

**CENTRAL
EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL
SPECIAL REPORT**



**A BIGGER, BETTER,
MORE INCLUSIVE
CONGRESS**

**New arrangements to
strengthen GMB
democracy**

**ANNUAL CONGRESS 2010
FLORAL HALL & CONVENTION CENTRE
SOUTHPORT**

**SUNDAY 6 JUNE 2010 to WEDNESDAY 9 JUNE 2010
9.30 am - 12.30 pm, 2.00 pm - 5.30 pm**

CEC SPECIAL REPORT TO CONGRESS 2010

GMB

CONGRESS FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS DELEGATES TO CONGRESS AND SECTION CONFERENCES

Introduction

Congress last year agreed to consult on proposals aimed at opening up Congress to a broader range of GMB members by increasing delegation sizes and seeking ways to ensure the delegations best represented the diversity in all Regions of the Union.

The Recommendations agreed in 2009 were as follows:

The CEC has already agreed to recommend to Congress a move to one Congress delegate per complete 1,500 fully financial members in a Region. This will create sufficient extra places to help ensure that our retired activists continue to play a key role in Congress, while at the same time having more opportunities for our younger activists (including workplace representatives) to participate at the supreme policy making body of the Union. But it would be important to protect the predominantly workplace-based nature of our Section Conferences, for reasons set out above.

The CEC suggests that with effect from Congress 2011 Regional Congress and Section Conference delegations are elected on the following uniform basis:

The election of Section Conference delegates be rolled up into the election of Congress delegates.

A minimum 80% of each Region's delegates should be working members

The election should be conducted so as to ensure a balanced representation reflecting the geographical, sectional and industrial make-up of the Region and to ensure representative gender, ethnic and sexual orientation balance in the delegation.

Branches with more than 250 members as at the relevant September figures may nominate two members for election as delegates.

The CEC is invited to consider these options, with a view to reaching decisions in principle following which this paper will go out for Regional consultation. Any subsequent rule amendments would then be drafted for

consideration at a future CEC meeting.

It is suggested that the Task Group be recalled to co-ordinate Regional responses and make recommendations to the CEC on these proposals.

If Congress were to accept these proposed changes any new rules would place an obligation on the CEC to issue guidelines for a uniform election across all Regions for the election of Congress (and therefore Section Conference) delegates.

Following on from Congress, the CEC sent the recommendations to Regions to seek widespread consultation. Regions collated responses and sent them on for consideration by a specially convened CEC Task Group consisting of CEC representatives and other Regional nominees. After seeking further Regional feedback, the Task Group's recommendations were accepted by the CEC. This paper puts the final proposals to Congress, along with a recommendation for the necessary Rule changes.

There was overwhelming agreement with the proposal to increase the number of Congress delegates. In future, delegation sizes will be calculated on the basis of one delegate for every 1,500 members in the Region, an increase of one third in the size of Congress. It was generally agreed that the additional costs of this change were more than justified by the need to update our procedures to take account of changing membership patterns, to broaden the opportunity for activists to attend Congress and, with some of the changes mentioned below, to better reflect the diversity in our membership.

In 2008, Sectional Conferences were held during a day and a half break in Annual Congress. This successful experiment not only saved money but sharpened the focus on industrial matters at the Sectional Conferences, freeing up time at Congress for organisational and broader policy considerations. The Biennial Sectional Conferences are again being held this year during a break in Congress, and the proposal is that this arrangement is made permanent. In addition the number of delegates will be increased to one per 1,500 members of the Section in each Region, to be made up of Congress delegates, supplemented as necessary to ensure that Regional Sectional numbers are properly represented.

The paper presented to Congress in 2009 emphasised that the Union is first and always an organisation of workers, and that the key decisions should be made predominantly by workplace representatives. However, the proposed solution to make it mandatory that all Regional delegations contained at least 80% working members met with significant opposition in the consultation. Although Congress had made it clear that it was essential to retain the experience of retired members at Congress, many of whom give long hours voluntarily to serving our members, there was a general view that the 80:20 requirement was unfairly discriminatory and probably impossible to implement. The CEC now recommends that we do not proceed with this idea. In fact, the make-up of Regional delegations in 2010 already shows a strong

move towards more working member delegates, and this trend should continue with the expansion of delegate numbers.

Arising from the discussion about retired members attending Congress, the Task Group confirmed that all Congress delegates must be paying the appropriate Grade 1 or Grade 2 contribution rate, and the CEC reminds Congress that this is the Rule book position.

Congress in 2009 proposed a uniform method of election for Congress delegates across all Regions. Investigations by the CEC Task Group confirmed that there are a variety of different electoral procedures in place in different Regions, all of which are in line with Rule and covered by Regional by-laws. In debate and during the consultation it became clear that each system is well understood in the relevant Region and that Regions are prepared to argue for the merits of their own system. The CEC is therefore disinclined to propose changes to Region's individual electoral systems at this Congress, but recommends that at some future date a uniform system should be adopted.

The CEC recommends that from Congress 2011 90% of delegates will be elected in the manner prescribed in Rule, as operated in each Region. These changes will result in a substantial increase of around 60 extra elected delegates in 2011.

The Task Group considered ways of ensuring that delegations properly represented the balance of membership in the Region, in respect of geography, industry, age, ethnicity, gender, disability and sexual orientation. The Task Group felt that one reason for the under-representation of, say, black and minority ethnic members was because such members were not coming forward through the existing branch nomination system. Accordingly, it was agreed and is recommended to Congress that 10% of the delegation should be selected by the Regional Committee to ensure that the delegation is fairly balanced. Guidelines will be issued by the CEC to help the selection process.

