

# **Rules of Organisation and Procedure of the National Assembly**

(Promulgated in State Gazette No. 53/18.06.2013, amended and supplemented SG No 62/12.07.2013)

## **Chapter One**

### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Article 1. The National Assembly shall establish its proper organisation and shall transact its business pursuant to the Constitution and these Rules.

Article 2. The National Assembly shall sit on the premises of the National Assembly in the capital city, unless it decides to sit elsewhere under extraordinary circumstances.

## **Chapter Two**

### **CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND CHANGES IN THE PRESIDING BODY**

Article 3. (1) The first sitting of the National Assembly shall be opened by the eldest Member present. The said Member shall chair the sitting until the National Assembly elects its President.

(2) The Members of the National Assembly shall take a spoken oath in pursuance of Article 76, paragraph 2 of the Constitution to be documented by signing individual oath papers.

Article 4. (1) Under the Chair of the eldest Member debates shall be held exclusively on the election of President of the National Assembly as well as the election itself.

(2) At the first sitting of the National Assembly the Members shall adopt rules of procedure on the terms and conditions for election of President and Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly.

Article 5. (1) The President and Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly can be discharged of their powers before the expiry of the term upon:

1. his/her own request;

2. a motion in writing of not less than one third of all Members when he/she is objectively incapable of fulfilling his/her duties, or is systematically abusing his/her authority or fails to carry out the duties within his/her competencies.

3. a motion in writing by the parliamentary group, formed by the parliamentary represented party or coalition, which has nominated them.

(2) The Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly shall be discharged of powers before the term expiry when they have quit the parliamentary group which has nominated them, or when they have been dismissed by it.

(3) In the cases under item 1 of paragraph 1 and 2, the discharge shall be announced without a debate or vote.

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

(5) In case of discharge under paragraph 1 and 2, a new election shall take place within 14 days after the decision was adopted under the terms and conditions determined in rules of procedure, adopted by the National Assembly. Until the holding of a new election for President of the National Assembly, the latter shall be chaired by the Vice-President, nominated by the parliamentary represented party or coalition, which has nominated the President.

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

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

### **Chapter Three**

#### **PRESIDIUM OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Article 8. (1) The President of the National Assembly, in pursuance of his/her powers under Article 77, paragraph 1 and Article 78, item 1 of the Constitution, shall:

1. announce the bills and other motions submitted to the National Assembly and assign such bills and motions to the Committees in accordance with their subject;
  2. authenticate the contents of the acts adopted by the National Assembly;
  3. ensure that appropriate conditions exist for the work of the Committees of the National Assembly and that of the Members;
  4. establish Standing Orders observable on the National Assembly premises, and such concerning the organisation and the use of the facilities, following coordination with the Council to the President;
  5. organize the National Assembly budget elaboration and implementation and the preparation of the annual financial report.
  6. authenticate by his signature the shorthand records of the sittings of the National Assembly;
  7. exercise control over the publication of the "State Gazette" as well as the other powers pursuant to the "State Gazette" Act;
  8. establish the seating arrangements in the plenary hall for the Members of the National Assembly by Parliamentary Group, for the Members of the Council of Ministers, and for the President and the Vice-President of the Republic following consultations with the Council to the President;
  9. after a vote may require information from the Secretaries of the National Assembly on voting with someone else's cards, save the cases under Art. 62, paragraph 3;
  10. ensure and observe the compliance with these Rules;
  11. approve the uniform classification of staff positions at the National Assembly and the staffing of its departments;
  12. appoint and dismiss the Secretary General of the National Assembly, the personnel at the President's Office and at the offices of the Vice-Presidents and Parliamentary Groups subject to their respective advice;
  13. endorse Operational Rules for the Administration of the National Assembly;
  14. control the internal and external security of the National Assembly placed under his orders;
  15. appoint and dismiss the tellers of the National Assembly.
  16. perform other functions he is entrusted with under the Constitution, the law and these Rules.
- (2) The President of the National Assembly shall establish a Consultative Legislation Council. The organisation, activities and composition of the Council shall be regulated by rules approved by the President of the National Assembly.
- (3) The Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly shall assist the President and carry out the activities assigned by him/her.
- (4) If the President of the National Assembly decides to delegate the performance of his functions under paragraph 1 to the Vice-Presidents on a permanent basis, he shall issue an order in writing distributing these functions among them.
- (5) The President of the National Assembly shall designate one of his deputies to act for him/her in his/her absence, and if that has not been done, he shall be substituted by the Vice-President of the same parliamentary group
- (6) If the President takes part in a floor discussion on a certain matter, the sitting shall be chaired by a Vice-President designated by him. He shall not resume the Chair for the same sitting before the vote or the discontinuation of debates on the said matter.

Article 9. (1) The President of the National Assembly shall be assisted by a Council to the President consisting of the Vice-Presidents and the Leaders of Parliamentary Groups or their duly authorised substitutes.

(2) The Council to the President shall:

1. conduct consultations on the draft bills schedule and weekly agenda of the National Assembly;
2. be informed, from time to time but not less than once a month, on the implementation of the legislative programme and on the Committees' work on the bills and draft decisions assigned to them, on statements and appeals.
3. contribute to achieving consensus in cases of conflicts of interests between different parliamentary groups as well as on procedural and organisational matters connected with the National Assembly's work.

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

Article 10. The Secretaries of the National Assembly shall:

1. inform the President of the Members' attendance at sittings of the National Assembly and assist him/her in performing quorum inspections;
2. when a vote is taken with the computerised voting system assist in preventing and punishing a vote with someone else's card, save for the cases under Art. 2, paragraph 3;
3. where a vote is taken by a show of hands, i.e. without the electronic voting equipment, count the votes and report the result of the vote to the President;
4. where a vote is taken by secret ballot, render technical assistance to the ballot;
5. where a vote is taken by roll-call, call the roll;
6. verify and sign the shorthand records of sittings at which they have been on duty;
7. perform such other tasks as may be assigned to them by the President in connection with the business of the National Assembly.

Article 11. The Tellers of the National Assembly shall:

1. perform the President's directions on the maintenance of order on the floor and in the galleries;
2. assist the Secretaries in counting the votes when voting with a show of hands is held and in the technical organisation of secret ballots, and upon voting with the computerised system, save for the cases under Art. 62, paragraph 3, assist them in preventing a vote with someone else's card;
3. ensure that only Members of the National Assembly, Ministers and officials authorised by the National Assembly are present in the plenary room.

## **Chapter Four**

### **PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS**

Article 12. (1) The Members of the National Assembly may form Parliamentary Groups.

(2) The minimum number of Members of the National Assembly to form a Parliamentary Group shall be 10 (ten).

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

(4) Where a parliamentary group ceases to exist the Vice-President elected by it shall be discharged of powers before the expiry of term. The discharge shall be announced at the earliest plenary sitting with no debate or vote.

Article 13. (1) Each Parliamentary Group shall submit to the President of the National Assembly a resolution on its establishment and a list of its leadership and members signed by all members thereof.

(2) The Parliamentary Groups, their leaderships and any changes therein 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 leaderships at a plenary sitting. Every change in the composition of a Parliamentary Group shall be announced by the President of the National Assembly at a plenary sitting.

(4) Any permanent assistants to a Parliamentary Group shall be appointed on the Assembly's staff. On the advice of every Parliamentary Group concerned, the number of such staff shall be approved by the President of the National Assembly in proportion of 1:10 to the number of its members, but not less than 2 for each parliamentary group.

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

(2) The terms of group membership, the commencement and termination thereof, and the rights and duties of group members shall be established by the Parliamentary Group concerned and in accordance with the provisions of these Rules.

(3) A Member of the National Assembly may resign from 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, which shall be announced at a plenary sitting.

(4) On resignation from the Parliamentary Group or on dismissal from it the Member shall lose his/her seat in Standing Committees as a representative of the respective Parliamentary Group, in National Assembly delegations and other elected offices at the National Assembly.

(5) A parliamentary group member who has quit or has been expelled from it shall become a National Assembly Member of no membership with a parliamentary group.

(6) The Members of the European Parliament from the Republic of Bulgaria may also participate in the work of the Parliamentary Groups in a non-voting capacity and according to the registration with the Central Electoral Commission of the party or coalition on the ticket of which they have been elected.

## **Chapter Five**

### **COMMITTEES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Article 15. (1) The National Assembly shall elect from among its Members Standing and Ad-hoc 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 and Local Self-Government Committee;
6. Investment Planning Committee;
7. Foreign Policy Committee;
8. Defense Committee
9. Internal Security and Public Order Committee;
10. Agriculture and Forests Committee;
11. Labour and Social Policy Committee;
12. Education and Science Committee;
13. Children, Youths and Sports Committee;
14. Healthcare Committee;
15. Environment and Water Committee;
16. Transport, Information Technologies and Communications Committee;
17. Culture and Media Committee;
18. Interaction with Civil Society Organizations and Movements Committee;

19. (amended - SG № 62/2013, in effect from 12.07.2013) Human Rights and Citizens' Complaints Committee;
20. (amended - SG № 62/2013, in effect from 12.07.2013) Anti-Corruption and Conflict of Interests Committee;
21. Committee on Control of the Security Services, Implementation and Use of Special Intelligence Means and Access to Data under the Electronic Communications Act;
22. Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds;
23. (new - SG № 62/2013, in effect from 12.07.2013) Religious Denominations and Parliamentary Ethics Committee;

(3) The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall report to the National Assembly on the performance of duties assigned to the Council of Ministers to provide preliminary information about its involvement in the development and adoption of EU acts. The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall draw up reports also on other acts of the European Union institutions.

(4) (amended - SG № 62/2013, in effect from 12.07.2013) The Human Rights and Citizens' Complaints Committee shall submit an annual report to the National Assembly.

(5) The National Assembly may alter the type, number and composition of the standing committees.

Article 16. (1) The Committee on Control of the Security Services, Implementation and Use of Special Intelligence Means and Access to Data under the Electronic Communications Act shall be established on a parity principle - three members from each parliamentary group, and shall hold meetings open to its members only.

(2) The Committee on Control of the Security Services, Implementation and Use of Special Intelligence Means and Access to Data under the Electronic Communications Act shall:

1. exercise parliamentary control over the activities of the security services;
2. adopt opinion papers on the budgets of the security services;
3. adopt its internal rules of operation within 14 days after its election and submit them to the National Assembly for approval.
4. conduct as provided by the Special Intelligence Means Act and the Electronic Communications Act parliamentary oversight and monitoring on the procedures of:
  - a) granting authorization, implementation and use of special intelligence means, storage and destruction of information obtained through them, and protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens against the unlawful use of special intelligence means;
  - b) granting authorization and accessing data under the Electronic Communications Act and protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens against unlawful access to such data.

