

European Parliament

Directorate-General for the Presidency

Directorate for the Plenary

The Plenary: a User's Guide

1 - WHO DOES WHAT IN PLENARY?

1.1 THE PRESIDENT

Duties of the President ([Rule 22](#))

The President directs all the activities of Parliament and its bodies and enjoys all the powers necessary to preside over its proceedings and to ensure that they are properly conducted.

The President of the sitting opens, suspends and closes the sitting, ensures the Rules of Procedure are adhered to, maintains order, gives the floor, closes debates, puts items to the vote and announces the results of votes.

Election of the President ([Rules 15 and 16](#))

The President is elected by secret ballot. Nominations may only be made by a political group or by at least 40 Members. They are handed before each ballot to the Member provisionally in the Chair by virtue of [Rule 14](#), who announces them to Parliament. If, after three ballots, none of the candidates have obtained an absolute majority of the votes cast, the fourth ballot is confined to the two candidates who obtained the highest number of votes in the third ballot.

In the event of a tie, the oldest candidate is declared elected.

As soon as the President has been elected, the Member who is provisionally in the Chair vacates the Chair. Only the elected President may deliver an opening address.

1.2 THE VICE-PRESIDENTS

Duties of the Vice-Presidents ([Rule 23](#))

The Vice-Presidents stand in for the President should she/he be absent, unable to discharge her/his duties or wish to take part in a debate.

Election of the Vice-Presidents (Rules [15](#) and [17](#))

The Vice-Presidents are elected after the President has been elected. There are fourteen seats to be filled. The Vice-Presidents are elected by secret ballot. Nominations may only be made by a political group or by at least 40 Members. Candidates are declared elected in the first ballot if they obtain an absolute majority of the votes cast and are among the fourteen or fewer candidates who obtained the highest number of votes.

A second ballot is held if seats remain unfilled after the first ballot. If a third ballot should prove necessary, candidates are elected by relative majority for the seats still to be filled. In the event of a tie, the oldest candidates are declared elected.

If the number of nominations does not exceed the number of seats to be filled, the candidates may be elected by acclamation. In this case their order of precedence is decided by a secret ballot.

1.3 TERMS OF OFFICE

Terms of office – Length ([Rule 19](#))

The term of office of the President and the Vice-Presidents is **two and a half years**.

Terms of office – Vacancies ([Rule 20](#))

Should it be necessary for the President or a Vice-President to be replaced, the successor is elected in accordance with the above rules.

Should the President's seat become vacant, the first Vice-President takes over the President's duties until a new President is elected.

1.4 PROVISIONAL CHAIR ([Rule 14](#))

The outgoing President or, if this is not possible, one of the outgoing Vice-Presidents in order of precedence or, in their absence, the Member who has held office for the longest period takes the Chair until the President has been elected.

No business may be transacted while a Member is provisionally in the Chair, unless it is concerned with the election of the President or the verification of credentials.

1.5 THE BUREAU

Composition of the Bureau ([Rule 24](#))

The Bureau is composed of Parliament's President and the fourteen Vice-Presidents.

Duties of the Bureau ([Rule 25](#))

The Bureau takes decisions on financial, organisational and administrative matters concerning Members and the internal organisation of Parliament, its secretariat and its bodies. It also manages matters relating to the conduct of sittings.

1.6 THE CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS

Composition of the Conference of Presidents ([Rule 26](#))

The Conference of Presidents consists of the President of Parliament and the chairs of the political groups.

The President of Parliament invites one of the non-attached Members to attend meetings of the Conference of Presidents, without having the right to vote.

Duties of the Conference of Presidents ([Rule 27](#))

Among other tasks, the Conference of Presidents adopts the draft agenda and the final draft agenda for Parliament's part-sessions.

1.7 THE CONFERENCE OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Rules [29](#) and [149](#))

The Conference of Committee Chairs consists of the chairs of all the standing or temporary committees.

The Conference of Committee Chairs makes recommendations to the Conference of Presidents about the drafting of the agenda for part-sessions.

1.8 MEMBERS

Allocation of seats in the Chamber ([Rule 36](#))

The Conference of Presidents decides how seats in the Chamber are to be allocated among the political groups, the non-attached Members and the institutions of the European Union.

Seating plan

An updated seating plan is distributed and published on the [Plenary webpage](#) for each part-session.

1.9 POLITICAL GROUPS ([Rule 32](#))

Members may form themselves into groups according to their political affinities. Political groups must comprise Members elected in at least one quarter of the Member States. The minimum number of Members needed to form a political group is twenty-five.

A Member may not belong to more than one political group.

2 - HOW PLENARY SESSIONS ARE ORGANISED

Parliament sits monthly in Strasbourg in a four-day part-session (Monday to Thursday). Additional part-sessions are held in Brussels.

An agenda is drawn up for each part-session.

2.1 SESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT

Parliamentary term ([Rule 145](#))

The parliamentary term runs concurrently with the Members' term of office, namely five years.

Convening of Parliament ([Rule 146](#))

Parliament meets, without needing to be convened, on the second Tuesday in March each year and decides on the duration of adjournments of the session.

Parliament also meets, without needing to be convened, on the first Tuesday after an interval of one month from the election of the European Parliament.

Exceptionally, Parliament may also be convened by the President on his or her own initiative, or by the President at the request of a majority of the members, or of the Commission or the Council.

Calendar of Parliament's part-sessions

Parliament's annual calendar of part-sessions is adopted in plenary.

Sessions, part-sessions, sittings ([Rule 145](#))

A session is a one-year period. The meetings held as a rule every month by Parliament are part-sessions. Part-sessions are divided into one-day sittings.

Meetings held simultaneously with plenary sittings

As a general rule, plenary sittings being the major forum for the business of the House, no other meetings may be held at the same time.

2.2 AGENDA

Agenda

The following are published for each part-session:

- a **draft agenda**;
- a **final draft agenda**;
- an **agenda**.

Draft agenda ([Rule 149](#))

The draft agenda for the forthcoming part-session is adopted by the **Conference of Presidents** at its second last meeting before the part-session concerned. It is then translated, printed and distributed in all the official languages and published on the [Plenary webpage](#).

Final draft agenda ([Rule 149](#))

Having examined any requests for amendments to the draft agenda proposed by the political groups, the **Conference of Presidents** adopts the final draft agenda at its last meeting before the part-session concerned. It is translated, printed and distributed in all the official languages and published on the [Plenary webpage](#).

Adoption of the agenda ([Rule 152](#))

At the beginning of each part-session, Parliament takes a decision on the final draft agenda.

Amendments may be proposed by a committee, a political group or at least 40 Members and must be received by the President **at least one hour** before the opening of the part-session. He/she may give the floor for one minute each to the person moving the amendment, one speaker in favour and one speaker against.

The agenda thus adopted contains:

- a key to the various parliamentary procedures (listing the order in which items on the agenda will be voted on);
- a list of the debates and other items;
- details of each item (reference documents and procedure);
- speaking time;
- the deadlines for tabling texts relating to items on the agenda and for requesting separate, split and/or roll-call votes.

