



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

# INSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

**STATUTE OF THE ESCB  
AND OF THE ECB**

**RULES OF PROCEDURE**



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

# INSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

**STATUTE OF THE ESCB  
AND OF THE ECB**

**RULES OF PROCEDURE**

© European Central Bank, 2011

**Address**

Kaiserstrasse 29  
60311 Frankfurt am Main  
Germany

**Postal address**

Postfach 16 03 19  
60066 Frankfurt am Main  
Germany

**Telephone**

+49 69 1344 0

**Internet**

<http://www.ecb.europa.eu>

**Fax**

+49 69 1344 6000

*All rights reserved. Reproduction for educational and non-commercial purposes is permitted provided that the source is acknowledged.*

ISSN 1830-0405 (print)

ISSN 1830-0391 (online)

# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	5
STATUTE OF THE ESCB AND OF THE ECB	7
RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE ECB	29
RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE ECB	43
RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE ECB	47



## FOREWORD

The European Central Bank's institutional provisions are a cornerstone of its legal framework and continue to provide a stable foundation for its operations: a basis which has withstood the tests of recent years largely unchanged. This booklet, which was first published in October 2004, has now been updated to reflect the limited changes to those provisions following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009. The new edition in English reproduces the revised text of the Protocol on the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank, now annexed to the Treaties as Protocol No 4. In addition, the text of Decision ECB/2004/2 of 19 February 2004 adopting the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank has been updated to reflect amendments made by Decision ECB/2009/5 of 19 March 2009. Although Decision ECB/2004/2 and the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and the General Council of the ECB have not been revised specifically to reflect the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, this booklet uses footnotes to indicate to readers both the new numbering of the relevant Articles of the Treaties and revised Union terminology. Footnotes with Roman numerals reflect both amendments made to Decision ECB/2004/2 by Decision ECB/2009/5 and the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. We trust that readers will continue to find this booklet a handy reference tool to support them in both their work and studies.

Frankfurt am Main, September 2011

Antonio Sáinz de Vicuña  
General Counsel



# **PROTOCOL (No 4) ON THE STATUTE OF THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF CENTRAL BANKS AND OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK<sup>1</sup>**

## **THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES,**

DESIRING to lay down the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank provided for in the second paragraph of Article 129 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

HAVE AGREED upon the following provisions, which shall be annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union:

## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF CENTRAL BANKS**

#### *Article 1*

#### **The European System of Central Banks**

In accordance with Article 282(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the national central banks shall constitute the European System of Central Banks (ESCB). The ECB and the national central banks of those Member States whose currency is the euro shall constitute the Eurosystem.

The ESCB and the ECB shall perform their tasks and carry on their activities in accordance with the provisions of the Treaties and of this Statute.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **OBJECTIVES AND TASKS OF THE ESCB**

#### *Article 2*

#### **Objectives**

In accordance with Article 127(1) and Article 282(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the primary objective of the ESCB shall be to maintain price stability. Without prejudice to the objective of price stability, it shall support the general economic policies in the Union with a view to contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the Union as laid down in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union. The ESCB shall act in accordance with the principle of an open market economy with free competition, favouring an

---

<sup>1</sup> Protocol as annexed to the consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2010/C 83/01) (OJ C 83, 30.3.2010, p. 230).



efficient allocation of resources, and in compliance with the principles set out in Article 119 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

### *Article 3*

#### **Tasks**

3.1. In accordance with Article 127(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the basic tasks to be carried out through the ESCB shall be:

- to define and implement the monetary policy of the Union;
- to conduct foreign-exchange operations consistent with the provisions of Article 219 of that Treaty;
- to hold and manage the official foreign reserves of the Member States;
- to promote the smooth operation of payment systems.

3.2. In accordance with Article 127(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the third indent of Article 3.1 shall be without prejudice to the holding and management by the governments of Member States of foreign-exchange working balances.

3.3. In accordance with Article 127(5) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the ESCB shall contribute to the smooth conduct of policies pursued by the competent authorities relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions and the stability of the financial system.

### *Article 4*

#### **Advisory functions**

In accordance with Article 127(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union:

(a) the ECB shall be consulted:

- on any proposed Union act in its fields of competence;
- by national authorities regarding any draft legislative provision in its fields of competence, but within the limits and under the conditions set out by the Council in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 41;

(b) the ECB may submit opinions to the Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies or to national authorities on matters in its fields of competence.

## *Article 5*

### **Collection of statistical information**

5.1. In order to undertake the tasks of the ESCB, the ECB, assisted by the national central banks, shall collect the necessary statistical information either from the competent national authorities or directly from economic agents. For these purposes it shall cooperate with the Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies and with the competent authorities of the Member States or third countries and with international organisations.

5.2. The national central banks shall carry out, to the extent possible, the tasks described in Article 5.1.

5.3. The ECB shall contribute to the harmonisation, where necessary, of the rules and practices governing the collection, compilation and distribution of statistics in the areas within its fields of competence.

5.4. The Council, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 41, shall define the natural and legal persons subject to reporting requirements, the confidentiality regime and the appropriate provisions for enforcement.

## *Article 6*

### **International cooperation**

6.1. In the field of international cooperation involving the tasks entrusted to the ESCB, the ECB shall decide how the ESCB shall be represented.

6.2. The ECB and, subject to its approval, the national central banks may participate in international monetary institutions.

6.3. Articles 6.1 and 6.2 shall be without prejudice to Article 138 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **ORGANISATION OF THE ESCB**

## *Article 7*

### **Independence**

In accordance with Article 130 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, when exercising the powers and carrying out the tasks and duties conferred upon them by the Treaties and this Statute, neither the ECB, nor a national central bank, nor any member of their decision-making bodies shall seek or take instructions from Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies, from any government of a Member State or from any other body. The Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies and the governments of the Member States

undertake to respect this principle and not to seek to influence the members of the decision-making bodies of the ECB or of the national central banks in the performance of their tasks.

#### *Article 8*

### **General principle**

The ESCB shall be governed by the decision-making bodies of the ECB.

#### *Article 9*

### **The European Central Bank**

9.1. The ECB which, in accordance with Article 282(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, shall have legal personality, shall enjoy in each of the Member States the most extensive legal capacity accorded to legal persons under its law; it may, in particular, acquire or dispose of movable and immovable property and may be a party to legal proceedings.

9.2. The ECB shall ensure that the tasks conferred upon the ESCB under Article 127(2), (3) and (5) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union are implemented either by its own activities pursuant to this Statute or through the national central banks pursuant to Articles 12.1 and 14.

9.3. In accordance with Article 129(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the decision making bodies of the ECB shall be the Governing Council and the Executive Board.

#### *Article 10*

### **The Governing Council**

10.1. In accordance with Article 283(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Governing Council shall comprise the members of the Executive Board of the ECB and the governors of the national central banks of the Member States whose currency is the euro.

10.2. Each member of the Governing Council shall have one vote. As from the date on which the number of members of the Governing Council exceeds 21, each member of the Executive Board shall have one vote and the number of governors with a voting right shall be 15. The latter voting rights shall be assigned and shall rotate as follows:

- as from the date on which the number of governors exceeds 15, until it reaches 22, the governors shall be allocated to two groups, according to a ranking of the size of the share of their national central bank's Member State in the aggregate gross domestic product at market prices and in the total aggregated balance sheet of the monetary financial institutions of the Member States whose currency is the euro. The shares in the aggregate gross domestic product at market prices and in the total aggregated balance sheet of the

monetary financial institutions shall be assigned weights of 5/6 and 1/6, respectively. The first group shall be composed of five governors and the second group of the remaining governors. The frequency of voting rights of the governors allocated to the first group shall not be lower than the frequency of voting rights of those of the second group. Subject to the previous sentence, the first group shall be assigned four voting rights and the second group eleven voting rights,

- as from the date on which the number of governors reaches 22, the governors shall be allocated to three groups according to a ranking based on the above criteria. The first group shall be composed of five governors and shall be assigned four voting rights. The second group shall be composed of half of the total number of governors, with any fraction rounded up to the nearest integer, and shall be assigned eight voting rights. The third group shall be composed of the remaining governors and shall be assigned three voting rights,
- within each group, the governors shall have their voting rights for equal amounts of time,
- for the calculation of the shares in the aggregate gross domestic product at market prices Article 29.2 shall apply. The total aggregated balance sheet of the monetary financial institutions shall be calculated in accordance with the statistical framework applying in the Union at the time of the calculation,
- whenever the aggregate gross domestic product at market prices is adjusted in accordance with Article 29.3, or whenever the number of governors increases, the size and/or composition of the groups shall be adjusted in accordance with the above principles,
- the Governing Council, acting by a two-thirds majority of all its members, with and without a voting right, shall take all measures necessary for the implementation of the above principles and may decide to postpone the start of the rotation system until the date on which the number of governors exceeds 18.

