EP Rules of Procedure: revision

2018/2170(REG) - 31/01/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 496 votes to 114, with 33 abstentions, to make amendments to its Rules of Procedure in order to operate in a more efficient and transparent way.

Rules of conduct for Members (Article 11)

The changes to the Rules of Procedure require that Members must preserve the dignity of Parliament and not damage its reputation. In particular, Members shall not:

- compromise the smooth conduct of parliamentary business, the maintenance of security and order in Parliament's buildings or the proper functioning of Parliament's equipment;

- disrupt good order of the Chamber and refrain from improper behaviour. The display of banners or banners will be prohibited;

- resort to the use of offensive language during parliamentary debates (for example, defamatory language, hate speech and incitement to discrimination). Members should also refrain from any form of psychological or sexual harassment.

A serious breach of these rules by a Member of Parliament may result in possible sanctions.

The Code of appropriate behaviour for Members of the European Parliament in the performance of their duties, adopted by the Bureau on 2 July 2018, shall become an annex to the Rules of Procedure. A Member may not be elected to office in Parliament or one of its bodies, appointed as rapporteur or participate in an official delegation or interinstitutional negotiations, unless he has signed the declaration relating to this Code.

Financial interests of Members and transparency register (new Article 11a)

Parliament will lay down the rules governing transparency relating to the financial interests of its members in the form of a code of conduct adopted by a majority of its component members.

Members should adopt the systematic practice of meeting only with representatives of interests that are officially registered in the transparency register. They will have to publish online all planned meetings with interest representatives in the transparency register.

Rapporteurs, shadow rapporteurs and committee chairpersons shall publish online, for each report, all scheduled meetings with interest representatives from the transparency register. The Bureau will provide the necessary infrastructure for this purpose on Parliament's website.

Parliament's website will have to be technically adapted to allow Members to publish public information related to their use of the general expense allowance.

Parliamentary questions

The envisaged revision also includes measures relating to parliamentary questions, in particular interpellations of the Council and the European Commission, committee consultations on confidential information and the rules of standing committees.

As regards questions for written answer (Rule 130), the revision provides that any Member, political group or committee may ask a maximum of 20 questions over a rolling period of three months. As a general rule, the addressee should reply to the questions sent to him/her within six weeks of their transmission. However, any Member, political group or committee may every month designate one of its questions as a "priority question", to be answered by the addressee within three weeks of being forwarded to it.

Parliamentary intergroups (Rule 34)

Intergroups and other unofficial groups of Members should be fully transparent in their actions. Only interest representatives who are registered in the transparency register may participate in the activities of an intergroup or any other informal grouping organised on Parliament's premises.

Public hearings and debates on citizens' initiatives (Article 211)

Parliament may organise a debate on any citizens' initiative published in the register provided for this purpose and decide, when it places the debate on the agenda, whether or not to close it with a resolution. If Parliament decides to close a debate with a resolution, the committee responsible, a political group or a number of Members reaching a certain threshold may table a motion for a resolution.

European political parties and foundations (Article 223a)

The Parliament shall define the conditions under which a group of at least 50 citizens may require the European Parliament to lodge a request to the Authority for European political parties and European political foundations to verify whether a given European political party (or foundation) fulfils these conditions.

These amendments will enter into force on the first day of the next part-session, with the exception of those added to the Code of appropriate behaviour for Members of the European Parliament in exercising their duties, as well as the amendments to Rules 196 (establishment of standing committees) and 204 (bureaux of committees) which will enter into force at the opening of the first part-session following the next elections to the European Parliament due to be held in 2019.