

General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union – Annex

Rules of Procedure of Congresses

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Rules of Procedure of Congresses

Article 1

General provisions

The present Rules of Procedure (hereinafter referred to as "the Rules") have been drawn up pursuant to the Acts of the Union and are subordinate to them. In the event of a discrepancy between one of their provisions and a provision of the Acts, the latter shall prevail.

Article 2

Delegations

1 The term "delegation" shall denote the person or body of persons designated by a member country to take part in a Congress. The delegation shall consist of a Head of delegation and, if appropriate, his deputy, one or more delegates and, possibly, one or more attached officials (including experts, secretaries, etc).

2 Heads of delegation, their deputies, and delegates shall be representatives of member countries within the meaning of article 14, paragraph 2, of the Constitution if in possession of credentials which comply with the conditions laid down in article 3 of these Rules.

3 Attached officials shall be admitted to meetings, and shall have the right to participate in the proceedings, but they shall not normally have the right to vote. However, they may be authorized by the Head of their delegation to vote on behalf of their country at Committee meetings. Such authorizations shall be handed, in writing, to the Chairman of the Committee concerned, before the beginning of the meeting.

Article 3

Delegates' credentials

1 Delegates' credentials shall be signed by the Head of State, the Head of Government or the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the country concerned. They shall be drawn up in due and proper form. The credentials of delegates entitled to sign the Acts (plenipotentiaries) shall specify the scope of such signature (signature subject to ratification or approval, signature ad referendum, definitive signature). In the absence of such specific information, the signature shall be regarded as being subject to ratification or approval. Credentials authorizing the holder to sign the Acts shall implicitly include the right to speak and to vote. Delegates on whom the relevant authorities have conferred full powers without specifying their scope shall be authorized to speak, to vote and to sign the Acts unless the wording of the credentials is explicitly to the contrary.

2 Credentials shall be deposited at the opening of Congress with the authority designated for that purpose.

3 Delegates who are not in possession of credentials or who have not deposited their credentials may, provided their names have been communicated by their Government to the Government of the host country, take part in the debates and vote from the moment they participate in the work of Congress. The same shall apply to those whose credentials are found to be not in order. Such delegates shall cease to be empowered to vote from the time Congress approves the last report of the Credentials Committee establishing that their credentials have not been received or are not in order until such time as the position is regularized. The last report shall be approved by Congress before any elections other than that of the Chairman of Congress and before approval of the draft Acts.

4 The credentials of a member country which arranges for the delegation of another member country to represent it at Congress (proxy) shall be in the same form as those mentioned in paragraph 1.

5 Credentials and proxies sent by telegram shall not be admissible. However, telegrams sent in reply to requests for information relating to credentials shall be accepted.

6 A delegation which, after it has deposited its credentials, is prevented from attending one or more meetings, may arrange to be represented by the delegation of another country, provided that notice in writing is given to the Chairman of the meeting concerned. However, a delegation may represent only a single country other than its own.

7 The delegates of member countries which are not parties to an Agreement may take part in the debates of Congress concerning that Agreement, without the right to vote.

Article 4 Order of seating

1 At Congress and Committee meetings, delegations shall be seated in the French alphabetical order of the member countries represented.

2 The Chairman of the **Council of Administration** shall draw lots, in due course, for the name of the country to be placed foremost before the rostrum at Congress and Committee meetings.

Article 5 Observers

1 Representatives of the United Nations may take part in the debates of Congress.

2 Observers from **intergovernmental organizations** shall be admitted to meetings of Congress or of its Committees when questions of interest to these organizations are being discussed. In the same cases, observers from non-governmental international organizations may be admitted to meetings of Committees at the discretion of the Committee concerned.

3 Qualified representatives of the Restricted Unions established in accordance with article 8, paragraph 1, of the Constitution shall also be admitted as observers when the Unions concerned express a wish to that effect.

4 The observers referred to in paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take part in the debates without the right to vote.

Article 6
Doyen of Congress

1 The postal administration of the host country of Congress shall suggest the person to be appointed as Doyen of Congress in agreement with the International Bureau. **The Council of Administration** shall approve this appointment in due course.

