

Rules for the Open Parliamentary Debate

as amended on 19 July 2023

Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Objective..... | 1 |
| A Debate | 2 |
| A.1 The motion..... | 2 |
| A.1.1 Relevance and practical relevance..... | 2 |
| A.1.2 Actor in the debate..... | 2 |
| A.1.3 Formulation | 3 |
| A.1.4 Additional information | 3 |
| A.2 Participating | 3 |
| A.2.1 Speakers..... | 3 |
| A.2.2 Jury | 4 |
| A.2.3 Addressing | 4 |
| A.2.4 Simulation | 4 |
| A.3 Course of the debate | 5 |
| A.3.1 Order of debate and duration of speeches | 5 |
| A.3.2 Opening speech of the government..... | 6 |
| A.3.3 Opening speech of the opposition | 7 |
| A.3.4 Extension speeches..... | 8 |
| A.3.5 Non-aligned speeches | 8 |
| A.3.6 Closing speeches..... | 9 |
| A.4 Interaction during the debate | 9 |
| A.4.1 Means of interaction..... | 9 |
| A.4.2 Reply speeches | 10 |
| A.4.3 Questions..... | 10 |
| A.4.4 Interjections..... | 11 |
| B Evaluation..... | 13 |
| B.1 Scale and object of the evaluation..... | 13 |
| B.1.1 Aim of the evaluation | 13 |
| B.1.2 Rating according to points | 13 |
| B.1.3 Individual performance..... | 14 |
| B.1.4 Team performance..... | 15 |
| B.1.5 Sanctions | 16 |
| B.2 Evaluation procedure..... | 18 |
| B.2.1 Conduct in the proceedings | 18 |
| B.2.2 Deliberation..... | 18 |
| B.2.3 Determination of results..... | 19 |

| | | |
|--------------|--|----|
| B.2.4 | Announcement of results and justification | 19 |
| C | Competitions..... | 20 |
| C.1 | Competition basics | 20 |
| C.1.1 | Basic concept of a competition | 20 |
| C.1.2 | Peculiarities of the debate process at competitions..... | 20 |
| C.2 | Competition procedure | 21 |
| C.2.1 | Preliminary rounds | 21 |
| C.2.2 | Elimination rounds | 22 |
| C.3 | Competition victory | 22 |
| C.3.1 | Qualification conditions and dealing with failures | 22 |
| C.3.2 | Determination of the competition victory | 23 |

Objective

The Open Parliamentary Debate pursues two goals: On the one hand, it is intended to provide a framework for rhetorical debate on contentious issues. It pursues this goal through a clear set of rules, which are described below. On the other hand, the Open Parliamentary Debate aims to promote debate in society on relevant issues and to spread a democratic culture of debate among the population. It pursues this goal in the careful selection of socially relevant contentious issues as topics of debate as well as argumentation that is as close to reality as possible.

A Debate

A.1 The motion

A.1.1 Relevance and practical relevance

- a) *Relevant issues*: Only contentious issues that are socially relevant are the subject of debate. Socially relevant issues are those that both:
- are significant or should be significant for many people in society as well as:
 - have an impact on parts of society and are intuitively interesting to people outside debating circles.
- b) *Practical questions*: Practical questions (so-called "proposal motions") are questions about what should be done or not done. They make the topic clear, concrete and tangible - the debate is about consequences in political or social action. Technical, empirical or theoretical questions, on the other hand, leave it completely open what follows from the answer. They are not directly action-oriented and thus less relevant for the population than topics where a decision would also have concrete consequences. Social questions can almost always be concretised by means of an example case with consequences ("Do we need more freedom than security?" is not suitable as the motion of a debate, "Do we need data retention?" on the other hand is).
- c) *Exceptions for relevance and practicality*: In principle, it is desirable to ask practical and/or relevant questions. However, it is also possible to raise a non-practical or less relevant contentious issue. In cases of non-practical contentious issues (so-called "principle motions"), the government should be explicitly exempted from proposing any measures. Such issues are particularly useful if framing them as a proposal motion would significantly distort the issue or render it incomprehensible ("Should sexualised performances be celebrated as a triumph of feminism?"). Regardless of the motion requirement or the complexity of a topic, it is the government's responsibility to explain whatever is necessary to inform the debate.

A.1.2 Actor in the debate

- a) *Actor without specification*: Motions without a named actor or location are based on the most obvious possible variant, i.e. the country the debate is held in and its institutions as the location and actor in the first instance, or the next supranational body (e.g. EU or UN) in the case of larger dimensions. In general, it makes sense to define all relevant aspects in the wording of the motion in debates with international participants.

- b) *Actor with specification*: The situation is different, of course, for motions that are to be examined from the perspective of a person or institution. In these cases, the perspective is defined by the motion setter before the issue is raised (e.g. "We are Edward Snowden. Should we try to get to Germany to be able to apply for asylum there?"). Here, too, no role is to be taken in the speech; the argumentation is to be prioritised according to what could plausibly be the interests of this person or institution.

A.1.3 Formulation

- a) *Binary decision questions*: Because a debate (as opposed to discussion) aims not only at clarification but at decision, the question must demand a clear statement, "yes" or "no", *tertium non datur*. (Example: "Should the police monitor inner-city hotspots by video?").
- b) *Unambiguity*: The question should be formulated unambiguously.

A.1.4 Additional information

- a) *Field of application*: Motions that are beyond the general knowledge of most participants in terms of content can also be debated, by providing the minimum factual information necessary to understand a submitted question at the time of announcement. In doing so, excessive inequalities between students from different disciplines and regions can be reduced. Information should be provided for such topics and only for such topics.
- b) *Scope and nature*: This information is only intended to guarantee a minimum level of background and knowledge of the status quo.