The right to vote shall be exercised in person. By way of derogation from this rule, the Rules of Procedure referred to in Article 12.3 may lay down that members of the Governing Council may cast their vote by means of teleconferencing. These rules shall also provide that a member of the Governing Council who is prevented from attending meetings of the Governing Council for a prolonged period may appoint an alternate as a member of the Governing Council.

The provisions of the previous paragraphs are without prejudice to the voting rights of all members of the Governing Council, with and without a voting right, under Articles 10.3, 40.2 and 40.3.

Save as otherwise provided for in this Statute, the Governing Council shall act by a simple majority of the members having a voting right. In the event of a tie, the President shall have the casting vote.

In order for the Governing Council to vote, there shall be a quorum of two-thirds of the members having a voting right. If the quorum is not met, the President may convene an extraordinary meeting at which decisions may be taken without regard to the quorum.

10.3. For any decisions to be taken under Articles 28, 29, 30, 32 and 33, the votes in the Governing Council shall be weighted according to the national central banks' shares in the subscribed capital of the ECB. The weights of the votes of the members of the Executive Board shall be zero. A decision requiring a qualified majority shall be adopted if the votes cast in favour represent at least two thirds of the subscribed capital of the ECB and represent at least half of the shareholders. If a Governor is unable to be present, he may nominate an alternate to cast his weighted vote.

10.4. The proceedings of the meetings shall be confidential. The Governing Council may decide to make the outcome of its deliberations public.

10.5. The Governing Council shall meet at least 10 times a year.

## *Article 11*

### **The Executive Board**

11.1. In accordance with the first subparagraph of Article 283(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Executive Board shall comprise the President, the Vice-President and four other members.

The members shall perform their duties on a full-time basis. No member shall engage in any occupation, whether gainful or not, unless exemption is exceptionally granted by the Governing Council.

11.2. In accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 283(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the President, the Vice-President and the other members of the Executive Board shall be appointed by the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, from among persons of recognised standing and professional experience in monetary or banking matters, on a recommendation from the Council after it has consulted the European Parliament and the Governing Council.

Their term of office shall be eight years and shall not be renewable.

Only nationals of Member States may be members of the Executive Board.

11.3. The terms and conditions of employment of the members of the Executive Board, in particular their salaries, pensions and other social security benefits shall be the subject of contracts with the ECB and shall be fixed by the Governing Council on a proposal from a Committee comprising three members appointed by the Governing Council and three members appointed by the Council. The members of the Executive Board shall not have the right to vote on matters referred to in this paragraph.

11.4. If a member of the Executive Board no longer fulfils the conditions required for the performance of his duties or if he has been guilty of serious misconduct, the Court of Justice may, on application by the Governing Council or the Executive Board, compulsorily retire him.

11.5. Each member of the Executive Board present in person shall have the right to vote and shall have, for that purpose, one vote. Save as otherwise provided, the Executive Board shall act by a simple majority of the votes cast. In the event of a tie, the President shall have the casting vote. The voting arrangements shall be specified in the Rules of Procedure referred to in Article 12.3.

11.6. The Executive Board shall be responsible for the current business of the ECB.

11.7. Any vacancy on the Executive Board shall be filled by the appointment of a new member in accordance with Article 11.2.

## *Article 12*

### **Responsibilities of the decision-making bodies**

12.1. The Governing Council shall adopt the guidelines and take the decisions necessary to ensure the performance of the tasks entrusted to the ESCB under these Treaties and this Statute. The Governing Council shall formulate the monetary policy of the Union including, as appropriate, decisions relating to intermediate monetary objectives, key interest rates and the supply of reserves in the ESCB, and shall establish the necessary guidelines for their implementation.

The Executive Board shall implement monetary policy in accordance with the guidelines and decisions laid down by the Governing Council. In doing so the Executive Board shall give the necessary instructions to national central banks. In addition the Executive Board may have certain powers delegated to it where the Governing Council so decides.

To the extent deemed possible and appropriate and without prejudice to the provisions of this Article, the ECB shall have recourse to the national central banks to carry out operations which form part of the tasks of the ESCB.

12.2. The Executive Board shall have responsibility for the preparation of meetings of the Governing Council.

12.3. The Governing Council shall adopt Rules of Procedure which determine the internal organisation of the ECB and its decision-making bodies.

12.4. The Governing Council shall exercise the advisory functions referred to in Article 4.

12.5. The Governing Council shall take the decisions referred to in Article 6.

### *Article 13*

#### **The President**

13.1. The President or, in his absence, the Vice-President shall chair the Governing Council and the Executive Board of the ECB.

13.2. Without prejudice to Article 38, the President or his nominee shall represent the ECB externally.

### *Article 14*

#### **National central banks**

14.1. In accordance with Article 131 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, each Member State shall ensure that its national legislation, including the statutes of its national central bank, is compatible with these Treaties and this Statute.

14.2. The statutes of the national central banks shall, in particular, provide that the term of office of a Governor of a national central bank shall be no less than five years.

A Governor may be relieved from office only if he no longer fulfils the conditions required for the performance of his duties or if he has been guilty of serious misconduct. A decision to this effect may be referred to the Court of Justice by the Governor concerned or the Governing Council on grounds of infringement of these Treaties or of any rule of law relating to their application. Such proceedings shall be instituted within two months of the publication of the decision or of its notification to the plaintiff or, in the absence thereof, of the day on which it came to the knowledge of the latter, as the case may be.

14.3. The national central banks are an integral part of the ESCB and shall act in accordance with the guidelines and instructions of the ECB. The Governing Council shall take the necessary steps to ensure compliance with the guidelines and instructions of the ECB, and shall require that any necessary information be given to it.

14.4. National central banks may perform functions other than those specified in this Statute unless the Governing Council finds, by a majority of two thirds of the votes cast, that these interfere with the objectives and tasks of the ESCB. Such functions shall be performed on the responsibility and liability of national central banks and shall not be regarded as being part of the functions of the ESCB.

### *Article 15*

#### **Reporting commitments**

15.1. The ECB shall draw up and publish reports on the activities of the ESCB at least quarterly.

15.2. A consolidated financial statement of the ESCB shall be published each week.

15.3. In accordance with Article 284(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the ECB shall address an annual report on the activities of the ESCB and on the monetary policy of both the previous and the current year to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, and also to the European Council.

15.4. The reports and statements referred to in this Article shall be made available to interested parties free of charge.

### *Article 16*

#### **Banknotes**

In accordance with Article 128(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Governing Council shall have the exclusive right to authorise the issue of euro banknotes within the Union. The ECB and the national central banks may issue such notes. The banknotes issued by the ECB and the national central banks shall be the only such notes to have the status of legal tender within the Union.

The ECB shall respect as far as possible existing practices regarding the issue and design of banknotes.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **MONETARY FUNCTIONS AND OPERATIONS OF THE ESCB**

### *Article 17*

#### **Accounts with the ECB and the national central banks**

In order to conduct their operations, the ECB and the national central banks may open accounts for credit institutions, public entities and other market participants and accept assets, including book entry securities, as collateral.

### *Article 18*

#### **Open market and credit operations**

18.1. In order to achieve the objectives of the ESCB and to carry out its tasks, the ECB and the national central banks may:

- operate in the financial markets by buying and selling outright (spot and forward) or under repurchase agreement and by lending or borrowing claims and marketable instruments, whether in euro or other currencies, as well as precious metals;
- conduct credit operations with credit institutions and other market participants, with lending being based on adequate collateral.



18.2. The ECB shall establish general principles for open market and credit operations carried out by itself or the national central banks, including for the announcement of conditions under which they stand ready to enter into such transactions.

### *Article 19*

#### **Minimum reserves**

19.1. Subject to Article 2, the ECB may require credit institutions established in Member States to hold minimum reserve on accounts with the ECB and national central banks in pursuance of monetary policy objectives. Regulations concerning the calculation and determination of the required minimum reserves may be established by the Governing Council. In cases of non-compliance the ECB shall be entitled to levy penalty interest and to impose other sanctions with comparable effect.

19.2. For the application of this Article, the Council shall, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 41, define the basis for minimum reserves and the maximum permissible ratios between those reserves and their basis, as well as the appropriate sanctions in cases of non-compliance.

### *Article 20*

#### **Other instruments of monetary control**

The Governing Council may, by a majority of two thirds of the votes cast, decide upon the use of such other operational methods of monetary control as it sees fit, respecting Article 2.

The Council shall, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 41, define the scope of such methods if they impose obligations on third parties.

