

[Constitution](#) [43rd National Assembly](#) [Legislation](#) [Plenary sittings](#) [European union](#) [News](#) [History and facts](#)

[Home](#) > [Legislation](#) > [Rules of Organisation and Procedure of the National Assembly](#)

RULES OF ORGANISATION AND PROCEDURE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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Chapter One GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1. The National Assembly shall organise and conduct its business pursuant to the Constitution and these Rules.

Article 2. The National Assembly shall convene its sessions in its House in the capital city, unless exceptional circumstances necessitate otherwise.

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

Article 3. (1) The first session of the National Assembly shall be opened by the eldest Member present. Said Member shall chair the session until the National Assembly has elected its President.

(2) The Members of the National Assembly shall take an oral oath as per Article 76, paragraph 2 of the Constitution, in witness whereof they shall each sign the oath roster.

Article 4. (1) The eldest Member shall only chair the debate on the election of a President of the National Assembly and shall oversee the election itself.

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

Article 5. (1) The President and any Vice Presidents of the National Assembly may be dismissed ahead of term in the following cases:

1. of their own volition;
2. subject to a motion in writing submitted by no less than one-third of all Members in case of an objective impossibility for the person in question to discharge his/her duties, or a systematic abuse of authority, or systematic failure to discharge his/her duties within his/her competences;
3. subject to a motion in writing submitted by the parliamentary group formed by the party or coalition, represented in Parliament, which nominated them.

(2) The President and the Vice Presidents of the National Assembly will be dismissed ahead of term should they quit their parliamentary group or be expelled therefrom, or in the event that said parliamentary group has ceased to exist.

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

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

(5) In the event of an early dismissal as per paragraph (1) or (2), new elections shall be held within 14 days from said decision to dismiss, in accordance with the rules of procedure adopted by the National Assembly. Until a new election is held for a National Assembly President, the National Assembly shall be presided over by the Vice President nominated by the largest party or coalition represented in Parliament that had been registered with the Central Elections Commission for participation as such in the latest parliamentary elections.

Article 6. The National Assembly shall elect 8 clerks from among its Members.

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

Chapter Three GOVERNANCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Article 8. (1) The President of the National Assembly, in discharging his/her powers under Article 77(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 spheres of competence;
 2. authenticate the contents of the acts adopted by the National Assembly;
 3. ensure appropriate conditions for the work of the Committees and the Members of the National Assembly;
 4. establish, on consultations with the Presidents' Council, House Rules to be observed on the National Assembly premises and in the use of facilities;
 5. organise the drafting and implementation of, and accounting for, the National Assembly budget;
 6. authenticate by his/her signature the stenographic records of the sessions of the National Assembly;
 7. oversee the publication of the State Gazette, as well as discharge other powers pursuant to the State Gazette Act;
 8. establish, in consultations with the Presidents' Council, seating arrangements in the plenary room for the Members of the National Assembly, divided by parliamentary groups, for the Members of the Council of Ministers, and for the President and the Vice President of the Republic;
 9. require, after a vote, information from the clerks of the National Assembly about Members who voted using voting cards other than their own, except in cases as per Article 63 (3);
 10. ensure and oversee compliance with these Rules;
 11. approve the staffing schedule of the National Assembly and oversee the staffing of its departments;
 12. appoint and dismiss the Secretary General of the National Assembly, the staff at the President's Office, as well as the staff at the offices of the Vice Presidents and the parliamentary groups subject to the latter's proposal;
 13. endorse Operational Rules for the National Assembly administration;
 14. oversee the internal and perimeter security of the National Assembly placed under his/her orders;
 15. appoint and dismiss the quaestors of the National Assembly;
 16. perform other functions assigned to him/her in accordance with the Constitution, the law and these Rules.
- (2) The Vice Presidents of the National Assembly shall assist the President and carry out the tasks assigned to them

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- ▶ [How does a bill become an act?](#)
- ▶ [How does the National Assembly work?](#)



by him/her.

(3) The President of the National Assembly shall appoint, by a written order following consultations with the President's Council, the Vice Presidents who shall take part in chairing the plenary sessions of the National Assembly on a weekly basis. The Vice Presidents thus appointed shall take their seats in the Presidium.

(4) Should the President of the National Assembly decide to delegate on a permanent basis to the Vice Presidents the performance of functions under paragraph (1), he/she shall issue an order in writing assigning such functions among them.

