



INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH  
& TRAINING ON  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

# EUROPA.S. 2023

## European Council



**EUROPA.S.**

PROMOTING EXCELLENCE, POLITICAL INNOVATION AND  
LEADERSHIP IN EUROPE

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Organized by:

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# RULES OF PROCEDURE

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## **A. GENERAL RULES OF SITTING**

## **B. THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL**

## **C. PROCEDURE**

### **C.1 Roll Call**

**C.1.1** At the beginning of each Committee session the Board shall determine the attendance by calling out the countries of all Heads of State or Government in the order that the member states are going to take over the Council's Presidency. The Heads of State or Government shall establish their presence in the Council by raising their placards and stating "Present" when their countries' names are called out. This is called a "Roll Call". At the end of the Roll Call procedure, the Board should announce the total number of present Heads of State or Government and subsequently the number of votes required for simple majority.

**C.1.2** Heads of State or Government arriving late at the European Council (after declared absent during the Roll Call procedure or after the procedure has finished) should send a note to the Board notifying it of their presence. In any other case, they will be considered as absent.

### **C.2 Quorum and verification of the Quorum**

**C.2.1** A quorum constitutes the majority of the membership of each forum (at least 1/2 of the total number of Heads of State or Government) and is verified through the Roll Call procedure. Proceedings may not commence before the quorum has been established.

**C.2.2** If the quorum is not met twenty (20) minutes after the scheduled start time of the council session, the European Council shall start its session with the number of Heads of State or Government already present, unless otherwise instructed by the President of the European Council.

**C.2.3** The Heads of State or Government may call at any time for a verification of the quorum. The Board will proceed by initiating a Roll Call, unless the motion is deemed to be dilatory, in which case it will be overruled with no option of appeal.

### **C.3 Substantive and procedural matters**

A substantive issue is one that pertains to the substance of an issue under discussion, or to the content of a document being debated (e.g. Conclusions, amendments) as opposed to procedural matters that refer to the procedure followed. No Roll Call vote or abstentions are permitted in voting on procedural issues.

### **C.4 Decision Making Process**

**C.4.1** In EUropa.S. 2023 the European Council Conclusions should be adopted by consensus. After long negotiations on the text, all participants should vote in favor of the document, consenting to the decisions of the group, even if they somehow slightly disagree in some of the points raised. In case consensus cannot be achieved, abstentions will be permitted in order for the document to be adopted unanimously. However, at all times, emphasis should be put on the building of consensus.

**C.4.2** Each Head of State or Government has one vote. In case a Head of State or Government votes against any substantive matter, this would automatically mean that consensus and unanimity have not been reached.

**C.4.3** Where the European Council decides by vote, the Board does not take part in the vote.

### **C.5 Attendance of the Council Sessions / Privacy**

The Council Sessions have to be attended by the Heads of State and the Board of the European Council. Although the European Council has full privacy in its sessions, however, for the purpose of the conference, entrance will be allowed for accredited visitors. However, the EC will have increased privacy in relation to the Parliamentary Committees. All visitors must have permission granted by the Secretary General of the Council in order to enter the room and circulation will be monitored by the administrative staff.

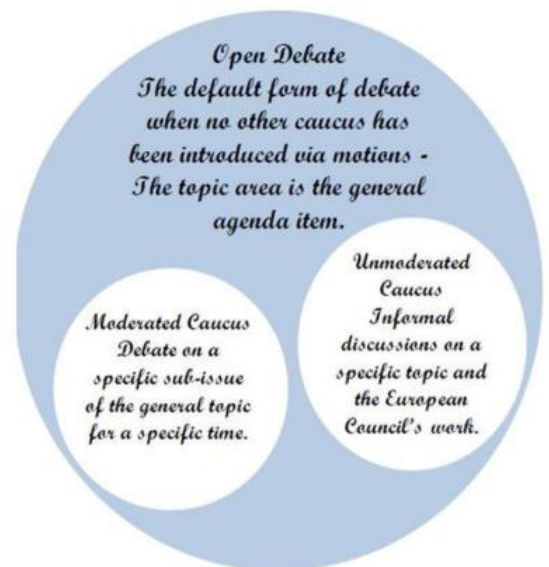
## **D. DEBATE**

### **D.1 Default Form of Debate**

Unless the Board decides otherwise, Open Debate will be the default form of debate during all sessions of the European Council. Any Heads of State or Government wishing to speak should raise their placard and be recognized by the Board of the European Council. The topic of the Open Debate will be the agenda item of the European Council. The individual speaker's time during open debate is set through the motion to set individual speaker's time.