### *Article 21*

#### **Operations with public entities**

21.1. In accordance with Article 123 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, overdrafts or any other type of credit facility with the ECB or with the national central banks in favour of Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies, central governments, regional, local or other public authorities, other bodies governed by public law, or public undertakings of Member States shall be prohibited, as shall the purchase directly from them by the ECB or national central banks of debt instruments.

21.2. The ECB and national central banks may act as fiscal agents for the entities referred to in Article 21.1.

21.3. The provisions of this Article shall not apply to publicly owned credit institutions which, in the context of the supply of reserves by central banks, shall be given the same treatment by national central banks and the ECB as private credit institutions.

#### *Article 22*

### **Clearing and payment systems**

The ECB and national central banks may provide facilities, and the ECB may make regulations, to ensure efficient and sound clearing and payment systems within the Union and with other countries.

#### *Article 23*

### **External operations**

The ECB and national central banks may:

- establish relations with central banks and financial institutions in other countries and, where appropriate, with international organisations;
- acquire and sell spot and forward all types of foreign exchange assets and precious metals; the term ‘foreign exchange asset’ shall include securities and all other assets in the currency of any country or units of account and in whatever form held;
- hold and manage the assets referred to in this Article;
- conduct all types of banking transactions in relations with third countries and international organisations, including borrowing and lending operations.

#### *Article 24*

### **Other operations**

In addition to operations arising from their tasks, the ECB and national central banks may enter into operations for their administrative purposes or for their staff.

## **CHAPTER V**

## **PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISION**

#### *Article 25*

### **Prudential supervision**

25.1. The ECB may offer advice to and be consulted by the Council, the Commission and the competent authorities of the Member States on the scope and implementation of Union legislation relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions and to the stability of the financial system.

25.2. In accordance with any regulation of the Council under Article 127(6) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the ECB may perform specific tasks concerning policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions and other financial institutions with the exception of insurance undertakings.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE ESCB**

#### *Article 26*

##### **Financial accounts**

26.1. The financial year of the ECB and national central banks shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December.

26.2. The annual accounts of the ECB shall be drawn up by the Executive Board, in accordance with the principles established by the Governing Council. The accounts shall be approved by the Governing Council and shall thereafter be published.

26.3. For analytical and operational purposes, the Executive Board shall draw up a consolidated balance sheet of the ESCB, comprising those assets and liabilities of the national central banks that fall within the ESCB.

26.4. For the application of this Article, the Governing Council shall establish the necessary rules for standardising the accounting and reporting of operations undertaken by the national central banks.

#### *Article 27*

##### **Auditing**

27.1. The accounts of the ECB and national central banks shall be audited by independent external auditors recommended by the Governing Council and approved by the Council. The auditors shall have full power to examine all books and accounts of the ECB and national central banks and obtain full information about their transactions.

27.2. The provisions of Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union shall only apply to an examination of the operational efficiency of the management of the ECB.

#### *Article 28*

##### **Capital of the ECB**

28.1. The capital of the ECB shall be euro 5 000 million. The capital may be increased by such amounts as may be decided by the Governing Council acting by the qualified majority provided for in Article 10.3, within the limits and under the conditions set by the Council under the procedure laid down in Article 41.

28.2. The national central banks shall be the sole subscribers to and holders of the capital of the ECB. The subscription of capital shall be according to the key established in accordance with Article 29.

28.3. The Governing Council, acting by the qualified majority provided for in Article 10.3, shall determine the extent to which and the form in which the capital shall be paid up.

28.4. Subject to Article 28.5, the shares of the national central banks in the subscribed capital of the ECB may not be transferred, pledged or attached.

28.5. If the key referred to in Article 29 is adjusted, the national central banks shall transfer among themselves capital shares to the extent necessary to ensure that the distribution of capital shares corresponds to the adjusted key. The Governing Council shall determine the terms and conditions of such transfers.

### *Article 29*

#### **Key for capital subscription**

29.1. The key for subscription of the ECB's capital, fixed for the first time in 1998 when the ESCB was established, shall be determined by assigning to each national central bank a weighting in this key equal to the sum of:

- 50% of the share of its respective Member State in the population of the Union in the penultimate year preceding the establishment of the ESCB;
- 50% of the share of its respective Member State in the gross domestic product at market prices of the Union as recorded in the last five years preceding the penultimate year before the establishment of the ESCB.

The percentages shall be rounded up or down to the nearest multiple of 0,0001 percentage points.

29.2. The statistical data to be used for the application of this Article shall be provided by the Commission in accordance with the rules adopted by the Council under the procedure provided for in Article 41.

29.3. The weightings assigned to the national central banks shall be adjusted every five years after the establishment of the ESCB by analogy with the provisions laid down in Article 29.1. The adjusted key shall apply with effect from the first day of the following year.

29.4. The Governing Council shall take all other measures necessary for the application of this Article.

### *Article 30*

#### **Transfer of foreign reserve assets to the ECB**

30.1. Without prejudice to Article 28, the ECB shall be provided by the national central banks with foreign reserve assets, other than Member States' currencies, euro, IMF reserve positions and SDRs, up to an amount equivalent to euro 50 000 million. The Governing Council shall

decide upon the proportion to be called up by the ECB following its establishment and the amounts called up at later dates. The ECB shall have the full right to hold and manage the foreign reserves that are transferred to it and to use them for the purposes set out in this Statute.

30.2. The contributions of each national central bank shall be fixed in proportion to its share in the subscribed capital of the ECB.

30.3. Each national central bank shall be credited by the ECB with a claim equivalent to its contribution. The Governing Council shall determine the denomination and remuneration of such claims.

30.4. Further calls of foreign reserve assets beyond the limit set in Article 30.1 may be effected by the ECB, in accordance with Article 30.2, within the limits and under the conditions set by the Council in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 41.

30.5. The ECB may hold and manage IMF reserve positions and SDRs and provide for the pooling of such assets.

30.6. The Governing Council shall take all other measures necessary for the application of this Article.

### *Article 31*

#### **Foreign reserve assets held by national central banks**

31.1. The national central banks shall be allowed to perform transactions in fulfilment of their obligations towards international organisations in accordance with Article 23.

31.2. All other operations in foreign reserve assets remaining with the national central banks after the transfers referred to in Article 30, and Member States' transactions with their foreign exchange working balances shall, above a certain limit to be established within the framework of Article 31.3, be subject to approval by the ECB in order to ensure consistency with the exchange rate and monetary policies of the Union.

31.3. The Governing Council shall issue guidelines with a view to facilitating such operations.

### *Article 32*

#### **Allocation of monetary income of national central banks**

32.1. The income accruing to the national central banks in the performance of the ESCB's monetary policy function (hereinafter referred to as 'monetary income') shall be allocated at the end of each financial year in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

32.2. The amount of each national central bank's monetary income shall be equal to its annual income derived from its assets held against notes in circulation and deposit liabilities

to credit institutions. These assets shall be earmarked by national central banks in accordance with guidelines to be established by the Governing Council.

32.3. If, after the introduction of the euro, the balance sheet structures of the national central banks do not, in the judgment of the Governing Council, permit the application of Article 32.2, the Governing Council, acting by a qualified majority, may decide that, by way of derogation from Article 32.2, monetary income shall be measured according to an alternative method for a period of not more than five years.

32.4. The amount of each national central bank's monetary income shall be reduced by an amount equivalent to any interest paid by that central bank on its deposit liabilities to credit institutions in accordance with Article 19.

The Governing Council may decide that national central banks shall be indemnified against costs incurred in connection with the issue of banknotes or in exceptional circumstances for specific losses arising from monetary policy operations undertaken for the ESCB. Indemnification shall be in a form deemed appropriate in the judgment of the Governing Council; these amounts may be offset against the national central banks' monetary income.

32.5. The sum of the national central banks' monetary income shall be allocated to the national central banks in proportion to their paid up shares in the capital of the ECB, subject to any decision taken by the Governing Council pursuant to Article 33.2.

32.6. The clearing and settlement of the balances arising from the allocation of monetary income shall be carried out by the ECB in accordance with guidelines established by the Governing Council.

32.7. The Governing Council shall take all other measures necessary for the application of this Article.

### *Article 33*

#### **Allocation of net profits and losses of the ECB**

33.1. The net profit of the ECB shall be transferred in the following order:

- (a) an amount to be determined by the Governing Council, which may not exceed 20% of the net profit, shall be transferred to the general reserve fund subject to a limit equal to 100% of the capital;
- (b) the remaining net profit shall be distributed to the shareholders of the ECB in proportion to their paid-up shares.

