

European Delegates Meeting “Orientation Pack”

Temporary Working Document - Updated August 2012



ORIENTATION PACK

DECISION MAKING

When representatives from the different communities in Europe first attend the EDM, they are very often surprised by the way decisions are made there. A consensus system is used in the (great) majority of cases, with qualified majority decisions made only as a last resort. This means that the participants aspire to consensus decision making but, when a large majority of delegates have a clear conscience which is blocked by a small minority, for business to go forward, majority decision making takes place (this is described in a following section).

Qualified majority decision-making is not an option that has been with the EDM for all its life. When the EDM was created, and for many years after, consensus was the method by which we arrived at decisions. Unfortunately, with an increase in number of delegates, and with an increasing workload, it has been necessary to modify this method.

Consensus is still the primary method of decision-making and, with open mindedness and unity in mind, will remain so. This does mean that the length of discussions that take place may seem alien to delegates coming from communities using majority voting as a norm, but this is the best method by which consensus can be reached.

A Different Way of Making Decisions

All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body's decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision-making processes. (7th Concept)

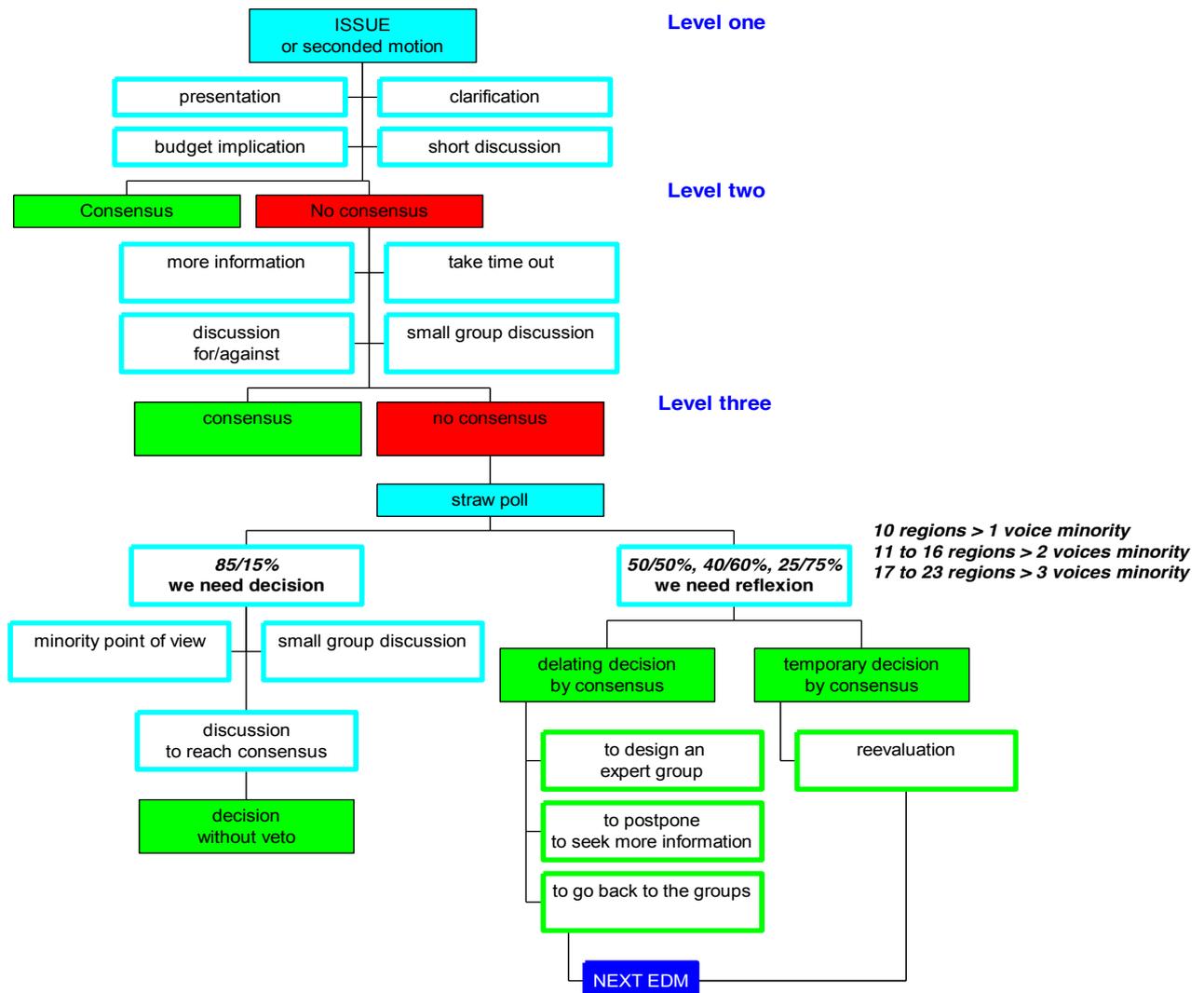
“NA service is a team effort. Our Service representatives are responsible to the NA fellowship as a whole rather than any special constituency; so are all other trusted servants on the team. The full participation of each member is of great value as we seek to express the collective conscience of the whole”. (Twelve Concepts of NA Service, p 16)

NA groups have the final responsibility and authority of NA service structure. NA groups also delegate to the service structure the authority necessary to fulfill the commitments they have instructed to be carried out. Area and Regions delegate to their representatives the responsibility and authority necessary to participate in the conscience- process at EDM meetings

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consensus process (version 2)



We start with an 'issue' be it in the form of a Proposal, Motion or point of interest that gains momentum leading to a decision.

Level 1:

The issue is presented followed by a short discussion including points of clarification and budget implications. At this and many further points, the facilitator, be it the chairperson or vice-chairperson, is expected to gauge whether the body is able to reach consensus and ask that question.

Level 2:

If consensus is not reached, more information can be sought e.g. from delegates, NAWS, etc. And/or we can have further small group discussions, take time out to deliberate on a one to one/ group level, or just have a break.

Level 3:

In the event of the body not reaching consensus, a straw poll of the voting members will then be taken to find out the proportion of delegates for or against the issue/proposal.

The path towards an outcome depends on the proportion of delegates for and against. If this is less than 85% 'for', one of two things can now take place. The chairperson could temporarily implement the proposal for it to be re-evaluated at the next EDM, or the issue could be passed on to an ad-hoc committee to deal with, postponed for more information or taken back to the communities, to be reassessed at the next EDM. If, though, the proportion 'for' is 85% or greater, the minority view will then be heard with the option for more small group discussions. Consensus will then be sought but if the proportion of

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delegates against the proposal is still less than 15%, the chairperson can take the decision to implement the proposal with any strong objections noted.

The procedure does not need to be followed slavishly; more time for reflection and/or discussion in open forum or small groups can be added at any time deemed appropriate. Conversely, as various topics and proposals are discussed over a whole weekend or even several EDMs, reaching a decision may, in the end, be a formality as all discussion may have been exhausted long before the formal decision making process.

It is up to us, the EDM, to try to achieve consensus even though it is not the only method of decision-making. We have the tools in the form of guidelines, steering committee and a higher power to help us reach a satisfactory conclusion.

The only exception to consensus will be on elections to the steering committee and EDM subcommittees, and bids for ECCNA. A simple majority vote will decide these. Only representatives elected from areas and regions can vote.