

RULES OF ORGANISATION AND PROCEDURE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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Chapter One GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1. The National Assembly shall organise and perform its work in accordance with the Constitution and the provisions of these Rules.

Article 2. The National Assembly shall sit in the building of the National Assembly located in the capital, unless it decides, on account of exceptional circumstances, to sit elsewhere.

Chapter Two CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND CHANGES OF THE MANAGEMENT

Article 3. (1) The first session of the National Assembly shall be opened by the oldest Member present. The latter shall chair the session until the election of the President of the National Assembly has been announced.

(2) The Members of the National Assembly shall take the oath laid down in Article 76(2) of the Constitution by reading the text loud, in witness of which they shall sign the text of the oath.

Article 4. (1) Under the chairmanship of the oldest Member, solely debates on the election of a President of the National Assembly shall be held and the election itself shall be performed.

(2) At the first session of the National Assembly, the Members shall adopt rules of procedure concerning the election of a President and Vice Presidents of the National Assembly.

Article 5. (1) The term of office of the President and any Vice President of the National Assembly may be prematurely terminated in cases where:

1. they so request;

2. a written proposal is submitted by not less than one third of all Members where there is an obvious incapability of fulfilling their duties, or systematic abuse of power, or systematic failure to fulfil the duties in their area of competence.

3. a written proposal is submitted by the parliamentary group formed by the parliamentary party or coalition they are nominated by.

(2) The term of office of the Vice Presidents of the National Assembly shall be prematurely terminated where they leave the parliamentary group or upon being expelled from it, as well as in cases where the parliamentary group has ceased to exist.

(3) In the cases referred to in paragraph 1, item 1 and paragraph 2, the dismissal shall be announced being debated and voted.

(4) In the cases referred to in paragraph 1, items 2 and 3, the proposal shall be put to the vote at the first session following the proposal submission date, allowing the person concerned the right to a hearing. The proposal shall be deemed adopted if it has been supported by more than one half of the Members of the National Assembly present.

(5) In the event of a premature termination of a term of office as per paragraph 1 or 2, new elections shall be held within 14 days from the adoption of the decision, in accordance with the rules of procedure adopted by the National Assembly. Pending the new elections for President of the National Assembly, the latter shall be chaired by the Vice President designated by the largest parliamentary party or coalition that has been registered in the Central Election Commission as an individual participant during the last parliamentary elections.

Article 6. The National Assembly shall elect 8 secretaries from among the Members.

Article 7. At subsequent sessions, the National Assembly shall elect Standing Committees.

Chapter Three

GOVERNANCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Article 8. (1) The President of the National Assembly, acting in accordance with the powers under Article 77(1) and Article 78, item 1 of the Constitution, shall:

1. announce the bills and other proposals submitted to the National Assembly and allocate them to its Committees in accordance with their subject;

2. authenticate the content of the acts adopted by the National Assembly;

3. ensure appropriate conditions for the work of the Committees and of the Members of the National Assembly;

4. establish, in coordination with the Conference of the Presidents, rules of procedure as regards the National Assembly premises and the use of facilities;

5. coordinate the elaboration, implementation and reporting of the National Assembly budget;
6. authenticate by his/her signature the verbatim reports from the National Assembly sessions;
7. monitor the publication of the State Gazette and other powers pursuant to the State Gazette Act;
8. establish, in coordination with the Conference of the Presidents, the seating arrangements in the plenary for the Members of the National Assembly, allocated by Parliamentary Group, for the Members of the Council of Ministers, and for the President and the Vice President of the Republic;
9. may require from the National Assembly secretaries, once voting has taken place, information about Members who have voted using other Members' voting cards, except in the cases referred to in Article 63(3);
10. ensure and monitor the compliance with these Rules;
11. approve the uniform staffing plan at the National Assembly and the staffing of the respective departments;
12. appoint and dismiss the Secretary General of the National Assembly, the officials of the President's Office, as well as the officials of the Vice Presidents offices and of the parliamentary groups, subject to the relevant proposals;
13. endorse Operational Rules for the National Assembly Administration;
14. coordinate the internal and external security of the National Assembly within his/her area of responsibility;
15. appoint and dismiss the quaestors of the National Assembly;
16. perform other functions as assigned to him/her pursuant to the Constitution, the law and these Rules.

(2) The Vice Presidents of the National Assembly shall assist the President and carry out the tasks he/she has assigned to them.

(3) The President of the National Assembly, in coordination with the Conference of the Presidents, appoints by written order the Vice Presidents who are to take part in the chairmanship of the relevant weekly sessions of the National Assembly. The president seats are taken by the Vice Presidents so appointed.

(4) Should the President of the National Assembly decide to delegate on a permanent basis the performance of his/her functions under paragraph 1 to the Vice Presidents, he/she shall issue a written order for the allocation of these functions among them.

(5) For the periods of his/her absence, the President of the National Assembly shall appoint an Acting President from among the Vice Presidents; where he/she fails to do so, he/she shall be replaced by the Vice President designated by the largest parliamentary party or coalition that has been registered in the Central Election Commission as an individual participant during the last parliamentary elections.

(6) Should the President take part in debates on a certain matter, the session shall be chaired by a Vice President designated by him/her. In such case, the President

may not take over the chairmanship of the session before the voting or the debate on this matter has completed.

(7) The President of the National Assembly shall have the right to establish a Consultative Council on Legislation. The organization, functions and composition of this Council shall be governed by rules approved by the President of the National Assembly. The sessions of this Council may be attended by representatives of non-profit legal entities performing public benefit activities.

Article 9. (1) The President of the National Assembly shall be assisted by the Conference of the Presidents comprised of the Vice Presidents of the National Assembly and the Parliamentary Group Leaders or their duly mandated alternates.

(2) The Conference of the Presidents shall:

1. conduct consultations on the drafts of the National Assembly legislative programme and on the sessions' agendas;
2. periodically inquire, but not less than once a month, about the implementation of the legislative programme and about the Committees' work on bills and draft decisions, statements and addresses as assigned to them;
3. contribute to achieving consensus in cases of conflicts of interests between different parliamentary groups, as well as with regards to procedural and organizational matters related to the National Assembly work.

(3) The Conference of the Presidents shall be convened by the President of the National Assembly on his initiative or at the request of one-third of its members.

Article 10. The Secretaries of the National Assembly shall:

1. inform the Chairperson of the Members' attendance at the sessions of the National Assembly and assist him/her in performing quorum checks;
2. where electronic voting system is used, except in the cases referred to in Article 63(3), assist in the prevention and sanctioning of unauthorized use of other Members' voting cards,
3. where a vote is taken by a show of hands, without using electronic voting equipment, count the votes and report the result to the Chairperson;
4. where a vote is taken by secret ballot, render the relevant technical assistance;
5. where a vote is taken by roll call, call the roll;
6. verify and sign the verbatim reports of the sessions they attended;
7. perform such other tasks as may be assigned to them by the Chairperson in connection with the activity of the National Assembly.

Article 11. The Quaestors of the National Assembly shall:

1. follow the Chairperson's directions for the purpose of maintaining order in the plenary and its galleries;
2. assist the Secretaries of the National Assembly in counting the votes where a vote by a show of hands is taken; in the technical organization of secret ballots; and in the prevention of unauthorized use of other Members' voting cards where an electronic vote is taken, except in the cases referred to in Article 63(3);
3. ensure that only Members of the National Assembly, Members of the Council of

Ministers, and persons authorised by the National Assembly are present in the plenary.

Chapter Four PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

Article 12. (1) Members of the National Assembly may form parliamentary groups.

(2) No fewer than 10 Members of the National Assembly shall be required for a Parliamentary Group to be formed.

(3) If the membership of a Parliamentary Group falls below the required minimum, the Group shall cease to exist.

(4) The Members of a Parliamentary Group that has ceased to exist shall become unaffiliated Members of the National Assembly and shall neither join another Parliamentary Group, nor form a new one.

Article 13. (1) Each Parliamentary Group shall submit to the President of the National Assembly the decision for its constitution and a list of its managerial staff and members duly signed by all the members of the Group.

(2) The Parliamentary Groups, their managerial staff and all the changes of the latter shall be recorded in a special register of the National Assembly.

(3) The President of the National Assembly shall announce the Parliamentary Groups so registered and their managerial staff at a plenary session. Every change in the composition of a Parliamentary Group shall be announced by the President of the National Assembly at a plenary session.

(4) The permanent assistants of the Parliamentary Groups shall be appointed officials of the National Assembly. Their number shall be determined by the President based on a 1:10 ratio in accordance with the membership of the Parliamentary Groups, but shall not be less than 2 persons per Parliamentary Group. Where the membership of a Parliamentary Group is not a multiple of 10, the number of the permanent assistants of the Group shall be rounded up to the next greater multiple of 10.

Article 14. (1) No Member of the National Assembly may belong to more than one Parliamentary Group.

(2) The terms and conditions for affiliation, membership and withdrawal from membership in a Parliamentary Group, as well as the rights and obligations of the members shall be determined by the Group itself, in keeping with these Rules.

(3) A Member of the National Assembly may quit his/her Parliamentary Group by addressing his/her resignation in writing to the leader of the Group and to the President of the National Assembly, the resignation itself being announced at a plenary session.

(4) Where a Member of the National Assembly leaves a Parliamentary Group or is expelled therefrom, he/she shall lose his/her post in the Standing Committees as a representative of the relevant Parliamentary Group, in the National Assembly delegations, and other elected offices at the National Assembly.

(5) A Member of the National Assembly who has quit or has been expelled from a Parliamentary Group shall become an unaffiliated Member of the National Assembly and may not claim or acquire membership in another Parliamentary Group.

(6) Members of the European Parliament for the Republic of Bulgaria shall also be entitled to take part in the work of the Parliamentary Groups with an advisory vote.

Article 15. Unaffiliated Members of the National Assembly may not form Parliamentary Groups. Existing Parliamentary Groups may not be merged or divided.

Chapter Five

COMMITTEES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Article 16. (1) The National Assembly shall elect from among its Members Standing and Temporary Committees.

(2) The National Assembly Standing Committees shall be the following:

1. Economic Policy and Tourism Committee;
2. Energy Committee;
3. Budget and Finance Committee;
4. Legal Affairs Committee;
5. Regional Policy, Public Works and Local Self-Government Committee;
6. Foreign Policy Committee;
7. Defence Committee;
8. Internal Security and Public Order Committee;
9. Agriculture and Foods Committee;
10. Labour, Social and Demographic Policy Committee;
11. Education and Science Committee;
12. Children, Youth and Sports Committee;
13. Healthcare Committee;
14. Environment and Water Committee;
15. Transport, Information Technologies and Communications Committee;
16. Culture and Media Committee;
17. Interaction with Non-Governmental Organizations and Citizens' Complaints Committee;
18. Religious Denominations and Human Rights Committee;
19. Anti-Corruption, Conflict of Interests and Parliamentary Ethics Committee;

20. European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee;
21. Committee for Oversight of the Security Services, the Deployment of Special Surveillance Techniques and the Access of Data under the Electronic Communications Act;
22. Committee on Supervision of the State Committee on Energy and Water Regulation.

(3) The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall report to the National Assembly on the performance of the duty of the Council of Ministers to ensure prior awareness in the cases where the latter takes part in EU acts drafting and adoption. The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall also draw up reports on other acts of the European Union institutions.

(4) The National Assembly may adopt changes concerning the type, number and composition of the Standing Committees.

Article 17. (1) The Committee for Oversight of the Security Services, the Deployment of Special Surveillance Techniques and the Access of Data under the Electronic Communications Act shall:

1. exercise parliamentary oversight with regards to the work of the security services;
2. adopt statements regarding the budgets of the security services;
3. adopt, within 14 days following its election, internal rules of procedure to be endorsed by the National Assembly;
4. carry out parliamentary oversight and monitoring, as provided for by the Special Surveillance Techniques Act and the Electronic Communications Act, with respect to the procedures of:
 - a) authorization, application and use of special surveillance techniques, storage and disposal of data obtained thereby, as well as protection of civil rights and freedoms against illegal use of special surveillance techniques;
 - b) authorization and provision of access to data under the Electronic Communications Act, as well as protection of civil rights and freedoms against illegal access to such data.

