

Terms of Reference
and
Rules of Procedure
of the
Economic Commission
for Europe

Fifth revised edition



UNITED NATIONS

E/ECE/778/Rev.5

**Terms of Reference
and
Rules of Procedure
of the
Economic Commission
for Europe**

Fifth revised edition



UNITED NATIONS
New York and Geneva, 2009

E/ECE/778/Rev.5

This revision of the Rules of Procedure of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe is in accordance with Commission decision B (63). The Terms of Reference remain unchanged.

CONTENTS

	page
TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMISSION	1
RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMISSION	4
Chapter	
I. Sessions	4
II. Agenda	5
III. Representation and credentials.....	6
IV. Officers	6
V. Intersessional Committee (Executive Committee).....	7
VI. Subsidiary bodies other than the intersessional committee	8
VII. Secretariat.....	9
VIII. Conduct of business	10
IX. Voting	12
X. Languages	13
XI. Records	13
XII. Publicity of meetings.....	14
XIII. Consultation with specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency.....	14
XIV. Relations with non-governmental organizations	15
XV. Reports	16
XVI. Amendments and suspensions.....	16
Annex List of ECE member countries	17

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMISSION

1. The Economic Commission for Europe, acting within the framework of the policies of the United Nations and subject to the general supervision of the Council shall, provided that the Commission takes no action in respect to any country without the agreement of the Government of that country:

(a) Initiate and participate in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic development and integration of Europe, for raising the level of European economic activity, and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of the European countries both among themselves and with other countries of the world;

(b) Make or sponsor such investigations and studies of economic and technological problems of and developments within member countries of the Commission and within Europe generally as the Commission deems appropriate;

(c) Undertake or sponsor the collection, evaluation and dissemination of such economic, technological and statistical information as the Commission deems appropriate.

2. Cancelled

3. Cancelled

4. The Commission is empowered to make recommendations on any matter within its competence directly to its member Governments, Governments admitted in a consultative capacity under paragraph 8 below, and the specialized agencies concerned. The Commission shall submit for the Council's prior consideration any of its proposals for activities that would have important effects on the economy of the world as a whole.

5. The Commission may, after discussion with any specialized agency functioning in the same general field and with the approval of the Council, establish such subsidiary bodies as it deems appropriate for facilitating the carrying out of its responsibilities.

6. The Commission shall submit to the Council a full report on its activities and plans, including those of any subsidiary bodies, once a year, and shall make interim reports at each regular session of the Council¹.

7. A complete list of ECE member countries is contained in the Annex.

8. The Commission may admit in a consultative capacity European nations not Members of the United Nations, and shall determine the conditions in which they may participate in its work, including the question of voting rights in the subsidiary bodies of the Commission.

9. Cancelled

10. Cancelled

11. The Commission shall invite any Member of the United Nations not a member of the Commission to participate in a consultative capacity in its consideration of any matter of particular concern to that non-member.

12. The Commission shall invite representatives of specialized agencies and may invite representatives of any intergovernmental organizations to participate in a consultative capacity in its consideration of any matter of particular concern to that agency or organization, following the practices of the Economic and Social Council.

¹ The Economic and Social Council decided, in resolution 232 (IX), that "it does not, for the present, require the Commission to submit interim reports to each session, in accordance with point 6 of its terms of reference".

13. The Commission shall make arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which have been granted consultative status by the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the principles approved by the Council for this purpose and contained in Council resolution 1996/31 parts I and II.

14. The Commission shall take measures to ensure that the necessary liaison is maintained with other organs of the United Nations and with the specialized agencies.

15. The Commission shall adopt its own rules of procedure, including the method of selecting its Chairman.

16. The administrative budget of the Commission shall be financed from the funds of the United Nations.

17. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall appoint the staff of the Commission, which shall form part of the Secretariat of the United Nations.

