-general. CAF's advisory role in the discharge procedure is limited to the topics of its general advisory competence. The secretary-general, in consultation and cooperation with the competent EESC services and internal bodies, without ever putting at risk the requisite confidentiality, shall prepare the EESC follow-up response to the discharge observations and commit to working towards a positive outcome of the process.*
6. *The CAF shall monitor, analyse and, whenever necessary, propose measures regarding the budget, its expected development, transfer of appropriations (with particular regard to buildings projects, IT, security and logistics) on the basis of reports provided regularly by the secretariat and/or at the express request of this commission. It shall also have an advisory role regarding the management of the budget line available for members' expenses. It shall regularly inform and/or issue recommendations to the bureau. The CAF shall also monitor all agreements concluded by the EESC that, directly or indirectly, have financial implications with respect to outside organisations.*
7. *The CAF shall then monitor the administration's proposals regarding the distribution of appropriations and for members' representation and reception expenses and shall forward its findings to the bureau for a decision.*
8. *The secretary-general shall communicate the operational organisation chart and any changes proposed to it to the CAF before submitting it to the bureau.*
9. *Contact between the CAF and the EESC's other bodies shall be maintained by the president of the commission or by a commission member delegated by him.*
10. *In the case of proposals that the CAF adopts by a simple majority, the bureau must be informed orally of the arguments supporting the minority positions.*

**Rule 16**

1. *The enlarged presidency may invite the presidents of other EESC bodies to attend its meetings.*

**Chapter IV**

**SECTIONS**

**Rule 18**

1. *Members of sections, consultative commissions or study groups may be accompanied by an assistant. Before the meeting starts, the assistant's name and capacity shall be communicated to the president of the section, consultative commission or study group for approval.*
2. *Assistants shall not have any right to a refund of expenses or to allowances. An assistant may be given the floor by the person chairing the meeting if the member whom the assistant is accompanying so requests. Members of sections, consultative commissions or study groups may be accompanied by their alternates as assistants.*
3. *It shall be the responsibility of the person chairing the meeting to ensure, within the scope of his general powers to direct the proceedings, that the contribution of an assistant is in keeping with the rules in force and does not exceed the function he has been assigned to perform for the member he is accompanying.*

**Rule 19**

1. *The section or consultative commission vice-presidents shall stand in as necessary for the section or consultative commission president or undertake specific tasks at his/her request.*
2. *If the president and the vice-presidents are absent, the oldest member of the bureau shall take the chair.*

Rule 20

1. *The membership of study groups should take account of the need to ensure that all the relevant interests, sectors, geographical areas and genders are represented. This requirement is all the more justified where several sections or consultative commissions are directly or indirectly concerned.*
2. *Study groups should not in principle have more than twenty-four members unless prior authorisation has been given by the Committee bureau. This authorisation may be granted at the request of the relevant section or consultative commission president acting with the approval of the section bureau. The Committee bureau shall decide the size of study groups in accordance with the procedures set out in RP Rule 33. Group presidents may modify the size of the study groups. This modification shall be confirmed by the Bureau.*
3. *It shall be the responsibility of the group presidents, in liaison with the sections or consultative commissions, to ensure that members appointed to a study group have a real interest in the subject, will be able to attend meetings, and possess the relevant expertise.*
4. *If, after detailed examination, the assignment of a referral to a category turns out to be inappropriate, it may be re-assigned, in exceptional circumstances, at the following meeting of the bureau, following a request from the rapporteur.*
5. *In urgent cases the president of the section or consultative commission to which the referral has been made may, in liaison with his bureau and after effective consultation of the group presidents, appoint the rapporteur and possible co-rapporteur and, if necessary, set up a study or drafting group, subject to the section or consultative commission's endorsement.*
6. *Opinions adopted by the sections or consultative commissions shall be sent as soon as possible to the members of the Committee, and to the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament.*
7. *Where missions in EU Member States are envisaged, the members of the Committee from the country to be visited must be consulted.*

