

RULES OF PROCEDURE

OF THE

GROUP OF THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY
(CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS)

IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

March 2021

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CHAPTER I

THE EPP GROUP

Article 1

Constitution

The Group was constituted on 11 September 1952. It was officially recognised on 23 June 1953, pursuant to the Resolution adopted on 16 June 1953 by the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community. It was reconstituted on 19 March 1958 within the framework of the European Parliament.

The Declaration of Constitution, containing the first name of the Group, the signatures of its founder members and the composition of its Bureau, was handed to the President of the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community and published on 28 April 1954 in the Official Journal of the European Coal and Steel Community (Vol. 3, No 7, page 309).

The Declaration of Reconstitution, also containing the signatures of the Group members, was forwarded to the President of the European Parliament.

Article 2

Name of the Group

The political group is called:

in Bulgarian:	Група на Европейската Народна Партия (Християндемократи) ЕНП
in Spanish:	Grupo del Partido Popular Europeo (Demócrata- cristianos) PPE
in Czech:	Poslanecký klub Evropské lidové strany (Křesťanských demokratů) ELS
in Danish:	Det Europæiske Folkepartis Gruppe (Kristelige demokrater) EPP
in German:	Fraktion der Europäischen Volkspartei (Christdemokraten) EVP
in Estonian:	Euroopa Rahvapartei (kristlike demokraatide) fraktsioon ERP
in Greek:	Κοινοβουλευτική Ομάδα του Ευρωπαϊκού Λαϊκού Κόμματος (Χριστιανοδημοκράτες) ΕΛΚ
in English:	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) EPP
in French:	Groupe du Parti Populaire Européen (Démocrates- Chrétiens) PPE
in Irish:	Grúpa Pháirtí an Phobail Eorpaigh (Na Daonlathaithe Críostaí) PPE
in Croatian:	Klub zastupnika Europske pučke stranke (kršćanski demokrati) EPP

in Italian:	Gruppo del Partito Popolare Europeo (Democratico Cristiano) PPE
in Latvian:	Eiropas Tautas partijas (Kristīgie Demokrāti) grupa ETP
in Lithuanian:	Europos liaudies partijos (krikščionių demokratų) frakcija ELP
in Hungarian:	Európai Néppárt (Kereszténydemokraták) Képviselőcsoport ENP
in Maltese:	Grupp tal-Partit Popolari Ewropew (Demokristjani) PPE
in Dutch:	Fractie van de Europese Volkspartij (Christen-Democraten) EVP
in Polish:	Grupa Europejskiej Partii Ludowej (Chrześcijańscy Demokraci) EPL
in Portuguese:	Grupo do Partido Popular Europeu (Democratas-Cristãos) PPE
in Romanian:	Grupul Partidului Popular European (Creștin Democrat) PPE
in Slovak:	Poslanecký klub Európskej ľudovej strany (kresťanský demokrati) EĽS
in Slovenian:	Poslanska skupina Evropske ljudske stranke (Krščanskih demokratov) ELS
in Finnish:	Euroopan kansanpuolueen ryhmä (kristillisdemokraatit) EPP
in Swedish:	Europeiska folkpartiets grupp (kristdemokrater) EPP

Article 3

Membership of the Group

- (1) The Group shall consist of Members elected to the European Parliament on the lists of the member parties of the European People's Party.
- (2) Other Members of the European Parliament may be admitted as Members of the Group of the European People's Party if they subscribe to the political programme of the European People's Party and accept these Rules of Procedure.
- (3) Members of the Group are committed to a policy, which, on the basis of a Constitution, pursues the process of federal unification and integration in Europe, which is a constituent element of the European Union as a Union of citizens and States.
- (4) Acting on the basis of the Union model within the European Union, the Group defines its values and aims in line with the current election programme of the European People's Party, in accordance with the founding values of the European Union, such as freedom and democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and subsidiarity, as well as the rights and principles enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- (5) The Group is a parliamentary formation well anchored in the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament. Members of the Group shall respect the Rules of the Parliament, ensure the spirit of mutual respect among Members and serve the will of the Group in public.

