

Rules of Procedure of the Federal Committee

Explanatory Note

I. About the Working Group: Methodology followed and context

The Working Group on Statutes and Rules of Procedure (hereinafter: Working Group) presented its first considerations on the basic structure of the new Rules of Procedure to the Federal Committee (FC) on 4 September 2021.

The Working Group was also interested in the opinion of FC members on which points of regulation should be included in the RoP and where they see potential for improvement. The FC members were invited to contribute to this.

After a short break, the Working Group resumed its work at the beginning of October 2021. The original composition of the Working Group was extended by the inclusion of Members of the Presidium of the Federal Committee. As with the drafting of the Statutes and the Financial and Contributions Order, the members of the Working Group cooperated in a very trusting and constructive manner. Together they developed the present Proposal for new Rules of Procedure of the FC.

II. The Rules of Procedure proposal in a nutshell

The Rules of Procedures begin with an enumeration of the duties of the Federal Committee (FC) by quoting the relevant articles of the Statutes. This serves to provide a better overview. Then the types of meetings, i.e. plenary meetings or meetings in the Political Commissions (PCs) are described. The online and/or hybrid formats already used in this and last year's meetings are now regulated in the Rules of Procedures. The hybrid meetings, however, should remain an exception.

The PCs can meet during the regular FC meetings as well as between the FC meetings. The PCs are to draw up an annual work programme which will be incorporated into the overall work programme of the UEF. At each FC meetings all FC members should be informed about the activities of the PCs. Each FC member can participate in several PCs and register for them. To activate a PC, at least 10 registered members are needed. The involvement of external experts is possible and welcome.

FC meetings are convened by the President with 6 weeks' notice before the meeting. Open votes are the rule and are carried out by raising the voting cards, in the case of online meetings by raising hands. Furthermore, the Rules of Procedure contain regulations on members, substitutes and proxies, as well as on speaking rights. Resolutions can be submitted by the EB, the PCs, FC members and authorised persons with declarations in the name of their Sections. The resolutions must be made available to the FC members at least three weeks, amendments one week before the FC meeting.

Rules of Procedure of the Federal Committee

The Union of European Federalists (U.E.F.) has adopted its Rules of Procedure of the Federal Committee (U.E.F.-RoP) on the occasion of the virtual meeting of the Federal Committee (FC) of the U.E.F., held on 4th July 2021 on the base of Article 20 paragraph 6 of the Statutes of the U.E.F. (U.E.F.-S) adopted by the formative Congress on 13th April 1973 in Brussels - last amended by the XXVII Congress on 3rd and 4th July 2021 in Valencia.

Duties of the Federal Committee

Article I

- (1) The Federal Committee (FC) is the highest organ of the UEF between Congresses. It develops and updates UEF's political line within the frame of the general political orientation of the Congress. It exercises its full powers except those explicitly reserved for the Congress by the statute and the rules of UEF (Article 13 Paragraph 1 U.E.F.-S).
- (2) The FC shall elect a Presidium of three persons among its members and an Auditing Committee of two persons at the first meeting after an ordinary Congress that elects the Executive Bureau (EB) (Article 13 Paragraph 2 U.E.F.-S). They remain in office until the next ordinary Congress (Article 20 Paragraph 1 U.E.F.-S).
- (3) The FC shall adopt and amend its own Rules of procedure by a two-thirds majority of its component members (Article 20 Paragraph 6 U.E.F.-S).
- (4) At the beginning of each meeting, it shall elect among its members a Credentials Committee of three persons and at least three Tellers (Article 20 Paragraph 1 U.E.F.-S).
- (5) It shall discharge the EB of its management and approve the draft budget for the following year and the report of activities of the preceding year (Article 13 Paragraph 3 U.E.F.-S).
- (6) It adopts, on proposal of the EB, a Finance and Contribution Order (U.E.F.-FCO) with the majority of its component members (Article 6 Paragraph 4 U.E.F.-S). The amount of the Sections contributions for each of their members and the membership fees for individual members shall be decided by the FC in line with Article 3 of the U.E.F.-FCO, in the regular case as a part of the budget proposal. These decisions become part of the U.E.F.-FCO as an annexe (Article 4 Paragraph 4 U.E.F.-FCO).
- (7) It approves, on the proposal of the EB, the acceptance of new Sections (Article 6 Paragraph 5 U.E.F.-S).

