

# Standing Orders of the Althingi

## I. OPENING PROCEDURES

### Article 1

1. At the opening sitting of a session of the Althingi following parliamentary elections, the longest serving Member shall preside at the sitting until a Speaker of the Althingi has been elected under that Member's supervision. If two Members or more have served for an equal length of time, the senior Member in age shall have seniority.
2. At the first sitting of the Althingi following general parliamentary elections, nine Members shall be elected to a committee in accordance with the provisions of Article 75 in order to verify the election credentials of newly elected Members and alternate Members and confirm their lawful election. The committee shall elect a chairman and a rapporteur and return a recommendation to the Althingi as to whether the election and eligibility of each Member should be accepted as lawful. The recommendations may be submitted orally without prior notice, and they may put to the vote collectively.
3. Debate on recommendations pursuant to paragraph 2 shall be subject to the same rules as second readings of legislative bills.
4. The opening date of the annual session of the Althingi is the second Tuesday of September, as provided in Article 35 of the Constitution.

### Article 2

1. Each new Member shall render the following pledge of loyalty to the Constitution as soon as it has been attested that the Member has been duly elected in accordance with Article 47 of the Constitution: I, the undersigned, having been elected as a Member of the Althingi, do pledge on my honour and integrity, to respect the Icelandic Constitution.
2. While a Member has not rendered a pledge pursuant to this Article the Member shall not participate in the proceedings of the Althingi, subject to paragraph 5 of Article 5.

### Article 3

1. A Speaker of the Althingi shall then be elected. Only Members who have been nominated and do not decline are candidates.

2. The rightfully elected Speaker is the candidate who has received more than half of the votes cast. If no candidate receives the required number of votes in the first round of voting, a second round of voting shall be held. If no candidate still receives the required number of votes, another round of voting shall be held between the two Members who received the greatest number of votes in the second round of voting. If more than two candidates have received the same number of votes in that round, two candidates shall be selected from among them by lot. If both candidates receive an equal number of votes in the third round of voting the Speaker shall be chosen by lot.

3. The Speaker shall supervise the election of six Deputy Speakers in accordance with Article 75. If the parliamentary groups cannot agree on a single list of candidates the election shall proceed in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5 of the cited Article.

4. Lots shall be drawn for Members' seats at the opening sitting of each legislative session.

#### **Article 4**

1. The Credentials Committee elected under Article 1 shall also scrutinize such election credentials as may be presented later and verify the lawfulness of the elections and eligibility of Members on which a decision has been deferred by the Althingi and any protests that may arise concerning the election or eligibility of Members already accepted by the Althingi.

2. Should this committee return a written recommendation or move to declare an election invalid, its recommendations shall be debated in accordance with the rules on second readings of legislative bills. Otherwise, committee recommendations are dealt with in accordance with the rules on such recommendations in Article 1.

3. When the Constitutional and Supervisory Committee provided for in Article 13 has been elected it shall assume the tasks of the Credentials Committee provided for in paragraph 1.

#### **Article 5**

1. In the course of scrutiny pursuant to Article 1, the Althingi may declare a Member's election unlawful even when no protests have been lodged, and it may also defer acceptance of an election in order to receive reports on the matter. The same applies to the election of a Member who is not present or whose election credentials have not been received at the time of the opening sitting of the Althingi.

2. The same rules apply to questions of eligibility.

3. In other respects, the Althingi will not on its own initiative investigate the lawfulness of elections or eligibility of Members, but will do so only if a protest is lodged.

4. A protest of a Member's election or eligibility shall be recognized only if it is lodged at the outset of a session following a general election or before a Member's election has been accepted by the Althingi.

5. During the scrutiny of Members' elections and eligibility, every Member shall enjoy full parliamentary privileges. However, if the Althingi votes to defer its decision on a Member's election credentials, such Member shall not participate in the proceedings of the Althingi until a decision has been reached in the matter and the Member's election and eligibility have been accepted.

### **Article 6**

1. Elections of the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, standing committees and international committees are effective for the duration of the elective term. However, the Althingi may at any time hold new elections pursuant to articles 3, 13 and 35 at the request of the majority of its Members, in which case the results of the earlier elections are void following the conduct of the new elections.

2. The departing Speaker and Deputy Speakers shall remain in office from election day until the opening sitting if they have been re-elected as Members. If the Speaker is not re-elected the Speaker's office shall be assumed by the re-elected Deputy Speaker next in line, or the senior Member in age, see Article 1, if no former Deputy Speaker is a Member.

### **Article 7**

The senior Member, as defined in Article 1, shall have all the same rights and duties as the Speaker during the Member's occupancy of the Speaker's chair.

### **Article 8**

1. The Speaker shall preside over the deliberations of the Althingi and ensure the preservation of order. The Speaker shall ensure that the work of the Althingi complies with the provisions of the Constitution, the Standing Orders and other legislation.

2. The Speaker shall take delivery of all business submitted to the Althingi and attend to all business passing from the Althingi. The Speaker shall inform assembled Members of all business sent to the Althingi and of any parliamentary documents submitted in the course of sittings.

3. Questions may be directed to the Speaker by means of a parliamentary document requesting a written response on administrative matters of the Althingi. The provisions of Article 56 shall then apply to procedure regarding the question, as applicable.
4. If the Speaker of the Althingi wishes to participate in a debate beyond the demands of his or her office the Speaker must take a seat among the Members and relinquish the Speaker's chair to a Deputy Speaker.
5. The Speaker is responsible for supervision of the work of parliamentary committees, as further provided in Chapter II. The Speaker shall establish general rules concerning rules of order for the committees and working facilities in consultation with the chairmen of the committees and the parliamentary groups.
6. In the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker assumes all the duties and responsibilities of the Speaker.

#### **Article 9**

The Speaker is responsible for the general management of the Althingi and has the supreme authority in its administration.

#### **Article 10**

1. The Deputy Speakers work with the Speaker and together they form the Speakers' Committee. The Speaker presides at meetings of the committee. A parliamentary group which is not represented on the Speakers' Committee may, with the permission of the committee, appoint an observer to attend committee meetings.
2. The Speakers' Committee is responsible for organising the conduct of work in the Althingi and for preparing a schedule for each session of parliament. The schedule shall normally divide the parliamentary year into four sub-sessions:
  1. Autumn session, from the opening sitting on 1 October until Christmas recess
  2. Winter session, from end of Christmas recess until the Holy Week
  3. Spring session, following Easter recess and through May
  4. Parliamentary sittings and committee meetings in September.
3. The summer recess of the Althingi is from 1 July until 10 August, and no committee meetings shall be called during this time unless urgently necessary.

4. The schedule shall specify on which days parliamentary sittings may be expected to take place, on which days there will be only meetings of committees or parliamentary groups and which days are specifically designated for work by Members in their constituencies. Regular sittings pursuant to the schedule shall not last longer than until 8 p.m. Deviations are permitted if the parliamentary groups reach an agreement on the deviation or if the Althingi so agrees, as provided in Article 74. The Speaker may move for longer meeting hours without notice. Furthermore, the Speaker may decide to extend a sitting until midnight on Tuesday evenings.

5. The Speakers' Committee shall discuss the budgets of the Althingi and agencies reporting to the Althingi and supervise international co-operation in which the Althingi participates. The committee shall establish general rules on the management of the Althingi and administrative matters. The Speakers' Committee shall also deal with all matters submitted to the committee by the Speaker or raised by the Deputy Speakers. In the event of any disagreement in the committee the Speaker shall cast the deciding vote.

6. The Speakers' Committee has charge of all matters entrusted to the Speakers of the Althingi by law.

#### **Article 11**

1. The Speakers' Committee shall appoint a Secretary General for a term of six years. The Secretary General shall manage the Secretariat of the Althingi and is responsible for the operation, finances and property of the Althingi with the authority vested in the office by the Speaker.