(3) The Committee shall submit to the National Assembly annually by 31 May a report on the activities completed under paragraph 2, item 4, which shall contain summary data on:

1. the authorizations granted, implementation and use of special intelligence means, storage and destruction of information obtained through them, and protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens against the unlawful use of special intelligence means;
2. the checks performed and suggestions for improving the procedures of storing and processing data under the Electronic Communications Act.

(4) The President of the National Assembly shall inform the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister of the Committee decisions and opinions.

Article 17. (amended- SG № 62/2013, in effect from 12.07.2013) The Anti-Corruption and Conflict of Interests Committee shall be formed on a parity principle – three Members from each parliamentary group.

Article 18. (1) A Member of the National Assembly may be elected to two standing committees at most.

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

Article 19. (1) The composition of the Standing Committees takes into account the number of members in each parliamentary group except for the Standing Committees under art. 15, paragraph 2, items 18, 20 and 21.

(2) The leadership of each Standing Committee shall comprise a Chairperson and up to four Deputy Chairpersons. The leadership of each Standing Committee shall organise its business on the basis of the information coming to the Committee.

(3) The leaderships and the members of the Standing Committees shall be elected on the motion of Parliamentary Groups or private motions by an open vote en bloc, unless objections are raised against any of the nominees.

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

(5) The Chairperson shall authorise one of his/her Deputies to chair the Committee's meetings in his/her absence. If such authorisation has not been done the President of the National Assembly shall assign one of the Deputies to chair the committee's meeting.

Article 20. The meetings of the Parliamentary Committees may be attended also by the Members of the European Parliament from the Republic of Bulgaria in an advisory capacity.

Article 21. (1) The Chairperson, Deputy Chairpersons and members of a Standing Committee may be discharged from their duties before the expiry of their term upon:

1. a request of their own;

2. a motion of more than half of the Committee members – when they are objectively incapable of fulfilling their duties for a period of six months, or when they are systematically abusing their authority, or systematically fail to fulfil their duties.

(2) Standing Committee Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons shall be discharged before the expiry of their term when they discontinue their membership in the Parliamentary Group on whose quota they have been elected to the Committee following a proposal submitted by the Parliamentary Group and after being given the right to be heard.

(3) In the cases under item 1 of paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 the discharge shall be accepted without a debate or vote, and under item 2 of paragraph 1 with a decision of the National Assembly.

(4) In the cases under item 2 of paragraph 1 the Committee shall decide on the motion with a majority of more than one half of its members.

Article 22. (1) The Standing Committees may adopt their Standing Orders in accordance with these Rules which shall be published on the respective Committee webpage of the National Assembly Internet site.

(2) The necessary expenses of Standing Committees of the National Assembly shall be approved by the President of the National Assembly on the advice of Committee leaderships.

Article 23. (1) Standing Committees may form from within their membership subcommittees and working groups.

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

(3) A standing subcommittee shall be established with the Energy Committee to monitor the activity of the State Energy and Water Regulatory Commission. The subcommittee shall be formed on a parity principle – two Members from each parliamentary group.

(4) The Standing Committees may set up public councils of representatives of civil organizations and movements in advisory capacity.

Article 24. (1) In relation to the activities of the Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee and on request by the Chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee the first level spending units shall draw up reports on the implementation of certain budgets and programmes which shall be submitted to the subcommittee within time-frames specified in the request. Reports on the implementation of extrabudgetary accounts and funds may also be debated under this procedure.

(2) The first level spending unit, the Head of the National Audit Office and the Minister of Finance or their deputies, shall take part in the subcommittee meetings as well as other persons invited by the Subcommittee Chairperson.

(3) After the report has been debated the Subcommittee Chairperson shall draw up a report with an evaluation of the budget implementation which shall then be submitted to the Budget and Finance Committee and to the Members of the National Assembly.

Article 25. (1) The Standing Committees shall consider bills, the Annual Programme under Article 111 and draft resolutions, declarations and addresses as may be assigned to them by the President of the National Assembly, and shall prepare reports, make recommendations and give opinions thereon.

(2) Standing Committee shall proceed at an assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of the Acts of the National Assembly.

(3) The standing committees shall, in compliance with their competence, exercise periodic control on the degree of absorption and on the purposeful and legal spending of the resources from the European Union programmes and funds.

(4) Government authorities, officials from the government and municipal administration and members of the public shall be obliged to make available upon request any information and documents required for the work of the Standing Committees.

(5) The Chairperson shall be obliged, on the motion of one third of the Committee members, to address forthwith a request to the government authorities and the officials from the government and municipal administration to attend Committee meetings. The persons so invited shall be obliged to appear before the Committee and to present the requested information as well as to answer the questions they are asked, within 7 days after the sending of the invitation or at the first regular meeting if it is after the expiry of the said 7 days.

Article 26. (1) During the last up to an hour and a half of the standing committees meetings, every first Wednesday or Thursday of the month, the line ministers shall appear before the relevant committees and reply to topical questions put verbally by committee members at the meeting. The questions should relate to specific policies and can not contain requests for detailed figures.

(2) A committee member from each parliamentary group shall have the right to two topical verbal questions whereas the members of no group membership shall be entitled to a total of two questions.

(3) The relevant line Minister to whom the question is addressed shall reply immediately after it has been posed. In the Minister's absence for valid reasons, the committee shall set in consultations with him/her a meeting at which the Minister will reply to topical verbal questions.

(4) The procedure of putting topical verbal questions under paragraph 1 shall be determined on the principle of proportional presentation of parliamentary groups in descending order, the last in line being a Member of the National Assembly who is not a parliamentary group member. The second round of questions shall be posed in the same order after exhausting the procedure of taking the first round of questions.

(5) The presentation of each question shall take up to 2 minutes. The response of the Minister shall take up to 3 minutes. The Member who has posed the question shall have the right of reply limited to 2 minutes and the Minister shall have the right of rejoinder, also limited to 2 minutes.

Article 27. (1) Standing Committee meetings shall be regular and extraordinary.  
(2) The Committees shall decide on the agenda, regularity and duration of their meetings.  
(3) Standing Committees shall be convened by their Chairperson or on the request of not less than one third of its members, or by the President of the National Assembly.

Article 28. (1) The meetings of Standing Committees shall be open. Upon a committee decision its meetings shall be livestreamed on the Internet page of the National Assembly.

(2) Members of the public may attend Committee meetings in compliance with the admission arrangements to the National Assembly.

(3) Any member of a Standing Committee may invite individuals or representatives of legal entities, concerned with the issues considered by the Committee, to attend its meeting.

(4) Representatives of trade unions, professional and industries' associations, on their request, shall attend the meetings, submit written opinions and participate in the Standing Committees' deliberations on draft legislation concerning their activities and issues of interest, in compliance with the rules established by the committees. The opinions shall be published on the relevant committee webpage of the National Assembly Internet site.

(5) Standing Committees may decide that particular meetings be closed.

(6) The meetings of the Committees on Foreign Affairs, Defense, Internal Security and Public Order and the Committees on Control of the Security Services, Implementation and Use of Special Intelligence Means and Access to Data under the Electronic Communications Act as well as their subcommittees shall be closed. Certain meetings of these Committees may be open, which is to be decided by the respective Committee.

(7) The participation of Members of the National Assembly in closed meetings of a committee of which they are not members, the documents and the issues they have become familiar with shall be recorded in a special report on proceedings and shall be signed by them.

(8) Members of the National Assembly, may attend any meeting of a Standing Committee of which they are not members in a non-voting capacity.

(9) Accredited journalists and other journalists who have been granted access, may attend open meetings of the standing committees of the National Assembly.

(10) The participants in Committee meetings shall comply with the requirements pertaining to the protection of classified information and of information under the Personal Data Protection Act, as well as of data relating to personal privacy and the good reputation of citizens.

(11) The mover of a bill or any other matter under consideration by a Committee shall be entitled to a hearing at the relevant Committee meeting. Where the mover is the Council of Ministers, a Member of the Council of Ministers or a Deputy Minister shall be heard at the relevant committee meeting.

Article 29. By way of exception Standing Committees may hold open meetings outside the Capital City.

Article 30. (1) Standing Committee Chairpersons shall deliver notice of the agenda, time and venue of meetings by posting such notice at special points on the premises of the Assembly or in person to Committee members concerned, to be acknowledged by signature. The agenda shall be announced not later than three days prior to the meeting including by way of publishing it on the website of the National Assembly. In the case of an extraordinary meeting, the agenda shall be announced at the same time with an announcement setting the date for such meeting.

(2) A Standing Committee's meeting shall only be in order if more than one half of the Committee's members are in attendance. If after the scheduled time for the meeting a quorum is not present, the committee may meet in the available composition when it is no less than a third of all its members.

(3) Standing Committee decisions shall be made by a majority vote of the members present.



Article 31. (1) Committees may hold joint meetings to discuss common issues. Such meetings shall be presided by one of the Committee Chairpersons designated by mutual consent.  
(2) In joint meetings, each Committee shall make 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 32. (1) Standing Committees' reports to the National Assembly shall be delivered by Committee Chairpersons or by Rapporteurs appointed by the Committees.  
(2) The report shall set out the decision adopted by the Committee, the different views on the matter and the majority in support of each.  
(3) Standing Committees reports from the open meetings shall be public and available under the standing procedures as well as on the National Assembly website.

Article 33. (1) Summary minutes shall be drawn up at the meetings of Standing Committees, setting out all the decisions made.  
(2) Shorthand records shall be drawn up of the meetings of reporting Committees. They shall be signed by the Committee Chairperson and the stenographer and shall be published on the Committee webpage of the National Assembly Internet site within seven days after the meeting.  
(3) The records of Standing Committees closed meetings shall be subject to a special procedure for safe-keeping, accounting and access in compliance with the requirements of the Classified Information Protection Act.

Article 34. (1) Select Committees shall be appointed ad hoc to investigate particular matters and to conduct inquiries.  
(2) Select Committees shall be elected by the National Assembly on the motion of the President or not less than one fifth of the Members.  
(3) The terms of reference, number, composition and term of office of the Select Committees shall be established by the National Assembly.  
(4) The rules of procedure relating to Standing Committees shall apply also to Select Committees.  
(5) Select Committees shall be dissolved as their term of office expires or earlier, by resolution of the National Assembly.

Article 35. (1) The National Assembly shall elect from among its Members the Assembly's standing delegations to international organisations.  
(2) The composition of the National Assembly's standing delegations to international organisations shall be based on the principle of proportional representation of Parliamentary Groups.  
(3) Where a parliamentary group ceases to exist its representative in the standing delegations of the National Assembly shall be dismissed.  
(4) The standing delegations shall report on their activities to the President of the National Assembly.

