

## Rules of Procedure of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe<sup>1</sup>

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# Rules of Procedure of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

## *I. Participation in the OSCE*

1. All States participating in the OSCE shall do so as sovereign and independent States and in conditions of full equality.
2. Each of the participating States shall decide on its representation in OSCE bodies and at OSCE meetings.

## *II. OSCE Decision-Making and Informal Bodies*

### *(A) General provisions*

1. The participating States of the OSCE may establish and dissolve working bodies of the OSCE which are authorized to take decisions and adopt documents having a politically binding character for all the participating States or reflecting the agreed views of all the participating States, hereinafter referred to as OSCE decision-making bodies. Only such bodies shall be regarded as official/formal OSCE bodies. Other bodies shall be regarded as informal bodies.
2. Decisions of the OSCE decision-making bodies shall be adopted by consensus. Consensus shall be understood to mean the absence of any objection expressed by a participating State to the adoption of the decision in question. This paragraph shall apply without prejudice to the earlier adopted CSCE/OSCE documents referred to in Annex 2.
3. Any texts, which have been adopted by a decision-making body by consensus, such as decisions, statements, declarations, reports, letters or other documents, shall hereinafter be referred to as OSCE decisions or OSCE documents. Such documents shall have a politically binding character for all the participating States or reflect the agreed views of all the participating States.
4. Documents issued by the Chairpersons of OSCE decision-making bodies or by OSCE executive structures shall not be regarded as OSCE documents and their texts shall not require approval by all the participating States.
5. Each decision-making body may set up subordinate decision-making bodies or dissolve them. In the former case, the participating States shall clearly define the terms of reference or mandate of these bodies and may amend them whenever appropriate. In the latter case, the tasks of a dissolved decision-making body may be transferred to other decision-making bodies.

6. Each decision-making body may set up informal subsidiary working bodies, hereinafter referred to as informal subsidiary bodies (ISBs), or dissolve them. These ISBs shall not have a decision-making capacity as specified in paragraph II(A)1 and shall be open to all participating States.
7. Each ISB shall work in accordance with its terms of reference or mandate and shall be accountable and report to a decision-making body hereinafter referred to as the superior decision-making body of that ISB.
8. The decision-making bodies, the Chairpersons of decision-making bodies, and the Chairpersons of ISBs in close consultation with their superior decision-making body, may set up or dissolve *ad hoc*/thematic open-ended informal working bodies, hereinafter referred to as informal working groups (IWGs), which shall not have a decision-making capacity as specified in paragraph II(A)1 and which shall be open to all the participating States.
9. Each IWG shall work in accordance with its terms of reference or mandate and shall be accountable and report to a decision-making body, the Chairperson of a decision-making body or the Chairperson of an ISB, hereinafter referred to as the superior authority of that IWG.
10. When setting up an ISB or IWG, the establishing authority shall clearly define the terms of reference for that body and it may amend them whenever appropriate. When an ISB or an IWG is dissolved, the tasks of the dissolved body may be transferred to other ISBs or IWGs.
11. A conference, seminar, workshop or other meeting which is held by a decision of the participating States shall be referred to hereinafter as an OSCE meeting. The participating States may decide to hold regular OSCE meetings, *ad hoc* OSCE meetings, or joint OSCE meetings with other international organizations or States.
12. The participating States shall be represented in the decision-making bodies, ISBs, IWGs and OSCE meetings by such delegates and experts, hereinafter referred to as Representatives, as they shall designate for the purpose.
13. The decision-making bodies may establish or dissolve, in keeping with their respective levels of authority, specific structures for the implementation of decisions taken and tasks set by the participating States. Such structures include the Secretariat, institutions, field operations, special representatives or other operational instruments of the Organization, hereinafter referred to as executive structures of the OSCE. When establishing an executive structure, the establishing authority shall clearly define its mandate and it may amend that mandate whenever appropriate. The decision-making body, which created the executive structure, shall constitute its superior authority.

14. Unless otherwise decided by the participating States,

- Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia shall hereinafter be referred to as *Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation*;
- Afghanistan, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and Thailand shall hereinafter be referred to as *Asian Partners for Co-operation*;
- Asian and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation may also be referred to as Partners for Co-operation;
- The modalities for the participation of the Partners for Co-operation in the work of the OSCE decision-making and informal bodies and OSCE meetings shall be governed by the relevant chapters of this document.

*(B) Structure of the OSCE decision-making bodies*

1. Unless otherwise decided by the participating States, the OSCE shall maintain the following structure of decision-making bodies.

2. The highest OSCE decision-making body is the Meeting of Heads of State or Government (Summit), which takes decisions, sets priorities and provides orientation at the highest political level.