2 At the opening of the first plenary meeting of each Congress, the Doyen shall act as Chairman until Congress has elected one. He shall also exercise the functions assigned to him under the present Rules.

Article 7
Chairmanships and vice-chairmanships of Congress and Committees

1 At its first plenary meeting, Congress shall elect, on the proposal of the Doyen, the Chairman of Congress and then approve, on the proposal of **the Council of Administration**, the appointment of the member countries which are to assume the vice-chairmanships of Congress and the chairmanships and vice-chairmanships of the Committees. These posts will be assigned taking as much account as possible of the equitable geographical distribution of the member countries.

2 The Chairmen shall open and close the meetings over which they preside, direct the debates, give speakers the floor, put proposals to the vote and announce what majority is required for their adoption, announce decisions and, subject to the approval of Congress, interpret such decisions if necessary.

3 The Chairmen shall see that the present Rules are observed and that order is maintained at meetings.

4 Any delegation may appeal to Congress or the Committee against a decision taken by the Chairman on the basis of a provision or interpretation of the Rules. The Chairman's decision shall nevertheless hold good unless rescinded by a majority of the members present and voting.

5 Should the member country appointed to the chairmanship be no longer able to exercise this function, one of the Vice-Chairmen shall be appointed by Congress or the Committee to replace it.

Article 8
Bureau of Congress

1 The Bureau shall be the central body responsible for directing the work of Congress. It shall consist of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of Congress and the Chairmen of the Committees. It shall meet periodically to review the progress of the work of Congress and its Committees and to make recommendations designed to facilitate such progress. It shall assist the Chairman in drawing up the agenda of each plenary meeting and in coordinating the work of the Committees. It shall make recommendations relating to the closing of Congress.

2 The Secretary-General of Congress and the Assistant Secretary-General, mentioned in article 11, paragraph 1, shall attend the meetings of the Bureau.

Article 9

Membership of Committees

- 1 The member countries represented in Congress shall, as of right, be members of the Committees responsible for studying proposals relating to the Constitution, the General Regulations, the Convention and its Detailed Regulations.
- 2 Member countries represented in Congress which are parties to one or more of the optional Agreements shall, as of right, be members of the Committee and/or Committees responsible for the revision of these Agreements. The right to vote of members of the Committee or Committees shall be confined to the Agreement or Agreements to which they are parties.
- 3 Delegations which are not members of Committees dealing with the Agreements and their Detailed Regulations may attend meetings of those Committees and take part in the debates without the right to vote.

Article 10

Working parties

Congress and each Committee may set up working parties to study special questions.

Article 11

Secretariat of Congress and of Committees

- 1 The Director-General and the Deputy Director-General of the International Bureau shall act as Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General of Congress, respectively.
- 2 The Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General shall attend the meetings of Congress and of the Bureau of Congress and take part in the debates without the right to vote. They may also attend, under the same conditions, Committee meetings or be represented thereat by a senior official of the International Bureau.
- 3 The work of the Secretariat of Congress, the Bureau of Congress and the Committees shall be performed by the staff of the International Bureau in conjunction with the administration of the host country.
- 4 Senior officials of the International Bureau shall act as Secretaries of Congress, of the Bureau of Congress and of the Committees. They shall assist the Chairman during meetings and shall be responsible for writing the minutes or reports.
- 5 The Secretaries of Congress and of the Committees shall be assisted by Assistant Secretaries.
- 6 Rapporteurs proficient in French shall take the minutes of Congress and of the Committees.

Article 12

Languages of debates

- 1 Subject to paragraph 2, French, English, Spanish and Russian may be used for debates, by means of a system of simultaneous or consecutive interpretation.
- 2 The debates of the Drafting Committee shall be held in French.

3 Other languages may also be used for the debates mentioned in paragraph 1. The language of the host country shall have priority in this connection. Delegations using other languages shall arrange for simultaneous interpretation into one of the languages mentioned in paragraph 1, either by means of the simultaneous interpretation system, when the necessary technical alterations can be made, or by special interpreters.

4 The cost of installing and maintaining the technical equipment shall be borne by the Union.

5 The cost of the interpretation services shall be divided among the member countries using the same language in proportion to their contributions to the expenses of the Union.