Rule 21

1. *The alternate must belong to the same category of economic and social activity as the member of the Committee. The member may at any time terminate the duties of the alternate on his own initiative or at the request of the latter. The member shall inform the bureau of such action. The duties of the alternate shall in any event end when the duties of the Committee member end.*
2. *The alternate shall take part in meetings at the initiative of the absent member, who shall notify the president of the study group.*
3. *This procedure can be seen as an additional way of enabling non-members to participate in the preparatory work of the Committee. In this sense it differs from the arrangements for the delegation of voting rights and replacement which operate between members (RP Rules 65 and 66).*
4. *Alternates shall be reimbursed for their participation in the work of meetings to which they are duly invited, in accordance with the terms of RP Rule 21(5).*
5. *A person with the status of alternate may be appointed as an expert under RP Rule 26. In that event the status of alternate shall be suspended de facto until his appointment as an expert ends.*
6. *Preparatory work is defined as that of:*
* *study group meetings;*
* *section or consultative commission meetings;*
* *meetings of observatories;*
* *subcommittee meetings.*

**Chapter VI**

**OBSERVATORIES, HEARINGS, EXPERTS**

Rule 25

1. *Once the authorisation of the Committee bureau has been obtained, it is for the president of the body or unit concerned to set the hearing procedure in motion, on the basis of any information supplied by the groups.*
2. *Persons not belonging to the European Economic and Social Committee, other than those appointed under RP Rule 25, and who are invited individually to contribute to a hearing, conference or meeting organised by the Committee, shall be entitled to compensation for travel and subsistence expenses, providing they fulfil the conditions set out in the rules adopted by the bureau in this regard.*

Rule 26

1. *Each group may propose the appointment of an expert, but the other groups shall not be obliged to follow suit.*
2. *Whether they are serving a rapporteur, a co-rapporteur or a group, experts shall be persons who are particularly qualified to deal with the matters under study; their job shall be to supply the members with information, not to make members' decisions for them. Thus, experts are particularly useful during the preparatory stage of work. Presidents of sections or consultative commissions and study groups shall ensure that the part played by experts in discussions does not go beyond the role assigned to them.*
3. *Experts' appointments shall end as soon as the section or consultative commission finishes its work on the subject concerned, unless the expert is advising a rapporteur and co-rapporteur, in which case the appointment may continue until the plenary session has finished considering the subject. However, in order to provide the follow-up to and promotion of opinions after they have been adopted, the appointments of rapporteurs' and co-rapporteurs' experts may be extended in accordance with RP Rule 20(5).*
4. *The appointment of group experts is the responsibility of the group presidents. Experts may attend a section or consultative commission meeting with the prior agreement of its president.*

Chapter VII

CONSULTATIVE COMMISSIONS

Rule 27

1. *The president and rapporteurs shall be appointed from amongst EESC members; assistants to the co-presidents and co-rapporteurs may be selected from amongst consultative commission delegates.*
2. *Delegates shall be reimbursed in accordance with the same terms as those that apply to EESC members under RP Rule 9(6).*
3. *On a decision of the bureau the secretariat of the consultative commissions shall be entrusted to either the secretariat of a section or to an ad hoc structure.*

Chapter VIII

**DIALOGUE WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS**

**IN EU AND NON-EU STATES**

Rule 29

1. *The Committee's participation in the activities of the joint consultative committees shall be governed by the following basic rules:*
2. *presidency or co-presidency to be rotated every two and a half years;*
3. *substitute members may be appointed;*
4. *members may arrange to be represented, in accordance with RP Rule 66(1).*
5. *To facilitate coordination of the Committee's external relations activities, the presidents of the joint consultative committees and the presidents of the groups and committees responsible for relations with non-EU states shall attend meetings of the bureau of the section for external relations either as members or as observers.*
6. *The composition and operating procedures of the contact groups shall be laid down by the bureau following a proposal from the section for external relations.*

Chapter IX

**GROUPS**

**Rule 30**

1. *The groups shall verify that any nomination to any posts within the working and management structures of the EESC complies with the principle of equality of opportunity between men and women, ensuring that, in accordance with Rule 1(5) of the Rules of Procedure, the proportion of women in all bodies of the Committee is greater than that in the assembly.*
2. *The groups formed within the Committee shall meet regularly at the time of the plenary sessions. If necessary, they may also meet at other times, preferably on the occasion of meetings of the constituent bodies of the Committee, provided that permission is granted by the bureau.*
3. *Committee members who attend group meetings organised in accordance with the above provisions shall be entitled to reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses.*
4. *The groups shall contribute towards the organisation of the business of the Committee by briefing their members for meetings of its various constituent bodies. In liaison with the bureau, they shall play a major role in organising the proceedings of the assembly, especially in connection with certain debates.*
5. *They may help in the drafting of plenary session agendas by presenting the bureau with proposals for the inclusion of a draft resolution or for the production of an own-initiative opinion.*
6. *The groups shall receive assistance from the general secretariat.*
7. *Group secretariats*
8. *The members of the group secretariats shall attend the plenary sessions and other Committee meetings as observers. The group secretariats shall act, inter alia, as a link between their groups and the general secretariat of the Committee. They shall help to ensure that the work is properly organised in the interests of the Committee. To this end the groups shall be allocated the necessary posts; these posts shall be included in the staff chart of the Committee.*
9. *The group secretariat posts shall be listed in the organisational chart under the secretariat of each group.*
10. *The appointing authority, acting on a proposal from the president of the group in question, shall recruit staff for the group secretariat posts in line with RP Rule 80 and in accordance with the recruitment procedures laid down in the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Communities, or in accordance with the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants. The groups shall be free to fill these posts by secondment of established officials from the Committee or another institution, or by recruiting temporary staff under Article 2(c) of the CEOS. The groups may modify their staffing decisions provided that they give notice early enough for the requisite budgetary arrangements to be made.*

