

Rules of Procedure of Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meetings

Adopted by ASEP IV
5 May 2006

PREAMBLE

The Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP) Meeting is part of the overall Asia - Europe partnership process.

The Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP) Meeting shall have the following as its objectives:

- a. To serve as a forum for interparliamentary contacts, exchanges and diplomacy among parliaments, and to promote mutual understanding among the people and countries of Asia and Europe.
- b. To provide a link between parliaments of Asia and Europe and ASEM, and thereby to make an active parliamentary contribution to the ASEM process and in particular to Summit Meetings.

ASEP meetings shall be regulated by the following Rules of Procedure:

I. Membership

Rule 1

In principle, members of ASEP shall be national parliaments from all ASEM member countries, and the European Parliament.

The membership of the national parliaments from countries joining ASEM after the adoption of the present Rules of Procedure shall become effective once confirmed by the subsequent ASEP meeting.

II. Participation

Rule 2

Member parliaments have the prerogative to send delegations and to designate their respective heads of delegation. Official delegates have to be members of parliament. The host parliament of each ASEP meeting shall decide on the maximum number of official delegates.

Rule 3

Guests of the host parliament may be invited subject to adequate prior notification to all ASEP member parliaments and provided that no objection is raised by the latter within one month of the notification. Guests may attend all public sessions of the Meeting. With the consent of the Meeting, a guest may be invited to make a statement.

Rule 4

A non-member parliament that makes a request, or is recommended by an ASEP member to attend may be accepted as an observer subject to adequate prior notification by the host parliament to all ASEP members and provided that no objection is raised by the latter within one month of the notification. The decision on such a request or recommendation shall be taken on a meeting by meeting basis. Observers may attend all public sessions of the Meeting. With the consent of the Meeting, an observer may be invited to make a statement.

III. Frequency of Asep meetings

Rule 5

ASEP meetings shall normally be convened on a regular bi-annual basis alternately in Asia and in Europe before the ASEM Summit. The parliament of the ASEM member state hosting the ASEM Summit shall have a priority to host the ASEP meeting the same year.

IV. AGENDA

Rule 6

The host parliament shall, not less than six weeks before the opening of the Meeting, draw up the draft agenda for the ASEP Meeting with issues relating to the main themes and focus of the ASEM process as well as issues of special interest to Asia-Europe interparliamentary diplomacy and communicate it with the related documents to all ASEP member parliaments.

Rule 7

Member parliaments that intend to present modifications or additions to the draft agenda should transmit their proposals to the host parliament not less than four weeks before the opening of the Meeting.

V. SESSIONS

Rule 8

The ASEP Meeting shall be structured as follows: the Inaugural Ceremony, followed by the first Plenary session to elect the Meeting's officers, to adopt the Agenda, organization of proceedings, and programme; Panel discussions; the last Plenary session in particular to adopt the Meeting's Final Declaration right before the Closing Ceremony.

Rule 9

Panel discussions shall be separately held focusing on respective topics of the Meeting's Agenda. The list of lead speakers and rapporteurs for each Panel discussion shall be established by the host parliament after due consultations. Lead speakers and rapporteurs for each Panel discussion shall be from both Asia and Europe.

Rule 10

The host parliament shall preside over a preparatory meeting prior to the opening of the ASEP Meeting among heads of delegation (or their representative) plus one other official delegate to discuss and agree on organizational issues such as the Agenda, election of the Meeting's officers, administrative arrangements, organization of proceedings etc.

VI. OFFICERS**President and Vice-Presidents****Rule 11**

The President of the parliament of the host country shall be the President of the ASEP Meeting.

The President of the parliament that is hosting the subsequent ASEP Meeting takes office after the conclusion of the ASEM Summit.

Rule 12

The President of the Meeting or his/her representative from the host parliament shall open and close the Meeting, chair plenary sessions, ensure observance of the rules of procedure and maintenance of order, accord the right to speak, rule on points of order, put questions to a discussion and announce decisions reached during the Meeting. He/she may propose the closure of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time allowed to speakers and on the number of times a representative of each participating parliament may speak on an item. The President's decisions on these matters shall be final.

Rule 13

The head of delegation of each participating parliament shall be designated as Vice-President of the Meeting. The President may conduct consultations with the Vice-Presidents on procedural as well as substantive matters at any time during the Meeting if he deems necessary.