Article 4

Allied Members of the Group

Members of the European Parliament may become allied Members of the Group if they subscribe to the basic policies of the Group of the European People's Party and if they accept these Rules of Procedure.

Article 5

Admission of Members

- (1) In accordance with Article 3 paragraph 1, Members elected to the European Parliament on the lists of the member parties of the European People's Party shall be Members of the Group.
- (2) Whenever the European People's Party admits a new member party, the Members elected to the European Parliament on its lists shall also be Members of the Group.

- (3) Decisions according to Article 3 paragraph 2 and Article 4 on the admission of Members have to be duly motivated and supported by the majority of votes cast, constituting the majority of the component Members of the Group. Members of the same Member State as the applicant shall be informed at least 14 days prior to that decision. Members may request a debate on the implications of the applications at least 7 days before a vote.
- (4) Each new Member shall sign two copies of the Declaration of Constitution of the Group. One copy shall be passed by the Group secretariat to the Secretary-General of the European Parliament; the other shall be preserved in the Group records.

Article 6

Voting in Plenary and Committees

- (1) Members commit themselves to support, as a rule, the Group line during votes; however, they have the right to vote according to their conscience and political convictions. Members are supposed to inform the Chairman of the Group or the Group Plenary Assembly the day before the vote in case they intend not to vote along the Group line in an important issue.
- (2) Members should inform, by electronic means, the responsible Vice-Chairman if they cannot participate in a vote in plenary.
- (3) Paragraph 1 and 2 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to votes in committees.

Article 7

Termination of Membership

- (1) Membership or allied membership of the Group shall end on the termination of a Member's appointment to the European Parliament or on resignation.
- (2) The Group's Plenary Assembly may decide, in a duly motivated way, upon the exclusion of a Member or Members of the Group by secret ballot. A proposal for exclusion from the Group may be made by the Presidency or by a group of Members representing at least 15% of the component Members of the Group out of at least 4 delegations.
- (3) The proposal for exclusion from the Group shall be duly motivated and submitted to all Members of the Group in writing at least three days before the vote. The Group shall hear the Member or Members concerned, as well as Members of the same Member State before the vote. The decision is taken by a two-thirds majority of votes cast, constituting at least a majority of the component Members of the Group. In determining whether a two-thirds majority is reached, no account shall be taken of abstentions.
- (4) Where the European People's Party terminates the membership of a member party, the Presidency shall present a proposal regarding the membership in the Group of

the Members of the delegation belonging to that party. In this case, the decision on their exclusion from the Group shall be taken by a majority of votes cast, constituting the majority of the component Members of the Group.

- (5) An excluded Member shall be entitled to ask for readmission provided that the requirements established in Article 3 are fulfilled. Readmission shall be subject to the provisions laid down in Article 5 paragraph 3.

Article 8

Suspension of rights of a Member of the Group

- (1) The rights of a Member may be temporarily suspended.
- (2) The Group's Plenary Assembly may decide, in a duly motivated way, upon the suspension of the rights of a Member or Members of the Group by secret ballot.
- (3) A proposal for the suspension of rights may be made by the Presidency or by a group of Members representing at least 15% of the Members of the Group out of at least 4 Delegations.
- (4) The proposal for suspension of rights shall be duly motivated and submitted to all Members of the Group in writing at least three days before the vote. The Group shall hear the Member or Members concerned, as well as Members of the same Member State before the vote.
- (5) The decision is taken by a two-thirds majority of votes cast, constituting at least a majority of the component Members of the Group. In determining whether a two-thirds majority is reached, no account shall be taken of abstentions.
- (6) The decision to suspend shall specify the reasons and the period of the suspension. The decision may be revised or revoked at any time. The decision to revise, revoke or prolong a suspension shall be adopted if it is supported by a majority of votes cast, constituting the majority of the component Members of the Group. In any case, the decision of suspension ceases to be effective at the end of the parliamentary term.
- (7) Whilst respecting their essential rights as Members of the European Parliament, Members whose rights have been suspended shall immediately be precluded from the following rights that belong to them as Members of the Group:
 - (i) Active participation in Group meetings and activities or in any vote or any other decision of the Group's Plenary Assembly;
 - (ii) Speaking in plenary, committee or other parliamentary activities on behalf of the Group. Provided that the Presidency shall ensure that their speaking rights as Members of the European Parliament are not curtailed;