It is translated, printed and distributed in all the official languages and published on the [Plenary webpage](#).

Amendments to the agenda

Once the agenda has been adopted the Rules provide for changes only in the following three cases:

- application of urgent procedure for a legislative proposal ([Rule 154](#));
- application of a procedural motion (see [Rules 187 to 191](#));
- a proposal by the President. (The President will normally make such a proposal only when there is a consensus with the political groups.)

If a request to amend the agenda is rejected, it may not be tabled again during the same part-session.

2.3 DEBATES

Timing

Plenary debates can be followed live on the [Plenary webpage](#). For forthcoming debates, estimated timing and lists of speakers are published and updated in real time.

Adjournment of a debate or a vote ([Rule 190](#))

At the start of a debate on an item on the agenda, a political group or at least 40 Members may move that the debate be adjourned to a specific date and time. The motion is put immediately to the vote.

The President must be notified at least twenty-four hours in advance of any intention to call for a debate to be adjourned.

If the motion is carried, Parliament moves to the next item on the agenda. The debate that has been adjourned will be resumed at the date and time agreed. If the motion is rejected, it cannot be tabled again during the same part-session.

A political group or at least 40 Members may also move that a vote be adjourned either before or during the vote, in which case this motion is put immediately to the vote.

Closure of a debate ([Rule 189](#))

A debate may be closed before all the speakers on the list have been called, should the President propose this or a political group or at least 40 Members request it. Such a proposal or request is immediately put to the vote.

If the proposal or motion is carried, only one Member from each political group that has not so far taken part in the debate may still speak. The debate is closed after these final speeches and Parliament then votes on the item under discussion, unless a specific time for the vote has been agreed on previously.

If the proposal or the motion is rejected, only the President may table it again during the same debate.

2.4 DEADLINES

Deadlines for tabling amendments

The deadline for tabling amendments to texts voted in plenary is normally **midday on the Wednesday** of the week before the start of the part-sessions in Strasbourg and Brussels.

Different deadlines may be adopted during the part-session, particularly as regards new items added to the final draft agenda or agenda itself.

The deadlines are published in the agenda for the part-session and on the [Plenary webpage](#).

Deadlines for requesting separate, split or roll-call votes

A political group or at least 40 Members may request a separate, split or roll-call vote. The request must be in writing and be made **before the relevant deadline indicated in the agenda (two days before the vote as a rule)**.

When voting on a report by way of a single vote and/or a final vote, Parliament votes by roll-call ([Rule 179](#)). This does not apply to reports concerning procedures on immunity (Rule 9).

Deadlines relating to legislative procedures

Deadlines concerning the handling of legislative procedures are announced by the President and have binding effect. The deadlines established in the Rules of Procedure for parliamentary procedures can be calculated on the basis of these announcements. Details of announcements appear in the minutes of the sitting concerned.

2.5 URGENT PROCEDURE ([Rule 154](#))

A request that a debate on a proposal on which Parliament has been consulted be treated as urgent may be made by the Council, the Commission, the President, a parliamentary committee, a political group or at least 40 Members. It must be made in writing and supported by reasons.

The President announces the request to Parliament and the vote on the request takes place during the following sitting.

If the request is adopted, the President determines the time of the debate (if any) and vote. An urgent debate may be held without a report or, exceptionally, on the basis of an oral report by the committee responsible.

See also 'Procedure without amendment or debate' (in section 5.3. 'Voting Procedure') and 'Amendments - Simplified Procedure' (in section 5.1. 'Amendments').

2.6 FORMAL SITTINGS

A formal sitting is a sitting held to mark an official visit (e.g. by a Head of State or Prime Minister) made at the President's invitation. The official guest addresses Parliament from a special rostrum.

Sakharov Prize

Since 1988 the European Parliament has awarded the annual Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in order to grant recognition to individuals, such as Andrei Sakharov, or bodies committed to defending human rights and fundamental freedoms and combating oppression and injustice. The prize is presented annually at a formal sitting of Parliament, generally in December.

3 - MEETING PLACE, CHAMBER, GALLERIES

Parliament sits monthly in Strasbourg in a four-day part-session (Monday to Thursday). Additional part-sessions are held in Brussels.

An agenda is drawn up for each part-session.

Access to the Chamber

Under [Rule 157](#), only Members of Parliament, Members of the Commission, Members of the Council, Parliament's Secretary-General, staff members, experts and EU officials there on official duty may enter the Chamber.

Political group staff are allocated a number of seats in the Chamber. They may only enter the Chamber when strictly necessary to assist Members in the exercise of their duties there. They must show the appropriate entry pass and wear it visibly at all times.

Parliament officials may enter the Chamber only on an exceptional basis and when strictly necessary to assist Members in the exercise of their duties there. They must show the appropriate entry pass and wear it visibly at all times.

Only parliamentary ushers are permitted, on the authority of the person presiding over the sitting, to distribute documents relating to parliamentary business.

Applications for group visits

Applications for group visits may be sent as follows:

Visits to Brussels and to Strasbourg during plenary sessions:

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
Visits and Seminars
PHS 01C003
rue Wiertz 60
1047 Brussels
BELGIUM
Tel.: +32/2 284 21 03
Fax +32/2 284 35 30

Visits to Strasbourg outside plenary sessions:

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
Strasbourg Office
BP 1024 F
67070 Strasbourg Cedex
FRANCE
Tel.: +33/3 88 17 20 01 / +33/3 88 17 20 08
Fax +33/3 88 17 51 84

There is also an online application form:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en/visits/chamber-tour-for-groups/book_a_group_visit.html;jsessionid=00A8183F528AC6E541659AE2871F9A1A

Access to the public galleries

Parliament's debates are open to the public, unless the Assembly decides otherwise.

Only persons so authorised by Parliament's President or the Secretariat's departments concerned may be admitted to the public galleries.

The Protocol Unit reserves places at all times for official delegations, members of the diplomatic corps, members of national parliaments and dignitaries. Applications for access must be sent to DG Presidency's Protocol Unit. In principle, these are the only people admitted to the official galleries.

Places are reserved at all times for members of the accredited press corps. Access to the galleries is governed by the rules applicable to photographers and television crews inside Parliament's buildings.

Places are reserved at all times for visitors' groups invited by Members. Applications for access must be sent to DG Communication's Visits and Seminars Unit. Authorisations are valid for a limited period not exceeding one hour.

The Protocol Unit and the Visits and Seminars Unit forward particulars of the official delegations or visitors' groups present in the galleries in good time to the Plenary Organisation and Follow-up Unit so as to ensure that the person presiding over the sitting is informed of their identity.

Groups of fewer than nine visitors invited by Members, and other visitors, are admitted subject to the availability of places. They must have a pass issued by the Security Unit's Accreditation Centre. These passes are issued for that day's sitting only and are valid for one day at the most. They must be shown on request.