18. The headquarters of the Commission shall be located at the seat of the European Office of the United Nations.

19. Cancelled

20. The Council shall, from time to time, make special reviews of the work of the Commission.

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMISSION

CHAPTER I

SESSIONS

Rule 1

Sessions of the Commission shall be held:

(a) On dates fixed by the Commission, after consultation with the Executive Secretary, at previous meetings;

(b) Within thirty days of the communication of a request to that effect by the Economic and Social Council;

(c) At the request of the majority of the members of the Commission, after consultation with the Executive Secretary;

(d) On such other occasions as the Chairperson, in consultation with the Vice-Chairpersons and the Executive Secretary, deems necessary.

Rule 2

Sessions shall ordinarily be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG). The Commission may, with the concurrence of the Secretary-General, decide to hold a particular session elsewhere.

Rule 3

The Executive Secretary shall, at least forty-two days before the commencement of a session of the Commission, distribute a notice of the opening date of the session, together with a copy of the provisional agenda. The basic documents relating to each item appearing on the provisional agenda of a session shall be transmitted not less than forty-two days before the opening of the session, provided that in exceptional cases the Executive Secretary may, for reasons to be stated in writing, transmit such documents not less than twenty-one days before the opening of the session.

Rule 4

The Commission shall invite any Member of the United Nations not a member of the Commission to participate in a consultative capacity in its consideration of any matter of particular concern to that Member.

CHAPTER II

AGENDA

Rule 5

The provisional agenda for each session shall be drawn up by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Chairperson, the two Vice-Chairpersons and the Executive Committee.

Rule 6

The provisional agenda for any session shall include:

- (a) Items arising from previous sessions of the Commission;
- (b) Items proposed by the Economic and Social Council;
- (c) Items proposed by any member of the Commission;
- (d) Items proposed by a specialized agency in accordance with the agreements of relationship concluded between the United Nations and such agencies; and
- (e) Any other items which the Chairperson or the Executive Secretary sees fit to include.

Rule 7

The first item upon the provisional agenda for each session shall be the adoption of the agenda.

Rule 8

The Commission may amend the agenda at any time.

CHAPTER III

REPRESENTATION AND CREDENTIALS

Rule 9

Each member shall be represented on the Commission by an accredited representative.

Rule 10

A representative may be accompanied to the sessions of the Commission by alternate representatives and advisers and, when absent, he may be replaced by an alternate representative.

Rule 11

The credentials of each representative appointed to the Commission, together with a designation of alternate representatives, shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary without delay.

CHAPTER IV

OFFICERS

Rule 12

The Commission shall, at each biennial session, elect a country from among its members to hold the chair for the period of the biennium. The representative of the elected country will be the Chairperson. The Commission will also, at the same meeting, elect two countries whose representatives will become the Vice-Chairpersons for the period of the biennium. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission will also serve as the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Executive Committee for the period of the biennium.

Rule 13

If the Chairperson is absent from a meeting, or any part thereof, one of the Vice-Chairpersons, designated by the Chairperson, shall preside.

Rule 14

If the representative of the country holding the position of Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Commission ceases to represent his/her country, the new representative of that country will become the new Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson for the unexpired portion of the term. If the representative of the country holding the position of Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson is so incapacitated that he/she can no longer hold office, the alternate representative will become the new Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson for the unexpired portion of the term.

Rule 15

The Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

Rule 16

The Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall participate in the meetings of the Commission as such and not as the representative of the member by whom he/she was accredited. The Commission shall admit an alternate representative to represent that member in the meetings of the Commission and to exercise its right to vote.

CHAPTER V

INTERSESSIONAL COMMITTEE (EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE)

Rule 17

The Commission shall adopt the terms of reference and the rules of procedure of its intersessional governing Committee (Executive Committee) and may amend these when necessary. The Commission provides general guidance to the Executive Committee.

CHAPTER VI

SUBSIDIARY BODIES OTHER THAN THE INTERSESSIONAL COMMITTEE

Rule 18

After discussion with any specialized agency functioning in the same general field, and with the approval of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission may establish such continually acting sub-commissions or other subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions and shall define the powers and composition of each of them. Such autonomy as may be necessary for the effective discharge of the technical responsibilities laid upon them may be delegated to them.