Chapter X

**CATEGORIES**

**Rule 31**

1. *Any change in the composition of a category already approved by the bureau must be communicated to the latter.*
2. *Categories that are duly formed may use the technical services of the general secretariat for their operations and have meeting rooms made available to them where existing availability permits, subject to the agreement of the bureau when additional expenditure is involved, such as, for example, expenses connected with the participation of members in category meetings or expenditure on interpreters.*
3. *Each category shall be attached to one of the three groups, with regard to the provision of technical and administrative support.*

**TITLE II**

**PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Chapter I**

**CONSULTATION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Rule 32**

1. *To carry out its duties, the Committee has the following means of expression:*
2. *opinions following a referral by the European Parliament, the Council or the Commission;*
3. *own-initiative opinions, which enable the Committee to express its views on any matter it considers appropriate;*
4. *exploratory opinions in which, at the request of a European institution, it is responsible for reflecting and making suggestions on a given subject, which may lead at a later date to a proposal from the Commission;*
5. *information reports to consider any question concerning the integration process and the policies of the Union;*
6. *additional opinions, which enable the Committee to supplement or update a previous opinion;*
7. *resolutions on any subject falling within the remit of the Committee.*
8. *Own-initiative opinions:*
9. Proposals for own-initiative opinions from the Committee's sections or consultative commissions and groups, which are submitted to the bureau for Committee authorisation under RP Rule 32(2), should comply with the rules below:
* *Their subject shall not have been dealt with recently (last two years) in other Committee work, be of a nature to promote the common interests of the members and be in keeping with the Committee's political priorities.*
* *The subject should be topical and innovative. It could include a subject not yet dealt with by the European Union or a completely new approach to a current subject.*
* *Opinions should draw the institutions' attention to any need for new legislation. They may also propose a new action plan or working method. Either way, they should add value to the regulatory field to which they refer.*
* *The timing must be appropriate for the own-initiative opinions to be of real value.*
1. *Requests for own-initiative opinions must include the following information:*
* *context;*
* *objective(s);*
* *organisation of work: timetable, size of working group, details of any proposed hearings and/or study visits;*
* *clear follow-up programme:*
* *plan specifying distribution to recipients concerned;*
* *plan specifying how the opinion will be used to develop relations with other institutions;*
* *estimate of follow-up costs.*
1. *Under the terms of the protocol on cooperation with the Commission, the Commission officials responsible for work on issues which the Committee examines at different levels shall be asked to participate in meetings to which they are invited so as to present the Commission's proposals and take note of the positions expressed by the members of the Committee.*

**Rule 33**

1. *The time limit set by the consulting body must be such that the Committee's opinion is ready in time to influence decision-making at European Union level.*
2. *The president, in cooperation with the bureau, shall set the date by which any priority opinion must be adopted by the Committee in order to comply with the deadlines laid down. This date should be set before work starts on the opinion.*
3. *In cases that should be dealt with urgently, such as own-initiative opinions on issues which, due to the economic and social situation, need to be addressed immediately, each group may appoint a representative, from among whom a rapporteur-general shall be indicated, and appointed by the assembly, to present the own-initiative opinion to the assembly for approval as soon as possible.*

**Rule 34**

1. *An information report is a document of a section or consultative commission that does not commit the Committee. It shall be submitted to the plenary session by the rapporteur and a general discussion shall ensue*. *It may not be amended.* *The information report, which is not published in the Official Journal of the European Union, shall be forwarded to the institutions if the assembly so decides.*
2. *An information report of a section or consultative commission may also serve as a basis for preparing an own-initiative opinion. After the information report procedure has been completed, the assembly should consider, on the basis of a proposal from the bureau, whether a short own-initiative opinion should be drawn up.*