(2) On an annual basis, not later than May 31st of each year, the Committee shall submit to the National Assembly a report on its work as per paragraph 1, item 4, which shall contain summarized information about:

1. the authorization, application and use of special surveillance techniques, the storage and disposal of data obtained thereby, and the protection of civil rights and freedoms against illegal use of special surveillance techniques;
2. any inspections and proposals performed in view of improving the procedures of data storage and processing under the Electronic Communications Act.

(3) The President of the National Assembly shall keep the President and the Prime Minister apprised of the Committee's decisions and statements.

Article 18. The Anti-Corruption, Conflict of Interests and Parliamentary Ethics

Committee shall be formed on the principle of parity, comprising two Members of the National Assembly from each Parliamentary Group.

Article 19. (1) A Member of the National Assembly may be elected member of no more than two Standing Committees.

(2) A Member of the National Assembly may be elected Chairperson of one Standing Committee only.

(3) The President and the Vice Presidents of the National Assembly may not be elected managerial staff of the Standing Committees.

Article 20. (1) The composition of the Standing Committees shall still be determined in proportion to the size of the Parliamentary Groups, with the exception of the Standing Committee as per Article 16, paragraph 2, item 19.

(2) The management body of each Standing Committee shall comprise a Chairperson and up to four Deputy Chairpersons. The management body of a Standing Committee shall organise its work on the basis of the information received by the Committee.

(3) The managerial staff and the members of the Standing Committees shall be elected subject to a proposal submitted by the Parliamentary Groups or by an individual Member of the National Assembly by an open vote en bloc, unless objections are raised against any of the nominees.

(4) The Chairperson shall chair meetings and maintain contacts with the Chairpersons of other committees and with the President of the National Assembly.

(5) For the periods of his/her absence, the Chairperson shall authorize one of the deputy Chairpersons to preside over the Committee meetings. In the absence of such authorization, the President of the National Assembly shall authorize one of the Vice Presidents to chair the Committee meeting.

Article 21. Members of the European Parliament for the Republic of Bulgaria may take part in the meetings of the Parliamentary Committees with an advisory vote.

Article 22. (1) The term of office of the Chairperson and of the Deputy Chairpersons of the Standing Committees shall be prematurely terminated if:

1. they so request;
2. a proposal has been filed by more than half of the Committee members, where there is an obvious incapability of fulfilling their duties for a period of 6 months, or systematic abuse of power, or systematic failure to fulfil the duties;
3. a written proposal has been filed by the Parliamentary Group they originate from.

(2) The term of office of the Chairperson and of the Deputy Chairpersons of the Standing Committees shall be prematurely terminated where they have left the Parliamentary Group they originate from or the Parliamentary Group in question has ceased to exist.

(3) The term of office of the members of the Standing Committees shall be prematurely terminated if:

1. they so request;

2. a written proposal has been filed by the Parliamentary Group they originate from.

(4) In the cases referred to in paragraph 1, item 1, paragraph 2, and paragraph 3, item 1, such termination of office shall be announced without being subject to debate or voting, whereas in the cases referred to in paragraph 1, item 2 and 3, and paragraph 3, item 2, it shall be endorsed by a decision of the National Assembly.

(5) In the cases referred to in paragraph 1, item 2, the Parliamentary Committee shall rule on the proposal by a majority of more than one half of its members.

Article 23. (1) The Standing Committees may adopt their internal rules of procedure in line with these Rules and are to publish them in the section of the relevant Committee on the website of the National Assembly.

(2) Any costs pertinent to the work of the Standing Committees of the National Assembly shall be subject to approval by the President of the National Assembly on the proposal of the Committees' management bodies.

Article 24. (1) The Standing Committees may form subcommittees and working groups comprised of their own members.

(2) A standing Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee to the Budget and Finance Committee shall be established.

(3) A standing Subcommittee for Monitoring the Work in the Area of Consumer Protection and Prevention of Monopolistic Activities to the Economic Policy and Tourism Committee shall be established.

(4) The Standing Committees may set up public councils comprising members of non-governmental organizations that would play an advisory role in their work.

Article 25. (1) For the purposes of the work of the Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee and upon request by the Chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee, the first level authorizing officers shall prepare reports on the implementation of specific budgets and programmes, which shall be submitted to the subcommittee within the deadlines specified in the request. Reports on the operation of extrabudgetary accounts and funds may also be reviewed in accordance with this procedure.

(2) The first level authorizing officer, the President of the National Audit Office and the Minister of Finance or their deputies, as well as other persons invited by the Subcommittee Chairperson, may take part in the Subcommittee meetings.

(3) Following the deliberations on the report, the Subcommittee Chairperson shall draw up a report containing an evaluation of the budget execution, which shall be submitted to the Budget and Finance Committee and to the Members of the National Assembly.

Article 26. (1) The Standing Committees shall review bills, the Annual Programme under Article 111, draft resolutions, declarations and addresses, and other proposals as may be assigned to them by the President of the National Assembly, and shall prepare reports, proposals and statements about them.

(2) The Standing Committee shall evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the laws.

(3) The Standing Committees shall, each in accordance with its area of competence, exercise periodic control as regards the utilization rate and the expedient and legitimate use of the financial resources of the European Union programmes and funds.

(4) The state authorities, the officials of the state and municipal administration, and the citizens shall be obliged to make available, on request, any information and documents, as well as statements, required for the activities of the Standing Committees.

(5) The Chairperson shall be obliged, on request by one-third of the Committee members, to address forthwith an invitation to the relevant state authorities and officials of the state and municipal administration to attend a meeting of the Committee. The invited parties shall be obliged to appear before the Committee and to present the requested information as well as to answer any questions addressed to them within 7 days from receipt of the invitation or at the first regular meeting, should the latter fall on a date following the expiry of the 7-day period in question.

Article 27. (1) In the course of the last hour and a half of the meetings of the Standing Committees, on the first Wednesday and Thursday of each month, the relevant line ministers shall appear before the respective Committees and shall answer topical verbal questions asked by members of the Committee during the meeting itself. The questions raised must refer to specific policies and may not require the provision of detailed numerical data.

(2) Each Committee member from each Parliamentary Group shall be entitled to two topical verbal questions, whereas unaffiliated Members of the National Assembly shall be entitled to a total of two questions.

(3) The line minister to whom a question is addressed must reply immediately upon taking the question. In the event of absence of a minister for valid reasons, the Committee shall, in coordination with him/her, schedule the meeting at which the minister will answer topical verbal questions.

(4) The procedure for asking topical questions as per paragraph 1 shall be established in accordance with the size of the parliamentary groups in descending order, unaffiliated Members being the last in line. Second questions are to be asked in the same order following the completion of the first questions procedure.

(5) The time for posing a single question shall be limited to 2 minutes. A minister's reply to a question shall be limited to 3 minutes. A Member of the National Assembly asking a question shall be entitled to a rejoinder of up to 2 minutes, and the responding minister, to a counter-rejoinder, also of up to 2 minutes.

Article 28. (1) The meetings of the Standing Committees can be ordinary as well as extraordinary.

(2) The Committees shall determine, on a discretionary basis, the agenda,

frequency and duration of their meetings.

(3) A meeting of a Standing Committee shall be convened by its Chairperson, on his/her initiative, or on the request by no less than one-third of its members, or by the President of the National Assembly.

Article 29. (1) The meetings of the Standing Committees shall be open. By decision of a Standing Committee, a live transmission of its meeting shall be performed on the website of the National Assembly.

(2) The Standing Committees may decide that individual meetings be held in camera.

(3) The meetings of the Committee for Oversight of the Security Services, the Deployment of Special Surveillance Techniques and the Access of Data under the Electronic Communications Act shall be held in camera. Individual meetings of this Committee may, at its discretion, be open.

(4) By way of exception, the Standing Committees may hold open meetings outside the capital.

Article 30. (1) Citizens may attend the Committee meetings in compliance with the National Assembly access policy as established in the Committees. The list of the attendees shall be an inseparable part of the minutes.

(2) Representatives of trade unions, professional and industrial organizations may lodge written statements and may, on their initiative, attend sessions of the Committees and participate in debates on National Assembly draft acts which concern their business activity, in keeping with the established rules of procedure of the Committees. Such statements shall be posted in the section of the relevant Committee on the website of the National Assembly.

(3) Any member of a Standing Committee may invite individual natural persons or representatives of legal entities interested in the debated issues to attend the meeting. The list of the attendees shall be an inseparable part of the minutes.

(4) Accredited and other journalists who have been granted access may attend the open meetings of the National Assembly Standing Committees.

(5) Members of the National Assembly who are not members of the respective Standing Committee may attend all its meetings in a non-voting capacity.

(5) Standing Committees may decide that individual meetings be held in camera.

(6) The attendance of Members of the National Assembly in closed meetings of Committees they are not members of, as well as the documents and the topics they have become familiar with, shall be recorded in a special protocol to be signed by them.

(7) The participants in Committee meetings shall comply with the requirements pertaining to the protection of classified information and data as per the Personal Data Protection Act, as well as of information pertaining to the citizens' private life and reputation.

Article 31. (1) The Standing Committees Chairpersons shall post notices specifying the agenda, time and venue of the meetings at specially designated points in the

premises of the National Assembly or shall submit them in person to the Committee members, who shall acknowledge receipt by signature. The agenda for the ordinary meetings of the Committee shall be announced not later than three days prior to the date of the meeting, including by way of a notice posted on the website of the National Assembly. In case of an extraordinary meeting, the agenda shall be announced along with scheduling the meeting.

(2) For a meeting of a Standing Committee to take place, more than one half of the Committee members shall attend. If there is no quorum at the appointed time for opening the meeting, the Committee may proceed with the meeting if at least one-third of its members are present.

(3) Where a Committee debates bills or other acts at its meetings, it shall hear the sponsor of the bill or act. Where a bill is sponsored by the Council of Ministers, the Committee shall hear, at its meeting, a member of the Council of Ministers or a deputy Minister.

(4) The decisions of the Standing Committees shall be adopted by a majority vote of the attending members.

Article 32. (1) The Committees may hold joint meetings to discuss common issues. Such meetings shall be presided over by one of the Chairpersons designated by mutual consent.

(2) In the case of joint meetings, each Committee shall adopt a separate decision on the matter at hand. In the case of dissent, each Committee shall submit a separate report to the National Assembly.

Article 33. (1) The reports of the Standing Committees shall be prepared by the Committee Chairpersons or by a rapporteur appointed by the relevant Committee.

(2) The report shall set out the decision adopted by the Committee and the dissenting views while stating the number of members supporting each view.

(3) Reports from the open meetings of the Standing Committees shall be made public and available in accordance with the established procedure, as well as accessible in the Committee's section of the National Assembly website.

Article 34. (1) A summary record of the meetings of the Standing Committees shall be drawn up, setting out all the decisions made.

(2) Shorthand record shall be kept for the meetings of the draft legislation Committee in charge. These records shall be signed by the Committee Chairperson and the minute taker and shall be posted in the Committee's section of the National Assembly website within 7 days from the date of the meeting.

(3) The records of the Standing Committees' meetings held in camera shall be subject to a special procedure as regards storage, reporting and access, in compliance with requirements of the Classified Information Protection Act.

Article 35. (1) Temporary Committees shall be appointed ad hoc to investigate particular matters and to conduct enquiries.

(2) Temporary Committees shall be elected by the National Assembly subject to a proposal by the President or by no less than one-fifth of the Members of the

National Assembly.

(3) The activity, size, composition and term of office of the Temporary Committees shall be determined by the National Assembly.

(4) The rules of procedure of the Standing Committees shall apply also with regards to the Temporary Committees.

(5) The Temporary Committees shall be dissolved upon expiry of their term of office or earlier, by a decision of the National Assembly.

Article 36. (1) The National Assembly shall elect from among its Members the Assembly's permanent delegations to international organizations.

(2) The composition of the National Assembly's permanent delegations to international organizations shall be determined in proportion to the size of the Parliamentary Groups.

(3) Where a Parliamentary Group has ceased to exist, its representative in the permanent delegations shall be dismissed.

(4) The permanent delegations shall report to the President of the National Assembly.

