



# **RULES OF PROCEDURE**

## **OF THE TWELVE PLUS GROUP**

*(adopted April 1993; amended April 1996, April 1998, April 2001, September 2001, April 2004, May 2006, October 2006 and October 2016)*

## **I. Name, Aim and Membership**

1. The Twelve Plus Group (hereafter referred to as the Group) is a co-ordinating body which brings together National Groups within the Inter-Parliamentary Union whose parliaments are based on multi-party democracies and other democratic principles as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. The membership of the Group shall include those who were Members as of the adoption of these Rules as well as other National Groups who apply for membership and are members of the Council of Europe. In exceptional circumstances a national group may be admitted on a temporary basis as a full member of the group.
2. International parliamentary assemblies in Europe may request associate member status with the Group. The status is granted by the Steering Committee by consensus. Associate members shall have the right to speak, but may not vote.<sup>1</sup>
3. The aim of the Group is to co-ordinate the action and policy of its member Groups as regards IPU matters. The Group shall aim to reach a common position on all IPU matters. Members should adhere to common positions adopted by the Group. They shall inform the Group or its Chairperson when they are opposed to and will not be bound by a common position adopted by the Group.
4. An application for membership of the Twelve Plus Group shall be submitted in writing to the Chairperson of the Group. The Group's Steering Committee shall examine the application and present its recommendations to the Group. A membership application is adopted when receiving a two-thirds majority of votes cast.

## **II. Officers of the Group**

5. The Group shall elect its Chairperson for a term of office of two years. The Chairperson shall hold office from the close of the session during which the election is held.
6. Nominations for the Chair shall be submitted to the Steering Committee before the opening of the session during which the election is to be held. Candidates for the office of Chair must be sponsored in writing by two National Groups. The Steering Committee shall review the applications and present its report.

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<sup>1</sup> The European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe are associate members of the Twelve Plus Group as of the adoption of this provision.

7. If there is more than one candidate for the Chair, the Chairperson shall be elected by secret ballot. If, after two ballots, no candidate for the office of Chairperson has obtained an absolute majority of the votes cast, the candidate who, on the third ballot, obtains the most votes, shall be elected. In the event of a tie, the issue shall be decided by lot.
8. The Chairperson of the Twelve Plus Group shall be supported in his work by a Steering Committee which shall advise him and promote the fulfilment of his tasks. This Steering Committee, which shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Twelve Plus Group, shall consist of the following members:
  - the two most recent predecessors of the current Twelve Plus Chairperson (as long as they are members of their national IPU delegation);
  - members of the Twelve Plus Group serving on the Executive Committee of the IPU;
  - further members, invited by the Chairperson on account of regional aspects or of particular abilities, who could benefit the activities of the Twelve Plus Group as a whole.
9. The Steering Committee appoints a Vice-Chairperson among its members by consensus. The Vice-Chairperson shall replace the Chairperson when the latter is absent or an interested party in the matter under discussion. When the Chairperson does not complete his or her term of office, the Vice-Chairperson shall exercise the Chairperson's functions until a new Chairperson has been elected.

### **III. Sessions and Agenda**

10. The Group shall meet as often as required in connection with the statutory sessions of the Assembly and the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The meetings of the Group shall be attended by two Council members of each member Group or their nominees and staff. Other members of the Group may attend as observers. Social functions of the Group are intended for those Council members (or their nominees), accompanying persons and staff attending the regular Twelve Plus meetings.
11. At its meetings the Group shall:
  - a. Discuss the agenda of the forthcoming statutory IPU meeting.
  - b. Discuss any other issues related to the working of the statutory IPU meeting, including elections to positions within the IPU.

- c. Discuss and decide on membership applications.
- d. Take up any other issues proposed by the Chairperson or a member Group.
- e. In the event of a vacancy, elect the Chairperson of the Group.

At its first annual session the Group shall additionally adopt the financial statement for the preceding year.

At its second annual session the Group shall additionally decide the scale of financial contributions from each member Group for the following year.

12. Applications for IPU vacancies shall be submitted to the Group not later than five days before the beginning of the session of the Assembly or the Governing Council at which these vacancies are to be filled.

Candidates will have the opportunity to present their application at the Group's first meeting held in connection with that session.

The Group will nominate its candidates, if necessary by taking a vote. As a rule, such votes will be taken at the Group's second meeting held in connection with the session in question. However, if the deadline for submitting applications to the IPU expires before that meeting, the vote will be taken at the Group's first meeting.

During the session, the Group may set a new deadline for the submission of applications for vacancies for which no application was submitted within the deadline stipulated in the first paragraph of this article. If, further to that decision, only one person submits an application for a vacancy, the Group can nominate that person as its candidate. If there are several applications, no candidate will be nominated.

13. Prior to the statutory Assemblies and Council meetings, the Chairperson shall prepare a draft agenda which he shall submit to the member Groups at least six weeks prior to the meetings and invite the Groups to suggest further items on the agenda.

#### **IV. Right to Speak, Methods of Voting and Right to Vote**

14. No Member may speak unless called upon to do so by the Chairperson. A speaker may not be interrupted, except on a point of order, except that he may, with the permission of the Chairperson, give way during his speech, to allow another Member to put to him a question on a particular point in his speech.

15. Normally the Group shall vote by show of hands. In case of appointments, voting may take place by secret ballot.
16. An absolute majority of the votes cast is required for any decision-making of the Group, except otherwise provided.
17. At the Group's meeting, each National Group present has two votes, providing at least two representatives of that Group are in attendance.

## **V. Languages and Interpretation**

18. The official languages of the Group shall be English and French.
19. Interventions delivered in one of the official languages shall be simultaneously interpreted. Interventions may be made in a language other than one of the official languages. In such cases the speaker himself shall be responsible for arranging for simultaneous interpretation into the official languages.

## **VI. Financial Arrangements**

20. Each member Group shall pay an annual membership fee according to a scale of contributions decided at the autumn session of the Group. Contributions shall be paid to the National Group chairing the Group in any given year.
21. The revenue collected by the Chairing Group shall be used to pay for the following activities related to the meetings of the Group at IPU statutory meetings:
  - a. Interpretation (English/French) at Group meetings as agreed with the IPU Secretariat.
  - b. Social functions in relations to the Group's meetings (normally a dinner and possibly a working lunch and transportation in relation to these functions).
  - c. Incidental expenses, including back fees, directly related to the functioning of the Chair and not paid for by the Chairperson's home parliament.
22. The Chairing Group shall provide an itemised statement of all revenues and expenditures before the first Assembly after the end of the financial year.
23. Any surplus accumulated in a given year shall be carried forward to the following year. A deficit shall be reported to the autumn meeting of the Group at which a decision as to its repayment shall be taken.

24. All revenues and expenditures shall be authorised and audited in accordance with the rules of the respective parliament whose Group is chairing the Twelve Plus Group.
25. Any National Group falling in arrears with its contributions will be suspended from the Group if payment is not made before the first Assembly after the end of the financial year.

## **VII. Amendment of Rules**

26. Amendments to the Rules shall be proposed by at least six Members. The Steering Committee shall examine the proposals and make recommendations to the Group. An amendment is adopted when receiving the two-thirds of the votes cast.