STATUTE

OF THE

ASSEMBLY OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS AND
SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS

OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
Preamble

The representatives of the economic and social councils (ESCs) and similar institutions, together with the representatives of civil society organisations in the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries which do not have an ESC or similar institution, have decided by common agreement to set up an Assembly of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions of the Union for the Mediterranean, in order to give a structured form of expression to organised civil society in the UfM, along the lines what has been done at Parliamentary level (EMPA) and with local and regional authorities (ARLEM).

This Assembly is a response to the mandate given to the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in the Barcelona Declaration "to lead the way in building links with its counterparts and equivalent bodies in the Mediterranean countries". On the basis of this mandate, a network of economic and social councils and similar institutions was established in 1995.

It is also underpinned by the final declaration of the 2009 Alexandria Euromed Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions, which declared that:

"the institutional profile of the Euromed network of cooperation between Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions should be reinforced and that it should be given consultative body status within the structure of the UfM, along the lines of what has been done at the parliamentary level and with local and regional authorities;" and that

"recognition of civil society representation within the UfM, would help to raise the profile of UfM initiatives amongst the public and boost participatory democracy in the Euromed region by involving all legitimate stakeholders, the social partners and other civil society actors".

Article 1

Nature and aims

1. The Assembly of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions of the Union for the Mediterranean ("the Assembly") intends to serve as the expression of organised civil society with consultative powers in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

2. It shall pursue the UfM's core objectives and endeavour to give a higher profile to relations between the European Union (EU) and the Mediterranean partner countries and to promote reforms strengthening governance and participatory democracy. It shall also seek to strengthen sustainable and solidarity-based development within the UfM.

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1 Extract from the declaration of the Euromed Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions, Alexandria, Egypt (18-19 October 2009), http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.euromed-summit-egypt.
3. The Assembly undertakes to promote its own decisions vis-à-vis the UfM bodies and EU institutions, and also to monitor UfM initiatives. It shall discuss publicly UfM issues and all topics of common interest which may concern civil society in the UfM member countries.

**Article 2**

**Membership and appointment of members**

1. The Assembly shall be divided into three main interest groups, comprising representatives of employers' and employees' organisations and civil society organisations which are representative and active in the economic, social, environmental and cultural sectors. The Assembly's membership must reflect the different categories of the economic, social and voluntary sectors in the countries concerned.

2. The association shall be made up of 92 members, half from partner countries and half from EU countries. It shall be made up of:

   - representatives of economic and social councils and similar institutions from the EU (30),
   - EESC members (16),
   - representatives of economic and social councils and similar institutions from partner countries (34),
   - representatives of employers' and employees' organisations and civil society organisations which are representative and active in the economic, social, environmental and cultural sectors of partner countries that do not have their own ESC or similar institution (12).

   The seats of members of the EU shall be distributed as follows: EESC (16), Spain (3), France (3), Italy (3), Greece (2), Malta (2), Slovenia (2), Austria (1), Belgium (1), Bulgaria (1), Estonia (1), Finland (1), Hungary (1), Ireland (1), Lithuania (1), Luxembourg (1), Netherlands (1), Poland (1), Portugal (1), Czech Republic (1), Romania (1), Slovakia (1).

   The seats of partner countries shall be distributed as follows: Albania (3), Algeria (3), Palestinian Authority (3), Bosnia and Herzegovina (3), Croatia (3), Egypt (3), Israel (3), Jordan (3), Lebanon (3), Morocco (3), Mauritania (3), Montenegro (3), Tunisia (3), Turkey (3), Syria (3), Monaco (1).

3. Each economic and social council or similar institution and the EESC shall appoint its own representatives. EU countries which do not have an economic and social council or similar institution shall be represented by members of the EESC delegation\(^2\). With regard to partner countries that do not have their own ESC or similar institution, members representing employers' and employees' organisations and civil society organisations which are

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\(^2\) Countries represented by the EESC delegation may not have more than three representatives each.
representative and active in the economic, social, environmental and cultural sectors shall be
appointed by the Assembly bureau, in consultation with international and national
organisations from the various sectors.

4. The Assembly shall pursue the objectives of gender balance and equality, and shall promote
greater participation by women and young people in its delegations.

Article 3

Observers

1. The Assembly may grant observer status at Assembly meetings and summits to organisations,
institutions and networks which are active in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Article 4

Powers

1. The Assembly is an advisory body which may, following a referral from the bodies of the
UfM, or on its own initiative, issue recommendations, declarations or reports to comment on
any issue concerning the Mediterranean region, especially as regards the economic and social
sector and the particular concerns of organised civil society.

2. The Assembly shall make recommendations to the UfM bodies and EU institutions with a
view to the achievement of its objectives.

3. The Assembly shall play an active role in the proposition, promotion and monitoring of UfM
projects.

4. The Assembly shall meet at least once a year.

5. The Assembly shall adopt all internal decisions necessary for its work to run smoothly.

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3 Arrangements for adjusting the number of seats in the event that an ESC is established in a partner country or in the EU shall be
laid down in the Rules of Procedure.
Article 5

President and bureau

1. The president of the Assembly shall be appointed from a council or similar institution from the EU a council or similar institution of a partner country or the EESC alternately. The first president of the Assembly shall be the president of the economic and social council or similar institution which hosts the annual summit following the establishment of the Assembly. Following that, the president shall be the president of the economic and social council or similar institution which holds the annual summit. In the event that the summit is held in a country that does not have an economic and social council or similar institution, the Assembly, meeting during the annual summit, may decide by consensus to appoint the president of the economic and social council or similar institution of a non-host country to be president of the Assembly. In that case, a representative of the host country shall be appointed as vice-president.