## **Chapter Six**

### **INTERACTION WITH CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS AND MOVEMENTS**

Article 36. (1) The Committee on Interaction with Civil Organizations and Movements shall:  
1. conduct a dialogue and interaction with representatives of civil society organizations and movements, including by conducting public hearings on matters of significant public interest. The conclusions of the discussions shall be forwarded to the reporting committees;

2. consider proposals for referenda and citizen initiatives under the Direct Participation of Citizens in the Central and Local Government Act, as well as petitions under Article 45 of the Constitution;
  3. perform the functions of a standing committee under the provisions of Chapter Five.
- (2) The Committee on Interaction with Civil Organizations and Movements shall be formed on a parity basis - three Members from each parliamentary group.

Article 37. To the Committee on Interaction with Civil Organizations and Movements shall be established a Public Council comprising representatives of civil society organizations and movements to advise the Committee. The composition and method of Council formation shall be determined by rules to be adopted by the Committee. The rules shall be published on the Committee webpage of the National Assembly Internet site.

- Article 38. (1) The Committee on Interaction with Civil Organizations and Movements shall operate under its internal rules of procedure adopted in accordance with these Rules. The rules shall specify the manner of interaction with civil society organizations and movements.
- (2) The Committee meetings shall be livestreamed on the Internet through the website of the National Assembly.
- (3) At the end of each session, the Committee shall submit to the National Assembly a report containing analysis and opinion on the issues raised by the representatives of civil society organizations and movements. The report shall be considered in plenary.

Article 39. Representatives of civil society organizations and movements have the right on their own initiative to attend committee meetings, to submit written opinions and take part in the discussion of bills under consideration by the National Assembly, referring to the subject of their activities, upon observing the rules of procedure established in the committees.

- Article 40. (1) Civil organizations and movements may submit written opinions on the draft legislation under consideration by the reporting committees.
- (2) The report of the responsible committee for the first reading shall contain a summary of the opinions submitted by civil society organizations and movements.
- (3) The Chairperson of the reporting committee may request civil society organizations and movements to provide their written opinion on the proposals submitted by Members of the National Assembly for the second reading.
- (4) The opinions of civil society organizations and movements shall be published on the Committee webpage of the National Assembly Internet site and shall be distributed to committee members.
- (5) The Committee shall respond to the filed proposals and complaints by civil society organizations and movements.

Article 41. Civil society organizations and movements through a Member of the National Assembly may participate in the parliamentary oversight under the terms and conditions of Chapter Nine, and may attend meetings of parliamentary committees in case of hearings under Chapter Ten or response to topical verbal questions pursuant to Article 26 subject to the access regime in the National Assembly.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **SESSIONS AND SITTINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Article 42. (1) The National Assembly shall sit in three sessions per annum.

- (2) The National Assembly shall be in recess from 22nd December to 10th January, for 10 days during the Easter Holidays, and from 1st to 31st August, each year.
- (3) As an exception, the National Assembly may set recess dates other than the above.
- (4) During periods of recess the time limits under these Rules shall be suspended.

Article 43. (1) The National Assembly shall be convened to a session by the President of the National Assembly.

- (2) In the cases under Article 78, items 2, 3 and 4 of the Constitution the President shall appoint a sitting not later than seven days following the date of the request, irrespective of whether the National Assembly is in recess or not.
- (3) The authors of the request under Article 78 of the Constitution shall be obligated to specify the agenda for the sitting.

Article 44. (1) The regular plenary sittings of the National Assembly shall be on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Sittings may be extended, if the Assembly so decides.

- (2) The National Assembly may change the hours of regular sittings.
- (3) The National Assembly may decide to hold unscheduled sittings, the agenda to be announced in advance, during a session but outside the days under paragraph 1. Extraordinary meetings may be held at any time in case of emergency.
- (4) The days other than the specified under paragraphs 1 and 3 shall be designated for meetings with voters including in the constituencies.

Article 45. (1) The sittings of the National Assembly shall be open.

- (2) A person who is not a Member of the National Assembly or a Government Minister may attend sittings, should the National Assembly decide so, and under the relevant rules established by the President, taking specially assigned seats. They must observe the established order and may take the floor only by invitation of the President.
- (3) Should there occur disorder among the audience, the President shall restore order through the tellers and may direct some or all members of the public to be removed.

Article 46. (1) The sittings of the National Assembly shall be closed when:

1. important interests of the state so require;
  2. documents are discussed that are classified by virtue of the Classified Information Protection Act.
- (2) A motion on a closed sitting may be brought forward by the President of the National Assembly, one tenth of the Members or the Council of Ministers.
  - (3) When such motion is brought forward, the President shall invite the audience to leave the plenary room and the galleries as well as that live broadcasting of the media is stopped. Having heard the mover's motives, the Assembly shall debate and take a vote on the motion. The sitting shall proceed as open or closed depending on the result of the vote.
  - (4) The deliberations and the records of closed sittings shall constitute classified information with the relevant obligations binding all Members of the National Assembly and any other persons allowed access thereto.
  - (5) Resolutions adopted at closed sittings shall be made public.

Article 47. (1) The open sittings of the National Assembly shall be broadcast live by the Bulgarian National Radio on a special frequency covering the entire national territory, and shall be covered also by televised reports of the Bulgarian National TV. The open sittings of the National Assembly shall be livestreamed through its Internet site.

- (2) Live radio and television coverage of sittings shall be subject in each case to a resolution of the Assembly.

(3) Plenary sittings dedicated to parliamentary oversight shall be broadcast live by the Bulgarian National Radio and the Bulgarian National TV.

Article 48. (1) The President shall open a sitting if more than one half of the Members of the National Assembly are in attendance.

(2) The availability of a quorum shall be ascertained through the computerised voting system before the opening of the sitting.

(3) The President may in connection with an impending vote, at his/her initiative or only once per sitting on the request by a parliamentary group, check the availability of a quorum through a roll call or through a count of the Members of the National Assembly by the National Assembly Secretaries.

(4) The President shall adjourn or suspend the sitting if there is no quorum in the plenary room. In cases of suspension, the President may resume the sitting no later than one hour, within business hours, where the required quorum is present following a new inspection.

Article 49. (1) On the motion of the President and after the consultations pursuant to Article 9, paragraph 2, item 1 the National Assembly shall adopt a weekly or fortnightly programme of business. In drafting of such programmes, 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 sitting, the President shall announce the date and hour of the next sitting and its agenda according to the adopted weekly or fortnightly programme.

(3) Parliamentary Group or private motions to include items in the programme to be adopted may be brought forward in writing before the President of the National Assembly not later than 6:00 p.m. on the day preceding the sitting at which the programme is to be put to the vote. Any Member of the National Assembly shall be entitled to propose one item on the agenda in the event of a weekly programme and up to two items in the event of a fortnightly programme. Bills and other draft acts of the National Assembly on which no reports have been submitted but the deadlines under article 74, paragraph 3 and article 84, paragraph 3 have expired may also be moved as items on the forthcoming programme.

(4) The draft programme under paragraph 1 above proposed by the President, and any motions under paragraph 3 above, shall be put to the vote, without a debate, before any other business on the agenda, at the plenary sitting where a weekly or fortnightly programme is to be adopted. No spoken motions shall be allowed.

(5) In exceptional cases, the President may move an amendment to the agenda at the outset of a sitting.

(6) Matters not included in the agenda shall not be debated.

(7) The bills and draft resolutions to be included in the agenda of the scheduled sitting held on the first Wednesday of every month shall be proposed by Parliamentary Groups. Proposals shall be brought before the President of the National Assembly not later than 6:00 p.m. on the previous day. Each Parliamentary Group shall have the right to propose one item of the agenda. The items shall be arranged on the agenda according to the Parliamentary Group size. Each subsequent month, the item proposals shall be arranged on a rotation basis. The National Assembly must consider the substance of the proposals brought forward. If no proposals have been brought by any Parliamentary Group, the Assembly shall proceed with the programme adopted under paragraph 1. Entitled to be proposed as items shall be also bills and draft resolutions with no reports submitted within the expired deadlines under Article 74, paragraph 3 and Article 84, paragraph 3.

(8) The adopted programme shall be published after the vote on the Internet site of the National Assembly and in case of subsequent changes to it voted by the Members the webpage shall be immediately updated.

Article 50. (1) The President shall preside at sittings and give the floor to the Members.

(2) No Member of the National Assembly shall speak unless and until recognised by the President.

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

(4) The President shall compile a list of speakers and shall determine the speaking order depending on:

1. the sequence proposed by the leadership of the Parliamentary Group on which behalf the speakers wish to be recognised, and alternating between representatives of different Parliamentary Groups;

2. the order of requests.

(5) The Chairperson shall recognise the Leaders of Parliamentary Groups or, in their absence, their deputies or duly authorised substitutes, upon request during the debate on the matter at hand and within the time limit allotted to each Group.

(6) Once in each sitting the President shall recognise the Leaders of Parliamentary Groups, their substitutes or a Member of the National Assembly authorised by them upon request to speak on any matter outside the agenda under debate for a maximum of 10 minutes.

Article 51. (1) Members of the National Assembly raising a point of order shall be recognised immediately, unless preceded by any request for a reply, rejoinder or explanation of a negative vote.

(2) Points of order are objections to a particular breach of the order of business, provided by these Rules, or motions to amend or supplement the adopted course of proceedings, including such as:

1. to adjourn the sitting;

2. to suspend the sitting;

3. to close a debate;

4. to suspend a debate;

5. to postpone a vote.

(3) The speaker on a point of order shall speak for not more than two minutes, and not in any case on the substance of the matter at hand.

(4) When the point of order relates to the manner of conducting proceedings, the President shall have the right of up to 2 minutes of explanation.

Article 52. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall only speak from the rostrum.

(2) In case where members of the National Assembly have physical disabilities, preventing them from gaining access of the rostrum, they shall speak from their sitting location, all necessary technical facilities being immediately made available to them.

Article 53. (1) Should a speaker digress from the matter at hand, the President shall call him to order, and if the speaker persists, the President shall rule him out of order.

(2) No Member of the National Assembly may speak twice on the substance of the same matter.

Article 54. (1) The President shall set the time limit for debate on each item on the agenda and the date and hour of the vote thereon. The time for debate shall be distributed among the Parliamentary Groups in proportion to their size, but not less than 15 minutes for the smallest and no less than 30 minutes for the largest Parliamentary Group. The total time limit for speeches of Members of the National Assembly who are not members of any parliamentary group shall be up to 15 minutes, whereas the time limit for individual Members of the National Assembly with no group membership shall be up to 5 minutes.