Article 13

Languages used for drafting Congress documents

1 Documents prepared during Congress including draft decisions submitted to Congress for approval shall be published in French by the Secretariat of Congress.

2 To this end, documents produced by delegations of member countries shall be submitted in French, either direct or through the intermediary of the translation services attached to the Congress Secretariat.

3 The above services, organized at their own expense by the language groups set up in accordance with the relevant provisions of the General Regulations, may also translate Congress documents into their respective languages.

Article 14

Proposals

1 All questions brought before Congress shall be the subject of proposals.

2 All proposals published by the International Bureau before Congress shall be regarded as being submitted to Congress.

3 Two months before Congress opens, no proposal shall be considered except those amending earlier proposals.

4 The following shall be regarded as amendments: any proposal which, without altering the substance of the original proposal, involves a deletion from, addition to or revision of a part of the original proposal. No proposed change shall be regarded as an amendment if it is inconsistent with the meaning or intent of the original proposal. In case of doubt, Congress or the Committee shall decide the matter.

5 Amendments submitted at Congress to proposals already made shall be handed in to the Secretariat in writing, in French, before noon on the day but one before the day on which they will be discussed, so that they can be distributed to delegates the same day. This time limit shall not apply to amendments arising directly from the debates in Congress or in a Committee. In the latter case, if so requested, the author of the amendment shall submit a written version in French, or in case of difficulty, in any other language used for debates. The Chairman concerned shall read it out or have it read out.

6 The procedure laid down in paragraph 5 shall also apply to the submission of proposals that are not designed to amend the text of the Acts (draft resolutions, draft recommendations, draft formal opinions, etc).

7 Any proposal or amendment shall give the final form of the text which is to be inserted in the Acts of the Union, subject, of course to revision by the Drafting Committee.

Article 15

Consideration of proposals in Congress and in Committees

1 Drafting proposals (the number of which shall be followed by the letter R) shall be assigned to the Drafting Committee either direct, if the International Bureau has no doubt as to their nature (a list of such proposals shall be drawn up for the Drafting Committee by the International Bureau), or, if the International Bureau is in doubt as to their nature, after the other Committees have confirmed that they are purely of a drafting nature (a list of such proposals shall likewise be drawn up for the Committees concerned). If, however, such proposals are linked with other proposals of substance to be considered by Congress or by other Committees, the Drafting Committee shall postpone consideration of them until after Congress or the other Committees have taken a decision on the corresponding proposals of substance. Proposals whose numbers are not followed by the letter R but which, in the opinion of the International Bureau, are of a drafting nature, shall be referred direct to the Committees concerned with the corresponding proposals of substance. When these Committees begin work, they shall decide which of the proposals shall be assigned direct to the Drafting Committee. A list of these proposals shall be drawn up by the International Bureau for the Committees concerned.

2 In principle, proposals for amending the Detailed Regulations which are the consequence of proposals for amending the Convention and the Agreements shall be dealt with by the Committee concerned, unless the latter decides to refer them to the **Postal Operations** Council on the proposal of its Chairman or of a delegation. If there is an objection to such referral, the Chairman shall immediately put the matter to a procedural vote.

3 On the other hand, proposals for amending the Detailed Regulations which are not the consequence of proposals for amending the Convention and the Agreements shall be referred to the **Postal Operations** Council, unless the Committee decides, on the proposal of its Chairman or of a delegation, that they shall be dealt with in Congress. If there is an objection to such referral, the Chairman shall immediately put the matter to a procedural vote.

4 If the same question is the subject of several proposals, the Chairman shall decide the order in which they are to be discussed, starting as a rule with the proposal which departs most from the basic text and entails the most significant change in relation to the status quo.

5 If a proposal can be subdivided into several parts, each part may, if the originator of the proposal or the assembly so agrees, be considered and voted upon separately.

6 Any proposal withdrawn in Congress or in Committee by its originator may be resubmitted by the delegation of another member country. Similarly, if an amendment to a proposal is accepted by the originator of the proposal, another delegation may resubmit the original, un-amended proposal.

7 Any amendment to a proposal which is accepted by the delegation submitting the proposal shall be immediately included in the text thereof. If the originator of the original proposal does not accept an amendment, the Chairman shall decide whether the amendment or the proposal shall be voted upon first, starting with whichever departs furthest from the meaning or intent of the basic text and entails the most significant change in relation to the status quo.

