



AS/RuI (2026) 06

26 January 2026

Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities

Challenge on procedural grounds of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Austria

Report¹

prepared by the Chairperson of the Committee

A. Opinion to the President of the Parliamentary Assembly²

1. On 26 January 2026, at the opening of the Parliamentary Assembly session, the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Austria were challenged on procedural grounds, relating to the gender composition of the delegation.

2. At its meeting on 26 January 2025, the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities examined the objections raised. It noted that the Austrian delegation is composed of 12 members (6 seats), of which 7 are women and 5 are men. Of the representatives, 4 are women and 2 are men.

3. Rule 6.2.b requires each national delegation to “include both women and men” among its representatives. As long as women are under-represented in the Assembly, Rule 6.2.b, requires delegations with 6 seats (12 members) is to have a “minimum of 4 women, including at least 2 women as representative”. Austria thus clearly meets the criteria of Rule 6.2.b.

4. The Austrian delegation clearly meets the criteria on gender set out in Rule 6.2.b, having both men and women as representatives, having 58.33% of the delegation as women, and having 7 women members on its delegation of which 4 are representatives.

5. It is further noted, as announced by the President of the Assembly, that the Assembly has, for the first year, reached equal representation of women and man amongst its members, given that 49.16% of members of the Assembly, for 2026, are women. For 2026, women are thus not under-represented within the Assembly.

6. The committee considers, in the light of Rule 6 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, that the credentials of the Austrian parliamentary delegation should be ratified and there are no grounds for a challenge to those credentials.

7. The Committee notes that the challenge was purportedly made under Rule 7.1.b on the grounds that the conditions set out in Rule 6.2.b were not met relating to the gender composition of the delegation. However, in the explanation provided when challenging the credentials of the Austrian delegation, Mr Jablonski did not suggest that the criteria of Rule 6.2.b were not met, but rather that the delegation did not meet the conditions that will enter into force in January 2027. The challenge of credentials based on Rule 7.1 of the rules of procedure must relate to the grounds set out in Rule 7.1 and the challenge was therefore not in compliance with the rules of procedure.

¹ Reference to committee: Assembly decision of 26 January 2026

² Adopted by the committee on 26 January 2026

B. Explanatory memorandum

1. Introduction

1. On 26 January 2026, at the opening of the Parliamentary Assembly session, Pawel Jablonski (Poland, ECPA), backed by at least ten other members belonging to five national delegations, challenged the still unratified credentials of the Austrian parliamentary delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly on procedural grounds, under Rule 7.1. of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, on the ground of the gender composition of the national delegation.

2. In accordance with Rule 7.2, the Assembly referred the credentials to the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities for report.

3. In accordance with Rule 10.3 "The members of a national delegation whose credentials are challenged may sit provisionally with the same rights as other Assembly members until the Assembly... has reached a decision". This includes, obviously, the right to stand for election as President. Thus, a challenge to the credentials of the delegation of a Presidential candidate does not affect the vote.

2. The gender composition of the Austrian delegation

2. It noted that the Austrian delegation is composed of 12 members (6 seats), of which 7 are women and 5 are men. Of the representatives, 4 are women and 2 are men. The delegation is composed as follows:

Representatives

Ms Petra BAYR (SPÖ)
Ms Doris BURES (SPÖ)
Ms Andrea EDER-GITSCHTHALER (ÖVP)
Ms Susanne FÜRST (FPÖ)
Mr Martin GRAF (FPÖ)
Mr Johannes SCHMUCKENSCHLAGER (ÖVP)

Substitutes

Ms Claudia ARPA (SPÖ)
Ms Sandra JÄCKEL (FPÖ)
Mr Axel KASSEGGGER (FPÖ)
Mr Andreas MINNICH (ÖVP)
Mr Dominik OBERHOFER (NEOS)
Ms Agnes Sirkka PRAMMER (GRÜNE)

3.. The requirements of Rule 6.2.b

3. Rule 6.2.b requires each national delegation to "include both women and men" among its representatives. Austria clearly meets this requirement as the delegation has both women and men as representatives – having 4 female representatives and 2 male representatives.

4. As long as women are under-represented in the Assembly, rule 6.2.b, additionally requires delegations with 6 seats (12 members) to "include a percentage of women as members that is at least equal to the percentage in its parliament or, if this is more favourable to the representation of women", to ensure a "minimum of 4 women, including at least 2 women as representative".

5. The Austrian national Council has 35.52% women and the Austrian Federal Council has 40% women whereas the Austrian delegation to the Assembly has 58.33% women. Thus, the Austrian delegation to PACE clearly includes "a percentage of women as members that is at least equal to the percentage in its parliament".

6. Further, Austria has 7 women on its delegation, including 4 as representatives, exceeding the minimum requirements for a delegation of 6 seats (12 members). Austria thus clearly meets this requirement of Rule 6.2.b.

4. Procedure

6. According to Rule 7.2, "[i]f the Committee concludes that the credentials should be ratified, it may submit an opinion to the President of the Assembly, who shall read it out in the plenary sitting of the Assembly or the Standing Committee, without debate. If the Committee concludes that the credentials should not be ratified or

that they should be ratified but that some rights of participation or representation should be denied or suspended, the Committee's report shall be placed on the agenda for debate within the prescribed deadlines".

5. Comment on the use of the right to challenge credentials under Rule 6.2.b.

7. In challenging the credentials under Rule 6.2.b, Mr Pawel Jablonski's argument was not entirely clear. He did not argue that the composition of the Austrian delegation did not respect Rule 6.2.b, but instead that it may not respect future rules. Challenging credentials not based on the rules of procedure but rather on spurious grounds of rules not yet in force, does not comply with Rule 7.1 of the rules of procedure where the grounds for challenge must be based on the specific grounds set out in Rule 7.1

6. Conclusions

8. The Austrian delegation clearly meets the criteria on gender set out in Rule 6.2.b, having both men and women as representatives, having 58.33% of the delegation as women, and having 7 women members on its delegation of which 4 are representatives.