Access for officials, political group staff, Members' assistants or long-term visitors is contingent on the availability of vacant seats in the galleries.

If necessary, a separate room with a live feed from the Chamber may be placed at their disposal.

Young children are not admitted to the galleries as a rule.

Passes for the galleries and special passes

During ordinary sittings, Parliament's Visits and Seminars Unit is responsible for granting passes to the galleries to visitors' groups and individual external visitors.

The passes are issued by staff at the reception of Visitors Service. They are for that day's sitting only and are valid for a limited period in plenary galleries not exceeding one hour.

During formal sittings, all galleries, except the press gallery, are the responsibility of the Protocol Unit. All normal passes cease to be valid and access to the galleries is authorised only upon presentation of a special pass.

Applications for special passes must be made at least twenty-four hours before the sitting in question to the European Parliament's Protocol Unit, which may limit the number of places allocated to each category of applicants or establish an order of priority.

Applications must specify the name and status of the applicant, the number of places required and the name(s) and status(es) of the beneficiary or beneficiaries.

Conduct in the Chamber

Persons admitted to the galleries must remain seated and keep silent. They must refrain from any actions contrary to the dignity of the Institution or likely to disrupt the business of the Assembly.

Expressions of approval or disapproval ([Rule 157](#)) are forbidden, as is any photography (except where prior authorisation has been granted on the understanding that additional lighting equipment or flash may not be used).

The use of mobile phones, smoking, eating or drinking is also prohibited in the galleries.

Persons present in the galleries must rise when the Assembly observes a minute's silence.

Persons present in the galleries will be informed of the rules concerning the conduct which the Institution expects of them.

Parliament staff responsible for the galleries may call to order and, if necessary, eject any person whose dress or conduct does not comply with these rules.

Filming

Television and cinema cameramen and photographers have permanent access during the part-session to the visitors' gallery overlooking the Chamber.

Passes bearing the letter **T** (for Tribune = galleries) are issued by the Press Service's Audio-visual Unit for each part-session.

The use of additional lighting equipment and flash is prohibited in the galleries.

Official visits

Official visits are usually defined as visits by persons holding public office who have accepted an invitation from the relevant Parliament authorities and who are acting in their official capacity.

4 - ORGANISATION AND CONDUCT OF DEBATES

Plenary sittings primarily consist of times for **debates** and **votes** (for further information on voting, see chapter 5 - 'Organisation and conduct of voting').

Key debates are debates selected by the Conference of Presidents as being of major political importance and are normally held on Wednesday morning in Strasbourg. During key debates no other meetings may be organised in parallel.

4.1 TYPES OF DEBATE

Committee reports (full debate)

A report is first debated and then put to the vote. A full debate normally has the following structure:

- Rapporteur(s)
- Council (when present)
- Commission
- Rapporteurs of opinions
- Speakers on the speakers' list
- Catch-the-eye
- Commission
- Council (when present)
- Rapporteur(s)

Rapporteurs are given six minutes to speak. This time is not deducted from the time allocated to political groups.

Rapporteurs for opinions are given one minute of speaking time. This time is not deducted from the time allocated to political groups.

Please note that reports adopted in committee by a very large majority may be put directly to the vote without debate ([Rule 150](#)).

Committee reports (short presentation) (Rules [150](#) and [151](#))

Short presentations are used mainly for own-initiative reports. They consist of a speech by the rapporteur (4 minutes) and a reaction by the Commission followed by up to 10 minutes of debate in which the President may give the floor, for up to 1 minute each, to Members on the basis of the catch-the-eye procedure.

According to current practice, short presentations are structured as follows:

- Rapporteur 4'
- Catch-the-eye 5' (indicative)
- Commission 5'

Statements by the other Institutions ([Rule 123](#))

Debates may be held on statements by the European Council, the Council, the Commission or the Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The debate may be wound up by a resolution.

Oral questions to the Council and the Commission ([Rule 128](#))

Oral questions may be tabled by a committee or political groups. If an oral question is tabled by a committee, the author is given five minutes speaking time. Debates may concern several oral questions tabled by political groups on the same subject. In such cases each author is given two minutes speaking time.

A debate on one or more oral questions may be wound up by a resolution.

Debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law ([Rule 135](#))

Once a month, on Thursday afternoon in Strasbourg, Parliament holds debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Three subjects are chosen each time. A subject cannot be included on the agenda for this type of debate if it is already on the agenda for the part-session. The total duration of the debates should not exceed 60 minutes.

The debates begin with interventions by the authors of the motions for resolutions, who are each given one minute speaking time. They are followed by speakers on behalf of the groups. Two minutes is set aside for catch-the-eye interventions for each debate. The debates are closed by the Commission.

The vote on motions for resolutions to wind up the debates takes place immediately after the debates.

Extraordinary debate ([Rule 153](#))

[Rule 153](#) provides for the holding of an extraordinary debate on a matter of major interest. This debate may not last longer than sixty minutes and is wound up without the adoption of a resolution.

In practice, this provision is very rarely used.

Question time ([Rule 129](#))

Question Time with the Commission is held at each part-session for a duration of 90 minutes on one or more specific horizontal themes decided upon by the Conference of Presidents one month in advance of the part-session.

The Commissioners have a portfolio related to the specific horizontal theme or themes on which questions are to be put to them. The number of Commissioners is limited to two per part-session, with the possibility of adding a third being dependent on the specific horizontal theme or themes chosen for the Question Time.

Members who put a question to one of the Commissioners are chosen by means of a ballot system:

- a ballot box is placed at the entrance to the Chamber one hour before the start of Question Time;
- Members wishing to put a question write their name on a form and place it in the ballot box;
- Members wishing to put a question may submit no more than one form
- the President opens Question Time and closes the ballot box;

- the President draws one ballot at a time and calls on the chosen Member to put his or her question to the competent Commissioner.

The Member has one minute in which to formulate the question and the Commissioner two minutes in which to reply. That Member may put a supplementary question of 30 seconds duration, having a direct bearing on the main question. The Commissioner has two minutes in which to give a supplementary reply.

Question Hour ([Rule 129](#))

Specific question hours may be held with the Council, the President of the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative and the President of the Eurogroup.

Established practice for Question Hour with the President of the Commission is that the 60-minute period is divided into two parts: the first part consisting of "free questions" put by political group chairs or their representatives on any subject, and a second part with a specific theme during which the representative of the institution concerned responds to questions put by Members using the catch-the-eye procedure. During the first part, speaking time is one minute per question, with 30 seconds for a possible supplementary. For the second part, Members have one minute to put their question. Question Hour with other representatives consists simply of "catch-the-eye" questions. Responses from the representative of the institution concerned should not exceed one minute.

4.2 PROCEDURES IN DEBATES

Catch-the-eye ([162\(6\)](#))

With a view to increasing the spontaneity of debates and Members' participation, a period is set aside for short speeches (one minute maximum) by Members on a "catch-the-eye" basis. This occurs at the end of the normal list of speakers, immediately prior to the closing speeches by the Commission, Council and the rapporteur(s) (where appropriate). The agenda sets aside a period of five minutes for "catch-the-eye", but this period can be shortened or extended by the President under [Rule 162](#), on the basis of the overall time available.

