



Rules Applying to the Council of Ministers for the Ministerial Summit of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organisation¹

1. General considerations

1.1. Scope.

The following rules apply to the Rhodes Model Regional Co-operation Conference, concerning the Council of Ministers of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (hereinafter BSEC Organisation). Please note that the Board is responsible for determining the rules that are in order to facilitate debate and discussion. In case of conflict of interpretation, the Chairman-in-Office is the final authority for determining the applicability of the Rules of Procedure.

1.2. Language.

English is the official language of RhodesMRC. A Delegate wishing to speak in an official language² where simultaneous interpretation is not provided will be required to provide his or her own translation. Please note that time spent in translation will be counted towards total time allotted for a given speech.

1.3. Credentials.

The RhodesMRC Secretariat has accepted the credentials of delegates or observers prior to the opening of the conference. Actions relating to the alteration of rights or credentials of any staff member, delegate or chairperson may exclusively be initiated by the Secretary General. Representatives must wear approved credentials at all times during the conference.

1.4. Dress Code.

In accordance with the delegate's diplomatic status a formal dress code is required. For male delegates a tie is obligatory and for female no revealing outfits are allowed. Informal clothing, such as jeans and trainers are out of order. The secretariat reserves

¹ Hereinafter referred to as "the Council".

² Russian is the other official language of BSEC Meetings, along with English.

the right to expel a delegate due to his or her dress code.

1.5. Diplomatic Courtesy.

During Council sessions, delegates are expected to exercise diplomatic courtesy when addressing members of the Council and the Board. The Board has the authority to address diplomatic warnings to delegates who obviously violate the diplomatic courtesy. In case that the delegate's conduct seriously hampers the process within the Council, the Chairman-in-Office reserves the right to request his expulsion from the conference room.

1.6. Statements by the Secretariat.

Any member of the RhodesMRC Secretariat may issue verbal or written statements to the Council at any time during the conference.

2. The Board of the Council

2.1. Composition.

The Board of the Council of the BSEC Organisation will be composed of the Chairman-in-Office and the Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat (hereinafter PERMIS) of the Organization.

2.2. Competence of the Board.

The competence of the Board may not be questioned by the delegates.

2.3. Authorities and Responsibilities.

2.3.1. Authority of the Chairman-in-Office.

The Chairman-in-Office shall exercise ultimate authority over the Council's proceedings in an equitable and objective manner. He/she also reserves the right to propose a motion at any given time which should be seconded by a delegate and given that there are no objections.

2.3.2. Responsibilities of the Chairman-in-Office.

The Chairman-in-Office is responsible for all procedural matters pertaining to the Council, including, but not limited to, moderating debate, determining the applicability of the rules and if necessary, clarifying on the meaning of the existing rules without approval from the Council members.

The Hellenic Republic currently holds the Chairmanship of the Organisation (until 31

of December 2010). Therefore, the Chairman-in-Office of the Council shall be the Greek Official, holding the relevant portfolio (i.e. Minister of Energy, Minister of Transport), in accordance with the topics on the agenda.

2.3.3. Authority of the Secretary General.

The Secretary General shall have authority over the Council's proceedings in an equitable and objective manner in the absence of or after receiving appointment by the Chairman-in-Office. The Secretary General also performs the voting procedure on all matters.

2.3.4. Responsibilities of the Secretary General.

The Secretary General is responsible for all procedural matters pertaining to the Council, including, but not limited to, moderating debate, determining the applicability of the rules and if necessary, clarifying on the meaning of the existing rules. His/Her authority is subject to appointment by the Chairman-in-Office (as defined above, Rule 2.3.3).

Moreover, the Secretary General can either take the floor, as any other delegate, in order to clarify the policy lines of the Member States, or issue verbal and/or written statements addressed to the Council, at any time. It is within His/Her responsibilities to assist in the policy planning of the Council, along with the Deputy Secretary General of RhodesMRC.³ and the Chairman-in-Office. The Secretary General has the duty to make remarks when a member state is out of line at any given discussion.

2.4. Caucus of the Board.

The Board reserves the right to halt the working process within the Council in order to take 30 seconds of caucus.

3. Delegations

3.1. Members.

The Ministers of the member states of the BSEC Organisation meet within the Council. Depending on the issue on the agenda, each state will be represented by the Minister holding the relevant portfolio (foreign affairs, culture, energy, finance etc).

3.2. Non-Council Members.

Pertaining to the issues discussed in the Council, various representatives from third states concerned, from International Governmental (IG) and Non-Governmental (NG) Organizations may participate, in an observer capacity.