3. The Ministerial Council, consisting of the ministers for foreign affairs of the participating States, is the central decision-making and governing body of the OSCE between Summits. It is the central forum for political consultations within the OSCE and may consider and take decisions on any issue relevant to the Organization. The Ministerial Council shall implement tasks defined and decisions taken by the Meetings of Heads of State or Government. The participating States may decide to convene regular or *ad hoc* meetings of other ministers with decision-making capacity as specified in paragraphs II(A)1 and II(A)5.

4. The Permanent Council (PC) is the principal decision-making body for regular political consultations and for governing the day-to-day operational work of the Organization between meetings of the Ministerial Council. It shall implement, within its area of competence, tasks defined and decisions taken by the Meetings of Heads of State or Government and the Ministerial Council.

5. The PC may convene reinforced PC meetings at the level of political directors or other senior officials from capitals in order to consider issues requiring such a level of representation and to adopt decisions.

6. The PC may also convene special PC meetings in order to discuss matters of non-compliance with OSCE commitments and to decide on appropriate courses of action. Special PC meetings may also be convened for other purposes in the periods when regular PC meetings are not normally held or for

the consideration of a particular issue/topic. Decisions adopted at reinforced or special meetings shall have the same force as other decisions of the PC.

7. The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) is the autonomous decision-making body with the mandate set in relevant decisions of the Meetings of Heads of State or Government and the Ministerial Council. It shall implement, within its area of competence, tasks defined and decisions taken by the Meetings of Heads of State or Government and the Ministerial Council.

8. The FSC may convene special FSC meetings for the consideration of a particular issue/topic or for other purposes in the periods when regular FSC meetings are not normally held. Decisions adopted at special meetings shall have the same force as other decisions of the FSC.

9. The PC and the FSC may convene joint meetings to consider issues related to the competence of both bodies and adopt PC and/or FSC decisions.

*(C) Other structures and institutions*

1. Unless otherwise decided by the PC or a higher-level decision-making body, the PC shall have the following ISBs as specified in paragraph II(A)6: the Preparatory Committee (PrepComm) as the highest-level ISB of the PC, the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance (ACMF), the Economic and Environmental Subcommittee (EESC), the Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and the Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation. (The latter two bodies may also be referred to as Contact Groups with the Partners for Co-operation.)

2. Unless otherwise decided by the FSC or a higher-level decision-making body, the FSC shall have the following ISBs, as specified in paragraph II(A)6: Working Group A, Working Group B and the OSCE Communications Group.

3. The Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE (OSCE PA), as an autonomous OSCE body which is composed of members of parliament from the OSCE participating States and maintains close relationships with other OSCE structures, determines its own rules of procedure and working methods. The modalities for the participation of the OSCE PA in the work of the OSCE decision-making and informal bodies and in OSCE meetings are set out in chapters IV.1(D), IV.2, V and VI(A) of this document.

4. The OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, as the body established for settlement, by means of conciliation and, where appropriate, arbitration, of disputes which are submitted to it in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on Conciliation and Arbitration within the CSCE (Stockholm, 1992), determines its own rules, subject to approval by States parties to that

Convention. The OSCE rules of procedure, as set out in this document, shall not apply to the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

### *III. Chairmanship and Troika*

1. The OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, hereinafter referred to as the Chairmanship, shall be held for one calendar year by the participating State designated as such by a decision of the Summit or the Ministerial Council, as a rule two years before the Chairmanship's term of office starts.
2. The Chairmanship shall be responsible on behalf of the Ministerial Council and the PC for co-ordination of and consultation on current OSCE business. The functions of the Chairmanship shall be exercised by the minister for foreign affairs (hereinafter referred to as Chairman-in-Office) of that participating State together with his/her staff, including the Chairperson of the PC.
3. In performing its duties, the Chairmanship shall act in accordance with OSCE decisions, and shall be assisted by the preceding and succeeding Chairmanships, operating together as a Troika. The Chairmanship shall be supported by the executive structures of the OSCE.
4. The FSC Chairmanship shall be held for the period from the end of each recess (winter, spring, summer) to the end of the following recess by the participating States, succeeding each other in the French alphabetical order. The FSC Chairmanship shall be responsible on behalf of the FSC for co-ordination of and consultation on current FSC business.
5. In performing its duties, the FSC Chairmanship shall act in accordance with OSCE decisions, and shall be assisted by the preceding and succeeding FSC Chairmanships, operating together as an FSC Troika. The FSC Chairmanship shall be supported by the relevant executive structures of the OSCE. Should a participating State waive its turn to chair the FSC, it will have the option of participating in the FSC Troika as an additional member during the period in which it was due to exercise the chairmanship.

