

BRUSSELS LABOUR INTERNATIONAL BRANCH

Standing Orders for Branch Meetings

These procedural rules are designed to provide a framework for well-ordered Meetings. They have been drafted to be as clear and straightforward as possible and should be interpreted in that spirit. They should be read in conjunction with the Branch Constitution though in the event of any apparent conflict between the two, it is always the Constitution that will take precedence.

1 Annual General Meetings

The Annual General Meeting shall be held each year as provided in the Constitution. Other Meetings of the members shall take place as scheduled by the Executive Committee.

2 Meeting times

Meetings shall commence at the time stated in the Notice of Meeting. Meetings to consider resolutions shall not be held if a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the notified starting time; always provided that in special circumstances, with the approval of the Officer chairing that Meeting, members present may agree to transact pressing business subject to the ratification of the proceedings by the next quorate Meeting. Meetings shall, save where otherwise provided in the Notice of Meeting, close two hours from the notified starting time, except that a particular Meeting may be temporarily extended for a specified period with the support of two-thirds of the members present. If a Meeting is not so extended, any unfinished business may be submitted in the normal course for consideration at a subsequent Meeting.

3 Quorum

A Meeting shall be quorate if ten percent (10%) of the paid-up Ordinary Branch Membership are present at the opening of the Meeting.

The proceedings and resolutions of any quorate Meeting shall not be held to be invalid simply through the accidental failure to give notice of the Meeting to, or the non receipt of such notice by, any person entitled to attend.

4 Entitlement to attend

Only fully paid-up individual members of the Branch shall be entitled to attend Meetings and to vote. Other members, including provisional members, may attend but shall not vote. Non-members may attend, but not vote at, all or parts of a Meeting by invitation of the Chair. When any scheduled Meeting is not held for any reason or is abandoned without completing the business on the agenda, such Meeting must be reconvened in order for any necessary outstanding business to be transacted.

5 Chair

The elected Chair of this Branch shall preside at all Meetings, where practicable.

In the absence of the Chair the Vice-Chair or Secretary shall preside and in the absence of any of them, those present shall elect a member to take the Chair of the Meeting. Should the Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary arrive after a member has been elected to preside in her or his place then she or he may claim, if they wish, the right to preside at the Meeting once the current item of business has been disposed of. At the Annual General Meeting the Chair shall preside until a successor is elected. The new Chair shall take over the conduct of the Meeting forthwith and proceed to the election of other Officers and further business.

6 Party business

The prime function of Meetings is to provide members with the opportunity to participate in party activities through social contact, political debate and policy discussion; and to establish objectives in the area for campaigning, the development of party organisation and the promotion of links with sympathetic individuals and bodies within the wider community.

The agenda of all Meetings shall be drawn up to give due priority to the endorsement and introduction of new members, discussion, party policy items and other matters of interest to members. Nominations for delegates and representatives to other bodies should be sought as widely from among Branch members as possible. Party business shall in general have precedence at all Meetings. As far as possible the Officers and/ or Executive Committee should deal with routine items of correspondence, finance, donations, operational matters and reports from or to other party bodies, provided that members shall have the opportunity at any Meeting to question, amend and/ or ratify any recommendations put to them.

7 Notice of motion

Motions for consideration at Meetings shall be accepted only from members entitled to attend and participate in the Meeting and must be received by the Secretary in writing (which may include e-mail) not less than 14 calendar days prior to the Meeting. On receipt of a valid motion the Secretary shall make reasonable endeavours to draw the motion to the attention of the membership.

Emergency motions must be delivered in writing to the Secretary as soon as the nature of the emergency allows. Emergency business may be accepted by a two-thirds majority of the Meeting on the recommendation of the Chair who shall interpret the term 'emergency' in a bona fide manner. If not accepted by the Chair or on a subsequent vote as an emergency

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item, it may be submitted for consideration by a subsequent Meeting in the normal manner.

incorporated in the arrangements for the secret ballot.

8 Discussion of motion

No motion shall be discussed at a Meeting until it has been moved and seconded by members present at the Meeting.

Speakers shall address the Chair and shall only speak once on any motion except by permission of the Chair, providing that once every member wishing to speak on the motion has done so, the mover of a motion may reply to the discussion without introducing new matter for debate; such reply shall close the discussion. No speaker shall be allowed more than three minutes in a single intervention, unless agreed by the Meeting to be 'further heard' for a specified period.

9 Procedural motions

A motion "that the vote be taken" on a motion shall not be moved until the mover and seconder of the motion have given the opportunity to be heard. Any procedural motion including a motion "that the vote be taken", to adjourn or of no-confidence in the Chair shall be moved, seconded and put to the vote without discussion; after any such a vote the Chair need not accept a further procedural motion for a period of 20 minutes.

10 Motion to rescind resolution

No motion to rescind a resolution shall be valid within three months from the date on which the resolution was carried. Notice of any rescinding motion must be given in writing and made available to those entitled to attend the relevant Meeting in line with rule 7 above.

11 Voting on motions

Voting shall be by show of hands and carried by a majority except where the Constitution or these Standing Orders provide for a ballot vote or where the Meeting decides otherwise. In the event of there being an equality of votes on any matter decided by a show of hands, the Chair may give a casting vote provided that s/he has not used an ordinary vote. If the Chair does not wish or is unable to give a casting vote, the motion is not carried.

12 Ballot votes

The election at the Annual General Meeting of the Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) shall take place in that order and will be by secret paper ballot and, where there are more than two candidates for any post, by preferential vote. The election of the other Executive Committee members shall be by secret paper ballot using a multiple vote where members may not cast more votes than the number of positions to be filled. Any quotas for women laid down in the Constitution shall be

13 Chair's ruling

Any breach of or question to the rules or Standing Orders may be raised by a member rising to a point of order. The Chair's ruling on any point arising from the rules or Standing Orders is final unless challenged by not less than four members; such a challenge shall be put to the Meeting without discussion and shall only be carried with the support of two-thirds of the members present.

14 Miscellaneous

Meetings and events shall be conducted in a friendly and orderly manner and organised in such a way as to maximise participation from members. Harassment or intimidation of any member is unacceptable as is any form of discrimination on the basis of gender, sexuality, disability, religious belief or race. Smoking is not permitted during the business part of any Meeting.

Any member acting in an unruly or disruptive manner may be removed from the Meeting by order of the Chair. The Chair shall put such a motion to the Meeting, which to be carried shall require the support of two-thirds of those present. Any member who has been removed from two Meetings during a 12-month period, shall with the approval of the Executive Committee be informed that they are ineligible to attend Meetings of this body for a period of up to 12 months.

This Branch accepts the principle of minimum quotas to ensure appropriate representation of women at all levels within the party.

The general provisions of the constitution and rules of the Labour Party shall apply to this Branch. No alterations shall be made to these Standing Orders except at an Annual General or special Meeting called for this purpose and carried with the support of two-thirds of the members present.