33.2. In the event of a loss incurred by the ECB, the shortfall may be offset against the general reserve fund of the ECB and, if necessary, following a decision by the Governing Council, against the monetary income of the relevant financial year in proportion and up to the amounts allocated to the national central banks in accordance with Article 32.5.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### *Article 34*

##### **Legal acts**

34.1. In accordance with Article 132 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the ECB shall:

- make regulations to the extent necessary to implement the tasks defined in Article 3.1, first indent, Articles 19.1, 22 or 25.2 and in cases which shall be laid down in the acts of the Council referred to in Article 41;
- take decisions necessary for carrying out the tasks entrusted to the ESCB under these Treaties and this Statute;
- make recommendations and deliver opinions.

34.2. The ECB may decide to publish its decisions, recommendations and opinions.

34.3. Within the limits and under the conditions adopted by the Council under the procedure laid down in Article 41, the ECB shall be entitled to impose fines or periodic penalty payments on undertakings for failure to comply with obligations under its regulations and decisions.

#### *Article 35*

##### **Judicial control and related matters**

35.1. The acts or omissions of the ECB shall be open to review or interpretation by the Court of Justice of the European Union in the cases and under the conditions laid down in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The ECB may institute proceedings in the cases and under the conditions laid down in the Treaties.

35.2. Disputes between the ECB, on the one hand, and its creditors, debtors or any other person, on the other, shall be decided by the competent national courts, save where jurisdiction has been conferred upon the Court of Justice of the European Union.

35.3. The ECB shall be subject to the liability regime provided for in Article 340 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The national central banks shall be liable according to their respective national laws.

35.4. The Court of Justice of the European Union shall have jurisdiction to give judgment pursuant to any arbitration clause contained in a contract concluded by or on behalf of the ECB, whether that contract be governed by public or private law.

35.5. A decision of the ECB to bring an action before the Court of Justice of the European Union shall be taken by the Governing Council.

35.6. The Court of Justice of the European Union shall have jurisdiction in disputes concerning the fulfilment by a national central bank of obligations under the Treaties and this Statute. If the ECB considers that a national central bank has failed to fulfil an obligation under the Treaties and this Statute, it shall deliver a reasoned opinion on the matter after giving the national central bank concerned the opportunity to submit its observations. If the national central bank concerned does not comply with the opinion within the period laid down by the ECB, the latter may bring the matter before the Court of Justice of the European Union.

#### *Article 36*

##### **Staff**

36.1. The Governing Council, on a proposal from the Executive Board, shall lay down the conditions of employment of the staff of the ECB.

36.2. The Court of Justice of the European Union shall have jurisdiction in any dispute between the ECB and its servants within the limits and under the conditions laid down in the conditions of employment.

#### *Article 37 (ex Article 38)*

##### **Professional secrecy**

37.1. Members of the governing bodies and the staff of the ECB and the national central banks shall be required, even after their duties have ceased, not to disclose information of the kind covered by the obligation of professional secrecy.

37.2. Persons having access to data covered by Union legislation imposing an obligation of secrecy shall be subject to such legislation.

#### *Article 38 (ex Article 39)*

##### **Signatories**

The ECB shall be legally committed to third parties by the President or by two members of the Executive Board or by the signatures of two members of the staff of the ECB who have been duly authorised by the President to sign on behalf of the ECB.

#### *Article 39 (ex Article 40)*

##### **Privileges and immunities**

The ECB shall enjoy in the territories of the Member States such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the performance of its tasks, under the conditions laid down in the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Union.



## CHAPTER VIII

### AMENDMENT OF THE STATUTE AND COMPLEMENTARY LEGISLATION

#### *Article 40 (ex Article 41)*

##### **Simplified amendment procedure**

40.1. In accordance with Article 129(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Articles 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 17, 18, 19.1, 22, 23, 24, 26, 32.2, 32.3, 32.4, 32.6, 33.1(a) and 36 of this Statute may be amended by the European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure either on a recommendation from the ECB and after consulting the Commission, or on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the ECB.

40.2. Article 10.2 may be amended by a decision of the European Council, acting unanimously, either on a recommendation from the European Central Bank and after consulting the European Parliament and the Commission, or on a recommendation from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament and the European Central Bank. These amendments shall not enter into force until they are approved by the Member States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.

40.3. A recommendation made by the ECB under this Article shall require a unanimous decision by the Governing Council.

#### *Article 41 (ex Article 42)*

##### **Complementary legislation**

In accordance with Article 129(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Council, either on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament and the ECB or on a recommendation from the ECB and after consulting the European Parliament and the Commission, shall adopt the provisions referred to in Articles 4, 5.4, 19.2, 20, 28.1, 29.2, 30.4 and 34.3 of this Statute.

## CHAPTER IX

### TRANSITIONAL AND OTHER PROVISIONS FOR THE ESCB

#### *Article 42 (ex Article 43)*

##### **General provisions**

42.1. A derogation as referred to in Article 139 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union shall entail that the following Articles of this Statute shall not confer any rights or impose any obligations on the Member State concerned: 3, 6, 9.2, 12.1, 14.3, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26.2, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 49.

42.2. The central banks of Member States with a derogation as specified in Article 139(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union shall retain their powers in the field of monetary policy according to national law.

42.3. In accordance with Article 139 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, ‘Member States’ shall be read as ‘Member States whose currency is the euro’ in the following Articles of this Statute: 3, 11.2 and 19.

42.4. ‘National central banks’ shall be read as ‘central banks of Member States whose currency is the euro’ in the following Articles of this Statute: 9.2, 10.2, 10.3, 12.1, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33.2 and 49.

42.5. ‘Shareholders’ shall be read as ‘central banks of Member States whose currency is the euro’ in Articles 10.3 and 33.1.

42.6. ‘Subscribed capital of the ECB’ shall be read as ‘capital of the ECB subscribed by the central banks of Member States whose currency is the euro’ in Articles 10.3 and 30.2.

#### *Article 43 (ex Article 44)*

### **Transitional tasks of the ECB**

The ECB shall take over the former tasks of the EMI referred to in Article 141(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union which, because of the derogations of one or more Member States, still have to be performed after the introduction of the euro.

The ECB shall give advice in the preparations for the abrogation of the derogations specified in Article 140 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

#### *Article 44 (ex Article 45)*

### **The General Council of the ECB**

44.1. Without prejudice to Article 129(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the General Council shall be constituted as a third decision-making body of the ECB.

44.2. The General Council shall comprise the President and Vice-President of the ECB and the Governors of the national central banks. The other members of the Executive Board may participate, without having the right to vote, in meetings of the General Council.

44.3. The responsibilities of the General Council are listed in full in Article 46 of this Statute.

#### *Article 45 (ex Article 46)*

### **Rules of Procedure of the General Council**

45.1. The President or, in his absence, the Vice-President of the ECB shall chair the General Council of the ECB.

45.2. The President of the Council and a Member of the Commission may participate, without having the right to vote, in meetings of the General Council.

45.3. The President shall prepare the meetings of the General Council.

45.4. By way of derogation from Article 12.3, the General Council shall adopt its Rules of Procedure.

45.5. The Secretariat of the General Council shall be provided by the ECB.

#### *Article 46 (ex Article 47)*

### **Responsibilities of the General Council**

46.1. The General Council shall:

- perform the tasks referred to in Article 43;
- contribute to the advisory functions referred to in Articles 4 and 25.1.

46.2. The General Council shall contribute to:

- the collection of statistical information as referred to in Article 5;
- the reporting activities of the ECB as referred to in Article 15;
- the establishment of the necessary rules for the application of Article 26 as referred to in Article 26.4;
- the taking of all other measures necessary for the application of Article 29 as referred to in Article 29.4;
- the laying down of the conditions of employment of the staff of the ECB as referred to in Article 36.

46.3. The General Council shall contribute to the necessary preparations for irrevocably fixing the exchange rates of the currencies of Member States with a derogation against the euro as referred to in Article 140(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

46.4. The General Council shall be informed by the President of the ECB of decisions of the Governing Council.

#### *Article 47 (ex Article 48)*

### **Transitional provisions for the capital of the ECB**

In accordance with Article 29.1, each national central bank shall be assigned a weighting in the key for subscription of the ECB's capital. By way of derogation from Article 28.3, central banks of Member States with a derogation shall not pay up their subscribed capital unless the General Council, acting by a majority representing at least two thirds of the subscribed capital

of the ECB and at least half of the shareholders, decides that a minimal percentage has to be paid up as a contribution to the operational costs of the ECB.

*Article 48 (ex Article 49)*

**Deferred payment of capital, reserves and provisions of the ECB**

48.1. The central bank of a Member State whose derogation has been abrogated shall pay up its subscribed share of the capital of the ECB to the same extent as the central banks of other Member States whose currency is the euro, and shall transfer to the ECB foreign reserve assets in accordance with Article 30.1. The sum to be transferred shall be determined by multiplying the euro value at current exchange rates of the foreign reserve assets which have already been transferred to the ECB in accordance with Article 30.1, by the ratio between the number of shares subscribed by the national central bank concerned and the number of shares already paid up by the other national central banks.

