



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



WORKING GROUP ON FINANCING OF THE ASSEMBLY AND REVISION OF THE EMPA RULES OF PROCEDURE

DMED_PV(2010)

MINUTES of the meeting of 5 March 2010, from 10h00 to 13h00 BRUSSELS

The meeting opened at 10.05 on 5 March 2010, with Mr. Gianni Pittella in chair.

Were present:

Miloud Chorfi (Vice-Chair) and Mohamed-Kamel Rezgui (Algeria); Mohamed Bassiouny (Egypt); Gennaro Malgieri (Italy); Eduardo Cabrita (Portugal); Faik Oztrak (Turkey).

1. ADOPTION OF DRAFT AGENDA

The draft agenda was adopted without modification.

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 14 JANUARY 2010

The minutes of the meeting on 14 January 2010 were adopted.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The participants heard the Chair who presented the outcome of the EMPA Bureau meeting held on 22 January in Rabat:

- the preparation of the sixth EMPA Plenary session, to be held on 13 - 14 March in Amman, was discussed. The following issues were agreed upon:
 - the meeting of the committees and the Bureau and Enlarged Bureau will be held on 12 March
 - the topics to be addressed by the Plenary on 13 March will be:
 - Middle East Peace Process,
 - Environment, climate change and renewable energy,

- Transformation of the Facility for the Euro Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) into a Euro Mediterranean Bank
 - the adoption of EMPA committees' recommendations and of the WG on Rules of Procedure proposals will be on the agenda of the sitting of 14 March 2010.
- the Bureau adopted three statements, which were sent to the EMPA member delegations, on:
 - on the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM),
 - on the Middle East Peace Process,
 and
 - on the situation in Haiti.
- the Bureau endorsed the proposals by the Working Group on the questions of the EMPA Secretariat, its budget, observers and guests, and decided to submit them to the Plenary.

Furthermore, the Chair informed the members that the EMPA President, Mr. Majali, mandated him to address a letter with the necessary information on the issues of the Secretariat and of the budget to the Presidents of all the EMPA member Parliaments, including their respective financial contributions to the EMPA budget. On the question of the permanent observer status for the PAM, the Bureau agreed to the WG's approach, considering that such a status should be mutual.

The Chair also informed the participants on the Bureau's decision on 22 January in Rabat to extend the mandate of the Working Group until March 2012.

Mr. Rezgui expressed the solidarity of the WG's members to the proposals agreed upon by the Bureau and their support to those proposals at the coming plenary session.

4. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE QUESTION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE EMPA STANDING COMMITTEES AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERS IN COMMITTEES

The Chair recalled the Plenary decision in March 2009 in Brussels concerning the composition of the Assembly, which has been increased from 260 to 280 members, in order to accommodate the delegations from the parliaments of the six new countries that joined the Euro-Med Partnership in 2008: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Mauritania, Monaco, and Montenegro.

However, since on the one hand that modification has not been reflected into the composition of the EMPA's standing committees, and since, on the other hand, the Bureau decided, on 28 November 2009 in Cairo, to upgrade the ad hoc Committee on Energy, Environment and Water to a standing committee, the WG has been mandated to propose a distribution of the 280 EMPA members to 5 standing committees, whilst respecting the principle of parity between the Mediterranean and the European components.

The Chair recalled the current composition of the EMPA:

EMPA 280 members
of which

Southern Mediterranean (MED) delegations have 140 members, distributed as follows:

- the old 10 NPs 130 members (each delegation has 13 members)
 - Mauritania 10 members
- The European delegations have 140 members, as follows:
- the EP 49 members
 - the 27 EU National Parliaments 81 members (each delegation has 3 members)
 - the new 5 new European delegations 10 members (each delegation has 2 members)

The Chair suggested to:

- slightly reduce the size of the three main committees (Political, Economic, and Culture) from 70 members to 64 members.
- slightly reduce the Women's Committee, from 50 to 44.
- slightly increase the Energy Committee (from 40 to 44).
- to introduce formally in the Rules of Procedure the notion of "permanent substitute members", which has already been approved by the EMPA Bureau at its meeting on 11 June 2008 and introduced to the Guidelines of Committees' meetings.