Rule 19

The Commission may establish or discontinue such committees and sub-committees as it deems necessary to assist it in carrying out its tasks.

Rule 20

Subsidiary Bodies shall adopt their own rules of procedure unless otherwise decided by the Commission.

Rule 21

Subsidiary Bodies should, as in rules 52 and 53, consult non-governmental organizations with general consultative status to ECOSOC which, because of their importance as regards their activity and the number of their members in Europe, play a part in the economic life of Europe, on questions within the competence of the Commission and deemed of interest to such organizations. These organizations could in

appropriate cases be invited to be represented at meetings of Subsidiary Bodies.²

CHAPTER VII

SECRETARIAT

Rule 22

The Executive Secretary shall act in that capacity at all meetings of the Commission and of its Subsidiary Bodies. He/She may appoint another member of the staff to take his/her place at any meeting.

Rule 23

The Executive Secretary or his/her representative may at any meeting make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

Rule 24

The Executive Secretary shall direct the staff provided by the Secretary-General and required by the Commission, and its Subsidiary Bodies.

Rule 25

The Executive Secretary shall be responsible for the necessary arrangements being made for meetings.

² This rule cannot be considered as implying, between the non-governmental organizations with general consultative status to ECOSOC any discrimination contrary to the decision and rules of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council.

Rule 26

The Executive Secretary in carrying out his/her functions shall act on behalf of the Secretary-General.

CHAPTER VIII

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Rule 27

A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 28

In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him/her elsewhere by these rules, the Chairperson shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the Commission, shall direct the discussion, ensure the observance of these rules, and shall accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote, and announce decisions. The Chairperson may also call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

Rule 29

During the discussion of any matter a representative may raise a point of order. In this case the Chairperson shall immediately state his/her ruling. If it is challenged, the Chairperson shall forthwith submit his/her ruling to the Commission for decision and it shall stand unless overruled.

Rule 30

During the discussion of any matter a representative may move the adjournment of the debate. Any such motion shall have priority. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one representative shall be allowed to speak in favour of, and one representative against, the motion.

Rule 31

A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate whether or not any other representative has signified his wish to speak. Not more than two representatives may be granted permission to speak against the closure.

Rule 32

The Chairperson shall take the sense of the Commission on a motion for closure. If the Commission is in favour of the closure, the Chairperson shall declare the debate closed.

Rule 33

The Commission may limit the time allowed to each speaker.

Rule 34

Principal motions and resolutions shall be put to the vote in the order of their submission unless the Commission decides otherwise.

Rule 35

When an amendment revises, adds to or deletes from a proposal the amendment shall be put to the vote first, and if it is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be put to the vote.

Rule 36

If two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Commission shall vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, then, if necessary, on the amendment next furthest removed and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote.

Rule 37

The Commission may, at the request of a representative, decide to put a motion or proposal to the vote in parts. If this is done, the text resulting from the series of votes shall be put to the vote as a whole.

CHAPTER IX

VOTING

Rule 38

Each member of the Commission shall have one vote.

Rule 39

Decisions of the Commission shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting.

Rule 40

The Commission shall take no action in respect of any country without the agreement of the Government of that country.

Rule 41

The Commission shall normally vote by show of hands. If any representative requests a roll call, a roll call shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the members.

Rule 42

All elections shall be decided by secret ballot, unless, in the absence of any objection, the Commission decides to proceed without taking a ballot on an agreed candidate or slate.

Rule 43

If a vote is equally divided upon matters other than elections, a second vote shall be taken. If this vote also results in equality, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

CHAPTER X

LANGUAGES

Rule 44

English, French and Russian shall be the working languages of the Commission.

Rule 45

Interventions made in any of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other working languages.

