



## **BRITISH GROUP INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION RULES (DECEMBER 2014)**

### **Rule 1 The British Group**

The British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) forms one of the National Groups of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in conformity with Articles 1 and 3 of the Statutes thereof.

### **Rule 2 Objects and Purposes of the Group**

In participating in the Group's programme of activities, Members, Honorary Members or Associate Members shall be deemed to give their assent to the aim of the IPU as defined in Article 1 of the Statutes thereof, namely:

“As the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue since 1889, the Inter-Parliamentary Union shall work for peace and co-operation among the peoples and for the firm establishment of representative institutions. To that end it shall:

- (a) foster contacts, co-ordination and the exchange of experience among Parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
- (b) consider questions of international interest and express its views on such issues with the aim of bringing about action by Parliaments and their members;
- (c) contribute to the defence and promotion of human rights, which are universal in scope and respect for which is an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development;
- (d) contribute to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.”

### **Rule 3 Membership**

As an inter-parliamentary body receiving funding from both the House of Commons and the House of Lords, any Member of either House of Parliament will be deemed to be a full member of the Group and will be entitled to participate in the Group's agreed programme of activities by application to the Secretariat.

### **Rule 4 Honorary Membership**

Any former Member of Parliament who has been a member of the IPU's Governing Council or has rendered distinguished services to the BGIPU, on the recommendation of the BGIPU Executive Committee, may become an Honorary member of the Group.

## **Rule 5 Associate Membership**

On the recommendation of the Executive Committee of the Group, any former Member of Parliament who has been a member of the Group for not less than three years and any servant of Parliament who has given distinguished service to the Group may become an Associate Member of the Group.

## **Rule 6 Rights of Honorary and Associate Members**

Honorary and Associate Members shall have the following rights:

- (a) to attend all general meetings of the British Group but without the right to vote;
- (b) to receive all minutes, agenda and other documents relating to such meetings;
- (c) Honorary Members only: to form part of the British Group's delegations to conferences and meetings overseas if the Executive Committee agrees to their participation.

## **THE GROUP'S REVENUE**

### **Rule 7 Subscriptions**

Membership fees will no longer be charged, however there will be no refunds of past Life or Annual subscriptions.

## **OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Rule 8 Officers of the Group**

- (1) The Officers of the Group shall be Honorary Presidents, Presidents, Chair, three Vice-Chairs (two from the House of Commons and one from the House of Lords), Treasurer and the Director.
- (2) The Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Speaker shall be invited to be Honorary Presidents while they hold their offices.
- (3) The President and Vice-Presidents shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting and may hold office only so long as they are Members of either House of Parliament.
- (4) The Chair shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting or, if appropriate, at a Special General Meeting and shall be a Member of the House of Commons and of a Government Party in that House; the office holder shall not be elected or re-elected Chair at more than three consecutive Annual General Meetings or hold continuous office for more than three years other than to await the holding of the next Annual or Special General Meeting after that period has elapsed; the office holder may not hold the office of Chair, Vice Chair or Treasurer for a further period of three years.
- (5) The three Vice-Chairs and the Treasurer shall not be elected or re-elected to any one of these offices at more than three consecutive Annual General Meetings or hold office for a period of more than three years other than to await the holding of the next Annual or Special General Meeting after that period has elapsed; no Member shall serve a consecutive period in these offices collectively of longer

than six years other than to await the holding of the next Annual General Meeting after that period has elapsed.

(6) The Director shall be appointed or may be removed by the Executive Committee upon such terms as the Committee may determine.

#### **Rule 9 The Executive Committee**

(1) The management of the Group shall be vested in the Executive Committee.

(2) The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair, three Vice-Chairs and the Treasurer, who shall be ex-officio members, and twenty-one members who shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting, of whom six shall be members of the House of Lords.