8 The procedure described in paragraph 7 shall also apply where more than one amendment to a proposal is submitted.

9 The Chairman of Congress and the Chairmen of Committees shall arrange for the text of the proposals, amendments or decisions adopted to be passed to the Drafting Committee, in writing, after each meeting.

10 At the end of their work, the Committees shall prepare, in respect of the Detailed Regulations concerning them, a two-part resolution consisting of:

- i the numbers of the proposals referred to the **Postal Operations** Council for consideration;
- ii the numbers of the proposals referred to the **Postal Operations** Council for consideration together with guidelines from Congress.

Proposals for amending the Detailed Regulations adopted by a Committee and then referred to the Drafting Committee shall be the subject of a resolution to which the definitive text of the said proposals shall be attached.

Article 16 Debates

1 Delegates may not take the floor until they have been given permission to do so by the Chairman of the meeting. They shall be urged to speak slowly and distinctly. The Chairman shall afford delegates the possibility of freely and fully expressing their views on the subject discussed, so long as that is compatible with the normal course of the debate.

2 Unless a majority of the members present and voting decides otherwise, speeches shall not exceed five minutes. The Chairman shall be authorized to interrupt any speaker who exceeds the said authorized time. He may also ask the delegate not to depart from the subject.

3 During a debate, the Chairman may, with the agreement of the majority of the members present and voting, declare the list of speakers closed after reading it out. When the list is exhausted, he shall declare the debate closed, although even after the closing of the list he may grant the originator of the proposal under discussion the right to reply to any of the speeches delivered.

4 The Chairman may also, with the agreement of the majority of the members present and voting, limit the number of speeches by any one delegation on a proposal or a certain group of proposals; but the originator of the proposal shall be given the opportunity of introducing it and speaking subsequently if he asks to do so in order to make new points in reply to the speeches of other delegations, so that he may, if he wishes, be the last speaker.

5 With the agreement of the majority of the members present and voting, the Chairman may limit the number of speeches on a proposal or a certain group of proposals; but this limit may not be less than five for and five against the proposal under discussion.

Article 17 Motions on points of order and procedural motions

1 During the discussion of any question and even, where appropriate, after the closure of the debate, a delegation may submit a motion on a point of order for the purpose of requesting:

- clarification on the conduct of the debates;
- observance of the Rules of Procedure;
- a change in the order of discussion of proposals suggested by the Chairman.

The motion on a point of order shall take precedence over all questions, including the procedural motions set forth in paragraph 3.

2 The Chairman shall immediately give the desired clarifications or take the decision which he considers advisable on the subject of the motion on a point of order. In the event of an objection, the Chairman's decision shall be put to the vote forthwith.

3 In addition, during discussion of a question, a delegation may introduce a procedural motion with a view to proposing:

- a the suspension of the meeting;
- b the closure of the meeting;
- c the adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion;
- d the closure of the debate on the question under discussion.

Procedural motions shall take precedence, in the order set out above, over all other proposals except the motions on points of order referred to in paragraph 1.

4 Motions for the suspension or closure of the meeting shall not be discussed, but shall be put to the vote immediately.

5 When a delegation proposes adjournment or closure of the debate on a question under discussion, only two speakers against the adjournment or the closure of the debate may speak, after which the motion shall be put to the vote.

6 The delegation which submits a motion on a point of order or a procedural motion may not, in its submission, deal with the substance of the question under discussion. The proposer of a procedural motion may withdraw it before it has been put to the vote, and any motion of this kind, whether amended or not, which is withdrawn may be reintroduced by another delegation.

Article 18

Quorum

1 Subject to paragraphs 2 and 3, the quorum necessary for the opening of the meetings and for voting shall be half the member countries represented in Congress and having the right to vote.

2 For votes on amending the Constitution and the General Regulations, the quorum required shall be two thirds of the Union member countries.

3 In the case of the Agreements and their Detailed Regulations, the quorum required for the opening of the meetings and for voting shall be half the member countries represented at Congress which are parties to the Agreement concerned and have the right to vote.