Example:

Question: "Should the baby box be fully legalised in Germany?"

Brief information: "The baby box is a possibility to give babies delivered at home into the care of a social institution (private associations, church or state organisations), bypassing all formalities. Within a certain period of time (8-10 weeks) the parents have the possibility to take their child back."

A.2 Participating

A.2.1 Speakers

- a) *Debate participants*: Participants in the debate are three fixed speakers (opening, extending and closing) on each side of the government and opposition (pro and con) - the factions – as well as, usually, non-aligned speakers.
- b) *The role of the non-aligned speakers*: Non-aligned speakers act as a representation of the public and are, as part of the audience, the addressees of the persuasion.

- c) *Team affiliation*: The government and opposition factions act as teams. The non-aligned speakers, on the other hand, act as individuals.

A.2.2 Jury

- a) *Composition and purpose of the jury*: A president and at least one adjudicator continue to be part of the debate. Presidents are responsible for presiding over the debate, and adjudicators are responsible for evaluating the debate on behalf of the audience.
- b) *Role of presidents*: Presidents lead the debate in a neutral manner. In particular, they monitor compliance with the rules, decide on their interpretation in cases of doubt and take all necessary measures to enforce them. In addition to a clock, they are equipped with a bell and a gavel or such utensils with which they can give comparable acoustic (ringing of the bell/gavel strike) and optical (raising of gavel and bell, flipping of the bell) signals. Presidents stop rule violations by ringing the bell; when debaters leave their role in the debate, they ring the bell and give an admonition.
- c) *Debates without a designated president*: If there are no dedicated presidents available to preside over the debate, a member of the jury will take over the presidency. No debate without a president! If possible, presidents should not be part of the jury, but only support them (e.g. by taking over the statistics of the questions).
- d) *Composition and task of the adjudicators*: The adjudicators consist of one main adjudicator and any number of additional adjudicators. Together they judge the debate on behalf of the audience. Main adjudicators lead the internal discussion (deliberation) on the evaluation of the performances.

A.2.3 Addressing

- a) *Addressee*: The addressee of the persuasion is the audience.
- b) *Composition of the audience*: Every person present is part of the audience. Adjudicators, however, are only present as persons and not in the role of adjudicators, so they are addressed as normal audience. Presidents officially preside over the debate and may be addressed as such.
- c) *Public character of the debate*: The address of the debate participants to each other and to the audience should not slip into the private sphere, even with personal references. The character of the debate is public.

A.2.4 Simulation

- a) *Taking positions*: A debate is a simulation. The speakers of the factions primarily advocate for their positions. Agreement of personal opinion with the answer to the motion is not necessary in the OPD format.

- b) *Not taking simulated roles*: Debaters argue for the conclusiveness of their position, not on the basis of a simulated role. Example: The motion is "Should ESA launch a manned mission to Mars?". CORRECTLY argued would be: "A manned Mars mission by ESA is generally important because..." FALSELY argued would be: "We are the ESA. We believe a manned Mars mission is important." or "We are the ESA. We think a manned Mars mission is important to us." Neither faction is responsible for, or generally takes the role of, the achievements or failures of any real government or opposition.

A.3 Course of the debate

A.3.1 Order of debate and duration of speeches

- a) *Preparation time*: As a rule, a preparation time precedes the debate.
- b) *Opening of the debate*: Presidents open the debate and state the motion to the audience and the non-aligned speakers. They determine the order of the debaters before the start of the speeches.
- c) *Order of speeches*: The debaters will give speeches on the motion one after the other. The order is as follows: Opening speech by the government, opening speech by the opposition, extension speech by the government, extension speech by the opposition, non-aligned speeches each answered by a reply speech by the opening or extending speaker of the opposing faction, closing speech by the opposition, closing speech by the government. In a case where no non-aligned speeches are held, the order of the two closing speeches is reversed.
- d) *Speaking time*: Faction speeches shall be given seven minutes each; non-aligned speeches shall be given three and a half minutes each. The first and last minute (in the case of non-aligned speeches the last 30 seconds) of this time is protected against questions and interjections in order to allow the participants in the debate to build up and conclude their speeches in an orderly manner. Questions offered and interjections made within the protected time shall be stopped by the sound of a bell; however, questions accepted before the protected time may be finished. If speeches fall below the speaking time of 6 minutes (or 3 minutes for non-aligned speakers), the next speaker has the right to wait with their speech until the time remaining up to this mark has expired. Presidents shall point out this right. If this right is not used, the remaining time is forfeited and the next speech is called directly. Reply speeches shall not exceed one minute of (protected) speaking time.
- e) *Stopping the speaking time*: Presidents give the floor, but the start of the speech is always decided by the speakers, so that they can address the audience as they see fit. However,

if presidents have the impression that the start of the speech is being delayed in order to gain an unfair advantage, they should remind the speakers to start the speech and count down from five seconds. At the latest after these five seconds, the speaking time begins to run, regardless of whether the speech actually begins. During the speeches, presidents mark the beginning and end of the time for questions with a single gavel strike. The end of the speaking time is indicated by a double gavel strike. If a speech exceeds the speaking time limit by more than fifteen seconds, the President shall ring the bell to stop the excess. If the time limits for questions are exceeded, presidents shall ring the bell immediately.