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

(3) The Parliamentary Group time under paragraph 1 above shall comprise:

1. the total taken up by speakers from the Group;
2. time taken up by Leader of the Group;
3. time taken up by speakers from the Group for replies and points of order, except for matters referring to the manner of conducting proceedings.
- (4) Up to three Members of the National Assembly may be recognised to express opinions dissenting from those of the Parliamentary Group to which they belong. The speaking time of a Member of the National Assembly shall be not more than 3 minutes.
- (5) If a speaker exceeds the time allotted in pursuance of paragraphs 1 to 4, the President, having called him to order, shall rule such speaker out of order.
- (6) The procedure laid down in the above paragraphs 1 to 5 shall not apply to debates on bills prior to the second vote.

Article 55. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall have the right of reply.

(2) A reply is a short objection to the substance of a preceding speech. It shall be made immediately after the speech in question and shall be limited to two minutes.

(3) Not more than three replies may be made to the same speech.

(4) The speaker who has been replied to shall have the right of rejoinder, limited to three minutes, after all replies have been made.

Article 56. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall have the right of personal explanation, limited to 2 minutes, where a Member is concerned, personally or by name, in another's speech.

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

(3) The right to explanation of a negative vote shall be restricted to Members of the National Assembly who have not expressed the same negative position, or have not spoken at all, during the debate.

(4) No more than three Members of the National Assembly may be recognised to explain their negative votes.

(5) No explanations of negative vote shall be allowed after a secret ballot or a vote on a point of order.

Article 57. After the list of speakers has been exhausted or representatives of all Parliamentary Groups have spoken according to the time allotment under Article 54, and no requests have been made for time extension, the President shall close the debate.

Article 58. (1) On a motion concerning a point of order one Member of the National Assembly shall be recognised to raise an objection. Thereafter, the motion shall be put to a vote immediately without a debate.

(2) The right under paragraph 1 may not prejudice rights of Parliamentary Groups under Article 54, paragraph 1.

Article 59. (1) A sitting may be adjourned or suspended by a decision of the National Assembly on the motion of the President or of a Parliamentary Group.

(2) Where a motion is brought forward to adjourn the sitting and another, to suspend the sitting, the motion to adjourn shall be put to the vote first.

Article 60. (1) Where the transaction of business is disrupted by noise or disorder, or where dictated by other important reasons, the President may suspend the sitting.

(2) Any Parliamentary Group may request, once per sitting, that a sitting be suspended for not longer than thirty minutes. The President shall grant such request immediately and set the duration of the suspension, which may not be less than 15 minutes. No such requests shall be allowed within one hour from the opening of a sitting, or within one hour before the closing

thereof as scheduled. The interval between two successive interruptions may not be shorter than one hour.

Article 61. Members of the Council of Ministers shall be entitled to attend the sittings of the National Assembly. They shall be recognised to speak whenever they so request. The President of the National Assembly may set the speaking time Ministers use for a specific issue.

Article 62. (1) Voting shall be in person. Votes may be 'for', 'against', or abstention. Voting shall be open. The National Assembly may decide a certain vote to be secret.

(2) Open votes shall be taken by any of the following:

1. the computerised voting system;
2. show of hands;
3. roll-call, calling the names of Members of the National Assembly with replies of 'yes', 'no' and 'abstained';
4. signatures read in person; or
5. roll-call, using the electronic system whereby the Members' names and votes are shown on screen through the computerized voting system.

(3) The computerized voting system uses the biometric data of every individual Member of the National Assembly or is activated by the biometric data of every individual Member of the National Assembly.

(4) Secret votes shall be taken by ballot papers.

Article 63. Any Parliamentary Group or not less than one tenth of all Members of the National Assembly may propose the vote to be performed under Article 62, paragraph 2, items 3, 4 and 5 or to be secret. Such motion shall be put to the vote without a debate. One Member of each Parliamentary Groups objecting to such a motion shall be recognised.

Article 64. (1) Before taking the vote the President shall invite Members to take their seats. Voting time for the purposes of Article 62, paragraph 2, item 1 shall be limited to 30 seconds, but not less than 15 seconds.

(2) From the announcement of the vote until its completion, no Member of the National Assembly may be recognised to speak.

Article 65 (1) Matters shall be put to the vote in the following order:

1. motions to reject;
2. motions to defer to a subsequent sitting;
3. motions to substitute;
4. motions to amend;
5. text under debate, including amendments already passed;
6. motions to supplement;
7. the original proposal.

(2) Any two or more motions of the same nature shall be put to the vote in the order of their submission.

Article 66. (1) A motion shall be deemed carried if more than one half of the Members of the National Assembly in attendance have voted for it, unless otherwise provided by the Constitution.

(2) If the votes are tied, the motion shall be deemed rejected.

Article 67. (1) The result of the vote shall be announced by the President immediately.

(2) Should the voting procedure or the result thereof be disputed by a Parliamentary Group immediately after the vote, the President may order the vote to be repeated. The result of such second vote shall be final.

(3) Where a vote is taken by the computerised voting system, printouts of the results may be made available to Parliamentary Group leaderships on request.

Article 68. The Chairperson may announce at the end of the plenary sitting the date and time for the vote on bills and other draft acts of the National Assembly included on the agenda on which the debates have been concluded.

Article 69. (1) Full shorthand records shall be drawn up of the sittings of the National Assembly on the day of the sitting or on the following day at the latest. Each record shall be signed by the stenographers, by the two Secretaries on duty and by the President of the National Assembly not later than the week following its production.

(2) Attached to the shorthand record shall be the explanatory memorandum and text of bills, resolutions, and other enactments of the National Assembly, and any proposed amendments thereto, whether read out or not on the floor, and the printouts of voting results from the computerised system.

(3) The records of open plenary sittings and printouts of voting results from the computerized system shall be published within 7 days on the website of the National Assembly.

Article 70. Any Member of the National Assembly may review the shorthand record of his speeches and demand the rectification of errors therein within three days following the drawing up of the record. Any related dispute shall be settled by the President on the report of the Secretaries on duty and the stenographer concerned in the presence of the Member concerned.

Article 71. (1) Any errors of fact in the enactments of the National Assembly prior to their promulgation in the State Gazette shall be amended on the instructions of the President of the National Assembly subject to written request by the Rapporteur of the Committee concerned and coordination with the mover, or solely upon instructions of the President.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall inform the members of the corrections pursuant to paragraph 1 .

(3) Corrections of errors of fact in promulgated acts of the National Assembly shall be made solely on the instructions of the President of the National Assembly.

(4) The President of the National Assembly shall announce the above corrections of errors at the first plenary sitting, following their detection.

(5) When the correction of error under paragraph 3 above concerns a promulgated law, the President of the National Assembly informs also the President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **INTRODUCTION, CONSIDERATION AND PASSAGE OF BILLS AND OTHER ACTS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Article 72. (1) Bills and explanatory memorandum thereto shall be addressed to the President of the National Assembly electronically and on paper and shall be entered forthwith in a special public register "Bills".

(2) In the explanatory memorandum the mover of the bill shall state his opinion about the expected consequences of the bill's implementation, including financial ones.

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



Article 73. (1) The President of the National Assembly shall assign the bills among the Standing Committees within three days following their submission.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall designate one Standing Committee to be the main Rapporteur on each bill.

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

(4) Objections to the Committee assignments may be raised with the President of the National Assembly by the bill's mover and the Standing Committees concerned within 7 days of the announcement in pursuance of paragraph 3 above. The President shall rule on such objections within two days.

Article 74. (1) Standing Committees shall consider bills not earlier than 24 hours and not later than three weeks after the receipt thereof by Committee members. Standing Committees shall submit to the President of the National Assembly and to the Chairperson of the main Rapporteur Committee substantiated opinions on the bills within such time limits as required by the Assembly's legislative programme or the current weekly or fortnightly programme of business.

(2) Upon consideration of the bill at first reading, the main Rapporteur Committee before discussing in substance shall assess its compliance with the requirements of the Statutory Instruments Act and the ordinance for its application and in the presence of inconsistencies may advise the importer to bring it in consistence within 7 days.

(3) Reports on the bills shall be presented to the National Assembly by the main Rapporteur Committees for the first vote not later than two months of their submission and shall be published on the Committee webpage of National Assembly Internet site.

Article 75. (1) The bills, accompanied by the explanatory memorandum thereto and the report of the main Rapporteur Committee, shall be made available to the Members of the National Assembly not later than 24 hours before the commencement of the sitting at which the bills are to be considered. The same term shall apply to the consideration of the bill at second reading, unless the National Assembly decides otherwise.

(2) The Chairperson of the main Rapporteur Committee may request, in respect of private bills introduced by Members, the opinion of the Council of Ministers or the Minister of the respective sector. The Council of Ministers or the respective Minister shall offer opinion within two weeks of the request.

(3) The Chairperson of the main Rapporteur Committee may request the opinion of the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation in respect of bills regulating labor or social security relations.

(4) On bills governing the rights of persons with disabilities, the Chairperson of the main Rapporteur Committee shall request the opinion by the National Council for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities.

(5) Citizens may submit written comments on bills.

(6) Opinions under paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 shall be published on the Rapporteur Committee webpage of the National Assembly Internet site and distributed to the Committee members.

(7) The lack of opinion under the preceding paragraph 2, 3, 4 and 5 may not prevent the bill's consideration.

(8) The report of the main Rapporteur Committee for the first reading shall contain opinion on the expected consequences, including financial, of the execution of the future law and a summary of the proposals received from interested non-governmental organisations and a summary opinion of the Committee.

Article 76. (1) Bills shall be put to the vote twice at two separate sittings.

(2) As an exception, the National Assembly may decide to take both votes at the same sitting. This provision shall be applicable only if during the bill's consideration no amendments or supplements to the bill have been made.

(3) A bill shall be considered at first reading after the National Assembly has heard the report of the main Rapporteur Committee, the mover's opinion lasting 10 minutes, and the reports, if any, of any other Standing Committees to which the bill has been assigned.

(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 debate on the bills' main provisions.

Article 77. (1) Standing Committees shall consider simultaneously all bills, concerning the substance of the same matter, introduced before the National Assembly by the date on which the main Rapporteur Committee shall initiate the debate thereon. The Assembly shall consider all such bills simultaneously and each shall be put to the vote separately.

(2) Where more than one bill concerning the substance of the same matter has passed the first vote, the main Rapporteur Committee shall, within fourteen days, consolidate such bills into a single bill to be introduced before the President of the National Assembly and the Members for proposals in writing.

Article 78. A bill which has been rejected at the first reading may be re-introduced only following substantial amendments to its main provisions, which shall be reflected in the background papers thereof and not earlier than 3 months after its rejection.

Article 79. (1) Members of the National Assembly may propose amendments and addenda in writing to a bill that has past the first vote or to the new bill dressed, pursuant to Article 77, paragraph 2, within seven days of passing the bill or its introduction before the President of the National Assembly, respectively. Such proposals shall be brought forward through the President of the National Assembly, before the Chairperson of the main Rapporteur Committee. As a matter of exception, the Assembly may resolve to extend the above period by not more than three weeks or to reduce it, but to no less than three days.

