



Constitution

RULES

**February 6, 2002
Amended June 14, 2007
Amended September 27, 2011**

1. NAME:

The organization shall be known as the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas.

2. SECRETARIAT:

The Secretariat of the Canadian Section shall be at the office of International and Inter-Parliamentary Affairs, Parliament of Canada, Ottawa.

3. OBJECTIVES:

Recognizing that strengthening democracy, creating prosperity and realizing human potential are the hemisphere's most pressing priorities, the objectives of the Canadian Section are:

- (1) to promote parliamentary participation in the inter-American system and contribute to inter-parliamentary dialogue; and
- (2) to maintain contact with parliamentary representatives of member states of the Organization of American States (OAS), and to seek to meet periodically with all such representatives, for joint public discussions of common problems and objectives.

4. MEMBERSHIP:

Any member of the Senate or House of Commons of Canada shall be entitled to become a member on application to the Canadian Section and on payment of the membership fee for the current year.

5. WORKING YEAR:

The operating year of the association shall be the fiscal year, commencing on the first day of April and ending on the thirty first day of March of the following year.

6. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS:

- (a) At least one meeting of the general membership shall be held each fiscal year.
- (b) An Annual General Meeting must be held within 60 calendar days of the opening of a new Parliament.
- (c) The Executive Committee or 10 members of the Association may, upon a minimum of two weeks' notice, call an Annual General Meeting.
- (d) The quorum shall be set at 20 or one third of the total membership, whichever is the lesser amount, provided that the Senate and the House of Commons are represented.
- (e) The assembly shall:
 - i) Elect the members of the Executive Committee;
 - ii) Receive a summary report of the expenses of the previous fiscal year and a written report of the Association's activities for that year from the Chair;
 - iii) Amend, where necessary and with one week's notice, the association's statutes by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the meeting;
 - iv) Make suggestions and adopt resolutions in accordance with the aims of the Association;
 - v) Transact any other necessary business.

7. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING:

The Executive Committee or 10 members of the Association may, upon two weeks' notice, call a special general meeting.

8. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

- (a) Subject to Article 9, the Executive Committee of the Canadian Section shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. It shall have the responsibility for the general management of the affairs of the Canadian Section and shall report thereon at each Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Section.

(b) The Executive Committee shall consist of twelve elected members as follows, with 30% of its members from the Senate and 70% from the House of Commons:

- i) A Chair
- ii) Two Vice-Chairs, one of whom shall be a senator, or two MPs if the Chair is a senator
- iii) Nine Counsellors.

(c) Each recognized political party should be represented on the Executive Committee in numbers proportionate to their representation in the House; nothing precludes an independent Senator or Member of Parliament from being a member of the Executive Committee.

(d) Members of the Executive Committee shall be members in good standing of the Canadian Section.

(e) The Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the Chair or any four of its members.

(f) If for any reason a position on the Executive Committee becomes vacant, the Executive Committee shall fill the position from the general membership for the balance of the term.

(g) The Chair shall assume the duties normally associated with that office, including that of presiding at meetings of the Executive Committee and the general membership. In his or her absence, the Chair shall designate a Vice-Chair to act on his or her behalf.

(h) Quorum shall be set at four, provided that a representative from each house is present.

9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

(a) The Association Secretary shall distribute nomination forms to all members of the Association.

(b) Nominations should be received at least 3 working days in advance of the Annual General Meeting. The Association Secretary shall prepare a nominations report based on nominations received. Once the deadline for nominations has passed, the nominations should be made public.

(c) In order to be eligible to vote, parliamentarians should be members of the Association at least 7 days prior to the Annual General Meeting. Once this deadline has passed, the names of all members eligible to vote shall be placed on a voters list.

(d) Nominations will only be accepted from the floor at the Annual General Meeting for positions for which no candidate has been nominated.

(e) The election shall be presided over by a parliamentarian to be chosen from a list that has received the approval of the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons, and who is not nominated for a position on the Executive Committee. Elections shall be conducted by secret ballot with the support of the Association Secretary and additional necessary staff from the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate.

(f) The ballot box shall be placed in full view and each parliamentarian shall insert his or her own ballot into the box.

10. FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice yearly to:

- (1) Direct and manage the affairs and budget of the Association in accordance with the decisions taken at its General Meetings and directives of the Joint Interparliamentary Council;
- (2) Draw up a work plan and submit it to the General Meeting;
- (3) Approve any activities, including travel, that are added to the Association's work plan over the course of the year;
- (4) Convene the Annual General Meeting;
- (5) Draw up a draft budget for the upcoming fiscal year and submit it to the Joint Interparliamentary Council;
- (6) Submit reports to the membership as required;
- (7) Ensure that regular reports are submitted to the Senate and House of Commons, as required in the rules and practices of both Houses.

11. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:

The Executive Secretary of the Canadian Section shall be an officer of the International and Inter-Parliamentary Affairs Directorate. The Executive Secretary shall be accountable to the Executive Committee, particularly to the Chair, and shall be responsible for providing the administrative management for activities of the Canadian Section, for determining and coordinating any additional resources required to support these activities and will act as Secretary for outgoing delegations.

12. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

- (a) The funding of the Canadian Section will be derived from:
 - i) Membership fees
 - ii) Grants
 - iii) Gifts and bequests
- (b) The operating year of the Canadian Section is the federal fiscal year commencing on the first day of April and ending on the thirty-first day of March of the following year.
- (c) 30 % of the Canadian Section's annual grant shall be included in the Estimates of the Speaker of the Senate and 70 % will be included in the Estimates of the Speaker of the House of Commons.
- (d) The signing officers of the Canadian Section shall be the Chair or, in his or her absence or impossibility to act, one other parliamentarian assigned by the Executive Committee together with the Executive Secretary of the Canadian Section.
- (e) A financial statement of the Canadian Section shall be presented to the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis in so far as possible.

13. PARTICIPATION IN PARLAMERICA'S ANNUAL SESSION:

- (a) Delegates to the Annual Session and other meetings of ParlAmericas, as designated by the Executive Committee, shall be chosen according to the Selection Procedure laid down in Article 14.
- (b) The number of delegates for the meetings and sessions of ParlAmericas shall normally be:
 - i) Meetings of the Executive Committee, when Canada is designated to represent the North American subregion - The Chair or one other member
 - ii) Annual Session - A maximum of twelve, with both houses and all parties to be represented
- (c) A member of the Canadian delegation elected by his or her peers during a meeting of ParlAmericas to be an officer of the Assembly or an officer or member of one of its committees or subcommittees shall serve in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of ParlAmericas.

14. DELEGATE SELECTION PROCEDURE:

- (a) Upon the approval of its budget by the Joint Interparliamentary Council, the Executive Committee shall meet to establish the number of participants at each of the activities listed in its work plan for that fiscal year.
- (b) If the names of the individual members who are to participate at each of these activities are known, these are to be noted on the record of the meeting and forwarded to the Whips for their approval.
- (c) For all other vacancies on delegations, the Association must send applications to its general membership for selection as delegates to be determined by Whips of each party, with due regard for the need to build strong Canadian delegations at international conferences.
 - i) The membership shall be notified of meetings to take place and be invited to apply. Members shall be provided with an application form and the deadline for submission and will be selected according to the procedure contained in paragraphs 14 (c) iv) and v).
 - ii) The Executive Committee shall decide the allocation of places amongst recognized Parties on the basis of 30 % to the Senate and 70 % to the House of Commons and with regard to party representation in each House.
 - iii) The Chair shall be the leader of a delegation and members elected to office in ParlAmericas according to Article 9 shall also be selected as delegates.
 - iv) The Executive Secretary shall make a list of applicants and shall submit it to the Whips of all parties.
 - v) The Whips in choosing the delegates shall take into account that participation in an inter-parliamentary meeting provides a valuable opportunity to increase understanding about attitudes and policies in OAS member countries and that this formative experience should be available to the widest possible number of parliamentarians. For that reason delegations should reflect, as far as possible, a 60% experience and 40% new members composition.
 - vi) All members shall be advised of the delegates and alternates chosen.
 - vii) All delegates and alternates selected shall be advised that, as a condition of participation, they must agree to take a full part in briefings and give the time required to prepare themselves to make a contribution at the meetings.

15. DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT:

In the event of a dissolution of Parliament, the Executive Committee in office at that time shall carry on the affairs of the Canadian Section until a new Executive Committee is elected as soon as practicable after a general election, with due regard to policies and related procedures set out in the Financial Management and Policy Guide for Parliamentary Associations.

16. PROCEDURE:

The rules of procedure to be followed in conducting Canadian Section business shall conform to Canadian parliamentary practice and rules of procedure.