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Assemblée parlementaire

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

DECLASSIFIED<sup>1</sup>

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## **Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy**

### **Relations between the Assembly and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**

**Memorandum prepared by the Secretariat**

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<sup>1</sup> On 24 January 2019, the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy decided to declassify this memorandum.

1. Relations between the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) were formalised in 1962 and the first Assembly debate on the activities of the OECD took place in 1963 on the basis of the report transmitted by the OECD to the Council of Europe.
2. The Enlarged Assembly debates were introduced in 1993 to allow delegations of national parliaments of OECD member States which are not members of the Council of Europe and of the European Parliament, to participate. These debates take place in accordance with special rules, adopted by the Enlarged Assembly (see Appendix 1).
3. Following an Assembly reform in 2011, it is the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy which, as of 2012, prepares the Assembly reports on the activities of the OECD.
4. In 2014, it was further decided that enlarged Assembly debates on the activities of the OECD would continue to take place every year; that every second year, such debates would be based on a report presented by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy; that every other year, the debate would be based on a report by the Secretary-General of the OECD; and that in principle, the Sub-Committee on Relations with the OECD and the EBRD would hold a meeting every year at the OECD Headquarters to exchange views with the Organisation's management.
5. As regards participation in the OECD Parliamentary Days, Political Affairs Committee rapporteurs have participated in the First OECD Parliamentary Days, in February 2013, and subsequently in 2016 and 2017.
6. The Sub-Committee on Relations with the OECD and the EBRD held a meeting at the OECD in Paris on 25-26 February 2015, on the occasion of the Third Parliamentary Days of the OECD. The full Political Affairs Committee met at OECD in Paris on 1 September 2015 and held, on that occasion, an exchange of views with OECD experts.
7. Former President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr Michele Nicoletti, was the first President of the Assembly to participate in the OECD Parliamentary Days in February 2018. Several PACE members participate in the OECD Parliamentary Days but in their national capacity. The Assembly has never participated as an institutional partner either in the OECD Parliamentary Days or in the meetings of the OECD Global Parliamentary Network.
8. Following the meeting between the President of the Assembly and the Secretary-General of the OECD in February 2018, and further to contacts between the respective secretariats, a renewed approach to relations between the Assembly and the OECD is proposed, aimed at a stronger and more efficient institutional relationship, streamlining procedures and making better use of both Organisations' strengths.
9. A recent exchange of letters between the Secretaries General of the OECD and of the Assembly (see Appendix 2) confirms agreement on the following proposals, which do not necessitate a change in the Rules of procedure for enlarged debates of the Parliamentary Assembly on the activities of the OECD:
  - Enlarged Assembly debates on the activities of the OECD will take place every two years (instead of every year), starting from October 2020, on the basis of a report presented by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, with the participation of delegations of national parliaments of OECD member States which are not members of the Council of Europe, of the European Parliament, and of the Secretary General of the OECD. Reports will focus on specific themes to be defined by the Rapporteur following contacts with the OECD, rather than on OECD activities in general. During the same year, an exchange of views with OECD experts will be organised as part of the agenda of the Committee, in the context of the preparation of the Committee's report on the OECD activities.
  - During the year when there is no Enlarged Assembly debate on the OECD activities, an Assembly delegation, possibly led by the President of the Assembly or the Chairperson of the Political Affairs and Democracy Committee, would participate as an institutional partner to the OECD Global Parliamentary Network, starting from October 2019. During the same year, the full Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy would, in principle, hold one meeting at the OECD Headquarters, with a view to holding an exchange of views with OECD experts.

**Appendix 1 - Extract of the Complementary texts of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly:**

**APPENDIX XII – Rules of procedure for enlarged debates of the Parliamentary Assembly on the activities of OECD**

**adopted by the enlarged Parliamentary Assembly at its session of 2 October 1992 in Strasbourg and amended by it at its session of 6 October 1994 and by Resolution 1467 (2005), appendix, Resolution 1629 (2008), appendix, Resolution 1758 (2010) and Resolution 1899 (2012)**

*I. General principles*

1. Parliamentary debates on the activities of OECD shall be held on the basis of an agreement between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the national parliaments of OECD member States which are not members of the Council of Europe and with the approval of the OECD Council.
2. These debates shall be public and shall usually take place once a year on the occasion of a part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly.

*II. Participants*

1. The following may participate in the debates:
  1. the delegations of Council of Europe member states to the Parliamentary Assembly;
  2. delegations of the national parliaments of OECD member States which are not members of the Council of Europe;
  3. a delegation from the European Parliament;
  4. the Secretary General of OECD, who shall present a report on the activities of his Organisation and shall reply to questions.
5. The number of seats to which the various delegations are entitled shall be determined in accordance with Appendix 1. The delegations shall reflect the different currents of opinion represented within their parliaments and take account as far as possible of the need for gender balance.