(2) The draft report for the second reading of a bill shall be published on the Internet site of the National Assembly not later than 1 day after the expiration of the term set in paragraph 1 above.

(3) The Chairperson of the Rapporteur Committee may ask for the opinion of the Council of Ministers or the respective Minister concerning the proposals moved by the members of the parliament.

(4) Within fourteen days following the expiry of the period under the paragraph 1, the main Rapporteur Committee shall introduce before the Assembly a substantiated report setting out:

1. any written proposals made within the period under paragraph 1, together with the Committee's opinion thereon;

2. the Committee's proposals concerning the bill under consideration, where the Committee had adopted such proposals upon a motion by any of its members during a sitting of the Committee.

(5) The report under paragraph 4 shall be published on the main Rapporteur Committee webpage of the National Assembly Internet site.

Article 80. (1) For the purposes of the second vote the National Assembly shall debate on bills chapter-by-chapter, title-by-title or paragraph-by-paragraph. Where no written proposals or objections have been made, the texts shall not be read out in the plenary room. Texts shall in this case be appended to the shorthand record and shall form part thereof.

(2) For the purposes of the second vote only proposals brought forward by Members in writing in pursuance of Article 79 shall be considered, together with any proposals by the main Rapporteur Committee included in its report. Drafting amendments shall be allowed as well. No proposals inconsistent with the principles of the bill as first voted and passed shall be considered or put to the vote.

(3) Any Member may substantiate proposals before the House, within a time limit of five minutes for each such proposal.

(4) The vote shall be taken as set out in Article 65. No speeches and new motions shall be admissible during voting. Only motions of Members of the National Assembly submitted under the procedure of Article 79, motions by the main Rapporteur Committee, drafting amendments made in the course of the debate as well as motions on deleting or postponing a text shall be voted on.

Article 81. The mover of a bill may withdraw it before the commencement of the first vote or, subject to the decision of the National Assembly, thereafter.

Article 82. (1) The President shall announce, at the first sitting, the receipt of any presidential decree pursuant to Article 101 of the Constitution whereby an Act of the National Assembly is returned for further consideration.

(2) Within three days of the receipt of such a decree, the President of the National Assembly shall direct the original main Rapporteur Committee to report on the decree and the background thereto before the Members.

(3) Any Act returned for further consideration shall be placed on the agenda of the National Assembly within fifteen days of the receipt of the decree.

(4) The Act so returned shall pass again by the majority vote of all the Members of the National Assembly.

(5) If the Act so returned does not receive the required majority and has been contested in principle, it shall be subject to a new consideration under the procedure for considering and adopting bills.

(6) If the Act so returned does not receive the required majority and has only been contested in terms of particular provisions, the procedure laid down in Article 80 shall apply and such contested provisions shall only be put to the vote.

Article 83. In the case of any ratification bill of an international treaty, the text of such treaty may not be amended. Reservations to a multilateral treaty may only be made where admissible by the said treaty.

Article 84. (1) Draft resolutions, declarations and addresses may be introduced by any Member or any Parliamentary Group.

(2) Draft resolutions, declarations and addresses shall be assigned by the President of the National Assembly among Standing Committees within three days of entry and he/she shall notify Members thereof under the procedure in Article 73, paragraph 3.

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

(4) Resolutions, declarations and addresses shall be passed by a single vote.

(5) Any draft resolution, declaration and address may be withdrawn by the mover thereof before it is put to the vote at a sitting of the National Assembly.

Article 85. Draft resolutions on procedural, organisational and technical matters shall not be distributed to standing committees unless the President of the National Assembly decides otherwise.

Article 86. (1) The reports under Article 84, items 16 and 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria shall be distributed by the President of the National Assembly to the respective standing committee within three days after their receipt of which he/she shall notify the Members of the National Assembly under the procedure of Article 73, paragraph 3.

(2) The standing committee shall debate the report under paragraph 1 within 15 days after the distribution 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 body whose activity has been put to debate.

(3) The report under paragraph 1 shall be included in the National Assembly agenda within one month after its submission.

(4) The report under paragraph 1 shall be debated after the National Assembly has heard the opinion of the committee and the statement of the mover each delivered within ten minutes time. The debate shall continue with speeches by Members of the National Assembly which may contain also questions to the mover who shall be obliged to respond to them.

(5) In the course of the debate of the report under paragraph 1 the Members of the National Assembly may move amendments and supplements to the draft resolution proposed by the committee. Motions shall be voted upon under the procedure of Article 65. A resolution shall be adopted on the report.

Article 87. When the National Assembly elects wholly or partly authorities under applicable law, it may adopt procedural rules for the terms and conditions of proposing nominations, presentation and public disclosure of documents and hearings of candidates in the relevant committee, and the procedure for their election by the National Assembly. The rules shall be drafted and submitted to the National Assembly by the Standing Committee competent for each election. Committee hearings shall be open for the public.

Article 88. (1) Where the Constitutional Court rules the National Assembly a party to a constitutional case brought against an Act or resolution thereof, the President of the National Assembly shall notify the main Rapporteur Committee concerned forthwith.

(2) Within 14 days of such notice the said Committee may adopt an opinion to the Constitutional Court. In this case the opinion shall mandatorily set out the grounds on which the Assembly has passed the act that has been contested before the Constitutional Court.

(3) The President of the National Assembly shall sign such opinion and shall send it to the Constitutional Court.

(4) Where the Constitutional Court proclaims a separate Act of the National Assembly or part thereof as unconstitutional, the National Assembly shall settle for any legal effects that have occurred in the meantime within two months of the entry into force of the judgement.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL**

Article 89. (1) Members of the National Assembly may address to the Prime Minister, any of the Deputy Prime Ministers or any of the Ministers questions of topical nature and public interest and falling within their respective province of executive powers or pertaining to the operations of the administration they are heading.

(2) The Prime Minister shall be addressed with questions that concern the activities of the Government.

Article 90. (1) Such questions shall be addressed in writing through the President of the National Assembly not later than 48 hours before the commencement of the sitting at which the Ministers shall be called upon to answer. Questions need to be precisely and clearly formulated, exclude personal invectives and insulting statements and be signed by the interpellant Member. When a Member asks a question that summarises meetings and requests of civil society organizations and citizens, this may be noted in the written question. Answers may be spoken or written. Answers shall be provided in writing only if the Member of the National Assembly has so expressly desired or when the question concerns personal rights or interests. Written answers

shall be provided within seven days. A Member of the National Assembly who has addressed a question with an oral answer may request in writing a change of the type of reply into a written one until 6:00 p.m. on the day preceding the day of the sitting at which the answer is due. The time-limit for the written answer shall be seven days after the request for change and shall not be postponed by the Minister. Such questions and their answers shall be submitted on paper and electronic copy and shall be immediately recorded in a public register "Parliamentary Control" and published on the website of the National Assembly in the "Parliamentary Control" section.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall notify immediately the Council of Ministers, the Deputy Prime Ministers or the Ministers respectively, of any such questions and of the date and time of the sitting at which an answer shall be due.

(3) The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Minister concerned, may request that the answer be postponed but by no more than seven days following the term specified in paragraph 1.

(4) Where the Member who has addressed the question is not present at the sitting due to valid reasons, the answer shall be postponed. Absence for valid reasons shall be certified by a letter of the Member concerned to the President of the National Assembly submitted not later than 6:00 p.m. on the day prior to parliamentary control.

(5) When a written answer is received to a question, the President shall announce the fact at the next sitting of the Assembly following such receipt and shall deliver a copy of such answer to the Member concerned. Questions for written answer as well as the written answers themselves shall be attached to the shorthand record of the sitting.

(6) Members of the National Assembly may withdraw their questions in writing until 6:00 p.m. of the day preceding the day of the sitting on parliamentary control. The President of the National Assembly shall notify the Minister concerned accordingly.

(7) Where the parliamentary groups have exercised their right under Article 50, paragraph 6 the time on parliamentary control shall be extended by the same (equal) time limit.

Article 91. (1) No Member of the National Assembly may address more than two questions at any sitting on parliamentary control.

(2) The presentation of any single question shall be limited to 2 minutes.

(3) The answer given by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Minister concerned shall be limited to 3 minutes. The Member who has asked a question shall have the right of reply within up to 2 minutes time, and the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Minister shall have the right of rejoinder, also within 2 minutes.

Article 92. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall have the right to address enquiries to the Prime Minister, any of the Deputy Prime Ministers or any of the Ministers.

(2) Such enquiries must relate to the main aspects of activity of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, or the administrations of which they are in charge.

(3) The Prime Minister shall be addressed with enquiries that concern the general policies of the Government.

(4) No Member of the National Assembly may address more than two enquiries at a single sitting on parliamentary control.

Article 93. (1) Enquiries shall be answered within fourteen days of receipt. The answer may be spoken or written. A written answer must be provided if the Member of the National Assembly addressing the enquiry has expressly wished so. A Member of the National Assembly who has addressed an enquiry with an oral answer may request in writing a change of the type of reply into a written one until 6:00 p.m. on the day preceding the day of the sitting on parliamentary control. The time-limit for the written answer shall be seven days after the request for change and shall not be postponed by the Minister. The enquiries received and the answers to them shall be submitted on paper and electronic copy, shall be immediately registered in a public register

“Parliamentary Control” and shall be published on the website of the National Assembly, in the “Parliamentary Control” section.

(2) The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Minister concerned, may request an extension of the above period, but by no more than seven days following the term specified in paragraph 1.

Article 94. Enquiries shall be addressed in writing, and signed by the Member concerned, through the President of the National Assembly. Enquiries must be formulated clearly and accurately, and must not contain any personal invectives and insulting statements.

Article 95. (1) The President shall announce submitted enquiries at each sitting dedicated to parliamentary control.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall give due notice of such enquiries to the Prime Minister, the respective Deputy Prime Minister or Minister, and of the date and hour of the sitting at which they shall be called upon to answer.

(3) The reply to an enquiry shall be postponed if the Member of the National Assembly addressing it is absent from the sitting due to valid reasons. Absence for valid reasons shall be certified by a letter of the Member concerned to the President of the National Assembly submitted not later than 6:00 p.m. on the day preceding the day of parliamentary control.

Article 96. Members of the National Assembly may withdraw their enquiries in writing until 6:00 p.m. on the day prior to the day of parliamentary control, whereof the President shall inform the National Assembly at the beginning of the sitting on parliamentary control and shall notify the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister or Minister concerned.

Article 97. (1) When the National Assembly proceeds to considering an enquiry, the enquiring Member of the National Assembly may elaborate such enquiry from the platform within a time limit of 3 minutes. The reply to the enquiry shall be limited to 5 minutes.

