

## RULES GOVERNING THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN SENATES



### **Preamble :**

The undersigned, Chairmen of European Senates, meeting in Paris on November 8th, 2000,

conscious that they share common values in the areas of democracy and Rule of Law,

anxious to ensure respect for the balance of power and the necessary diversification of national representation,

desirous of asserting the contribution made by bicameral systems to democratic debate and the role of their assemblies in the relationships between the peoples they represent, while at the same time respecting the diverse cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe,

inspired with the wish to work together at forging closer bonds between European States, facilitating communication and sharing of common achievements, and contributing to the realization of European construction,

have agreed the following:

### **Article the first (*Composition*) :**

1 - An Association of European Senates shall be created, composed of the following Senates :

The Federal Council of Germany (Bundesrat);

The Federal Council of Austria (Bundesrat);

the Belgian Senate;

the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina

the Spanish Senate,

the French Senate,

the Irish Senate

the Italian Senate ;

the First Chamber of the States General of the Netherlands;

the Polish Senate;

the Romanian Senate ;

the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation ;

the National Council of Slovenia ;

the Swiss Council of States;

the Senate of the Czech Republic

the House of Lords of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

2 - The Council of State of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg shall participate in the activities of the Association in the capacity of observer.

3 - The Association of European Senates shall decide by consensus the admission of any other European Senate applying for membership either as a full member or as an observer.

**Article 2 (Aims) :**

The aims of the Association of European Senates shall be the development of relationships between members, promotion of bicameralism in the framework of parliamentary democracy, and strengthening of European identity and awareness.

**Article 3 (Activities) :**

The Association of European Senates :

- shall each year organize at least one meeting on topics of interest to all its members, each of which shall be represented by the President or the parliamentarian chosen by him for that purpose;

- shall encourage the undertaking of common studies, the pooling of information and experience, the creation and use of a Website, and permanent relationships between parliamentary administrations, not least by means of exchanges of civil servants;

- may, on proposal of one of its members, decide to constitute temporary working groups, composed of Presidents assisted by the civil servants or experts they shall have designated, for the purpose of examining issues relating to the role of Senates and the development of bicameralism.

**Article 4 :**

In Association activities, the autonomy and constitutional position of each parliamentary assembly and each President shall be respected.

**Article 5 (Deliberations) :**

The Association shall deliberate by consensus.

**Article 6 (Meetings of the Association) :**

1 - The annual meeting of the Presidents shall take place on the invitation and under the Chairmanship of the host President.

2 - The Association shall be chaired, as of the close of one meeting, by the President inviting to the following ordinary meeting. This President shall be responsible for organizing the said meeting. He shall be assisted by the President hosting the previous meeting and that hosting the meeting following his period as Chairman; they shall form the Committee of the Association.

3 - The secretariat of the Association shall be undertaken by the departments or persons nominated for this purpose by the successive host Presidents, under the same conditions.

4 - At the end of each meeting, the venues for the following two ordinary meetings shall be chosen.

5 - An extraordinary meeting may be called on the proposal of a President, signed by two thirds of the other Presidents. This meeting shall take place at the seat of the assembly the President of which proposed the meeting.

**Article 7 (Agenda) :**

1 - At each meeting, the agenda of the following meeting shall be decided, on the basis of a draft prepared by the President who is to chair that meeting.

2 - The date and the draft agenda of any extraordinary meeting shall be communicated to the Presidents not later than one month before this meeting.

3 - The reports and working documents shall be distributed not later than two weeks before the date of the meeting.

**Article 8 (Minutes of meetings) :**

1 - At the end of each meeting, minutes shall be drawn up by the host President and communicated to all the members of the Association.

2 - The Chairman and each member of the Association shall be entitled to make public the opinions and views they have expressed during the meeting, but such publicity shall in no way bind the Association as a whole.

**Article 9 (Languages) :**

1 - The written documents distributed by the Chairman of the meeting shall be available in French, English, and, where possible, in the language of the host President.

2 - Any contribution from a member of the Association shall be available in French and/or English.

3 - During each meeting of Presidents, simultaneous interpreting shall be carried out in French and English, as well as, where possible, in the national languages of the other members of the Association.

**Article 10 (Amendments) :**

Proposals for amendments to these rules shall be submitted in writing by one or several Presidents to all the members of the Association not later than three weeks before the meeting during which they are to be examined.

These proposals shall be entered on the agenda for the meeting. They shall be presented in a report given by the President chairing the meeting.