Rule 35

1. *Draft resolutions shall be lodged with the bureau or, where appropriate, the president of the Committee.*
2. *The draft of the resolution shall be the subject of a general discussion; it may be amended and it shall be the subject of a vote. Where the resolution is approved, it shall be forwarded to the authorities of the European Union by the president of the Committee. The resolution shall be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.*
3. *The Committee may state its position by adopting any other text.*

**Rule 36**

* 1. *When EU Institutions ask the EESC for an evaluation of policies, this document will take the form of an information report as per the definition under the rule 36.B of the Implementing Provisions.*
	2. *In accordance with the Bureau decision of 19 January 2016, "evaluation of policies" shall be understood to be "of a qualitative and 'ex-post' nature insofar as it concerns policies or laws which are already being implemented. In line with the assistance provided by the Committee in compliance with Article 300(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, this assessment consists in taking note of and informing the institutions of the appraisal, criticism, concerns and demands of the organisations represented with the Committee and, where appropriate, of other civil society organisations"*.

**Chapter II**

**ORGANISATION OF WORK**

**A. WORK OF THE SECTIONS AND CONSULTATIVE COMMISSIONS**

**Rules 39 and 40**

* 1. *The draft agenda and the other documents pertaining to a meeting shall be sent in good time to the members of the section or consultative commission and, for information purposes, they shall be made available to all Committee members on the Committee's website.*
	2. *The presidents and bureaux of the sections and consultative commissions shall ensure that opinions are prepared within the deadlines set by the bureau of the Committee at the request of the institutions.*
	3. *Except in special circumstances, the meetings must be held at intervals of four to six weeks so that documents can be passed on to the secretariat in good time and the deadline set by the bureau can be observed.*
	4. *The provisions of Rules 53, 54, 55 and 57 regarding the conduct of proceedings at plenary sessions shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to section and consultative commission meetings.*
	5. *Role of section and consultative commission bureaux:*
	6. *To submit proposals to the section or consultative commission, concerning:*
		+ *the definition of the section or consultative commission's general priorities and the drafting of work programmes;*
		+ *the choice of own-initiative opinions to put to the Committee bureau*.
			1. *To organise the work of the section or consultative commission in accordance with its own powers:*
		+ *making clear recommendations to the CAF and the Committee bureau on proposals from the section or consultative commission (own-initiative opinions, hearings, delegations, etc.) having financial consequences, including follow-up;*
		+ *setting the agenda for section or consultative commission meetings, providing for participation from guest speakers;*
		+ *replying to invitations relevant to the section or consultative commission;*
		+ *selecting working languages for section or consultative commission meetings according to the provisions adopted by the Committee bureau;*
		+ *monitoring the progress of the section or consultative commission's preparatory work, including the submission of opinions in accordance with the rules established by the Committee bureau;*
		+ *ensuring compliance with recommendations in opinions when these require the Committee to take action;*
	7. *In urgent cases, the president of the section or consultative commission may, immediately or after consulting the members of the section or consultative commission, take all necessary steps, including steps concerning the section or consultative commission bureau, to enable the section or consultative commission to carry out its work. He shall inform the members of these steps at the next bureau meeting.*

**Rule 42**

1. *The submission of amendments must be governed by rules similar to those observed for plenary sessions. Members must submit their amendments in writing before the meeting. The section or consultative commission president shall decide, with the agreement of the section or consultative committee members, whether to waive this rule and authorise certain amendments to be presented orally.*

Rule 43

1. *All the provisions on the preparation of opinions shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to the preparation of information reports.*
2. *In the interests of efficient organisation of the work, opinions of the sections and consultative commissions shall, except in urgent cases, be adopted at least ten calendar days before the date of the plenary session, so that the relevant documents can be made available to Committee members in good time.*

Rule 45

1. *Section and consultative commission minutes shall record the decisions taken. They shall be drawn up immediately after the meeting, and shall as a rule be available in time for the next meeting. The bureau of each section or consultative commission shall determine the languages into which the minutes must be translated.*