Chapter Six

RELATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Article 37. (1) The Interaction with Non-Governmental Organizations and Citizens' Complaints Committee shall:

1. pursue dialogue and interaction with representatives of non-governmental organizations, including by means of conducting public hearings on issues of considerable public interest; carry out parliamentary and civil oversight of the operation of the activities of the state regulatory bodies by means of public hearings; the findings and conclusions of such hearings shall be forwarded to the committees in charge;
2. consider proposals for referendums and civil initiatives under the Law on the Direct Participation of Citizens in State Government and Local Self-Government, as well as petitions as per Article 45 of the Constitution;
3. consider citizens' complaints, petitions and proposals as per the Committee's rules of procedure;
4. perform the functions of a Standing Committee as per Chapter Five.

Article 38. A Public Council comprising members of non-governmental organizations shall be established as an advisory body of the Interaction with Non-Governmental Organizations and Citizens' Complaints Committee. The composition and staffing of the Council shall be determined by a set of rules adopted by the Committee. These rules shall be posted in the Committee's section on the National Assembly website.

Article 39. (1) The Interaction with Non-Governmental Organizations and Citizens' Complaints Committee shall operate in accordance with its set of internal rules of procedure, in compliance with these Rules. These rules shall determine the manner of interaction with non-governmental organizations.

(2) Live transmission of the meetings of the Committee shall be performed on the website of the National Assembly.

(3) Every 6 months, the Interaction with Non-Governmental Organizations and Citizens' Complaints Committee shall submit to the National Assembly a report on its activities. This report shall be reviewed in a plenary session.

Article 40. Representatives of non-governmental organizations may lodge written statements and may, on their initiative, attend sessions of the Committees and participate in debates on National Assembly draft acts which concern their business activity, in keeping with the established rules of procedure of the Committees. The list of the attendees shall be an inseparable part of the minutes. The statements shall be published in the relevant Committee's section of the National Assembly website.

Article 41. (1) Non-governmental organizations may submit written statements concerning the bills reviewed by the relevant Committees in charge.

(2) The report by the Committee in charge regarding the first committee vote shall also contain a summary of any statements lodged by non-governmental organizations.

(3) The Chairperson of the Committee in charge may require non-governmental organizations to submit statements regarding proposals filed by Members of the National Assembly for a second vote.

(4) Such statements of non-governmental organizations shall be posted in the section of the Committee in charge on the National Assembly website and circulated among the Committee members.

(5) The Committees shall be obligated to respond to any proposals and complaints submitted by non-governmental organizations.

Article 42. Representatives of non-governmental organizations may participate, through a Member of the National Assembly, in the parliamentary oversight subject to the terms and procedure as per Chapter Nine, as well as attend meetings of the parliamentary committees when the latter conduct hearings in accordance with Chapter Ten and reply to topical verbal questions as per Article 27, in compliance with the National Assembly access policy. The list of the attendees shall be an inseparable part of the minutes.

Chapter Seven

SESSIONS AND MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Article 43. (1) The National Assembly shall hold three plenary sessions per annum.

(2) The National Assembly shall be in recess from December 22nd until January 10th, for 10 days during the Easter Holidays, and from August 1st till August 31st each year.

(3) By way of an exception, the National Assembly may establish other than the above recess periods.

(4) During periods of recess, the time limits under these Rules shall be suspended.

Article 44. (1) The National Assembly shall be convened by its President.

(2) In the cases referred to in Article 78, items 2, 3 and 4 of the Constitution, the President of the National Assembly shall schedule a session not later than seven days following the date of the proposal submission, irrespective of whether the National Assembly is in recess or not.

(3) The authors of the proposal under Article 78 of the Constitution shall be obliged to establish the agenda for the session.

Article 45. (1) The ordinary plenary sessions of the National Assembly shall be held on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9:00 h till 14:00 h. By decision of the National Assembly, these sessions may be extended.

(2) The National Assembly may change the time for its regular sessions.

(3) The National Assembly may decide to hold extraordinary sessions, the agenda for which is to be announced in advance during a plenary session, but on days other than those specified in paragraph 1. Extraordinary sessions may be held at any time in case of exceptional circumstances.

Article 46. (1) The sessions of the National Assembly shall be open.

(2) A person who is not a Member of the National Assembly or a member of the Council of Ministers may attend the sessions at the discretion of the National Assembly, in accordance with rules laid down by the President, taking the seats specifically assigned to them. During the sessions, they must observe the established order and may take the floor only by invitation of the Chairperson.

(3) In case of turmoil or disorder among the audience, the Chairperson shall restore the order through the quaestors and may require that some persons or all external parties leave the chamber.

Article 47. (1) Sessions of the National Assembly shall be held in camera when:

1. important interests of the state so require;
2. debates are taking place on documents classified in accordance with the terms of the Classified Information Protection Act.

(2) A proposal for holding a session in camera may be brought forward by the President of the National Assembly, one-tenth of the Members of the National Assembly, or the Council of Ministers.

(3) When such proposal is brought forward, the Chairperson shall order all external parties to leave the plenary and the galleries and the media to suspend their live

transmission via internet. Having heard the sponsor's motives, the National Assembly shall debate and take a vote on the proposal. Depending on the result of the vote, the session shall continue as either an open or a closed one.

(4) The deliberations and the records of the sessions held in camera shall constitute classified information, thus imposing binding obligations on all Members of the National Assembly and any other persons having access to them.

(5) Resolutions adopted at sessions held in camera shall be made public.

Article 48. (1) The open sessions of the National Assembly shall be broadcast live by the Bulgarian National Radio at a special frequency covering the entire national territory, and shall be covered also by television reports on the Bulgarian National Television. Open plenary sessions of the National Assembly shall be broadcast live on the website of the National Assembly.

(2) Live coverage of plenary sessions on the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio shall be provided at the discretion of the National Assembly.

(3) Plenary sessions at which parliamentary oversight is exercised shall be broadcast live by the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio.

Article 49. (1) The Chairperson shall open a session if more than one half of the Members of the National Assembly are present.

(2) Prior to opening a session, the quorum shall be verified by means of the electronic voting system.

(3) With regards to a vote to be taken, the Chairperson may check the quorum, at his/her discretion or only once per session, on the request of a parliamentary group, by instructing the Secretaries to perform a roll call or a head count of the Members of the National Assembly.

(4) Where the check as per paragraph 3 identifies that there is no quorum in the plenary, the Chairperson may continue, close or suspend the session until the needed quorum is achieved. Where a session continues in the absence of quorum in the plenary, only parliamentary oversight can be carried out, but no voting can take place and no acts can be adopted. If a session is suspended, the Chairperson may resume the session no later than one hour, within business hours, provided that a subsequent check has identified the availability of the needed quorum.

Article 50. (1) Subject to a proposal by the President and following consultations as per Article 9, paragraph 2, item 1, the National Assembly shall adopt a weekly or a biweekly schedule. In drafting such schedules, and in other matters relating to parliamentary proceedings, the President of the National Assembly shall be assisted by the Vice Presidents.

(2) At the end of each session, the Chairperson shall announce the date and time for the next session and its agenda according to the adopted weekly or biweekly schedule.

(3) Proposals by Members of the National Assembly and by Parliamentary Groups

for items to be included in the schedule may be submitted in writing to the President of the National Assembly not later than 18:00 h on the day preceding the session at which the schedule is to be put to a vote. Any Member of the National Assembly shall be entitled to propose one agenda item to be included in a weekly schedule, and up to two agenda items to be included in a biweekly schedule. Where the time limits under Article 75(3) and Article 85(4) have expired, bills and other draft acts of the National Assembly on which no reports have been submitted may also be proposed as agenda items to be included in the schedule.

(4) The draft schedule under paragraph 1 above, as proposed by the President, and any proposals submitted as per paragraph 3 above, shall be put to a vote, without being debated, at the start of the plenary session at which a weekly or a biweekly schedule is to be adopted. No verbal proposals shall be allowed.

(5) In exceptional cases, the Chairperson may propose a change in the agenda at the beginning of a session.

(6) Matters falling out of the scope of the agenda shall not be debated.

(7) Proposals for observing a minute's silence are acceptable only insofar as they have been filed in the National Assembly Registry by 18:00 h on the day preceding the respective plenary session, except in extraordinary circumstances.

(8) Bills and draft resolutions to be included in the agenda of an ordinary plenary session of the National Assembly held on the first Wednesday of each month shall be lodged by the Parliamentary Groups. Proposals shall be submitted to the President of the National Assembly not later than 18:00 h on the previous day. Each Parliamentary Group shall have the right to propose one agenda item. The agenda items shall have an order of precedence according to the size of the relevant Parliamentary Groups. Each subsequent month, the order of precedence of the items proposed by the Parliamentary Groups shall be determined on the basis of a rotation principle. The National Assembly must address the substance of the proposals brought forward. If none of the Parliamentary Groups has made a proposal, the National Assembly shall proceed in accordance with the schedule as per paragraph 1. Where the time limits under Article 75(3) and Article 85(4) have expired, bills and other draft acts of the National Assembly on which no reports have been submitted may also be proposed as agenda items to be included in the schedule.

(9) Once put to vote, the adopted schedule shall be published on the National Assembly website and shall be kept timely updated.

Article 51. (1) The Chairperson shall chair the sessions and shall give the floor to the Members of the National Assembly.

(2) No Member of the National Assembly shall speak unless and until given the floor by the Chairperson.

(3) Any Member of the National Assembly may request the floor by raising a hand, while remaining seated, or by addressing an advance written request.

(4) The Chairperson shall compile a list of speakers and shall determine the order

of precedence:

1. depending on the sequence proposed by the leaders of the Parliamentary Groups on whose behalf the floor has been requested, the representatives of different Parliamentary Groups taking the floor on an alternating basis;
2. depending on the sequence of the requests submitted.

(5) The Chairperson shall give the floor to the Chairpersons of the Parliamentary Groups or, in their absence, to their deputies or Members of the National Assembly duly authorised by them, upon request, during the debate on the agenda and within the time limit allocated to each Group.

(6) Once per session, the Chairperson shall, upon request, give the floor to the Chairpersons of the Parliamentary Groups, their deputies or a Member of the National Assembly authorised by them during the session, on matters outside the scope of the agenda at hand. Such interventions shall be limited to 10 minutes.

Article 52. (1) Members of the National Assembly raising procedural issues shall be given the floor immediately, unless preceded by any request for a rejoinder, counter-rejoinder or justification of a negative vote.

(2) Procedural issues are those by which objection is raised against the terms and conditions for holding the sessions as stipulated by these Rules, or which contain proposals for amending or complementing the adopted agenda, including inter alia:

1. proposals for closing the session;
2. proposals for postponing the session;
3. proposals for closing the debates;
4. proposals for postponing the debates;
5. proposals for postponing the voting.

(3) Procedural issues shall be raised within no more than 2 minutes, without referring to the substance of the matter at hand.

(4) Where a procedural issue concerns the manner of conducting the session, the Chairperson shall be allowed up to 2 minutes for justification.

Article 53. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall only speak from the floor.

(2) In cases where Members of the National Assembly have physical disabilities preventing them from accessing the floor, they shall speak from their seats, whereby all necessary technical facilities shall be immediately made available to them.

Article 54. (1) Should a speaker digress from the matter at hand, the Chairperson shall call him/her to order. Should the infringement persist or be repeated, the Chairperson shall have the right to cut off the speaker.

(2) A Member of the National Assembly may not speak more than once on the substance of one and the same matter.

Article 55. (1) The Chairperson shall set the time limit for debating on each item on the agenda, as well as the date and time that it will be put to a vote. The speaking time shall be allocated among the Parliamentary Groups in proportion to their size, but can be no less than 15 minutes for the smallest Parliamentary Group and no

less than 30 minutes for the largest one. A total of 15 minutes speaking time, or 5 minutes per person, shall be allowed to unaffiliated Members of the National Assembly.

(2) Any Parliamentary Group may request an extension of its speaking time as allocated under paragraph 1, but by no more than one-third thereof. The other Parliamentary Groups shall have the right to a proportionate extension of the time allocated to them.

(3) The speaking time allocated to a Parliamentary Group under paragraph 1 above shall comprise:

1. the total time used by speakers from the Group;
2. the time used by the Chairperson of the Group;
3. the time used by speakers from the Group for making rejoinders and for raising procedural issues, excluding issues concerning the manner of conducting the session.