### **D.2 Moderated Caucus**

A Head of State or Government or the Board can, at any time that the floor is open to points or motions, propose a Moderated Caucus for a specific time, in order to limit the discussion to a specific aspect of the topic. A moderated caucus is a "parenthesis" to the Open Debate—a way of dividing the general topic area in sub-questions and debate time accordingly. The Head of State or Government proposing the Motion must briefly explain the purpose and specify a time limit for the Caucus and a time limit for individual speeches. Simple majority is required to adopt the motion.



### **D.3 Unmoderated Caucus**

Formal debate (Open Debate and Moderated Caucuses) may be interrupted by a motion for an Unmoderated Caucus, proposed by a Head of State or Government or the Board, only when the Board opens the floor. Heads of State or Government making the motion must briefly explain its purpose and propose a total duration for this caucus. The time limit for the caucus remains

at the Board's discretion. Simple majority is required to adopt the motion. An Unmoderated Caucus is an informal procedure where the Heads of State or Government are allowed to move around the room, discuss, negotiate and start drafting the Conclusions of the European Council. An Unmoderated Caucus may only be proposed for the purpose of discussing substantive issues and is not in order after a motion to close the debate has passed

#### **D.4 Personal Statements**

At the beginning of the European Council's sessions on the first day, unless the Board decides otherwise, the Heads of State or Government shall be given 1 minute each for an introductory personal statement (tour de table). Personal Statements shall address matters of political importance or express positions reflecting the policy to be followed by each Head of State or Government during the proceedings. Personal Statements may be applied at any time during the sessions under the discretion of the Board, in case it is estimated that it would facilitate the flow of the debate.

#### **D.5 Recognition and interruption**

A Head of State or Government may have the floor only if he/she has been recognized by the Board. No points or motions may interrupt a speaker or the Board with the sole exception of a Point of Personal Privilege pertaining to audibility.

#### **D.6 Relevance of Speech**

The Board may call a Head of State or Government to order if his/her speech is not relevant to the topic under discussion, or if he/she is out of policy or not respecting diplomatic courtesy.

## **E. POINTS**

### **E.1 Overview**

Points may not interrupt a speaker or the Board with the sole exception of a point of personal privilege pertaining to audibility. All other points are entertained by the Board when the floor is open or when the Board requests that any existing points shall be stated. Points do not require a second; they are not debatable and are not voted upon.

### **E.2 Point of Personal Privilege**

Whenever a Head's of State or Government ability to participate in the European Council proceedings is impaired or is in discomfort, he/she may raise a Point of Personal Privilege. The Board will request that the speaker raise his/her volume or speak more clearly. This is the only point that may interrupt a speaker and it shall refer to the audibility of the speech; for any other discomfort, a Head of State or Government shall inform the Board by sending a note.

### **E.3 Point of Order**

A Head of State or Government may raise a Point of Order if a Rule of Procedure is not properly observed by the Head of State or Government or by the Board. The President and the Secretary General will rule on the validity of the point. A Head of State or Government rising to a Point of Order may not comment on the topic of discussion. A Point of Order ruled dilatory by the President may not be appealed.

### **E.4 Point of Procedural Inquiry**

When the floor is open, a Head of State or Government may raise a Point of Procedural Inquiry requesting an explanation from the Board on the Rules of Procedure in general or their application on a particular circumstance or any other procedural matter.

