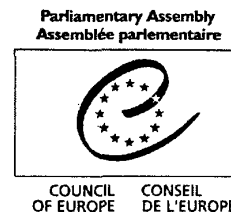


**Parliamentary Assembly**  
**Assemblée parlementaire**



For debate in the Standing Committee — see Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure

**Doc. 10493**  
7 April 2005

**Increase of the number of seats of the Committee on  
Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to 83**

Report

Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities

Rapporteur: Mrs Ganka Samoilovska-Cvetanova, "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia",  
Group of the European People's Party

*Summary*

The report proposes to approve the request of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to increase the number of its seats to 83 and to modify the Assembly's Rules of Procedure accordingly.

**I. Draft resolution**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to Resolution 1144 (1998) which fixed the number of seats of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to 45 seats (now 51 seats following the admission of new member states to the Council of Europe) and to Resolution 1220 (2000) which confirmed this decision.

2. It also takes note of the request by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to increase the number of its seats to 83. This request was referred by the Bureau of the Assembly to the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities according to Rule 65.2 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure.

3. The Assembly considers that the work of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men is of importance for the Assembly's priorities. It also notes that with a view to its volume of activities and workload, the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men may be compared to other larger Assembly Committees with 83 seats.

4. The Assembly therefore supports the request of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to increase the number of its seats to 83.

5. Consequently, the Assembly decides:

i. to replace in Rule 43.1.8 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure the words: "(51 seats)" by "(83 seats)";

ii. to replace the first three paragraphs of Rule 43.2 by the following text:

"France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United Kingdom shall have four seats in each of the first eight committees and two seats in the next committee.

Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine shall have three seats in each of the first eight committees and one seat in the next committee.

Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sweden and Switzerland shall have two seats in each of the first eight committees and one seat in the next committee." (the remainder of the paragraph without change)

iii. that these provisions shall enter into force at the Part-Session which will follow the adoption by the Assembly of the present resolution.

## **II. Explanatory memorandum by the rapporteur, Mrs Samoilovska-Cvetanova**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

1. On 23 November 2004 the Bureau of the Assembly referred to the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities the request of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to increase the number of its seats to 83. This request (letter of the Committee Chair to the President of the Assembly of 18 November 2004) was made in connection with the current revision of the terms of reference of Assembly committees. The letter advanced in particular the following arguments. Equality of treatment between the Assembly committees should be an objective (except with respect to the Monitoring Committee and the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities because of their particular mandates). However, the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men had only 51 seats, while all other committees dealing with substantive issues had 83 seats. The small number of seats of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was perceived as a form of ungrounded discrimination by Assembly members and harmed the perception of the committee's work in the Assembly and indeed by the general public. Despite of its size the committee held the same number of meetings and hearings and presented a similar number of reports to the Assembly as other committees dealing with substantive issues.

2. The present draft report was prepared accordingly. It will give basic information on the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, its current work, set out the principles for the size of Assembly committees and then take position on the request to increase the number of its seats.

### **B. FACTS RELATING TO THE CREATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN**

3. This committee is not one of the general Assembly committees already set up at the end of 1949 or in the early 50s. It was set up on 26 January 1998 by Assembly Resolution 1144 (1998) and replaced the ad hoc Committee on Equality of the Sexes of the Assembly's Bureau which was operational between 1993 and January 1998.

4. The reasons for this change were in particular the following:

- bringing about equal opportunities for women and men is a prerequisite for genuine democracy;
- whereas the Council of Europe's intergovernmental sector had a particular (Steering) Committee to coordinate the various activities to promote equal opportunities, this was not the case for the Assembly;
- the terms of reference of the Bureau ad hoc Committee were "to deliver opinions, from the equality standpoint on texts submitted to the Assembly by Assembly Committees". It also organised seminars and held exchanges of views. However, it was considered that this scope of action was not broad enough. The ad hoc Committee could in particular not report to the Assembly and submit draft resolutions and recommendations for further action.

5. To eliminate this and other drawbacks of the then existing structure the Assembly decided in 1998 to set up the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, after having rejected other possible options (see Doc. 7890).

### **C. SIZE OF ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES**

6. Before 1997 the Assembly had four sizes of general committees. With a view to a better rationalisation of the Assembly's work, Resolution 1107 (1997) reduced these to two:

- committees with 65 (following the admission of new member States to the Council of Europe, now 83) seats (including the Monitoring Committee);
- and committees with 45 (now 51) seats.

From the then existing general committees with 45/51 seats only the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities has been preserved. No reasons were given in the report (Doc. 7723) why the respective committees had 65 (83) or 45 (51) seats.

7. When Resolution 1144 (1998) set up the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men the report on which this text is based (Doc. 7890, par. 12) also indicated no reasons why this committee was given 45 (51) seats. However, it was underlined that, because of the function of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, it would be desirable that it should include a suitable proportion of women representatives.