(4) Members of the National Assembly who wish to express a different opinion from the one of the Parliamentary Group to which they belong shall be allowed up to three interventions to do so. The speaking time of a Member of the National Assembly shall be not more than 3 minutes.

(5) If a Member of the National Assembly exceeds the time allocated in accordance with paragraphs 1-4, the Chairperson, having called him/her to order, shall have the right to cut him/her off.

(6) The procedure laid down in paragraphs 1-5 shall not apply to debates on bills put to a second vote.

Article 56. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall have the right to a rejoinder.

(2) A rejoinder is a brief objection to the substance of a preceding intervention. A rejoinder shall be made immediately after the intervention it addresses and shall be limited to 2 minutes.

(3) No more than three rejoinders may be made to the same intervention.

(4) The speaker to whom a rejoinder has been addressed shall have the right to a counter-rejoinder, limited to 3 minutes, after all rejoinders have been made.

Article 57. (1) Members of the National Assembly who have been offended personally or by means of being referred to by name in an intervention during a plenary session shall be entitled to a personal explanation, limited to 2 minutes.

(2) Members of the National Assembly shall have the right to a justification of a negative vote, limited to 2 minutes, to be made immediately after the vote.

(3) The right to a justification of a negative vote shall be restricted to Members of the National Assembly who have not taken the floor during the debate on the matter in question.

(4) No more than three Members of the National Assembly may be given the floor to justify their negative votes.

(5) No justification of a negative vote shall be allowed after a secret ballot or a vote on a procedural issue.

Article 58. After the list of speakers has been exhausted or representatives of all Parliamentary Groups have spoken according to the time allocation under Article 55, and no requests have been made for time extension, the Chairperson shall close the debate.

Article 59. (1) Where a procedural motion has been made, the floor shall be given to a Member of the National Assembly who disagrees with it. Thereafter, the motion shall be put to a vote immediately, without being debated.

(2) The exercise of the right under paragraph 1 may not prejudice the rights of the Parliamentary Groups under Article 55(1).

Article 60. (1) A session may be closed or suspended by a decision of the National Assembly, subject to a proposal by the Chairperson or by a Parliamentary Group.

(2) Where a proposal for closing the session and a proposal for suspending the session have been submitted simultaneously, the proposal for closing the session shall be put to a vote first.

Article 61. (1) Where the deliberations are disrupted by turmoil or disorder, or where important circumstances so require, the Chairperson may suspend the session for some time.

(2) Any Parliamentary Group may request a suspension of a session for no more than 30 minutes, once per session. The Chairperson shall suspend the session immediately after the request has been made and shall define the duration of the suspension, which may not be less than 15 minutes. Such requests shall be allowed not earlier than one hour from the opening of a session, and not later than one hour before the closing time. The interval between two successive suspensions may not be less than one hour.

Article 62. Members of the Council of Ministers shall be entitled to attend the sessions of the National Assembly. They shall be given the floor whenever they so request. The President of the National Assembly may determine the duration of the Ministers' speaking time.

Article 63. (1) Votes shall be cast in person. Members may vote „in favour“, „against“, or „abstain“. Members shall vote by open ballot. At the discretion of the National Assembly, voting by secret ballot may be performed in some cases.

(2) Voting by open ballot shall be performed by:

1. the electronic voting system;
2. a show of hands;
3. a roll call in alphabetical order whereby Members reply from their seats „for“, „against“, or „I abstain“;
4. handwritten signature;
5. electronic roll call by means of the electronic voting system, with the names of the Members and the result of the vote being shown on the screen.

(3) Where a vote is taken using the electronic voting system, votes shall be recorded through the biometric data of each Member or by means of a system activated by each Member's biometric data.

(4) A vote by secret ballot shall be performed by means of ballot papers.

Article 64. Any Parliamentary Group or no less than one tenth of all Members of the National Assembly may propose voting as per Article 63, paragraph 2, items 3, 4 and 5 or voting by secret ballot. Such proposal shall be put to a vote without being debated. One Member of each Parliamentary Group which objects to the proposal shall be heard.

Article 65. (1) Before the vote, the Chairperson shall invite the Members to take their seats. The time for voting under Article 63, paragraph 2, item 1 shall be limited to 30 seconds, but shall be no less than 15 seconds.

(2) No interventions shall be allowed during voting time.

Article 66. (1) Voting shall be performed in the following order:

1. proposals to be rejected;
2. proposals to be deferred to a subsequent session;
3. proposals for substitution;
4. proposals for amendments;
5. debated wording which may contain editorial changes already approved;
6. proposals for supplements;
7. basic proposal.

(2) Where two or more proposals of the same nature have been made, they shall be put to a vote in the order of their submission.

Article 67. (1) A proposal shall be deemed approved if more than one half of the Members of the National Assembly present have voted in favour, unless otherwise provided by the Constitution.

(2) In the event of a tied vote, the proposal shall be deemed rejected.

Article 68. (1) The result of the vote shall be immediately announced by the Chairperson.

(2) Should the voting procedure or the result thereof be disputed immediately after the vote, the Chairperson shall order that the vote be rerun. The result of the second vote shall be final.

(3) Where a vote is taken using the electronic voting system, printouts of the results shall be made available upon request of the leaders of a Parliamentary Group.

Article 69. The Chairperson may set the date and time for voting on the bills on the weekly schedule debated at first reading.

Article 70. (1) Full shorthand record shall be taken for the sessions of the National Assembly. They shall be drawn up on the day of the session or on the following day at the latest. The minutes shall be signed by the shorthand typists, by the two secretaries in charge and by the Chairperson not later than one week after they have been prepared.

(2) Attached to the shorthand record shall be the text of the bills and the explanatory memorandum, the resolutions and other acts of the National Assembly, and any proposals made in respect thereof, whether presented in plenary or not,

and the computer printouts of the electronic voting system.

(3) The shorthand record of the plenary sessions which were not held in camera, as well as a printout of the vote taken using the electronic voting system, shall be published within 7 days on the website of the National Assembly.

Article 71. Any Member of the National Assembly may review the shorthand record of his/her speeches and demand the rectification of errors therein within three days following the drafting of the shorthand record. Any dispute as may arise shall be resolved by the Chairperson after being reported by the Secretaries in charge and the shorthand typists, in the presence of the Member concerned.

Article 72. (1) Corrections of any factual errors in the acts of the National Assembly not yet promulgated in the State Gazette shall be made upon a written request by the rapporteur of the respective Committee, with the approval of the sponsor of the draft, and shall be performed on instructions from the President of the National Assembly; or solely on instructions from the President of the National Assembly.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall notify the Members of any corrections as per paragraph 1.

(3) Corrections of factual errors in already promulgated acts of the National Assembly may only be made on instructions from the President of the National Assembly.

(4) The President of the National Assembly shall announce to the National Assembly any corrections as per paragraph 3 at the very first session after the relevant errors were found.

(5) Where a correction as per paragraph 3 is made in an already promulgated law, the President of the National Assembly shall also notify the President of the Republic.

Chapter Eight

SUBMISSION, DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF BILLS AND OTHER ACTS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Article 73. (1) Bills and the explanatory memorandums thereto shall be submitted to the President of the National Assembly in hard copy and electronic form and shall be entered forthwith in the Bills public register.

(2) In the explanatory memorandum, the sponsor of the bill shall state the expected implications, including the financial impact, of the implementation of the proposed legal act.

(3) Explanatory memoranda for bills pertaining to the membership of the Republic of Bulgaria in the European Union shall specify the concrete parts of the EU law requiring the respective regulation to be introduced.

Article 74. (1) The President of the National Assembly shall allocate the bills between the Standing Committees within three days from their submission.

(2) For each bill, the President of the National Assembly shall designate one Standing Committee in charge.

(3) Each week, at the first session, the Chairperson shall announce the newly submitted bills, if any, their sponsors and the Committees they have been assigned to.

(4) Objections to the assignment of bills may be submitted to the President of the National Assembly by the Standing Committees concerned within seven days of the announcement as per paragraph 3. The President shall rule on such objections within two days.

Article 75. (1) The Standing Committees shall consider the bills not earlier than 24 hours and no later than three weeks after the Committee members have received them. They shall submit to the President of the National Assembly and to the Chairperson of the Committee in charge a substantiated report on the bills, within time limits compliant with the National Assembly's legislative programme and the adopted weekly or biweekly schedule.

(2) Where a bill is voted in its first reading, the Committee in charge, before addressing the substance of the bill, shall ascertain its compliance with the Law on Normative Acts and the Decree on its implementation. Should any discrepancies be detected, the Committee may instruct the sponsor to bring the bill to a state of conformity within a 7-day period.

(3) The Committees in charge shall submit the reports on the bills to the National Assembly for a first vote not later than two months after the bills have been filed, and shall publish them in the section of the Committee in charge on the website of the National Assembly.

Article 76. (1) The bills, accompanied by the explanatory memorandum thereto, the statement as per Article 73(1), and the report of the Committee in charge they have been assigned to, shall be presented to the Members of the National Assembly not later than 24 hours before the opening of the session at which the bills are to be considered. The same time limit, unless the National Assembly decides otherwise, shall apply to the consideration of bills subject to second vote.

(2) With regards to bills submitted by Members of the National Assembly, the Chairperson of the Committee in charge shall request the opinion of the Council of Ministers or of the relevant line Minister. The Council of Ministers or the relevant line Minister shall provide their statement within two weeks after the request has been filed.

(3) The Chairperson of the Committee in charge shall request an opinion from the National Tripartite Cooperation Council on bills governing employment and social security matters.

(4) The Chairperson of the Committee in charge shall request an opinion from the National Council for Integration of Persons with Disabilities on bills governing the

rights of the disabled.

(5) The Chairperson of the Committee in charge shall request an opinion from the Supreme Judicial Council on bills governing the judicial authorities.

(6) Citizens shall have the right to submit written opinions on bills.

(7) Opinions as per paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 shall be published in the section of the Committee in charge on the website of the National Assembly and shall be circulated among the Committee members.

(8) The lack of opinions as per paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 shall not impede the deliberations on the bill.

(9) The report of the Committee in charge for the first vote shall also state the expected implications, including the financial impact, of the implementation of the proposed legal act, and shall contain a summary of all opinions submitted and a summarized opinion of the Committee.

Article 77. (1) Bills shall be adopted following two votes at two separate sessions.

(2) By way of an exception, the National Assembly may decide to take both votes in the same session. This provision shall only apply if during the deliberations on the bill no amendments or supplements have been proposed.

(3) A bill shall be considered at first reading after the National Assembly has heard the reports of the Committee in charge, the sponsor's opinion, which shall take no more than 10 minutes, and the reports, if any, of any other Committees the bill has been assigned to. The reports and opinions of the other Committees may also be submitted in summary.

(4) For the purposes of the first vote, the bill shall be debated in principle and in its entirety. The Members of the National Assembly shall consider the essential aspects of the bill.

Article 78. (1) The Standing Committees shall consider simultaneously all bills treating one and the same matter, as submitted to the National Assembly, by the date on which the Committee in charge has initiated deliberations. These bills shall be discussed simultaneously by the National Assembly. The National Assembly shall put each of these bills to a separate vote.

(2) Where more than one bill on the same matter has passed the first vote, the Committee in charge, together with the sponsors of the bills passed at first reading, shall, within 14 days, consolidate such bills into a single bill to be submitted to the President of the National Assembly and circulated among the Members of the National Assembly, so that written proposals can be made with regards to this consolidated bill.

Article 79. A bill rejected at first reading may be resubmitted only after substantial amendments have been made to its main provisions, which shall be reflected in the explanatory memorandum thereto, and not earlier than three months after its rejection.

Article 80. (1) Members of the National Assembly may submit written proposals for amending and supplementing a bill that has passed the first vote or a consolidated

bill as per Article 78(2), within 7 days from its adoption or circulation among the Members, respectively. Such proposals shall be addressed through the President of the National Assembly to the Chairperson of the Committee in charge. By way of exception, the National Assembly may decide to extend the above time limit by no more than three weeks or to reduce it, but to no less than three days.

(2) Not later than on the next day following the expiry of the time limit as per paragraph 1, the draft report for the second vote shall be published in the section of the Committee in Charge on the National Assembly website.