- (8) It decides, on the proposal of the EB, the termination of a Section following severe or repeated action against the statutes, rules or positions of UEF or by causing unjustified material or immaterial damage to it (Article 7 Paragraph 2 U.E.F.-S).
- (9) It approves the agreement defining the relationship between UEF and the Young European Federalists (JEF) (Article 8 Paragraph 1 U.E.F.-S).
- (10) The FC may decide to convene an extraordinary Congress with a two thirds majority (Article 11 Paragraph 1 U.E.F.-S) of its component members.
- (11) The FC confirms the appointment by the Bureau Executive of new EB members replacing members not fulfilling their term for the rest of the EB's mandate (Article 16 Paragraph 3 U.E.F.-S).
- (12) The FC may decide to establish an Honorary Committee according to Article 18 Paragraph 1 U.E.F.-S. On proposal of the EB, the FC can appoint and withdraw the members and the Chairperson of this Committee, ensuring political, geographical and gender balance among them (Article 18 Paragraph 2 U.E.F.-S).
- (13) The FC may propose to the Congress the dissolution of the UEF (Article 25 Paragraph 2).
- (14) In the event of dissolution of the association, the FC shall take charge of its liquidation (Article 25 Paragraph 3 U.E.F.-S) and designate the European organisation to which its funds will be transferred (Article 23 Paragraph 5 U.E.F.-S).

Types of meetings

Article 2

- (1) Only plenary meetings are entitled to take decisions on the subjects attributed to the FC by the statute.
- (2) Plenary meetings must be convened at least twice a year or for extraordinary meetings on the request of one fourth of the Sections (Article 13 Paragraph 1 U.E.F.-S).
- (3) Plenary meetings are normally held in presence or online. Hybrid meetings may be organized, on a proposal of the Presidium or of the Secretary General, under exceptional conditions.
- (4) Political Commissions (PC) of the FC may be set up in order to create the conditions for an in-depth political debate on specific issues in view of the decisions of plenary meetings and to draft resolutions to be submitted to the FC vote. PCs do not take final decisions but are entitled to present recommendations to the plenary meetings.
- (5) The term of office of PCs ends with the beginning the ordinary Congress that elects the EB.
- (6) PC meetings may be held in physical presence, or online or, under exceptional conditions, on the basis of an agreement between the Chairs and the Presidium, in hybrid form.

Political Commissions

Article 3

- (1) The FC sets up PCs after the Congress upon proposal of the EB or of at least 10% of its component members with voting rights. The proposal must specify the total number and the titles of the PCs as well as the FC members, who should act as chairs and rapporteurs.
- (2) PCs can hold their meetings on occasion of plenary FC meetings and between two FC meetings.
- (3) PCs may:
 - freely discuss and analyse political aspects related to their assigned areas;
 - discuss, draft and propose resolutions to the FC;
 - evaluate, on request by the EB, resolutions proposed to the FC;
 - evaluate proposed amendments to tabled resolutions and make contact with the authors of the motion and the authors of the amendment in order to assess the possibility of reducing the number of amendments.
- (4) PCs shall produce an annual work programme to be included in the overall work programme of UEF and shall report on their activities at each meeting of the plenary.
- (5) Each member of the FC is free to choose to participate in one or more PCs and shall notify the Secretariat, which will draw up a list of the members of each Commission and communicate it to the respective Chairs. Registration is dropped after three unexcused absences. A minimum of 10 registered members are needed to activate a PC.
- (6) The Commissions are entitled to involve external experts in their work.
- (7) Initiatives of PCs requiring expenditure must be authorised in advance by the EB.