(5) In the absence of the President of the National Assembly, a Vice President designated by him/her shall be the acting President; the non-designation of an acting President shall result in the Vice President nominated by the largest party or coalition represented in Parliament, and registered with the Central Elections Commission for participating in its own capacity in the latest parliamentary elections, being appointed acting President.

(6) Whenever the President takes part in a floor discussion on a certain matter, the session shall be chaired by a Vice President designated by him/her. In such cases, the President cannot resume the Chair for the same session before the vote or the adjournment of debates on the said matter.

(7) The President of the National Assembly may set up a Consultative Council to deal with issues of legislation. The organisation, functions and composition of said Council shall be governed by rules approved by the President of the National Assembly. The meetings of the Council shall be open for participation by members of non-profit entities registered as charitable bodies for the public benefit.

Article 9. (1) The President of the National Assembly shall be assisted by the Presidents' Council comprised of the Vice Presidents and the leaders of parliamentary groups or their designates.

(2) The Presidents' Council shall have the following duties:

1. to conduct consultations on drafts for a National Assembly legislative programme and on the sessions' agendas;
2. inquire, from time to time but not less than once a month, about the implementation of the legislative programme and about the Committees' work on the bills and draft decisions, draft statements and draft addresses assigned to them;
3. contribute towards the resolution of conflicts as may emerge between different parliamentary groups, as well as seek to establish consensus on procedural and organisational matters pertinent to the National Assembly work.

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

Article 10. The Clerks of the National Assembly shall have the following duties:

1. to inform the session Chairperson of the members' attendance at sessions of the National Assembly and assist him/her in performing quorum checks;
2. when the computerized voting system is used, to assist in the prevention and sanctioning of the unauthorized use of other Members' voting cards, except in cases as per Article 63(3);
3. when a vote is taken by a show of hands, to count the votes and report the result of the vote to the session Chairperson;
4. when a vote is taken by secret ballot, to render the relevant technical assistance;
5. when a vote is taken by roll-call, to call the roll;
6. to verify and sign the stenographic records of sessions where they were on duty;
7. to perform such other tasks as may be assigned to them by the session Chairperson in connection with the business of the National Assembly.

Article 11. The Quaestors of the National Assembly shall:

1. follow the session Chairperson's directions for the purpose of maintaining order on the floor and in the galleries;
2. assist the Clerks in counting the votes when a vote by a show of hands is taken; in the technical organisation of secret ballots; and in the prevention of unauthorized use of other Members' voting cards when an electronic vote is taken, except in cases as per Article 63(3);
3. ensure that only Members of the National Assembly, Government Ministers and persons authorised by the National Assembly are present in the plenary room;
4. execute the orders of the session Chairperson to maintain order in the building of the National Assembly where the plenary sessions are being conducted.

Chapter Four

PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

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

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

(3) If the membership of a Parliamentary Group falls below the required minimum, such Group shall be dissolved.

(4) The members of a parliamentary group that has ceased to exist shall become unaffiliated members of the National Assembly, and cannot join other parliamentary group or form a new parliamentary group.

Article 13. (1) Each Parliamentary Group shall submit to the President of the National Assembly the decision whereby it constituted itself and a list of its leadership and membership; both documents must be signed by all members of the National Assembly comprised in the group.

(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 present the Parliamentary Groups so registered and their leaderships at a plenary session. Every change in the composition of a Parliamentary Group shall be announced by the President of the National Assembly at a plenary session.

(4) The National Assembly shall appoint Permanent Aides to the Parliamentary Groups having the status of National Assembly staff. The number of such permanent aides, at a ratio of one for each 10 members of a parliamentary group, but not fewer than 2 per group, shall be approved by the President. Where the size of a parliamentary group is not a multiple of 10, the number of permanent aides is rounded up to match the next multiple of 10.

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

(2) The terms and conditions of obtaining, holding and termination of one's membership in a Parliamentary Group, as well as the rights and obligations of members, shall be determined by the Group itself, in keeping with these Rules.

(3) A Member of the National Assembly may quit a Parliamentary Group by tendering a written resignation to the leader of the Group and the President of the National Assembly; said resignation shall be announced at a plenary session.

(4) Where a member has quit a Parliamentary Group or been expelled therefrom, said Member shall lose his/her seat on the Standing Committees as a representative of the relevant Parliamentary Group, his/her place in National Assembly delegations, and other elected offices of the National Assembly.

(5) A Member of Parliament who has quit his/her Parliamentary Group, or has been expelled therefrom, shall be regarded as an unaffiliated member and may not join any other Parliamentary Group.