- f) *Announcement of time signals*: There is a need for ironclad rigour in enforcing speaking times. Presidents should first raise the gavel 10 seconds before each gavel strike, signalling to speakers that the signal is about to sound. Before ringing the bell at the end of the speaking time buffer, presidents must raise the bell at least 5 seconds before the bell rings. If the bell is not raised in time, no penalty can be given unless the speech continues until 5 seconds after the bell is raised.
- g) *Interruption of the debate*: Presidents may interrupt the debate if external constraints make this necessary. If a speech has been unreasonably hindered by external influences (house administration, power failure, siren, etc.), presidents may extend the speaking time appropriately. This and the additional amount of time granted shall be announced by the president immediately after the disruption by means of a heckle.
- h) *Closing of the debate*: The president closes the debate. A handshake of the debaters follows.
- i) *Feedback*: Optionally, feedback is given after the debate.

A.3.2 Opening speech of the government

- a) *Tasks*: The government's opening speech usually concretises the wording of the motion at hand by means of a proposal. This must show the audience and the other participants who is to carry out which action and how, so that the possible feasibility of the measure is beyond question and it can also be seen what price must be paid for it. The government's opening speech must introduce the motion in terms of content.
- b) *Binding of the proposal to the motion*: The wording of the question binds both factions, but it still has to be interpreted in the debate. A government proposal may not go beyond the wording of the motion (example: "Should the nationalist German party NPD be banned?") (for example: "Right extremist parties should be banned"), but may also not restrict it significantly ("The NPD youth organisations should be banned"). Measures that go beyond the motion but are consistent with the government's argumentation may be normatively advocated by the government, but not applied for. Accordingly, the proposal must correspond exactly in its wording to the question posed ("The NPD should be banned").

Likewise, the opposition is bound. The interpretation of the wording in the debate is the concretisation of the requested measure (here: description of what is to be understood by the ban in detail) or the development to be assessed (in the case of a non-proposal question).

- c) *Depth of the proposal:* The level of detail in the proposal is necessary so that the audience has an idea of how the implementation of the measure would work, what it would achieve and what the opportunity costs would be. It is not necessary to mention everything down to the cent, second or specific number of people, but orders of magnitude and factors important for success should be explained in a way that is easy to understand.
- d) *Side debates through the motion:* The justification of the motion should not tend to trigger a debate of its own. That is, the government should not use premises that are as contentious or more contentious than the motion under debate itself. Example: In a debate on the establishment of state-funded elite universities, the government may not propose the complete abolition of unemployment benefits or the armed forces as a means of funding, since these proposals are manifestly more controversial than the issue at hand and the debate could thus unduly stray from its question. On the other hand, in the case of the question "Do we want Islamic religious education in public schools?", it would still be legitimate as an opposition to doubt the sense of any public religious education, provided that the rejection of the link between church and state in schools does not appear more controversial than the rejection of the principle of equality in the relationship between state and religions.

A.3.3 Opening speech of the opposition

- a) *Task:* The opposition's opening speech replies to the government's opening speech. If there are any ambiguities or problems in the government's opening speech that call into question the possible implementation of the motion, it points them out. It argues against the government's position by refuting it and building its own opposition position.
- b) *Alternatives to the proposal:* The opposition group criticises the government's proposal, but is not obliged to present its own concept. However, it may be useful for persuasion to state alternatives to the proposal. Such alternatives should not be reasonably compatible with the government's proposal.
- c) *Reaction if the government fails the motion:* If the government clearly fails the motion in its first speech, the opposition's opening speech shows why the proposal or speech has nothing to do with the motion and explains what a proposal that could have been reasonably made might look like. It debates the motion in relation to such a proposal. Of course, in this case the opposition's arguments should only be of a technical nature ("proposal criticism") if they would have to appear in any proposal in a form that can be

criticised accordingly. It is not the purpose of this measure to put forward a moronic new proposal on the topic only to be able to criticise it endlessly in technical terms! Example: On the motion "Should religious groups not be given special rights?", the government puts forward a proposal to ban churches in general. The opposition should then explain that a ban and thus the abolition of these institutions is a much more controversial measure than just no longer collecting the church tithe from the state with the income tax and taking away priests' rights to remain silent in court, since core elements of religious communities instead of "amenities" are now at stake. It could then state that a proposal could provide, for example, to deprive them of these very (and any other) benefits compared to other institutions. The opposition would then argue further against this proposal.

- d) *Reaction of the jury in the case of a failed proposal:* If the government's proposal was objected to as having failed the motion in the opposition's opening speech in accordance with the previous paragraph, the main adjudicator of the debate shall announce which version of the topic is being debated immediately after the end of the speech for both sides without further justification. If the government has indeed failed the motion in the proposal significantly and the opposition has outlined a proposal that is in line with the topic, the opposition is to be agreed to. If, on the other hand, the government's proposal did justice to the motion or if the opposition did not have a proposal that did justice to the motion, the government's proposal remains.

A.3.4 Extension speeches

- a) *General tasks:* The extension speeches of the government and the opposition add to the arguments of their opening speeches or deepen the points of view already presented. They address questions to the opposing side, refute their arguments and, if necessary, hold reply speeches.
- b) *Faction-specific tasks:* The government's extension speech develops the argumentation of its own faction in an extending or in-depth manner and corrects any misinterpretations and ambiguities addressed by the opposition's opening speech. The opposition's extension speech responds to this.

A.3.5 Non-aligned speeches

- a) *Tasks:* The purpose of the non-aligned speeches is to bring the debate forward in terms of arguments, for example, through new arguments, deepening existing analyses, introducing new perspectives, meaningful refutations of arguments already mentioned, etc. The non-aligned speeches are then held in a predetermined order. Following the extension speeches, they express themselves in a predetermined order.