(iii) Holding any elected position within the Group or being nominated by the Group for any elected position within the European Parliament;

(iv) Being nominated for any rapporteurship or shadow rapporteurship on behalf of the Group;

(8) Where the European People's Party suspends the membership of a member party, the Presidency shall present a proposal regarding the position in the Group of the Members of the delegation belonging to that party. In this case, the decision on the suspension of their rights as Members of the Group shall be taken by a majority of votes cast, constituting a majority of the component Members of the Group. It shall have the effect of suspending the rights of the Members concerned, as defined in this Article. The decision to revise, revoke or prolong suspension of rights in the Group shall also be taken by a majority of votes cast, constituting a majority of the component Members of the Group. In any case, the decision of suspension ceases to be effective at the end of the parliamentary term.

CHAPTER II

GROUP ORGANS

Article 9

Group Organs: Membership and Powers

The organs of the Group of the European People's Party are:

- the Plenary Assembly (Art. 10);
- the Presidency (Art. 12);
- the Group Presidency and Heads of National Delegations (Art. 15);
- the Bureau (Art. 16).

Article 10

Group Plenary Assembly

- (1) The Plenary Assembly meets on convocation of the Presidency at least once during group weeks and once during plenary sessions.
- (2) At the request of one third of the Members or one national delegation, the Presidency convenes the Plenary Assembly to an extraordinary meeting.
- (3) The Plenary Assembly may deliberate, adopt the agenda and vote, whatever the number of Members present.
- (4) At the invitation of the Presidency, other persons may attend meetings and speak.
- (5) The minutes of the Group Plenary Assembly meetings shall include a record of attendance, the names of speakers and the decisions taken. They shall be made available to the Members of the Group and preserved in the records of the Group.

Article 11

Responsibilities of the Group Plenary Assembly

The Plenary Assembly shall:

- (a) decide on admissions, suspension of rights and termination of membership of the Group;
- (b) take decisions on all political matters dealt with inside or outside the European Parliament;
- (c) elect the Presidency;
- (d) set up Standing Working Groups of the Group;
- (e) appoint, on proposal by the Presidency, Members to fill any vacancies set aside for the Group on Committees, Sub-Committees, Temporary Committees and Inter-Parliamentary and other Delegations;
- (f) establish, on proposal by the Presidency, the Group's annual budget, adopt the balance sheet (statement of accounts) and decide whether to grant a discharge in respect of the implementation of the annual budget;
- (g) appoint three auditors;
- (h) take decisions concerning the Group's Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulation (revisions and amendments).

Article 12

Composition of the Presidency

- (1) The Presidency shall consist of the Group Chairman and ten Vice-Chairpersons.
- (2) The Members of the Presidency shall agree among themselves on an allocation of tasks, including the task of Treasurer and the Chairmanships of the Standing Working Groups. This decision shall be brought to the notice of the Group.

