

## Moderation of the debates in the GA

**Goal:** Highlite of every MEP-conference is debating in the GA (General Assembly) Here all the resolutions from all the Committees come together and are presented for debate. Basic idea in these debates is that we have a constructive and lively discussion, in which an appreciative and fair tone is used, to enable a compromise and a consensus can be attained in the end. The presidency bears a heavy responsibility, for through their moderation and steering of the debate they make attaining these goals possible. By a poor moderation they might even prevent attaining these goals at all.

### Means and Decisions:

- Prior to the GA the Presidency chooses 2 OCs from each resolution, that must be debated on by all means and call for them in the end of the debate in case they are not brought up before by the GA.

*Comment:* The Presidents know from their extensive experience, which OCs are more important and exciting, which prevents that long trivial OCs are brought up from the GA. The choice of these OCs enables the goal to have fruitful, constructive and lively, even controversial debates taking place. Calling for these OCs in the end will bring the debate to a highlite. The Presidents should not leak these OCs to the GA in advance, but wait to see if they are not brought forward by the delegates themselves and debated on. Only when they don't, the President can call for them.

- The President explain and decide when a certain OC has been sufficiently debated and move on to another OC.

*Comment:*As soon as the debate is going in circles and every time the same arguments are brought up, a new OC must be introduced, so that as many OCs as possible are debated and explained. Also for time management be attentive not to spend on one OC too long. Of course that also depends on the interventions of the GA in that OC. Goals should not be to deal with all OCs and rush through the resolution.

- The presidents allow a delegate from the GA to ask follow up questions, when they suspect that the delegate apparently shows dissatisfaction with the answer from the Committee. The follow up question must question more precisely the matter and not be an entirely new question. The follow up answer can be given by the same delegate from the Committee or by another member of the Committee.

*Comment:* The follow up question allows the delegate from the floor to focus on his core point, and in the meantime he suggests his dissatisfaction with the given answer. This measure clearly proves effective, when the delegate must stand up and stay upright so long for his question, until he finds the answer from the Committee to the point; the delegate from the Committee must of course also stand up. This allows the Presidents to see if the delegate from the GA is satisfied with the answer or not.

- The Presidents will allow another member of the Committee to answer, when they have the impression that the Committee is not satisfied with the given answer.

*Comment:* In his excitement or also because everyone wants to show eagerness to participate, it sometimes happens that the given answer/defense from the first member of the Committee is so weak or trivial, that other members in the Committee are unsatisfied or disagree with it and like to give a better and more precise answer. The Presidents and all the members of the Committee should not take this measure too frequently, for the first answering member of the Committee might feel discriminated by his own Committee.

- The Presidents gather 1 to 3 questions/statements/attacks from the GA first that will be given to be answered combined. The Presidents must see to it that all questions will be dealt with.

*Comment:* Should the President notice that the first statement/question is not particularly important, they can allow one more. It also enables the member of the Committee to show his ability and knowledge, when he can go into several issues/points; On top this way of combining questi-

ons saves time, especially if the first delegate must walk up to the microphone.

If at the first question/comment a splendid attack comes up, there will be no need to gather mechanically additional statements, but allow a member of the Committee to answer. If more than 3 statements are combined the overview will get lost.

- The President calls for and suggests that other delegates from the GA support the Committee in response to questions/attacks from the GA. After an answer from the Committee he can always allow an additional reaction from the GA.

*Comment:* Especially this measure leads to lively debate, which can lead to fruitful dialogues on the floor, because the dull and boring, rigid Ping-Pong scheme (first question from the GA, then answer/defense from Committee) will thus be broken and replaced by a Triangle (Statement from the GA, Counter Statement from the GA, Counter Statement from the Committee). This has more positive consequences: more delegates can participate in the debate, because one can now support the Committee. This allows delegates to show their knowledge and not in a negative destructive way (I show how good I am, when I come to the rescue of the Committee and propose additional facts that also the Committee might not even have thought of before). Positive effect there also, that the atmosphere as such is not so aggressive at all (you destroyed my resolution, so now I get yours down!). The Presidents should keep an eye on it that trivial or empty phrases should not be presented, that solely serves the fact that a delegate calls for the floor to fake a contribution to the debate without having said anything to the matter (e.g. „I'd like to praise the Committee for their work, because it's a good OC, for it solves the problem“ )

- The President summarizes the intervention by the delegate, before they ask the Committee or the plenary to take a stand in the answer.

*Comment:* Also this measure adds to the liveliness of the debate, for the President doesn't just schematically („Italy from the Plenary“/ „Who can I recognize to answer this question?“ / „Lithuania from the Com-

mittee“) call for a reaction, but he addresses the Committee directly with the question of the Competence. „Who can I call to answer this?“ / „Lithuania, please.“ allows more variation in the phrasing and more precision in answering the questions.

This measure can be especially useful when a delegate isn't able to pinpoint precisely the point or the correct phrasing, although to the content he really hits the thing. Above all with foreign delegates and guest delegations who are not so strong in the language.

**Conclusion:** With these suggestions the Presidents have useful tools at hand with which they can lead constructive debating actively and well and steer all kinds of situations. These tools should be applied according to situations and not used schematically and rigidly. It also means that the Presidents must follow the debates and the various argumentations highly concentratedly, but in order to be successful here they need to have read the resolutions thoroughly on beforehand. It is therefore good advice that the Presidents change after each resolution and a new President can start with a fresh mind at the following debate.

*W. Kienel - Stand: März 2018*