Members wishing for the floor under this procedure should attract the President's attention by raising their hand. Priority will normally be given to Members who have been present throughout the debate and who have not spoken during the debate or during the time-slot in which the debate takes place. Overall, the President seeks to ensure that the "catch-the-eye" is balanced and that the different political groups and nationalities have their turn.

Exceptionally, when adopting the final draft agenda, the Conference of Presidents may decide that a debate is limited to one round of speakers, with no "catch-the-eye" nor blue cards.

Blue card ([Rule 162\(8\)](#))

The President may give the floor to Members who indicate, by raising a blue card, their wish to put to another Member, during that Member's speech, a question of no longer than half a minute's duration, where the speaker agrees and where the President is satisfied that this will not lead to a disruption of the debate.

When a Member raises his/her blue card, the President, if he/she judges it appropriate, will ask the speaker, normally at the close of his/her speech, if he/she is willing to take the question before giving the floor to the blue card speaker. The "blue-card" speaker has 30 seconds to ask a question and the original

speaker 30 seconds to respond. A speaker can be interrupted by more than one blue-card holder, at the President's discretion. A Member can make more than one blue-card request during a debate; it will be up to the President to decide whether or not to grant the request. A rapporteur or a speaker under the catch-the-eye procedure can also be interrupted by a blue card holder. Blue card questions may not be put to representatives of the other Institutions.

Exceptionally, when adopting the final draft agenda, the Conference of Presidents may decide that a debate is limited to one round of speakers, with no "catch-the-eye" or blue cards.

4.3 TAKING THE FLOOR IN PLENARY

Members who wish to speak in a debate on the plenary agenda should ask their political group to allocate them speaking time. Alternatively they may ask to speak under the catch-the-eye procedure (see 4.2). When speaking in Parliament, any Member who has a direct financial interest in the subject under debate must declare this interest to the meeting orally ([Annex I, Article 1](#)).

Members who have not spoken in a debate may, at most once per part-session, hand in a written statement of not more than 200 words, which will be appended to the verbatim report of the debate ([Rule 162\(12\)](#)).

One-minute speeches ([Rule 163](#))

For a period of not more than 30 minutes during the first sitting of each part-session, and on the basis of a list prepared by the Plenary Organisation and Follow-up Unit, Members may speak for a maximum of one minute each on a matter of political importance they wish to draw Parliament's attention to.

Blue card questions may not be put during one-minute speeches.

Personal statements ([Rule 164](#))

Members may ask to make a personal statement to rebut any remarks made about their person in the course of the debate or opinions that have been attributed to them. They may also make a statement to correct observations that they themselves have made.

In general, personal statements may not be more than three minutes long.

Procedural motions ([Rule 185](#))

Requests to move a procedural motion, namely:

- to declare a matter inadmissible ([Rule 187](#));
- to refer back to committee ([Rule 188](#));
- to close a debate ([Rule 189](#));
- to adjourn a debate and vote ([Rule 190](#));
- to suspend or close the sitting ([Rule 191](#)).

take precedence over other requests to speak.

Only the following persons may be heard on these motions in addition to the mover: a speaker in favour and one against and the chair or rapporteur of the committee responsible. Speaking time may not be more than one minute.

Interpretation of debates in plenary ([Rule 158](#))

Debates in plenary are interpreted simultaneously into all the official languages of the European Union.

If a speaker uses a language that is not an official one, the speech will not be interpreted and will not be included in the verbatim report of the debates.

Speakers may provide beforehand the text of the speech they will be giving in plenary.

Numbers of the interpreting booths and sound channels:

1 DE German	2 EN English	3 FR French	4 IT Italian	5 NL Dutch	6 DA Danish	7 EL Greek
8 ES Spanish	9 PT Portuguese	10 SU Finnish	11 SV Swedish	12 CS Czech	13 ET Estonian	14 LV Latvian
15 LT Lithuanian	16 HU Hungarian	17 MT Maltese	18 PL Polish	19 SK Slovak	20 SL Slovenian	21 BG Bulgarian
22 RO Romanian	23 GA Irish	24 HR Croatian				

Speakers

Members stand and speak from their places, addressing the President or Vice-President.

List of speakers ([Rule 162](#))

Speaking time is fixed for the whole part-session and entered in that part-session's Agenda. Speaking time is allocated to each political group on the basis of their numerical strength.

Taking the speaking time they have been allocated, political groups draw up a list of their speakers for all the debates on the agenda. Members who wish to speak in a debate must inform their group. The groups give the names of their speakers, the order in which they will speak and the time allocated to each one.

Structure of debates in plenary

A. Debate on a report (ordinary legislative procedure, consent procedure, consultation procedure and own-initiative reports¹)

1. Rapporteur
2. Possibly Council²
3. Commission³
4. Possibly rapporteurs for opinion
5. Speakers on the speakers' list
6. "Catch-the-eye"
7. Commission¹

¹ For own-initiative reports that are not short presentations

² With regard to reports on subjects that fall within the competence of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative (VPC/HR) of the Union for foreign and security policy, the latter intervenes after the rapporteur. In case of the VPC/HR being absent, he/she will decide whether he/she is to be replaced by the representative of the current Council Presidency or by a member of the Commission.

³ *ibid*

8. Possibly Council²
9. Rapporteur

B. Cases of special debates on reports

a) Annual reports from other institutions ([Rule 132](#))

1. Rapporteur
2. Institution invited
3. Possibly Commission
(4-9 as under A. above)

b) Short presentations

1. Rapporteur
2. "Catch-the-eye"
3. Commission

c) Waiver of immunity (IMM)

d) Amendment of the Rules of Procedure (REG)

In general, neither the Council nor the Commission intervene in the latter two types of debates, so their structure is:

1. Rapporteur
2. Speakers on the speakers' list
3. "Catch-the-eye"
4. Rapporteur

C. Other procedures

a) European Council / Council / VPC/HR / Commission statement(s) ([Rule 123](#)):

1. Institution(s) concerned
2. Speakers on the speakers' list
3. "Catch-the-eye"
4. Institution(s) concerned
5. Possibly one round of speakers in reverse order

b) Oral Question(s) ([Rule 128](#)):

1. Author(s) of the OQ(s)
2. Institution(s) concerned
3. Speakers on the speakers' list
4. "Catch-the-eye"
5. Institution(s) concerned

c) Debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law ([Rule 135](#))

1. Authors of the motions for resolutions

¹ ibid

² ibid

2. Speakers on the speakers' list
3. "Catch-the-eye"
4. Commission

D. General principles

1. The European Council, the Council, the VPC/HR, the Commission and the institutions invited are asked not to exceed the speaking time allocated to them in the agenda.
2. There is no "catch-the-eye" and there are no blue card questions in debates for which the agenda foresees only one round of speakers.
3. The order in which the authors of oral questions ([Rule 128](#)) or of motions for resolution ([Rule 135](#)) speak follows the chronological order of the tabling of the questions or motions respectively.

