

Amendments to Parliament's Rules of Procedure concerning question time, the central rostrum, the blue-card procedure, the explanations of votes, the transparency register and the Ombudsman

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The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted the report by Gabriele BISCHOFF (S&D, DE) on amendments to Parliament's Rules of Procedure concerning question time, the central rostrum, the blue-card procedure, explanations of vote, the transparency register and the Ombudsman.

The committee responsible recommends that the European Parliament should decide to make the following amendments to its Rules of Procedure.

Rule 11 - Members' financial interests and Transparency register and Article 123 - Access to Parliament

Certain technical changes of the text of the Rules of Procedure are required since the Agreement of 16 April 2014 between the European Parliament and the European Commission has been replaced by the Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register.

Rule 137 - Question time

The purpose of the changes to Rule 137 is to allow more flexibility with regard to the duration and the themes of question time, while aligning the deadline for deciding on the latter with point 46 of the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission. Their objective is also to include the European Council as regards the circle of possible invitees from other institutions.

Rule 171 - Allocation of speaking time and list of speakers

The aim of the modification of Rule 171(2) and the introduction of a new paragraph into Rule 171 is to oblige Members, whose interventions are foreseen on the list of speakers, to address the hemicycle from the central rostrum, while ensuring that speakers with disabilities may take the floor from their places. For other interventions, such as those based on the catch-the-eye and blue card procedure, Members continue to speak from their places.

The changes to Rule 171(8) introduce the possibility of giving a Member who has raised the blue card the opportunity to intervene with a reaction, which may then be followed up by the speaker, while at the same time avoiding a dialogue between Members from the same political group or between non-attached Members.

Rule 194 - Explanations of votes

The modification of Rule 194(1) aims at ensuring that explanations of votes are given at the end of the day on which the vote concerned has taken place, while allowing the President the necessary flexibility to exceptionally postpone them to a later time in the part-session.

Rule 231 - Election of the Ombudsman

The modification of Rule 231(2) imposes the use of a standardised form for the support of candidates for the election of the Ombudsman. The requirement of the date of signature aims at ensuring that the deadline for submission of nominations is respected. The additional subparagraph clarifies that a Member may withdraw the signature of support and that if a Member signs for more than one candidate, none of the signatures will count for any of the nominations. Lastly, the reference to the Statute of the Ombudsman has to be adapted after its revision.

The change to Rule 231(3) is intended to specify the point in time when the list of Members who have given their support to the nominees must be published, which is to be the working day following the expiry of the deadline for the submission of nominations.

In order to allow all candidates, who have been nominated, equal access to Parliament to meet with Members, a new paragraph is introduced into Rule 231, according to which nominees are, upon request, to be issued with a temporary badge granting them access to Parliament's premises.

Rule 232 - Activities of the Ombudsman

The amendments stated that, in line with Article 4(4) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2021/1163, the Ombudsman may, on his or her own initiative or at the request of the committee responsible, be heard by that committee or provide information on his or her activities.

The introduction of a new paragraph is necessary since Article 18 of the new Statute of the Ombudsman stipulates that the Ombudsman must consult Parliament before adopting the implementing provisions of that Statute.

Rule 233 - Dismissal of the Ombudsman

The reference to the Ombudsman's request in Rule 233(2) needs to be deleted since Article 13 of the new Statute of the Ombudsman requires to hear the Ombudsman if Parliament intends to request his or her dismissal without such a request being necessary.