2. The Secretary General shall attend meetings of the Speakers' Committee and assist the committee in all matters pertaining to the administration of the Althingi.

3. The Secretary General is responsible for hiring other employees of the Althingi.

#### **Article 12**

1. The Secretary General of the Althingi, or his or her representative, shall attend sittings of the Althingi and assist the Speakers.

2. The Secretary General shall, together with the Speaker, ensure that all parliamentary business passed by the Althingi are recorded and the record shall be signed by the Speaker and the Secretary General.

3. All documents received by the Althingi, as provided in paragraph 2 of Article 8 and Article 28, shall be preserved in the parliamentary archives, together

with the records of minutes of the Althingi, minutes of committee meetings and other documents which concern the work of the Althingi and its operation, or which are entrusted to the Althingi for preservation, see also Article 10 of the Constitution.

## II. COMMITTEES

### Article 13

1. The following standing committees work in the Althingi, normally composed of nine Members each:

1. *Judicial Affairs and Education Committee*  
The committee is responsible for the affairs of the judiciary and law and order, human rights, citizenship, consumer affairs, the affairs of the State Church and other religious organisations and equal rights, as well as education and culture, science and technology.
2. *Economic Affairs and Trade Committee*  
The committee is responsible for general economic affairs, trade, including banking affairs and financial operations, and tax and customs affairs.
3. *Industrial Affairs Committee*  
The committee is responsible for fisheries affairs, agricultural affairs, affairs of the industries and energy, innovation and technical development, general employment affairs and utilisation of natural resources based on research and advice.
4. *Environment and Communications Committee*  
The committee is responsible for environmental affairs, planning and building, and research, consultancy, preservation and sustainability in the area of natural resource affairs in general. In addition, the committee is responsible for communications, including construction plans, regional matters and the affairs of the municipalities and the division of responsibilities between the municipalities and the State.
5. *Budget Committee*  
The committee is responsible for State finances, budget allocations, State assets, borrowings and State guarantees and pension matters. The committee shall advise the Economic Affairs and Trade Committee on parliamentary business concerning the revenue side of the State Budget Act. In addition, the committee is responsible for oversight of the implementation of the State Budget Act.
6. *Foreign Affairs Committee*  
The committee is responsible for relations with foreign states and international organisations, defence and security, export trade, the affairs of the European Economic Area and international development, as well as foreign and international affairs in general. In addition, the

committee shall discuss reports from international committees and the report of the Foreign Minister on foreign and international affairs.

7. *Welfare Committee*

The committee is responsible for health and pension insurance, social services, children's affairs, the affairs of the elderly and the handicapped, housing affairs, the job market and health services.

8. *Constitutional and Supervisory Committee*

The committee is responsible for constitutional affairs, the affairs of the President of the Republic, the Althingi and its institutions, elections, the affairs of the Government Offices in general and other matters relating to the supreme government of the State. In addition, the committee shall discuss reports from the National Audit Office and the annual report and notices from the Ombudsman of the Althingi.

The committee shall also take the initiative in investigating any decisions of individual Ministers or their procedure which may warrant an enquiry on the basis of the role entrusted to the Althingi of supervising the executive powers. If a request is received for such an enquiry from at least one quarter of the members of the committee the enquiry shall be held. The committee may return a report to the Althingi on the conclusions of its enquiry.

The committee shall also conduct assessments and submit recommendations to the Althingi concerning appropriate times to appoint an investigative committee, as provided in the Act on investigative committees. The committee shall address the reports of investigative committees and submit to the Althingi its report and recommendations on further action to be taken by the Althingi.

2. Standing committees shall be elected at the opening sitting of the Althingi following parliamentary elections; the election is valid for the entire electoral term.

## **Article 14**

1. At the opening sitting, in the course of elections to standing committees pursuant to Article 13 and international committees pursuant to Article 35, the chairmen of the parliamentary groups shall submit their recommendations regarding principal and substitute committee members. The recommendation shall take account of the proportional strength of the parties and the total number of committee seats in the standing committees and international committees, respectively. Committee seats shall be allocated using the d'Hondt system, as provided in Article 75. However, deviation from this system is permitted in order for co-operation between parliamentary groups in the Althingi to be reflected in the committees. Each Member of the Althingi is entitled to a seat on at least one committee pursuant to Article 13; however, no Member may serve on more than two standing committees. Special

consideration shall be given to the requests of parliamentary groups which are not entitled to seats on all the standing committees. The division of committee seats shall take account of the meeting schedules of the committees. The recommendation shall also specify the division of the offices of chairman, first deputy chairman and second deputy chairman between parliamentary groups. The recommendation may deviate from the number of representatives on standing committees. A chairman and one deputy chairman shall be elected in international committees. If the recommendation of the chairmen of the parliamentary groups is approved, the election of the committees and their officials is thereby concluded.

2. A parliamentary group which is not represented in a standing committee under Article 13 may appoint an observer to attend committee meetings.

3. If an agreement cannot be reached among the parliamentary groups on the composition or chairs of committees, or a recommendation from the parliamentary groups or a part of the groups does not achieve a two thirds majority vote at the opening sitting, elections shall be held for each of the committees pursuant to the rules of Article 75 (d'Hondt). In such an event the committees shall elect a chairman and deputy chairman at the first meeting of each respective committee, which shall be called within one week from the election to the committee. The first meeting of a parliamentary committee shall be called by the person first elected to the committee. The Speaker shall announce their election at a sitting of the Althingi.

4. A committee may at any time elect a new chairman or deputy chairman at the request of the majority of the committee members, in which case the results of the earlier elections are void following the conduct of the new elections.

## **Article 15**

1. The chairman or, in the chairman's absence, the deputy chairman, shall summon the committee to meetings and preside at committee meetings. In the absence of the chairman and deputy chairmen, or if alternate Members are attending in their place, the committee chairman shall entrust to another committee member the task of preparing a committee meeting and serving temporarily as chairman.

2. A committee chairman is under obligation to call a meeting if requested by a minimum of one fourth of the committee members and place on the agenda the specified items of business. The same applies to requests from the committee member appointed to examine a specific matter pursuant to the provisions of Article 27. Also, one fourth of committee members may request a Minister to attend a meeting of the committee during recess periods of the Althingi. The meeting shall be held as soon as possible after a request has been



received. The chairman shall supply acceptable reasoning if the committee meeting is delayed by more than three working days.

### **Article 16**

The parliamentary groups may replace their committee representatives. A request for such replacement shall be submitted to the Speaker, who shall announce the request at a sitting of the Althingi. If a request is submitted for a vote on the replacement the Speaker shall call a vote at a sitting of the Althingi.

### **Article 17**

1. The duty of Members of the Althingi to attend committee meetings is subject to the general provisions of Article 60. The chairman shall be notified of any absences.
2. An alternate Member who takes a seat in the Althingi in the absence of a principal Member shall serve on the same committees that the Member was elected to, except as otherwise decided by the Member's parliamentary group, The alternate Member shall then take the place of the principal temporarily, or the rules in paragraph 3 regarding temporary stand-in members shall apply. The provisions of this paragraph also apply on the decease or resignation of a Member.
3. In the absence of a committee member and substitute member, that member's parliamentary group may appoint another Member of the Althingi as a temporary stand-in committee member; the chairman shall be notified of such a substitution. An temporary stand-in committee member shall enjoy all the same rights and privileges as other committee members.