48.2. In addition to the payment to be made in accordance with Article 48.1, the central bank concerned shall contribute to the reserves of the ECB, to those provisions equivalent to reserves, and to the amount still to be appropriated to the reserves and provisions corresponding to the balance of the profit and loss account as at 31 December of the year prior to the abrogation of the derogation. The sum to be contributed shall be determined by multiplying the amount of the reserves, as defined above and as stated in the approved balance sheet of the ECB, by the ratio between the number of shares subscribed by the central bank concerned and the number of shares already paid up by the other central banks.

48.3. Upon one or more countries becoming Member States and their respective national central banks becoming part of the ESCB, the subscribed capital of the ECB and the limit on the amount of foreign reserve assets that may be transferred to the ECB shall be automatically increased. The increase shall be determined by multiplying the respective amounts then prevailing by the ratio, within the expanded capital key, between the weighting of the entering national central banks concerned and the weighting of the national central banks already members of the ESCB. Each national central bank's weighting in the capital key shall be calculated by analogy with Article 29.1 and in compliance with Article 29.2. The reference periods to be used for the statistical data shall be identical to those applied for the latest quinquennial adjustment of the weightings under Article 29.3.

*Article 49 (ex Article 52)*

**Exchange of banknotes in the currencies of the Member States**

Following the irrevocable fixing of exchange rates in accordance with Article 140 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Governing Council shall take the necessary measures to ensure that banknotes denominated in currencies with irrevocably fixed exchange rates are exchanged by the national central banks at their respective par values.

*Article 50 (ex Article 53)*

**Applicability of the transitional provisions**

If and as long as there are Member States with a derogation, Articles 42 to 47 shall be applicable.

# DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

OF 19 FEBRUARY 2004

## ADOPTING THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK (ECB/2004/2)\*

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK,

Having regard to the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank, and in particular to Article 12.3 thereof;

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

### *Sole Article*

The Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank as amended on 22 April 1999, as further amended by Decision ECB/1999/6 of 7 October 1999 amending the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank<sup>1</sup>, shall be replaced by the following which shall enter into force on 1 March 2004.

## RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

### PRELIMINARY CHAPTER

#### *Article 1*

#### **Definitions**

These Rules of Procedure shall supplement the Treaty establishing the European Community<sup>i</sup> and the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank. The terms in these Rules of Procedure shall have the same meaning as in the Treaty and the Statute. The term ‘Eurosystème’ shall mean the European Central Bank (ECB) and the national central banks of those Member States whose currency is the euro.

---

\* OJ L 80, 18.3.2004, p. 33. Decision as amended by Decision ECB/2009/5 (OJ L 100, 18.4.2009, p. 10) – unofficial consolidated version.

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 314, 8.12.1999, p. 32.

<sup>i</sup> Now the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

#### *Article 2*

##### **Date and place of Governing Council meetings**

- 2.1 The Governing Council shall decide on the dates of its meetings on a proposal from the President. The Governing Council shall, in principle, meet regularly following a schedule that it shall determine in good time before the start of each calendar year.
- 2.2 The President shall convene a meeting of the Governing Council if a request for a meeting is submitted by at least three members of the Governing Council.
- 2.3 The President may also convene meetings of the Governing Council whenever he/she deems it necessary.
- 2.4 The Governing Council shall normally hold its meetings on the premises of the ECB.
- 2.5 Meetings may also be held by means of teleconferencing, unless at least three Governors object.

#### *Article 3*

##### **Attendance at Governing Council meetings**

- 3.1 Except as provided herein, attendance at meetings of the Governing Council shall be restricted to its members, the President of the Council of the European Union and a member of the Commission of the European Communities<sup>ii</sup>.
- 3.2 Each Governor may normally be accompanied by one person.
- 3.3 If a Governor is unable to attend, he/she may appoint, in writing, an alternate without prejudice to Article 4. This written communication shall be sent to the President in due time before the meeting. Such an alternate may normally be accompanied by one person.
- 3.4 The President shall appoint a member of staff of the ECB as Secretary. The Secretary shall assist the Executive Board in preparing the meetings of the Governing Council and shall draft the minutes thereof.
- 3.5 The Governing Council may also invite other persons to attend its meetings if it deems it appropriate to do so.

---

<sup>ii</sup> Now the European Commission.

*Article 3a<sup>iii</sup>*

**Rotation system**

1. Governors shall be allocated to groups as set out in the first and second indents of Article 10.2 of the Statute.
2. Governors shall be ordered in each group, following EU convention, in accordance with a list of their national central banks which follows the alphabetical order of the names of the Member States in the national languages. The rotation of voting rights within each group shall follow this order. The rotation shall start at a random point in the list.
3. The voting rights within each group shall rotate every month, starting on the first day of the first month of the implementation of the rotation system.
4. For the first group, the number of voting rights that rotate in each one month period shall be one; for the second and third groups, the number of voting rights that rotate in each one month period shall be equal to the difference between the number of governors allocated to the group and the number of voting rights assigned to it, minus two.
5. Whenever the composition of the groups is adjusted in accordance with the fifth indent of Article 10.2 of the Statute, the rotation of voting rights within each group shall continue to follow the list referred to in paragraph 2. From the date on which the number of governors reaches 22, the rotation within the third group shall start at a random point in the list. The Governing Council may decide to change the order of rotation for the second and third groups to avoid the situation that certain governors are always without a voting right at the same periods of the year.
6. The ECB shall publish in advance a list of the members of the Governing Council with a voting right on the ECB's website.
7. The share of each national central bank's Member State in the total aggregated balance sheet of the monetary financial institutions shall be calculated on the basis of the annual average of monthly average data over the most recent calendar year for which data are available. Whenever the aggregate gross domestic product at market prices is adjusted in accordance with Article 29.3 of the Statute or whenever a country becomes a Member State and its national central bank becomes part of the European System of Central Banks, the total aggregated balance sheet of the monetary financial institutions of the Member States which have adopted the euro shall be recalculated on the basis of the data relating to the most recent calendar year for which data are available.

---

iii Inserted by Decision ECB/2009/5.



## Article 4

### Voting

4.1 In order for the Governing Council to vote, there shall be a quorum of two-thirds of the members with a voting right<sup>iv</sup>. If the quorum is not met, the President may convene an extraordinary meeting at which decisions may be taken without regard to the quorum.

4.2 The Governing Council shall proceed to vote at the request of the President. The President shall also initiate a voting procedure upon request from any member of the Governing Council.

4.3 Abstentions shall not prevent the adoption by the Governing Council of decisions under Article 41.2<sup>v</sup> of the Statute.

4.4 If a member of the Governing Council is prevented from voting for a prolonged period (i.e. more than one month), he/she may appoint an alternate as a member of the Governing Council.

4.5 In accordance with Article 10.3 of the Statute, if a Governor is unable to vote on a decision to be taken under Articles 28, 29, 30, 32, 33 and 51<sup>vi</sup> of the Statute, his/her appointed alternate may cast his/her weighted vote.

4.6 The President may initiate a secret ballot if requested to do so by at least three members of the Governing Council. If members of the Governing Council are personally affected by a proposal for a decision under Articles 11.1, 11.3 or 11.4 of the Statute, a secret ballot shall be held. In such cases the members of the Governing Council concerned shall not participate in the vote.

4.7 Decisions may also be taken by written procedure, unless at least three members of the Governing Council object. A written procedure shall require: (i) normally not less than five working days for consideration by every member of the Governing Council; and (ii) the personal signature of each member of the Governing Council (or his/her alternate in accordance with Article 4.4); and (iii) a record of any such decision in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the Governing Council. Decisions to be taken by written procedure shall be approved by the members of the Governing Council with a voting right at the time of approval<sup>vii</sup>.

---

iv Amended by Decision ECB/2009/5.

v Now Article 40.2 of the Statute.

vi Article 51 is now repealed.

vii Sentence amended by Decision ECB/2009/5.

## *Article 5*

### **Organisation of Governing Council meetings**

5.1 The Governing Council shall adopt the agenda for each meeting. A provisional agenda shall be drawn up by the Executive Board and shall be sent, together with the related documents, to the members of the Governing Council and other authorised participants at least eight days before the relevant meeting, except in emergencies, in which case the Executive Board shall act appropriately having regard to the circumstances. The Governing Council may decide to remove items from or add items to the provisional agenda on a proposal from the President or from any other member of the Governing Council. An item shall be removed from the agenda at the request of at least three of the members of the Governing Council with a voting right if the related documents were not submitted to the members of the Governing Council in due time<sup>viii</sup>.