According to that proposal, the composition of the standing committees would be:

Political Committee - 64 members

MED delegations:	32 members (shared by 11 delegations)		
European delegations:	32 members:	EP	11
		European NPs (EU + 5)	21

Economic committee - 64 members

MED delegations:	32 members (shared by 11 delegations)		
European delegations:	32 members:	EP	11
		European NPs (EU + 5)	21

Culture committee - 64 members

MED delegations:	32 members (shared by 11 delegations)		
European delegations:	32 members:	EP	11
		European NPs (EU + 5)	21

Women's committee - 44 members

MED delegations:	22 members (shared by 11 delegations)		
European delegations:	22 members:	EP	8
		European NPs (EU + 5)	14

Energy committee - 44 members

MED delegations:	22 members (shared by 11 delegations)		
European delegations:	22 members:	EP	8
		European NPs (EU + 5)	14

The members heard the Chair who pointed out the assumptions at the basis of the proposal he made:

- the principle of parity between the Southern Mediterranean side and the European side would be maintained at Committee level as well;
- the first three permanent committees (i.e. Political, Economic, and Culture), which reflect the three pillars of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, seem to be, politically, more interesting for members - therefore they would be bigger. Those committees are called to follow the work of the executive branch in their respective fields and to propose resolutions and recommendations with a view to achieving the objectives of the Union for the Mediterranean;
- the efficiency of Committees' work would be improved, especially viewed the weak attendance of members to the Committees' meetings;
- the neutralisation of the committees would be avoided - thus ensuring that any committee is politically important and attractive enough to trigger Members' committed participation.

Mr. Malgieri emphasized the importance of ensuring the representativeness of each delegation in each of the standing committees, suggesting that, in particular for the three old standing committees (Political, Economic and Culture Committees), it was important that each delegation had one full member in each of those committees. However, he considered the Chair's proposal to be realistic, in particular since the attendance to committees' meetings, as experienced until now, would not prevent the substitute delegation to fully participate to the committees' work.

Mr. Cabrita agreed that the proposal presented by the Chair guarantees the participation of all delegations to the work of the EMPA standing committees. He also considered that a distinction should be made between the three "original" committees (political, economic and culture) and the two newer committees. He considered that the EU National Parliaments (EU NPs) should have the right to have one member in each of the first three committees, but he considered that that would create difficulties in ensuring the balance between the representation of the European Parliament and that of the EU NPs. As for the Women's Rights and the Energy Committees, Mr. Cabrita was of the opinion that the EU NPs should be able to express a preference as to which committee they would be interested to participate to.

Mr. Oztrak was of the opinion that the Chair's proposal implies that the representation of the Southern Mediterranean countries will not be balanced, as one delegation will have to be represented by two members in the three bigger committees.

Mr. Rezgui proposed that Mauritania, whose delegation to the EMPA has only ten members, be represented by two members in the mentioned three committees. He considered that the permanent substitutes' proposal, who will have the rights mentioned by the Chair, was the most suitable solution, in order to meet the necessary criteria and, most importantly, to respect the parity between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

The Chair underlined that Mr. Malgieri and Mr. Cabrita's suggestions would lead to the neutralisation of the Women's Rights and the Energy Committees, thus diminishing their importance. At the same time, the three "original" committees would be very big, with around 92 members. That would lead to big difficulties in ensuring the majority needed in the decision making procedure, since the majority would be hard to attain. The Chair considered that too big or too small committees would compromise the decision making procedure

within the EMPA committees.

Mr. Malgieri considered that the principle of substitution has to be accepted by the Presidency of the Assembly or of the concerned committee and that it should be clearly specified who is a substitute for whom. He was of the opinion that that might be a problem viewed that the EMPA members are not organised by political groups, but by national delegations.

The participants agreed that the status of the permanent substitute members for committees, as discussed previously by the WG, would be maintained:

- The permanent substitutes would be entitled to attend and speak at committee meetings.
- They would be allowed to vote only if full members from the same constituent part are absent.
- In case of a substitute (member of one delegation) voting for a full member of another delegation of the same component, the substituted delegation would have to give its agreement prior to the vote.
- The number of votes cast from each of the 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.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Rezgui raised the question of the Minutes of the EMPA Bureau, which should be sent to the Assembly's member delegations.

6. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be decided after the plenary session in Amman on 13 - 14 March 2010.