### **Article 18**

1. The meeting times of committees shall be decided before elections to the committees pursuant to Article 14. In consultation with committee chairmen the Speaker shall decide on their working days and procedures to the extent that such matters are not provided for in the Standing Orders.
2. The Speaker shall draw up a schedule of committee reporting in consultation with committee chairmen so that reports may be placed on the agenda of the Althingi an efficient order and distributed evenly over the session.
3. The Speaker may set for a committee entrusted with the examination of a matter a deadline for completion of its work and the issue of a committee report or supplementary report if the Speaker is of the opinion that the examination by the committee has been unreasonably delayed. The Speaker

shall announce the deadline at a sitting of the Althingi. A vote shall be taken if requested by a Member.

4. Ministers shall normally, in the course of the first weeks of a parliamentary session, attend meetings of the committees charged with issues falling within the scope of their ministries, as provided in paragraph 1 of Article 23, and give an account of the parliamentary business that they intend to submit during the legislative session, cf. paragraph 3 of Article 58.

## Article 19

1. In addition to committee members, committee meetings may be attended by the staff members of the committee and any guests who are summoned to the meeting or agree to appear before the committee. Quoting what committee members or guests say at closed committee meeting is prohibited except with the permission of the person in question, subject to paragraph 2.

2. When guests appear before a committee meeting, other than guests who work for the government offices on the responsibility of Ministers, the committee is always permitted to open such meetings, or a part of the meeting, to the press. In such circumstances, the provisions of paragraph 1 on quoting what guests say at committee meetings do not apply. The provision of this paragraph does not apply if a committee has agreed to receive information or documents in confidence, see Article 49.

3. A committee may also hold open meetings for the purpose of obtaining information on parliamentary business that has been referred to the committee or on matters that the committee addresses on its own initiative. A committee may request a present or former Minister, directors of independent State agencies, chairmen of State councils and committees, the Director of the National Audit Office, the Ombudsman of the Althingi, representatives of interest groups and experts who do not work under the direction or on the responsibility of Ministers to appear at an open meeting and provide information to the committee. If a minimum of one fourth of the members of a committee request such a meeting, the committee chairman shall, with reasonable advance notice, seek the consent the person asked to appear at an open meeting to accede to the request and shall explain the reason for the meeting.

4. Open meetings shall be held in public and broadcast on television and on a website pursuant to further rules established by the Speakers' Committee.

5. At open meetings the disclosure or citation of information which is confidential pursuant to rules on confidentiality or the Information Act is prohibited. The chairman of a committee may decide to close a meeting to the public in order for such confidential information to be submitted.

6. The Speaker shall establish further rules on the conduct of open meetings, including rules on access by observers and broadcasting.

#### **Article 20**

Committee meetings shall not be held at the same time as sittings of the Althingi. Exceptions to this provision may be made if committee members so resolve and if the Speaker does not object.

#### **Article 21**

Committees shall keep minutes of proceedings at meetings. A committee staff member, the committee clerk, shall keep the minutes, which shall be signed by the chairman and clerk. Minutes of meetings shall be approved either at the end of a meeting or at the beginning of the next meeting and shall then be published on the Althingi's website. However, the parts of minutes containing confidential information shall be removed. Each committee shall keep a book of minutes to keep records of confidential matters. The Speaker shall establish further rules concerning the format of committee minutes.

#### **Article 22**

A chairman may call a committee meeting to order if the meeting has been duly called with the issue of an agenda. A quorum is achieved if the majority of the committee members is present at a meeting.

#### **Article 23**

1. The Althingi may refer any item of business placed before a sitting to a standing committee, as needed. Any item of business may be referred to committee at any stage. If this is done before the conclusion of a debate the debate shall be postponed. On the continuation of the debate, the provisions of Article 89 on speaking times shall apply once more.

2. Before the first reading of a government bill or resolution the Speaker may, at the request of nine Members, permit the referral of the matter to a committee for the purpose of gathering information or obtaining clarification of its substance. This may also be done following the speech introducing the item of business. The Speaker shall decide on time limits for the committee deliberations.

3. A committee that has a matter under examination may refer it to another standing committee if it considers, on further reflection, that the matter is more suited to that committee. However, the prior consent of the committee to which the matter is referred must first be obtained.

## Article 24

1. The Foreign Affairs Committee shall serve as an advisory body to the government on all major foreign policy issues, the government being under obligation to place such matters before the committee whether the Althingi is in session or not. Information disclosed in committee shall be treated as confidential by committee members when requested by the chairman or a Minister.
2. A Minister is required to provide information and consult with the committee on EEA matters in accordance with rules established by the Speakers' Committee.

## Article 25

1. To the Budget Committee shall be referred, inter alia, the Budget Bill, the Supplementary Budget Bill, the State Credit Bill and the Bill on the Approval of the State Accounts following the first reading of these bills. The Budget Bill shall be resubmitted to the Budget Committee following the second reading.
2. The third reading of the Budget Bill shall begin no later than December 15.
3. The Budget Committee is entitled to receive such information as it considers necessary concerning the operation and proposed budgets of companies and organisations applying for appropriations from the State Treasury. Furthermore, State agencies involved in economic affairs are required to supply the committee with any information and assistance required for the resolution of parliamentary business.
4. The Minister of Finance shall submit to the Althingi, no later than 1 April of each year, a motion for a parliamentary resolution on the principal division of expenditures of the following fiscal year (framework) and a report on any changes in the generation of State revenues. The proposal shall be accompanied by a projection of State finances in the following three years.

## Article 26

1. During its term of office, a committee may at any time examine a matter that falls within its terms of reference, even if the matter has not been specially referred to the committee by the Althingi.
2. A committee may, if it sees reason to do so, submit to the Althingi a report on its examination pursuant to paragraph 1 providing an account of the recommendations and comments of the committee regarding the matter it has addressed. The report may include a motion for a parliamentary resolution,

which will be tabled for debate at the end of deliberations on the report, subject to the provision in the second sentence of paragraph 1 of Article 45.

3. Following an election to the Althingi, a newly elected committee shall decide whether unfinished examinations pursuant to paragraph 1 should be continued.

### **Article 27**

1. When a matter has been referred to a committee for examination, the committee shall make a decision on how to proceed and appoint one committee member to act as rapporteur in the matter. The rapporteur shall then examine the matter on behalf of the committee and return a recommendation on a course of action along with a draft of a committee report when the examination has been concluded.

2. If a committee member moves that the examination of a matter should be abandoned and the matter passed from the committee, the chairman is required to take a vote on the motion at the meeting where it was made. The motion is carried only if the majority of the committee members support it.

### **Article 28**

1. In the course of its examination of a matter a committee may request a written opinion from sources outside the Althingi. Similarly, parties having an interest in an item of business may submit written comments to the committee on their own initiative. The committee may also agree to receive and hear guests.

2. The Speaker shall establish further rules concerning procedure with respect to business and comments received by committees.

### **Article 29**

1. Before a committee concludes its examination of matter, a proposal for a committee report shall be available for process. If a committee member does not agree with the report, the member shall make such disagreement known before the matter is finalised. Committee reports shall be printed and distributed to Members at a sitting. If a committee is not unanimous in its opinion and parts of the committee return separate reports, each part shall appoint a rapporteur. The matter may not be tabled for debate until at least one night after the committee report or majority report has been distributed.

2. If a committee receives a matter for re-examination after the printing of a committee report the committee may issue a supplementary report. The same time limits apply to the earliest time for debates following the distribution of a

supplementary report as otherwise apply to committee reports, see Articles 40 and 45.

### **Article 30**

1. A committee may return a single report on two or more matters if the matters are related.
2. If a committee recommends the passing of a legislative bill or resolution, the printed committee report shall include an estimate of the expense to the Treasury entailed by the new act or resolution. Furthermore, the committee shall obtain a revision of the estimated expense of a government bill, see Article 37, if the committee makes significant amendments to the bill.
3. The Speaker shall establish further rules on the preparation of committee reports, including their content, and on the printing of attached documents.