(3) The composition of the Executive Committee shall reflect the numerical strength of the parties in the House of Commons. At least one Peer shall be drawn from the Cross Benches and not more than three Peers shall be from any one Party. The number of Peers belonging to any one opposition party shall never exceed the number of Peers of the parties of Government.

(4) The Executive Committee may co-opt not more than four additional members at its discretion.

#### **Rule 10 Election of Officers and Members of the Executive Committee**

(1) Any full member of the Group may be elected as an Officer or as a member of the Executive Committee.

(2) Any full member of the Group who is elected a member of the Executive Committee shall be eligible for re-election.

(3) A notice of intention to propose a member for election or re-election as an Officer or as a member of the Executive Committee shall be given in writing to the Secretary at least fourteen calendar days before the Annual General Meeting.

(4) A notice of intention under paragraph (3) above shall include the name of a seconder and the written consent to serve of the candidate who is being proposed.

(5) Every proposal for election or re-election shall be circulated by the Secretariat to every member of the Group at least three calendar days before the Annual General Meeting.

(6) Not including holders of high office nominated as Honorary Presidents and Presidents, Honorary and Associate Members shall not be eligible for election as an Officer or as a member of the Executive Committee.

#### **Rule 11 Terms of Office**

(1) The term of office of the Officers, other than the Director, and of members of the Executive Committee shall be from the end of the Annual General Meeting at which they are elected to the end of the next Annual General Meeting.

(2) If an Officer or member of the Executive Committee retires at any time, or if a vacancy occurs for any other reason, the office falling vacant shall be filled by the runner-up at the last election for that office, provided that he is eligible and willing to assume the office.

(3) If there is no runner-up in the last election of Officers eligible and willing to assume office, the Executive Committee shall nominate a member of the Committee to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of office.

(4) If there is no runner-up in the last election of members of the Executive Committee eligible and willing to assume office, the Committee may co-opt an additional member to take this place and shall so co-opt as many additional members as will provide that the Committee consists of at least twelve members in addition to the Officers.

## **Rule 12 Effects of a General Election**

(1) If, following a General Election, the same party or coalition partners remain in power:

- (a) members of the Executive Committee who were in office at the dissolution of Parliament and have been re-elected in the General Election shall continue in office until the next Annual General Meeting;
- (b) if any of the Officers have not been re-elected at the General Election, the Executive Committee shall nominate one or more members of the Committee to act in their places until the next Annual General Meeting;
- (c) if fewer than five members of the Executive Committee have been re-elected in the General Election, the Secretariat shall take immediate steps to arrange for new elections to the Executive Committee.

(2) If, following a General Election, the party or coalition partners in power change:

- (a) the Secretariat shall convene a Special General Meeting to arrange for new elections of Officers and members of the Executive Committee;
- (b) the term of office of any Officers or members of the Executive Committee re-elected at the General Election shall expire at the end of the meeting at which the new elections take place, unless they are re-elected as Officers or members of the Executive Committee.

## **Rule 13 Meetings of the Executive Committee**

(1) The Executive Committee shall meet when the Chair or any three members of the Committee so request.

(2) On receiving such a request, the Secretariat shall convene a meeting of the Committee, giving seven calendar days' notice in writing.

(3) Decisions shall be taken by a majority of votes cast.

(4) Each member of the Committee shall have one vote.

(5) If the votes are equal, the Chair shall have second or casting vote.

(6) The quorum of the Committee shall be eight, including the member in the chair.