(6) Members of the European Parliament for the Republic of Bulgaria may take part in the work of the Parliamentary Groups in a non-voting capacity.

Article 15. Members of the National Assembly who are not affiliated with any of the existing parliamentary groups may not form parliamentary groups. Existing parliamentary groups cannot merge or split.

Chapter Five

COMMITTEES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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

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

1. (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Budget and Finance Committee;
2. (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Legal Affairs Committee;
3. (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Economic Policy and Tourism Committee;
4. (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Energy Committee;
5. Regional Policy, Public Works and Local Self-Government Committee;
6. Foreign Policy Committee;
7. Defence Committee;
8. Internal Security and Public Order Committee;
9. Agriculture and Foods Committee;
10. Labour, Social and Demographic Policy Committee;
11. Education and Science Committee;
12. Committee for Children, Youth and Sports;
13. Health Care Committee;
14. Environment and Water Committee;
15. Transport, Information Technology and Communications Committee;
16. Committee for Culture and the Media;
17. Committee for Interaction with Non-governmental Organizations and Citizens' Complaints;
18. Religious Affairs and Human Rights Committee;

19. Anti-Corruption, Conflict of Interests, and Parliamentary Ethics Committee;
20. European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee;
21. Committee for Oversight of the Security Services, Deployment of Special Surveillance Techniques and Data Access under the Electronic Communications Act;
22. (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Committee for Monitoring the Work of the State Energy and Water Regulatory Commission.
23. (New, SG No. 13/2015) Committee on the Policies towards Bulgarians who live Abroad.
- (3) The European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee shall report to the National Assembly on the discharge by the Council of Ministers of its duties to ensure advance public awareness of its involvement in the drafting and adoption of EU acts. The European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee shall also prepare reports on other acts of the European Union institutions.
- (4) The National Assembly may make changes in the type, number and composition of the standing committees.
- Article 17. (1) Committee for Oversight of the Security Services, Deployment of Special Surveillance Techniques and Data Access under the Electronic Communications Act shall:
1. exercise parliamentary oversight with respect to the work of the security services;
 2. formulate opinions regarding the budgets of the security services;
 3. adopt, within 14 days following its election, internal rules of procedure, to be endorsed by the National Assembly;
 4. perform parliamentary oversight and monitoring, as provided under both the Special Surveillance Techniques Act and the Electronic Communications Act, with respect to the procedures of:
 - a) authorization and deployment of special surveillance techniques, the storage and disposal of data obtained thereby, as well as the protection of the rights and liberties of members of the public against the illegal use of special surveillance techniques;
 - b) the authorization of access and actual access to data under the Electronic Communications Act, as well as the protection of the rights and liberties of members of the public against illegal access to such data.
- (2) On an annual basis, not later than May 31st of each year, the Committee shall submit to the National Assembly a report on its work as per paragraph 1(4), which shall contain summarized information about:
1. the authorization and deployment of special surveillance techniques, the storage and disposal of data obtained thereby, as well as the protection of the rights and liberties of members of the public against the illegal use of special surveillance techniques;
 2. any inspections made and proposals submitted for improving the procedures of storage and processing of data under the Electronic Communications Act.
- (3) The President of the National Assembly shall keep the President and the Prime Minister apprised of the Committee's decisions and opinions.
- Article 18. The Anti-Corruption, Conflict of Interests, and Parliamentary Ethics Committee shall be formed on the principle of parity, comprising two Members of Parliament each from every Parliamentary Group.
- Article 19. (1) A Member of the National Assembly may be elected to no more than two standing committees.
- (2) A Member of the National Assembly may be elected Chairperson of one Standing Committee only.
- (3) The President and Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly cannot be elected to the leadership of Standing Committees.
- Article 20. (1) The composition of the Standing Committees shall be determined in proportion to the size of the Parliamentary Groups, with the exception of the standing committees as per Article 16(2), item 19.
- (2) The leadership of each Standing Committee shall comprise a Chairperson and up to four Deputy Chairpersons. The leadership of a Standing Committee shall organise its work on the basis of the information received by the Committee.
- (3) The leaderships and the members of the Standing Committees shall be elected subject to a proposal by a Parliamentary Group or by any individual member, by an open vote en bloc, unless objections are raised against any of the nominees.
- (4) The Committee Chairperson shall chair meetings and shall maintain contacts with the Chairpersons of other committees and with the National Assembly President.