*III. Chair*

1. The President or a Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe shall open the debates.
2. The occupant of the Chair shall be responsible for ensuring the orderly conduct of the proceedings as well as for maintaining public order in the chamber and galleries. He or she shall also decide whether speakers are in order.

*IV. Use of languages and documents*

1. Simultaneous interpretation of speeches made in the Assembly shall be provided by the Council of Europe in English, French, German, Italian and Russian. For any other language, the cost of simultaneous interpretation shall be payable by the delegation concerned. That delegation shall also supply a translation of statements made in that language into one of the official languages of the Council of Europe so that they can be published in extenso in the final report.
2. The Secretariat of the Council of Europe shall distribute the discussion documents and other working papers in English and French.
3. The Secretariat of the Council of Europe shall draw up a report of the debates in English and French for distribution as early as possible.
4. The English and French versions of these reports shall contain the full texts of speeches made in those languages and a summary of speeches made in other languages.
5. Full texts of speeches made in German and Italian shall also be distributed.

#### *V. Right to speak*

1. No member may speak unless invited to do so by the occupant of the Chair.
2. Members wishing to speak shall enter their names in a register as early as possible and at the latest at 7 p.m. the day before the debate.
3. The list of speakers shall be established taking into account the need to ensure a balanced representation of national delegations and of committees of the Parliamentary Assembly directly concerned in the debate.
4. Each committee directly concerned may appoint a member, who shall speak on its behalf at some stage in the debate. Such committees may present written contributions.
5. Speakers in a debate may speak for not more than 4 minutes. The rapporteur shall have 13 minutes to introduce the report and to reply to the debate. The persons speaking on behalf of committees shall have 3 minutes. However, if circumstances so require, the occupant of the Chair may reduce these speaking times.<sup>1</sup>
6. The occupant of the Chair
  - may, in order to ensure a political and geographical balance among the speakers, depart from the order in which members are listed to speak;
  - may interrupt a debate and go on to the vote in order to keep to the agreed time-table

#### *VI. Amendments and sub-amendments*

1. Members may propose in writing amendments and sub-amendments to texts submitted for adoption. Amendments shall relate directly to the text they are intended to alter and may be tabled only in respect of texts submitted for adoption.
2. Sub-amendments shall relate to an amendment previously tabled and shall be admissible insofar as they do not contradict the sense of the amendment. They may not themselves be further amended.
3. The President of the Parliamentary Assembly shall decide on the admissibility of amendments and sub-amendments, which must be signed by at least five members and tabled in accordance with the deadlines set out in Rule 34.6. of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly.
4. The occupant of the Chair may decide, by way of an exception, to accept an oral amendment or sub-amendment of a stylistic nature.
5. When an amendment or sub-amendment is called, one of its authors or another member speaking in its favour shall be allowed a maximum of thirty seconds for the purpose of moving it.
6. When an amendment is being considered, only one of its authors or another member speaking in its favour, one speaker against, and the rapporteur or chairperson of the committee concerned shall be heard.

#### *VII. Points of order*

A member shall have a prior right to speak if he or she asks leave to raise a point of order, which may relate only to procedure and to which only the occupant of the Chair shall reply. The raising of a point of order may not take more than thirty seconds.

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1. The provisions relating to speaking time apply.

### *VIII. Voting*

1. Voting shall be by a show of hands and, in cases of doubt, by sitting and standing. Members of the European Parliament's delegation do not have the right to vote.
2. If a delegation of a non-European OECD member country would otherwise be under-represented, each of its members present may cast up to five votes.
3. A relative majority of the votes cast shall be required for the adoption of a resolution. Amendments and procedural questions shall also be decided by a relative majority.

### *IX. Procedure in committee and examination of the report in reply to the OECD activity report*

1. The Parliamentary Assembly committee responsible for preparing a report on the activities of the OECD may hold meetings with the representatives of the delegations of non-European OECD member countries to examine the OECD activity report and the texts in reply thereto. During such discussions these representatives and the delegates of the European Parliament shall have the same rights as the members of the Parliamentary Assembly. However, members of the European Parliament shall not vote.
2. At meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly committee in question, delegations of the national parliaments of the OECD member States which are not members of the Council of Europe shall be allocated the following number of votes:
  - United States of America, Japan and Mexico: 4 votes
  - Canada and Republic of Korea: 3 votes
  - Australia and Chile: 2 votes
  - New Zealand and Israel: 1 vote.
5. The report in reply to the OECD activity report shall contain an explanatory memorandum and one or more texts which shall normally take the form of draft resolutions. Only these texts shall be voted upon in committee and shall then be put to the vote in plenary sitting.
6. Voting in committee shall be by show of hands.
7. The examination of texts in plenary sitting shall be based on the draft adopted in committee.
8. When the examination of and voting on the whole of a text are over, and the results announced, any members who did not speak in the debate may speak for not more than one minute in order to explain their votes.