#### **E.5 Right of reply**

A Head of State or Government, whose personal or national integrity has been impugned by a previous Personal Statement, may raise to a Right of Reply. Disagreement with the content of a Head's of State or Government speech does not constitute grounds for a Right of Reply. The President may recognize the Right of Reply at his/her discretion, as well as decide on how to respond to it. It is noted that, generally, a right of reply should be used with caution and reserve, since such disagreements are not in line with the spirit of cooperation in good faith and the European Council's aim of consensus-building. This point may not interrupt the speaker but should be raised the moment the speech it refers to has finished. If the Board rule out the Right of Reply, their decision cannot be appealed. A Right of Reply to a Right of Reply is not in order.

## **F. MOTIONS**

#### **F.1 Overview**

Motions are proposals for specific procedural actions to be taken by the Council. Motions may not interrupt a speaker and are entertained by the Board only when the floor is open or when the Board requests that any existing motions be stated. In order for a motion to be entertained it should be firstly ruled in order by the Board. The Board will recognize participants raising motions one by one. In EUropa.S., the Board will not entertain seconds or objections for a motion, but will vote upon all the motions proposed, starting from the most disruptive one. In case of several motions having equal priority, the Board shall decide the order of voting. If there are any motions to extend a current caucus, they should be voted upon before any other motions. If a motion passes, all other motions previously raised are removed from the floor.

#### **F.2 Motion to Verify the Quorum**

Every session starts with a Motion to Verify the Quorum and a Roll Call.



#### **F.3 Motion to Set the Agenda**

Debate starts with a motion to set the agenda. Given that, in EUropa.S., the European Council only has one agenda item, the motion is introduced by a Head of State or Government and is automatically adopted by the European Council. It sets the allocated agenda item as the topic of discussion before the European Council. From that point on, the European Council is officially in an Open Debate.

#### **F.4 Motion to Set Speaker's Time**

In both Open Debate and Moderated Caucuses there is a limit in individual speaker's time. In open debate, a Head of State or Government may move to set individual speaker's time after the agenda has been set. A Head of State or Government exceeding the allotted speaker's time will be requested to come to his/her concluding remarks.

#### **F.5 Motion for a Moderated Caucus**

A Head of State or Government may move for a Moderated Caucus thereby suggesting limiting the discussion in a specific aspect of the topic for a specific time. The Head of State or Government who proposes this motion must suggest the total duration, the individual speaker's time and the proposed sub-topic. The Board may suggest different caucus duration for the sake of the procedure and put it to vote or may rule the Moderated Caucus dilatory without possibility of appeal.

#### **F.6 Motion to Extend the Moderated Caucus**

A Head of State or Government may move to extend the Moderated Caucus if he/she feels that additional time would benefit the work of the European Council. The Head of State or Government who moves for an Extension of the Moderated Caucus must suggest the duration of the extension, which shall not exceed the duration of the original Moderated Caucus. The Board may suggest a different caucus duration and put it to vote or may rule the Extension of the Moderated Caucus dilatory without possibility of appeal.

#### **F.7 Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus**

A Head of State or Government may move for an Unmoderated Caucus thereby suggesting a change from formal to informal debate. The Head of State or Government who proposes this motion must suggest the total duration and the purpose of the Unmoderated Caucus. The Board may suggest a different caucus duration for the sake of the procedure and put it to vote or may rule the Unmoderated Caucus dilatory without possibility of appeal. Once the Motion has passed, the European Council will proceed to an informal discussion on the topic specified in the Motion inside the European Council's room with the help and coordination of the Board.

#### **F.8 Motion to Extend the Unmoderated Caucus**

All the aforementioned for the extension of a Moderated caucus apply in this case respectively.

#### **F.9 Motion to Introduce a Draft for the European Council's Conclusions**

A Head of State or Government may move to a Motion to Introduce a Draft for the European Council's Conclusions once it has been approved and numbered by the Board and distributed to the European Council. The introduction of a Draft for the European Council's Conclusions shall be a procedural matter raised by this motion and shall be limited to the reading of the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions as a whole by the Head of State or Government whose country holds the Presidency of the Council for the semester, during which EUropa.S. takes place.