- (5) For periods of his/her absence, the Chairperson of a Standing Committee shall authorize one of the deputy Chairs to preside over the Committee meetings. In the absence of such an authorization, the President of the National Assembly shall designate one of the deputy Chairs to chair the Committee meeting.
- Article 21. Members of the European Parliament for the Republic of Bulgaria may take part in the meetings of parliamentary committees with an advisory vote.
- Article 22. (1) The Chairperson and deputy Chairs of a Standing Committee may be dismissed ahead of term:
1. of their own volition;
 2. subject to a motion filed by more than half of the Committee members, in case of an objective impossibility for the person in question to discharge his/her duties, or a systematic abuse of authority, or systematic failure to discharge his/her duties;
 3. subject to a motion in writing submitted by the parliamentary group on whose quota they were elected to the Committee.
- (2) The Chairperson and deputy Chairs of a Standing Committee shall be dismissed ahead of term if they have quit the Parliamentary Group on whose quota they were elected to the Committee, or if said Parliamentary Group has ceased to exist.
- (3) Members of the Standing Committees may be dismissed ahead of term:
1. of their own volition;
 2. subject to a motion in writing submitted by the parliamentary group on whose quota they were elected to the Committee.
- (4) In cases as per paragraph 1, item 1, paragraph 2 and paragraph 3, item 1, such dismissal shall be announced without a debate or vote, and in cases as per paragraph 1, items 2 and 3 and paragraph 3, item 2, by a decision of the National Assembly.
- (5) In the cases as per paragraph 1, item 2, the Parliamentary Committee shall rule on the motion by a majority of more than half of its members.
- Article 23. (1) The Standing Committees may adopt their internal rules of organisation in line with these Rules, which are to be posted on the web page of the relevant Committee within the Internet site of the National Assembly.
- (2) Any and all costs pertinent to the work of the Standing Committees of the National Assembly must be authorized by the President of the National Assembly subject to a proposal of Committee leaderships.
- Article 24. (1) Standing Committees may form subcommittees and working groups manned by their own members.
- (2) A standing Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee shall be established under the Budget and Finance Committee.
- (3) A Standing Subcommittee for monitoring consumer protection and anti-trust activities shall be formed with the Economic Policy and Tourism Committee.
- (4) The Standing Committees may set up public councils, comprised of members of civil organizations, that would play an advisory role in their work.
- Article 25. (1) In pertinence to the work of the Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee and subject to a motion by the Chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee, the first level budget spenders shall report on the implementation of certain budgets and programmes; said reports shall be submitted to the subcommittee within time limits specified in the motion. Reports on the execution of extrabudgetary accounts and funds may also be debated in accordance with this procedure.
- (2) Authorized to take part in the subcommittee meetings shall be the relevant first level budget spender, the President of the National Audit Office and the Minister of Finance or their designates, as well as other persons summoned by the Subcommittee Chairperson.
- (3) After the report has been discussed, the Subcommittee Chairperson shall draw up a report containing an evaluation of the budget execution, which shall be submitted to the Budget and Finance Committee and to the Members of the National Assembly.
- Article 26. (1) The Standing Committees shall have the authority to consider bills, the Annual Programme as per Article 114, and draft resolutions, draft declarations and draft 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) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The Standing Committees may assign, as per Article 17 of the Financial Regulations regarding the Budget of the National Assembly, the carrying out of an ex post impact assessment of laws, which aims to determine their efficiency and level of achievement of targets.
- (3) The Standing Committees shall, each in accordance with its scope of competence, exercise periodic control of the extent of absorption and the purposeful and lawful spending of resources from the European Union programmes and funds.
- (4) Government authorities, officials of the State and municipal administrations and members of the public shall be obliged to submit, when required to do so, any information and documents as may be relevant to the work of the Standing Committees.
- (5) The Committee Chairperson is obligated, subject to a motion by one-third of the Committee members, to summon forthwith the relevant government authorities and officials of the State or municipal administrations to attend a meeting of the Committee. The officials so summoned shall be obligated to appear before the Committee and to present the requested information as well as to answer any questions addressed to them within 7 days from receipt of the summons or at the first scheduled meeting if it falls on a date following the expiry of the said 7-day period.
- Article 27. (1) In the course of the last hour and a half of the meetings of the Standing Committees, on the first Wednesday and Thursday of each month, the relevant line Ministers shall appear before the relevant Committees and take verbal questions addressed by members of the Committee during the meeting itself. Questions thus asked must pertain to specific policies and may not contain requests for supply of detailed numerical data.
- (2) One Committee member from each Parliamentary Group shall be entitled to two verbal questions on relevant