CHAPTER XI

RECORDS

Rule 46

Suspended

Rule 47

Suspended

Rule 48

Suspended

Rule 49

As soon as possible, the text of all reports, resolutions, recommendations and other formal decisions made by the Commission and its Subsidiary Bodies shall be communicated to the members of the Commission, to the consultative members concerned, to all other Members of the United Nations and to the specialized agencies.

CHAPTER XII

PUBLICITY OF MEETINGS

Rule 50

The meetings of the Commission shall ordinarily be held in public. The Commission may decide that a particular meeting or meetings shall be held in private.

CHAPTER XIII

CONSULTATION WITH SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

Rule 51

(a) Where an item proposed for the provisional agenda for a session contains a proposal for new activities to be undertaken by the United Nations relating to matters which are of direct concern to one or more specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Executive Secretary shall enter into consultation with the agency or agencies concerned and report to the Commission on the means of achieving coordinated use of the resources of the respective agencies.

(b) Where a proposal put forward in the course of a meeting for new activities to be undertaken by the United Nations relates to matters which are of direct concern to one or more specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Executive Secretary shall, after such consultation as may be possible with the representatives at the meeting

of the other agency or agencies concerned, draw the attention of the meeting to these implications of the proposal.

(c) Before deciding on proposals referred to above, the Commission shall satisfy itself that adequate consultations have taken place with the agencies concerned.

CHAPTER XIV

RELATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Rule 52

Non-governmental organizations with general and special consultative status to ECOSOC may designate authorized representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Commission. Organizations on the Roster may have representatives present at such meetings which are concerned with matters within their field of competence. Non-governmental organizations with general consultative status may circulate to the members of the Commission written statements and suggestions on matters within their competence. Non-governmental organizations with special consultative status and on the Roster may submit such statements and suggestions to the Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary will prepare and distribute at each session of the Commission a list of such communications received, briefly indicating the substance of each of them. On the request of any member of the Commission the Executive Secretary will reproduce in full and distribute any such communication.

Rule 53

The Commission at its discretion may consult with non-governmental organizations with general and special consultative status to ECOSOC and on the Roster on matters in which the Commission regards these organizations as having special competence or knowledge. Such consultations may be arranged on the invitation of the Commission or on the request of the organization. In the case of non-governmental organizations with general consultative status, consultations should normally be held with the Commission itself. In the case of

nongovernmental organizations with special consultative status and on the Roster consultations might be effected either directly or through ad hoc committees.

CHAPTER XV

REPORTS

Rule 54

The Commission shall submit to the Economic and Social Council a full report on its activities and plans, including those of any subsidiary bodies, once a year, and shall make interim reports at each regular session of the Council.³

CHAPTER XVI

AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSIONS

Rule 55

Any of these rules of procedure may be amended or suspended by the Commission provided that the proposed amendments or suspensions do not attempt to set aside the terms of reference laid down by the Economic and Social Council.

³ The Council decided, in resolution 232 (IX), that "it does not, for the present, require the Commission to submit interim reports to each session, in accordance with point 6 of its terms of reference.

ANNEX

LIST OF ECE MEMBER COUNTRIES

(as of 28 June 2006)

Albania	Lithuania
Andorra	Luxembourg
Armenia	Malta
Austria	Monaco
Azerbaijan	Montenegro
Belarus	Netherlands
Belgium	Norway
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Poland
Bulgaria	Portugal
Canada	Republic of Moldova
Croatia	Romania
Cyprus	Russian Federation
Czech Republic	San Marino
Denmark	Serbia
Estonia	Slovakia
Finland	Slovenia
France	Spain
Georgia	Sweden
Germany	Switzerland
Greece	Tajikistan
Hungary	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Iceland	Turkey
Ireland	Turkmenistan
Israel ⁴	Ukraine
Italy	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Kazakhstan	United States of America
Kyrgyzstan	Uzbekistan
Latvia	
Liechtenstein	

⁴ Pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 1991/72, Israel became a member of the Commission on 26 July 1991, on a temporary basis