#### **F.10 Motion to Close Debate on a Draft for the European Council's Conclusions**

A Head of State or Government may move to Closing Debate, in order to end discussions on the Draft for the Conclusions of the European Council, and thus, the European Council will enter immediately the voting procedure on the Draft for the Conclusions of the European Council. If the Board rules the Motion in order, there can only be one (1) Head of State or Government speaking against the Motion and one (1) Head of State or Government

speaking in favor of it. Two-thirds (2/3 of the present Heads of State or Government) majority vote is required to pass the Motion to close debate.

#### **F.11 Motion to Divide the Question**

This motion is used when the 2/3 of the Heads of State or Government wish to vote on the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions clause by clause at first and then as a whole.

After debate on a Draft for the European Council's Conclusions has been closed, a Head of State or Government may request that operative parts of the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions shall be voted upon separately. Therefore, the division of the question is in order right before the voting procedure has started and should specify the proposed division (clause by clause, vote on some of the clauses separately etc.).

#### **F.12 Motion for a Roll Call Vote**

A Head of State or Government may move to a Motion for a Roll Call Vote when the Board announces that the European Council is entering the voting procedure or when entertained to raise this motion by the Board.

A Roll Call Vote is a voting procedure where the Heads of State or Government state their vote when their country's name is called out by the Board without raising placards. This motion passes automatically. The Roll Call Vote takes place following the order in which the member states are going to take over the Council's Presidency unless the Board decides otherwise in order to facilitate the procedure.

#### **F.13 Motion to Close Debate on the Topic Area under Discussion**

After the voting of the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions has concluded, a Head of State or Government may move to Close Debate, in order to end Debate on the Topic Area under Discussion. If the Board rules the Motion in order, there will be only one (1) Head of State or Government speaking against the Motion. Two-thirds (2/3 of the present Heads of State or Government) majority vote is required to pass the Motion to close debate.

#### **F.14 Motion for the Suspension of the Meeting**

A Head of State or Government may move for the Suspension of the meeting to suspend all the activities of the European Council until the next scheduled meeting time. Simple majority is required to adopt this motion. The Board may rule out the Motion without possibility of appeal or put it to vote.

#### **F.15 Motion for the Adjournment of the Meeting**

A Head of State or Government may move for the Adjournment of the meeting to suspend all the activities of the European Council until the next year's scheduled meeting time. The Board may rule out the Motion without possibility of appeal or put it to vote.

This motion will not be entertained by the Board until the end of the last session of the European Council. Once entertained, it shall not be appealed. After adjournment, the EC shall reconvene in EUropa.S. 2024. A simple majority is required to adopt the motion.

## **G. DRAFT CONCLUSION AND AMENDMENTS**

### **G.1 Working Paper**

A Working Paper is an informal document used by Heads of State or Government to work on building the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions.

There is no specific format to be applied to a Working Paper. Although, when finalized, in a sense that all ideas and questions raised during the sessions are addressed, its format has to be more "official", thus the working paper is transformed into a "Draft Conclusion".

### **G.2 Format of the Draft of the Conclusions of the European Council**

Guidelines for the drafting of the Conclusions will be available on our website in the respective online document and will also be distributed during the sessions.

### **G.3 Introduction of the Draft for the Conclusions of the European Council**

A Head of State or Government may move to introduce the Draft for the Conclusions of the European Council, once it has been approved by the Board and distributed to the European Council. The introduction of the Draft for the Conclusions of the European Council is a procedural matter raised by a motion for the introduction of the Draft of the European Council Conclusions and shall be limited to the reading of the Draft of the European Council Conclusions as a whole. The Draft of the European Council's Conclusions shall be presented by the Head of State or Government whose country holds the Council's Presidency for the semester. In order for a Draft of the European Council Conclusions to be introduced before the European Council, there should be a number of supporters equal to at least 1/2 of the total number of the present Heads of State or Government.

### **G.4 Amendments**

An Amendment is a proposed alteration to the original text of the Draft of the European Council Conclusions, and it can be introduced by a Head of State or Government during Debate on the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions. It proposes to add to, exclude or modify a part of the Draft for the European Council Conclusions.