4 Delegations which are present but do not take part in a given vote, or which state that they do not wish to take part therein, shall not be considered absent for the purpose of establishing the quorums required under paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.

Article 19

Voting principle and procedure

1 Questions which cannot be settled by common consent shall be decided by vote.

2 Votes shall be taken by the traditional system or by the electronic voting system. They shall normally be taken by the electronic system when that system is available to the assembly. However, in the case of a secret ballot, the traditional system may be used if one delegation, supported by a majority of the delegations present and voting, so requests.

- 3 For the traditional system, the methods of voting shall be as follows:
 - a by show of hands. If there is doubt about the result of such a vote, the Chairman, if he so wishes or if a delegation so requests, may arrange for an immediate roll-call vote on the same question;
 - b by roll-call, at the request of a delegation or if so decided by the Chairman. The roll shall be called according to the French alphabetical order of the countries represented, beginning with the country whose name is drawn by lot by the Chairman. The result of the vote, together with a list of the countries grouped according to the way they voted, shall be included in the minutes of the meeting;
 - c by secret ballot, using ballot papers, if requested by two delegations. In this case, the Chairman of the meeting shall appoint three tellers and make the necessary arrangements for the holding of a secret ballot.
- 4 For the electronic system, the methods of voting shall be as follows:
 - a non-recorded vote: it replaces a vote by show of hands;
 - b recorded vote: it replaces a roll-call vote; however, the names of the countries shall not be called unless one delegation, supported by a majority of the delegations present and voting, so requests;
 - c secret ballot: it replaces the secret ballot by ballot papers.
- 5 Regardless of the system of voting used, the secret ballot shall take precedence over any other voting procedure.
- 6 Once the voting has begun, no delegation may interrupt it, except to raise a point of order relating to the way in which the vote is being taken.
- 7 After the vote, the Chairman may permit delegates to explain why they voted as they did.

Article 20

Conditions of approval of proposals

- 1 To be adopted, proposals involving amendments to the Acts must:
 - a in the case of the Constitution, be approved by at least two thirds of the member countries of the Union;
 - b in the case of the General Regulations, be approved by a majority of the member countries represented in Congress;
 - c in the case of the Convention and its Detailed Regulations, be approved by a majority of the member countries present and voting;
 - d in the case of the Agreements and their Detailed Regulations, be approved by a majority of the member countries present and voting which are parties to the Agreements.
- 2 Procedural matters which cannot be settled by common consent shall be decided by a majority of the member countries present and voting. The same shall apply to decisions not concerning changes in the Acts, unless Congress decides otherwise by a majority of the member countries present and voting.
- 3 Subject to paragraph 5, "member countries present and voting" shall mean member countries voting "for" or "against", abstentions being disregarded in counting the votes required to constitute a majority, and similarly blank or null and void ballot papers in the case of a secret ballot.

4 In the event of a tie, a proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

5 When the number of abstentions and blank or null and void ballot papers exceeds half the number of votes cast (for, against and abstentions), consideration of the matter shall be deferred until a subsequent meeting, at which abstentions and blank or null and void ballot papers shall be disregarded.

Article 21

Election of the members of **the Council of Administration** or the **Postal Operations Council**

In order to decide between countries which have obtained the same number of votes in elections of members of **the Council of Administration** or the **Postal Operations Council**, the Chairman shall draw lots.

Article 22

Election of the Director-General and the Deputy Director-General of the International Bureau

1 The elections of the Director-General of the International Bureau and of the Deputy Director-General shall take place by secret ballot successively at one or more meetings held on the same day. The candidate who obtains a majority of the votes cast by the member countries present and voting shall be elected. As many ballots shall be held as are necessary for a candidate to obtain this majority.

2 "Member countries present and voting" shall mean member countries voting for one of the candidates whose applications have been announced in due and proper form, abstentions and blank or null and void ballot papers being ignored in counting the votes required to constitute a majority.

3 If the number of abstentions and blank or null and void ballot papers exceeds half the number of votes cast in accordance with paragraph 2, the election shall be deferred to a later meeting, at which abstentions and blank or null and void ballot papers shall no longer be taken into account.