- issues, whereas unaffiliated Members of Parliament shall be entitled between themselves to a total of two questions.
- (3) The line Minister to whom a question is addressed must reply immediately upon taking the question. In the absence of a Minister for valid reasons, the Committee shall, in coordination with him/her, schedule an alternative meeting for him/her to answer verbal questions on relevant issues.
- (4) The procedure of asking verbal questions as per paragraph 1 shall be determined in accordance with the size of the parliamentary groups in descending order, with unaffiliated Members being the last in line. Second questions are to be asked in the same order once the first series of questions have been answered.
- (5) The time for formulating a single question shall be limited to 2 minutes. A minister's reply to a question shall be limited to 3 minutes. The Member asking a question shall be entitled to a rejoinder of up to 2 minutes, and the responding Minister, to a counter-rejoinder, also of up to 2 minutes.
- Article 28. (1) Standing Committee meetings can be either scheduled or unscheduled.
- (2) The Committees determine by themselves the agenda, frequency and duration of their meetings.
- (3) A meeting of a Standing Committee is convened by its Chairperson, at his/her initiative, or at the request by no less than one-third of its members, or by the President of the National Assembly; said request must contain a draft agenda for the meeting.
- Article 29. (1) The meetings of Standing Committees are open. By decision of the relevant Standing Committee, its meeting may be streamed live on the website of the National Assembly.
- (2) Standing Committees may decide that individual meetings be held in camera.
- (3) The meetings of the Committee for Oversight of the Security Services, Deployment of Special Surveillance Techniques and Data Access under the Electronic Communications Act shall be held in camera. Individual meetings of said Committee may, at its own discretion, be open.
- (4) By way of exception, Standing Committees may hold open meetings outside the Capital City.
- Article 30. (1) Members of the public may attend Committee meetings in compliance with the National Assembly access policy and the rules of procedure of the relevant Committee. The list of attendees shall form an integral part of the stenographic records of the meeting.
- (2) Representatives of trade unions, professional and industrial organisations may submit written opinions and, at their own initiative, attend Committee meetings, as well as participate in debates on National Assembly bills under review, relating to their relevant sphere of interest, in keeping with the established rules of procedure of the Committees. The list of attendees representing such organizations shall form an integral part of the stenographic records of the meeting. Their opinions shall be posted on the web page of the relevant Committee within the website of the National Assembly.
- (3) Any member of a Standing Committee may invite members of the public or representatives of legal entities concerned with the issues under consideration to attend its meeting. The list of invitees shall form an integral part of the stenographic records of the meeting.
- (4) Accredited reporters and other journalists who have been granted access may attend the open meetings of the National Assembly Standing Committees.
- (5) Any Member of the National Assembly may attend the meetings of any Standing Committee without being its member, in a non-voting capacity.
- (6) The attendance by Members of the National Assembly of meetings held in camera by Committees to which they do not belong, as well as the documents and subject matter presented to them, shall be recorded in a special log to be signed by them.
- (7) All participants in Committee meetings are obligated to comply with requirements pertaining to the protection of classified information and data as per the Personal Data Protection Act, as well as of any information pertaining to the privacy and good standing of citizens.
- Article 31. (1) Standing Committee Chairpersons shall post notices with the agenda, time and venue of the meetings at specially designated points on the premises of the National Assembly or shall cause these to be delivered in person, against signature, to Committee members. The agenda for scheduled Committee meetings shall be announced not later than three days prior to the date of the meeting, including by way of a notice posted on the parliamentary web-site. In case of an unscheduled Committee meeting, the agenda shall be announced in the notice setting the date for such meeting.
- (2) A Standing Committee's meeting may only proceed if more than one half of the Committee members are in attendance. If at the appointed time for opening of the meeting there is no quorum, the Committee may also proceed with the meeting if at least one-third of its members are in attendance.
- (3) When a Committee is discussing bills or other acts at its meetings, it shall hear the sponsor of the bill or other act. Where a bill is sponsored by the Council of Ministers, the Committee shall hear at its meeting a member of the Council of Ministers or a deputy Minister.
- (4) Standing Committee decisions shall be adopted by a majority vote of the attending members.
- Article 32. (1) Committees may hold joint meetings to discuss common issues. Such meetings shall be presided over by one of the Chairpersons designated by mutual consent.
- (2) In joint meetings, each Committee shall adopt a separate decision on the matter at hand. In case of dissent, each Committee shall submit a separate report to the National Assembly.
- Article 33. (1) Standing Committee reports are prepared by the Committee Chairpersons or by a rapporteur appointed by the relevant Committee.
- (2) A report shall set out the decision adopted by the Committee and the dissenting views while stating the number of members supporting each view.
- (3) Reports from open meetings of the Standing Committees shall be part of the public domain and made available in accordance with the established procedure, as well as accessible on the web page of the Committee within the National Assembly Website.
- Article 34. (1) (Supplemented, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) An executive summary of the meetings of the Standing Committees shall be drawn up, setting out all the decisions made, and an audio recording shall be made. The summary shall be signed by the Committee Chairperson and the person drawing it up, and within 5 days following the meeting shall be published, along with the audio recording, on the web page of the Committee within the website of the National Assembly.
- (2) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Full stenographic records shall be drawn up of the meetings of the Standing Committees, when they are in charge of bills, of Parliamentary Oversight as per Article 27 and of the Hearings, including Hearings of candidates under Article 89. The summaries shall be signed by the Chairperson of the Committee and by the person drawing them up, and within 7 days following the meeting, shall be published on the web page of the Committee within the website of the National Assembly. When the summaries refer to meetings of Standing Committees in charge of bills, these shall be published before the review of the report in the Plenary room.
- (3) The records of Standing Committee meetings held in camera shall be subject to a special safe-keeping, reporting and access procedure in compliance with requirements of the Classified Information Protection Act.
- Article 35. (1) Select Committees shall be appointed ad hoc to investigate particular matters and to conduct enquiries.
- (2) Such Select Committees shall be elected by the National Assembly subject to a proposal by the President or a motion by no less than one-fifth of the Members of the National Assembly.
- (3) The terms of reference, size, composition and term of office of such Select Committees shall be determined by the National Assembly.
- (4) The rules of procedure of the Standing Committees shall apply also to Select Committees.
- (5) Select Committees shall be dissolved upon expiry of their term of office or, by a decision of the National Assembly, ahead of said term.
- Article 36. (1) The National Assembly shall elect from among its Members the Assembly's permanent delegations to international organisations.
- (2) The composition of the National Assembly's permanent delegations to international organisations shall be determined in proportion to the size of the Parliamentary Groups.
- (3) If a Parliamentary Group has ceased to exist, its representatives shall be dismissed from the permanent delegations.
- (4) Such permanent delegations shall report to the President of the National Assembly.