- b) *Positioning*: Non-aligned speakers may formulate their own position, but within the framework set by the government (e.g. the motion and proposal). Their choice of side may correspond to their personal opinion, but may also run counter to it for the purpose of argumentative examination, especially if essential arguments for one of the sides have remained unmentioned until then.
- c) *Disclosure of positioning*: Non-aligned speeches clearly indicate within the first minute whether they support the government or the opposition. Disclosure of side choice within the first minute of the speech is necessary to allow speakers of the not supported faction to ask questions. If the classification of the speech according to government and opposition is not yet obvious after the first minute, presidents shall call for comments.

A.3.6 Closing speeches

- a) *Tasks*: The closing speech weighs the arguments for the government side against the arguments for the opposition side so that it is apparent to the audience that they should vote for their side. The closing speech may explain existing arguments in more depth and further refute arguments of the other side.
- b) *Prohibition of new lines of argument*: This rebuttal should refer either directly to weaknesses in the opponent's argument or to arguments of the own team. However, new lines of argument are not allowed for reasons of fairness. The prohibition of introducing new arguments should not be confused with a deeper examination of thematic content already addressed in the form of new examples or in-depth analysis on points already dealt with previously: Clarification and elucidation of inferences already introduced into the debate is permitted.

A.4 Interaction during the debate

A.4.1 Means of interaction

- a) *Role and types of interaction*: Reply speeches, questions and interjections are special means of interaction and as such ensure the liveliness of the debate. They motivate participants to remain attentive and active throughout the debate. They ensure reference and direct exchange among the debate participants and support the factions in clarifying their points of contention. They encourage the speakers to stay on topic, to speak plainly and to make possible implications explicit.
- b) *Commitment to interaction*: Reply speeches are compulsory, questions and interjections are encouraged. It is obligatory to hold reply speeches so that the opinions of the non-aligned speakers cannot be ignored and the debate always remains on the level of its problem development. It is desirable to offer questions and to make interjections, because

they can both enliven and deepen the debate and contribute to the audience's decision in favour of one side, without them being absolutely necessary for the continuation of the debate. Questions are the means of choice for more complex issues, whereas interjections are means of providing impetus for content or a concise rebuttal of a statement. Interjections harbour a potential for disruption that cannot be controlled by the speaker. They are therefore only desirable to the extent that they do not interfere with the development of the debate and a substantive discussion of the topic. They must be finely dosed.

A.4.2 Reply speeches

- a) *Tasks:* Reply speeches are the means for factions to comment on opposing non-aligned speeches. The reply speech is purely a reply with the purpose of re-promotion or clarification. The primary aim of every reply speech should be to win the non-aligned speaker over to one's own side. If their interests are absolutely not alignable with the reply speaker's, the non-aligned speaker and the audience should be shown why the ideals espoused by the reply speaker's own side are preferable to their stated interests. The reply speech has to be specific to the speech of the non-aligned speaker and must not be used in an unconnected way for general remarks.
- b) *Speaking time:* Reply speeches are limited to one minute and are made from the floor. Questions and interjections are not permitted for reply speeches. The same rules on timekeeping apply with regard to gavel strikes, buffer time and the bell.
- c) *Speakers:* Reply speeches are held by the opening or extension speakers of the factions.
- d) *Requests for further interventions:* In the event of fundamental contradiction between the content of non-aligned speeches and the argumentation of the faction on whose side the speeches claimed to be on, the factions concerned shall also have the right to make a reply speech on application to the president. The request shall be made immediately after the conclusion of the non-aligned speech by a faction member without further justification and shall be decided by the main adjudicator without debate. The president shall announce the decision. The granting of the additional right to intervene in a non-aligned speech that has formally joined a side, but is explicitly in fundamental opposition to it, is to be handled in an extremely restrictive manner. It only serves to ensure the progress of the debate and fairness towards the team concerned in obvious exceptional cases. Conditional argumentation ("even if") is usually not a sign of fundamental contradiction in this sense.

A.4.3 Questions

- a) *Tasks:* Questions are short statements, often - but not exclusively - formulated in the form of questions, which implicitly or explicitly ask speakers to deal more closely with certain

contents of the debate or to explain them further. They must be understandable for the audience and the speaker.

- b) *Duration*: Questions last a maximum of fifteen seconds.
- c) *Authorisation to offer questions*: All speakers who do not belong to the faction of the speaker are entitled to offer questions. Questions may not be offered within the protected speaking time. During a non-aligned speech, the side for which they are taking sides may not offer questions.
- d) *Offering questions*: Questions are offered by the questioner standing from their seat. If the questioner accepts a question, it is presented in the same way.
- e) *Rejection of questions*: If several questions are pending, all other pending questions shall be deemed rejected if one question is accepted or rejected. Those offering rejected questions shall be seated again immediately.
- f) *Decision on questions*: The explicit decision to accept or decline an offered question is a requirement of politeness (one does not leave questioners out in the cold) and serves to clarify the situation.
- g) *Privilege questions*: If a faction has not asked a question during the opening and extension speeches of the other side and has not held a reply speech during the debate, it shall be entitled to a privilege question during the closing speech. A privilege question shall be marked with the words "privilege question" when the question is offered and must be accepted by the speaker concerned within 30 seconds. The president shall enforce this right. If none of the faction's members marks a question as a privilege question before the end of the fifth minute, this right is forfeit. The purpose of the privilege question is to ensure that a team that has had neither the opportunity to hold a reply speech nor the opportunity to ask a question during the debate can still be fairly adjudicated. Tactically refraining from offering questions during the opponent's opening and extension speeches in the hope of receiving a privilege question is blatantly poor interaction. Privilege questions may not be solicited after the conclusion of the fifth minute in order to ensure that the speakers in question are able to adequately frame their closing remarks. If the right to ask a privilege question exists, the president shall announce this right before the start of the speech.