The maximum speaking time is normally fixed as follows:

Rapporteur(s)		6' (4'+2')
Rapporteur(s) for opinion(s)		1'
Author of an oral question: - on behalf of a committee - on behalf of a political group		5' 2'
Catch-the-eye		1'
Explanation of vote - on behalf of a group - on own behalf	Rule 183	2' 1'
Procedural motion	Rule 185	1'
Point of order	Rule 186	1'
Personal statement	Rule 164	3'

4.4 CONDUCT IN THE CHAMBER

Under [Rule 11](#) Members' conduct shall be characterised by mutual respect, based on the values and principles laid down in the basic texts on which the European Union is founded, respect the dignity of Parliament and not compromise the smooth conduct of parliamentary business or disturb the peace and quiet of any of Parliament's premises.

Standards of conduct

As laid down in the rules adopted by the Bureau, the following are not allowed in the Chamber: banners, leaflets, wall posters, the use of mobile phones and smoking.

Under [Annex XV](#) of the Rules of Procedure:

1. A distinction should be drawn between visual actions, which may be tolerated, provided they are not offensive and/or defamatory, remain within reasonable bounds and do not lead to conflict, and those which actively disrupt any parliamentary activity whatsoever.
2. Members will be held responsible for any failure by persons whom they employ or for whom they arrange access to Parliament to comply on Parliament's premises with the standards of conduct applicable to Members.

Any failure to comply with these provisions may be regarded as a disturbance within the meaning of [Rule 165](#).

Calling to order ([Rule 165](#))

The President calls to order any Member who disrupts the smooth conduct of the proceedings or whose conduct fails to comply with the relevant provisions of [Rule 11](#) as regards standards of conduct.

Should the offence be repeated, the President calls the Member to order again, and the fact is recorded in the minutes of the sitting.

Should the disturbance continue, or if a further offence is committed, the President may deny the offenders the right to speak and exclude them from the Chamber for the remainder of the sitting.

Should disturbances threaten to obstruct the business of the House, the President may either suspend the sitting for a given period or close it.

Penalties ([Rule 166](#))

When a case of disorder or disruption of Parliament is exceptionally serious, the President, after hearing the Member concerned, will adopt a reasoned decision laying down the appropriate penalty. The penalty is notified to the Member concerned and to the presiding officers of the bodies, committees, and delegations on which the Member serves, before being announced to plenary.

The penalty may take the form of a reprimand, temporary forfeiture of entitlement to the daily subsistence allowance, temporary suspension from Parliament's activities, or suspension or removal from one or more of the elective offices held by the Member in Parliament.

5 - ORGANISATION AND CONDUCT OF VOTING

Votes in plenary take place after the debates, generally at about midday. A quorum exists when one third of the Members are present in the Chamber. Parliament normally votes by show of hands; the President of the sitting determines in each instance whether there is a majority. In cases of doubt, the President will call for a vote to be taken using the electronic voting system.

At the end of voting, those Members who so wish may speak in order to give an explanation of vote.

5.1 AMENDMENTS

An amendment may seek to alter a part of a text (a motion for a resolution, a draft legislative resolution or a legislative proposal) and hence to delete, add, or substitute words or figures in this text. It has to satisfy certain admissibility criteria.

Only the committee(s) responsible, a political group, or at least 40 Members may table amendments for consideration in plenary.

Amendments must be signed by their authors and tabled in writing with Parliament's appropriate department. Parliament staff (the Tabling Desk) are responsible for coordinating and handling amendments from the time when they have been tabled until they are put to the vote.

See also 'Deadlines for tabling amendments' (in section 2.4. 'Deadlines').

Amendments in columns

After being checked by the Directorate for Legislative Acts (Lawyer-linguists), amendments by a committee responsible are published in anticipation of the plenary vote and disseminated via the [Plenary webpage](#).

Amendments are presented in columns (with the proposed new text on the right).

Compromise amendments (Rules [61\(2\)](#), [173](#) and [174](#))

The term "compromise amendment" is used in two different contexts:

- when a compromise is being sought between the Commission or Council and Parliament, represented by the committee responsible (Rules [61\(2\)](#), [69](#) and [73](#));
- or when political groups are seeking to reach a compromise among themselves (Rules [173](#) and [174](#))

In the former case, a compromise amendment is treated as a standard plenary amendment.

In the latter cases:

i) if a compromise amendment has been tabled after the close of the debate, the President will rule on its admissibility, ascertaining whether the amendment constitutes a compromise.

In so doing he may consider the following general criteria:

- compromise amendments may not relate to parts of the text to which no amendments were tabled before the deadline expired;
- compromise amendments must be tabled by political groups, the chairs or rapporteurs of the committees concerned, or the authors of other amendments;

- where there are compromise amendments, other amendments to the same passage must be withdrawn.

ii) only the President may propose that a compromise amendment be considered. The President must obtain Parliament's agreement by asking whether there are any objections to the amendment's being put to the vote. If an objection is raised, the plenary will decide by a majority of the votes cast whether to vote on the compromise amendment.

Tabling and moving amendments ([Rule 169](#))

The committee responsible, a political group, or at least 40 Members (or for certain procedures one tenth of the House) may table amendments for consideration in plenary.

Amendments must be tabled in writing and signed by their authors. The deadline for tabling amendments is set by the President.

An amendment may be moved during the debate by its author or by any other Member appointed by the author to replace him or her.

As a general rule an amendment may not be put to the vote if it has not been printed and distributed in all the official languages. Parliament may nevertheless decide by a majority of the votes cast to vote on such an amendment but only on condition that there is no opposition from 40 Members or, if there are less than 100 Members present, from one tenth of those present.

Committee consideration of plenary amendments ([Rule 175](#))

When more than fifty amendments and requests for a split or separate vote have been tabled to a report for consideration in plenary, the President may ask the committee responsible to meet to consider those amendments or requests. Any amendment or request for a split or separate vote not receiving favourable votes at this stage from at least one tenth of the committee members is not put to the vote.

Order of voting of amendments ([Rule 174](#))

The Rules of Procedure lay down the order in which amendments tabled are to be put to the vote in plenary.

With the assistance of Parliament's appropriate department (the Tabling Desk), the President draws up a voting list for each text for which the vote has been placed on the agenda.

See also 'Voting procedure - second reading' (in section 5.3. 'Voting procedure').

See also 'Voting procedure - third reading' (in section 5.3. 'Voting procedure').

If two or more mutually exclusive amendments have been tabled to the same part of a text, the amendment that departs furthest from the original text has priority and is put to the vote first. If it is adopted, the other amendments fall. If it is rejected, the amendment next in priority is put to the vote, each of the remaining amendments being treated similarly.