### **Article 31**

A committee may return a report to the Althingi explaining an unfinished examination of a matter if the committee sees special reason to do so. Similarly, a committee may submit a progress report to the Althingi.

### **Article 32**

Select committees may be elected for deliberation on individual matters. The same rules, *mutatis mutandis*, shall apply to select committees as to standing committees.

### **Article 33**

A parliamentary committee may request expert assistance from agencies or individuals outside the Althingi Secretariat in its examination of parliamentary business. The Speaker shall establish further rules on such outside assistance.

### **Article 34**

Each standing committee shall have a committee clerk to keep minutes, assist in the preparation of committee reports and proposed amendments, gather information requested by the committee and perform such other tasks as the committee may decide.

### **Article 35**

1. The following international committees function within the Althingi:

1. The Icelandic delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU.
2. The Icelandic delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.
3. The Icelandic delegation to the EFTA and EEA Parliamentary Committees.
4. The Icelandic delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.
5. The Icelandic delegation to the Nordic Council.
6. The Icelandic delegation to the West-Nordic Council.
7. The Icelandic delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE.
8. The Icelandic delegation to the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.

2. International committees shall be elected concurrently with elections to standing committees pursuant to Article 13. Seven principal members and an equal number of substitute members shall be elected to the Icelandic delegation to the Nordic Council, six principal members and an equal number of substitute members shall be elected to the West-Nordic Council, and five principal members and an equal number of substitute members shall be elected to the EFTA and EEA Parliamentary Committee. Three principal members and an equal number of substitute members shall be elected to other international committees.

3. The same rules shall apply to procedure for international committees as for standing committees.

4. Each international committee shall have a clerk who assists the committee.

5. The Speaker shall establish general rules on the work of international parliamentary committees.

### **Article 36**

The Speakers' Committee may appoint temporary international committees in addition to those mentioned in the paragraph 1 of Article 35. In addition, the Speakers' Committee may decide to entrust certain defined international tasks to a specific international committee.

## **III. PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS**

### **Article 37**

1. Legislative bills shall have the form of draft acts of law; they shall be printed and distributed to Members at a sitting. Each bill shall be accompanied

by explanatory notes describing the general reason for its introduction and explaining its principal provisions. Government bills shall be accompanied by an estimate of the expense to the State Treasury of their enactment. The Speaker may establish guidelines on the format of legislative bills. The Speaker shall furthermore establish rules on the preparation of legislative bills implementing rules based on EU acts (matters with EEA relevance). A bill may not be placed on the agenda for debate until at least two nights have passed from its distribution.

2. Bills which are distributed after the end of November may not be placed on the agenda before Christmas recess except with the consent of the Althingi, obtained in compliance with Article 74.

3. The government shall, at the outset of a winter session of the Althingi, submit to the Speaker a revised schedule for the submission of government bills in the winter and spring sessions together with planned submission dates, see paragraph 3 of Article 58. Legislative bills which are distributed after 1 April may not be placed on the agenda before the summer recess except with the consent of the Althingi, obtained in compliance with Article 74. However, this consent can only be sought when five days have passed from the distribution of the bill; derogation from this requirement is permitted with the support of three fifths of the Members voting on the bill.

### **Article 38**

A legislative bill cannot be passed into law until it has received three readings.

### **Article 39**

At the first reading, the bill shall be debated in its entirety. On completion of the first reading the bill will pass to the second reading and to the committee proposed by the Speaker. However, a vote shall be taken at the request of any Member, and also if another motion is made regarding the committee to which the bill should be submitted.

### **Article 40**

1. The second reading shall not take place until one night has passed from the first reading or distribution of a committee report; at the second reading, individual articles of the bill shall be debated along with any proposed amendments. A vote shall then be taken on the articles of the bill and any proposed amendments, as well as individual issues at the request of Members. The bill then passes to the third reading; however, this shall be put to the vote at the request of any Member.



2. If a bill is amended in the course of the second reading, the bill shall be referred to a committee again before the third reading at the request of any Member or Minister.

#### **Article 41**

1. The third reading shall not take place until one night has passed from the second reading. In the course of this reading the bill shall be discussed in its entirety, including all proposed amendments and the articles to which they apply. At the conclusion of this reading a vote shall be taken, first on the proposed amendments, and then on the entire bill in its final version.

2. If an amendment has been passed at the third reading, but debate has been postponed before the bill in its entirety has been put to a vote and referred back to a committee under the provisions of Article 23, a Minister, the relevant committee or individual committee members may propose new amendments to the bill. On the continuation of the debate the provisions of Article 89 on the third reading of legislative bills shall apply once more if any amendments have been proposed. At the close of the debate a vote shall first be taken on the amendments and subsequently on the bill in its entirety in its amended form.

#### **Article 42**

When a bill has thus been passed after three readings, the Speaker shall send it to the government as an Act of the Althingi.

#### **Article 43**

1. A bill which proposes an amendment or annex to the Constitution shall be referred to the Constitutional and Supervisory Committee. In its title such a bill shall be referred to a Constitutional Bill. If it has no such title it shall be dismissed by the Speaker.

2. A motion entailing an amendment to the Constitution shall only be introduced in connection with a Constitutional Bill. Any such motion relating to any other bill shall be dismissed by the Speaker.

#### **Article 44**

A defeated legislative bill may not be reintroduced during the same session.

#### **Article 45**

1. Motions for parliamentary resolutions shall have the form of resolutions. They shall be printed and distributed to Members at a sitting of the Althingi. As a rule, motions for resolutions shall be accompanied by an explanation of their

substance. Deliberations may not take place until at least two nights after the distribution of the motion.

2. A resolution cannot pass until it has received two readings. However, motions of no confidence in the government or a Minister, motions on the appointment of committees according to Article 39 of the Constitution and motions from committees submitted pursuant to paragraph 2 of Article 26, shall be debated and brought to a conclusion in a single debate in accordance with the rules on second readings of parliamentary resolutions. The same applies to motions for adjournment of sittings of the Althingi pursuant to the second sentence of paragraph 1 of Article 23 of the Constitution.

3. At the end of the first reading the motion will pass to the second reading and the committee proposed by the Speaker. However, a vote shall be taken at the request of any Member, and also if another motion is made regarding the committee to which the matter should be submitted.

4. The second reading shall not take place until one night after the first reading or distribution of a committee report. At this reading, individual articles of the proposal shall be debated along with amendments to such articles. At the close of this reading a vote shall be taken on each article of the proposal and amendments to them, and finally on the proposal in its entirety. However, if there are no motions for amendments, the proposal may be put to the vote in its entirety.

5. If the Althingi receives a submission relating to a matter on which the Althingi is required to take a position under the Constitution or by law, but the submission does not constitute parliamentary business pursuant to Chapter III, the Speaker shall report the submission at a sitting. The matter is then submitted without debate to a committee at the recommendation of the Speaker. When the committee has completed its examination of the matter, the committee shall express its opinion in a report, which shall be distributed at a sitting, together with a motion for a resolution, which shall be debated and brought to a conclusion in a single sitting pursuant to the rules on second readings of parliamentary resolutions.

6. Parliamentary resolutions which are distributed after the end of November may not be placed on the agenda before Christmas recess except with the consent of the Althingi, obtained in compliance with Article 74. Furthermore, parliamentary resolutions which are distributed later than 1 April may not be placed on the agenda before summer recess except with the consent of the Althingi, obtained in compliance with Article 74. However, this consent can only be sought when five days have passed from the distribution of the resolution; derogation from this requirement is permitted with the support of three fifths of the Members voting on the resolution.

7. Constitutional requirements pursuant to Article 103 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area shall be derogated from by a parliamentary resolution, whose presentation shall comply with rules established by the Speaker.