A.4.4 Interjections

- a) *Tasks*: Interjections are a means for all debaters to point out inconsistencies, argumentative gaps, aberrations and the like to speakers and to encourage them to clarify.
- b) *Length and Limitation*: Interjections must not exceed seven words in length; "seven words" is to be understood as a rule of thumb. Interjections must not become short speeches. Callers may not have more than two interjections on the same point immediately following

each other and may not enter into a dialogue with the speaker together with other debaters. Interjections must not be used as purely acoustic disruptive manoeuvres.

- c) *Prohibiting interjections*: Speakers may prohibit interjections. In this case, all interjections are prohibited in the following minute of the speech. In order to make it unmistakably clear to all participants when interjections are forbidden, presidents indicate the time limit by flipping the bell. The "forbidding" must explicitly refer to interjections or the minute limit, a simple 'silence please' is not sufficient. Presidents also have the right to flip the bell at their own discretion if interjections unreasonably interfere with the speech. Main adjudicators may also instruct them to do so. Interjections may be prohibited, but not questions.

B Evaluation

B.1 Scale and object of the evaluation

B.1.1 Aim of the evaluation

- a) *Performance evaluation*: Especially at competitions, factions and debaters should be evaluated according to their performance. The only yardstick for the evaluation is the set by the rules presented here. The appliance of the rules ensures comparability and forces the judges to objectify their evaluation.
- b) *Evaluation from the audience's point of view*: Since the entire audience is usually not able to join in the judging (and sometimes there is hardly any audience at all), adjudicators should try to reflect on major deviations of themselves in comparison to fictitious, interested and generally educated spectators and not let these deviations influence the debate. Thus, adjudicators' political preferences should not influence the evaluation. However, adjudicators' specialist knowledge may be used to evaluate objectively false statements of fact made by debaters as such.
- c) *Impact evaluation*: Open Parliamentary Debate as a sporting debating format does not evaluate actions, but effects. It follows the primacy of the persuasive in all aspects. Good is what helps to persuade an interested, generally educated audience, bad is what hinders it. It can be assumed that such an audience has no prejudices against speakers. However, external characteristics such as body size and voice may well contribute to the fact that actions or lines of argumentation by different speakers are perceived differently by an audience, i.e. produce a different effect. How persuasive an individual rhetorical action is, is a highly subjective value - depending, among other things, on the subjective preferences of the respective addressees, here: the adjudicators. In order to record performance more objectively, the impressions of as many adjudicators as possible (calibrated to a certain scale) are averaged. The larger the number of (calibrated) adjudicators, the more objective the result.

B.1.2 Rating according to points

- a) *Individual and team performances*: Team and individual performances are evaluated. Political groups receive points according to their team performance. Speakers receive points according to their individual performance. In order that each performance in the competition can be appreciated in a differentiated way, both team and individual performances are evaluated independently of each other. "Individual performance" is the

effect of the speech at the time at the lectern. "Team performance" assesses the performance of the teams in the overall context of the debate.

- b) *Point scale*: An absolute standard applies to the awarding of points itself. The highest score is reserved for the best possible performance. For orientation, the point scale of the German school-system can be used (assuming strict grading); the range of 15-20 points then serves primarily to profile the top performances at competitions. Indicative values are accordingly: 0 points = non-existent; 1-3 points = poor (very clear weaknesses); 4-6 points = just satisfactory (weaknesses predominate); 7-9 points = satisfactory (strengths/weaknesses in balance); 10-12 points = good (strengths predominate); 14-16 points = very good (hardly any weaknesses); >15 points = outstanding performance. Where other scales are mentioned in the regulations, the relations shift accordingly.

B.1.3 Individual performance

- a) *Individual categories*: Individual performance is assessed in five categories: speaking, demeanour, connection, expertise, and judgement. The categories listed tap into five aspects that together form a functional structure: The oratorical performance. None of these aspects can be completely isolated from the others, so all five aspects are present in every speech.
- b) *Points per category*: A maximum of twenty points will be awarded in each category. A good speech should therefore have an average in the 50s (good range). A speech in which strengths and weaknesses are balanced throughout is therefore 40 points (8 per category).
- c) *Speaking*: Speaking means comprehensibility, clarity and appropriateness in language and voice. A good performance in speaking means that the verbal dimension of the presentation is shaped in such a way that the audience enjoys listening, understands what is meant, finds the speakers likeable and credible and remembers what they say. Speakers achieve this by working with the voice and working with words. The category is not to be understood as an end in itself: There is no positive evaluation of speaking should it not serve the ultimate purpose of persuading people of one's side. Thus, a three-minute anecdote unrelated to the topic, regardless of its internal excellence, cannot be grounds for a very good rating of speaking; however, as a short introduction to entertain and thus engage the audience, it can receive very good ratings in the context of a speech.
- d) *Demeanour*: Demeanour assesses the extent to which the speaker's visual presence contributes to persuading the audience. A good appearance supports the speaker's verbal message with authentic accompaniment in posture, stance, gestures and facial expressions. What is important is not what the speaker does, but whether it fits the speech and whether it helps to persuade the audience of one's own side.

