

GUIDE TO THE CONSENSUS METHOD

Introduction

Consensus is the ordinary method by which the bodies of the Statodellarte take decisions. It does not mean enthusiastic unanimity, but the absence of substantial objections: a proposal is adopted by consensus when none of those present opposes it for reasons they consider fundamental. Consensus seeks the solution that all can support, or at least accept, not the one that all prefer.

This Guide describes how to practise the consensus method. It applies always and wherever the Constitution or a regulation of the Statodellarte provides for recourse to that method, in any body – Forums, Cantieri, Camera, Presidency, Collegio delle Ambasciate and the related coordination structures – and is to be adapted with good sense to the size and nature of each.

1. Who Leads

Every search for consensus is led by the person who presides over the body – the coordination structure, the presidency, or whoever acts in their place. The one who leads does not impose their own position: they facilitate the dialogue, reformulate, verify. Their task is to bring out the objections and help the group to integrate them.

2. The Phases

a) Presentation

The proposer sets out the proposal clearly, indicating its purpose. The one who leads verifies that everyone has understood it before opening the discussion.

b) Listening

The view of those present is gathered, giving each one the possibility to express themselves. In this phase one listens in order to understand, not in order to reply.

c) Verification of Consensus

The one who leads asks whether there are substantial objections. If there are none, the proposal is adopted.

d) Integration (first iteration)

If objections emerge, the one who leads has them made explicit and reformulates the proposal to take account of them. Consensus is verified again on the modified proposal.

e) Second Integration (second iteration)

If objections remain, a second reformulation is attempted, focusing on the residual objections.

f) Outcome

If after the second iteration consensus is reached, the proposal is adopted. If it is not, a vote by majority of those present is taken, pursuant to Article 23 of the Constitution.

3. What Distinguishes a Substantial Objection

Not every preference is an objection. An objection is substantial when it concerns a problem for the body or for its aims, not the mere “I would have done it differently”. Whoever raises a substantial objection is invited, as far as possible, also to indicate a way to overcome it: the objection is a contribution to the solution, not a veto.

4. The Urgency Route

Where substantiated grounds of urgency apply, the one who leads may propose to decide directly by majority vote, skipping the search for consensus. The ground of urgency must be declared at the time of convocation and approved by the majority of those present before proceeding, pursuant to Article 23 of the Constitution.

5. Spirit of the Method

Consensus is an expression of the trinamic Formula of Creation applied to decisions: differing positions are not obstacles but material from which a solution better than the initial one can be born. Whoever participates places listening before judgement, the search for the shared solution before the affirmation of their own, and the care of the bond of the group before the victory of their own thesis.

Validity

This Guide, elaborated by Cittadellarte and delivered to the Statodellarte pursuant to the transitional provisions of the Constitution, enters into force with the inaugural session of the Camera. It may subsequently be amended by the Camera by the procedure referred to in Article 56 of the Constitution, on the proposal of the Presidency. The amendments may in no case modify or alter the provisions of the Constitution.