8. The Prime Minister shall in October of each year submit to the Althingi a report on the implementation of resolutions passed by the Althingi in the preceding year and requiring action by a Minister or the government, unless a different form of reporting to the Althingi is provided for by law. The report shall furthermore address the process of matters referred by the Althingi to the government or a Minister. When the report has been submitted, it shall be referred to the Constitutional and Supervisory Committee for discussion. The committee may submit to the Althingi its opinion regarding the Minister's report at its discretion and submit proposals to the Althingi regarding individual matters in the report.

#### **Article 46**

1. Amendments to legislative bills and resolutions shall be printed and distributed no later than one night before they are scheduled for debate. Amendments may be accompanied by a brief explanatory statement. Any Minister or Member may introduce amendments at any reading.

2. Amendments to amendments may be introduced by a Member at the beginning of the sitting at which the principal amendments are to be discussed. However, such amendments must have been previously distributed. A committee may also introduce an amendment to a bill or resolution at the same short notice.

3. An amendment to an item which has been defeated may not be put forward again during the same session. The Speaker shall decide whether a proposed item and an item previously defeated are one and the same, and Members shall abide by the Speaker's decision.

#### **Article 47**

Any unfinished business at the end of a session of the Althingi shall lapse.

### **IV. SUPERVISORY WORK OF THE ALTHINGI AND GENERAL DEBATE**

#### **Article 48**

1. The Althingi, parliamentary committees and individual Members of the Althingi shall monitor the work of the executive branch. The monitoring role of the Althingi relates to Ministers responsible for executive acts, as provided in Article 14 of the Constitution.

2. The monitoring work of the Althingi is conducted by means of questions, requests for reports and special debates pursuant to the provisions of this Chapter of the Standing Orders, but parliamentary committees can address matters relating to executive acts of Ministers pursuant to the provisions of Chapter II, see points 5 and 8 of paragraph 1 of Article 13 on the Budget Committee and the Constitutional and Supervisory Committee, and paragraph 1 of Article 26 on the examination by committees of matters on their own initiative.

3. The monitoring work of the Althingi with regard to Ministers relates to public affairs. A public affair refers to any affair relating to the role and activities of the State and its agencies, as well as companies and other legal persons which are 50% or more in the ownership of the State and are entrusted with administrative tasks or with the provision of services to the public on the basis of law, administrative provisions or contracts.

#### **Article 49**

1. In the course of deliberations on parliamentary business, in special debates, in responses to Members' questions and in reports, whether submitted on a discretionary basis or at the request of Members, and in the course of examinations of matters on the initiative of the standing committees of the Althingi, a Minister shall provide the information to which he or she has access and which is of significance for the evaluation by the Althingi of the matter.

2. It is permitted to submit to the Althingi information which otherwise would be barred from disclosure pursuant to rules on confidentiality. In such an event, appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure that the information is not disclosed to unauthorised persons.

3. A parliamentary committee may subject certain information received at a committee meeting to confidentiality. Also, a parliamentary committee shall decide beforehand whether the committee will admit the disclosure of information which is subject to confidentiality by law or at the request of the party wishing to disclose the information to the committee.

4. A parliamentary committee shall decide beforehand whether the committee will admit the disclosure of information which is subject to confidentiality by law or at the request of the party wishing to disclose the information to the committee. A parliamentary committee may also subject certain information received at a committee meeting to confidentiality.

#### **Article 50**

1. If a minimum of one fourth of committee members calls for access by the committee to information from the government relating to a matter that is

under deliberation by the committee, the government body in question shall accede to the request of the committee to such effect as promptly as possible and no later than seven days from receipt of the request. The government body is permitted to restrict access by a committee to information if the interest of the committee in knowing its substance is exceeded by much more urgent public or private interests. Such refusal shall be reasoned in writing.

2. If there are legitimate reasons for a request for confidentiality regarding the substance of information, committee members shall examine the information at a closed meeting without removing them from the meeting. However, a person providing such information to the committee may permit committee members to take with them copies from the meeting, in which case the committee members shall take care to prevent their disclosure to unauthorised parties.

3. Information which is provided to a committee in confidence shall be preserved in the Althingi's archives in accordance with rules established by the Speakers' Committee.

#### **Article 51**

A Member of the Althingi is subject to confidentiality regarding information obtained by the Member in the course of work if the information is subject to confidentiality pursuant to law or by a lawful decision of the person providing the information, see Article 136 of the Penal Code.

#### **Article 52**

1. If a Minister wishes to report on a matter of public interest, this shall be done by means of a report to the Althingi, which shall be printed and distributed to Members at a sitting.

2. Should the Minister so request, the report may be placed on the agenda for debate. The same applies if such a request is made by nine Members of the Althingi. In such an event the Minister shall present the report.

3. If it is not possible to print and distribute the report in accordance with paragraph 1, or if this should not be regarded as necessary, the Minister may deliver the report orally. The debate then proceeds as in the case of a written report.

#### **Article 53**

1. Nine Members may request a report from a Minister on a matter of public interest. A committee or committee majority can also request a report from a Minister on a public affair, see Article 83. The request shall be in writing,

submitted to the Speaker, and may be accompanied by a brief explanatory statement. The request shall be printed and distributed to Members at a sitting. At the following sitting of the Althingi the Speaker shall take a vote, without any preceding debate, on whether the request should be granted. The Speaker shall inform the Minister in question if such a request is granted.

2. The Minister shall complete the preparation of the report within 10 weeks and the report shall then be printed and distributed to Members at a sitting.

3. Should the Minister or any party to the request for a report so request, the report shall be placed on the agenda for debate. In such an event the Minister shall present the report.

#### **Article 54**

International committees shall each year submit to the Althingi a report on their activities. Reports of international committees shall be referred to the Foreign Affairs Committee for discussion. The Foreign Affairs Committee may submit a report on the international work of the Althingi based on reports from international committees; the report shall appear on the agenda under the same rules that generally apply to reports.

#### **Article 55**

1. In the course of debate on reports pursuant to Articles 26, 31 and 52-54, parliamentary groups may agree to appoint spokesmen, see paragraph 6 of Article 62, in which case the time limits for speeches are subject to Article 89.

2. A report may be referred to a committee. In such an event debate shall be suspended and not resumed until one night following the distribution of the committee report.

#### **Article 56**

1. If a Member wishes to call for information or a response from a Minister concerning a matter of public interest, see paragraph 1 of Article 53, or a specific point of such a matter, this shall be done by means of a question which shall be submitted to the Speaker. The question shall be clear, confined to a limited topic or single matter for which the Minister is responsible, and so phrased as to be answerable in brief terms. The Member shall specify whether a written or oral response is requested. The question may be accompanied by a brief explanatory note if a written response is requested.

2. The Speaker shall decide as promptly as possible whether a question should be allowed or not. In cases of doubt, however, the Speaker may put the matter

to a vote without debate at a sitting of the Althingi. This shall also be done if a Member so demands after the Speaker has denied the request.

3. Questions shall be printed and distributed to Members at a sitting. A question which has been allowed shall be sent to the Minister or Ministers in question.

4. At a special sitting of the Althingi the Speaker shall place on the agenda questions which have been distributed at least three working days before the sitting. As a rule, however, a question shall be placed on the agenda no later than eight days after it has been distributed.

5. A question shall be introduced by the questioner or by a rapporteur designated by the Members putting the question. The Minister addressed shall then respond to the question. Other Members shall be permitted to make one brief comment before the questioner and Minister speak for the second time.

6. If a written response is requested, the Minister shall normally send it to the Speaker no later than fifteen working days after the question was allowed. The Speaker shall send the response to the questioner and it shall be printed and distributed to Members at a sitting of the Althingi. If a Minister is unable to respond to the question within the time limit established in this Article, the Minister shall notify the Speaker of the Althingi and disclose the reason and when a response may be expected.