- e) *Contact*: Contact means the ability to adjust to the respective circumstances of the debate. This happens on a content-related and emotional level. In terms of content, good performance in contact requires, on the one hand, referring to relevant developments in the debate so far, illustrating the subject matter of the debate and, on the other hand, dealing appropriately with questions and interjections. Contact does not scale with the quantity of answered questions/interjections; in general, however, a contactable speech gives the opposing team sufficient opportunity to interact. On an emotional level, a contactable speech builds rapport with the audience. This can be done, for example, through quick-witted interaction with the opposing team, humour, created emotions and eye contact. This requires a feeling for the situation and relating to the audience. Confident speakers do not shy away from offering the other side the opportunity to interact within the framework of speaking time and possibilities.
- f) *Expertise*: Expertise means the ability to plausibly justify, explain and present arguments for one's own side. Key question: "Is what is being said correct?" Expertise assesses the correctness of facts used for argumentation, the reasonableness of conclusions and the plausibility of justifications. Expert knowledge can contribute to argumentation if it is built into consistent conclusions. Otherwise, it will hardly contribute to the establishment of expertise and should rather be assessed with low points. The use of subject-relevant expertise without good integration into the argumentation structure will nevertheless contribute more to the credibility of the speech in terms of content than the omission of expertise or even the use of false statements of fact.
- g) *Judgement*: Judgement asks to what extent speaking time is used efficiently. Key question: "Is the right thing said?". This includes the correct selection and prioritisation of arguments, selective intensive engagement with previous speeches and the arrangement of the speech material.

B.1.4 Team performance

- a) *Team categories*: The factions' team performance is evaluated in three categories: strategy, interaction and persuasion.
- b) *Points per category*: A maximum of seventy-five points will be awarded in each of the first two categories, and a maximum of fifty points in the last.
- c) *Strategy*: Strategy evaluates the impact of a speech retrospectively in the overall context of the debate. A maximum of twenty-five points can be assigned per speech (opening, extension, closing). Strategy is about fulfilment of the respective function in the team. This includes in particular but not exclusively: Opening: Meaningful introduction to the debate; a clear understanding of motive and core arguments of the team are established and these are compared with those of the opposing side. Extension: Continuation of the debate in

terms of content by taking up, deepening and criticising previous arguments and supplementing further argumentation; intensive discussion with the opposing side and persuasive presentation of the team's position for the subsequent free speeches. Closing speech: Structuring the debate; consideration and specification of the disputed factors; no new argumentation.

- d) *Interaction*: Interaction means the use of reply speeches, questions and interjections. A maximum of thirty points can be awarded for reply speeches and questions, and a maximum of fifteen points for interjections. Awards are given for effectiveness in clarification, precision in examination, wit (acumen, humour, repartee) in shaping. Questions and interjections are good if they advance the debate in terms of content. This can be both constructive, e.g. by asking necessary comprehension questions, and destructive, e.g. by pointing out gaps in the opponent's argumentation or a lack of engagement of the other side with important material. The quality of the questions asked is primarily decisive for the assessment. The number of questions offered is only relevant when hardly any questions from a team have been accepted. Questions that are announced with an announcement (e.g. "Exactly on that!" or "Comprehension question!"), but then, contrary to the announcement, address something else, are unsporting and thus to be rated lower. If no reply speech can be held (because all non-aligned speeches join their own faction), the same number of points as for "questions" must be entered in the score sheet. Reply speeches are to be evaluated not only in terms of their content as an adequate response to the non-aligned speech, but also in terms of their quality as a speech: In addition to their argumentative strength, speaking, demeanour and contact (each in the sense of 1.3) should be taken into account.
- e) *Persuasiveness*: Persuasiveness means the overall appearance of the faction, especially its unity as a team and its dedication to the debate. The key question for evaluation is: 'Was the team convincing as a unit?' Teams are convincing as a team in terms of content if a clear line can be discerned, can be consistently maintained from beginning to end and can also persuade at the end of the debate. Ignoring material from the other side and deliberately refusing to answer questions is just as unconvincing as constantly changing or contradictory positions on content. Teams are emotionally convincing as a team by attentively following the debate, taking it seriously as a unit and eagerly trying to persuade the audience as well. Teams that hang lethargically in their chairs and only shuffle to the lectern to speak are not very persuasive.

B.1.5 Sanctions

- a) *Penalties*: Points may be deducted for behaviour that damages the sporting debate. Such rule violations are: Missing the time limit, missing the topic, missing the role. For each of

these violations, six points are deducted from the offender, in severe cases twelve points. Such penalties can be made by a two-thirds majority of the adjudicators and not against the vote of the main adjudicators. They will be deducted after averaging and, if necessary, rounding of points.

- b) *Penalties and poor performance*: Penalties do not sanction poor performance (that is what the scoring is for), but refer only to behaviour that frustrates the debate as a debate or is likely to cause disadvantage to other debaters in an illegitimate way. A penalty and a poor speech performance are not mutually exclusive.
- c) *Summation of penalties*: A speech can receive penalties in several deduction categories. The point deductions then add up. A speech can receive a maximum of one major deduction in each penalty category, optionally due to a particularly serious or repeated minor offence.
- d) *Penalty i - "Time limit missed"*: Small deduction: after the bell has been struck, one word against the bell. Major deduction: 7:30' (faction speech), 4:00' (non-aligned speech) or 1:30' (reply speech) exceeded. This deduction prevents individual speakers or a team from unfairly gaining speaking time and ensures that the timetable of competitions runs smoothly.
- e) *Penalty ii - "Missed the point"*: Small deduction: Too much restriction in the debate setting, which alienates the debate from the motion. (Example: The motion reads "Do we need compulsory military service?"). Legitimate restrictions: Children, the elderly and pregnant women are excluded. Illegitimate restriction: women are excluded). If a proposal was not clearly wrong, a deduction may not be made, even if main adjudicators grant the motion to the opposition according to A.3.3.d). Major deduction: The debate setting is irrelevant to the debate because it is aimed at answering a different motion. (Example: The motion reads "Do we need universal conscription?" The government proposes that everyone can volunteer for military service). This penalty prevents individual speakers or whole teams from gaining unfair advantages by distorting the motion or replacing it with a motion on which they hope to score more points.
- f) *Penalty iii - "Role missed"*: This refers to the role in the debate, not the function in the team! Small deduction: Permanent lack of or unsportsmanlike wrong positioning in non-aligned speeches; appearing in a simulated role (as long as it is not obvious from the speech as a rhetorical stylistic device) or inappropriate reflection of one's own debating role in the speech (meta remarks). Major deduction: gross insults, persistent disregard of either the instructions of presidents or main adjudicators or of bans on interjections. This deduction is intended to punish unsportsmanlike conduct that is likely to harm other speakers, for example by making them feel insecure through personal attacks, interrupting them with