The Board will announce during the debate that the floor is open to amendments for a specific time. During that time, the Heads of State or Government can send them amendments to the Board. All Amendments are checked by the Board and if approved, they shall be presented to the European Council and voted upon, once a Motion for Introducing the Amendments has passed. However, under exceptional circumstances, an Amendment may also be presented by the Board prior to the Motion for Introducing the Amendments, in order to facilitate the flow of discussion.

Amendments are introduced to the European Council and voted upon, starting from the most disruptive ones. There is no possibility of proposing an Amendment to an Amendment, unless, and only under the strict discretion of the Board, this facilitates the voting procedure on the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions.

No amendments to the European Council's Conclusions shall be made during the Plenary Session where the European Council's Conclusions will be presented.

#### **G.5 Non-Substantive Amendments**

Amendments correcting grammatical, spelling or formatting mistakes are considered Non-Substantive. Non-Substantive Amendments will be automatically adopted at the discretion of the Board without prior voting upon them by the Heads of State or Government. Following the reading of the initial Draft for the European Council Conclusions by the Head of State or Government whose country holds the Council's Presidency for the semester, the Heads of State or Government are permitted to point out any such problems to the Board.

#### **G.6 Substantive Amendments**

Amendments regarding the content of the Draft of the European Council Conclusions are considered substantive. All Amendments require approval from the Board to be introduced. Amendments will be put to a vote prior to the vote on the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions as a whole.

During the voting procedure, at least simple majority is required in order for the Amendments to pass. The issue lies at the discretion of the Board.

#### **G.7 Withdrawal of an Amendment**

Any supporter of an Amendment may request its withdrawal at their discretion, before its adoption by the European Council.

#### **G.8 Voting on Amendments**

All Amendments shall be voted upon in the order in which they were presented to the European Council. Regarding conflicting amendments, the Board will decide upon its discretion. If one Amendment implies the rejection of a second Amendment, it is at the Board's discretion to encourage the forum to discuss both, and therefore the second Amendment will not be voted upon. A passed Amendment shall be automatically included in the

Draft of the European Council Conclusions. Once all the Amendments relating to the Draft of the European Council's Conclusions have been voted upon, the European Council shall vote on the Draft of the European Council Conclusions as a whole after Closure of the Debate on the Draft of the European Council Conclusions.

### **G.9 Division of the Question**

After debate on the Draft for the European Council Conclusions has been closed, a Head of State or Government may request that different parts of the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions be voted upon separately. Therefore, the division of the question is in order right before the voting procedure has started and should specify the proposed division (clause by clause, vote on some of the clauses separately etc.).

Pre-ambulatory clauses and sub-operative clauses may not be removed by division of the question. The request to divide the question must be stated in the form of a motion right after the voting procedure has been introduced and right before the Heads of State or Government have casted their vote.

The Board will take into consideration all different requests for division of the question and then, if seconded and objected to, put them to vote starting from the most disruptive one. (The most disruptive division is considered the one which separates the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions into the greatest number of divisions.)

It is at the discretion of the Board to introduce a maximum of 2 speakers in favor and against the division.

If the division receives the  $2/3$  majority required to pass, the Draft of the European Council Conclusions will be divided accordingly. A procedural separating vote will be taken on each divided part to determine whether it will be included in the final Draft of the European Council Conclusions or not. If the division fails to pass, the Draft of the European Council Conclusions stays intact.

Parts of the Draft for the European Council's Conclusions that have passed will be recombined into a final document and will be put to substantive vote as a whole. If all the operative parts of the Draft of the European Council Conclusions have been rejected, the Draft of the European Council Conclusions will be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

## **H. VOTING PROCEDURE**

### **H.1 Overview**

Each Head of State or Government has one vote and must demonstrate his/her voting intentions by raising his/her placard at the Board's request unless a motion for a Roll Call Vote has passed. The European Council reaches Conclusions by consensus following the decision-making process described above.

### **H.2 Unanimity/Majority**

The European Council reaches its decision **unanimously**.