Article 13

Responsibilities of the Presidency

The Presidency shall be responsible for:

- (a) convening and presiding over Group meetings, the meetings of the Standing Working Groups and leading the Group in plenary sittings;
- (b) representing the Group externally;
- (c) taking decisions, on proposal by the Secretary-General, on the composition of the secretariat and the working method of the secretariat;
- (d) informing the Group on strategic and political decisions it has taken at its meetings;
- (e) taking decisions in urgent cases instead of the competent body; any such decisions shall be submitted to the competent body;
- (f) preparing Bureau and Group decisions in the financial field;
- (g) preparing the Bureau's deliberations on the Group's Financial Regulation (revisions and amendments);
- (h) external communications, including press releases, on behalf of the Group;
- (i) tabling a proposal for suspension of rights and for exclusion of a Member or Members of the Group.

Article 14

Election of the Group Presidency

- (1) The Group Plenary Assembly shall elect the Chairman and the ten Vice-Chairpersons.
- (2) The elections shall be held before the beginning of the new legislature.
- (3) The term of office of the Group Presidency shall be the same as the effective term of office of the President of Parliament. If this term ends before the end of the legislature, new elections shall be held at least one month before the end of term of office of the President of Parliament.

Article 15

Group Presidency and Heads of National Delegations

The Group Presidency and the Heads of National Delegations shall meet at least once a month to discuss key and strategic issues, to prepare political decisions of major importance and to deliberate on questions of special internal relevance to the Group.

Article 16

Composition of the Bureau of the Group

- (1) The Bureau of the Group shall consist of:
 - (a) the Members of the Presidency;
 - (b) the Heads of National Delegations and an additional Member for every ten Members;
 - (c) the Members of the Presidency of the Parliament belonging to the Group;
 - (d) the Chairmen of Standing Committees belonging to the Group;
 - (e) the Coordinator within each of the Standing Committees;
 - (f) the Chairman and the Secretary-General of the European People's Party, if they are Members of the European Parliament.
- (2) If the Chairman and the Secretary-General of the European People's Party are not Members of the European Parliament, they are permanently invited *ad personam* to the meetings of the Bureau.

Article 17

Responsibilities of the Bureau of the Group

- (1) The Bureau of the Group shall:
 - (a) prepare the strategic and political decisions of the Group;
 - (b) prepare for the plenary sessions highlighting the most relevant questions for the Group from the different national perspectives;
 - (c) propose to the Group, on an initiative from the Presidency, the Group's Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulation.
- (2) The Bureau shall meet at the invitation of the Presidency. The Bureau, a national delegation or one third of the Members of the Group may also request that a meeting be convened.

CHAPTER III

ORGANISATION OF WORK WITHIN

THE GROUP

Article 18

Fixing of the Agenda, Quorum

The Plenary Assembly may deliberate and fix the agenda whatever the number of Members present.

Article 19

Decisions

Except where otherwise provided for in the Rules of Procedure, a simple majority of votes cast shall be required for the decisions of all organs.

Article 20

Remote voting

All organs of the Group shall be able to take their decisions by remote vote.

Article 21

Elections

(1) Elections shall be notified at least three days in advance. A deadline for nominations of at least two days shall be set; this deadline shall expire at least 24 hours before the vote starts. A vote can only be held if at least one third of the candidates are of another sex than the majority of candidates.

(2) All elections shall be held by secret ballot.

(3) If a number of candidates have been nominated for a number of posts, the vote shall only be valid if at least one third of the elected members are of another sex than the majority of candidates elected.

After two unsuccessful ballots, the Group may decide, according to the majority requirements laid down in Article 34, to derogate for the following third ballot from this condition.

(4) If a number of candidates have been nominated for one post, the candidate obtaining the absolute majority of the votes cast shall be elected. If more than two candidates participate and no candidate obtains the required majority at the first and second ballot a final ballot shall be held between the two candidates who got the highest number of votes at the second ballot.

(5) If the same number of candidates has been nominated for a number of posts, a collective ballot can be held.

If a higher number of candidates have been nominated for a number of posts, the candidates obtaining the highest number of votes cast shall be elected.

(6) The Chairman should ensure that, as the result of elections, the overall representation of members holding posts within the Group are composed of at least one third of members belonging to another sex than the majority of members.