(2) After the answer, the enquiring Member of the National Assembly shall have the right of seeking further clarification by not more than two supplementary questions presented within a total time limit of 2 minutes, and the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister or Minister shall answer within 3 minutes. Where the answer is provided in writing, no such further questions shall be allowed.

(3) No debate shall be held and no replies shall be allowed in the course of answering an enquiry. The enquiring Member shall have the right to express his opinion on the answer within a time limit of 2 minutes. Replies on part of the enquired Minister shall not be allowed on any grounds.

Article 98. (1) Where a written answer to an enquiry has been received, the President shall announce the fact at the following sitting of the National Assembly dedicated to parliamentary control and shall hand a copy of such answer to the enquiring Member.

(2) Enquiries requiring a written answer and the written answers thereto shall be attached to the shorthand records.

Article 99. (1) On the motion of not less than one fifth of the Members of the National Assembly, a debate shall be opened on an enquiry and a resolution shall be voted. Such motions for debate together with a draft resolution shall be brought before the President of the National Assembly until completion of the plenary sitting.

(2) The debate shall be scheduled for the following sitting dedicated to parliamentary control. After the President has scheduled the debate the Members of the National Assembly shall not be entitled to withdraw their signatures from the motion. The debate shall be held in the presence of the Minister concerned, following the order laid down in Chapter Seven herein and shall be limited to one hour. The time for debate shall be distributed among Parliamentary Groups in

relation to their membership number, being 5 minutes for the smallest and up to 5 minutes total for all Members of the National Assembly who are not members of any parliamentary group .

(3) Such drafts resolution may be proposed also by any individual Member. Where more than one draft is proposed, proposals shall be put to the vote in the order of entry. Voting shall be held under the provisions of Article 60.

Article 100. (1) The National Assembly shall hear questions, enquiries, and answers thereto during the last three hours of each Friday sitting, except if it decides otherwise.

(2) The Prime Minister shall be the first to answer, followed by the Deputy Prime Ministers or the Ministers and while answering the Ministers shall be subject to rotation.

(3) The questions and enquiries to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Ministers shall be asked in the order of their entry.

(4) For questions and inquiries on the same subject, the response of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers shall be a shared one, under the relevant provisions of Articles. 91 and 97.

(5) The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister or Minister concerned, who has not responded within the statutory period, shall be required within 10 days to appear in person before the National Assembly to explain the failure of their duty.

(6) The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister or Minister concerned shall respond in person.

Article 101. (1) Members may not address a question or enquiry to which an answer has already been provided.

(2) Where a question and enquiry do not conform to these Rules or are not addressed to the member of the Council of Ministers under whose responsibility the subject matter of such question or enquiry belongs, the President shall notify the Member of the Assembly concerned to remove such inconsistencies within three days. Within the same time limit the notified Member shall be entitled to challenge the admissibility of the question or enquiry. After consultations with the Council to the President on the inadmissibility, the President shall make a final decision whereof the Member shall be informed. In case of a decision to admit the question or inquiry, the deadline for response under Article 90, paragraph 1 and Article 93, paragraph 1 shall be determined by the date of the final decision.

Article 102. (1) In the last up to an hour and a half of the sitting every first Wednesday of each month, the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Ministers shall appear before the National Assembly and take verbal topical questions relating to the general government policy addressed by Members of the National Assembly representatives at the sitting itself. The questions addressed may not contain requests for provision of detailed figures.

(2) Each parliamentary group shall be entitled to two topical verbal questions and the Members with no group membership shall be entitled to a total of two questions.

(3) The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Ministers, who have addressed with a question respond immediately after it has been posed. In the absence of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Ministers for valid reasons, the President of the National Assembly in consultation with them shall determine the sitting at which they will answer topical verbal questions.

(4) The procedure of addressing topical verbal questions under paragraph 1 shall be determined according to the size of parliamentary groups in descending order, with the last in line being a Member of the National Assembly who is not a members of any parliamentary group. Addressing the second round of questions shall be held in the same order only after the procedure of responding to the first round of questions has been exhausted.

(5) The provisions of Article 91, paragraph 2 and 3 shall apply to the procedure of topical verbal questions.

(6) No Parliamentary Group can take advantage of the right under Article 50, paragraph 6 in the time for responses to topical verbal questions.

Article 103. (1) The Council of Ministers may request the National Assembly to take a vote of confidence in it on the Council's overall policy or on a specific issue.

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

(3) After the closing of the debate, a relevant resolution of the Assembly shall be put to the vote, at the same sitting.

(4) The resolution shall pass if more than one half of the Members of the National Assembly in attendance vote for it.

Article 104. One fifth of the Members of the National Assembly may move a vote of no confidence in the Council of Ministers or the Prime Minister by introducing a substantiated draft resolution.

Article 105. (1) The debate on a draft no-confidence resolution shall commence not earlier than three days and not later than seven days after the submission of the motion.

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

(3) The resolution may not be put to the vote before the expiry of 24 hours after the closing of the debate thereon.

(4) The resolution shall pass if more than one half of all the Members of the National Assembly vote for it.

Article 106. Once a motion of no-confidence to the Council of Ministers has been rejected, no new motion of no-confidence on the same grounds may be made within the following six months.

## **Chapter Ten**

### **PARLIAMENTARY HEARING, INVESTIGATION AND INQUIRY**

Article 107. (1) The National Assembly, or its elected Committees, may conduct hearings, investigations and inquiries on matters concerning state or public interests.

(2) When the National Assembly proceeds with a hearing the mover of the proposal shall present the issues within five minutes. The person that is being heard shall inform the National Assembly on the issues that are the subject of the hearing within ten minutes. Each parliamentary group shall be entitled to two questions and the Members with no group membership – to a total of one question, each question being addressed within 2 minutes. The person that is being heard shall respond to each question after it has been posed. Parliamentary Groups shall be entitled to comment the answers of the person heard within a time limit of 5 minutes.

(3) Parliamentary Committees may require that Ministers or officials appear before their meetings and answer their questions. Interested organizations and members of the public may attend such meetings. Within seven days after holding the hearing the respective committee shall submit to the President of the National Assembly a report of the hearing which shall be distributed to the Members of the National Assembly.

Article 108. All government bodies, officials of the government and municipal administration and members of the public, shall have the duty to make available the required information and documents relating to the hearings, investigations and inquiries, even where the information constitutes state or official secret.

Article 109. The form in which such information shall be made available shall be determined by the National Assembly or the Committee concerned.



Article 110. (1) Officials and members of the public, if invited, shall be bound to appear before the Committees of the National Assembly and to provide any requested information and papers.  
(2) The summons for such appearance shall be served by offices of the National Assembly.

## **Chapter Eleven**

### **PARLIAMENTARY MONITORING AND CONTROL ON EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS**

Article 111. (1) The Council of Ministers shall submit to the National Assembly the Annual Programme for the Participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the European Union decision-making process adopted by it within one week after its adoption.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall refer the Annual Programme under paragraph 1 to the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds and to the other standing committees. The standing committees shall prepare their proposals for the Annual Programme of the National Assembly within three weeks, taking also into account the Working Programme of the European Commission for the respective year.

(3) The Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds shall, taking into consideration also the proposals of the other standing committees, propose a draft Annual Working Programme of the National Assembly on issues of the European Union within two weeks after the expiration of the term envisaged in para 2 . The Annual Working Programme shall contain a list of the draft acts of the European Union institutions over which the National Assembly shall exercise monitoring and control. The draft Annual Working Programme shall be debated and adopted by the National Assembly.

(4) The President of the National Assembly shall send the Council of Ministers the adopted Annual Working Programme according to the preceding paragraph.

(5) In case of newly emerging circumstances the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds may propose on its own initiative or on proposal by other standing committees additions to the Annual Working Programme of the National Assembly on European Union issues which shall be adopted following the procedure of paragraph 3.

Article 112. (1) The draft acts of the European Union institutions included in the Annual Working Programme under Article 111, paragraph 3 shall be submitted by the Council of Ministers to the National Assembly within three weeks after their receipt.

(2) In case circumstances occur requiring amendments to the initial Bulgarian position, the Council of Ministers shall duly inform the National Assembly of these circumstances and of the amendment of the position.

Article 113. (1) Within the time-limit under Article 73, paragraph 1, the President of the National Assembly shall refer to the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds and to other standing committees of the National Assembly the draft acts of the institutions of the European Union received from the Council of Ministers and accompanied by a framework position. When the acts concern foreign policy or defence issues the President of the National Assembly must refer them to the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Defense Committee.

(2) The Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds may, on its own initiative or on the proposal of a standing committee, impose a reservation on behalf of the National Assembly on draft acts of the European Union, included in the Annual Working Programme under Article 111, paragraph 3. The reservation of the National Assembly implies the Council of Ministers' obligation not to take a stand before the Council of the European Union until the National Assembly makes final decision.

Article 114. The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall debate the draft acts of the institutions of the European Union and the framework positions on them after the receipt of reports of the other standing committees.

(2) The National Assembly shall decide within 8-weeks on whether the principle of subsidiarity has been applied in the draft acts of the European Union institutions, included for consideration in its Annual Working Programme.

(3) When the National Assembly rules that a draft act of the European Union's institutions does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity, it shall send its reasoned opinion to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission. The reasoned opinion of the National Assembly should contain the arguments why it considers the said act to be in breach of the principle of subsidiarity.

(4) The Council of Ministers, at the request of the National Assembly, shall set an action in the Court of the European Union against an act (of the European Union institutions) which does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity.

Article 115. The Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds shall draw up a report and shall present it to the President of the National Assembly who shall send it to the Council of Ministers.

Article 116. (1) When a draft act of the institutions of the European Union relates to foreign policy or defense issues the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds shall hold a joint sitting respectively with the Foreign Policy Committee or the Defense Committee.

(2) In case joint sittings are held joint reports of the two committees shall be drawn up.

Article 117. The National Assembly shall take part in the mechanisms for evaluation of the policies of the European Union within the Area for Freedom, Security and Justice, in the political control over Europol and the evaluation of the activities of Eurojust.

(2) The National Assembly shall take part in the procedures regarding the renegotiation of Treaties.

(3) The National Assembly shall consider the applications of countries willing to join the European Union.

(4) The National Assembly shall take an active part in the inter-parliamentary cooperation of the EU member-states.

Article 118. The Council of Ministers in compliance with Article 105, paragraph 4 of the Constitution shall present to the National Assembly a report on its actions related to the adoption of European Union acts. The report shall specify also issues on which differences have occurred with the adopted position of the Bulgarian side when the act is adopted finally by the European Union institutions.

Article 119. (1) The European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee shall hold hearings for candidates for positions in the European Union institutions proposed by the Council of Ministers.