### **H.3 Voting Procedure**

When the Board announces that the European Council is entering voting procedure, no entering or exiting the room will be permitted, note passing will be suspended and journalists, observers, staff and guests will have to leave the room, until the procedure has come to an end.

At this time, Motion for a Roll Call Vote is in order.

The following voting procedure shall apply to the Draft of the European Council Conclusions:

The Committee votes on the Draft of the European Council Conclusions as a whole (with all the amendments that have passed incorporated in the original text) or by dividing it – in case a motion to divide the question has passed.

### **H.4 Roll Call Vote**

A Roll Call Vote is a voting procedure where the Heads of State or Government state their vote when their country's name is called out by the Board without raising placards. It is proposed via a motion by a Head of State or Government, or the Board and it passes automatically. The Roll Call vote shall take place by calling out the county names of all the Heads of State or Government in the order that the member states are going to take over the Council's Presidency,



unless the Board decides otherwise in order to facilitate the procedure. A motion to divide the Question supersedes a motion for a Roll Call Vote.

#### **H.5 Voting Options**

During a Roll Call Vote, a Head of State or Government may vote in favor or against, in favor or against with rights or abstain.

#### **H.6 Voting with Rights**

A Head of State or Government may request a right of explanation after voting. Upon completion of voting, Head of State or Government will be permitted to explain the reasons for choosing to vote in a certain way.

The Board may limit the speaker's time at their discretion.

#### **H.7 Passing**

During Roll Call Vote, a Head of State or Government may choose to pass. The Board will place the country's name of this particular Head of State or Government at the bottom of the voting list and ask him/her to vote after the ordinary voting list has finished. A Head of State or Government, who has passed, may not pass again but must ascertain his/her vote. If a Head of State or Government has passed, he/she may vote only in favor or against the Conclusion and has no rights on his/her vote. If more than one Heads of State or Government have passed, they shall be asked to declare their votes in the order they passed.

#### **H.8 Voting on the Draft of the Conclusions of the European Council**

If there is more than one Draft of the European Council Conclusions on the table, they will be voted upon in the order that they were numbered by the Board. The result of the voting procedure is defined by the process outlined in the sections above (**Unanimity**).

Once a Draft of the European Council Conclusions has received Unanimity or simple majority by the Heads of State or Government, it is considered to have been adopted by the European Council and it automatically becomes the European Council's Conclusions.

## **H.9 EP Closing Plenary Session**

At the EP Closing Plenary Session, the Committee Reports of the Parliamentary Committees are voted upon according to the EP's Rules of Procedure.

At the EP Closing Plenary Session, the European Council's Conclusions are presented to the EP by the President of the European Council, but they are not voted upon.

**ANNEX:**

**ORDER OF DISRUPTIVENESS OF MOTIONS & MAJORITIES**

Order	Motion/Point	Purpose	Majority
1.	Point of Personal Privilege	When a Head of Government/State is unable to participate or follow the discussion	N/A
2.	Point of Order	To correct an error in the procedure	N/A
3.	Point of Parliamentary Inquiry	To pose a question about the procedure to the Board	N/A
4.	Right of Reply	To address another Head of Government/State if insulted	N/A
6.	Unmoderated Caucus	To move to informal debate (most disruptive one based on duration)	1/2
7.	Moderated Caucus	To move to formal debate (most disruptive one based on duration and speaker's time)	1/2
5.	Suspension of the Meeting	To recess	1/2
6.	Adjournment of the Meeting	To end all procedure (last committee session)	1/2
7.	Close Debate	To close debate and proceed to roll call vote	2/3
8.	Set the Agenda	Sets the agenda topic	N/A
9.	Division of the Question	To vote upon each clause or group of clauses separately	2/3
11.	Introduce Draft Conclusion	To introduce draft conclusion	1/2

## EUropa.S. 2023

### European Council - Rules of Procedure

12.	Introduce Amendments	To introduce amendments, provided that a draft conclusion is already introduced	1/2
N/A	Roll Call vote	To vote without specific order	N/A
N/A	Verification of the Quorum	To verify that there is an adequate number of present Heads of Government/State to start the official procedure	N/A