### *X. Special guests, parliamentary observers and partners for democracy*

1. The delegations of parliaments of non-Council of Europe member States which hold special guest, parliamentary observer or partner for democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly may speak in the debate.
2. Special guests, parliamentary observers and partners for democracy shall not table amendments or take part in voting.

### *XI. Application of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliamentary Assembly*

1. In all cases where no specific provisions have been laid down, and in so far as they are not incompatible with these Rules, the provisions in force in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe shall apply.
2. Any contestation concerning the application of these Rules shall be decided upon by the occupant of the Chair.

**Appendix 2 – Exchange of letters**

ORGANISATION  
FOR ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT



ORGANISATION DE  
COOPÉRATION ET  
DE DÉVELOPPEMENT  
ÉCONOMIQUES

Secretary-General

AG/2019.013.pb

21 January 2019

Dear Secretary General,

I hope 2019 will be a year of great happiness and success for you.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your letter concerning the proposals for the future of our longstanding co-operation. A renewed approach to relations between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the OECD is essential to rebalance the inter-parliamentary links that exist today, leading to a stronger and more efficient institutional relationship. Indeed, the vital role of PACE and OECD in strengthening inter-parliamentary dialogue, and in addressing the present challenges to international co-operation, call on us to enhance mutual co-operation and make better use of both Organisations' strengths.

Concerning the format of our future collaboration, I will be pleased to attend the Enlarged Assembly debates on the activities of the OECD every two years, starting from October 2020. Moreover, I welcome the organisation of an exchange of views with OECD experts during that year's preparation of the Committee's report on the OECD's activities.

During the intervening years when there will be no report and debate, we look forward to holding an exchange of views here at the OECD Headquarters.

Moreover, the OECD will be most pleased to receive regularly PACE delegates to our meetings of the OECD Global Parliamentary Network. The Network is an excellent space for PACE members to benefit from an in-depth dialogue between legislators and OECD experts, as well as to interact with peers from countries beyond the Assembly's membership. I would like to take this opportunity to invite PACE members to attend the next OECD Parliamentary Days which will take place from 13-15 February 2019; as of October 2019, we look forward to welcoming PACE as an institutional partner to the Network at our fall meetings.

On the OECD side, I have asked Anthony Gooch, Director of Public Affairs and Communications with responsibility for relations with Parliaments, to follow-up with your team as necessary.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angel Gurría', is positioned above the printed name.

Angel Gurría

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Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  
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*Council of Europe  
Parliamentary Assembly*

*The Secretary General*

Strasbourg, 19 December 2018

Dear Secretary General,

As you know, following your meeting with former President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr Michele Nicoletti, on 8 February 2018, contacts were developed between our respective secretariats with a view to adapting the format of cooperation between the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and our Parliamentary Assembly.

In particular, the following proposals, which do not necessitate a change in the Rules of procedure for enlarged debates of the Parliamentary Assembly on the activities of the OECD, have been discussed:

- Enlarged Assembly debates on the activities of the OECD should take place every two years, on the basis of a report presented by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy and with the participation of the overseas delegations and of the Secretary General of the OECD, starting from October 2020; during the same year, an exchange of views with OECD experts will be organised as part of the agenda of the Committee, in the context of the preparation of the Committee's report on the OECD activities;
- During the year when there is no Enlarged Assembly debate on the OECD activities, an Assembly delegation, possibly led by the President of the Assembly or the Chairperson of the Political Affairs and Democracy Committee, would participate as an institutional partner to the OECD Global Parliamentary Network, starting from October 2019; during the same year, the Political Affairs and Democracy Committee would, in principle, hold one meeting at the OECD Headquarters, with a view to holding an exchange of views with OECD experts; should you be available, your presence at this meeting, possibly in the form of a welcome address, would be highly appreciated.

I would therefore like to ask for your formal agreement on this procedure, in order to consult the Bureau of the Assembly. I would propose that we then write together to the Parliaments of OECD member States which are not members of the Council of Europe to inform them accordingly.

I look forward to your reply and Ms Despina Chatzivassiliou, Head of the Secretariat of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, remains at your disposal for any further information (tel. +33 3 88 41 30 75, email: [despina.chatzivassiliou@coe.int](mailto:despina.chatzivassiliou@coe.int)).

I seize this opportunity to send you my Season's Greeting and best wishes for a Happy and Creative New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Wojciech Sawicki

Mr Angel Gurría  
Secretary General  
OECD Paris

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