**Rule 47**

1. *The meetings of a study group shall be presided over by a president appointed by the section or consultative commission in accordance with Rule 20; if the president of a study group is absent, a member designated by the members present shall take the chair.*
2. *Where appropriate, the rapporteur shall determine by mutual agreement with the co-rapporteurs the distribution of their respective tasks.*
3. *The president, the rapporteur and the co-rapporteur shall fix the dates of meetings in agreement with the section or consultative commission secretariat. The secretariat shall draw up a draft timetable to be submitted to the members for approval at the first meeting. The members of the study group shall be consulted before the date of the first meeting is set.*
4. *The rapporteur and, where appropriate, the co-rapporteur shall draw up a working document for the first study group meeting. After this meeting they, assisted by the secretariat of the section or consultative commission and if necessary by experts, shall draw up either a preliminary draft opinion for submission to the study group or a draft opinion for submission to the section or consultative commission.*
5. *Where more general issues of major importance are involved, a general discussion shall take place in the section or consultative commission in order to prepare the work of the study group and brief the rapporteur and, where appropriate, the co-rapporteur; at all events, unless the section or consultative commission decides otherwise, a general discussion shall take place when the draft opinion is examined and adopted by the section or consultative commission.*
6. *Under this Rule, meetings should be organised in such a way that all the members or their alternates and the experts and assistants have sufficient time to study the documents. To this end, the rapporteur and co-rapporteur’s draft must reach members at least three days before the study group meets.*
7. *Study group presidents shall ensure compliance with the deadlines and criteria laid down in Rule 20 of these provisions. They must conduct meetings accordingly.*
8. *With the exception of the permanent groups referred to in Rule 20(6), study groups may not hold more than three meetings without referring to the section or consultative commission bureau, which must inform the Committee bureau so that it can amend the programme of work if necessary. These same rules shall apply to own-initiative opinions.*
9. *Study groups may work in a limited number of official languages of the European Union, to be determined by the president before the first meeting, according to the study group's composition. The members of the study group may waive the translation of working documents and may decide by unanimity to adopt a single working language.*
10. *Section and consultative commission presidents may attend the meetings of the study groups, observatories and other bodies of their section or consultative commission, as observers.*
11. *Rapporteurs and co-rapporteurs may, at their own request, have an expert of their choice.*

**Rule 49**

1. *Where a document has not been debated at section or consultative commission level, the bureau shall ensure that there is adequate time for discussion in the groups and by members, including for amendments, before any debate in plenary session.*

**Rule 50**

1. *Opinions which are on the agenda of the plenary session must be made available by the secretariat not later than the Thursday of the week preceding that of the session. When this falls on a public holiday for the Committee, documents must be made available the day before. If this condition is not met, the item shall be carried over to a subsequent plenary session. The plenary may also decide by vote on whether to examine the opinion urgently during the current session.*

**Rule 51**

1. *If, during the plenary session, the number of members present (physically or remotely) or represented is less than 25% of the members, the chair may propose to defer a vote until the next meeting.*

**Rule 52**

1. *Committee members may submit written questions to the president regarding the role and operation of the Committee or a topical issue. These questions must be submitted at least two weeks before the plenary session at which they are to be discussed. However, if its topical nature so dictates, a question may be submitted up to the opening of the plenary session.*
2. *The president gives a reply to these questions at the plenary session. The author of the question may, if necessary, give an explanation of the question before the reply is given. Questions to which it is not possible to reply within the space of one hour are the subject of a written reply or, if the author of the question so wishes, shall be put on the next plenary session agenda.*
3. *Questions may not concern work in progress in the study groups and sections or consultative commissions.*
4. *If a question concerns a subject which the president considers should not be discussed in public, he may propose to the assembly that it be dealt with at the end of the plenary session.*

**Rule 53**

1. *In principle, the draft resolution must reach the president at least one working day before the bureau meeting. The bureau shall examine the draft text and shall decide whether the draft resolution should be put on the agenda for that session or the following session.*