Where there is doubt as to priority, the President decides, if necessary after consulting the rapporteur. If all amendments are rejected, the original text is deemed adopted unless a separate vote has been requested within the specified deadline. However, the President may put the original text to the vote first or, before taking the vote on the amendment that departs furthest from the original text, put to the vote an amendment that is closer to the original text.

When an amendment is adopted, other incompatible amendments relating to the same part of the text will fall. As a general rule amendments will lapse if they are inconsistent with a previous vote.

Identical amendments

Two or more identical amendments tabled by different authors are put to the vote as one.

Justifications for amendments

Amendments to legislative documents may be accompanied by short justifications. Such justifications are intended solely to clarify an author's intentions. They fall under the responsibility of their author and are not put to the vote.

Justifications are **not** permitted when amendments relate to non-legislative texts.

Oral amendments

Exceptionally, amendments may be tabled orally in plenary sitting before the text in question is put to the vote.

However, since the Rules of Procedure ([Rule 169](#)) provide that amendments may be put to the vote only after they have been printed and distributed in all the official languages, unless Parliament decides otherwise, the President of the sitting is required to consult the House on whether an oral amendment should be considered. If at least 40 Members object, the oral amendment may not be taken into consideration.

Procedure in plenary without amendment ([Rule 150](#))

Any legislative proposal (first reading) or any non-legislative motion for a resolution adopted in committee with less than one tenth of the committee members voting against is placed on Parliament's draft agenda for adoption without amendment.

An item to be taken without amendment is dealt with by a single vote unless, before the final draft agenda has been drawn up, political groups or individual Members who together constitute one tenth of Parliament's membership have requested permission in writing to table amendments. In that event the President shall set a deadline for tabling the amendments.

When finalising a part-session agenda, the Conference of Presidents may propose that other items be taken without amendment. When adopting its agenda, Parliament may not accept any such proposal if a political group or at least 40 Members have raised objections in writing at least one hour before the opening of the part-session.

Amendments – Simplified procedure ([Rule 50](#))

Following initial discussion of a legislative proposal, the Chair of the committee concerned may propose that the proposal be approved without amendment. Unless at least one tenth of the committee members object, the Chair will submit a report to Parliament approving the proposal.

Amendments – Admissibility (Rules [22](#), [52](#), [61](#), [69](#), [170](#) and [174](#))

The admissibility criteria are laid down in the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament. In line with the development of the legislative procedure, additional inadmissibility criteria apply at second reading. No amendments are admissible at third reading.

In the case of non-legislative motions for resolutions ([Rule 170\(4\)](#)), a political group may table an alternative motion for a resolution to a non-legislative motion for a resolution contained in a committee report. In this event the group may not table amendments to the motion for a resolution by the committee responsible. The alternative motion for a resolution may not be longer than the committee's motion for a resolution. It is put to a single vote in Parliament without amendment.

The rapporteur may table amendments to take account of new information received after adoption of the text by the committee responsible ([Rule 52\(2\)](#)), and at least one tenth the Members of the European Parliament may table amendments seeking to change the text adopted by the committee responsible ([Rule 52\(2\)](#)).

An amendment that has been declared inadmissible is not put to the vote.

The President decides whether amendments are admissible. His decision is not based exclusively on the provisions relating to inadmissibility, but on the provisions of the Rules in general. His decision is final.

Amendments – Withdrawal ([Rule 169\(5\)](#))

Where an amendment is withdrawn by its author, it falls unless immediately taken over by another Member under the same conditions (on behalf of the committee(s) responsible, a political group or at least 40 Members).

Amendments – Deletion

Any amendment deleting a part of a text is put to the vote before other amendments relating to the same part of the text.

If a part of a text is the subject of a deleting amendment, separate vote requests on that text are not admissible and any request for a roll-call vote must concern the deleting amendment, not the original text.

Collective voting on amendments (Rules [173](#) and [174](#))

Voting on reports is based on a recommendation of the committee responsible. If the committee has agreed on a set of amendments to the text with which the report is concerned the amendments in question are put to the vote collectively in plenary and taken first in order of priority.

If a political group or at least 40 Members have requested a separate vote or if other amendments have been tabled to the same part of the text, the amendments in question are put to the vote separately.

The President may put other amendments to the vote collectively where they are complementary. In such cases he follows the procedure set out above. Authors of such amendments may propose such collective votes where their amendments are complementary.

The President may decide, following the adoption or a rejection of a particular amendment, that several other amendments of similar content or with similar objectives are to be put to the vote collectively. The President may seek the agreement of Parliament before doing so. Such a set of amendments may relate to different parts of the original text.

5.2 ORGANISATION OF VOTING

The service responsible

The Tabling Desk is responsible for the submission of texts put to the vote in Parliament and for checking whether they comply with the rules and are admissible. Disputes are referred to the President of Parliament. His decision is final.

The Tabling Desk prepares briefings for the President and also publishes on the [Plenary webpage](#) voting schedules and voting lists concerning the organisation and conduct of voting. Prior to voting, the official responsible briefs the Chair and notifies him of any procedural and/or presentational problems which may occur during voting.

Order of votes of items placed on the agenda

Texts are put to the vote in the order laid down in the voting schedule published on the [Plenary webpage](#).

Voting lists

A voting list is drawn up for each item that is put to the vote.

An initial list is published by the Tabling Desk on the [Plenary webpage](#) after amendments have been received. It shows the order in which the amendments will be put to the vote and any amendments that have lapsed. Upon the expiry of the deadlines for the submission of requests for roll-call, separate and split votes, a final version of the voting list, including details of these requests, is published on the [Plenary webpage](#).

Taking the floor during voting time (Rules [150](#) and [171\(5\)](#))

No Member may be given the floor when Parliament is voting. During voting only the President and the rapporteur may address the House.

When an item is taken without debate, the rapporteur or the chairman of the committee responsible may make a statement of not more than two minutes immediately prior to the vote.

Other Members may be authorised to take the floor to draw attention to translation problems. A vote may be interrupted only in the event of a misunderstanding concerning the subject of the vote.

A Member may not be given the floor in order to justify amendments under consideration or to relaunch the debate on substantive matters.

Disputes on voting ([Rule 184](#))

The President may of his own initiative or at the request of the House cross-check the result of a vote by show of hands using the electronic voting system.

The result of the vote is initially displayed only on the President's screen. The result of the vote is validated when it is announced by the President. The President's decision is final.

Electronic vote ([Rule 181](#))

Electronic votes are cast using the blue non-transferable chip card.

Members may vote from any seat in the Chamber using their personal cards.

The voting card is inserted into the slot in the terminal at the Member's seat with the side showing the Member's name facing towards him or her. The terminal then comes on.

If the card has been inserted incorrectly, a yellow warning light will flash and an animated display will appear.

If the card has been correctly inserted, the display will show:

- the card number
- the Member's name
- the current date.