³ Responsible for the Committee of the Council of Ministers of the BSEC Organisation.

3.2.1. Debating Privileges.

A non-Council member is given debating rights. This will allow the delegation to be recognized by the Chairman-in-Office during debate, to submit Draft Ministerial Declarations or amendments (being the sponsor or one of the signatories, as set in Rules 13.2 and 13.3), but not to move these to the floor or vote on any substantive matter.

4. Parliamentary procedure

4.1. Roll Call.

Attendance shall be confirmed by the Chairman-in-Office by a Roll Call at the beginning of every session. Delegates shall establish their presence in the Council by raising their placards and declaring “*Present*”.

4.2. Procedural Matters.

Procedural matters are those matters relating to the structure of the Council session as defined in the Rules of Procedure of the RhodesMRC. They include, but are not limited to, establishing speaking time, motions and adjournment of the Council session. All delegates must vote on procedural matters and no delegate may abstain. Roll Call vote is not in order for procedural matters.

4.3. Substantive Matters.

Substantive matters are defined as those matters relating to the specific topic at hand. Delegates that have established their presence at the initial Role Call shall act accordingly. Roll Call vote on substantive matters is in order following voting procedure as set in Rule 15.1.

4.3.1. Decision Making Process.

The Council during RhodesMRC has to adopt a Ministerial Declaration by consensus. Throughout the period of the Chairmanship and according to the specific areas of cooperation, the Ministers of the member states with relevant portfolios (i.e. energy, maritime transportation) may adopt Declarations during their regular Meetings. The Declarations are then notified to the next scheduled Meeting of the Council of Foreign Affairs.

5. Quorum

Quorum for the Council activities and meetings, as stipulated in Article 17 of the BSEC Charter, shall be 2/3 majority of the Member States.

If quorum is not met thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled start time of the Council session, the Council will start its session with the number of delegates already present, unless otherwise instructed by RhodesMRC Secretariat. Quorum shall be assumed when Council activity begins.

5.1. Verification of Quorum.

Delegates may move to the Verification of Quorum, introducing a Motion to set the Quorum, where the Chairman-in-Office will proceed with Quorum confirmation by initiating a Roll Call. The Chairman-in-Office can rule the Motion dilatory without option for appeal.

6. Consensus

Consensus shall be understood as the absence of any objection expressed by any member state and presented by the latter as constituting an obstacle to the taking of the decision in question. Consensus is needed in order to reach a decision and adopt a Ministerial Declaration. Each member state has one vote. Abstentions are permissible and do not count against consensus, being interpreted as an absence of the abstaining state from voting procedure. Member states shall decide by consensus when:

- a) establishing dialogue partnership and sectoral dialogue partnership with third parties;
- b) creating new organs of the BSEC; defining, modifying and terminating their mandates; and structural mechanisms;
- c) approving of cooperation projects.

7. Majority Vote

7.1. Simple Majority.

A procedural matter requires a simple majority to pass, implying that fifty percent plus one members (50% + 1) of the Council must vote in favour of the matter to pass. If the vote is a tie, the matter will be considered to have failed.

7.2. Two-thirds (2/3) Majority.

A procedural or substantive matter requiring a two-thirds (2/3) majority to pass implies that two-thirds (2/3) of the Council members must vote in favour of the matter to pass. Decisions shall be made by the 2/3 majority of the member states present and voting.

8. Debate

8.1. Form of Debate.

Unless the Chairman-in-Office decides otherwise, Moderated Caucus will be the form of debate during all sessions of the Council. Any delegate wishing to speak should raise his/her placard and be recognized by the Chairman-in-Office.

8.2. Informal Debate.

During formal debate a motion can be made by any delegate for an Unmoderated Caucus, which constitutes informal debate. Informal debate can only occur on substantive issues and is out of order once a motion to close debate has passed. Motion to enter informal debate is in order, following the procedures outlined in Rules 12.6 and 12.7.

8.3. Recognition.

A Delegate may only address the Council if he/she has received permission from the Chairman-in-Office.

8.4. Interruptions.

A Speaker may not be interrupted by another delegate, unless the delegate has risen to a Point of Personal Privilege.

9. Agenda

The Agenda reflects the order in which topics will be addressed by the committee. As soon as the Quorum has been set, the Chairman-in-Office may entertain a motion to set the agenda.