### *IV. Rules of Procedure for Decision-Making Bodies*

#### *IV.1 General Rules*

##### *(A) Procedural aspects of decision-making*

1. Proposals for draft decisions may be initiated by the Chairmanship or FSC Chairmanship, as appropriate, or by any participating State or group of participating States. Proposals of participating States or groups of participating

States shall be submitted in writing to the Chairperson of the relevant decision-making body and circulated as soon as possible to all participating States.

2. The Chairperson shall ensure that draft decisions are considered in an appropriate IWG, ISB and/or subordinate decision-making body of the decision-making body to which the draft decision has been submitted, or otherwise discussed by all the participating States prior to the submission of the draft decision for adoption.

3. The Chairperson shall submit the draft decision for adoption by including it in the draft agenda of an appropriate meeting if it has been forwarded to him/her by a subordinate decision-making body or ISB. The Chairperson may also submit draft decisions for adoption on his/her own initiative if the conditions set out in paragraph IV.1(A)2 are met.

4. The absence of a Representative at a meeting of a decision-making body shall not be considered as an objection of that participating State or constitute an obstacle to the adoption of decisions at that meeting.

5. Decisions shall be adopted at meetings of decision-making bodies or, if so determined by consensus, through the application of a silence procedure. The modalities for the application of a silence procedure by the Ministerial Council, the PC and the FSC are set out in Annex 1.

6. Representatives may ask for their formal reservations or interpretative statements concerning given decisions, including those through a silence procedure, to be duly registered by the Secretariat and circulated to the participating States. Such formal reservations and interpretative statements must be submitted in writing to the Secretariat.<sup>2</sup>

7. Each decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption unless otherwise specified in the text of the decision. If a decision has been adopted through a silence procedure, the date of the expiration of the period of silence shall be regarded as the date of adoption of the decision.

8. Once adopted, decisions shall not require an additional endorsement or approval by a higher-level decision-making body. Draft decisions requiring adoption by a higher-level decision-making body shall be forwarded, without adoption, to that decision-making body.

9. Any decision may be amended or overruled by the same decision-making body that has adopted the decision, unless this decision-making body specifies that a lower-level decision-making body may amend or overrule it. Any

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<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is intended to codify past and existing CSCE/OSCE practice with regard to formal reservations and interpretative statements.

decision may be amended or overruled by a higher-level decision-making body.

10. Texts of documents for adoption jointly by the OSCE participating States and other parties, including international organizations, shall be adopted by a decision of a relevant OSCE decision-making body. Such a decision shall contain provisions ensuring that a joint document with other parties comes into effect for the OSCE upon that document's entry into force for the other parties or for the OSCE, whichever is the later.

*(B) Working languages and official records*

1. The working languages of the OSCE shall be: English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish.

2. Meetings of the decision-making bodies shall be conducted with interpretation between the working languages. Exceptionally, the Chairperson of a decision-making body may suggest, giving a clear explanation of the reasons, that, with the consent of the participating States, a meeting or a part of a meeting should be held in one language only, without interpretation.

3. Any Representative may make a statement in a language other than the working languages. In this case, he/she shall himself/herself provide for interpretation into one of the working languages.

4. Proceedings of the meetings of decision-making bodies shall be recorded in the journals of meetings, which shall constitute the only official OSCE records. These shall be issued both on paper and in electronic format in all the working languages, and shall be made public.

5. The journals shall be in a standard OSCE format and shall contain the following information about a meeting: the date(s), the time of opening/suspension/resumption/closing, name(s) of the Chairperson(s), subjects discussed, lists of statements made under each agenda item and sub-item (with reference numbers of statements distributed), records of decisions adopted, as well as the date, time and place of the next meeting.

6. The texts of decisions, with interpretative statements and formal reservations attached, if any, shall be circulated to the participating States in all the working languages in a standard OSCE format, shall be appended to the journal of the meeting at which the decision has been adopted and shall be made public. The texts of decisions adopted by a decision-making body through a silence procedure shall be appended to the journal of the first meeting of that body following the expiration of the silence period.

7. Statements made at a meeting may be annexed to the journal of the meeting if so requested by a Representative at the meeting and agreed by the

Chairperson. Such documents shall be submitted in writing to the Secretariat. The Chairperson may, if necessary, annex to the journal other documents relevant to that particular meeting, including Chairperson's statements, after announcing that at the meeting.

8. The journals shall be issued by the Secretariat as soon as possible, upon approval of their contents by the Chairperson(s) of the meeting in question.

9. Language conforming of the translations of documents adopted by the Ministerial Council and Meetings of Heads of State or Government shall be organized by the respective Chairmanship, following the distribution in all the working languages of the journal(s) of the respective meeting(s). Originally adopted texts of those documents or texts of documents not falling within the meaning of paragraph II(A)3 shall not be subject to language conforming.

