

## 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 privately using the in chat function in Zoom 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 privately using the in chat function in Zoom if you wish to raise a procedural motion, (please check notes on Procedural Motions below).

### Speaking Co-ordinator Role - Nora

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

Message the Speaking Co-ordinator privately using the in chat function in Zoom in 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.

## Timing & Support – Cathy



Cathy, as Deputy Chair of the National Council, will be supporting the Steering Committee with timing and queries on the constitution of USI.

### How long can Delegates speak on motions:

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

**Speakers who wish to speak as Gaeilge agus as Béarla, will have 1 additional minute for their speeches.** 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 'raise your hand'  icon in the chat window so steering committee can unmute you. You will find the  icon by either clicking on the three dots beside your name in the participants tab or in the 'reactions' section at the bottom of your screen. When you finish speaking, it is important to lower your hand again. You can do that by following the same process for raising your hand.

Each speaker must say their name and the name of their Students' Union at the beginning of each speech, each time they speak.

## 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 or the 'reactions' section 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 above.

## 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.

A point of information is a question or a statement, that is raised while another delegate is speaking. The person speaking does not have to accept the Point of Information.

## 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.

**An example of where a delegate may call a Point of Order is if the Chair calls on another speaker in favour directly after a speaker in favour if there is an opposer waiting to speak.**

## Who attends Congress?

Congress is composed of the current Executive Team 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 are not 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, on a first come first served basis. 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 in-between speakers. The following are the procedural motions and their effect, if passed:

(A) THAT THE QUESTION NOW BE PUT

A delegate can call for a 9A if they wish for the debate to finish and a vote to be called without any further speakers on either side of the debate being called.

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

Method: Message "9A" to Deputy Chairperson, click on the 'raise hand' icon and wait to be called.

(B) THAT THE QUESTION NOT BE PUT

A delegate can call for a 9B if they wish for the debate to finish and for no vote on the motion to take place.

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

A delegate can call a 9C if they wish to have the motion divided into parts and for a vote on each part separately. Congress will then decide if they wish to keep any/all 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 'raise hand' 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

A delegate can call for a 9D if they wish for the debate to finish and a further discussion to take place at a different point.

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 'raise hand' icon and wait to be called.

#### (E) A CHALLENGE TO THE CHAIRPERSON'S RULING

A delegate can call for a 9E if they believe the Chairperson has made an incorrect ruling on an issue in relation to a motion.

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

A delegate can call a 9F against the Chair when they feel the Chairperson no longer has the confidence of the delegates.

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 'raise hand' icon and wait to be called.