Chapter Six RELATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Article 37. The Committee for Interaction with Non-governmental Organizations and Citizens' Complaints shall have the authority to:
- engage in dialogue and interaction with representatives of non-governmental organizations, including by conducting public hearings on matters of significant public interest; place State regulatory authorities under parliamentary and civil scrutiny through public discussions and ensuring that the conclusions of the discussions be forwarded to the leading committees;
 - consider proposals for referendums and civil initiatives within the meaning as per the Direct Citizen Participation in State and Local Government Act, as well as petitions as per Article 45 of the Constitution;
 - examine complaints, tip-offs and proposals submitted by members of the public in conformity with the internal rules of the relevant Committee;
 - perform the functions of a Standing Committee as per Chapter Five.
- Article 38. Established with the Committee for Interaction with Non-governmental Organizations and Citizens' Complaints will be a Public Council of members of non-governmental organizations that will have advisory functions

with respect to the Committee. The composition and manner of appointment of the Council shall be determined by a set of rules adopted by the Committee. Said rules shall be posted on the web page of the Committee within the website of the National Assembly.

Article 39. (1) The Committee for Interaction with Non-governmental Organizations and Citizens' Complaints shall operate in accordance with a set of internal rules of procedure adopted by itself in compliance with these Rules. Said rules of procedure shall set forth the manner of interaction with non-governmental organizations.

(2) Meetings of the Committee shall be streamed live on the website of the National Assembly.

(3) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The Committee for Interaction with Non-governmental Organizations and Citizens' Complaints shall submit to the National Assembly a report on its work once every 6 months, which shall be provided to the Members of the National Assembly.

