

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MEDIUM-RANGE WEATHER FORECASTS

Adopted by the Council at its 2nd session (May 1976)

Amended by the Council at its 66th session (December 2006)

Amended by the Council at its 75th session (June 2011)

The Council of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts,

Having regard to Article 6(3)(a) of the Convention establishing the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts,

Whereas the Convention already contains provisions governing the functioning of the Council,

Whereas in this connection it is necessary to adopt supplementary rules,

Has adopted the following Rules of Procedure:

Composition of delegations

Rule 1

Prior to a session of the Council each Member State shall communicate to the Director-General of the Centre the names of the persons composing its delegation, indicating which are the representatives, as laid down in Article 4(2) of the Convention, and which are advisers.

Observers

Rule 2

The Council may invite observers to attend its meetings. Apart from the representatives of States or organisations or national agencies which by virtue of the Convention or of co-operative agreements made in conformity with the Convention are eligible to be invited, these observers may be:

- representatives of other non-Member States, or organisations which the Council may decide by unanimous vote to invite to a meeting or meetings;
- experts whom the Council shall decide by a two-thirds majority vote to invite to a meeting or meetings.

Rule 3

The conditions under which observers may attend a meeting or meetings of the Council shall be as follows:

- an observer shall speak only when invited to do so by the President. An observer shall not propose, second or oppose motions. An observer shall not have a vote;
- an observer shall not attend any meeting held "in camera";
- an observer may be provided with appropriate Council documents at the discretion of the Director-General.

Rule 4

The Council may, in particular cases, add to or modify the conditions listed in Rule 3.

Rule 5

The notification of observers representing States, public international bodies or other organisations shall be signed by the competent authority of the State, public international body or organisation concerned, and shall be sent to the Director-General before the session opens.

Convocation and agenda of meetings

Rule 6

The President convenes the sessions of the Council on the date and in the place fixed by the Council, the decision being by simple majority of the Member States present and participating in the vote, or in accordance with Article 4(4) of the Convention at the written request of at least one-third of the Member States, the request to be addressed to the President through the Secretariat setting out the matters to be placed on the agenda.

Rule 7

The provisional agenda for a session of the Council shall be established by the President with the assistance of the Director-General, taking due account of any requests made under Rule 6 or Rule 9.

Rule 8

Notice of the convening of a session of the Council and the provisional agenda shall be sent to Member States as soon as possible and at least three weeks before the date of the session. Any documentation relating to items on the provisional agenda should be sent to Member States as soon as possible and at least three weeks before the date of the session, in the working languages of the Centre. Any additional documents for consideration during the session should be sent to the Member States as soon as they are available.

Rule 9

Any Member State may propose the addition of items to the provisional agenda at any time, but preferably at least two weeks before the date of the session. Such proposals should be addressed to the President, through the Secretariat, accompanied by explanatory memoranda, and shall, if possible, be sent out by the Secretariat to the Member States.

Rule 10

The provisional agenda shall be submitted to Council for approval as soon as possible after the opening of the session. The agenda may be amended by Council at any time.

Conduct of Debates

Rule 11

In addition to exercising any power conferred upon him/her elsewhere in these Rules of Procedure, the President shall open and close the meetings, direct the discussions, ensure the observance of the provisions of the Convention and of the Rules of Procedure, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. The President shall ensure the maintenance of order at meetings. The President shall rule on points of order and shall have, in particular, the power to propose adjournment or closure of the debates or adjournment or suspension of meetings.

Rule 12

In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall act as Chair. In the absence of both President and Vice-President, the Director-General shall act as temporary Chair until an acting Chair is elected. The members of the Council shall elect an acting Chair for that particular meeting.

Rule 13

The President may call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are irrelevant to the subject under discussion. The time allowed to each speaker may be limited by the President.

Rule 14

Proposals shall be debated and voted upon in the order in which they have been presented, except as otherwise provided.

Rule 15

During the debate on an item of the agenda, any delegation may present proposals on or amendments to the subject under consideration.

Rule 16

A point of order raised by any delegation shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. A delegation may appeal against the ruling of the President. Discussion on such an appeal shall be limited to the appellant and the President. If the appeal is maintained it shall be immediately put to the vote and the ruling of the President shall stand unless that ruling is over-ruled by a two-thirds majority of the delegations present and voting.

Neither the delegation raising a point of order nor any other delegation may speak on the substance of the subject under discussion until the point of order has been determined.

Rule 17

If two or more amendments are moved to a motion or to an amendment, a discussion shall be held and a vote shall be taken first on the amendment which the President rules to be in substance furthest removed from the original proposal or amendment, and then on the amendment next furthest removed until all the amendments maintained have been put to the vote.