(3) The Chairperson of the Committee in charge may request the Council of Ministers or the relevant line Minister to provide statements on the proposals made by the Members of the National Assembly.

(4) Within 14 days from the expiry of the time limit as per paragraph 1, the Committee in charge shall submit to the National Assembly a substantiated report containing:

1. any written proposals made by Members of the National Assembly within the time limit under paragraph 1, along with the Committee's opinion on them;
2. the Committee's proposals concerning the bill under consideration, where the Committee has adopted such proposals subject to a proposal by any of its members during a session.

(5) The report as per paragraph 4 shall be published in the section of the Committee in charge on the National Assembly website.

Article 81. (1) In the second vote, the National Assembly shall debate and vote on the bills chapter by chapter, section by section or paragraph by paragraph. Where no written proposals or objections have been made, the relevant texts shall not be read out in the plenary. The texts shall in such case be appended to the shorthand record as an integral part thereof.

(2) In the second vote, only proposals brought forward by Members of the National Assembly in accordance with Article 80 shall be considered, together with any proposals by the Committee in charge included in its report. Editorial changes shall also be allowed. No proposals that are inconsistent with the principles and scope of the bill as first voted and passed shall be considered or put to a vote.

(3) Members of the National Assembly shall be allowed up to 5 minutes to substantiate each individual proposal made.

(4) The vote shall be taken under the provisions of Article 66. No interventions or new proposals shall be allowed during a vote. Only proposals by Members of the National Assembly submitted in accordance with Article 80, proposals by the Committee in charge, editorial changes made in the course of the debate, as well as proposals for rejecting or postponing a text shall be put to a vote.

(5) Where a bill is presented for a second vote in the plenary and the rapporteur reads out a different text than the one specified in the report of the Committee in charge, without an editorial change being made as per the applicable procedure, the text to be put to a vote is the one specified in the Committee's report.

Article 82. The sponsor of a bill may withdraw it before the commencement of the first vote or, at the discretion of the National Assembly, after the vote has begun.

Article 83. (1) The Chairperson shall announce, at the first subsequent session of the National Assembly, whether a presidential decree as per Article 101 of the Constitution has been issued by which an Act of the National Assembly is sent back for reconsideration.

(2) Within three days from receipt of such decree, the President of the National Assembly shall instruct the Committee in charge to present the presidential decree and the explanatory memorandum thereto to the Members of the National Assembly.

(3) Any Act sent back for reconsideration shall be placed on the agenda of the National Assembly within fifteen days from receipt of the relevant presidential decree.

(4) The National Assembly shall re-adopt the bill on the basis of a majority of one half of the Members of the National Assembly plus one.

(5) Should the returned act not receive the votes of more than one half of the total number of Member of the National Assembly and be contested in principle, it shall be subject to a consideration in accordance with the standard procedure for deliberation on and enactment of bills.

(6) Should the returned act not receive the votes of more than one half of the total number of Member of the National Assembly, but only individual provisions are contested, the procedure laid down in Article 81 shall apply and only the contested provisions and the ones related with them shall be put to a vote.

Article 84. In a case where a bill on the ratification of an international treaty is considered, the text of the treaty may not be amended. Reservations to a multilateral treaty may only be made where allowed by the treaty itself.

Article 85. (1) Draft resolutions, declarations and addresses may be submitted by Members of the National Assembly and by Parliamentary Groups.

(2) Draft resolutions, declarations and addresses shall be submitted in hard copy or electronically and shall be immediately filed in the Public Registry „Draft resolutions, declarations and addresses“.

(3) The President of the National Assembly shall allocate any draft resolutions, declarations and addresses to the relevant Standing Committees within three days of receipt and shall inform the Members of the National Assembly thereof in accordance with Article 74(3).

(4) The Standing Committees shall consider the drafts under paragraph 1 not later than fifteen days following their assignment and shall submit their positions on the drafts to the President of the National Assembly.

(5) Resolutions, declarations and addresses shall be put to a single vote.

(6) Any draft resolution, declaration and address may be withdrawn by its sponsor before it is put to a vote at a session of the National Assembly.

Article 86. Draft resolutions on procedural, organizational and technical issues shall

not be assigned to the Standing Committees unless the President of the National Assembly decides otherwise.

Article 87. (1) The reports under Article 84, items 16 and 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria shall contain a statement about the activity of the enforcement body during the relevant period and the problems and challenges encountered, as well as about the fulfilment of the recommendations made by the National Assembly in the course of the discussion of the preceding report.

(2) These reports shall be submitted to the National Assembly not later than March 31st, unless a different deadline has been prescribed by law.

(3) The President of the National Assembly shall allocate the reports under Article 84, items 16 and 17 of the Constitution to the respective Standing Committee within three days from receipt and shall notify the Members of the National Assembly thereof in accordance with Article 74(3).

(4) The Standing Committee shall consider the report under paragraph 1 within 15 days from its assignment and shall present its opinion to the President of the National Assembly, proposing also a draft resolution on the report. The draft resolution may also contain recommendations to the entity whose activity is reviewed.

(5) The report under paragraph 1 shall be placed on the agenda of the National Assembly within one month after its submission to the National Assembly and shall be reviewed not later than 3 months thereafter.

(6) The report under paragraph 1 shall be debated after the National Assembly has heard the opinion of the Committee and the statement of the sponsor, each of them presented within up to 10 minutes. The debate shall continue with interventions by Members of the National Assembly that may also contain questions to the sponsor of the bill to which the latter shall be obliged to respond.

(7) In the course of the debate of the report under paragraph 1, the Members of the National Assembly may propose amendments and supplements to the draft resolution proposed by the Committee.

(8) The sponsor shall set out his position on the proposals and recommendations made.

(9) The proposals made by the Members of the National Assembly in accordance with paragraph 7 shall be put to a vote as per Article 66.

(10) A decision shall be adopted with regards to the report. The National Assembly may accept or reject the report submitted by the sponsor in accordance with Article 84, item 17 of the Constitution. In rejecting the report, the National Assembly must substantiate its decision.

Article 88. (1) The National Assembly may require the submission of a report by a body referred to in Article 84, item 17 of the Constitution and with regards to certain aspects of its activity, subject to a proposal by the relevant Standing Committee or by one fifth of the Members of the National Assembly.

(2) In the cases as per paragraph 1, the National Assembly shall define the issues,

the period to be covered by the report, and the deadline for its submission.

(3) The debate on the report shall be performed in accordance with Article 87.

Article 89. (1) Following a public procedure, the National Assembly shall elect bodies, in whole or in part, in accordance with the legislation in force.

(2) The selection proposals, along with biographical data and documents related to the requirements for incompatibility, length of service, education, and other required documents, shall be published on the website of the National Assembly not later than 14 days before the hearing, in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Law.

(3) Non-profit legal entities and professional organizations may, not later than 3 days before the hearing, submit to the committee statements about the applicant, including questions to be asked to him/her. The media may send to the committee questions to be asked to the applicant. Anonymous statements and submissions shall be disregarded. The statements shall be published on the website of the National Assembly within 3 days following their receipt, in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Law.

(4) The selection proposals shall be reviewed by a standing committee of the National Assembly which shall hold the hearing of the applicants fulfilling the legal requirements and shall submit a report summarizing the results of the hearing. The hearing shall be public.

(5) The report as per paragraph 4 shall contain a conclusion of the committee as regards the compliance with the minimum legal requirements for filling the post on the part of each applicant, as well as regarding the availability of data that calls into question the applicants' morality, competence, qualification, experience and professional assets. The report shall also specify the existence of specific expertise, motivation, public reputation and public support for the relevant applicant. The committee may request further information both from the applicant, and from the respective competent authority.

(6) The report as per paragraph 4 shall be submitted to the Members of the National Assembly not later than 24 hours before the beginning of the session at which the applications shall be put to a vote, and shall be published on the website of the National Assembly.

(7) The National Assembly shall adopt rules of procedure governing the terms, conditions and procedures for nomination of candidates, the submission and public announcement of documents and the hearing of candidates in the relevant Standing Committee, as well as the procedure for their election by the National Assembly. The draft rules shall be prepared and submitted to the National Assembly by the relevant Standing Committee in charge of each election.

Article 90. (1) Where the Constitutional Court has ruled the National Assembly an interested party to a constitutional lawsuit brought against a law or another act, the President of the National Assembly shall notify the Committee in charge without delay.

(2) Within 14 days of such notice, the Committee in charge may adopt an opinion addressed to the Constitutional Court. In such case, the opinion must specify the National Assembly's motives for adopting the act challenged before the Constitutional Court.

(3) The President of the National Assembly shall forward this opinion to the Constitutional Court.

(4) If the Constitutional Court declares an individual law or another act or a part thereof unconstitutional, the National Assembly shall ensure, within two months from the entry into force of the decision, that any legal implications thereof are duly addressed.

Chapter Nine

PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Article 91. (1) Members of the National Assembly may address to the Prime Minister, any of the Deputy Prime Ministers or any of the Ministers queries on relevant issues of public interest, within their respective area of competence or concerning the activity of the administration they are in charge of.

(2) Queries regarding the functioning of the Government shall be addressed to the Prime Minister.

Article 92. (1) Such queries shall be addressed in writing through the President of the National Assembly not later than 48 hours before the opening of the session at which the Ministers shall reply. Queries must be precisely and clearly formulated; they must contain no personal attacks or offensive language and must be signed by the Member of the National Assembly. Where a Member of the National Assembly submits a query derived from meetings with and demands of civil organizations and citizens, this may be specified in the query. The reply to a query may be given verbally or in written form. The reply shall be given in written form when the Member of the National Assembly has explicitly requested so or when an issue concerning personal rights or interests is raised. Written replies shall be given within seven days. Where a Member of the National Assembly has submitted a query implying a verbal reply, he may request in writing, not later than 18:00 h on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight, that the reply be a written one instead. The time limit for giving a written reply shall be 7 days from filing the request and may not be extended any further by the Minister. All queries made and the replies given thereto shall be submitted in hard copy and in electronic form. They shall be entered without delay into the Parliamentary Oversight Public Registry and published in the Parliamentary Oversight section on the website of the National Assembly.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall notify immediately the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the relevant Minister of any such queries and of the date and time of the session at which replies shall be given.

(3) The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Minister to whom a query has been addressed may request a deferral of the reply, but by no more than seven days after the deadline as per paragraph 1.

(4) Where the Member of the National Assembly who has submitted the query is not present at the session for a valid reason, the reply shall be postponed. The valid reason for such absence shall be substantiated by a letter of the Member addressed to the President of the National Assembly not later than 18:00 h on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight.

(5) When a written reply to the query is received, the Chairperson shall announce this at the next parliamentary oversight session of the National Assembly and shall deliver a copy of the reply to the Member of the National Assembly who has submitted the query. Queries implying a written reply, as well as the written replies themselves shall be enclosed with the shorthand record of the plenary session.

(6) Members of the National Assembly may withdraw their queries by means of a written request that shall be filed not later than 18:00 h on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight. The President of the National Assembly shall notify the relevant Minister accordingly.

(7) Where Parliamentary Groups have exercised their right under Article 51(6), the parliamentary oversight time may be extended by the same time length.

Article 93. (1) Members of the National Assembly may register queries implying a verbal reply by adhering to the provisions of Article 103(1).

(2) Queries shall be presented within 2 minutes.

(3) The reply given by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the relevant Minister shall be limited to 3 minutes. The Member of the National Assembly who has submitted the query shall have the right to a rejoinder, limited to 2 minutes, and the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the relevant Minister shall have the right to a counter-rejoinder, also limited to 2 minutes.

Article 94. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall address queries to members of Council of Ministers.

(2) These queries shall refer to main aspects of the activity of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers or the administration they are in charge of.

(3) Queries concerning the general policies of the Government shall be addressed to the Prime Minister.

(4) Members of the National Assembly may file queries implying verbal reply by adhering to the provisions of Article 103(1).

Article 95. (1) Queries shall receive a response within 14 days of being filed. The response to a query must be in verbal or written form. A response must be given in writing if the author of the query has expressly so requested. A Member of the National Assembly who has filed a query implying a verbal reply may request in

writing another type of response not later than 18:00 hours on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight. The time limit for giving a written reply shall be 7 days from filing the change request and may not be postponed by the Minister. All queries filed and the replies given thereto shall be submitted in hard copy and in electronic form; they shall be entered without delay into the Parliamentary Oversight Public Registry and published in the Parliamentary Oversight section on the website of the National Assembly.