10. The final document of each Ministerial Council meeting or Meeting of Heads of State or Government shall be compiled in a standard OSCE format as a separate volume, the contents and structure of which shall be defined by the respective Chairmanship with the assistance of the Secretariat. The final document shall contain the texts of all the documents adopted at the meeting, the texts of other documents annexed to its journal(s) and the texts of selected reports and letters submitted to that meeting. The final document shall be printed and issued in an electronic format in all the working languages.

11. All statements made at meetings of decision-making bodies in working languages other than English and subsequently distributed to all the participating States in a written form shall be translated by the Secretariat into English.

#### *(C) Conduct of meetings*

1. Any meeting of a decision-making body shall be conducted in accordance with an agenda. Decision-making bodies shall keep standing items on the agenda of their meetings: "review of current issues", "general statements", or "security dialogue" (as appropriate to the purview of the decision-making body), and "any other business", under which any issue may be raised by any participating State. Titles of documents to be adopted at a meeting of the PC or FSC shall be included in the draft agenda as separate items or sub-items, pursuant to paragraph IV.1(A)3.

2. Draft agendas for Summits and Ministerial Council meetings shall be prepared and issued by the Chairmanship and forwarded to the Chairperson of the Summit or the Ministerial Council meeting by a PC decision. The agenda shall be formally adopted at the beginning of the meeting and appended to the journal of that meeting.

3. Draft agendas of the meetings of the PC shall be prepared and issued in advance by the Chairmanship, taking into account views expressed by participating States. The Chairperson shall announce the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. If a reservation is expressed by a participating State regarding a non-standing item of the draft agenda, the Chairperson shall decide on the agenda of that meeting as appropriate.
4. Draft agendas of the FSC shall be prepared by the FSC Chairmanship and discussed in the FSC Troika. The draft agendas shall thereafter be issued and agreed upon by the FSC at the beginning of each meeting.
5. The Chairperson shall ensure the good order and smooth running of meetings.
6. During the meetings, the Chairperson shall keep a list of speakers to which all Representatives shall have equal and unhindered access.
7. During the meetings, the Chairperson may declare the list of speakers closed with the consent of the meeting. If a statement made after the closure of the list of speakers makes desirable a reply by a Representative, the Chairperson shall accord the right of reply to that Representative, at his/her request.
8. If a Representative wishes to raise a point of order, he/she shall communicate that wish to the Chairperson, and the latter shall give him/her the floor immediately. A Representative raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.
9. The Chairperson may change the order of consideration of agenda items with the consent of the meeting. He/she may suspend and resume the meeting as he/she deems necessary.
10. At the meetings of the decision-making bodies each participating State shall have one seat at the main table with a nameplate.
11. At the meetings of the decision-making bodies, the European Commission shall have one seat next to the participating State holding the EU Presidency.

*(D) Other participants*

1. Representatives of the OSCE PA and of executive structures may attend meetings of the decision-making bodies. They may make oral contributions at the invitation of the Chairperson of a meeting under an item on the agenda. They shall not participate in the drafting of documents, but may comment on drafts that directly concern them, at the invitation of the Chairperson.

2. The Partners for Co-operation and international organizations, institutions and initiatives may be invited by the participating States, on a regular or case-by-case basis, to attend meetings of decision-making bodies and make oral and/or written contributions, without the right to participate in the drafting of documents. Unless otherwise agreed by the participating States, the specific modalities for their participation at meetings of decision-making bodies, as set out in this chapter and chapter IV.2 below, shall apply.
3. Japan may attend and make both oral and written contributions at meetings of the decision-making bodies, without the right to participate in the drafting of documents.
4. Other Partners for Co-operation may attend and make both oral and written contributions at the Meetings of Heads of State or Government and Ministerial Council meetings and, upon invitation by the respective Chairperson, at certain meetings of the PC and the FSC, without the right to participate in the drafting of documents.
5. Representatives of other international organizations, institutions and initiatives, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia and business may be invited by the participating States, on a case-by-case basis, to attend certain meetings of decision-making bodies and make oral and/or written contributions.
6. The participating States may decide to make certain meetings or sessions during meetings of decision-making bodies open to NGOs, the press and the public.

#### *IV.2 Specific Rules*

##### *(A) Meetings of Heads of State or Government*

1. The time and venue of Meetings of Heads of State or Government shall be determined by the Ministerial Council or the PC. A Meeting of Heads of State or Government or the Ministerial Council may decide on the frequency of Summits.
2. The decision on the timetable and organizational modalities for each Meeting of Heads of State or Government shall be adopted by the PC not later than two months before the meeting.
3. The Meetings of Heads of State or Government shall have a duration of not more than two days, as a rule, and shall consist of several plenary sessions, including opening and closing plenary sessions.