9.1. Motion to Set the Agenda.

- Following the Motions put on the floor by delegates suggesting the order of topics on the Agenda, the Chairman-in-Office will consider the Motions in the order in which they were made.
- The Chairman-in-Office will take one (1) Speaker in favour and one (1) Speaker against the Motion and proceed with a vote.
- If the Motion is accepted by simple majority, the Agenda will be set in the manner suggested by the Motion.
- If the Motion fails, the Chairman-in-Office shall consider the next Motion and

repeat the process lay forward in the above sections. If no Motion to set the Agenda receives the necessary simple majority then the Council will discuss as first topic the one that gathered the most positive votes during the voting procedure.

- The order in which the Agenda is set at the beginning of the conference shall remain for the duration of Rhodes MRC. Should delegates wish to revisit the Agenda at a later time, they can request to do so after a topic has either been completed and all substantive matters voted on or if a topic has been tabled. The relevance of such a Motion shall remain at the discretion of the Chairman-in-Office.
- The Chairman-in-Office shall call for tabling of the debate if committee updates and news need to be considered immediately by the delegates. The Council shall return to the regular Agenda once the given updates and news have been addressed.

10. Speeches

As soon as the Quorum and the Agenda have been set, a Delegate may move to set a time limit on speeches.

10.1. Motion to Set Speaking Time.

The Chairman-in-Office may either rule the Motion dilatory at his/her discretion or put it to vote. A Delegate exceeding the allotted time for a speech may be called to order by the Chairman-in-Office. The Chairman-in-office is able to entertain a Motion to change the speaking time at his/her own discretion.

11. Points

11.1. Point of Personal Privilege.

A Delegate may rise to a Point of Personal Privilege if a matter impairs him/her from participating fully in Council activities. The Chairman-in-Office shall try to effectively address the source of impairment. This point may interrupt a Speaker only due to inability.

11.2. Point of Order.

A Delegate may rise to a Point of Order if a rule of procedure is not properly observed by a Delegate or by the Board. The Chairman-in-Office will rule on the validity of the point. A Delegate rising to a Point of Order may not comment on the topic of

discussion. A Point of Order ruled dilatory by the Chairman-in-Office may not be appealed. This point may not interrupt a Speaker.

11.3. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry.

A Delegate may rise to a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry to request an explanation on the Rules of Procedure by the Chairman-in-Office. This point may not interrupt a Speaker.

11.4. Right of Reply.

A Delegate whose personal or national integrity has been impugned by another Delegate's comments may rise to a Right of Reply. Disagreement with the content of a Delegate's speech is not grounds for a Right of Reply. The Chairman-in-Office will recognize the Right of Reply at his/her discretion as well as decide on how to resolve the motion. Should the Chairman-in-Office rule the Right of Reply out of order, his/her decision cannot be appealed. No delegate may call for a Right of Reply on a Right of Reply. This point may not interrupt a Speaker.

12. Motions

Unless otherwise specified, no Motions are debatable and all require a simple majority vote to pass.

12.1. Motion to Set the Quorum.

As defined in Rule 5 (and 5.1).

12.2. Motion to Set the Agenda.

As defined in Rule 9.1

12.3. Motion to Set Speaking Time.

As defined in Rule 10.1

12.4. Motion for the Adjournment of the Meeting.

A Delegate may move for the Adjournment of the Meeting to suspend all Council activities until the next scheduled meeting time. The Chairman-in-Office may rule the Motion out of order without possibility of appeal or put it to vote.

12.5. Motion for the Adjournment of the Session.

A Delegate may move for the Adjournment of the Session to cease permanently all Council activities⁴. The Chairman-in-Office may rule the Motion out of order without

⁴ This motion is in order only to be used for the end of the conference.

possibility of appeal or put it to vote. In the event that the Chairman-in-Office approves this, there should be two (2) Speakers for and two (2) Speakers against and the motion will require a two-thirds (2/3) majority to pass.

12.6. Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus.

A Delegate may move for an Unmoderated Caucus, thereby suggesting a change from formal to informal debate. The Delegate who makes this motion must suggest a length and justification for the Unmoderated Caucus. The Chairman-in-Office may suggest a more appropriate caucus length and put it to vote or may rule the Unmoderated Caucus out of order without possibility of appeal. Once the Motion has passed, the Delegates will carry an informal discussion on the topic specified in the Motion without leaving the conference room.

12.7. Motion to Extend the Unmoderated Caucus.

A Delegate may move to extend the Unmoderated Caucus if he/she feels that additional time would benefit the work of the Council. The Delegate who moves for an extension of an Unmoderated Caucus must suggest a length for the extension, which shall not exceed the duration of the original Unmoderated Caucus. The Chairman-in-Office may suggest a more appropriate caucus length and put it to vote or may rule the Extension of the Unmoderated Caucus out of order without the possibility of appeal.