inadmissible interjections or severely undermining their authenticity for the debate by referring to the debate setting and debate role.

- g) *Deductions to the bench:* Deductions are usually given for offences at the lectern and deducted from individual speaking points. "To the Bench" deductions may be given if speakers significantly abuse their right for questions and interjections to commit violations of the nature described above. Irrespective of a possible assessment as a poor performance in the respective team category, which evaluates the quality of the performance given, such a deduction penalising a rule violation will always be applied to the individual speaking points of the offenders.
- h) *No points for non-appearance:* Participants or teams who do not appear for their speech(es) at the scheduled time for the debate will not receive any points.
- i) *No points for serious misconduct:* Participants who insult or personally discriminate against other participants or entire teams will not be awarded a point in the debate concerned if the adjudicators unanimously agree that there has been misconduct of a severity that cannot be adequately punished by the deduction of points.

B.2 Evaluation procedure

B.2.1 Conduct in the proceedings

The evaluation and deliberation are held in a fair, constructive, collegial and respectful manner.

B.2.2 Deliberation

- a) *Place and time:* After the end of the debate, the jury leaves for deliberation or the audience and speakers leave the room temporarily.
- b) *Duration:* Adjudicators should have a maximum of 20 minutes for deliberation, and another 5 minutes for the final tallying of points.
- c) *Objective:* The deliberation serves to check the congruence between perception and scoring of the debate. In cases that deviate from this, however, it is not valid to impose one's own subjective assessment on others. If there is sufficient time, the adjudicators can address individual performances and scores of speeches and make corrections to their own assessment if necessary. However, the discussion about the team performance and possible penalties has clear priority in the adjudicators' meeting.
- d) *Procedure:* The deliberation is led by the main adjudicator. All adjudicators have their say in the discussion, but not necessarily to the same extent. Presidents may only participate

to the extent that they are asked about specific points that fall within their area of responsibility (for example, the number of interjections).

- e) *Removal from the judging*: In extremely exceptional cases, it is possible for additional adjudicators to voluntarily remove themselves from the judging. The main adjudicator must be informed of this immediately.

B.2.3 Determination of results

- a) *Averaging of scores*: By adding up the scores, it is meant that the adjudicators calculate an arithmetic mean of the respective scores of all adjudicators for all individual and team performances.
- b) *Type of result*: The scores averaged in this way represent the outcome of the debate. Part of the result can also be the highlighting of the most persuasive faction or the most persuasive individual speech.
- c) *Determination of the most persuasive performance*: The faction that scored the most points in the sum of individual and team performances in the jury vote was the most persuasive. The speech that scored the most points in the comparison of individual performances in the jury vote was the most persuasive. In the event of a tie, the president will decide.

B.2.4 Announcement of results and justification

- a) *Objective*: After the deliberation, the factions and non-aligned speakers will receive the result and a justification of the result from the main adjudicator.
- b) *Feedback*: Debate feedback should be respectful and received in silence. Afterwards, the speakers should be given the opportunity to ask questions.

C Competitions

C.1 Competition basics

C.1.1 Basic concept of a competition

- a) *Definition of a competition:* A competition involves a number of teams, divisible by three, competing over at least three consecutive debates (called rounds). The aim of the competition is to determine a winning team.
- b) *Types of competition and rounds:* In one type of competition (e.g. a classic tournament), after rounds in which all teams take part - so-called preliminary rounds - there are elimination rounds (e.g. quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals) for which the best teams and speakers qualify. In the other type of competition (e.g. a league), there are only preliminary rounds (alternatively, the term "rounds" or "match days" is used).
- c) *Competitors:* Each team participating in a competition consists of three speakers. In justified exceptional cases (e.g. illness) it is possible to replace team members during the competition in consultation with the competition management. More details can be found in the section on winning the competition.
- d) *Debate rooms:* If there are more than three teams in the competition, parallel debates take place in different rooms in each round. Which team is in which room is determined by a so-called draw.

C.1.2 Peculiarities of the debate process at competitions

- a) *Jury in the debate room:* The jury in each room consists of at least one person, but at least three are recommended. In order to ensure a neutral evaluation in substance and appearance, adjudicators and presidents must not have a close personal relationship (e.g. through partnership or activity in the same debating society) with the debaters - unless other suitable adjudicators and presidents are not available.
- b) *Speakers per debate room:* The number of non-aligned speakers per room is three. These non-aligned speakers should preferably come from three different teams. The factions each consist of one other team, so that there are a total of nine speakers in one room.
- c) *Order:* The factions choose the distribution of their speaking roles themselves, the order of the non-attached speakers is determined in advance.
- d) *Motion announcement:* The motion of a debate round is the same for every room. It is announced simultaneously to all faction speakers, excluding the non-aligned speakers. Non-aligned speakers receive the motion at the beginning of the debate.