Rule 54

1. *The rapporteur and, where appropriate, the co-rapporteur shall introduce the opinion adopted by the section or consultative commission. If the rapporteur and, where appropriate, the co-rapporteur cannot attend, they shall nominate a member to replace them.*
2. *A general discussion shall then be held on the question covered by the opinion; those members who make themselves known to the president shall be called upon to speak.*
3. *The president may limit speaking time.*
4. *When it is decided that a debate shall be held on a particular agenda item, any member may take part in the general discussion within the time limits set. The president shall read out the list of speakers after the rapporteur and, where appropriate, the co-rapporteur or the representative from the institutions has spoken, and shall call on the groups to nominate any other speakers. The final list shall be closed when the general discussion opens and only members whose names have been put down shall have the right to speak.*
5. *Opinions put straight to the vote without a debate shall be voted on at the start of the session.*
6. *In such cases the assembly shall waive the statements by the section or consultative commission president and the rapporteur and, where appropriate, the co-rapporteur, the general discussion and the detailed examination. Explanations of voting and statements for the minutes should be dispensed with in order to avoid confusion and indirect discussion.*
7. *After the general discussion, the Committee shall examine the opinion in detail and shall adopt it on the basis of the section or consultative commission’s text and the amendments carried.*
8. *If no amendments have been tabled, the Committee may likewise dispense with a debate, in which case the president shall call directly for a vote on the text of the opinion as a whole; alternatively it may confine the debate to a general discussion without the detailed examination, especially if the section or consultative commission so requests.*
9. *If a large number of amendments have been tabled, the Committee may dispense with the general discussion and proceed directly to the detailed examination.*
10. *These rules shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to section and consultative commission proceedings, except where provision is made to the contrary.*

Rule 55

1. *The explanatory statement accompanying an amendment must be concise but sufficient to enable the amendment to be fully understood. If it is noted that several amendments are repetitive in their form or content, the president, assisted by the secretariat of the section or consultative commission concerned, shall propose that they be examined together.*
2. *Amendments that have been duly lodged but are not presented at the plenary session by the proposer or another Committee member shall not be considered by the Committee.*

**Rule 57**

1. *A member may at any time request and be given precedence to speak during a discussion for the purpose of submitting a procedural motion, the object of which is:*
2. *to secure compliance with the agenda;*
3. *to secure compliance with the Rules of Procedure or draw attention thereto, by invoking the relevant Rule;*
4. *to propose on behalf of a group that the meeting be adjourned, that the discussion be closed or that speaking time be limited.*
5. *The president may ask the assembly to hold a vote in order to decide on a proposal submitted by means of a procedural motion.*
6. *Under no circumstances may a procedural motion deal with substantive matters.*

**Rule 58**

1. *The following documents shall be annexed to the minutes of plenary sessions: records of the Committee proceedings on the adoption of the opinions, including the texts of all amendments proposed and put to the vote, and a statement of the voting thereon (where a recorded vote is held, the names of the voters shall be given); the opinions of the competent sections or consultative commissions; any other documents which the Committee deems essential for an understanding of the discussions.*

Rule 59

1. *As regards referrals assigned to categories A, B and B+ as defined in RP Rule 33, opinions shall be concise documents giving a reasoned statement of the views of the Committee. They shall set out the arguments essential for an understanding of the line taken. Where necessary, opinions shall contain concrete proposals.*
2. *Length and presentation of opinions*
	1. *Length of opinions. No opinion or information report should exceed a total of 18 000 characters excluding spaces. A derogation raising this total to a maximum of 30 000 characters excluding spaces may, however, be granted by the section or consultative commission president. Beyond 30 000 characters excluding spaces, any derogation must be granted by the bureau. These indications of length refer to the body of the opinion (thus excluding the cover page) and must be based on the macro developed at the Committee, and comply with the interinstitutional standards for counting the number of characters in a text.*
	2. *Presentation of opinions*

*Opinions are to be presented in the following form:*

* *cover page;*
* *procedural page;*
* *executive summary of conclusions and recommendations (in the case of very short opinions - totalling no more than 6 000 characters excluding spaces - this may be omitted);*
* *general comments, including a description of the background to the opinion (explanatory memorandum) and any specific comments*.
	1. *Opinions assigned to category C shall simply set out the Committee's position in a concise form.*
1. *It is necessary to avoid a proliferation of entities with the right to express divergent views under the procedure referred to in RP Rule 59(5) (declarations by minorities). That is why use of this procedure is to be confined to identifiable minorities, i.e. on the one hand the groups formed under RP Rule 30 and on the other hand the categories of economic and social activity formed under RP Rule 31.*
2. *The majority required for a joint statement on a vote to be considered as representative of a group or a category shall be three quarters of the members concerned actually present or represented at the vote.*
3. *So that it does not lose any of its significance, the statement on a vote should be made only for major issues; it should further be confined to the subject in question and accord with the deliberations that have taken place. Its aim should be to expound a position that has been presented and supported during the Committee's deliberations. It should set out in condensed form the basic reasons why the authors are against the text of the opinion, which distinguishes it from the explanation of voting provided for in RP Rule 57.*
4. *The statement on a vote shall not be followed by any debate. Under no circumstances may it give rise to individual explanations of votes.*