There was a robust debate around the question of changing the number of branch nominations from one to two. Some colleagues argued that the extra delegate numbers should be used to encourage a greater number of branches to be represented, others argued that dual nomination would allow more leading activists from larger branches to go to Congress. The Task Group's decision, which the CEC recommends to Congress, was that each branch continues to make one nomination for election to Congress. However, each branch will be invited to make a second nomination for consideration by the Regional Committee in selecting the 10% "balancing" delegates described above, and in selecting any delegates to take up places unfilled by election.

It became clear from the Regional consultation that in some areas the number of branch nominations was sometimes quite limited and there was a chance that the election process might not produce sufficient delegates. The Task Group therefore took the decision that Regional Committees should be

explicitly empowered to select additional delegates where necessary to ensure that the Region sends a complete delegation to Congress, and this is recommended to Congress by the CEC.

In selecting both the 10% “balancing” delegates and any necessary “top-up” delegates, the Regional Committee will consider branch nominations, but will also seek recommendations from other groups within the Region, for example the Equality Forum or the Retired Members Association and from officers and lay activists who can suggest members who might add to the range and talents in the delegation.

Finally, the consultation revealed that some branches regularly failed to complete the Congress returns seeking nominations and motions. The Task Group considered that participation in the Congress process was a basic duty of branches and asked the CEC through the Regions to ensure that all branches do complete the returns, failing which the Region should take appropriate action.

The CEC believes the Task Group went about its business in a realistic and no-nonsense manner. The solutions it came up with are not based on some imaginary theory, but on the practical life of GMB today. Congress is and will always be the supreme authority in our Union. Since it returned to an annual event, Congress and GMB itself have been reinvigorated. Now we need to make Congress bigger, more representative and more diverse, just like GMB.

The CEC proposes that, if they are adopted by Congress 2010, it will review these new procedures after Congress 2012.

The CEC urges Congress to accept the recommendations in this report, and to adopt the necessary Rule Changes.

Rule Changes

Rule 8, clause 4

Line 2, Delete “2,000”

Insert “1,500”

Rule 8, clause 5

Line 1, Delete “Each”

Insert “For 90% of delegates, each”

Rule 8, new clause 6

Insert

“6 The region’s remaining 10% of delegates will be appointed by the regional committee to ensure that the regional delegation properly reflects the balance of the regional membership in respect of industry, geographic spread, ethnicity, gender, disability, youth and sexual orientation. Appointments made under this rule will be made in line with guidance issued by the Central Executive Council”

Rule 8, new clause 7

Insert

“7 Each branch will be invited to nominate one further delegate to be considered by the Regional Committee in appointing delegates under clause 6 of this Rule, and in appointing delegates to make up any shortfall in the delegation following the election process in clause 5 of this Rule. In making these appointments, the Regional Committee may also consider members recommended by other committees, forums or post-holders within the Region”

Renumber subsequent clause.

Rule will now read:

Congress

Rule 8 Congress of the union

- 1 The Congress (Ordinary or Special), made up of representatives from the regions of the union, holds supreme authority.
- 2 The Ordinary Congress will be held every year on dates decided by the Central Executive Council.
- 3 The Central Executive Council can choose to hold and arrange a Special Congress.
- 4 All delegates must be fully financial members. Each region will elect one delegate for every 1,500 financial members, as stated in the membership figures for the previous September.
- 5 For 90% of delegates, each branch of a region may nominate one delegate to represent the region at the Congress. These nominations must be sent to the regional office no later than 31 December. The region will then print and issue lists during the third week of January, setting out the name and

branch of each candidate. The closing date for voting will be 28 February. The candidates who receive the largest number of votes will be elected.

6 The region's remaining 10% of delegates will be appointed by the regional committee to ensure that the regional delegation properly reflects the balance of the regional membership in respect of industry, geographic spread, ethnicity, gender, disability, youth and sexual orientation. Appointments made under this rule will be made in line with guidance issued by the Central Executive Council.

7 Each branch will be invited to nominate one further delegate to be considered by the regional committee in appointing delegates under clause 6 of this Rule, and in appointing delegates to make up any shortfall in the delegation following the election process in clause 5 of this Rule. In making these appointments, the regional committee may also consider members recommended by other committees, forums or post-holders within the Region.

8 The following will take part in the Congress and will have the right to speak but not to vote.

- Central Executive Council members
- The general secretary and treasurer
- Regional secretaries
- Section national secretaries
- National industrial officers
- General member auditors

Rule A3

Clause 2

Delete clause and replace with:

"2 National conferences will be held every two years during a break in GMB Congress. There will be one regional delegate for every 1,500 financial members of the section in each region. Delegations will be made up of Congress delegates who are members of the section, together with any additional delegates required to reflect the numerical strength of the section in each region. Delegates will hold office for two years."

Rule will now read

Rule A3 Section national conferences

1 We will hold a national conference for the members of each section every two years. The conferences will report to and advise the Central Executive Council and the union negotiators, and all decisions of the

conferences must be approved by the Central Executive Council and Congress. The conferences must not consider any matter Congress is responsible for. The Central Executive Council and Congress may, from time to time, issue guidelines on what matters the conferences can consider.

2 National conferences will be held every two years during a break in GMB Congress. There will be one regional delegate for every 1,500 financial members of the section in the each region. Delegations will be made up of Congress delegates who are members of the section, together with any additional delegates required to reflect the numerical strength of the section in each region. Delegates will hold office for two years.

3 A section national president will be elected in 2008 and at every second Section Conference from then on, from among the members of the Section Conference elected in line with rule A3.2 for that year, and from the members of the Section National Committee. The section president will hold office for four years, chair the Section Conference after that at which they are elected and be eligible to be nominated and re-elected after their four-year term of office. During their term of office the section president will chair all meetings of the Section National Committee.