- e) *Preparation time*: The preparation time for each debate room is the same, predetermined time, but at least and usually simply 15 minutes. It begins with the announcement of the motion. During the preparation time, the government may use the debate room.
- f) *Research and digital aids*: Speakers are not allowed to conduct digital research. The competition management may make exceptions. If an explicit regulation is made, all participants must be aware of it early enough to be able to arrive with the appropriate material. The use of digital tools (mobile phone, laptop, etc.) is allowed during the preparation time and the debate, as long as they are used exclusively for timekeeping, taking notes and, if necessary, dictionaries for non-native speakers.
- g) *Announcement of results*: For reasons of time, dramaturgy or other organisational reasons, the announcement of results can be planned shorter, longer or delayed by the competition management for individual rounds or certain competitions.

C.2 Competition procedure

C.2.1 Preliminary rounds

- a) *Seeding in preliminary rounds*: In preliminary rounds, the debaters are not allowed to choose their room and their position (government, opposition or non-factional), nor the order of the non-aligned speeches in the respective room. Instead, this order is determined by a random draw.
- b) *Balance of seeding*: When drawing lots for seeding, it must be ensured that all teams are seeded as equally as possible in the course of the preliminary rounds in each of the three positions (Government - Opposition – Non-aligned Speech), as well as on the first, second and third non-aligned Speech. The number of preliminary rounds must therefore be at least three and should be divisible by three.
- c) *An additional round*: If another round is added after a number of preliminary rounds divisible by three, the following special features apply to the seeding: The third of the teams with the lowest number of points up to that point holds the non-aligned speeches; the top two thirds meet each other (as before, by drawing lots).
- d) *Two additional rounds*: For a potential second additional round, if the number of participating teams is not at least six times the number of teams in any elimination rounds, the same procedure applies as for an additional round. If, on the other hand, this condition is fulfilled, the following special features apply to the seeding: The middle third of teams in total points up to that point will hold non-aligned speeches; the top third and the bottom third will each be drawn against each other within their third. If the number of teams within

a third is not even, the team with the lowest points in the upper third will speak against the team with the highest points in the lower third.

C.2.2 Elimination rounds

- a) *Qualification for elimination rounds:* The teams with the most points at the end of the preliminary rounds qualify for the first elimination round as factions. The speakers with the most points from the remaining teams are qualified as non-aligned speakers. All teams and speakers must also meet the qualification requirements for winning the competition.
- b) *Seeding in elimination rounds:* The qualified team with the most points speaks in room 1 against the qualified team with the fewest points, the one with the second most points against the one with the second fewest points, etc. The non-aligned speakers are allocated to the rooms according to the order of their individual points; i.e. the person with the most points in room 1, the second highest in room 2, and so on. The position of the teams (government or opposition) and the order of the non-aligned speakers will be determined by lot, as in the previous rounds.
- c) *Advancement in elimination rounds:* In the elimination rounds, the qualification for the next round is decided by direct comparison between the factions. The speakers with the highest number of points in a room who did not advance via their faction qualify as non-aligned speakers for the next round (in case of a tie, the current individual points decide). The remaining non-aligned speakers in the next round are made up of the best speakers who have not yet advanced according to individual points.

C.3 Competition victory

C.3.1 Qualification conditions and dealing with failures

- a) *General qualification rule:* In general, only teams whose members have not changed during the competition rounds and have participated in the debate with all three members in the elimination rounds are qualified to win the competition. However, original team members may also receive prizes as individual speakers as long as all substituted team members met the competition criteria.
- b) *Complete team absences in preliminary rounds:* If a complete team is absent in a preliminary round, it will be awarded no points in the respective debate according to the scoring rules. They must be replaced by the competition management with substitute speakers.
- c) *Partial team absence in preliminary rounds for faction speeches:* If a team is partially incomplete in faction speeches in the preliminary rounds, there are two options: Either the

missing speakers are replaced by the competition management with substitutes or a remaining team member delivers several team speeches. Only in the latter case does the team retain its eligibility for elimination rounds and the competition victory, if it also appears plausible to the competition management that the person concerned could not reasonably be expected to participate in the debate due to the nature of the topic or a reason inherent in the person concerned. In cases of doubt, the person concerned must be heard if he or she invokes this rule. In both cases of substitution, the individual points of the substituted speech will be attributed to the team in the total points, but not to the person who dropped out in the individual speech points.

- d) *Partial team absence in preliminaries for non-aligned speeches*: If a team is partially incomplete in the preliminary rounds of non-aligned speeches, the missing speech will be cancelled without replacement and the team will accordingly be credited several times with the score of the lowest-scoring speeches made by the team in that round. Otherwise, the same rules apply for the crediting of points in total and individual points as well as for the qualification for elimination rounds and competition victory.
- e) *Absent speakers in elimination rounds*: If a team is incomplete in elimination rounds, the next strongest team will be re-qualified and the draw adjusted accordingly.

C.3.2 Determination of the competition victory

- a) *Tables*: The scores awarded in each round and in each room are recorded centrally in tables. Speakers (with the total number of points for their individual performances) and teams (with the total number of points for their individual and team performances) are listed in one table, sorted by points. The person with the most points heads the table.
- b) *Competition victory without elimination rounds*: If only general rounds are held in a competition, the team with the most total points at the end of all rounds wins the competition.
- c) *Competition victory in elimination rounds*: If elimination rounds are held, the team that wins the last elimination round, the final, wins the competition.

*The OPD Rules Commission of Streitkultur e.V. in 2023
after Michael Hoppmann, Ansgar Kemmann and Bernd Rex*