**Rule 60**

1. *When appropriate, opinions of the Committee shall be forwarded to the Committee of the Regions, to national economic and social councils and similar institutions, and to the joint consultative committees or any other concerned entity.*
2. *Committee opinions and minutes shall also be made available to the members of the Committee as soon as possible after each session and before the following session.*

**TITLE III**

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**Chapter I**

**METHODS OF VOTING**

Rule 61

1. *Since abstentions are a neutral form of voting, only the votes for and against are to be taken into consideration when calculating the majority.*

Chapter II

URGENCY PROCEDURE

**Rules 62 and 63**

1. *In urgent cases, the section or consultative commission may meet to hold a general, preliminary discussion; the rapporteur and, where appropriate, the co-rapporteur shall be instructed to prepare, in the light of this discussion, a draft opinion to be submitted to the following section or consultative commission meeting or straight to the assembly under the rapporteur general procedure, in accordance with RP Rule 23.*
2. *In urgent cases, with the agreement of the group presidents, the section or consultative commission president may organise work in such a way as to ensure that the opinion is adopted as quickly as possible.*

**Chapter III**

**ABSENCE AND REPRESENTATION**

**Rule 64**

1. *With the exception of plenary sessions and section or consultative commission meetings, for which a quorum is required by the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, and the EESC Bureau (which sets its quorum in a Bureau decision), all meetings shall be held without the requirement for a quorum.*

**Rule 65**

1. *Delegations of voting rights must be notified personally by the delegator to his group secretariat. If not belonging to a group, the delegator must notify personally to the Secretary General. The list of delegations of votes shall be included in the minutes of the meeting.*
2. *Voting rights may be delegated only once per sitting; they may be taken back during that sitting. Only a personal voting right may be delegated. In other words, a person to whom a voting right has been delegated may not delegate that right to another person.*
3. *Before holding the vote, the president shall call for verification of delegated voting rights.*
4. *A member standing in for a member of a section or consultative commission under Rule 66(1) can exercise all the rights of the person he is representing. He may therefore, like him, be delegated the single voting right of an absent member of his group within the section or consultative commission under the present rule.*

**Rule 66**

1. *Members unable to attend a meeting should record their absence in advance of the meeting and they can either directly arrange for another member to represent him at the relevant meeting or with the assistance of their group secretariat. In case not belonging to any group, the assistance should be given by the Secretary General. Cases of representation not covered by the texts in force may be the subject of an exemption granted by the Committee president.*
2. *The possibility of representation may not be used when the member wishing to be represented is present in person on the same day at the place of the meeting, unless the replacement has no financial implications for the Committee.*
3. *The request for replacement must be made when the study group is set up and must be communicated immediately to the secretary-general in writing.*
4. *The Committee member acting as replacement shall participate in the section or consultative commission’s work in place of the member who has designated him solely in respect of the subject for which he has been designated. The member who has been replaced may participate fully in the work of the section or consultative commission on any other subject on the agenda for the meeting.*
5. *Use of these various possibilities must not fundamentally affect the balance, particularly as between the groups.*

**Chapter IV**

**PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF COMMITTEE TEXTS - ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**Rule 67**

* + 1. *Committee opinions shall be published in all official languages in the Official Journal of the European Union and on the Committee's website.*

**Rule 69**

1. *To ensure that the assembly can work effectively, admittance to the session chamber shall be strictly limited to members and officials on duty.*
2. *Experts and assistants shall sit in the observers’ gallery. If necessary, an expert advising a rapporteur may, however, sit beside the rapporteur when the item which concerns him comes up for discussion.*
3. *The president of the Committee may issue persons approved by one of the groups with a permanent visitor’s pass for public meetings; such passes shall not be valid for proceedings which have been declared confidential.*

**Chapter VI**

**TERMINATION OF MEMBERS' TENURE OF OFFICE, INCOMPATIBILITIES**

**Rule 75**

1. *In practice members may withdraw their resignation up until the date it is forwarded to the Council.*

**Chapter VII**

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Rule 77**

1. *The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions may have joint services; the organisational and administrative arrangements for these services shall be determined by joint agreement.*
2. *The secretaries-general of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions shall jointly decide matters relating to the above common services. The secretary-general of the EESC shall inform the president and the bureau of such decisions as quickly as possible.*
3. *The written report referred to in RP Rule 77(4), submitted to the president by the secretary-general, may be drawn up in the form of a three-monthly activity report.*
4. *The secretary-general shall submit a report on staffing policy and the human resources of the secretariat to the bureau each year.*