When the President puts a motion to the vote, Members should press the button on the terminal that corresponds to their voting intention. The appropriate light will then come on on the terminal:

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| – left-hand button | FOR | GREEN light |
| – centre button | ABSTENTION | WHITE light |
| – right-hand button | AGAINST | RED light |

When a vote is taken by secret ballot, only a BLUE light will appear, indicating that the Member has taken part in the vote.

The display will show information about the vote in the form of pictograms:

- subject of the vote
- nature of vote: *for (+), against (-), abstention (0)* for votes by public ballot
X for votes by secret ballot
- type of vote: *simple, roll-call or secret ballot*
- status of vote: *open, closed*

Until such time as the President has announced that voting is closed, Members may change their vote by pressing a different button.

The President assesses the data provided by the voting system, notes the result and announces it.

Following the announcement by the President, the display on the terminal and one of the big screens in the Chamber will show the result of the vote.

During debates, and outside voting times, the display will show the following information:

- subject of the debate
- name of the speaker
- names of the upcoming speakers
- the next items on the agenda.

Voting by roll-call ([Rule 180](#))

The vote is taken by roll-call if a political group or at least 40 Members have so requested in writing before the deadline laid down in the voting schedule published on the [Plenary webpage](#). Roll-call voting

usually takes place using the electronic system. The result of the vote is recorded by name and published as an annex to the minutes of the sitting.

When voting on a report, whether by way of a single and/or final vote, Parliament votes by roll-call ([Rule 179](#)). This does not apply to reports concerning procedures on immunity ([Rule 11](#)).

Correction of votes

Requests for a correction of vote made verbally in the sitting or forwarded in writing or electronically by Members may concern **only roll-call votes**.

Any request for a correction of vote forwarded by a Member is recorded in the list of "results of roll-call votes" as printed and available electronically on the [Plenary webpage](#), but the result of the vote is not changed.

Any Member wishing to point out a correction to a roll-call vote may do so by using the "Roll-call vote correction" electronic form in the "Members only" space on the [Plenary webpage](#).

Corrections received before 6:30 p.m. on the day of the vote are published on the [Plenary webpage](#) on that day and in the minutes of the sitting, after the results of votes.

A correction of votes can be submitted until Friday 12 noon of the second week following the part-session.

Explanations of vote ([Rule 183](#))

Explanations of votes may be given orally or in writing, individually or on behalf of a group.

Requests for oral explanations of vote must be forwarded to the Plenary Organisation and Follow-up Unit before the end of voting time either by using the "Explanation of Vote" electronic form in the "Members only" space on the [Plenary webpage](#) or by contacting the Plenary Organisation and Follow-up Unit staff in the Chamber. No further requests for explanations of vote are admissible after the first explanation of vote for that particular sitting has begun.

Speaking time for oral explanations of votes is one minute if the Member is speaking in a personal capacity and two minutes if the Member is speaking on behalf of a political group.

Written explanations of votes can be submitted via the "Explanation of vote" electronic form in the "Members only" space on the [Plenary webpage](#), by e-mail or to the staff in the Chamber. They can be submitted until Friday 12 noon the week after the part-session concerned.

There are no explanations of vote on:

- procedural matters;
- resolutions tabled in the context of debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law ([Rule 135](#)).

In the case of reports voted on under the procedure without debate, only written explanations of vote are permitted ([Rule 150](#)).

Quorum ([Rule 168](#))

A quorum exists when **one third of the component Members of Parliament** are present in the Chamber.

Unless the President – on a request made before voting has begun by at least 40 Members – establishes at the moment of voting that the quorum is not present, the vote is valid whatever the number of voters.

A request for the quorum to be ascertained can be made by at least 40 Members. If the number of Members required to make up the quorum is not present, the President does not announce the result of the vote, but declares that the quorum is not present. In this case the vote is placed on the agenda of the next sitting.

Majorities

Unless the Treaties and/or Rules of Procedure provide otherwise, decisions are adopted by a majority of the votes cast (for and against). This is often referred to as a "simple" majority.

Certain decisions, for example amendments to the Budget, votes at second reading in legislative procedures and amendments to the Rules of Procedure, require for adoption the votes of a majority of the Members of the House. This is often referred to as a "qualified" majority

Certain decisions on the use of funds under the Flexibility Instrument or the Globalisation Adjustment Fund require for adoption the votes of a majority of the Members of the House and also three fifths of the votes cast.

Results of votes

The results of votes are published as an annex to the minutes of the sitting. They are also available on the day of the vote on the [Plenary webpage](#). Corrections of votes are also published there.

5.3 VOTING PROCEDURE

The following voting procedure applies to reports:

- (a) first, voting on any amendments to the text with which the report of the committee responsible is concerned;
- (b) second, voting on the text as a whole, amended or otherwise;
- (c) third, voting on amendments to the motion for a resolution/draft legislative resolution;
- (d) finally, voting on the motion for a resolution/draft legislative resolution as a whole (final vote).

Voting procedure – second reading (Rule [68](#), [69](#) and [76](#))

Where no proposal to reject or amend the Council's common position has been tabled, the common position is deemed to have been approved.

A proposal to reject the common position is voted on before voting on any amendments. Where several amendments to the common position are tabled, they are put to the vote in the order set out in [Rule 174](#).

Where Parliament has voted to amend the common position, a further vote on the text as a whole may only be taken in accordance with [Rule 68\(2\)](#).

Voting procedure – third reading ([Rule 72](#))

The joint text as a whole is the subject of a single vote. The joint text is approved if it secures a majority of the votes cast (simple majority).

No amendments may be tabled to the joint text.

Procedure in plenary without amendment ([Rule 150](#))

Any report put to the vote without amendment in accordance with [Rule 150](#) shall be subject to a single vote. No requests may therefore be made for separate or split votes. When voting on any report by way of a single and/or final vote (except for reports on immunity procedures) Parliament votes by roll-call ([Rule 179](#)).

Procedure without amendment and debate

Items placed on the agenda of the sitting are the subject of a debate, except for those adopted in accordance with the simplified procedure or the procedure without debate and amendment (Rules [50](#) and [150](#)).

Motion for the rejection of a Commission proposal at first reading ([Rule 60](#))

A motion to reject a Commission proposal outright is put to the vote before any amendments. The motion may be tabled only by the committee(s) responsible or at least 40 Members.

Alternative motion for a resolution ([Rule 170\(4\)](#))

A political group may table an alternative motion for a resolution to a non-legislative motion for a resolution contained in a committee report. In such a case, the group may not table amendments to the motion for a resolution by the committee responsible.

Referral back to committee ([Rule 188](#))

Motions seeking to refer a matter back to committee may be brought at three stages of the procedure:

- when Parliament fixes its order of business at the opening of a part-session;
- when the debate on the item in question is opened;
- during the vote, at any point before the final vote.

Such a request may be made only once at each of these three stages.

In the case of the first two of these three stages, the intention to move referral back to committee must be notified at least twenty-four hours in advance to the President, who must inform Parliament immediately.