4. The Chair at the opening and closing sessions shall be taken by the host country. The Chair at other plenary sessions shall be taken by the Troika countries or those participating States designated by the PC.
5. The Meetings of Heads of State or Government shall be open to the press and the public, and the proceedings shall be broadcast live in all the working languages to the media centre and NGO centre by closed-circuit television, unless otherwise decided by the participating States.
6. For each Meeting of Heads of State or Government, the PC shall specify the list of international organizations, institutions and initiatives to be invited to attend and to make oral and/or written contributions.
7. The order of statements by the participating States shall be established by the drawing of lots. The European Commission may take the floor immediately after the participating State holding the EU Presidency.
8. The President of the OSCE PA shall be invited to address the Meeting of Heads of State or Government at the opening session.
9. The Partners for Co-operation shall be invited to address the Meeting of Heads of State or Government after the statements by the participating States in the order established by the drawing of lots.
10. Other participants invited to address the Meeting of Heads of State or Government pursuant to paragraph 6 above will speak in the order established by the PC.
11. Statements at the meetings should not exceed five minutes.

*(B) Meetings of the Ministerial Council*

1. The time and venue of the Ministerial Council meetings shall be determined by the Ministerial Council or the PC. The Ministerial Council shall meet, as a rule, once a year in the country holding the Chairmanship, unless otherwise decided by the participating States.
2. The decision on the timetable and organizational modalities for each Ministerial Council meeting shall be adopted by the PC not later than one month before the meeting.
3. The meetings shall have a duration of not more than two days and shall consist of several plenary sessions, including opening and closing plenary sessions.
4. The meetings shall be chaired by the Chairman-in-Office. The Chair at plenary sessions, other than opening and closing plenary sessions and those

taking up agenda items which are subject to discussion and possible decision, may be delegated to the preceding and/or incoming Chairman-in-Office.

5. For each meeting, the PC shall specify the list of international organizations, institutions and initiatives to be invited to attend and to make oral and/or written contributions.

6. Only the opening and closing sessions shall be open to the press and the public, unless the meeting decides to make other sessions open. Unless otherwise decided, all sessions, except for those taking up agenda items which are subject to discussion and possible decision, shall be broadcast live in all the working languages to the media centre and NGO centre by closed-circuit television.

7. The order of statements by the participating States shall be established by the drawing of lots. The European Commission may take the floor immediately after the participating State holding the EU Presidency.

8. The President of the OSCE PA shall be invited to address the meeting at the opening session.

9. The Partners for Co-operation shall be invited to address the meeting after the statements by the participating States in the order established by the drawing of lots.

10. Other participants invited to address the meeting pursuant to paragraph 5 above will speak in the order established by the PC.

11. Statements at the meetings should not exceed five minutes.

*(C) Meetings of the PC and FSC*

1. The meetings of these bodies shall take place, as a rule, once a week in Vienna. They may also be held at the venue of the Ministerial Council meetings and Meetings of Heads of State or Government, or elsewhere, if so decided by the participating States. The PC and FSC meetings shall be convened and chaired by the respective Chairperson or his/her representative.

2. The Chairmanship shall determine exact dates for the winter, spring and summer recesses during which meetings shall not, as a rule, be held.

3. The Chairperson may invite the States specified in paragraph IV.1(D)4 to certain meetings.

4. The Chairperson may invite high-level officials from the participating States and other international organizations, institutions and initiatives to address a meeting as a guest speaker.

5. Unless otherwise decided by the participating States, the meetings shall be closed to the press and the public. The Chairperson may allow the presence of the press during presentations of guest speakers. He/she may allow the presence of a limited number of visitors upon request of a participating State or the Secretariat.

6. The order of statements for each agenda item or sub-item shall be established by the Chairperson according to the order of requests for the floor. Such requests may be communicated to the Chairperson in advance.

7. Statements at the meetings shall not, as a rule, be limited in time. The Chairperson may request speakers to limit the length of their interventions if there is a time constraint for the duration of a meeting.

*(D) Joint meetings of the PC and FSC*

1. Joint FSC-PC meetings may be convened by the Chairpersons of both bodies when necessary and shall be co-chaired by both of them or their representatives.

2. The rules contained in paragraphs IV.2(C)3 to IV.2(C)7 shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to joint FSC-PC meetings.

3. PC and/or FSC decisions may be adopted at the joint FSC-PC meetings. The journals of the meetings shall be issued as set out in chapter IV.1(B).

*V. Rules of Procedure for Informal Bodies*

*(A) Informal subsidiary bodies of the decision-making bodies*

1. The work of an ISB shall be co-ordinated by its Chairperson, who shall be accountable and report to the Chairperson of the superior decision-making body, as set out in paragraph II(A)7.