2. The Assembly's bureau shall have a north-south balance and be made up of the president of the Assembly and three vice-presidents. The vice-presidents shall be the president of the national economic and social council or similar institution which held the previous summit (or the representative of that country), the EESC, through its president or the president of the Euromed Follow-up Committee, and the president of an ESC appointed by the Assembly to ensure a north-south balance.

3. The president and members of the bureau shall be appointed for a period of one year (running from summit to summit). In the event of resignation or termination of duties of a member, a replacement shall be appointed by the EESC or the economic and social council or similar institution concerned for the remainder of the term.

4. The bureau members shall represent the Assembly at UfM meetings, or may arrange to be represented by another Assembly member for this purpose. They shall report on these meetings to the president, who shall submit a summary of the report to the bureau and the annual summit.

5. The bureau shall be responsible for organising the annual summits and coordinating the Assembly's work.

Article 6

Annual summits

1. Once a year, the Assembly shall come together at a summit of economic and social councils and similar institutions, held, where possible, in EU Member States and partner countries alternately.
2. The summit shall be chaired by the president of the Assembly; he or she shall be assisted by the vice-presidents. The draft agenda shall be drawn up by the bureau, taking into account the decisions taken at the previous summit.

3. Any declarations or recommendations adopted at the summits shall be forwarded to the UfM bodies and EU institutions. Declarations and recommendations shall be adopted by consensus.

4. The Assembly shall adopt its Rules of Procedure at the annual summit following its establishment, or at the following annual summit at the latest.

*Article 7*

**Working groups**

1. At each summit, the Assembly shall set up working groups to draw up reports, between the annual summits, on topics decided by common agreement or at the request of the UfM bodies or the EU institutions.

2. The working groups shall be made up of members of the EESC, representatives of the countries without an ESC, and of the economic and social councils and similar institutions making up the Assembly, respecting as far as possible the balance between partner and EU countries. Experts, observers or members of economic and social councils or similar institutions who are not full members of the Assembly may also take part.

3. The EESC or an economic and social council or similar institution shall offer to act as coordinator for each working group. The bureau shall coordinate and approve organisation of work, as required.

4. The working groups shall meet at least twice a year in order to issue reports, to be presented to the summit.

*Article 8*

**Relations with the institutions and bodies of the UfM**

1. The Assembly shall work in tandem with the UfM bodies. It shall offer to attend the meetings of the UfM as an advisory body with speaking rights.

2. The Assembly shall invite the representatives of the bodies of the UfM to its meetings as observers with speaking rights.
Article 9

Languages

1. The official languages of the Assembly shall be Arabic, English, French, Italian and Spanish.

2. Official documents adopted by the Assembly shall be translated into all the official languages of the Assembly.

3. Working group meetings shall be held in the languages decided on at the start of the work by the EESC or the economic and social council or similar institution which is acting as coordinator for the working group, within the limits of the resources it makes available.

Article 10

Publication

1. Any recommendations, declarations, reports and decisions issued by the Assembly shall be forwarded by the Assembly bureau and members, as required, to the bodies of the UfM and widely disseminated among the economic and social councils, the EU institutions, the institutions of the EU Member States and the partner countries, ARLEM and EMPA, and other partner civil society organisations.

Article 11

Funding of organisation, participation, interpreting and translation

1. The EESC shall provide, at its own expense and in compliance with its financial regulation, interpreting and translation between the Assembly's official languages for the annual summit, for a period of four years, renewable by the sole decision of the EESC, and within the limits described in appendix 1. Moreover, the EESC may provide a financial contribution to the organiser of the annual summit, subject to the EESC’s approval in compliance with its financial regulation, in addition to the contribution of the host ESC. Other sources of funding will also be sought.

2. Each year, the EESC shall request a financial contribution from the European Commission to cover the travel and subsistence costs for three representatives of each partner country\(^4\) to take part in the summits.

\(^4\) Except Monaco.
3. Each ESC acting as working-group coordinator shall organise, at its own expense, the appropriate meetings, including as regards interpreting and translation.

4. The practical arrangements for covering the travel and subsistence costs of participants in working groups shall subsequently be laid down in the Rules of Procedure, in the light of existing funding methods and any further new contributions.

Article 12

Secretariat

1. The Assembly shall be assisted in the preparation, smooth running and monitoring of its work by the EESC secretariat-general and the secretariat of the economic and social council or similar institution hosting the annual summit.

Article 13

Changes to the statute

1. The Assembly, meeting with a quorum, [definition of quorum] may amend the present statute on the basis of proposed amendment(s) forwarded by at least two member ESCs or similar institutions to the bureau, which shall submit them to the following summit.

2. Amendments to the present statute shall be adopted by consensus subject to 2/3 of the members being present.

3. Amendments to the present statute shall enter into force as soon as they have been adopted by the summit.

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Appendix 1

With regard to Article 11(1), the following annual limits shall apply:

- number of standard source-language pages (1 page = 1 500 characters) translated into the Assembly's five official languages: 250
- interpreting from/into the Assembly's five official languages for five meeting days.