12.8. Motion to Table Debate on a Topic.

A Delegate may move to Table Debate in order to suspend debate on a substantive issue without voting any Draft Ministerial Declaration that may be on the floor. If the Chairman-in-Office rules the Motion in order, one (1) Delegate shall speak in favour and one (1) Delegate shall speak against before proceeding with a vote. A two-thirds (2/3) majority is needed in order to table the debate.

12.9. Motion to Resume Debate on a Topic.

A Delegate may move to Resume Debate on a substantive issue that has been tabled (Rule 12.8). If the Chairman-in-Office rules the Motion in order, one (1) Delegate shall speak in favour and one (1) Delegate shall speak against before proceeding with a vote. A two-thirds (2/3) majority is needed in order to resume the debate.

12.10. Motion to Close Debate on a Draft Ministerial Declaration.

A Delegate may move to Close Debate in order to end debate on a Draft Ministerial Declaration, whereby the Council will enter voting procedure on all amendments on the floor. If the Chairman-in-Office rules the Motion in order, there will be only one (2) Delegates speaking against the Motion. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is required to pass the Motion.

12.11. Motion to Close Debate on the Topic Area under Discussion.

A Delegate may move to Close Debate in order to end Debate on the Topic Area under Discussion whereby the Council will enter voting procedure on all Draft Ministerial Declarations on the floor. If the Chairman-in-Office rules the Motion in order, there will be only two (2) Delegates speaking against the Motion. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is required to pass the Motion.

13. Declarations of the Council

13.1. Working Paper.

A Working Paper is an informal document used by Council Delegates to work on building a Draft Ministerial Declaration. A Working Paper will be distributed at the Chairman's-in-Office discretion if requested by a Delegate.

13.2. Ministerial Declarations of the Summit.

13.2.1. Format.

Draft Ministerial Declarations must be properly formatted according to the guidelines found in the “RhodesMRC BSEC Draft Ministerial Declarations Writing” paper.

13.2.2. Sponsor.

The main writer/contributor of the Draft Ministerial Declaration is recognized as the Sponsor. The Sponsor must be present for a Draft Ministerial Declaration to be introduced to the floor. The Sponsor must agree to support a Ministerial Declaration, unless major changes have been introduced through the amendment process.

13.2.3. Signatories.

Signatories are recognized as the supporters of the Draft Ministerial Declaration. The required number of Signatories will be set by the Chairman-in-Office being equal to at least the 1/5 of the total members present at the Council. The respective number of Signatories must be present on a Working Paper to be introduced to the floor as a Draft Ministerial Declaration. Amendments to the Draft Ministerial Declaration are not required to be approved by Signatories. Signatories are not required to support the Draft Ministerial Declaration during voting procedure; they only agree to put their names as those who are interested in seeing the Working Paper nominated as a Draft Ministerial Declaration for further debate. Signatories can sign only one Draft per Topic Area. However, there is no restriction in the voting procedure.

13.2.4. Introduction of a Draft Ministerial Declaration.

Delegates may move to introduce a Draft Ministerial Declaration once it has been approved and assigned a number by the Chairman-in-Office and distributed to the Council. Such an introduction shall be procedural in nature. The content of the introduction shall be limited to the reading of the Draft Ministerial Declaration as a whole where upon the Sponsor of the Draft Ministerial Declaration shall be granted the floor for the allotted time limit. After its introduction, debate upon the introduced Draft Ministerial Declaration shall be conducted according to the Rule 8.

13.3. Amendments.

During Debate on a Draft Ministerial Declaration, a Delegate may move to introduce an Amendment, which will add to, strike out from or modify a part of the Draft Ministerial Declaration. The Amendment has to be first approved by the Chairman-in-Office.

13.3.1. Non Substantive Amendments.

Amendments correcting grammatical, spelling or formatting mistakes will be automatically adopted without vote from the Council, at the discretion of the Chairman-in-Office. Following the initial reading of the Draft Ministerial Declaration by its sponsor, delegates are permitted to point out any such problems to the Chairman-in-Office.

13.3.2. Substantive Amendments.

All Amendments require approval from the Chairman-in-Office to be introduced. Amendments will be put to a vote prior to the vote on the Draft Ministerial Declaration as a whole. Amendments to Amendments are out of order. Due to the nature of the decision process in the Council, all amendments to a Draft Ministerial Declaration must be unanimously voted (consensus).

13.4. Withdrawal.

The Signatories of an Amendment may request its withdrawal at their discretion, before its adoption by the Council.