2. Unless otherwise laid down in the terms of reference of an ISB, the functions of the Chairperson of an ISB shall be exercised by a representative of the Chairmanship or the FSC Chairmanship, as appropriate. In cases where an ISB is chaired by a representative of another participating State or the Secretariat, the overall responsibility for the work of that ISB shall remain with the Chairmanship or the FSC Chairmanship, as appropriate. Unless otherwise decided by the participating States, the latter provision shall relate to the following ISBs:

- (a) The ACMF, during a calendar year, shall be chaired by a representative of the Chairmanship from 1 January to 30 September and by a representative of the incoming Chairmanship from 1 October to 31 December;

- (b) The Contact Group with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation shall be chaired by a representative of the incoming Chairmanship;
- (c) The Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation shall be chaired by a representative of the preceding Chairmanship;
- (d) The OSCE Communications Group shall be chaired, on behalf of the Chairmanship, by a representative of the OSCE Secretary General.

3. The agenda for the meetings of an ISB shall be prepared and issued in advance by its Chairperson, who shall include in the agenda an appropriate item, such as “any other business”, under which Representatives may raise any issue. The Chairperson may include additional items in the agenda if so requested by a Representative before or at the beginning of the meeting.

4. There shall be no official records kept for the meetings of ISBs. The Chairperson of an ISB may issue informal summaries or reports of the meetings unless otherwise laid down in the ISB’s terms of reference.

5. The meetings of ISBs shall not, as a rule, be provided with interpretation between the working languages. Subject to availability of resources and in accordance with relevant provisions of paragraph (43) of Chapter V of the 1992 Helsinki Decisions, the Chairperson of the relevant superior decision-making body may decide otherwise for certain ISB meetings.

6. Unless otherwise decided for certain ISBs by the relevant superior decision-making body, representatives of the OSCE PA and of executive structures may attend and observe the meetings of the following ISBs: PrepComm, ACMF, EESC, both Contact Groups, Working Groups A and B. They shall not participate in the drafting of documents, but may comment on drafts or on other matters that directly concern them, and are related to the items on the agenda, upon invitation of the Chairperson.

7. Unless otherwise decided for certain ISBs by the relevant superior decision-making body, the Partners for Co-operation may attend the meetings of the following ISBs, without the right to participate in the drafting of documents:

- (a) Japan – PrepComm, EESC, Working Groups A and B, Contact Group with the Asian Partners for Co-operation;
- (b) Other Partners for Co-operation – their respective Contact Groups.

8. The relevant superior decision-making body may decide to invite the OSCE PA and the Partners for Co-operation to the meetings of ISBs that are not listed in paragraphs 6 and 7 above. The Chairperson of an ISB may invite, on a case-by-case basis, representatives of the OSCE PA and Partners for Co-operation to certain meetings of that ISB, where such attendance is not already stipulated by paragraphs 6 and 7 above.

9. The meetings of ISBs shall be closed to the press and the public. The Chairperson of an ISB may invite representatives of relevant international organizations and guest speakers to certain meetings of that ISB on a case-by-case basis and without the right to participate in the drafting of documents.

*(B) Informal working groups*

1. The work of an IWG shall be co-ordinated by its Chairperson, who shall be appointed by and be accountable to and shall report to its superior authority, as set out in paragraph II(A)9.

2. There shall be no official records kept for the meetings of IWGs. The Chairperson of an IWG may issue informal summaries or reports of the meetings unless otherwise laid down in its terms of reference.

3. The meetings of IWGs shall not, as a rule, be provided with interpretation between the working languages.

4. Representatives of the OSCE PA and of executive structures may attend and observe the meetings of IWGs. They shall not participate in the drafting of documents, but may comment on drafts or on other matters that directly concern them, and are related to the items on the agenda, upon invitation of the Chairperson.

5. The Chairperson of an IWG may invite Partners for Co-operation, representatives of relevant international organizations and guest speakers to certain meetings of that IWG on a case-by-case basis. The meetings of IWGs shall be closed to the press and the public.

*VI. Conferences, Seminars, Workshops and Other Meetings*

*(A) OSCE meetings*

1. OSCE meetings shall not have a decision-making capacity, as specified in paragraph II(A)1 and shall be open to all the participating States. Documents produced at such meetings shall not be considered as OSCE documents, as defined in paragraph II(A)3.