Rule 18

If there are multiple proposals for the annual budget, the President shall put them to a vote in descending order, starting with the highest budget proposed. If necessary, the President shall have the power to determine the order of voting on proposals under this Rule.

Rule 19

Once a proposal has been accepted or rejected by the Council, it shall not be permissible to request re-examination within a period of twelve months, except with the consent of the same majority as was necessary for the original decision. After such period, re-examination may be proposed by any Member State or by the Director-General.

Rule 20

A proposal or an amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer unless an amendment to it is under discussion or has been adopted.

Rule 21

Amendments shall be voted on before the proposal or amendment to which they refer. When all amendments have been disposed of, the original proposal, as modified by adopted amendments, shall be voted on.

Rule 22

A delegation may request that parts of a proposal, document or amendment shall be voted on separately. If objection is made to the request for division, the request for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the request for division shall be given only to two speakers in favour and two speakers against. If the request for division is accepted those parts of the proposal, document or amendment which are approved individually shall subsequently be put to the vote as a whole. If all parts of the proposal, document or amendment have been rejected, the proposal, document or amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Rule 23

During the discussion of any matter, a delegation may propose the postponement of the debate to a specified time. Such proposals shall not be debated, but shall immediately be put to a vote.

Rule 24

A delegation may propose at any time the adjournment or the suspension of the meeting. Such a proposal shall not be debated, but shall immediately be put to a vote.

Rule 25

A delegation may at any time propose the closure of the debate, whether or not any other delegate has signified his/her wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of the debate may be accorded to not more than two speakers both opposing the closure, after which the proposal shall be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 26

The following proposals shall have precedence in the following order over other proposals before the meeting:

- to suspend the meeting;
- to adjourn the meeting;
- to adjourn the debate on the item under discussion;
- for the closure of the debate on the item under discussion.

Rule 27

After the President has announced that the voting has commenced, no one may interrupt the voting, except on a point of order concerning the manner of conducting the vote. The President may permit the delegations to explain their vote, either before or after the count, except in cases where a secret ballot is held. The President shall not permit the delegate raising the point of order to explain his/her vote.

Rule 28

If for any reason the President resigns or is unable to carry out his/her functions, the Vice-President shall have the same powers and duties as the President.

Publicity of Meetings

Rule 29

Unless otherwise decided, the meetings of the Council will be held in private. On decision of the Council a meeting may be held in public or in camera.

Rule 30

In the case of a meeting to be held in camera, the meeting shall be strictly restricted to the representatives of Member States as defined in Article 4(2) of the Convention, to the Director-General in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Convention, and to those persons whose presence has been agreed to.

Rule 31

Public statements upon the proceedings and conclusions of the Council shall be issued only by the President or a person authorised by him/her.

General Rules for Voting

Rule 32

In accordance with Articles 6(4) and 4(3), of the Convention, the President and Vice-President are elected by simple majority.

Rule 33

Unless otherwise specified in the Convention or the Rules of Procedure, all decisions of the Council shall be determined by a simple majority of the votes cast for and against.

Rule 34

The simple majority shall be the next integer immediately above the half of the votes cast for and against.

Rule 35

If an equal number of votes is cast for and against a proposal, the proposal shall be regarded as lost.

Rule 36

The two-thirds weighted majority according to Article 5(4) and Article 6(2) of the Convention shall be interpreted as:

- the number of Member States voting in favour of the decision must be at least twice the number of Member States voting against the decision; and
- the combined contributions to the current year's budget of the Member States voting in favour of the decision must be at least twice the combined contributions of the Member States voting against the decision.

Rule 37

In accordance with Article 5(4) of the Convention, in determining unanimity only votes cast for or against a decision shall be taken into account.

Voting at Meetings

Rule 38

At the beginning of each meeting of the Council as well as before each vote the President shall examine whether the number of Member States represented constitutes the quorum as defined in Article 5(1) of the Convention.

Rule 39

Voting shall normally be by show of hands. However, any delegation may request a vote by roll-call; the vote or abstention of each Member State shall be recorded in the minutes.

Rule 40

Upon demand of at least two delegations present at the meeting, voting shall be by secret ballot. Voting by secret ballot shall take precedence over vote by roll-call if both have been requested. In all voting by secret ballot two tellers shall be appointed from among the delegates to count the votes, assisted by a representative of the Secretariat.

Rule 41

The number of votes for and against, and the number of abstentions shall be recorded in the minutes in the case of votes by secret ballot.

Rule 42

In case of doubt, the President shall decide on the validity of voting slips.