(2) The candidates under paragraph 1 shall be obliged to appear before the European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds Committee and answer questions posed by its members.

Article 120. (1) The Council of Ministers shall present to the National Assembly on a regular basis information on draft acts of the European Union relating to obligations of the Republic of Bulgaria resulting from its European Union membership as well as on draft acts in the drafting of which it participates.

(2) Every two weeks the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers shall exchange information on the acts under paragraph 1 and the Council of Ministers shall present the positions developed on these acts on a regular basis.

Article 121. The National Assembly shall establish and maintain a database on draft acts and other documents of the institutions of the European Union as well as on the framework positions sent to the National Assembly pursuant to Article 112, paragraph 2.

Article 122. (1) The National Assembly shall hear a report by the Prime Minister at the beginning of every six-month period of the presidency of the European Union on the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the decision making process of the European Union during the preceding presidency and on the tasks of the Republic of Bulgaria during the current presidency.

(2) The National Assembly may hold hearings of the Prime Minister on the position of the Republic of Bulgaria at impending meetings of the Council of the European Union.

(3) The Members of the European Parliament from the Republic of Bulgaria may participate in a non-voting capacity in the sittings of the National Assembly under paragraphs 1 and 2.

## **Chapter Twelve**

### **MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Article 123. Every Member of the National Assembly may be elected to the bodies of the National Assembly. He shall have the duty to participate in such bodies' work.

Article 124. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall retain their positions in the government and municipal bodies and organisations and in commercial companies with a more than 50 percent government or municipal share in the capital, by taking an unpaid leave of absence until the termination of their powers. This shall also apply to persons who have a contract to manage commercial companies with a more than 50 percent government or municipal share, but for not longer than the term of the contract.

(2) Where the reinstatement is subject to an act of a government authority, the authority concerned shall be obliged to issue such act.

Article 125. The time during which Members of the National Assembly perform their duties shall be recognised as length of service in the position occupied before their election to the National Assembly.

Article 126. (1) Members of the National Assembly may not receive any other remuneration in respect of employment.

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

Article 127. (1) Members of the National Assembly may not occupy any other position in a government authority or carry out any activities, which is incompatible with the status of a Member of the National Assembly under the law.

(2) Members of the National Assembly may not participate in the management or supervisory bodies of commercial companies or co-operatives.

(3) Members of the National Assembly may continue their participation in collective management and academic bodies of the higher education establishments and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences with the exception of individual managerial positions.

(4) Members of the National Assembly shall not have the right to consent to or make use of their official status for commercial advertising.

Article 128. When submitting a bill or speaking in plenary or in Committee sittings Members with a direct financial interest in the issue under consideration within the meaning of the Conflicts of Interest Prevention and Detection Act shall be obliged to reveal this interest.

Article 129. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall have the right to a paid annual leave coinciding with the recesses of the National Assembly.

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

Article 130. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall have the duty to attend the sittings of the National Assembly and those of the Committees to which they are elected.

(2) Any Member of the National Assembly, who has a reason to withdraw from a sitting before the completion of its business, or to come late to a sitting, shall notify the Secretaries on duty or the leadership of the Committee, as the case may be.

(3) Any Member of the National Assembly, who has to be absent for valid reasons from a sitting of the National Assembly or a meeting of any of its Committees shall notify the President of the National Assembly, respectively the Chairperson of the Committee.

(4) Any Member may publish on the website of the National Assembly information on his/her schedule of meetings with voters, statements or stated positions, proposals and opinions on draft laws and the names of his/her assistants, a phone number and an e-mail address for contact.

Article 131. For matters unsettled by these Rules, the Labour Code and the Social Insurance Code shall be applied, as long as they do not contradict or are not incompatible with the status of being a Member of the National Assembly.

Article 132. (1) Members of the National Assembly may not be taken into custody and shall not be liable to criminal prosecution, save for a committed crime of a general nature and then only by consent of the National Assembly or, when the Assembly is not in session (Article 42, paragraph 2), by a consent of the President of the National Assembly.

(2) No consent to custody shall be required when the Member concerned is caught in the act of committing a grave crime, in which case the National Assembly, or, when the Assembly is not in session (Article 42, paragraph 2), its President, shall be notified immediately.

(3) Where there is sufficient data to the effect that a Member of the National Assembly has committed a crime of a general nature, the Chief Prosecutor shall direct a substantiated request to the National Assembly or, when the Assembly is not in session, to its President, for permission to institute criminal proceedings. Sufficient data shall be enclosed with such request.

(4) Permission to initiate criminal proceedings shall not be required in case there is agreement in writing by the Member of the National Assembly. The Member of the National Assembly shall submit his/her agreement to the President of the National Assembly who shall notify forthwith the Chief Prosecutor and inform the National Assembly at the first sitting following the submission of the agreement. Once given by a Member of the National Assembly the agreement cannot be withdrawn.

(5) Except for the cases under paragraph 4, the request of the Chief Prosecutor and the data therewith shall be considered by the National Assembly, which shall rule thereon not earlier than 14 days after the receipt of the request. If so requested, and if the Member concerned appears before it, the National Assembly shall hear the Member concerned.

(6) When the National Assembly is not in session (Article 42, paragraph 2), the permission to institute criminal proceedings against a Member shall be issued by the President of the National Assembly. Such permission so issued shall be tabled for approval by the Members of the National Assembly at the first sitting of the Assembly.

(7) Where the criminal proceedings conclude with a prison sentence for a premeditated crime or the execution of the prison sentence for any other crime is not suspended, the National Assembly

shall adopt a resolution to terminate the powers of the Member concerned before the end of his/her term.

(8) Where the Chief Prosecutor has requested that the Member concerned be taken into custody, the National Assembly shall pass a separate resolution on such request following the procedure laid down under paragraphs 1 to 7. The Assembly may rescind a permission already given.

(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 133. Members of the National Assembly shall be exempt from mobilisation and reserve service.

Article 134. (1) Any Member of the National Assembly elected as a Member of the Council of Ministers shall be substituted, for the duration of his office, by the next candidate on the party or coalition ballot list.

(2) When such Member of the National Assembly is relieved of his/her 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 in one election list, the powers of the last on the list, who has assumed them as a substitute, shall be terminated when the powers of a Member of The National Assembly are being restored.

Article 135. State and local authorities and their administrations shall be obliged to cooperate with the Members of the National Assembly and to provide upon request information and documents relating to the execution of the Members' mandate. Members of the National Assembly shall have the right to visit all state and local authorities, ministries, institutions, agencies and organizations.

### **Chapter Thirteen**

#### **PARLIAMENTARY CONDUCT**

Article 136. Members of the National Assembly shall not have the right to interrupt the speaker, address personal attacks, use offensive language, gestures or threats against any person, divulge information concerning the private life or compromising the good standing of any citizen, behave in any improper manner or such as causes disorder at sittings.

Article 137. The following disciplinary measures may be applied against Members of the National Assembly:

1. Call to order.
2. Reprimand.
3. Censure.
4. Rule out of order.
5. Suspension from one sitting.
6. Suspension for up to three sittings.

Article 138. The President shall call to order any Member who does not keep to the matter at hand or disturbs the order of the sitting in any other way.

Article 139. (1) The President shall reprimand any Member of the National Assembly whom he has already called to order at the same sitting but who persists in his disorderly conduct.

(2) The President shall likewise reprimand any Member of the National Assembly who, in addressing another Member or other Members, uses offensive language, gestures or threats.

Article 140. The President shall censure any Member of the National Assembly who, having been called to order or reprimanded, persists in disturbing the order of the sitting or causes disorder in the plenary room.

Article 141. The President shall rule any Member of the National Assembly out of order:

1. whom the Chairperson has already disciplined twice during his speech in pursuance of Article 137, items 1-3; or
2. who continues his speech beyond the time limit notwithstanding the President's invitation to conclude his speech.

Article 142. The President may suspend from the sitting in progress any Member of the National Assembly who:

1. disputes a disciplinary measure in a rude and inappropriate manner;
2. continuously or repeatedly disrupts the normal progress of business in the plenary room;
3. votes with another Member's card save for the cases under Article 62, paragraph 3.

Article 143. (1) The President may suspend for more than one sitting, but for not more than three sittings, any Member of the National Assembly who:

1. insults the National Assembly or the Head of State;
2. calls to violence in the plenary room or on the premises of the National Assembly;
3. repeatedly votes with another Member's card save for the cases under Article 62, paragraph 3..

(2) Any Member of the National Assembly suspended in pursuance of paragraph 1 and Article 142 shall not be remunerated for the sittings from which he/she has been suspended.

(3) Any Member shall have the right to contest the imposed disciplinary measure before the President of the National Assembly within three days after it was imposed. The President may confirm, repeal or amend the disciplinary measure.

Article. 144. Every month the website of the National Assembly shall publish information regarding the undue absences of Members of the National Assembly from the sittings of the Standing Committees, Subcommittees, working groups and from plenary sittings. The information shall be published not later than 7 days after the end of the month.

## **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS**

§ 1. (1) These Rules of Organisation and Procedure of the National Assembly may be amended on the motion of the President of the National Assembly or on the request of any individual Member of the National Assembly.

(2) Such motions shall be examined by the Legal Affairs Committee within 14 days.

(3) The opinion of the Committee shall be sent 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 settle by resolution any matter not provided for in these Rules.

§ 3. For the purposes of these Rules, 'President' shall mean the occupant of the Chair at any sitting of the National Assembly.

§ 4. For the purposes of a secret ballot, 'in attendance' shall mean all the Members of the National Assembly who have cast ballots. For the purpose of an open vote, 'in attendance' shall

mean the number of Members of the National Assembly who have registered before the start of the vote.

§ 5. For the purposes of these Rules, ‘number of parliamentary group’ shall mean the number of the group at the time of making a respective decision by the National Assembly.

§ 6. (1) For the execution of its powers the National Assembly is helped by an administration.  
(2) The employees in the administration of the National Assembly are considered parliamentary employees. Their status shall be regulated by the Rules under Article 8, paragraph 1, item 13 of the Rules of Organization and Procedure of the National Assembly.  
(3) The number of parliamentary employees in the National Assembly, the title of the positions, the minimal educational requirements, the minimum rank and/or professional experience required for each position, the type of employment as well as the other requirements for the particular position and the minimum and maximum remuneration for each one are determined within the Uniform Schedule of Positions in the Administration at the National Assembly.  
(4) Where the term of the National Assembly has ended or the National Assembly has been dissolved earlier the Secretary General of the National Assembly shall exercise urgent administrative functions of the President of the National Assembly in conformity with these Rules and with the Law in the period until the nomination of a new President.

