

Participating in Congress: Quick Guide

22/05/2020



How Online Congress Works

Congress is going to be very different this year, but we can still have great debates and keep the spirit of USI's student democracy alive. We'd ask for your support and patience to make this work and apologise in advance for any WiFi and/or technology issues. **Please consider printing this short document** or having it open on another screen to ensure you know how to get to speak, how to vote, time limits, how to make points of order and information etc.

Who is in charge of debate at Congress?

Steering Committee is.

Steering Committee is responsible for ensuring that things run smoothly and that motions are discussed fairly and properly. They do not vote and they are not members of any delegation. Steering Committee enforces the rules which Congress have adopted: they do not make the rules. Their responsibility at Congress is to preside over the various sessions of debate and to ensure that speakers are not improperly interrupted. They also enforce time limits or other regulations and ensure that votes are carried out properly. As this

year's Congress is online, the role of Steering is a little different than usual. The three members of Steering that will be running each session are as follows:

Chairperson Role - Colm

The Chairperson calls on delegates to speak and takes the vote for each motion and announces the result. Message the Chairperson in relation to Points of Order and Points of Information.

Deputy Chairperson Role - Aodhán

The Deputy Chairperson looks after the timing of speeches and organises Procedural Motions. Message the Deputy Chairperson if you wish to raise a procedural motion, (please check notes on Procedural Motions below).

Speaking Co-ordinator Role - Cathy

The speaking Co-Ordinator will update the list of upcoming speakers for future motions.

Message the Speaking Co-ordinator if you want to speak next in relation to a motion AND let them know what side you want to speak on: i.e. if you wish to speak in Proposition or Opposition.

Guidance to Delegates

How long can Delegates speak on motions:

- Proposition Speaker: 3 minutes (Steering will already have this person's name already)
- Opposition Speaker: 2 minutes
- Proposition Speaker: 2 minutes
- Opposition Speaker: 2 minutes

After the second Opposition Speaker, the motion then goes back to the first Proposition Speaker. They have 1 minute to summarize their arguments before the vote takes place. They may choose to transfer that opportunity to another speaker who is in favour of the motion but they must let the Speaking Co-ordinator know before being called on to speak if they wish to transfer the right to summarize the arguments. Alternatively, they may simply say 'Formal' or 'Foirmeálta' if they feel all the arguments have been addressed and want to proceed directly to the vote.

How Can I Speak on a Motion?

All delegates had an opportunity to pre-register for a speaking slot on each motion. If you haven't pre-registered you may still speak on a motion if there are any slots remaining. Each motion will have up to 4 speakers, up to 2 for and up to 2 against. You can indicate at any time that you wish to speak on a motion by messaging the Speaking Co-ordinator and letting them know that you want to speak for or against a motion. Before your time comes to speak, please click on the 🖐️ icon in the chat

window so steering committee can unmute you.

How can I applaud or express support for a speaker?



In the chat window, you can see a small 'thumbs up' icon, clicking this will allow the speaker to see you approve/agree with their speech, alternatively, you can click on the three dots for further options and then click the applause icon.

How Do I Vote on a Motion?

When a vote is called by the Chairperson on a procedural or substantive motion, a box will appear on the screen. The Chairperson will allow 60 seconds for all delegates to vote on Constitutional Amendments and 30 seconds for all other votes. After voting has concluded, the Chairperson will announce the result.


If you are having any difficulty voting on a motion please see the section on technical difficulties below.

How do I raise a Point of Information?

You can raise a Point of Information by typing 'POINT OF INFORMATION' into the chat menu as a direct message to the Chairperson and clicking on the 'Raise Your Hand' icon so Steering Committee can unmute you. The Chairperson will then interrupt the speaker asking if they wish to

accept the Point of Information.. If the Speaker chooses to accept the Point of Information the Chairperson will enable the microphone for the person for 15 seconds to make their Point of Information. The Chairperson will not allow Points of Information in the first or last 30 seconds of any speech.

How do I raise a Point of Order?

You can raise a Point of Order by typing 'POINT OF ORDER' into the chat menu as a direct message to the Chairperson and clicking on the  icon so Steering Committee can unmute you. The Chairperson will then interrupt debate and enable your microphone to allow you to make your Point of Order. Points of Order can only be made in relation to the conduct of a debate.

Who attends Congress?

Congress is composed of the current Executive Team Officerboard and delegates from each Member Organisation (MO) whose affiliation fees have been paid. The number of delegates from each MO varies according to the number of students registered in that Students' Union.

How do debates work and who proposes the motions?

The Officer or MO who put the motion forward initially, normally proposes the motions in each session. If the people who initially wrote the motion isn't ready to speak, or don't want to speak, any delegate can start the debate by proposing the motion after clicking the 'Raise your hand' icon and being called on by the Chairperson. Once a motion is proposed, it

is then open to the floor for discussion unless there are slots already booked by speakers. If no-one is willing to propose a motion, it automatically falls.

How often can I speak?

Unless you are the person who proposed the motion, you can only speak once on any motion. There are two speech slots for and two speech slots against each motion. You can speak on as many motions as you wish during Congress if there are slots available and you are called by the Chairperson. If you proposed a motion, or if you have an amendment to a motion successfully passed, then you can also summate before a vote is taken.


What procedural motions can be put?

To help ensure that debates run smoothly and as quickly as possible, procedural motions exist. All procedural motions must be notified to the Deputy Chairperson who will announce over chat that a procedural motion has been called. Once notification of a procedural motion has been served anybody who wishes to speak against a procedural motion can message "against" to the Deputy Chairperson, first come first served. Proposers and opposers of procedural motions will have 30 seconds to speak. Procedural motions will only be taken after a motion has been proposed and inbetween speakers. The following are the procedural motions and their effect, if passed:

(A) THAT THE QUESTION NOW BE PUT

If passed, the Proposer will summarise and then an immediate vote will be taken.


Method: Message "9A" to Deputy

Chairperson, click on the  icon and wait to be called.

(B) THAT THE QUESTION NOT BE PUT

If passed, no vote will be taken on the matter under discussion.


Method: Message "9B" to Deputy

Chairperson, click on the  icon and wait to be called.

(C) THAT THE QUESTION BE TAKEN IN PARTS

If passed, divides the motion or amendment into specified sections to be voted on individually. Used if there are sections that you do not agree with.

Method: Message "9C" to Deputy


Chairperson and click on the  icon. You must include the full details of which exact parts you want to split the motion in to or it will not be accepted. Please allow adequate time as Steering will have to notify all delegates of the changes.

(D) THAT THE MATTER BE REFERRED BACK

If passed, refers the matter back to a specified time or a specified Officer, or a specified Committee, or to a National Council. It is therefore not voted upon at Congress.

Method: Message "9D" to Deputy


Chairperson stating where you would like

to refer back to, click on the  icon and wait to be called.

(E) A CHALLENGE TO THE CHAIRPERSON'S RULING

If passed, the Chairperson must change his or her ruling on an issue in accordance with the motion.


Method: Message "9E" to Deputy

Chairperson, click on the  icon and wait to be called.

(F) NO CONFIDENCE IN THE CHAIRPERSON

If passed, the Chairperson will vacate the Chair for the remainder of the session and will be replaced by another member of Steering Committee.

Method: Message "9F" to Deputy

Chairperson, click on the  icon and wait to be called.

Technical Difficulties

General: We advise signing into Zoom via the desktop client as opposed to a web browser version.

Voting: If you are having technical difficulties and a box is not appearing on your screen to vote, make sure you are signed into zoom from a unique account.

Help: Help is available for further technical difficulties, email congress@usi.ie