(2) The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the relevant Minister may request an extension of the time limit, but by no more than seven days after the deadline as per paragraph 1.

Article 96. Queries shall be filed in writing through the President of the National Assembly and shall be signed by the respective Member of the National Assembly. They must be precisely and clearly formulated and must contain no personal attacks or offensive language.

Article 97. (1) At the beginning of each parliamentary oversight session, the Chairperson shall announce the queries submitted.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall inform in due time the Prime Minister, the relevant Deputy Prime Minister or Minister of such queries and of the date and time of the session at which a response shall be given.

(3) The reply to a query shall be deferred if its author is absent from the session for a valid reason. The valid reason for such absence shall be substantiated by a letter of the Member addressed to the President of the National Assembly not later than 18:00 h on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight.

Article 98. Members of the National Assembly may withdraw their queries by means of a written request that shall be filed not later than 18:00 h on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight. The Chairperson shall announce such withdrawal at the beginning of the parliamentary oversight session and shall notify thereof the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Minister concerned.

Article 99. (1) Once the National Assembly proceeds to considering a query, the Member of the National Assembly who has submitted the query shall be allowed 3 minutes to elaborate on it. The time for response to a query shall be limited to 5 minutes.

(2) After a query has been replied to, his author shall have the right to ask no more than two clarifying questions for which he/she shall be given 2 minutes in total, while the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister or Minister shall have 3 minutes for a response. Where the response to a query is provided in writing, no clarifying questions shall be allowed.

(3) No debate shall be carried out and no rejoinders shall be allowed with regards to the response to a query. The author of the query shall have the right to express an opinion on the response within a time limit of 2 minutes. The Minister shall not be allowed to make a rejoinder on any grounds.

Article 100. (1) Where a written response to a query has been received, the

Chairperson shall announce that at the earliest parliamentary oversight session of the National Assembly and shall deliver a copy of the response to the author of the query.

(2) Queries implying written response and the written responses thereto shall be attached to the shorthand record.

Article 101. (1) Subject to a proposal by no less than one fifth of the Members of the National Assembly, the query shall be debated and a resolution shall be adopted. Proposals for debate and a draft resolution following the response and registration shall be submitted to the Chairperson before the close of the plenary session.

(2) The debate shall be scheduled for the next parliamentary oversight session. After the President of the National Assembly has scheduled the debate, the Members of the National Assembly shall have no right to withdraw their signatures from the proposal. Debates shall be held in the presence of the respective Minister, in accordance with the procedure as per Chapter Seven, and shall be limited to one hour. The time for debate shall be allocated between the Parliamentary Groups in proportion to their size and ranges from 5 minutes for the smallest group up to 5 minutes in total for unaffiliated Members.

(3) Draft resolutions may also be filed by Members of the National Assembly. Where more than one draft resolution has been filed, they shall be put to a vote in the order of their receipt. The voting shall be conducted in accordance with Article 66.

Article 102. (1) The National Assembly shall hear any questions, queries, and responses thereto during the last three hours of each Friday session, unless it decides otherwise.

(2) The Prime Minister shall be the first to respond, followed by the Deputy Prime Ministers and the Ministers, the latter responding on the basis of a rotation principle.

(3) Questions and queries addressed to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers or the Ministers shall be announced in the order of their receipt.

(4) The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers or the Ministers shall give a joint answer to questions and queries on one and the same subject, whereby the provisions of Article 93 and Article 99, respectively, shall apply.

(5) Should the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers or the Ministers fail to give a response within the statutory period, they shall be obliged, within ten days, to appear before the National Assembly in person and give an explanation about his/her failure to fulfil that obligation.

(6) The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers or the Ministers concerned shall give the required response in person.

Article 103. (1) Members of the National Assembly may file not more than two questions and one query implying a verbal response per plenary week.

(2) Members of the National Assembly may not submit a question or query to which a response has already been given.

(3) Where a question or query does not conform to these Rules or is not addressed to the member of the Council of Ministers in charge, the Chairperson shall advise the author to rectify such inconsistencies within three days. Within the same time limit, the Member of the National Assembly so advised shall challenge in writing the alleged inadmissibility of the question or query. Following consultations with the Conference of the Presidents regarding the contested inadmissibility of the question or query, the Chairperson shall make the final decision and shall duly communicate it to the Member of the National Assembly. If the decision declares the question or query admissible, the deadline for a reply under Article 92(1) and Article 95(1), respectively, shall start as from the date of the final decision.

Article 104. (1) During the last two hours of the first Wednesday session each month, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Ministers shall appear before the National Assembly to answer topical verbal questions concerning the general policy of the Government as submitted by Members of the National Assembly during the session itself. These questions may not contain requests for the provision of detailed numerical data.

(2) Each Parliamentary Group shall be entitled to two verbal questions on topical issues, whereas unaffiliated Members of the National Assembly, taken together, shall be entitled to a total of two questions.

(3) The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Ministers to whom a question is addressed shall reply immediately upon taking the question. In the event of the absence of the Prime Minister or the Deputy Prime Minister for valid reasons, the President of the National Assembly shall, in coordination with them, schedule the meeting at which they will answer verbal questions on topical issues.

(4) The procedure for asking topical questions as per paragraph 1 shall be established in accordance with the size of the parliamentary groups in descending order, unaffiliated Members being the last in line. Second questions are to be asked in the same order following the completion of the first questions procedure.

(5) With respect to the procedure for asking verbal questions on topical issues, the provisions of Article 93(2) and (3) shall apply.

(6) Parliamentary Groups shall not take advantage of their right as per Article 51(6) during the time for answering verbal questions on topical issues.

Article 105. (1) The Council of Ministers may request from the National Assembly a vote of confidence on the Council's overall policy or on any specific issue.

(2) The debate shall commence at the session immediately following such request.

(3) Following the debate, a relevant resolution of the National Assembly shall be put to a vote, within the same session.

(4) Such resolution shall be considered adopted if more than one half of the Members of the National Assembly present have voted in favour thereof.

Article 106. One fifth of the Members of the National Assembly may propose a vote of no confidence in the Council of Ministers or the Prime Minister by submitting a reasoned draft resolution.

Article 107. (1) The debate on a draft no confidence resolution shall commence not earlier than 3 days and not later than 7 days after the submission of the proposal.

(2) During the debate, no amendments or supplements to the draft resolution shall be allowed.

(3) The resolution shall be put to a vote not earlier than 24 hours after the closure of the debate.

(4) The resolution shall be adopted if more than one half of all the Members of the National Assembly have voted in favour thereof.

Article 108. If a vote of no confidence in the Council of Ministers is rejected, a new no confidence vote may be proposed on the same grounds not earlier than 6 months thereafter.

Chapter Ten

PARLIAMENTARY HEARINGS, ENQUIRIES AND SURVEYS

Article 110. (1) The National Assembly or its Committees may conduct hearings, enquiries and surveys on matters concerning state or public interests.

(2) When the National Assembly proceeds with a hearing, the sponsor of the proposal shall be given 5 minutes to report on the matter at hand. The persons being heard shall be given 10 minutes to inform the National Assembly on the subject matter of the hearing. Each of the Parliamentary Groups shall be allowed to ask each person being heard 2 questions, and the unaffiliated Members, taken together – 1 question in total, with a 2-minute time limit for each question. The persons being heard shall respond immediately after the question was asked. Parliamentary Groups shall be allowed 5 minutes to express an opinion on the responses given.

(3) Parliamentary Committees may require Ministers and other officials to be present at their meetings and to answer the questions asked. Stakeholder organizations and citizens may also attend such meetings. Within 7 days following the hearing, the respective Committee shall submit to the President of the National Assembly a report on the hearing which shall be circulated among the Members of the National Assembly.

Article 111. All state authorities and officials of the state and municipal administration, as well as citizens, shall be obliged to supply the required information and documents in relation with such hearings, enquiries and surveys, even if such information constitutes a state or professional secret.

Article 112. The form in which such information shall be supplied shall be determined by the National Assembly or the Committee concerned.

Article 113. (1) Officials and citizens, when invited, shall be bound to appear before

the Committees of the National Assembly and to provide any required information and documents.

(2) Such invitations shall be made by the offices of the National Assembly.

Chapter Eleven

PARLIAMENTARY MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT ON EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS

Article 114. (1) The Council of Ministers shall submit to the National Assembly its Annual Programme for the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the European Union decision-making process, within 7 days after its adoption.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall allocate the Annual Programme under paragraph 1 to the Standing Committees. Within three weeks from receipt thereof, the Standing Committees, excluding the European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee, shall prepare their proposals for an Annual Work Programme of the National Assembly on European Union Affairs, taking into consideration the Work Programme of the European Commission for the relevant year.

(3) Within 14 days from expiry of the deadline as per paragraph 2, the European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall, taking into consideration also the proposals of the other Standing Committees, shall elaborate a draft Annual Work Programme of the National Assembly on European Union Affairs. This Annual Work Programme shall contain a list of the draft legislative acts of the European Union institutions falling within the scope of the National Assembly's monitoring and oversight. The draft Annual Work Programme shall be debated and adopted by the National Assembly.

(4) The President of the National Assembly shall forward the adopted Annual Work Programme under paragraph 3 to the Council of Ministers.

(5) In case of new circumstances, the European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee may propose, on its own initiative or subject to a proposal by other Standing Committees, supplements to the Annual Work Programme of the National Assembly on European Union Affairs, which shall be adopted following the procedure under paragraph 3.

Article 115. (1) The Council of Ministers shall submit to the National Assembly its framework statement on the European Union institution draft legislative act included in the Annual Work Programme under Article 114(3), within three weeks from the date of the decision of the Council of Ministers' European Affairs Committee for approving the act allocation.

(2) Should new circumstances require amendments to the initial Bulgarian position, the Council of Ministers shall in due course inform the National Assembly of such

circumstances and of the amendments to the position.

Article 116. (1) Within the time limit as per Article 74(1), the President of the National Assembly shall allocate to the European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee and to the competent Standing Committees the framework statement under Article 115(1) submitted by the Council of Ministers and the draft act. The draft act shall be derived from the database under Article 119 and shall be attached to the framework statement.

(2) The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee may, on its own initiative or subject to a proposal by another Standing Committee, impose a parliamentary reservation on a draft legislative act of a European Union institution included in the Annual Work Programme under Article 114(3). Such parliamentary reservation shall oblige the Government to express no opinion at the Council of the European Union with regards to the legislative act before the National Assembly has taken a stand, but not later than the third session of the Council's preparatory body reviewing the draft act.

Article 117. (1) The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall debate draft legislative acts of European Union institutions and the framework statements thereon, while taking into consideration the relevant reports of the competent Standing Committees, if any. The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall prepare a report on the draft act.

(2) The Standing Committees shall assess the draft legislative act's compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, within the deadline under Article 6 of Protocol No 2 to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

(3) Should an infringement of the principle of subsidiarity be identified in a draft legislative act of a European Union institution, the European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall issue a reasoned opinion.

(4) The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall present the report or the reasoned opinion to the President of the National Assembly, who in turn shall submit it to the Council of Ministers and the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, and the European Commission, within the deadline prescribed by Article 6 of Protocol No 2 to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Article 118. The National Assembly shall submit a reasoned request to the Council of Ministers for filing a claim before the Court of Justice of the European Union concerning a legislative act infringing the principle of subsidiarity.

Article 119. (1) The National Assembly shall elaborate and maintain a database of draft acts and other documents of the European Union institutions.

Article 120. (1) The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall hear the applicants for positions in the European Union institutions as proposed by the Council of Ministers.

(2) The applicants under paragraph 1 shall appear at a session of the European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee and shall answer questions

raised by its members.

Article 121. (1) The National Assembly shall participate in the mechanisms for assessing the implementation of the European Union policies within the area of freedom, security and justice, in the political control of Europol and in the assessment of the activities of Eurojust.

(2) The National Assembly shall participate in the reviews of the EU Treaties.

(3) The National Assembly shall review applications for accession to the European Union.

(4) The National Assembly shall actively participate in the process of inter-parliamentary cooperation in the European Union.