2. The participating States shall adopt decisions regarding the time, venue, theme(s), agenda, timetable and organizational modalities for each OSCE meeting or for a series of OSCE meetings. Unless otherwise laid down in those decisions, the following general rules of procedure shall be applied at the OSCE meetings:

- (a) All plenary sessions shall be conducted with interpretation between the working languages. Exceptionally, the chairperson may suggest, giving a clear explanation of reasons, that, with the consent of the participating States, a part of a meeting conducted outside of the agreed timetable should be held in one language only, without interpretation.
- (b) The chairperson or moderator shall ensure the good order and smooth running of meetings.
- (c) All participants shall have equal access to the list of speakers. The order of statements shall be determined by the chairperson or moderator according to the order of requests for the floor. Such requests may be communicated to the chairperson in advance unless a certain time is set for the opening of the list of speakers. The chairperson or moderator may change the order of statements if necessary.
- (d) During a meeting, the chairperson or moderator may declare the list of speakers closed. If a statement made after the closure of the list of speakers makes desirable a reply by a Representative, the chairperson or moderator shall accord the right of reply to that Representative, at his/her request.
- (e) If a Representative wishes to raise a point of order, he/she shall communicate that wish to the chairperson or moderator, and the latter shall give him/her the floor immediately. A Representative raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.
- (f) Statements shall be limited in time. The chairperson or moderator may establish and change the time limit for statements.
- (g) The OSCE PA and the Partners for Co-operation shall be invited to attend and make both oral and written contributions at OSCE meetings.
- (h) Official records (standard OSCE journals, as specified in chapter IV.1(B)) shall be kept and issued for the following regular OSCE meetings: Review Conferences, Annual Security Review Conferences (ASRC), Annual Implementation Assessment Meetings (AIAM), Economic and Environmental Forums (EEF) and Human Dimension Implementation Meetings (HDIM).
- (i) A report or summary of an OSCE meeting may be issued by the Chairmanship, the FSC Chairmanship or a relevant executive structure, as appropriate.

*(B) Meetings organized by the Chairmanship, the FSC Chairmanship or an executive structure*

1. An OSCE-related conference, seminar, workshop or other open meeting which is held by the Chairmanship, the FSC Chairmanship or an executive structure without a specific decision of the participating States shall not be referred to as an OSCE meeting. The organizers of such meetings shall not be

required to apply the rules of procedure set out in sub-paragraphs (a) to (i) of paragraph VI(A)2 above.

2. Such meetings shall not have a decision-making capacity, as specified in paragraph II(A)1, and shall be open to all the participating States. Documents produced at such meetings shall not be considered as OSCE documents, as defined in paragraph II(A)3.

3. The host(s) or organizer(s) of such meetings shall, as appropriate, inform the participating States about the time, venue, theme(s), agenda, timetable and organizational modalities of the meeting concerned, and provide the participating States with its report or summary.

#### *VII. Final Provisions*

1. These rules of procedure shall complement provisions of OSCE documents adopted earlier. In case of contradiction with OSCE documents adopted earlier, the rules of procedure contained in this document shall take precedence.

2. Pursuant to paragraph IV.1(A)9, the PC and FSC may decide, within their respective competencies, whenever necessary, to recommend to the Ministerial Council amendments to these rules of procedure. The Ministerial Council will decide whether to adopt the amendments recommended, if necessary through the application of the procedure set out in Annex 1(B), and will issue revised rules of procedure, as appropriate.

*Annex 1*

*(A) Application of a Silence Procedure in the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation*

1. The Chairperson may suggest the adoption of a decision through a silence procedure. Such a suggestion shall be made during a meeting, with an indication of the exact time for the expiration of the period of silence. If there is no objection expressed by a Representative at that meeting, the decision shall be regarded as placed under a silence procedure.
2. Immediately after that meeting, the Secretariat shall issue an interim text of the decision without a number and with a temporary title reflecting the fact that the decision is subject to a silence procedure. The interim text shall be appended to the journal of that meeting.
3. The silence shall be regarded as broken if an objection or an amendment has been communicated by a participating State to the Chairperson in writing before the expiration of the silence period. In this case, the Chairperson shall immediately inform the participating States in writing that the decision in question has not been adopted.
4. If the silence has not been broken, the Chairperson, immediately after the expiration of the silence period, shall inform the participating States in writing that the decision in question has been adopted. The text of the decision shall not be issued until the next meeting. If urgent administrative actions are to be taken on the basis of that decision, the Chairperson may send the text of the decision to a relevant executive structure strictly for internal use.
5. At the first meeting following the adoption of the decision, the Chairperson shall make an announcement concerning the adoption of the decision.
6. Immediately after that meeting, the decision, with interpretative statements and formal reservations attached, if any, shall be issued by the Secretariat in a standard OSCE format and appended to the journal of that meeting. The date of the expiration of the silence period shall be regarded as the date of adoption of the decision.

*(B) Procedure for Adopting Ministerial Council Decisions in the Period Between Meetings of the Ministerial Council*

1. The Chairmanship shall circulate the text of a draft Ministerial Council decision to the participating States. After consensus has been reached or approached on the draft Ministerial Council decision, the Chairmanship shall issue a draft PC decision, hereinafter referred to as a PC recommendation, on forwarding the decision in question to the Ministerial Council and recom-

mending its adoption through a silence procedure. This draft PC decision may also contain a recommendation regarding the exact time of the expiration of the period of silence.