5.2 The minutes of the proceedings of the Governing Council shall be approved at the subsequent meeting (or if necessary earlier by written procedure) by the members of the Governing Council who had a voting right at the meeting to which the minutes refer and shall be signed by the President<sup>ix</sup>.

5.3 The Governing Council may lay down internal rules on decision-making in emergency situations.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

## *Article 6*

### **Date and place of Executive Board meetings**

6.1 The date of the meetings shall be decided by the Executive Board on a proposal from the President.

6.2 The President may also convene meetings of the Executive Board whenever he/she deems it necessary.

## *Article 7*

### **Voting**

7.1 In order for the Executive Board to vote, in accordance with Article 11.5 of the Statute, there shall be a quorum of two-thirds of the members. If the quorum is not met, the President may convene an extraordinary meeting at which decisions may be taken without regard to the quorum.

---

viii Sentence amended by Decision ECB/2009/5.

ix Amended by Decision ECB/2009/5.

7.2 Decisions may also be taken by written procedure, unless at least two members of the Executive Board object.

7.3 Members of the Executive Board personally affected by a prospective decision under Articles 11.1, 11.3 or 11.4 of the Statute shall not participate in the vote.

#### *Article 8*

### **Organisation of Executive Board meetings**

The Executive Board shall decide on the organisation of its meetings.

## **CHAPTER III**

# **THE ORGANISATION OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK**

#### *Article 9*

### **Eurosystem/ESCB committees**

9.1 The Governing Council shall establish and dissolve committees. They shall assist in the work of the decision-making bodies of the ECB and shall report to the Governing Council via the Executive Board.

9.2 Committees shall be composed of up to two members from each of the Eurosystem NCBs and the ECB, appointed by each Governor and the Executive Board respectively. The Governing Council shall lay down the mandates of the committees and appoint their chairpersons. As a rule, the chairperson shall be a staff member from the ECB. Both the Governing Council and the Executive Board shall have the right to request studies of specific topics by committees. The ECB shall provide secretarial assistance to the committees.

9.3 The national central bank of each non-participating Member State may also appoint up to two staff members to take part in the meetings of a committee whenever it deals with matters falling within the field of competence of the General Council and whenever the chairperson of a committee and the Executive Board deems this appropriate.

9.4 Representatives of other Community<sup>x</sup> institutions and bodies and any other third party may also be invited to take part in the meetings of a committee whenever the chairperson of a committee and the Executive Board deems this appropriate.

---

<sup>x</sup> Now 'Union'.

#### *Article 9a*

The Governing Council may decide to establish ad hoc committees in charge of specific advisory tasks.

#### *Article 10*

##### **Internal structure**

10.1 Having consulted the Governing Council, the Executive Board shall decide upon the number, name and respective competence of each of the work units of the ECB. This decision shall be made public.

10.2 All work units of the ECB shall be placed under the managing direction of the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall decide upon the individual responsibilities of its members with respect to the work units of the ECB, and shall inform the Governing Council, the General Council and the staff of the ECB thereof. Any such decision shall be taken only in the presence of all the members of the Executive Board, and may not be taken against the vote of the President.

#### *Article 11*

##### **Staff of the ECB**

11.1 Each member of the staff of the ECB shall be informed of his/her position within the structure of the ECB, his/her reporting line and his/her professional responsibilities.

11.2 Without prejudice to Articles 36 and 47<sup>xi</sup> of the Statute, the Executive Board shall enact organisational rules (hereinafter referred to as Administrative Circulars) which are binding on the staff of the ECB.

11.3 The Executive Board shall adopt and up-date a Code of Conduct for the guidance of its members and of the members of staff of the ECB.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **INVOLVEMENT OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL IN THE TASKS OF THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF CENTRAL BANKS**

#### *Article 12*

##### **Relationship between the Governing Council and the General Council**

12.1 The General Council of the ECB shall be given the opportunity to submit observations before the Governing Council adopts:

- opinions under Articles 4 and 25.1 of the Statute,

---

xi Now Article 46 of the Statute.

- recommendations in the statistical field, under Article 42<sup>xii</sup> of the Statute,
- the annual report,
- the rules on the standardisation of accounting rules and reporting of operations,
- the measures for the application of Article 29 of the Statute,
- the conditions of employment of the staff of the ECB,
- in the context of the preparations for the irrevocable fixing of exchange rates, an ECB opinion either under Article 123(5) of the Treaty<sup>xiii</sup> or concerning Community<sup>xiv</sup> legal acts to be adopted when a derogation is abrogated.

12.2 Whenever the General Council is requested to submit observations under the first paragraph of this Article, it shall be given a reasonable period of time within which to do so, which may not be less than ten working days. In a case of urgency to be justified in the request, the period may be reduced to five working days. The President may decide to use the written procedure.

12.3 The President shall inform the General Council, in accordance with Article 47.4<sup>xv</sup> of the Statute, of decisions adopted by the Governing Council.

### *Article 13*

#### **Relationship between the Executive Board and the General Council**

13.1 The General Council of the ECB shall be given the opportunity to submit observations before the Executive Board:

- implements legal acts of the Governing Council for which, in accordance with Article 12.1 above, the contribution of the General Council is required;
- adopts, by virtue of powers delegated by the Governing Council in accordance with Article 12.1 of the Statute, legal acts for which, in accordance with Article 12.1 of these Rules, the contribution of the General Council is required.

13.2 Whenever the General Council is requested to submit observations under the first paragraph of this Article, it shall be given a reasonable period of time within which to do so, which may not be less than ten working days. In a case of urgency to be justified in the request, the period may be reduced to five working days. The President may decide to use written procedure.

---

xii Now Article 41 of the Statute.

xiii Now Article 140(3) of the TFEU.

xiv Now 'Union'.

xv Now Article 46.4 of the Statute.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SPECIFIC PROCEDURAL PROVISIONS**

#### *Article 14*

##### **Delegation of powers**

14.1 The delegation of powers of the Governing Council to the Executive Board under the last sentence of the second paragraph of Article 12.1 of the Statute shall be notified to the parties concerned, or published if appropriate, where decisions taken by means of delegation have legal effects on third parties. The Governing Council shall be promptly informed of any act adopted by way of delegation.

14.2 The Book of Authorised Signatories of the ECB, established pursuant to decisions adopted under Article 39<sup>xvi</sup> of the Statute, shall be circulated to interested parties.

#### *Article 15*

##### **Budgetary procedure**

15.1 The Governing Council, acting upon a proposal from the Executive Board in accordance with any principles laid down by the former, shall adopt, before the end of each financial year, the budget of the ECB for the subsequent financial year.

15.2 For assistance in matters related to the budget of the ECB, the Governing Council shall establish a Budget Committee and lay down its mandate and composition.

#### *Article 16*

##### **Reporting and annual accounts**

16.1 The Governing Council shall adopt the annual report required under Article 15.3 of the Statute.

16.2 The competence to adopt and publish the quarterly reports under Article 15.1 of the Statute, the weekly consolidated financial statements under Article 15.2 of the Statute, the consolidated balance sheets under Article 26.3 of the Statute and other reports shall be delegated to the Executive Board.

16.3 The Executive Board shall, in accordance with the principles established by the Governing Council, prepare the annual accounts of the ECB within the first month of the subsequent financial year. These shall be submitted to the external auditor.

16.4 The Governing Council shall adopt the annual accounts of the ECB within the first quarter of the subsequent year. The external auditor's report shall be submitted to the Governing Council before their adoption.

---

<sup>xvi</sup> Now Article 38 of the Statute.

## *Article 17*

### **Legal instruments of the ECB**

17.1 ECB Regulations shall be adopted by the Governing Council and signed on its behalf by the President.

17.2 ECB Guidelines shall be adopted by the Governing Council, and thereafter notified, in one of the official languages of the European Communities<sup>xvii</sup>, and signed on the Governing Council's behalf by the President. They shall state the reasons on which they are based. Notification of the national central banks may take place by means of telefax, electronic mail or telex or in paper form. Any ECB Guideline that is to be officially published shall be translated into the official languages of the European Communities<sup>xviii</sup>.

17.3 The Governing Council may delegate its normative powers to the Executive Board for the purpose of implementing its regulations and guidelines. The regulation or guideline concerned shall specify the issues to be implemented as well as the limits and scope of the delegated powers.

17.4 ECB Decisions and Recommendations shall be adopted by the Governing Council or the Executive Board in their respective domain of competence, and shall be signed by the President. ECB Decisions imposing sanctions on third parties shall be signed by the President, the Vice-President or any two other members of the Executive Board. ECB Decisions and Recommendations shall state the reasons on which they are based. The Recommendations for secondary Community<sup>xix</sup> legislation under Article 42<sup>xx</sup> of the Statute shall be adopted by the Governing Council.