Article 122. The National Assembly may hold a hearing of the Prime Minister concerning the position of the Republic of Bulgaria during forthcoming sessions of the European Council.

Article 123. The Council of Ministers, in compliance with Article 105(3) of the Constitution, shall inform the National Assembly about matters concerning the obligations of the Republic of Bulgaria arising from its membership in the European Union.

Article 124. The Council of Ministers, in compliance with Article 105(4) of the Constitution, shall, at the beginning of each six-month period of the presidency of the Council of the European Union, submit to the National Assembly a report on the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the decision-making process of the European Union during the preceding presidency and on the priorities of the Republic of Bulgaria during the current presidency. The National Assembly shall hold a hearing of the report by the Prime Minister.

Article 125. (3) Members of the European Parliament for the Republic of Bulgaria may participate in a non-voting capacity in the sessions of the National Assembly under Articles 122 and 124.

Chapter Twelve

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Section I

Legal Status

Article 126. Every Member of the National Assembly may be elected to the bodies of the National Assembly. He/she shall have the obligation to participate in the activities of these bodies.

Article 127. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall retain their positions under

employment contracts in state or municipal institutions and enterprises, in companies where the state or municipal share in the equity capital exceeds 50%, or in budget organizations, while taking unpaid leave for the duration of their term of office as Members of the National Assembly. The above shall also apply to agents engaged under contracts for the management of commercial companies where the state or municipal share in the equity capital exceeds 50%, but for no longer than the term of the contract.

(2) Where an act of a state authority or another institution is needed for a person to be reinstated to a previously held position, the authority concerned shall be obliged to issue this act.

Article 128. The time during which Members of the National Assembly perform their duties shall be recognised as professional experience, respectively as length of service for the purposes of the position occupied before their election to the National Assembly.

Article 129. (1) Members of the National Assembly may not receive any other employment compensation.

(2) Members of the National Assembly may receive fees or remuneration as independent contractors.

Article 130. (1) Members of the National Assembly may not occupy other state positions or perform any activities which are declared incompatible with the status of a Member of the National Assembly by law.

(2) Members of the National Assembly shall have no right to participate in the management or supervisory bodies of commercial companies and cooperatives.

(3) Members of the National Assembly may continue their participation in collective management bodies and academic bodies of higher education institutions and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, with the exception of sole manager positions.

Article 131. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall be entitled to paid annual leave coinciding in time with the recesses of the National Assembly.

(2) Members of the National Assembly shall have no right to unpaid leave.

Article 132. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall be obliged to attend the sessions of the National Assembly and the meetings of the Committees they are members of.

(2) A Member of the National Assembly who has a valid reason to leave a session or Committee meeting or to arrive late for a session or Committee meeting, shall notify the relevant Secretaries or leaders of the Committee.

(3) A Member of the National Assembly who is absent from a plenary session or a Committee meeting for a valid reason shall inform in advance the President of the National Assembly or, respectively, the Chairperson of the Committee.

Article 133. For any matters not explicitly dealt with by these Rules, the provisions of the Labour Code and the Social Security Code shall apply, unless this would be contrary to or incompatible with the status of Members of the National Assembly.

Article 134. (1) Members of the National Assembly may not be arrested and shall

not be liable to criminal prosecution, save for a committed crime of a general nature, with the permission of the National Assembly or, when the Assembly is not in session (Article 43(2), of the President of the National Assembly.

(2) No parliamentary permission for arrest shall be required in the event of flagrante delicto, in which case the National Assembly, or, when the Assembly is not in session (Article 43(2), its President, shall be immediately notified.

(3) Where there is sufficient evidence that a Member of the National Assembly has committed a crime of a general nature, the Prosecutor General shall address a reasoned request to the National Assembly or, when the Assembly is not in session, to its President, for permission to institute criminal proceedings. Such request must be supported with sufficient evidence.

(4) No permission to initiate criminal proceedings shall be required if the Member of the National Assembly has given his/her written consent to that effect. The Member of the National Assembly shall submit his/her written consent to the President of the National Assembly, who, in turn, shall notify the Prosecutor General and the National Assembly at the earliest session following the receipt of the written consent. Once given, such consent cannot be withdrawn by the Member of the National Assembly.

(5) In cases other than those under paragraph 4, the request of the Prosecutor General and the supporting evidence attached shall be considered by the National Assembly, which shall rule thereon not earlier than 14 days after the receipt of the request. The National Assembly shall hold a hearing of a Member of the National Assembly who has appeared before it upon request.

(6) When the National Assembly is not in session (Article 43(2), such permission to institute criminal proceedings against a Member of the National Assembly shall be granted by the President of the National Assembly. The permission granted by the President of the National Assembly shall be submitted for approval by the Members of the National Assembly at the earliest session of the National Assembly.

(7) Where such criminal proceedings lead to a conviction imposing a custodial sentence for an intentional offence or where the execution of the custodial sentence is not postponed, the National Assembly shall adopt a resolution to prematurely dismiss the Member of the National Assembly concerned.

(8) Where the Prosecutor General has requested permission for the arrest of the relevant Member of the National Assembly, the National Assembly shall adopt a separate resolution on such request, following the procedure as per paragraphs 1 through 7. The National Assembly shall have the right to withdraw a granted permission.

(9) The provisions of Article 70 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria shall apply also where criminal proceedings against a Member of the National Assembly had been instituted prior to his election.

Article 135. Members of the National Assembly may not be summoned to reserve military service.

Article 136. (1) Where a Member of the National Assembly elected from the candidate list of a party or coalition has been appointed a minister, he/she shall be replaced, for the duration of the minister's term of office, by the next candidate from the same ticket.

(2) When such Member of the National Assembly is released from his ministerial post, his/her powers as National Assembly Member shall be reinstated, whereas those of his/her substitute shall be terminated. When more than one substitution has been made within a candidate list, the substituting Members shall be released on the last-in-first-out principle in case of reinstatement of the powers of a Member of the National Assembly.

Article 137. State and local authorities and their administrations shall be obligated to render full assistance to Members of the National Assembly and to supply, on request, any information and documents pertinent to the performance of his/her duties. Members of the National Assembly shall have the right to access to state and local bodies and organizations.

Section II Ethical Values

Article 138. Members of the National Assembly shall exercise their powers by respecting the rule of law and protecting the public interests, while also adhering to the principles of impartiality, openness, accountability, and transparency.

Article 139. Members of the National Assembly shall duly respect all citizens, regardless of the political bias, the posts held and the opinions expressed by the latter.

Article 140. (1) Members of the National Assembly may not agree to exercise their powers in the private interest of physical or legal persons.

(2) Members of the National Assembly may not approve or use their official position for advertising activities.

Article 141. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall not allow their financial dependence or other kind of subordination to physical or legal persons which may affect the exercise of their powers.

(2) Members of the National Assembly shall exercise their powers without seeking or receiving material or any other benefit for themselves and their related parties, as referred to in the Conflict of Interest Prevention and Ascertainment Act.

(3) Members of the National Assembly shall not undertake actions violating the principle of separation of powers and the state authorities' independence.

Article 142. Members of the National Assembly shall disclose their property, income and expenditures on the territory of the country and abroad, in accordance with the Law for Publicity of the Property of Persons Occupying High State Positions.

Article 143. In the cases where, in the meaning of the Conflict of Interest

Prevention and Ascertainment Act, Members of the National Assembly have a private interest with regards to submission of draft acts, debates or voting during plenary sessions or committee meetings, they shall be obliged to disclose this fact.

Article 144. Members of the National Assembly shall keep confidential all information received in the course of exercise of their powers, as well as information about the private life of Members of the National Assembly.

Article 145. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall not use their official position to acquire special privileges and benefits.

(2) Members of the National Assembly, acting as such, shall not accept gifts, other than representational ones and with an approximate value of no more than one tenth of their basic remunerations for the respective month. Gifts of greater value shall be submitted to the National Assembly and shall be published in the Public Registry of the National Assembly.

Article 146. (1) Members of the National Assembly may announce postal address and electronic mail to be contacted at.

(2) Members of the National Assembly shall carry out meetings with constituents, including in the constituencies, unless during plenary sessions and committee meetings.

(3) Members of the National Assembly may publish on their websites information about the scheduled meetings with constituents, their speeches, proposals and statements concerning draft legislative acts, as well as the names of their assistants, and telephone and electronic mail to be contacted at.

Article 147. Members of the National Assembly shall be entitled to no more than three contract assistants. The National Assembly elaborates and maintains a registry of the contract staff. The registry also lists the contract agents taking part in the preparation, discussion and adoption of legislative acts or documents in the National Assembly.

Article 148. (1) The Anti-Corruption, Conflict of Interests and Parliamentary Ethics Committee shall identify infringements under this section and shall issue a decision to be published in the Public Registry of the National Assembly. Members of the National Assembly shall be entitled to give an opinion about the decision, which is also to be published in the registry.

(2) The Committee under paragraph 1 shall adopt the rules for implementing the provisions of this section.

Section III

Parliamentary Conduct

Article 149. (1) The conduct of the Members of the National Assembly shall be based on respect of the authority of the National Assembly and respect to the other Members of the National Assembly and external persons. It shall not disrupt the ordinary course of the parliamentary activity or the order in the premises of the

National Assembly.

(2) Members of the National Assembly shall have no right to interrupt a speaker, address personal attacks, use offensive language, gestures or threats against any person, disseminate information concerning the private life or damaging the reputation of any citizen, behave indecently or disrupt in any way a parliamentary session or Committee meeting.

Article 150. The following disciplinary measures may be applied with regards to Members of the National Assembly:

1. call to order;
2. reprimand;
3. censure;
4. denial of the floor;
5. expulsion from a session;
6. expulsion from up to three sessions.

Article 151. The Chairperson shall call to order any speaker who does not adhere to the matter at hand.

Article 152. (1) The Chairperson shall reprimand any Member of the National Assembly who, in addressing another Member or other Members, uses offensive language, gestures or threats.

Article 153. The Chairperson shall censure any Member of the National Assembly who disrupts the ordinary course during the session or causes disorder in the plenary.

Article 154. The Chairperson shall deny the floor to any Member of the National Assembly:

1. whom the Chairperson has already disciplined twice during his/her intervention, in accordance with Article 150, items 1-3; or
2. who continues his/her speech beyond the time limit, disregarding the Chairperson's instructions to conclude his/her speech.

Article 155. The Chairperson may expulse from the session in progress any Member of the National Assembly who:

1. disputes a disciplinary measure imposed upon him/her in a rude and indecent manner;
2. continuously disrupts the order in the plenary;
3. votes with another Member's card.

Article 156. (1) The Chairperson may expulse from more than one session, but for not more than three sessions, any Member of the National Assembly who:

1. insults the National Assembly, members of the Council of Ministers, the President or Vice President of the State or any other state authorities;
2. incites or commits violence in the plenary or in the premises of the National Assembly;

(2) A Member of the National Assembly expelled in accordance with paragraph 1 and Article 155 shall not be remunerated for the sessions from which he/she was

expulsed.

(3) A Member of the National Assembly shall have the right to challenge a disciplinary measure imposed upon him/her before the President of the National Assembly within three days from its imposition. The President of the National Assembly shall then have the right to sustain, cancel or amend in a reasoned manner the disciplinary measure imposed.

Article 157. Information about the disciplinary measures imposed on Members of the National Assembly in accordance with Article 150 is published on the website of the National Assembly.

Article 158. Information about the unjustified absences of Members of the National Assembly from meetings of the Standing Committees, sub-committees, working groups and from plenary sessions shall be published on the website of the National Assembly on a monthly basis. Such information shall be posted no later than 7 days after the end of the month it refers to.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

§ 1. (1) These Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly may be amended subject to a proposal by the President of the National Assembly or on request by any individual Member of the National Assembly.

(2) Such proposal shall be considered by the Legal Affairs Committee within 14 days.

(3) The opinion of the Committee shall be submitted to the President of the National Assembly who shall circulate it in writing among all Members of the National Assembly.

§ 2. The National Assembly shall adopt resolutions with regards to any matters not explicitly dealt with in these Rules.

§ 3. For the purposes of these Rules, „Chairperson“ shall mean the person chairing a session of the National Assembly.