2. The PC shall, as a rule, adopt its recommendation without putting it under a silence procedure. If, nevertheless, a silence procedure is applied for the PC recommendation, then the next step (paragraph 3 below) shall be postponed until the expiration of the PC's period of silence, which shall be regarded as the date of entry into force of the PC recommendation.

3. Immediately after the entry into force of the PC recommendation, the Chairman-in-Office (CiO) shall circulate a letter to the other members of the Ministerial Council, which shall announce a silence procedure on the draft Ministerial Council decision and shall be sent as a restricted document, with the draft Ministerial Council decision attached, through the OSCE delegations in Vienna. This letter shall fix the exact time for the expiration of the silence period, which shall not be earlier than five days following the date of the circulation of the letter.

4. The silence shall be regarded as broken if an objection or amendment has been communicated by a participating State to the Chairmanship in writing before the expiration of the silence period. In this case, the Chairmanship shall immediately inform the participating States in writing that the decision in question has not been adopted.

5. If the silence has not been broken, the CiO shall circulate, immediately after the expiration of the silence period, a letter to the other members of the Ministerial Council announcing the adoption of the Ministerial Council decision. The text of the Ministerial Council decision shall not be issued until the next PC meeting.

6. At the first PC meeting following the adoption of the Ministerial Council decision, the Chairperson of the PC shall make an announcement about the adoption of the Ministerial Council decision.

7. Immediately after that PC meeting, the Ministerial Council decision, with the interpretative statements and formal reservations attached, if any, shall be issued by the Secretariat in a standard OSCE format and appended to the journal of that PC meeting. The date of the expiration of the silence period shall be regarded as the date of adoption of the Ministerial Council decision. The text of the CiO's letter mentioned in paragraph 5 above shall be annexed to the journal of that PC meeting, for the record.

8. At the first Ministerial Council meeting following the adoption of the Ministerial Council decision, the CiO shall announce that the decision has been adopted through a silence procedure, and the decision, with the inter-

pretative statements and formal reservations attached, if any, shall be appended to the journal of that Ministerial Council meeting.

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9. The Ministerial Council may place draft decisions under a silence procedure at the meetings of the Ministerial Council. In this case, the consecutive procedure set out in paragraphs (A)1-2 and (B)4-8 of Annex 1 shall be applied.

## *Annex 2*

### *Provisions Related to Paragraph II(A)2*

Paragraph II(A)2 shall apply without prejudice to the following provisions of earlier adopted CSCE/OSCE documents:

- Paragraph 16 of Chapter IV of the Prague Document on Further Development of CSCE Institutions and Structures (1992),
- Paragraph 4 (d) of the Decisions of the Third Meeting of the Council (Stockholm, 1992),
- Decision on Peaceful Settlement of Disputes (Stockholm, 1992).

*Attachment 1*

*Interpretative Statement under Paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure*

By the delegation of Ukraine:

“In connection with the adoption of the OSCE Rules of Procedure, we would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

Ukraine has joined the consensus on the Rules or Procedure of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and welcomes the adoption of that document. We understand that paragraph IV.1(A)6 and both sections of Annex 1 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure reflect past and existing CSCE/OSCE practice with regard to formal reservations and interpretative statements.

Our understanding of this practice and of the adopted rules is that possible formal reservations or interpretative statements concerning given decisions are delivered orally during the meeting at which the decision in question is adopted or, in cases where a silence procedure is applied in accordance with section (A) or section (B) of Annex 1, at the first meeting following the successful expiration of the silence period, immediately after the Chairperson’s announcement about the adoption of the decision in question.

It is also our understanding that no interpretative statements or formal reservations can be made by a participating State and circulated or registered by the Secretariat after the texts of decisions, with interpretative statements and formal reservations attached, if any, are circulated to the participating States in accordance with paragraph IV.1(B)6, paragraph 6 of Annex 1(A) and paragraph 7 of Annex 1(B).

Mr. Chairperson, we ask for this interpretative statement to be duly registered by the Secretariat.”

*Attachment 2*

*Interpretative Statement under Paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure*

By the delegation of the Russian Federation:

“Having joined the consensus regarding the decision of the Ministerial Council on the OSCE Rules of Procedure, we take the position that the adoption of this document signals a useful, even if modest, step in reforming the OSCE and in placing its work on a firm normative basis in the form of a single

compendium of clear and collectively agreed rules, as befits a fully fledged international organization.

We believe that it will be necessary in the future to continue work on the codification of existing procedural practices within the OSCE, supplementing the Rules of Procedure adopted with provisions referring, *inter alia*, to the procedures governing the activities of OSCE institutions and field operations.

We would request that this statement be attached to the decision adopted and included as an annex to the journal of the day.”