17.5 Without prejudice to the second paragraph of Article 44<sup>xxi</sup> and the first indent of Article 47.1<sup>xxii</sup> of the Statute, ECB Opinions shall be adopted by the Governing Council. However, in exceptional circumstances and unless not less than three Governors state their wish to retain the competence of the Governing Council for the adoption of specific opinions, ECB Opinions may be adopted by the Executive Board, in line with comments provided by the Governing Council and taking into account the contribution of the General Council. ECB Opinions shall be signed by the President.

17.6 ECB Instructions shall be adopted by the Executive Board, and thereafter notified, in one of the official languages of the European Communities<sup>xxiii</sup>, and signed on the Executive Board's behalf by the President or any two Executive Board members. Notification of the national central banks may take place by means of telefax, electronic mail or telex or in

---

xvii Now 'Union'.

xviii Now 'Union'.

xix Now 'Union'.

xx Now Article 41 of the Statute.

xxi Now Article 43 of the Statute.

xxii Now Article 46.1 of the Statute.

xxiii Now 'Union'.

paper form. Any ECB Instruction that is to be officially published shall be translated into the official languages of the European Communities<sup>xxiv</sup>.

17.7 All ECB legal instruments shall be numbered sequentially for ease of identification. The Executive Board shall take steps to ensure the safe custody of the originals, the notification of the addressees or consulting authorities, and the publication in all the official languages of the Union in the *Official Journal of the European Union* in the case of ECB Regulations, ECB Opinions on draft Community<sup>xxv</sup> legislation and those ECB legal instruments whose publication has been expressly decided.

17.8 The principles of Council Regulation (EC) No 1 determining the language to be used by the European Economic Community<sup>2</sup> of 15 April 1958 shall apply to the legal acts specified in Article 34 of the Statute.

### *Article 18*

#### **Procedure under Article 106(2)<sup>xxvi</sup> of the Treaty**

The approval provided for in Article 106(2)<sup>xxvii</sup> of the Treaty shall be adopted for the following year by the Governing Council in a single decision for all participating Member States within the final quarter of every year.

### *Article 19*

#### **Procurement**

19.1 Procurement of goods and services for the ECB shall give due regard to the principles of publicity, transparency, equal access, non-discrimination and efficient administration.

19.2 Except for the principle of efficient administration, derogations may be made from the above principles in cases of urgency; for reasons of security or secrecy; where there is a sole supplier; for supplies from the national central banks to the ECB; to ensure the continuity of a supplier.

### *Article 20*

#### **Selection, appointment and promotion of staff**

20.1 All members of staff of the ECB shall be selected, appointed and promoted by the Executive Board.

---

xxiv Now 'Union'.

xxv Now 'Union'.

2 OJ 17, 6.10.1958, p. 385.

xxvi Now Article 128(2) of the TFEU.

xxvii Now Article 128(2) of the TFEU.



20.2 All members of staff of the ECB shall be selected, appointed and promoted with due regard to the principles of professional qualification, publicity, transparency, equal access and non-discrimination. The rules and procedures for recruitment and for internal promotion shall be further specified by means of Administrative Circulars.

## *Article 21*

### **Conditions of employment**

21.1 The Conditions of Employment and the Staff Rules shall determine the employment relationship between the ECB and its staff.

21.2 The Governing Council, upon a proposal from the Executive Board and following consultation of the General Council shall adopt the Conditions of Employment.

21.3 The Executive Board shall adopt the Staff Rules, that shall implement the Conditions of Employment.

21.4 The Staff Committee shall be consulted before the adoption of new Conditions of Employment or Staff Rules. Its opinion shall be submitted to the Governing Council or the Executive Board respectively.

## *Article 22*

### **Communications and announcements**

General communications and announcements of decisions taken by the decision-making bodies of the ECB may be published on the ECB website, in the *Official Journal of the European Union*, or by means of wire services common to financial markets or any other media.

## *Article 23*

### **Confidentiality of and access to ECB documents**

23.1 The proceedings of the decision-making bodies of the ECB and of any committee or group established by them shall be confidential unless the Governing Council authorises the President to make the outcome of their deliberations public.

23.2 Public access to documents drawn up or held by the ECB shall be governed by a decision of the Governing Council.

23.3 Documents drawn up by the ECB shall be classified and handled in accordance with the rules laid down in an Administrative Circular. They shall be freely accessible after a period of 30 years unless decided otherwise by the decision making bodies.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **FINAL PROVISION**

#### *Article 24*

#### **Amendments to these Rules of Procedure**

The Governing Council may amend these Rules of Procedure. The General Council may propose amendments and the Executive Board may adopt supplementary rules within its field of competence.

Done at Frankfurt am Main on 19 February 2004.

*The President of the ECB*

Jean-Claude TRICHET



**DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK**  
**OF 12 OCTOBER 1999**  
**CONCERNING THE RULES OF PROCEDURE**  
**OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK**  
**(ECB/1999/7) \***

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK,

Having regard to the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank and in particular to Articles 8 and 24 thereof;

Whereas, with a view to ensuring that ECB Decisions can be adopted by the Executive Board at any time, it is necessary to establish a regime for the adoption of Decisions by means of teleconferencing and a regime for the delegation of powers, both of which preserve the principle of the collective responsibility of the Executive Board;

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

**Supplementary nature**

This Decision shall supplement the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank. The terms in this Decision shall have the meaning which they have in the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank.

*Article 2*

**Attendance at executive board meetings**

1. The President shall appoint a member of the staff of the European Central Bank (ECB) as Secretary. The Secretary shall be responsible for organising and drafting the summary proceedings of all Executive Board meetings.
2. In the absence of both the President and the Vice-President, the Executive Board will be chaired by the most senior member of the Executive Board in terms of office in the first instance, and by age in the event of two or more members having equal standing in terms of office.
3. The Executive Board may invite members of the staff of the ECB to attend its meetings.

---

\* OJ L 314, 8.12.1999, p. 34.

### *Article 3*

#### **Agenda and proceedings**

1. The agenda for each meeting shall be adopted by the Executive Board. A provisional agenda shall be drawn up by the President and shall, in principle, be sent, together with the related documents, to the members of the Executive Board at least two working days before the relevant meeting, except in emergencies, in which case the President shall act appropriately in view of the circumstances.
2. The summary proceedings of Executive Board meetings shall be submitted to the members of the Executive Board for approval at their next meeting (or earlier, if necessary, by written procedure) and shall be signed by the chairman.

### *Article 4*

#### **Teleconference**

1. At the request of the President, decisions may be taken by the Executive Board by means of teleconferencing, unless at least two members of the Executive Board object. Special circumstances shall be required for a decision to be taken by means of teleconferencing. The President shall determine the nature of these circumstances and the members of the Executive Board may require prior notice both of the teleconference and of the issue on which a decision is to be taken.
2. The decision reached by the President on the special circumstances and the decisions taken by the Executive Board by means of teleconferencing shall be recorded in the summary proceedings of the Executive Board meetings.

### *Article 5*

#### **Delegation of power**

1. The Executive Board may authorise one or more of its members to take, on its behalf and under its responsibility, clearly defined management or administrative measures, including the use of instruments in preparation for a decision to be taken collectively by the members of the Executive Board at a later point in time and instruments implementing final decisions taken by the Executive Board.
2. The Executive Board may also ask one or more of its members, with the agreement of the President, to adopt (i) the definitive text of any instrument as defined in Article 5(1), on condition that the substance of such instrument has already been determined in discussion, and/or (ii) final decisions, where such delegation involves limited and clearly defined executive powers, the exercise of which is subject to strict review in the light of objective criteria established by the Executive Board.
3. The delegations and decisions adopted in accordance with Article 5(1) and (2), shall be recorded in the summary proceedings of the Executive Board meetings.

4. Powers conferred in this manner may be sub-delegated only as and when there is a specific provision to this end in the enabling decision.

*Article 6*

**Publication**

This Decision shall be published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*<sup>i</sup>.

Done at Frankfurt am Main on 12 October 1999.

*The President of the ECB*

Willem F. Duisenberg

---

i Now the *Official Journal of the European Union*.



# **DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK**

**OF 17 JUNE 2004**

## **ADOPTING THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK (ECB/2004/12)\***

THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK,

Having regard to the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank, and in particular to Article 46.4<sup>i</sup> thereof,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

### *Sole Article*

The Rules of Procedure of the General Council of the European Central Bank of 1 September 1998 shall be replaced by the following, which shall enter into force on 1 July 2004.

## **RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK**

### **PRELIMINARY CHAPTER**

#### *Article 1*

#### **Definitions**

These Rules of Procedure shall supplement the Treaty establishing the European Community<sup>ii</sup> and the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank. The terms in these Rules of Procedure shall have the same meaning as in the Treaty and the Statute.