4 The candidate who obtains the least number of votes in any one ballot shall be eliminated.

5 In the event of a tie, an additional ballot, and if necessary a second additional ballot, shall be held in an attempt to decide between the tying candidates, the vote relating only to these candidates. If the result is inconclusive, the election shall be decided by drawing lots. The lots shall be drawn by the Chairman.

Article 23

Minutes

1 The minutes of the meetings of Congress and Committees shall record the course of the meetings, briefly summarize speeches, and mention proposals and the outcome of the debates. Minutes shall be prepared of the plenary meetings and summarized minutes of the Committee meetings.

2 The minutes of Committee meetings may be replaced by reports to Congress if **the Council of Administration** so decides. As a general rule, Working Parties shall prepare a report for the body that set them up.

3 Each delegate, however, shall be entitled to ask for any statement made by him to be included in the minutes or in the report either verbatim or in summary form, provided the French text is handed to the Secretariat not later than two hours after the end of the meeting.

4 Delegates shall be allowed a period of twenty-four hours, from the moment when the draft minutes or the draft report are distributed, in which to make their comments to the Secretariat, which, if necessary, shall act as an intermediary between the party concerned and the Chairman of the meeting in question.

5 As a general rule and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, at the beginning of each meeting of Congress, the Chairman shall submit the minutes of a previous meeting for approval. The same shall apply in regard to those Committees whose proceedings are recorded in the form of minutes or a report. The minutes or reports of the last meetings which it has not been possible to approve in Congress or in a Committee shall be approved by the respective Chairmen of the meetings. The International Bureau shall also take account of any comments received from delegates of member countries within forty days of the dispatch of the minutes to them.

6 The International Bureau shall be authorized to correct in the minutes or reports of meetings of Congress and Committees any clerical errors which were not brought to light when the minutes were approved in accordance with paragraph 5.

Article 24

Approval by Congress of draft decisions (Acts, resolutions, etc)

1 As a general rule, each draft Act submitted by the Drafting Committee shall be studied article by article. It can only be regarded as adopted after an overall favourable vote. Article 20, paragraph 1, shall apply to such a vote.

2 During this study, any delegation may reopen a proposal which has been carried or rejected in Committee. An appeal relating to a rejected proposal shall be subject to the delegation's having notified the Chairman of Congress accordingly, in writing, at least one day before the meeting at which the relevant provisions of the draft Act is to be submitted to Congress for approval.

3 Nonetheless, it shall always be possible, if the Chairman considers it desirable for the progress of Congress work, to consider appeals before considering the draft Acts submitted by the Drafting Committee.

4 When a proposal has been adopted or rejected by Congress, it can only be reconsidered by the same Congress if the appeal has been supported by at least ten delegations and approved by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. This possibility is limited to proposals submitted direct to plenary meetings, it being understood that a single question cannot give rise to more than one appeal.

5 The International Bureau shall be authorized to correct in the final Acts any clerical errors which have not come to light during the study of the draft Acts, the numbering of articles and paragraphs and references.

6 **The drafts of decisions other than those amending the Acts, submitted by the Drafting Committee, shall as a general rule be considered en bloc. Paragraphs 2 to 5 shall also apply to the drafts of these decisions.**

Article 25

Assignment of studies to **the Council of Administration** and the **Postal Operations Council**

On the recommendation of its Bureau, Congress shall assign studies to **the Council of Administration** and the **Postal Operations Council**, **in accordance with** the respective compositions and responsibilities of these two bodies **as they are set forth in articles 102 and 104 of the General Regulations.**

Article 26

Reservations to Acts

Reservations must be submitted in writing in French (proposals concerning the Final Protocol), in order that they may be considered by Congress before the signing of Acts.

Article 27

Signature of Acts

Acts finally approved by Congress shall be submitted to the plenipotentiaries for signature.

Article 28

Amendment of the Rules

1 Each Congress may amend the Rules of Procedure. In order to be accepted for discussion, proposals to amend the present Rules, unless submitted by a UPU body empowered to put forward proposals, shall be supported in Congress by at least ten delegations.

2 To be adopted, proposals for amendments to the present Rules must be approved by at least two thirds of the member countries represented in Congress.

Universal Postal Convention

Convention
Final Protocol

Universal Postal Convention

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