## **TRANSITIONAL AND CONCLUDING PROVISIONS**

§ 7. The provisions of Article 28, paragraph 1 on the livestreaming on the Internet of the sittings of Standing Committees except for the sittings of the Committee on Interaction with Civil Organizations and Movements, shall be applied from the moment when technical means for that are in place but not later than September 1st, 2013.

§ 8. The provisions of Article 26 and Article 102 shall be in effect as of September 1st, 2013.

§ 9. These Rules are enacted in pursuance of Article 73 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria and repeal the Rules of Organization and Procedure of the National Assembly (Promulgated in State Gazette No. 58/27.07.2009; amended, SG No. 60/30.07.2009; Constitutional Court Decision No 11/3.12.2009, SG No 98/ 11.12.2009; supplemented, SG No. 100/15.12.2009, amended and supplemented, SG No 43/ 8.06.2010; amended and supplemented , SG No 33/ 26.04.2011; Constitutional Court Decision No 6/16.05.2011, SG No 39/ 20.05.2011; Constitutional Court Decision No 9/04.10.2011, SG No 80/ 14.10.2011; amended, SG No. 30/17.04.2012; amended SG No. 69/2012).

§ 10. These Rules shall enter into force on the date of promulgation in the State Gazette.

These Rules of Organization and Procedure were adopted by the 42nd National Assembly on June 12th 2013 and were sealed with its official seal.

## **Appendix to the Rules**

Financial Regulations for the National Assembly Budget

Art. 1. (1) The separate budget of the National Assembly is part of the State budget of the Republic of Bulgaria.

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

(3) The budget of the National Assembly shall include all the revenues from the operations of its second level spending units, all administrative and business expenditures, the financial support expenses provided to Parliamentary Groups and Standing Committees and the expenses for its international activities and inter-parliamentary organizations.

(4) Funds from the budget of the National Assembly may be used to finance specific projects and programs aimed at the establishment of democratic civic values, leadership skills and democratic practices of decision making, and for special training courses for Members of the National Assembly and leaders of all the political forces represented in parliament in regards with the membership of the Republic of Bulgaria in the European Union.

(5) The second level spending units of the National Assembly's budget, represented by the heads of the Economic and Social Council, the State Gazette, the National Center for Public Opinion Surveys, the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in South East Europe to the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Sanatorium and Recreational Facility of the National Assembly in the town of Velingrad, the Publishing Center and the Catering Department are authorized to manage their separate budgets.

(6) Every year the National Assembly shall allocate from its budget funds to finance the program titled "National Assembly's Student Internships for Legislative Research". The research studies shall be published on the program site of National Assembly website.

(7) Every year the budget of the National Assembly shall allocate reserves for unforeseen and /or urgent expenses.

Art. 2. (1) The President of the National Assembly or a person authorized by him determines the order and the terms for elaboration of a draft medium-term budget forecast and a draft budget of the National Assembly on the basis of decision taken by the Council of Ministers to start a procedure for the elaboration of a three-year budget forecast and a draft state budget for the corresponding year.

(2) The Parliamentary Budget and Finance Directorate coordinates and prepares the draft budget of the National Assembly and the draft report to it. The summary draft budget forecast and draft budget are prepared on the basis of the first and second level spending units draft budgets. The Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee with the Budget and Finance Committee deliberates and delivers opinion on the draft budget forecast and the draft budget. The draft budget forecast, the draft budget, the draft reports and the opinion of the Subcommittee are submitted to the President of the National Assembly.

Art. 3. The use of reserves from the National Assembly's budget for unforeseen and/or urgent expenses is undertaken by order of the National Assembly President.

Art. 4. (1) The Parliamentary Budget and Finance Directorate prepares the annual cash report for the implementation of the National Assembly's budget based on the first and second level spending units' reports and presents it to the National Assembly President, who then submits it to The Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee with the Budget and Finance Committee for opinion.

(2) The financial report for the implementation of the budget is presented by the National Assembly President and adopted by the National Assembly not later than six months after the end of the fiscal year.

Art. 5. Members of the National Assembly shall receive base monthly remuneration equivalent to three average monthly salaries of employees under labour or service contract in the public sector according to data supplied by the National Statistics Institute. Such base monthly remuneration shall be adjusted quarterly on the basis of the average monthly salary for the last month of the preceding quarter.



Art. 6. (1) The President of the National Assembly shall receive remuneration greater by 55 per cent than the base monthly remuneration under Article 5 above; the Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly shall receive remuneration greater by 45 per cent; Standing Committee Chairpersons and Parliamentary Groups Chairpersons under Article 9 of the Rules shall receive remuneration greater by 35 per cent; Deputy Chairpersons of Committees shall receive remuneration greater by 25 per cent; Members of Standing committees shall receive remuneration greater by 15 per cent; Parliamentary Secretaries shall receive remuneration greater by 10 per cent.

(2) Where a parliamentary group is co-chaired by two persons, a single only remuneration is due.

(3) Where a Member of the National Assembly holds more than one leading positions in the bodies of the Assembly he/she shall be paid only for the one with the highest remuneration.

(4) Members of Parliament receive remuneration in proportion of the time spent on work, but not less than 5 per cent of their base monthly remuneration for their participation in subcommittees, ad hoc committees and working groups, designated by the Standing Committees. It is decided in each case whether an additional remuneration shall be granted to those who take part in ad hoc committees and working groups, when their term of office is extended.

Art. 7. (1) Base monthly remuneration under Articles 5 and 6 shall be adjusted upward by monthly allowances for length of service and professional experience - 1 percent for each year served, and for academic degree 'Doctor' - 10 percent, and 'Doctor of Sciences' - 15 percent of the base monthly salary of member of parliament.

(2) Members of the National Assembly may receive additional remunerations for their contributions to the fulfillment of priority tasks of the country.

(3) The remunerations as calculated shall be adjusted downwards by deductions set by the Natural Persons Income Tax, as well as insurance contributions under the Social Security Code, the Health Insurance Act, and other deductions such as may be stipulated by law which are at the expense of the insured persons.

Art. 8. Members of the National Assembly shall be covered by full insurance with premium rates for third category of labour as defined in the Labor Code, and also for the risks covered by life insurance.

Art. 9. All additional expenses incurred by any Member of the National Assembly for assistant or nursing care due to disability shall be covered from the Budget of the National Assembly.

Art. 10. No Member of the National Assembly may, in such capacity, receive any gifts equivalent to more than one tenth of his/her base monthly remuneration for the current month. Any gifts exceeding such value shall be transferred to the National Assembly.

Art. 11. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall have the right to free travel by state-owned or municipal city transport, the railways, inter-city road transport and water transport, at first class and sleeping compartment rates, within Bulgaria.

(2) Members of the National Assembly may claim expenses for travel, in connection with their proper work, by private bus services.

(3) Members of the National Assembly whose constituencies fall within an airline service area and are situated at distances exceeding 250 km from Sofia may claim expenses for travel, in connection with their proper work, by air, but limited to 40 return air tickets annually. All other Members may claim in connection with their proper work up to 12 return air tickets annually.

(4) Members of the National Assembly who do not own a family home in the Greater Sofia Municipality shall be provided, free of charge, with housing in Sofia from the National Assembly housing fund for their term of office. Any expenses for housing repairs, standard furniture, security through signalling security equipment or otherwise, taxes and fees under the Local Taxes and Charges Act shall be at the expense of the National Assembly budget.

(5) Members of the National Assembly shall have the right to accommodation and per diem allowances when visiting their constituencies. The accommodation and travel allowances when the Member concerned uses his own car shall be fixed by the President of the National

Assembly. This matter shall be regulated with an internal act issued by the President of the National Assembly.

(6) Members of the National Assembly shall have the right to individual office space in Sofia, provided by the National Assembly and equipped with the necessary technical and communication facilities and shall have the right to a personal webpage in the Internet supported by the server of the National Assembly.

(7) The National Assembly shall provide Members of the European Parliament from the Republic of Bulgaria with office space in Sofia equipped with the necessary technical and communication facilities, the maintenance costs of such office space and equipment being for account of the respective Member of the European Parliament.

Art. 12. The National Assembly shall cover additional expenses incurred by Members of the National Assembly, organized in Parliamentary Groups and by Members with no Parliamentary Group membership in connection with their proper work, limited to two thirds of the base monthly remuneration under Article 5. For this purpose a gross amount of money shall be disbursed to the Parliamentary Groups, who shall determine the manner of its allocation, and to the Members with no Parliamentary Group membership. Such sums are intended for expenses for assistance, consultations, expert opinions, offices and such others connected with the Members' work in the Assembly and in their respective constituencies. Members of the National Assembly shall inform the Parliamentary Group every three months for the expenses incurred, that can be also posted on their website. Members of the National Assembly who are not members of any parliamentary group shall announce every three months on their respective websites information about the expenses.

Art. 13. The Budget of the National Assembly shall include entertainment expenses of the President and Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly, the Chairpersons of Parliamentary Groups and Standing Committees, and welcoming expenses for invitees of the Assembly.

Art. 14. (1) If any Member of the National Assembly fails, for no valid reason, to attend a plenary sitting his daily remuneration shall be withheld.

(2) In case of unjustified absence from a Committee, Subcommittee or Working group sitting, an amount equal to the surplus payment for participation in the respective Committee, Subcommittee or Working group sitting shall be withheld from the Member of the National Assembly.

(3) Where a Member of the National Assembly fails to attend without valid reason 3 consecutive and in total 5 monthly plenary sittings two thirds of his monthly remuneration shall be withheld.

(4) The data on the deductions shall be based on the registration and voting printouts, from the reports of the Chairpersons of Standing Committees, Subcommittees and Working groups and the shorthand records.

Art. 15. Any amounts withheld in pursuance of Article 14 shall be credited as expenses saved to the Budget of the National Assembly.

Art. 16. (1) Remunerations under Articles 5 and 7 shall accrue from Election day, and for Members of the National Assembly subsequently assuming office – from the date on which the Member of the National Assembly has been declared elected by the Central Elections Committee. Remunerations under Article 6 shall accrue from the date of election of the Members of the National Assembly to the respective posts as Committee members.

(2) Ministers elected as Members of Parliament in a consecutive National Assembly declare where they will receive their remuneration from, for the period until the new Council of Ministers is nominated.

Art. 17. (1) Every parliamentary employee who has reached the length of service and age required for retirement is entitled to one time compensation equal to as many monthly remunerations as the number of years served in the National Assembly, but not more than 10, when his/her employment is terminated.

(2) Parliamentary employees are entitled to a yearly allowance for professional attire to the amount of two average monthly remunerations in the public sector of the economy.

Art. 18. The National Center for the Study of Public Opinion shall publish on the Center webpage of the National Assembly Internet site its Working Plan, the studies conducted at the request of the National Assembly or parliamentary groups financed by the budget of the National Assembly, the publications made and an archive by year and topics.