Convening of meetings

Article 4

- (1) Plenary meetings are organised by the EB and convened by the President of UEF (Art. 15.2).
- (2) The Secretariat must give 6 weeks notice of plenary meetings (both face-to-face and online) to FC members and substitutes (Article 20 Paragraph 2 U.E.F.-S). The same notice applies to extraordinary meetings.
- (3) For both face-to-face and online FC meetings, the proposed agenda and all relevant technical documents must be sent two weeks in advance (Article 20 Paragraph 3 U.E.F.-S).
- (4) Meetings of PCs are organised and convened by their respective chairs; the invitation must be accompanied by the agenda and relevant documents (if any) and be sent out with a two weeks' notice.

Attendance and voting rights in meetings

Article 5

- (1) Only FC members, FC substitutes, and observers having registered at the Secretariat can participate actively in FC meetings.
- (2) A participation fee for FC meetings held can be decided by the EB on proposal of the Secretary General (Article 6 Paragraph 1 U.E.F.-FCO). In the case participants are not fulfilling their financial obligations to the U.E.F. in due time, their Section is held responsible and obliged to fulfill (Article 6 Paragraph 2 U.E.F.-FCO).
- (3) If the number of voting rights collides with delegates and substitutes present or proxies, the preference is to a substitute delegate arrived in time against a delegate with late arrival and a proxy lapses (Article 21 Paragraph 5 U.E.F.-S).

Management of meetings

Article 6

- (1) Open votes are conducted by raising voting cards; votes in online meetings are conducted by the raising hands.
- (2) In case of plenary meetings held in presence, only registered FC members will receive a voting card; if the number of registered FC members of a given Section who have right of vote is less than the number of voting rights due to the section for the meeting under the U.E.F.-FCO (Article 21 Paragraph 3 U.E.F.-S), the missing voting cards shall be allocated to substitutes in the order of the list communicated to the Secretariat by the Sections. The same applies in the case of the delegates elected by the Congress.
- (3) In case of online meetings, the same criteria will apply as far as the access at voting devices is concerned.
- (4) In the case of hybrid meetings, all participants must register, specifying whether they will be attending in person or online.
- (5) Only if the number of available substitutes is less than the number of missing members, it is possible for members for whom a substitute is missing to give a proxy to a registered member or substitute; no member of the meeting can control more than two votes (Article 21 Paragraph 2 U.E.F.-S).
- (6) If the number of FC members from a given Section, according to U.E.F.-FCO, falls below the number previously due to the section, the last delegate in the list given by the Section becomes the first substitute delegate. The same applies in the case of the delegates elected by the Congress.
- (7) If the number FC members from a given Section, according to U.E.F.-FCO, rises above the previous number due to the section, the first substitute delegate in the list given by the Section becomes the last ordinary delegate. The same applies in the case of the delegates elected by the Congress.

(8) FC members, FC substitutes having chosen to participate in a given PC and observers can participate in its meetings. Registration may be required for PC meetings that are not held in conjunction with FC plenary meetings.

Management of debates

Article 7

(1) In debates all participants in the meeting, provided they are registered, may ask to speak. Voting members have priority over non-voting members (e.g. substitutes not replacing a full member) and the latter over observers.

(2) In debates the Presidium may impose a restriction of the time available to each speaker if the number of requests is such that not all of them can be dealt with.

(3) In order to prevent a few participants from monopolising the debate, the Presidium may limit the number of interventions of the same person on the same topic.

(4) The Presidium may take away the floor if a speech goes beyond the topic of discussion, or if the tone is offensive to other participants, or relates facts that cannot be documented.

(5) The Presidium may have disturbing persons dismissed from the meeting.

(6) When voting on resolutions and amendments, the Presidium shall give the floor to the mover of the motion or amendment, or to the rapporteur of the relevant PC, for a brief explanation of the meaning of the proposal, to a one-minute speech in favour of and one against, and then immediately proceed to the vote.