## **Rule 14 Duties of the Executive Committee**

The duties of the Executive Committee of the Group shall include:

- (a) adoption of the Group's business plan and oversight of the related programme of annual activities;
- (b) nomination of a Selection Committee which shall be responsible for:
  - (i) selection of delegates to participate in the Assemblies of the IPU, at which the British members of the Governing Council shall be the Leader and

- two other members of the delegation as appointed in accordance with the IPU Statutes;
- (ii) selection of delegates to participate in other activities of the IPU and to represent the Group on bilateral or other delegations and to appoint a leader when required;
  - (c) oversight regarding action to be taken on the recommendation and resolution of the Assemblies and Governing Council of the IPU;
  - (d) promotion and oversight of membership of the Group in accordance with these Rules;
  - (e) consistent with the Group's obligations to its funding bodies in the agreed Financial Memorandum, control and oversight of the expenditure of the Group's funds, including through appointment of an Audit Committee comprising members of the Executive Committee;
  - (f) formal correspondence with the Secretariat of the IPU on the Group's membership;
  - (g) adoption of the Annual Report of the Group, including authorising its transmission to the Secretariat of the IPU;
  - (h) appointment of the Director of the Group, who shall be responsible to the Officers and the Executive Committee for the implementation of their decisions and for the administration of the Group and its Secretariat.

## **MEETINGS OF THE BRITISH GROUP**

### **Rule 15 Annual General Meeting**

- (1) The Annual General Meeting shall be called during the last six months of each calendar year.
- (2) The business of the Annual General Meeting shall be to elect the Officers and Executive Committee, to receive and consider the Annual Report and the Financial Statement (duly audited) and to appoint Auditors.
- (3) A notice of the Annual General meeting of the Group with a copy of the Annual Report and Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting, shall be published with notification to members of the Group not less than twenty-one calendar days before the date appointed for such a meeting, and shall specify the business to be transacted.
- (4) Any member may bring before the Annual General Meeting any business other than that stated in the said notice if, seven calendar days before the date of the meeting, notice in writing of this intention so to do shall have been received by the Secretariat, which shall notify each member of the Group at least three calendar days before the date of the Annual General Meeting.
- (5) Any business brought forward under paragraph (4) of this Rule shall not include a proposal to alter the Rules of the Group.

### **Rule 16 Special General meeting**

- (1) A Special General Meeting of the Group, of which at least seven calendar days' notice shall be given to members of the Group, may be summoned at any time and place by the Executive Committee to consider and determine any matter of interest or importance that may arise, except alterations to the Rules of the Group.
- (2) If at least thirty members of the Group write to the Secretariat requesting a Special General Meeting and state the business which such a meeting is to consider,

the Executive Committee shall summon a Special General Meeting to be held within twenty-one calendar days of the receipt of the request, or if Parliament is in recess, as soon as possible after the expiry of this period when both Houses of Parliament are sitting.

(3) No business shall be transacted at a Special General Meeting other than that stated in the notice convening the meeting.

## **ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS**

### **Rule 17 All Party Parliamentary Groups**

(1) The Group shall cooperate with All Party Parliamentary Groups organised for the purpose of encouraging engagement between British Members of Parliament and their counterparts in other countries, in accordance with Article 1 of the Statutes of the IPU, provided that they are properly registered with the House of Commons Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

(2) At the discretion of the Executive Committee, financial assistance may be given to All Party Parliamentary Groups to enable delegations to visit their associated countries, to receive inward visits to Westminster and other relevant activities in support of inter-parliamentary relations.

(3) The Group shall consult with All Party Parliamentary Groups when inter-parliamentary activities affecting the country or group of countries concerned are under consideration.

(4) The Group shall publish in its Annual Report a reference to its cooperation with All Party Parliamentary Groups, including any financial assistance provided to such Groups.

## **ALTERATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES**

### **Rule 18 Alteration of the Rules**

(1) The Rules of the Group and alterations thereto, shall be adopted by the Annual General Meeting.

(2) Any proposal to alter the Rules shall be notified to members of the Group not less than twenty-one calendar days before the Annual General Meeting at which they are to be considered.

### **Rule 19 Interpretation of the Rules**

If the interpretation of any of the foregoing Rules is in doubt or if a situation arises which does not appear to be provided for in the Rules, the Chair, or the member acting as Chair, shall give a ruling which shall be effective unless and until it is rejected by the next Annual General Meeting.