---

\* OJ L 230, 30.6.2004, p. 61.

i Now Article 45.4 of the Statute.

ii Now the TFEU.



## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

#### *Article 2*

##### **Date and place of General Council meetings**

1. The General Council shall decide on the dates of its meetings on a proposal from the President.
2. The President shall convene a meeting of the General Council if a request for a meeting is submitted by at least three members of the General Council.
3. The President may also convene meetings of the General Council whenever he/she deems it necessary.
4. The General Council shall normally hold its meetings on the premises of the European Central Bank (ECB).
5. Meetings may also be held by means of teleconferencing unless at least three Governors object.

#### *Article 3*

##### **Attendance at General Council meetings**

1. Except as provided herein, attendance at meetings of the General Council shall be restricted to its members, the other members of the Executive Board, the President of the Council of the European Union and a member of the Commission of the European Communities<sup>iii</sup>.
2. Each Governor may normally be accompanied by one person.
3. If a member of the General Council is unable to attend a meeting, he/she may appoint, in writing, an alternate to attend the meeting and vote on his/her behalf. This written communication shall be sent to the President in due time before the meeting. Such an alternate may normally be accompanied by one person.
4. The President shall appoint a member of staff of the ECB as Secretary. The Secretary shall assist the President in preparing the meetings of the General Council and shall draft the minutes thereof.
5. The General Council may also invite other persons to attend its meetings, if it deems it appropriate to do so.

---

<sup>iii</sup> Now the European Commission.

## *Article 4*

### **Voting**

1. In order for the General Council to vote, there shall be a quorum of two-thirds of the members or their alternates. If the quorum is not met, the President may convene an extraordinary meeting at which decisions may be taken without regard to the quorum.
2. Unless stated otherwise in the Statute, decisions shall be taken by simple majority.
3. The General Council shall proceed to vote at the request of the President. The President shall also initiate a voting procedure upon request from any member of the General Council.
4. Decisions may also be taken by written procedure, unless at least three members of the General Council object. A written procedure shall require:
  - (i) normally not less than ten working days for consideration by every member of the General Council. In a case of urgency to be justified in the request, the period may be reduced to five working days; and
  - (ii) the personal signature of each member of the General Council; and
  - (iii) a record of any such decision in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the General Council.

## *Article 5*

### **Organisation of General Council meetings**

1. The General Council shall adopt the agenda for each meeting. A provisional agenda shall be drawn up by the President and shall be sent, together with the related documents to the members of the General Council and other authorised participants at least eight days before the meeting, except in emergencies, in which case the President shall act appropriately having regard to the circumstances. The General Council may decide to remove items from or add items to the provisional agenda on a proposal from the President or from any other member of the General Council. An item shall be removed from the agenda at the request of at least three of the members of the General Council if the related documents were not submitted to the members of the General Council in due time.
2. The minutes of the proceedings of the General Council shall be submitted to its members for approval at the subsequent meeting (or where necessary earlier by written procedure) and shall be signed by the President.

## CHAPTER II

### INVOLVEMENT OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL IN THE TASKS OF THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF CENTRAL BANKS

#### *Article 6*

##### **Relationship between the General Council and the Governing Council**

1. Without prejudice to the General Council's other responsibilities, including those under Article 44<sup>iv</sup> of the Statute, the General Council shall contribute, in particular, to the tasks listed in Article 6.2 to 6.8.
2. The General Council shall contribute to the ECB's advisory tasks under Article 4 and Article 25.1 of the Statute.
3. The contribution of the General Council to the ECB's statistical tasks shall consist in:
  - strengthening the cooperation between all the national central banks of the European Union with a view to supporting the ECB's tasks in the field of statistics,
  - contributing to the harmonisation, where necessary, of the rules and practices governing the collection, compilation and distribution of statistics by all the national central banks of the European Union, and
  - providing the Governing Council with observations on draft recommendations in the statistical field, under Article 42<sup>v</sup> of the Statute, prior to their adoption.
4. The General Council shall contribute to fulfilling the ECB's reporting commitments under Article 15 of the Statute by providing the Governing Council with observations on the annual report prior to its adoption.
5. The General Council shall contribute to the standardisation of accounting rules and reporting of operations under Article 26.4 of the Statute by providing the Governing Council with observations on the draft rules prior to their adoption.
6. The General Council shall contribute to the adoption of other measures in the context of Article 29.4 of the Statute by providing the Governing Council with observations on such draft measures prior to their adoption.
7. The General Council shall contribute to the Conditions of Employment for the staff of the European Central Bank by providing the Governing Council with observations on the draft prior to its adoption.

---

iv Now Article 43 of the Statute.

v Now Article 41 of the Statute.

8. The General Council shall contribute to the preparations for the irrevocable fixing of exchange rates under Article 47.3<sup>vi</sup> of the Statute by providing the Governing Council with observations on:

- draft ECB opinions under Article 123(5)<sup>vii</sup> of the Treaty, and
- on any other draft ECB opinions concerning Union legal acts to be adopted when a derogation is abrogated, and
- on decisions under paragraph 10 of the Protocol on certain provisions relating to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland<sup>viii</sup>.

9. Whenever the General Council is requested to contribute to the tasks of the ECB under the above paragraphs, it shall be given a reasonable period of time within which to do so, which may not be less than 10 working days. In a case of urgency to be justified in the request, the period may be reduced to five working days. The President may decide to use the written procedure.

10. The President shall inform the General Council, in accordance with Article 47.4<sup>ix</sup> of the Statute, of decisions adopted by the Governing Council.

### *Article 7*

#### **Relationship between the General Council and the Executive Board**

1. The General Council of the ECB shall be given the opportunity to submit observations before the Executive Board:

- implements legal acts of the Governing Council for which, in accordance with Article 12.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank, the contribution of the General Council is required,
- adopts, by virtue of powers delegated by the Governing Council in accordance with Article 12.1 of the Statute, legal acts for which, in accordance with Article 12.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank, the contribution of the General Council is required.

2. Whenever the General Council is requested to submit observations under the first paragraph of this Article, it shall be given a reasonable period of time within which to do so, which may not be less than ten working days. In a case of urgency to be justified in the request, the period may be reduced to five working days. The President may decide to use written procedure.

---

vi Now Article 46.3 of the Statute.

vii Now Article 140(3) of the TFEU.

viii Now Protocol No 15 to the Treaties.

ix Now Article 46.4 of the Statute.

## *Article 8*

### **European System of Central Banks Committees**

1. Within its field of competence the General Council may request studies of specific topics by committees established by the Governing Council under Article 9 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank.
2. The national central bank of each non-participating Member State may appoint up to two staff members to take part in the meetings of a committee whenever it deals with matters falling within the field of competence of the General Council and whenever the chairperson of a committee and the Executive Board deem this appropriate.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **SPECIFIC PROCEDURAL PROVISIONS**

## *Article 9*

### **Legal instruments**

1. ECB Decisions under Article 46.4<sup>x</sup> and Article 48<sup>xi</sup> of the Statute and under these Rules of Procedure, as well as ECB Recommendations and ECB Opinions adopted by the General Council under Article 44<sup>xii</sup> of the Statute, shall be signed by the President.
2. All ECB legal instruments are numbered, notified and published in accordance with Article 17.7 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank.

## *Article 10*

### **Confidentiality of and access to the ECB's documents**

1. The proceedings of the General Council, and of any committee or group dealing with matters falling within its competence, shall be confidential unless the General Council authorises the President to make the outcome of their deliberations public.
2. Public access to documents drawn up by the General Council, and by any committee or group dealing with matters falling within its competence, shall be governed by a Governing Council decision adopted under Article 23.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank.
3. Documents drawn up by the General Council, and by any committee or group dealing with matters falling within its competence, shall be classified and handled in accordance with

---

x Now Article 45.4 of the Statute.

xi Now Article 47 of the Statute.

xii Now Article 43 of the Statute.

the rules laid down in the Administrative Circular adopted under Article 23.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Central Bank. They shall be freely accessible after a period of 30 years unless decided otherwise by the decision-making bodies.

#### *Article 11*

#### **End of applicability**

When, in accordance with Article 122(2)<sup>xiii</sup> of the Treaty, all derogations are abrogated by the Council of the European Union and when the decisions provided for in the Protocol on certain provisions relating to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are taken, the General Council shall be dissolved and these Rules of Procedure shall no longer apply.

Done at Frankfurt am Main, 17 June 2004.

*The President of the ECB*

Jean-Claude TRICHET

---

xiii Now the first subparagraph of Article 140(2) of the TFEU. The first sentence of Article 122(2) was repealed.

ISSN 1830-0405



9 771830 040009