14. Voting Procedure

14.1. General.

The Council usually reaches decisions by allowing discussions to continue until a consensus is reached. In the event of a stalemate, the Council may make use of a *tour de table* (see Rule 14.2. below).

14.1.1. Consensus (Unanimity).

For the decision process demanding Consensus, refer to Rules 6 and 13.3.2., above.

14.2. Tour de Table.

Tour de Table shall be conducted at the discretion of the Chairman-in-Office. The Chairman-in-Office requests each delegate to give a short summary of his/her thinking on the matter under discussion, thus ensuring that every member state is able to outline his or her position and allowing the Chairman-in-Office to determine whether a compromise is possible.

14.3. Procedure.

When the Chairman-in-Office announces that the Council is entering voting procedure, no entering or exiting from the room will be permitted, unless there is an emergency or until voting procedure has come to an end. At this time, Motion for a Roll Call Vote is in order.

15. Method of Voting

Each Delegate of the Council has one vote and must demonstrate his/her voting intentions by raising his/her placard at the Chairman's-in-Office request unless there is a Roll Call Vote (see rule 15.1). Delegates must vote in favour, against or abstain.

15.1. Roll Call Vote.

Roll Call Vote may only be in order for substantive matters. This Motion is automatically accepted unless the Chairman-in-Office rules it out of order; the decision is not subject to appeal. The Roll Call starts from a delegate randomly selected by the Chairman-in-Office.

15.2. Passing.

During Roll Call, a Delegate may choose to pass. The Chairman-in-Office will place the Delegate at the bottom of the voting list. A Delegate who has passed once during a voting sequence may not pass again but must ascertain his vote.

15.3. Voting with Rights.

A Delegate may request a right of explanation after voting. Upon completion of voting, the Delegate will be permitted to explain the reasons as to why he/she has chosen to vote a certain way. The Chairman-in-Office may limit the speaking time at his/her

discretion.

15.4. Voting on Draft Ministerial Declarations.

Draft Ministerial Declarations will be voted on in the order that they were numbered by the Chairman-in-Office. The result of the voting procedure is defined by the process outlined in Rule 6 (Consensus).

15.5. Voting on Amendments.

All Amendments shall be voted on in the order in which they were proposed before the Council closes debate on the Draft Ministerial Declaration that they concern. If one Amendment implies the rejection of a second Amendment, the second Amendment will not be voted upon. A passed Amendment shall be automatically included in the Draft Ministerial Declaration. Once all the Amendments relating to a Draft Ministerial Declaration have been voted on, the Council shall vote on the Draft Ministerial Declaration as a whole after Closure of the Debate on the Topic Area under Discussion. The result of the voting procedure is defined by the process outlined in Rules 6 (Consensus) and 13.3.2.

16. Precedence Motions shall be considered in the following decreasing order.

Rule	Description	Debatable	Votes Required	Interrupt Speaker
11.1. Point of Personal Privilege	Feeling discomfort	No	No	Yes
11.2. Point of Order	To point out misuse of rules	No	No	No
11.4. Right of Reply	Reply to an insult	No	No	No
11.3. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry	Clarify the rules	No	No	No
5.1. Motion for the Verification of Quorum	Seeking to verify the presence of delegates	No	No	No
9.1. Motion to Set the Agenda	Define the order of topics on the Agenda	Yes (1+/1-)	Simple Majority	No
10.1. Motion to Set Speaking Time	Define speaking time limit	No	Simple Majority	No
15.1. Motion for a Roll Call	Roll Call Vote	No	No	No
12.6. Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus	Proceed to an Unmoderated Caucus	No	Simple Majority	No
13.2.4. Motion to introduce a Draft Ministerial Declaration	Introduction of a Draft Ministerial Declaration	No	Simple Majority	No
13.3. Motion to Introduce an Amendment	Introduction of an Amendment	No	Simple Majority	No
12.8. Motion to Table Debate	Postpone debate	Yes (1+/1-)	2/3 Majority	No
12.9. Motion to Resume Debate	Resume a tabled debate	Yes (1+/1-)	2/3 Majority	No
12.10. Motion to Close Debate on a Draft Ministerial Declaration	Close the separate debate on a Draft Ministerial Declaration	Yes (2-)	2/3 Majority	No
12.11. Motion to Close Debate on the Topic Area under Discussion	Close debate on the Topic Area	Yes (2-)	2/3 Majority	No
12.4. Motion to Adjourn Meeting	Adjourn until next scheduled meeting	No	Simple Majority	No
12.5. Motion to Adjourn the Session	Close the Session at the end of the Conference	Yes (2+/2-)	2/3 Majority	No