§ 4. For the purposes of a secret ballot, „present“ shall mean all the Members of the National Assembly who have voted. For the purpose of an open vote, „present“ shall mean the number of Members of the National Assembly who have registered before the start of the vote.

§ 5. „Size of a Parliamentary Group“ shall mean the size of a group at the moment when the relevant National Assembly resolution is being adopted.

§ 6. (1) In executing its powers, the National Assembly shall be assisted by a parliamentary administration.

(2) The employees in the National Assembly administration shall be parliamentary officials whose status shall be determined by the Rules pursuant to Article 8,

paragraph 1, item 13.

(3) The uniform staffing plan for the National Assembly administration defines the following: the number of parliamentary officials, the designations of their positions, the minimum education level required, the minimum seniority and/or professional experience, the type of employment status, other requirements for occupying the position, as well as the minimum and maximum remuneration for each position.

(4) When the term of office of the National Assembly has expired or has been prematurely dismissed, the Secretary General of the National Assembly shall perform urgent administrative functions on behalf of the President of the National Assembly pursuant to these Rules and as required by law, until the election of a new President of the National Assembly.

§ 7. All projects, documents and other information needed for the plenary work of the Members of the National Assembly shall be distributed among by means of the professional electronic mail. The date and time of the distribution of the above shall be the date and time of sending them. Where needed, the President of the National Assembly may require that the materials be also distributed in hard copy in the plenary – during the plenary session or by parliamentary groups.

§ 8. The deadlines specified in these Rules shall be calculated as laid down in the Code of Civil Procedure. The last day of the deadline expires at 18:00 h.

TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

§ 9. The provisions of Article 48(1) regarding the live Internet transmission of the open meetings of the Standing Committees by a parliamentary TV channel (BNT) shall apply from the moment the required technical and financial resources are provided.

§ 10. These Rules is adopted by force of Article 73 of the Constitution and repeals the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly (promulgated in State Gazette, No. 53/2013; amended SG No. 62/2013 and No.97/2013).

§ 10. These Rules shall enter into force on the date of their promulgation in State Gazette, with the exception of Article 11, sentence 7 from the Appendix to the Rules - Financial Regulations for the National Assembly Budget, which shall enter into force on January 1, 2015.

These Rules were adopted by the 43rd National Assembly on November 21, 2014, and bear the official seal of the National Assembly.

Appendix to the Rules

Financial Regulations for the National Assembly Budget

Article 1. (1) The independent Budget of the National Assembly shall be part of the State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria.

(2) The budget of the Economic and Social Council shall be part of the budget of the National Assembly.

(3) The budget of the National Assembly shall comprise all revenues from the operation of its second level authorizing officers, administrative and business expenses, the upkeep of the Parliamentary Groups, the Committee expenses, the expenses of Members of the National Assembly, as well as expenses for international activities and the cost of membership in inter-parliamentary organizations.

(4) Allocations from the National Assembly Budget may also fund specific projects and programs related to the establishment of democratic civic culture, leadership skills and democratic practices in the decision-making process, as well as training courses for Members of the National Assembly and leaders of all political parties and coalitions represented in National Assembly, in view of Bulgaria's membership in the European Union.

(5) The second level authorizing officers for the National Assembly Budget are the heads of: the Economic and Social Council; the State Gazette editorial office; the National Public Opinion Survey Centre, the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in Southeast Europe under the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria; the Medical Treatment and Rehabilitation Facility of the National Assembly, Velingrad; the Publishing House and the Catering Complex.

(6) Allocations from the Budget of the National Assembly shall be made on an annual basis for the Student Programme for Legislative Research in the National Assembly. Reports of such research projects shall be published in the Programme's section on the website of the National Assembly.

(7) A designated reserve fund shall be annually established in the budget of the National Assembly to cover contingency and/or emergency costs.

Article 2. (1) The President of the National Assembly or a person authorised by him/her shall establish the budgetary procedure and deadline for preparing a midterm budget forecast and a draft National Assembly budget, on the basis of the Decision of the Council of Ministers on the adoption of a budgetary procedure for preparing a three-year budget forecast and a draft state budget for the following year.

(2) The Parliamentary Budget and Finance Directorate shall coordinate and prepare the draft midterm budget forecast and the draft National Assembly budget, as well as the draft reports accompanying them. A summary of the draft budget forecast and of the draft budget shall be prepared on the basis of the drafts of the first- and second level authorizing officers. The Standing Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee to the Budget and Finance Committee shall review the budget

forecast draft and the budget draft and issue an opinion thereupon. The budget forecast draft and the budget draft, the draft reports and the opinions of the Subcommittee shall be submitted to the President of the National Assembly.

Article 3. The reserve fund for contingency and emergency expenses within the National Assembly Budget shall be utilised by order of the President of the National Assembly.

Article 4. (1) The Parliamentary Budget and Finances Directorate shall draw up the annual cash report on the execution of the National Assembly Budget, on the basis of the reports by the first and second level authorizing officers, and shall submit it to the President of the National Assembly who shall present it to the Standing Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee to the Budget and Finance Committee for an opinion.

(2) Not later than six months from the year's closure, the report on the execution of the budget shall be approved by the National Assembly, subject to a report by the President of the National Assembly.

Article 5. Members of the National Assembly shall receive a basic monthly remuneration equivalent to three average monthly salaries of officials under employment and service contracts in the public sector, according to data of the National Statistics Institute. The basic monthly remuneration shall be adjusted quarterly on the basis of the average monthly salary for the last month of the preceding quarter.

Article 6. (1) The President of the National Assembly shall receive monthly remuneration by 55% higher than the basic monthly salary under Article 5; the Vice Presidents of the National Assembly, by 45% higher; Standing Committee Chairpersons and Leaders of Parliamentary Groups under Article 9 of the Rules, by 35% higher; Deputy Chairpersons of Committees, by 25% higher; Standing Committee Members, by 15% higher, and Parliamentary Secretaries, by 10% higher.

(2) Where a Parliamentary Group has two co-chairpersons, only one of them shall receive a chairperson's remuneration as described above.

(3) A member of the National Assembly who occupies more than one leadership position shall receive only the higher remuneration of both for one of the positions, and a member remuneration for the other positions.

(4) For participation in sub-committees, temporary committees and working groups elected by the Standing Committees, Members of the National Assembly shall receive remuneration proportionate to the working hours, but not exceeding 5% of the basic monthly remuneration. When the term of a temporary committee or a working group is extended, a decision shall be taken as to whether their participants shall receive additional remuneration.

Article 7. (1) Bonuses for length of service and professional qualification shall be added to the basic monthly remunerations as per Articles 5 and 6, as follows: 1% of the basic monthly remuneration of a Member of the National Assembly for each

year of service, 10% for a PhD degree, and 15% for a ScD degree.

(2) Members of the National Assembly may receive additional remunerations for the execution of tasks of national priority.

(3) The remunerations under Articles 5 and 6 and paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be subject to insurance deductions payable by the insured persons under the Social Security Code and the Health Insurance Act, tax deductions under the Personal Income Tax Act, and other deductions as defined by law, as well as deductions defined in Article 13.

Article 8. Members of the National Assembly shall be subject to full coverage insurance with premium rates for third category of labour, and also for the risks covered by life insurance.

Article 9. All additional expenses incurred by a disabled Member of the National Assembly for hiring a companion or a personal assistant shall be covered from the Budget of the National Assembly.

Article 10. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall be reimbursed for travel expenses for public and municipal urban transport, railway, road and sea transport – at first class and sleeping compartment rates, within the entire territory of Bulgaria.

(2) Members of the National Assembly shall be allowed a reimbursement of travel expenses for private bus services in relation to their official duties as Members of the National Assembly.

(3) Members of the National Assembly whose constituencies fall within an airline service area and are situated at distances exceeding 250 km from Sofia shall be allowed a reimbursement of airplane travel expenses, in relation to their official duties, up to 40 one-way or return airplane tickets annually, and all other Members of the National Assembly are entitled to a reimbursement of up to 12 one-way or return airplane tickets annually.

(4) Members of the National Assembly who do not own a family housing on the territory of Sofia Municipality shall be provided, free of charge, with an accommodation from the National Assembly's housing stock in Sofia for the duration of their term of office, whereby any costs of housing repairs, standard furniture, security alarms, as well as any taxes and charges under the Local Taxes and Charges Act shall be covered from the National Assembly budget.

(5) Members of the National Assembly shall have the right to accommodation and per diem allowances when visiting their respective constituencies. When a Member uses his/her own car, the accommodation and travel allowances shall be determined by the President of the National Assembly. This matter shall be regulated by an internal order of the President of the National Assembly.

(6) Members of the National Assembly shall be entitled to office space in Sofia, provided by the National Assembly and furnished with the necessary technical and communication equipment, as well as to a official website maintained by the server of the National Assembly.

(7) The National Assembly shall provide Members of the European Parliament for the Republic of Bulgaria, where needed and against payment, with office space in its premises furnished with the necessary technical and communication equipment. The costs shall be borne by the relevant Member of the European Parliament.

Article 11. (entered into force on 1.01.2015, concerning sentence 7 – SG, No. 97/2014) The National Assembly shall reimburse Members of Parliamentary Groups, as well as unaffiliated Members, for any additional expenses at the rate of two thirds of the basic monthly remuneration of a Member of the National Assembly as per Article 5. This sum shall be provided to the Parliamentary Groups and to the unaffiliated Members of the National Assembly. The Parliamentary Groups shall determine the way of allocating, reporting and monitoring the amounts. Such sums shall be used for assistants remunerations, consultations, expert opinions, office premises and other activities related to the work of the Members of the National Assembly performed in the Parliament and in their respective constituencies. Members of the National Assembly shall report to their Parliamentary Group, on a quarterly basis, the expenses incurred, which may also be published on their website. Unaffiliated Members of the National Assembly shall publish on their website quarterly information about the expenses incurred.

Article 12. The Budget of the National Assembly shall cover entertainment expenses of the President and Vice Presidents of the National Assembly, the Leaders of Parliamentary Groups and Chairpersons of Standing Committees, as well as hospitality expenses for guests invited by the National Assembly.

Article 13. (1) Where a Member of the National Assembly is absent from a plenary session without a valid reason, a deduction amounting to his/her daily pay shall be made from his/her monthly salary.

(2) Where a Member of the National Assembly is absent from a meeting of a Parliamentary Committee, subcommittee or working group without a valid reason, a deduction amounting to the supplement for the participation in the meeting in question shall be made from his/her monthly salary.

(3) Where a Member of the National Assembly is absent from 3 consecutive or a total of 5 plenary sessions in any given month, a deduction amounting to two thirds of his/her monthly salary shall be deducted from the latter, while the National Assembly shall not cover more than one third of his/her additional expenses as per Article 11.

(4) When a parliamentary session cannot be started or must be closed on account of a lack of quorum, those members of the National Assembly who were absent without a valid reason shall have two thirds of their daily pay deducted from their monthly salaries.

(5) Attendance data shall be retrieved from the registration and vote printouts, through reports by Chairpersons of parliamentary committees, subcommittees and working groups, and from the shorthand record.

Article 14. Amounts deducted in accordance of Article 13 shall be credited as

savings to the Budget of the National Assembly.

Article 15. (1) Remunerations under Articles 5 and 7 shall be accrued as from the Election Day, and for Members of the National Assembly who have taken office at a later stage, from the date on which they are declared Members of the National Assembly by the Central Election Committee. Remunerations under Article 6 shall be accrued from the date the Members of the National Assembly were elected to their respective positions or as Committee members.

(2) Ministers who have been elected Members of the National Assembly in a subsequent National Assembly shall specify which state body they wish to receive their remuneration from, until the election of a new Council of Ministers.

Article 16. (1) If dismissed, a parliamentary employee entitled to a retirement pension shall have the right to a lump sum cash benefit in the amount of one basic salary multiplied by the number of years of service in the National Assembly, but not exceeding ten basic salaries.

(2) Parliamentary employees shall be paid an annual clothing allowance amounting to two average monthly salaries of public sector employees.

Article 17. The National Public Opinion Survey Centre shall publish in its section on the National Assembly website its work plan, any completed surveys commissioned by the National Assembly or a Parliamentary Group and financed by the budget of the National Assembly, any publications made, as well as its archive data classified by year and by subject matter.