Referral back to committee entails suspension of the discussion of the item. This procedure does not apply to the debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law ([Rule 135](#)) or to texts issuing from statements made by other institutions under Rules [123](#) and [128](#), where the text was not tabled by the committee responsible.

Adjournment of a vote ([Rule 190](#))

A political group or at least 40 Members may also move that a vote be adjourned either before or during the vote, in which case this motion is put immediately to the vote.

5.4 TYPES OF VOTE

Split vote ([Rule 176](#))

Split voting means voting an amendment, article or paragraph of the text under consideration in two or more parts.

A split vote may be requested by a political group or 40 Members. The deadline for submitting requests for split votes is given in the Agenda of the part-session. The President is entitled to reject any request made after this deadline.

Separate vote ([Rule 174](#))

Where the committee responsible has tabled a set of amendments to the text with which the report is concerned, the President puts them to the vote collectively, unless a separate vote is requested or unless other amendments have been tabled ([Rule 174\(5\)](#)).

A separate vote may also concern a paragraph of a resolution to be put to the vote ([Rule 171\(1\)\(d\)](#)).

A separate vote may be requested by a political group or 40 Members. The deadline for making such a request is given in the Agenda of the part-session. The President is entitled to reject any request made after this deadline.

Single vote ([Rule 150](#))

Items placed on the agenda for adoption without amendment are the subject of a single vote in plenary. Split and separate vote requests are not admissible.

6 – DOCUMENTS RELATED TO ACTIVITIES IN PLENARY

See also:

- *Amendments (section 5.1.)*
- *Voting lists (in section 5.2. 'Organisation of voting')*
- *Lists of speakers (in section 4.3. 'Taking the floor in Plenary')*

Minutes ([Rule 192](#))

Minutes of each sitting, detailing the proceedings and the decisions of Parliament and the names of speakers, are distributed at least half an hour before the beginning of the afternoon period of the next sitting.

At the beginning of the afternoon period of each sitting, the President places before Parliament, for its approval, the minutes of the previous sitting. If any objections are raised to the minutes, Parliament decides, if necessary, whether the changes requested should be considered.

The minutes must be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Record of Members' attendance in Plenary ([Rule 148](#))

An attendance register is placed outside the Chamber while sittings are in progress.

The minutes include a list of the Members "present", for those who have signed the attendance register, and a list of the Members "excused", for those who have been excused from attending by the President.

The President may excuse Members from attending on the grounds of ill-health, serious family circumstances, presence elsewhere on mission on behalf of Parliament, expectation of childbirth and maternity leave. Members wishing to be excused from attending must submit a request by ordinary or electronic mail, sent to the Quaestors' secretariat.

A Member may notify the Plenary Records Unit that he or she was present even though his or her name does not appear in the attendance register. That information will be published in the minutes, but the records of attendance will not be changed.

Texts adopted ([Rule 193](#))

The texts adopted in plenary constitute the acts of the European Parliament. They may be resolutions, legislative resolutions, opinions, declarations, decisions, recommendations etc.

Texts adopted by Parliament shall be published immediately after the vote. They shall be placed before Parliament in conjunction with the minutes of the relevant sitting and preserved in the records of Parliament.

Texts adopted by Parliament shall be subject to legal-linguistic finalisation under the responsibility of the President. Where such texts are adopted on the basis of an agreement reached between Parliament and the Council, such finalisation shall be carried out by the two institutions acting in close cooperation and by mutual agreement.

Positions adopted by Parliament under the ordinary legislative procedure shall take the form of a consolidated text. Where Parliament's vote was not based on an agreement with the Council, the consolidated text shall identify any amendments adopted.

After finalisation, the texts adopted shall be signed by the President and the Secretary-General and published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Verbatim report ([Rule 194](#))

The verbatim report records the debates in plenary in their entirety in the original languages of the speakers. These texts are usually available in their original languages ("rainbow" version) the following day. The verbatim report also includes explanations of vote and written statements.

The verbatim report is published as an annex to the Official Journal of the European Union.

Audio-visual record of proceedings ([Rule 195](#))

Parliament broadcasts in real time on its website the debates in plenary, in the languages in which they are conducted, as well as the multilingual soundtrack from all active interpretation booths.

Furthermore, immediately after each sitting, Parliament publishes on its website an indexed audio-visual recording of the debates in plenary, linked to the multilingual verbatim reports of the proceedings, and available for streaming, downloading and uploading on social media.

Distribution of documents ([Rules 156 and 160](#))

Documents forming the basis for Parliament's debates and decisions are printed and distributed to Members. They are also accessible via the [Plenary webpage](#). A list of these documents is published in the minutes of Parliament's sittings.

Except in the cases of urgency provided for in the Rules of Procedure, a debate and vote are not opened on a text in plenary unless the text was distributed at least twenty-four hours previously.

Legislative reports ([Rule 49](#))

The term "legislative report" refers to texts considered by Parliament in the context of the various legislative procedures (such as ordinary legislative procedure, consent and consultation).

Non-legislative reports ([Rule 51](#))

The term "non-legislative report" refers to reports adopted by Parliament on its own initiative.

Texts relating to statements by other institutions and oral questions with debate ([Rules 123 and 128](#))

When a statement with debate or an oral question is placed on its agenda, Parliament decides whether or not to wind up the debate with a resolution. If Parliament decides on a resolution, a committee, a political group or at least 40 Members may table a motion for a resolution, in accordance with [Rules 123](#) and [128](#) respectively.

Each motion for a resolution is given a serial document number. A joint motion for a resolution replacing a set of motions for resolutions (on the same subject) receives a JMR number + the serial number of the first motion tabled of the set to be replaced.

References and acronyms for session documents

The following references and acronyms denoting the various kinds of procedure and document are often used in session documents:

A:	reports, recommendations, and recommendations for second reading
B:	motions for resolutions and other session documents
O:	oral questions
E:	written questions
C:	documents from other institutions
T:	texts adopted
RC:	joint motions for resolutions
COD or ***	ordinary legislative procedure (I: 1 st reading; II: 2 nd reading; III: 3 rd reading)
CNS or *	consultation procedure
APP or ***	consent
NLE:	non-legislative enactment
REG:	report on an amendment to a Rule of Procedure
INI:	own-initiative report
IMM:	report on a request for defence or waiver of immunity of a Member
BUD:	budget documents
ACI:	interinstitutional agreement
OJ:	agenda

The number that may follow the letter denoting the document type refers to the parliamentary term: e.g. A7 = a report adopted during the seventh parliamentary term; A8 = a report adopted during the eighth parliamentary term, etc.

Directorate for the Plenary

The Secretariat of the Directorate for the Plenary can be contacted by e-mail at sessions@europarl.europa.eu or via the contact form of the [Plenary webpage](#).

In the Chambers in Brussels and Strasbourg the officials assisting the President are responsible for the following tasks:

- minutes
- verbatim reports of proceedings
- lists of speakers
- requests for the floor and requests to modify speaking time
- explanations of vote
- assisting the President and the Vice-President in the conduct of the sitting.