Article 22

Nominations

The Group Plenary Assembly shall decide upon nominations of the Group for posts within the Parliament's Bureau. Article 21 shall apply accordingly.

Article 23

Committee Working Groups

(1) The Members of the Group belonging to the same Parliamentary Committee shall form a Working Group coordinated by a Coordinator elected from among these Members. The Working Group may elect a Deputy Coordinator.

(2) The Coordinator is the responsible spokesperson of the Group with respect to the remit of the Committee Working Group and is responsible for the co-ordination of the work of the Group's Members in the respective committee.

Article 24

Standing Working Groups

(1) Committee Working Groups may be grouped together to form Standing Working Groups. Each Member of the relevant Committee Working Groups is a Member of the Standing Working Group. Each Member of the Group can participate in every Working Group meeting and has an advisory vote.

- (2) The Standing Working Groups shall be chaired by a Member of the Presidency (Vice-Chairperson of the Group); they are the responsible spokespersons of the Group with respect to the remit of the Standing Working Group and are responsible for the coordination of the work of the Group's Members in their respective committees.
- (3) The Working Group proposes to the Group Plenary Assembly a list of Members who will speak in the Plenary on behalf of the Group.
- (4) The agendas of the Working Groups are made available to all Members of the Group. Minutes are taken for each meeting and are sent to the Members of the Presidency.

Article 25

Internal Rules of Working Groups

The tasks of Standing Working Groups and Committee Working Groups shall be laid down by internal rules.

Article 26

Parliamentary Initiatives

Members shall inform the Presidency and the responsible Coordinator in advance on legislative initiatives in accordance with Article 5 of the Members' Statute.

CHAPTER IV

GROUP SECRETARIAT

Article 27

The Group Secretariat

The staff of the Group secretariat shall fulfil a supranational function and is subject to the Regulation laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Community.

Article 28

Tasks of the Group Secretariat

The secretariat shall assist the Group.

The secretariat shall perform conscientiously and to the best of their ability all duties assigned to them in the Group secretariat, exclusively serving the Group's interests and neither seeking nor accepting instructions from any body or person outside the Group in the performance of these duties.

Article 29

Secretary-General of the Group

- (1) The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the Bureau on a proposal from the Presidency.
- (2) The Secretary-General shall head and coordinate the Secretariat. He shall also prepare the deliberations of the Bureau and Presidency relating to the secretariat itself.

CHAPTER V

BUDGET

Article 30

Group Budget and Balance Sheet

Before the beginning of a new financial year, the Treasurer shall, with the assistance of the Secretary-General, submit the draft estimates to the Presidency and to the Bureau which, having established them, shall forward them to the Assembly for approval.

Article 31

Representation

The Chairman or his delegate shall be empowered to commit expenditure on behalf of the Group within the limits of the estimates adopted by the Plenary Assembly.

Article 32

Auditing

At the first meeting after the beginning of a new financial year, the Group shall appoint three auditors who are not Members of the Bureau. They shall audit the accounts of the previous financial year, submit a report in writing to the Plenary Assembly and propose that a discharge be granted in respect of the implementation of the annual budget.

Article 33

Group's financial regulations

Financial transactions shall be governed by the Group's financial regulations.

CHAPTER VI

FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 34

Modifications of the Rules of Procedure

Amendments to the Rules of Procedure may be adopted by a two-thirds majority of votes cast, constituting at least a majority of the component Members of the Group. In determining whether a two-thirds majority is reached, no account shall be taken of abstentions.

Article 35

Entry into force

This version of the Rules of Procedures replaces that of 09 October 2013 with effect from 03 March 2021.

ANNEX

A staff committee shall be constituted, consisting of members elected by the staff of the secretariat. This committee shall give its opinion to the Presidency of the Group on all problems concerning the staff. Its terms of reference shall be set out in details in a protocol established by common accord between the members of the secretariat and the Presidency of the Group.