*This report shall deal in particular with the establishment plan of the secretariat, the policy for recruiting officials and other staff and social policy, including equal opportunities and developments regarding the gender balance, in accordance with the organizational competence of the bureau.*

**Rule 79**

1. *The term "head of unit of legislative work" corresponds to the heads of unit responsible for the secretariats of the Committee's sections and CCMI, in the context of the Committee's consultative function.*

**Rule 82**

1. *Before finalising the estimates of the expenditure and revenue of the Committee, the bureau, with the vice-president responsible for financial and budgetary affairs speaking on its behalf, shall make a brief statement to the assembly; comments may be made on this occasion.*
2. *The president, with the vice-president responsible for financial and budgetary affairs speaking on his behalf, shall inform the assembly of the budget allocated to the Committee by the budgetary authorities and shall comment on its major features. At the end of each financial year, he shall report to the assembly on the implementation of the budget. These statements shall not be followed by a debate.*

**Chapter VIII**

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**Rule 85**

1. *The terms used in these implementing provisions for the various offices are not gender-specific.*

**Rule 86**

1. *The Committee shall decide on the setting-up of the rules of procedure panel, its composition, its president and, if necessary, its vice-presidents, and on the appointment of a rapporteur-general and the date of entry into force by a majority of the votes cast, in accordance with RP Rule 61.*
2. *Amendments may be tabled to the draft of the RP submitted by the rapporteur-general, in accordance with Rule 55, and will be voted on in accordance with RP Rule 61. Adoption of the RP shall be subject to their approval by an absolute majority of the members.*

**Rule 87**

1. *The purpose of the implementing provisions is to clarify the Rules of Procedure, where necessary by supplementing them. The implementing provisions shall be adopted by the bureau and submitted for the approval of the plenary assembly.*
2. *They shall come into force once they are adopted by the plenary assembly.*

*\* \* \**

**APPENDIX**

**List and terms of reference of the sections
of the European Economic and Social Committee**

1. **Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO)**
	* + Macroeconomic policies for sustainable growth and stability (including monetary policy)
		+ EU budget
		+ Statistics
		+ Taxation
		+ Financial markets
		+ Cohesion policies (including regional, territorial and urban policies)
2. **Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT)**
	* + Sustainable development in the framework of the single market, production and consumption
		+ Industrial policies
		+ Single Market policies (in particular freedom of movement of goods and services including company law and intellectual property rights)
		+ Digital economy and society (including the Digital Single Market and artificial intelligence)
		+ Competition
		+ Research and innovation
		+ Consumption and consumer protection
		+ Enterprise policy (including SMEs and Social Economy) as well as new economic models such as the circular economy
		+ Customs
3. **Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)**
	* + Sustainable and smart mobility
		+ Transport and climate
		+ Infrastructure networks (digital, energy, transport)
		+ Sustainable, clean and secure energy and climate (including issues relating to consumption and energy transition)
		+ Nuclear energy (in the framework of the Euratom Treaty)
		+ Production and distribution of services (public and private) in the areas of telecommunications, water and energy
		+ Information society and media
		+ General interest services
		+ Issues related to the former ECSC Treaty
		+ Space policy
4. **Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC)**
	* + The social, employment and citizenship dimension of sustainable development
		+ Employment (labour market, labour law)
		+ Human dimension of the integration process
		+ Social and fundamental rights, rule of law
		+ Education, training and culture
		+ Social protection
		+ Free movement of persons
		+ Citizenship
		+ Equal opportunities and equal treatment
		+ Minorities, exclusion and marginalisation
		+ Equality between men and women
		+ Family and youth
		+ Health (promotion and prevention)
		+ Demographics
		+ Non-governmental organisations and the non-market sector
		+ Justice, asylum, migration and integration
5. **Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT)**
	* + Agriculture
		+ Biodiversity
		+ Fisheries
		+ Forestry
		+ Sustainable food systems
		+ Environmental protection
		+ Rural development
		+ Sustainable development
		+ Climate policy and climate action
		+ Circular economy
6. **Section for External Relations (REX)**
	* + External political, economic and trade relations
		+ Enlargement and integration of certain neighbouring areas
		+ Relations with economic and social actors and representatives of civil society organisations in third countries
		+ International agreements
		+ Cooperation, partnership and association agreements with third countries
		+ Development policy
		+ International organisations
		+ Immigration (third countries)
		+ Delegations

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