Procedural motions, points of order and points of information

Article 8

(1) Any participant entitled to vote shall have right to submit one of the following mainprocedural motions:

- a motion to change the membership of the Presidium,
- a motion to overrule a decision of the Presidium,
- a motion to close the list of speakers on a specific resolution or amendment,
- a motion to move to the next business,
- a motion to restrict the time available to each speaker,
- a motion to exclude from the meeting person(s) causing a disturbance,
- a motion to amend the agenda or time table,
- a motion to change the tellers,
- a motion to postpone a decision,
- a motion to move to immediate vote.

A procedural motion shall be adopted by consensus or put to a vote immediately, with a discussion of two one-minute speeches by one speaker in favour and one against.

(2) Any participant entitled to vote shall have right to rise a point of order, that is to draw attention of the Presidium to the fact that the procedure or discussion is not in accordance with the rules of procedure, or the statute, or previously agreed procedural motions.

(3) The Presidium may at his discretion allow points of information to be made. Points of information are to be brief and must relate to facts and not give an opinion. The Presidium may choose not to accept such points if a participant is abusing the procedure to gain additional speaking rights or time if the debate is limited.

Nominations

Article 9

Nominations for elective posts can be submitted if they are:

- signed by 10% of the members of the FC (Article 22 Paragraph 2 U.E.F.-S) with voting right;
- signed by authorised representatives of at least three Sections (Article 22 Paragraph 2 U.E.F.-S). No Section may sign more nominations than the number of posts to be elected (Article 22 Paragraph 2 U.E.F.-S);
- proposed by the EB.

Management of political resolutions

Article 10

(1) Only the EB, PCs, authorized persons with declarations in the name of their Sections and members of the FC are eligible for submitting political resolutions and amendments.

(2) Proposed resolutions are to be sent to the Secretariat and must be made available to FC members by the Secretariat three weeks before the FC meeting. Amendments must be submitted to the Secretariat at least one week before the FC meeting.

(3) The EB may forward proposed resolutions, together with proposed amendments, for discussion and evaluation to one or more PCs.

(4) As far as whole political resolutions are concerned, PCs can:

- recommend approval,
- recommend rejection,
- suggest postponement for further discussion.

(5) As far as amendments are concerned, PCs can, having made contact with the authors of motions and the authors of amendments, verify the possibility that, with their consent, an amendment may be incorporated into the motion, modified or withdrawn. In absence of agreement, the amendment shall be put to the vote in plenary.

- (6) Last minute compromise amendments may be proposed by the Rapporteurs;
- (7) Emergency resolutions may be tabled by the EB or the Presidium, or by 10% of FC members with voting right and coming from at least three Sections.

Voting procedures

Article 11

- (1) All decisions, with the exception of elections, are taken by open vote. In cases where there is clearly a broad consensus, the Presidium may, if no objections are raised, decide that the decision is adopted by consensus. Secret ballot can be requested by 25% of participants eligible to vote (Article 21 Paragraph 7 U.E.F.-S).
- (2) Votes are passed when approved by the majority of the votes cast (Article 21 Paragraph 7 U.E.F.-S, abstentions not counted).
- (3) Elections are by secret ballot; if only one candidate is present, it is possible – unless opposition is raised – to vote by showing voting cards (in presence) or raising hands (online) (Article 22 Paragraph 1 U.E.F.-S).
- (4) In an election for a single post, the candidate with a majority of the votes cast is elected (Article 22 Paragraph 3 U.E.F.-S).
- (5) An election for several equal posts takes place on the basis of a single list of candidates. On penalty of nullity, the ballot paper must indicate a minimum preferences of 1/3 and a maximum of 2/3 of the number of candidates to be elected. Should the number of candidates be equal to the number of posts, the FC may decide that the list of candidates can be approved by raising voting cards (in presence) or raising hands (online).
- (6) In case of elections for bodies for which a limited number of members from the same Section is provided (Article 22 Paragraph 6 U.E.F.-S), if the number of candidates from a Section exceeds such a number, candidates from the Section elected with lowest number of votes are excluded.

Minutes

Article 12

- (1) All meetings can be tape-recorded.
- (2) The minutes of each FC meeting must be made available to all FC members and Sections at the next meeting at the latest.
- (3) A summary of the meetings of the PCs shall be communicated to the plenary.