Article 40. Representatives of non-governmental organizations may submit opinions in writing and, at their own initiative, attend meetings of the Committees and participate in debates on National Assembly bills under review, relating to their relevant sphere of interest, in keeping with the established rules of procedure of the Committees. The list of attendees representing such organizations shall form an integral part of the stenographic records of the meeting. Their opinions shall be posted on the web page of the relevant Committee within the website of the National Assembly.

Article 41. (1) Non-governmental organizations may submit opinions in writing in respect of the bills reviewed by the relevant Committees in charge.

(2) The report of the leading Committee for the first vote shall also contain a summary of any opinions contributed by non-governmental organizations.

(3) The Chairperson of the Committee in charge may request an opinion from non-governmental organizations in respect of proposals tabled by Members of Parliament for a second vote.

(4) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Such opinions of non-governmental organizations shall be posted on the web page of the Committee in charge within the website of the National Assembly, and provided to the Committee members.

(5) The Committees are obligated to respond to any proposals and petitions submitted by non-governmental organizations.

Article 42. Members of non-governmental organizations may participate, through the good offices of a Member of the National Assembly, in parliamentary oversight sessions subject to the terms and procedure as per Chapter Nine; they may attend meetings of the parliamentary committees conducting hearings in accordance with Chapter Ten, as well as hear responses to relevant verbal questions as per Article 27, in compliance with the National Assembly access policy. The list of attendees shall form an integral part of the stenographic records of the meeting.

Chapter Seven

SESSIONS AND MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Article 43. (1) The National Assembly shall convene for three trimesters per annum.

(2) (Supplemented, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The National Assembly shall be in recess from December 22nd until January 10th, for 10 days during the Easter Holidays from Good Friday inclusive, and from August 1st till August 31st of each year.

(3) By way of exception, the National Assembly may set other dates than the ones above for its recesses.

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

Article 44. (1) The National Assembly shall be convened for a new trimester by its President.

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

(3) The sponsors of the motion as per Article 78 of the Constitution must set the agenda for the session.

Article 44a. (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Every trimester of the National Assembly shall open with the anthem of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Article 45. (1) The regular plenary sessions of the National Assembly shall be conducted on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Their duration may be extended, if the Assembly so decides.

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

(3) The National Assembly may decide to hold special unscheduled sessions to an agenda made known in advance in the course of the trimester, on days other than those as per paragraph 1. Unscheduled meetings may be held at any time in case of an emergency.

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

(2) A person who is not a Member of the National Assembly or the Council of Ministers may attend at the discretion of the National Assembly and in accordance with rules laid down by the session Chairperson, in compliance with a designated seating arrangement. During sessions, such persons must observe the established order and may take the floor only if invited to do so by the session Chairperson.

(3) In the event of disorderly conduct on the part of the audience, the session Chairperson shall impose order through the quaestors and may direct some or all members of the public to be expelled.

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

1. important interests of the state so require;

2. documents are discussed that are classified by force of the Classified Information Protection Act.

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

(3) When such a motion has been filed, the session Chairperson shall order all unauthorized personnel to leave the plenary room and the galleries and instruct the media to suspend their live broadcasts. Having heard the sponsor's motives, the Assembly shall debate the motion and take a vote on it. The session shall proceed as either open or in camera depending on the result of the vote.

(4) The deliberations and the records of sessions held in camera shall constitute classified information with the relevant obligations binding for all Members of the National Assembly and any other persons allowed access thereto.

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

Article 48. (1) The open sessions of the National Assembly shall be broadcast live by the Bulgarian National Radio at a special frequency covering the entire national territory; these shall also be covered by televised reports on Bulgarian National Television as well as broadcast live on the Parliamentary TV Channel (of BNT). Such live broadcasts shall be accessible to the public free of charge. Open plenary sessions of the National Assembly shall be streamed live on the website of the National Assembly.

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

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

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

(2) Quorum shall be ascertained using the computerised voting system prior to the opening of the session.

(3) The session Chairperson may ascertain the quorum in connection with an impending vote, at his/her discretion or only once per session at the request of a parliamentary group, by instructing the Clerks to perform a roll call or a head count of the Members of the National Assembly.

(4) In case where the check as per paragraph 3 has established that the plenary session does not have the required quorum, the President of the National Assembly may either carry on with the session or adjourn it, or suspend it for a certain time until the required quorum is attained. In cases where the session continues in the absence of quorum, the only function that can be performed in plenum is parliamentary oversight; no votes can be taken and no acts of Parliament adopted in the absence of quorum. If a session is suspended, the session Chairperson may resume no later than an hour from the time of suspension, within regular business hours, provided that a further check finds that the required quorum is there.