Voting by Correspondence

Rule 43

A vote by correspondence, as provided for by Article 5(3) of the Convention, may be called by the President at the request of a Member State or of the Director-General of the Centre.

Rule 44

Voting by correspondence shall be conducted by the Secretariat. Any proposal submitted to a vote by correspondence shall be arranged so that independent questions are voted on separately.

Rule 45

Votes by correspondence must be received by the Secretariat within 30 days of the date on which the invitation to vote was sent to the Member States. Votes received after that date shall be considered invalid.

Rule 46

In accordance with Article 5(3) of the Convention, the majority of the Member States entitled to vote shall constitute the quorum. If the number of replies received by the Director-General during the 30 days' period specified in Rule 45 does not reach the required quorum, the proposal shall be considered to be rejected. It may, however, be re-submitted at the next session of the Council.

Rule 47

Each Member State shall designate a person or governmental institution authorised to vote in a vote by correspondence. In the case of an individual a deputy shall be designated. The names of these persons or governmental institutions shall be communicated to the Secretariat.

Rule 48

A statement certifying the results of the voting by correspondence shall be established by the Secretariat. The voting slips shall be retained by the Secretariat until the end of the subsequent session of the Council, unless the Council at this session decides otherwise.

Rule 49

The results of a vote by correspondence shall be communicated to all Member States, in the form of numbers of votes cast for and against and the number of abstentions. A list showing the votes of individual Member States shall be sent to all Member States.

Minutes and Documents

Rule 50

All documents distributed during, and intended for consideration in, a meeting shall be distributed to participants in the meeting at least eighteen hours before the time they will be discussed.

Rule 51

The Secretariat shall prepare a list of decisions and the summarised minutes of each session of the Council, giving the substance of the discussion and the decisions arrived at. The texts of all resolutions and recommendations made by the Council shall be annexed.

Rule 52

The decisions and the minutes shall be made available as soon as possible in the three working languages¹ to all Member States and other participants in the session, who may submit their corrections in writing to the Secretariat within thirty days following the date of publication. Decisions and minutes to which no objection has been made within thirty days after publication shall be held to be adopted. Any disagreement on the subject of these corrections will be settled by the Chair of the session, after consultation with the Member State or the participant concerned. Where objections have been received, the relevant parts of the minutes or decisions shall be held to be adopted, in their amended form if appropriate, once the Chair of the session has decided on the text. The text of any amendment shall be made available to all Member States and other participants in the session.

¹ In accordance with the “Resolution determining the use of languages at ECMWF” adopted by the Council at its 62nd session in April 2005.

Advisory Committees

Rule 53

The Council may set up Advisory Committees, and shall determine the composition and duties thereof. When the Council or its Committees establish Working Groups or Advisory Committees or similar with specific limited membership, then unless otherwise decided, representatives of 'other' Member States will have the right to attend as 'observers', in the sense of Rules 3 to 5.

Rule 54

The Council may appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair of an Advisory Committee or leave this task to the Advisory Committee itself.

Rule 55

At the request of an Advisory Committee, and after consulting the Director-General in any case in which financial expenses for the Centre may be involved, the President may invite technical experts to take part in the work of the Committee.

Rule 56

An Advisory Committee shall, whenever possible, carry out its proceedings by correspondence.

Rule 57

Travel and subsistence expenses of members attending meetings of an Advisory Committee shall normally be borne by their own national governments.

Rule 58

An Advisory Committee shall submit its report to the Council. The Council may request, however, that other Advisory Committees give an opinion on the report before it is discussed in Council.

Rule 59

Unless otherwise specified by the Council or in the Convention, the Rules of Procedure applicable to the Council shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to the proceedings of Advisory Committees of the Council.

Rule 60

Unless otherwise specified by the Council, documentation, decisions and minutes will be provided in one language only.

Rule 61

Unless otherwise specified by the Council, discussions at meetings will be in one language only.

Secretariat

Rule 62

In carrying out the functions assigned to him/her by Article 4(5) of the Convention, the Director-General shall be assisted by those members of staff of the Centre he/she deems necessary. These constitute the Secretariat of the Council. The functions of the Secretariat shall be the following:

- to carry out the duties assigned to it by the Rules of Procedure of the Council, and any other tasks the Council may assign to it;
- to prepare and distribute the documentation for items on the agenda of the sessions of the Council;
- to make arrangements for the sessions of the Council;
- to organise and perform the secretarial duties at sessions of the Council;
- to maintain files of correspondence arising from all matters concerning the Council;
- to prepare and distribute the summarised minutes in accordance with Rules 51 and 52;
- to provide any public information service that may be considered necessary for the Centre.