7. For up to half an hour at previously designated sittings, normally twice in the course of each complete parliamentary week, see paragraph 2 of Article 10, the Speaker may permit Members to submit questions orally to Ministers without notice. The Prime Minister shall, before 12 o'clock noon of the preceding Friday, notify the Speaker which Ministers, normally five at each sitting, will be available to respond at sittings in the following week. The Speaker will notify Members of the decision of the Prime Minister. In the event of any absence, or if the Prime Minister wishes to change a previous decision or add another Minister to respond to questions, this shall be notified as soon as possible.

8. No resolutions may be passed in the course of debates on questions.

9. If a Minister leaves office any unanswered questions to that Minister shall lapse.

## **Article 57**

1. For up to thirty minutes at previously designated sittings, normally twice in the course of each complete parliamentary week, see paragraph 2 of Article 10, Members may take the floor to discuss the conduct of business of the

Althingi, make a statement or direct questions to committee chairmen, chairmen of parliamentary groups or other Members.

2. The Speaker may place on the agenda of a sitting a special debate where Members can submit for discussion an item of business, whether in the form of a declaration or a question to a Minister. The Member shall submit a written request to such effect to the Speaker. The Minister shall be available to respond at such debates.

3. If a matter that is subjected to debate pursuant to paragraph 2 is so important, complex and urgent that it cannot be accommodated within the time limits of speeches in special debates, as provided in Article 89, the Speaker may permit an extended debate period and extended time limits on speeches of individual Members and Ministers beyond those provided for in Article 89. The Speaker shall seek a consensus between parliamentary groups on speaking times, but decide the matter in the event of disagreement.

4. The Speaker may, in the course of a sitting, permit Ministers and chairmen of political parties to make a statement and representatives of other parties to respond to the statement if warranted. The Speaker shall decide the time limits of speeches when a statement of this kind is given and also when the statement is debated.

#### **Article 58**

1. At the start of each session of the Althingi the Prime Minister shall deliver a Policy Speech on behalf of the government; a copy of the speech shall be distributed to Members as a confidential document two days before it is delivered.

2. The Speaker shall submit a motion and seek a consensus on the arrangement of the debate, its duration, rounds, and time limits on speeches and the time allotted to the Prime Minister, parliamentary groups and individual Members, including non-party Members. If a consensus cannot be reached, the Speaker shall decide the arrangements of the debate; however, a parliamentary group may call for a vote on the Speaker's decision at a sitting of the Althingi.

3. The copy of the Policy Speech shall be accompanied by a summary of the parliamentary business that the government intends to submit in the course of the session, together with a time plan for their distribution to Members. The summary shall be printed in the Parliamentary Record.

#### **Article 59**



In the second half of a session a general political debate shall be held. The arrangements of this debate shall be subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article 58.

## **V. RULES OF ORDER**

### **Article 60**

1. Members are required to attend all sittings of the Althingi unless unavoidably absent. The Speaker shall be notified of all absences as soon as possible and shall assess their justification. The provisions of this paragraph do not apply to question periods in the Althingi.

2. If a Member is unavoidably absent, so that it becomes necessary for his alternate to take the Member's seat temporarily, the Member shall notify the Speaker in writing and explain the reason for the absence and its anticipated duration. The Speaker shall place the letter before the Althingi. If an alternate Member takes a seat in the Althingi in the absence of a Member, the alternate Member shall serve for a minimum of two weeks unless the Althingi has been dismissed or adjourned. An absent Member shall not be paid a salary while an alternate Member sits in the Althingi unless the absence is due to illness or official business.

3. When a meeting has been called to order, the Speaker shall inform Members of all matters which have been submitted to the Speaker or any parliamentary documents which have been distributed to Members. The agenda is then opened.

4. Between sittings of the Althingi, parliamentary documents may be published on the Althingi's website, in which case the publication shall be equivalent to a distribution at a sitting. The Speaker shall establish further rules on the distribution of parliamentary documents on the Althingi's website. The same applies to notices of attendances of alternate Members. All notices appearing first on the Althingi's website pursuant to this paragraph shall be repeated by the Speaker at the start of the next sitting following the publication on the website.

### **Article 61**

Members who have requested and received permission to speak at a sitting shall speak from the rostrum. However, the Speaker may permit Members to speak from their seats if necessary. The same applies to Ministers. Members shall always address their words to the Speaker or to the assembly and never to individual Members. Members shall be referred to by their constituency or by their full names.

## Article 62

1. Time limits on speeches on legislative bills, parliamentary resolutions and other parliamentary business, special debates and other debates under the rules of order are subject to the rules laid down in Article 89, in the table of time limits on speeches.
2. However, the Speaker is permitted to extend the time limits of speeches on parliamentary business at any debate if the item of business is so complex or so important that it cannot be adequately debated within the rules otherwise applicable, see Article 79. Also, the Speaker is permitted to extend the time limits of a Member's speech in special circumstances, if necessary. The decision of the Speaker pursuant to this Article shall be made available before the start of debate.
3. In the course of debate on a budget bill the time allowed for speeches in Article 89 is doubled, unless a consensus has been reached between the parliamentary groups on other arrangements for the debate.
4. If a reasoned request has been submitted by a parliamentary group, the time allowed for speeches in Article 89 shall be doubled at the second reading of a bill. Each parliamentary group has the right to submit two such requests at each session of the Althingi. The request shall be made in writing before the start of debate.
5. The rapporteur is the Member so designated in a document. If the rapporteur is absent at a debate, another Member may be appointed rapporteur with the same rights during the absence. If there are two or more sponsors, the Member listed first on the document shall be regarded as the rapporteur unless another is designated.
6. The spokesman of a party or parliamentary group is the Member who first takes the floor for the party, unless the chairman of the parliamentary group notifies the Speaker otherwise.
7. A brief remark regarding the conduct of a vote, an election, the Speaker's conduct of a sitting, or to defend oneself against any charges is normally permitted.

## Article 63

1. The Speaker shall normally permit Members to take the floor in the order that they submit their requests at the time that the item of business is being addressed. The Speaker may depart from this rule, however, in the case of the Minister involved in the matter and the rapporteur, and also for the purpose of alternating speeches in favour of and opposition to a question, or to permit

Members to make a brief correction or comment that concerns them personally.

2. The Speaker may permit Members to comment briefly on individual speeches immediately after they have been made. In such an event the Member wishing to respond shall submit a request to such effect to the Speaker. Such a comment may be directed only at the speech in question and not at another response. During such debate the Speaker may curtail the speaking time permitted to each Member. Exchanges in responses and rebuttals shall not continue for more than fifteen minutes each time.

#### **Article 64**

1. If a debate is taking an excessively long time, the Speaker may impose time limits on Members' speeches.

2. The Speaker may move that debate should be brought to a close and may also move, either at the beginning of debate or during the course of debate, that debate on a given item of business should be concluded by a specified time. However, as long as any Member requests the floor, time limits may not be imposed on Members' speeches so as to restrict the total duration of the debate to less than three hours. Speakers' motions to this effect shall be put to the vote without debate and the matter decided by a simple majority.

3. Also, nine Members may request that a vote be taken without further debate on bringing debate to a close, limiting debate to a specified time or limiting individual Members' speeches to a specified time.

4. If a time limit is in force on a debate or on the speeches of individual Members, the Speaker shall divide the allotted time in as equitable a manner as possible among the supporters and opponents of the matter in question without being constrained by the order in which Members have requested the floor; the Speaker may divide the allotted time among parliamentary groups if this is more convenient.

5. The provisions of this Article shall apply to time limits on Ministers' speeches as well.

#### **Article 65**

A Member may not, without permission from the Speaker, read aloud from printed matter.