Co-chairs of panel discussions

Rule 14

There shall be Co-chairs to conduct debate in Panel discussions. Each Panel discussion shall be co-chaired by representatives from both Asia and Europe. The list of Co-chairs shall be established by the host parliament after due consultations.

Chair of drafting committee

Rule 15

The Drafting Committee shall be chaired by the host parliament.

Rapporteurs

Rule 16

There shall be rapporteurs to elaborate reports of Plenary sessions as well as Panel discussions. The list of Rapporteurs shall be established by the host parliament after due consultations.

VII. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Sessions

Rule 17

As a rule, sessions of the ASEP Meeting shall be public. If he/she deems necessary, the President of the Meeting may propose to sit in closed session. The Meeting in plenary shall decide thereon by consensus.

Speeches

Rule 18

1. The President/Co-chairs/Chair shall grant the right to speak at the Plenary sessions, Panel discussions or Drafting Committee meetings. As a rule, the President/Co-chairs/Chair shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak.
2. To ensure the efficient conduct of business and broad participation in the debates, the host parliament may decide on a time limit for interventions and inform the preparatory meeting.
3. Debate shall be confined to the questions pertaining to the subject and focus of the Meeting. The President/Co-chairs/Chair may call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

List of speakers**Rule 19**

In order to ensure orderly, efficient and dynamic debate, the Chair/Co-Chair of the meeting shall establish at his/her own discretion a list of speakers taking into consideration, inter alia, regional balance, the need to give precedence to delegates of ASEP member parliaments taking the floor for the first time and relevance of the speaker's country to the issue at hand. Speakers are encouraged to register with the Secretariat before or during the sessions. They may also raise their hands to ask for the floor during the debate.

Rule 20

During the course of a debate the President/Co-chairs may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the delegates, declare the list closed.

Decision making**Rule 21**

Adoption of decisions shall be by consensus among official delegations.

Rule 22

The Chair may consider a delegation's request that differing opinions on an issue be recorded in a relevant document of the meeting.

Language**Rule 23**

English shall be the working language of the Meeting. Participating parliaments that would like the proceedings to be interpreted in their preferred language shall have the responsibility to bring their own interpreters at their own expense. The host country is to provide the simultaneous interpretation facilities.

Secretariat**Rule 24**

The host country shall set up a Secretariat to provide adequate support services for the Meeting.

Documents**Rule 25**

Copies of official documents, reports or statements made in the Meeting shall be distributed promptly. Only the Secretariat is allowed to disseminate documents on the meeting premises.

Expenses**Rule 26**

The host parliament shall bear the cost of organizing the Meeting and the delegations shall cover their own expenses for attending the Meeting.

VIII. OUTCOME OF THE MEETING

Rule 27

At the end of the last plenary session, the Meeting shall adopt one final document - the ASEP Declaration reflecting the main thrust of the debates, the Meeting's decisions as well as its recommendations to the upcoming ASEM Summit. The host parliament shall submit a draft declaration to all member parliaments three weeks before the Meeting. Member parliaments are encouraged to submit their contribution to the first draft final document prior to the Meeting to be incorporated to the extent possible into the consolidated draft final document. The ASEP Declaration approved shall be transmitted to all member parliaments and to the upcoming ASEM Summit.

Rule 28

The Meeting shall set up a Drafting Committee to elaborate the drafts of the Meeting's final document for submission to and subsequent approval by the Plenary Session. This committee shall be composed of representatives from the host parliament and from all interested delegations. Informal consultations may be held to ensure the Meeting's final outcome.

Rule 29

The Summary Report of the ASEP Meeting shall be prepared by the host parliament with the help of relevant rapporteurs. The Summary Report shall be circulated to all delegations for amendments.

IX. Adoption and amendment of the rules

Rule 30

The Meeting shall adopt and amend its Rules by consensus.

Rule 31

Proposals for amending the Rules of the ASEP Meeting shall be formulated in writing and sent to the parliament of the host country at least three months before the Meeting. The Parliament of the host country shall communicate such proposals immediately to all ASEP member parliaments. It shall also, if necessary, communicate to all ASEP member parliaments any proposals for sub-amendments at least one month before the ASEP Meeting.

Consideration of any request to amend the Rules shall be included in the agenda of the next Meeting.

Unless otherwise specified with the approval of the Meeting, amendments to these rules shall enter into force at the following Meeting.