8. The last report on the committee structure of the Assembly (Resolution 1220 (2000)) confirmed the division of the Assembly's general committees into two categories: eight larger ones with then 76 members and two smaller ones (Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities) with then 46 seats.

### **D. PROPOSALS CONCERNING THE REQUESTED INCREASE OF THE NUMBER OF SEATS OF THE COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN TO 83**

9. It results from the above observations that there are no written criteria for the inclusion of existing (or any new) general Assembly committees in one or the other category.

10. The merits of any request to increase the number of the seats allocated to an existing committee could therefore be analysed according to the following criteria:

- importance of that committee's work for the priorities of the Assembly;
- comparison of the volume and the workload of that committee with those of the committee(s) already included in the proposed category.

11. Several current activities of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men are among the priorities of the Assembly (combating violence against women in Europe; action against trafficking in human beings).

12. Promoting equality between women and men will be one of the priority objectives of the Third Council of Europe Summit. It is likely that this will include stepping up action to combat violence against women, which constitutes an unacceptable violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, the proposal has been made that the Summit should instruct the Committee of Ministers to draft minimum European standards on equality between women and men and to promote the setting-up of national equality mechanisms.

13. It results from an approximate comparison of quantitative elements such as the number of meetings held, of seminars organised and of committee documents and reports prepared by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men that this fully corresponds to the activity of such large Assembly Committees as the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs. For instance the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men held six hearings in 2004 linked to seven reports and four opinions submitted to the Assembly or the Standing Committee in the same year. In both 2003 and 2004 the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men held 11 plenary meetings. Its sub-committees also have important activities. Furthermore, it is to be noted that the new resolution on the revision of the terms of reference of

Assembly committees (Resolution 1425 (2005)) has enlarged those of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

14. For these reasons the rapporteur proposes that the number of seats of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men should be increased to that of the other large Assembly committees, i.e. to 83.

15. This would require the following Rule changes:

- to replace in Rule 43.1.8 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure the words "(51 seats)" by "(83 seats)"

- to replace Rule 43.2. by the following text:

"France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United Kingdom shall have four seats in each of the first eight committees and two seats in the next committee.

Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine shall have three seats in each of the first eight committees and one seat in the next committee.

Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sweden and Switzerland. shall have two seats in each of the first eight committees and one seat in the next committee." (the remainder of the paragraph without change)

16. As this would not come under the province of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities, the rapporteur has not examined any financial consequences of the proposed new status of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (e.g. possible increase of the committee secretariat) nor has it analysed such practical aspects as the attendance at the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men with its current size.

#### **E. FINAL REMARK**

17. The proposed new Rules should enter into force at the part-session which will follow the adoption of the resolution by the Assembly, to give the relevant national delegations time to make the necessary appointments to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men with its new composition.

Committee responsible for the report: Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities

Reference to committee: Decision of the Bureau of 23 November 2004

Draft resolution unanimously adopted on 17 March 2005

Members of the committee: Mr Andreas **Gross**, (Chairperson), Mr Andrea **Manzella**, Mrs Ganka **Samoilovska-Cvetanova**, Mrs Lene Garsdal (Vice-Chairpersons), Mr Sándor Albert, Mr Gulumhuseyn Alibeyli, Mr Ioannis Bougas, Mrs Anne **Brasseur**, Mr Aslan **Cebeci**, Mr Jonas **Cekuolis**, Mr Manlio Collavini (alternate: Mr Giuseppe **Mulas**), Mrs Helen D'Amato, Mrs Krystyna Doktorowicz, Mr Miljenko Dorić, Mr Vangjel Dule, Mr Mats **Einarsson**, Mr Herbert Frankenhauser, Mr Tihomir Gligorić, Mrs Arlette Grosskost, Mr Gerd Höfer, Mr Serhiy **Holovaty**, Mr Tomáš Jirsa, Mr Armand Jung, Mr Erik Jurgens, Mrs Mojca **Kucler-Dolinar**, Mr Markku Laukkanen, Mr Per Erik **Monsen**, Mrs Nóra Nagy, Mr Ionel Olteanu, Mr Alexey Ostrovsky, Mr Julio Padilla, Mr Ivan Pavlov, Mrs Sólveig Pétursdóttir, Mr Christos Pourgourides, Mrs Valentina Radulović Šćepanovic, Mr Armen Rustamyan, Mr Fernando Santos Pereira, Mr Peter **Schieder**, Mr Yuri Sharandin (alternate: Mr Valeriy **Fedorov**), Mr Christophe Spiliotis-Saquet, Mr Victor Stepaniuc, Mr Karim **van Overmeire**, Mr Rudolf **Vis**, Mr David **Wilshire**, Mr G.V. Wright.

*NB: The names of those members present at the meeting are printed in bold.*

*Secretary of the committee: Mr Mario Heinrich.*