#### **Article 66**

All Members shall be subject to the authority of the Speaker in all matters pertaining to the preservation of good order. Should general disorder ensue, it is the duty of the Speaker to recess or, if necessary, adjourn the sitting.

#### **Article 67**

1. Bills, whether introduced by the government or by individual Members, as well as motions for resolutions and amendments, may be withdrawn at any stage of a debate. However, any Member may reintroduce them immediately at the same sitting, subject to the provisions of paragraph 2. A question may also be withdrawn.

2. A motion for an amendment which is on the agenda at the second reading, but has been withdrawn in part or in full, shall only be placed on the agenda at the third reading if it has been moved again.

#### **Article 68**

If it is not considered necessary to pass a resolution on an item on the agenda, the Althingi can refer it to the government or a Minister.

#### **Article 69**

While debate is in progress, a reasoned motion may be introduced to proceed to the next item of business on the agenda; the motion shall be submitted to the Speaker in writing. Such a motion may also be moved in printed parliamentary documents. The motion can not be brought to a conclusion until after the end of debate.

#### **Article 70**

1. The Speaker calls Members to sittings of the Althingi and decides the agenda for each sitting. However, the agenda for the following sitting may be decided by a resolution of the Althingi.

2. The Speaker may change the order of business on the agenda and also strike items off the agenda.

3. The Speaker may call a recess of sittings of the Althingi, in accordance with the parliamentary schedule, see Article 10 and paragraph 1 of Article 79, but is required to summon Members to a sitting if requested by the Prime Minister or the majority of the Members of the Althingi, with the agenda that accompanied the request.

4. The Speaker may permit, if requested, and provided that no Member objects, that debate should proceed on two or more items on the agenda

simultaneously if they deal with related matters or if such a course is considered expedient for other reasons. Rules on time limits of speeches shall apply as in the case of a single item of business. If the items of business are subject to different rules on time limits, the most liberal limits shall apply.

### **Article 71**

1. No resolution may be passed unless more than half the membership of the Althingi is present and voting, as stipulated in Article 53 of the Constitution. A Member who is present at a sitting and abstains in the course of a roll call or electronic voting is regarded as having participated in the voting.
2. Members are required to be present and cast their votes unless they have a valid reason for absence or have been granted a leave of absence.
3. No Member may vote in support of an appropriation of funds to himself.

### **Article 72**

The Speaker shall decide the order in which matters are put to the vote and the conduct of the voting. However, the Althingi may change the Speaker's decision at the request of a parliamentary group or nine Members.

### **Article 73**

1. When the Speaker has reason to believe that all Members are in agreement or that the outcome of a matter is clear in advance, the Speaker may declare an item of business concluded without a vote and the declaration shall take the place of a vote if no requests to the contrary are made. However, in the case of final decisions on legislative bills and parliamentary resolutions, the Speaker must conduct a vote.
2. The vote shall be conducted using electronic equipment that confirms which Members participated and how they cast their votes. The Speaker shall announce the result of the vote. The vote of each Member at the final reading of a bill or resolution shall be recorded in the Parliamentary Record; the same shall apply to other votes except in the case of unanimity. The Secretariat will preserve transcripts of all votes using electronic equipment.
3. If a vote cannot be taken by electronic means the procedure of the vote shall be that each Member raises his or her hand when the Speaker calls for votes for or against or abstentions. The Speaker shall have the votes counted, including abstentions, and announce the results.
4. The Speaker may order a roll call instead of a vote pursuant to paragraphs 2 or 3. The Speaker is also permitted to use this alternative even if a vote has

already been taken but the results have been unclear or any protests have been made, provided that the second vote is taken immediately. All requests for a vote by roll call shall be granted. Roll calls shall be taken by means of a numbered and alphabetically ordered list of Members' names, and lots shall be cast to determine at what number on the list the roll call shall begin. At a roll call the Speaker shall cast the last vote.

5. Votes pursuant to paragraph 2 may be repeated even if their result has been announced, at the discretion of the Speaker or at the request of a Member. In such an event the new vote shall take place immediately, before any resolution is passed or any new item of business addressed. If a Member at a sitting wishes to make a correction after votes have been taken pursuant to paragraph 2, the correction may be entered in the Parliamentary Record, but only if the Member participated in the vote. The correction shall not alter the result of the vote.

6. On voting by electronic means, and in voting by roll call, Members may give a brief explanation of their vote.

#### **Article 74**

All items of business and details thereof are decided by majority vote unless otherwise specified in the Constitution or in the Standing Orders. Both votes for and against an item of business shall be counted.

#### **Article 75**

1. Elections in the Althingi shall proceed as provided in paragraph 2 of Article 3, with the addition that when elections involve two or more candidates, whether for duties inside or outside the Althingi, the Speaker shall employ a method of proportional voting known as the d'Hondt system (the list system). The method is described in paragraphs 2-4.

2. Members who have mutually agreed to vote for the same candidates in the same order shall submit to the Speaker, at the time of the election, a list of their candidates in that order. When the Speaker has received these lists each shall be marked with a letter of the alphabet, A, B, C, etc., at the Speaker's own discretion or in accordance with an agreement which has been made once and for all for the duration of the session. The Speaker will then read aloud the letter of each list and the names on the list. The Members shall then cast their votes so that each Member writes on a ballot paper only the letter (A, B, etc.) of the list for which the Member intends to vote. The ballots are delivered to the Speaker who reads aloud the letter on each ballot while tellers record the votes and count how many votes have fallen to each list of candidates, how many to A, how many to B, etc., as necessary. The number thus achieved by each list is then divided, first by 1, then by 2, then by 3 etc., as needed. The

resulting figures are written down, one below the other, in a column headed by the identifying letter of the list.

3. The list receiving the highest number of votes is awarded the first candidate, the list receiving the second highest number is awarded the second candidate and so on until the required number of candidates has been elected. If two or more lists receive the same number, lots are cast to determine from which list a candidate should be chosen.

4. Candidates on each list shall be elected in the order of their appearance on the list.

5. When Deputy Speakers are elected pursuant to the provisions of the second sentence of paragraph 3 of Article 3, the highest number of votes for the list of the Speaker's parliamentary group shall be excluded. In other respects the provisions of paragraphs 3 and 4 shall apply to the election of Deputy Speakers and their order of precedence.

6. If substitutes are to be elected as well, each list from which a candidate or candidates have been elected is entitled to an equal number of substitutes in the order that they appear on the list.

7. In an election of a single person, the only candidates are those whose names have been put forward and who have not protested their candidacy to the Speaker. The election may take place by electronic means, as provided in paragraph 2 of Article 73, so that it constitutes the equivalent of an election by ballot.

#### **Article 76**

Sittings of the Althingi shall be open to the public. However, the Speaker may move, or a Member request, that all non-Members should be excluded; the assembly shall then decide whether the sitting shall be held in public or in camera, as provided in Article 57 of the Constitution.

#### **Article 77**

The Speaker shall decide on the arrangements by which the public is invited to observe sittings which are open to the public. The members of the public are required to remain silent and orderly. In the event of any transgression the Speaker may have the offender removed and, if necessary, clear the galleries.

### **VI. PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS AND MEMBERS**

#### **Article 78**

1. If Members organise themselves in parliamentary groups they shall elect a chairman to represent them in dealings with the Speaker and other parliamentary groups and Members.
2. Each parliamentary group must have at least three Members. However, two Members may form a parliamentary group provided that the parliamentary group is formed immediately following elections and the Members are elected on the tickets of the same party or political association.
3. No Member may participate in more than one parliamentary group.

#### **Article 79**

1. The Speaker shall consult on a regular basis with the chairmen of parliamentary groups or their representatives concerning the organization of parliamentary business and submit to them for comment the schedule of the Althingi and the schedule of parliamentary business for each week.
2. The Speaker shall also consult with the chairmen of the parliamentary groups concerning the arrangement of debate on important issues if it is likely that discussions will be extensive. The Speaker may then, with the consent of all parliamentary groups, decide prior to the start of debate on different time limits for speeches from those provided for in the Standing Orders and on the permitted duration of the debate. In the case of such agreements between the parliamentary groups concerning the time of debate, half of the debating time shall be divided equally among the parliamentary groups and half in proportion to the number of Members of each parliamentary group; in such cases the Speaker shall decide the time limits for non-party Members. However, approval for such a decision shall be sought at a sitting of the Althingi if least three Members so request.
3. The Speaker and Speakers' Committee shall consult with chairmen of the parliamentary groups regarding the rules they are required to set in accordance with this Act.
4. The Speaker shall ensure that the parliamentary groups and individual Members are provided with working facilities in consultation with the chairmen of the parliamentary groups. The same shall apply to non-party Members.

#### **Article 80**

1. Members of the Althingi shall, within one month from the time that a newly elected parliament convenes, provide a public account of their financial interests and positions of trust outside the Althingi pursuant to further rules established by the Speakers' Committee.



2. The same applies to any alternate Member who takes a permanent seat in the Althingi and alternate Members who have served for four consecutive weeks in the Althingi. Also, Ministers who are not also Members of the Althingi shall be subject to the same rule.

3. Information pursuant to this Article shall be published on the Althingi's website when it has been recorded. Members of the Althingi shall enter new information within one month from the time that it becomes available.

#### **Article 81**

1. The Speakers' Committee shall prepare and submit a motion for a parliamentary resolution on a code of ethics for Members of the Althingi.

2. The Speakers' Committee is responsible for matters relating to the Members' code of ethics, its enforcement and any violations.

### **VII. BROADCASTING OF DEBATE**

#### **Article 82**

1. The opening sitting, the Prime Minister's Policy Speech and debate on the speech, and general political debate shall be broadcast.

2. Debate on motions of no-confidence shall be broadcast if a request to such effect is submitted by a parliamentary group.

3. Debates on parliamentary business, or a part of such debates, shall be broadcast at the request of a parliamentary group if a consensus is reached between parliamentary groups, or if the Speaker has scheduled the debate at the request of the parliamentary group. If the request is denied, the parliamentary group is entitled to have the request put to a vote at a sitting.

4. The arrangements of debate pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 shall be subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article 58.

5. Where broadcasting of debate is required, the requirement is restricted to the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service.

### **VIII. SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 83**

1. The Althingi may not admit any business which is not sponsored by a Member or a Minister, as stipulated in Article 55 of the Constitution.

2. Items of business pursuant to Articles 37 and 45, and motions for amendments of such items of business, may be sponsored by Members, Ministers, parliamentary groups and standing committees, select committees and international committees, as well as the Speakers' Committee. The same applies to committee majorities.

#### **Article 84**

1. Proceedings of the Althingi and parliamentary documents shall be printed in the Parliamentary Record (Althingistíðindi). The Secretariat of the Althingi is responsible for the publication of the Parliamentary Record.

2. Parliamentary documents shall be printed in Section A of the Parliamentary Record, while all debates, agendas of sittings, notices, votes and any other proceedings shall be printed in Section B, including information on the conclusion of parliamentary business and the details thereof.

3. Nothing may be omitted from the Parliamentary Record which belongs in the Record, having emerged at sittings of the Althingi as evidenced by audio recordings. No alterations may be made to any substance except to correct obvious and verifiable errors. Nothing may be added to the Parliamentary Record, whether involving personalities or issues, unless it is unavoidable or involves the correction of an obvious error.

4. The Speaker may establish further rules on the publication of the Parliamentary Record, including its publication in electronic form.

5. All documents which would otherwise be printed may be published on the Althingi's website. Such publication shall constitute the equivalent of printing, except as otherwise noted. When documents are published electronically, the security, integrity and permanent preservation of published matter shall be ensured. The Speaker may establish rules on the arrangements of publication.

#### **Article 85**

1. The language of parliamentary business is Icelandic.

2. If part of a parliamentary document is in a foreign language it shall be accompanied by an Icelandic translation. Deviation from this rule is permitted if warranted by special circumstances and if the part in question of the parliamentary document does not directly concern the substance of the matter.

3. If a Member quotes from printed matter, see Article 65, in a foreign language the Member shall also translate or paraphrase its substance in Icelandic.

4. If a guest appears at a committee meeting and does not speak Icelandic his or her words shall be interpreted. Derogation from this provision is permitted if there is no objection.

#### **Article 86**

The Secretariat of the Althingi operates an information and research service for the Members and committees of the Althingi. The service shall be further provided for in rules established by the Speakers' Committee of the Althingi.

#### **Article 87**

If a Member speaks disrespectfully of the President of Iceland or makes allegations against a Minister or Member, or departs entirely from the subject under discussion, the Speaker shall caution the Member with the words "that is out of order" and quote the words ruled out of order. If a Member is cautioned twice at the same sitting, the Speaker may, with the approval of the assembly, deprive the Member of the right to speak at that sitting.

#### **Article 88**

On the motion of the Speaker or chairman of a parliamentary group, the provisions of these Standing Orders may be suspended if supported by two thirds of the voting Members.

#### **Article 89**

The right of Members and Ministers to participate in debates shall extend up to the time limits specified in the following table accompanying the rules on speaking times, subject to Article 57 on special debates, Articles 58 and 59 on the policy speech and general political debate, Article 62 on extended speaking times, Article 63 on curtailment of speaking times, Article 79 on agreed speaking times and Article 82 on broadcast debates:

#### **RULES ON TIME LIMITS OF SPEECHES**

	<b>1st time</b>	<b>2nd time</b>	<b>At will</b>
<b>LEGISLATIVE BILLS</b>			
<i>1st reading</i>			
Sponsor (Minister or Member)	30 min.	15 min.	5 min.
Other Ministers	15 min.	5 min.	5 min.

Other Members	15 min.	5 min.	
<i>2nd reading</i>			
Rapporteur of a committee report	30 min.	15 min.	5 min.
Minister and sponsor	20 min.	10 min.	5 min.
Other Members	20 min.	10 min.	5 min.

*3d reading*

Same as 1st reading, except that the rapporteur of a committee report replaces the sponsor

**PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTIONS**

*1st reading*

Sponsor (Minister or Member)

Minister

Other Members

15 min.	10 min.	5 min.
10 min.	5 min.	5 min.
10 min.	5 min.	

*2nd reading:*

Same as 2nd reading of legislative bill

*Single round of debate*

Same as 2nd reading of legislative bill

**QUESTIONS**

Questioner

Minister

Other Members and Ministers (brief comment)

3 min.	2 min.
5 min.	2 min.
1 min.	

**UNPREPARED QUESTION TIMES**

Questioner and Minister

2 min.	1 min.
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**REPORTS**

Rapporteur (Minister or Member)

Minister

Parliamentary group spokesman

20 min.	10 min.	5 min.
10 min.	5 min.	5 min.
15 min.	5 min.	

Other Members	min. 10 min. min.
<b>WORK OF THE ALTHINGI</b>	
Members and Ministers	2 min. 2 min.
<b>SPECIAL DEBATES</b>	
Member raising the question	5 min. 2 min.
Minister (respondent)	5 min. 2 min.
Other Members and Ministers	2 min. 2 min.
<b>RESPONSES (UP TO 15 MINUTES)</b>	
Members and Ministers	2 min. 2 min.
Initial speaker	2 min. 2 min.
<b>COMMENTS</b>	
<i>Explanatory comment on vote</i>	1 min.
< against defence sitting, of conduct>	
comment on the conduct of a vote or an election	1 min. 1 min.