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

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

(3) Motions to include certain agenda items in the schedule of business may be submitted in writing to the President of the National Assembly by individual Members or Parliamentary Groups not later than 6 p.m. on the day preceding the plenary session at which the business schedule is to be put to the vote. Any Member of the National Assembly shall be entitled to propose one agenda item to be included in a weekly schedule, and up to two agenda items to be included in a fortnightly schedule. Bills and other draft acts of the National Assembly on which no reports have been submitted but the time limits under Article 75(3) and Article 85(4) have expired may also be proposed as agenda items to be included in the schedule of business. Where a proposal for inclusion of an agenda item is rejected by the National Assembly, Members and Parliamentary Groups can resubmit the same proposal not earlier than one month thereafter.

(4) The draft schedule under paragraph 1 as proposed by the President, as well as any motions under paragraph 3 above, shall be put to the vote, without a debate, at the start of the plenary session where the next weekly or fortnightly schedule of business is to be adopted. No spoken motions shall be allowed.

(5) By way of exception, the session Chairperson may propose an amendment to the agenda at the opening of a

session.

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

(7) Proposals for honouring the memory of deceased individuals by a minute of silence can only be submitted in writing to the filing department of the National Assembly not later than 6 p.m. on the day preceding the relevant plenary session, except in an emergency.

(8) Any bills and draft resolutions to be included in the agenda of the plenary session of the National Assembly scheduled to be held on the first Wednesday of every month must have been sponsored by a Parliamentary Group. Such proposals must be submitted through the good offices of the President of the National Assembly not later than 6 p.m. on the previous day. Each Parliamentary Group shall have the right to propose one item on the agenda. The order of precedence of agenda items shall correspond to the size of the Parliamentary Groups. Each subsequent month, the order of precedence of agenda items proposed by Parliamentary Groups shall be determined on the principle of rotation. The National Assembly must consider the proposals brought forward on their merit. If no proposals have been made by any Parliamentary Group, the National Assembly shall proceed according to the schedule of business as per paragraph 1. Bills and other draft acts on which no reports have been submitted but the time limits under article 75(3) and article 85(4) have expired may also be proposed as agenda items.

(9) The schedule thus adopted shall be posted, after being put to the vote, on the web site of the National Assembly and shall be immediately updated to reflect any subsequent changes made therein.

Article 51. (1) The session Chairperson presides over sessions and calls the speakers to the rostrum.

(2) No Member of the National Assembly may speak unless and until called to the rostrum by the Chairperson.

(3) A Member of the National Assembly may request the floor by raising a hand, while seated, or by signing up in advance.

(4) The session Chairperson compiles a list of speakers and shall set the order of precedence:

1. based on the sequence submitted by the leaderships of Parliamentary Groups on whose behalf the would-be speakers request the floor, and alternating between representatives of different Parliamentary Groups;

2. depending on the precedence of submitted requests.

(5) The session Chairperson gives the floor to the leaders of Parliamentary Groups or, in their absence, to their deputies or designates, upon request during the debate on the matter at hand and within the time limit allotted to each Group.

(6) Once during each session the Chairperson shall, upon request, give the floor to the leaders of Parliamentary Groups, their deputies or designates, to speak on any matter not on the agenda. Such interventions shall be limited to 10 minutes.

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

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

1. a motion to adjourn the session;

2. a motion to suspend the session;

3. a motion to close a debate;

4. a motion to postpone a debate;

5. a motion to postpone a vote.

(3) Points of order interventions shall be limited to 2 minutes, without touching on the substance of the matter at hand.

(4) Where a point of order concerns the manner of conducting the session, the Chairperson shall be allotted up to 2 minutes for an explanation.

Article 53. (1) Members of the National Assembly may only speak from the rostrum.

(2) In cases where members of the National Assembly have physical disabilities barring their access to the rostrum, they may speak from their seats, and all necessary technical facilities shall be provided immediately to that end.

Article 54. (1) Should a speaker digress from the matter at hand, the Chairperson may call him/her to order, and if the speaker persists, the Chairperson shall have the right to rule him/her out of order.

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

Article 55. (1) The session Chairperson shall set the time limit for debate on each item on the agenda, as well as the date and time of the vote to be conducted thereupon. The time for debate shall be allotted among the Parliamentary Groups in proportion to their size, but can be no less than 10 minutes for the smallest and no less than 30 minutes for the largest Parliamentary Group. A total of 10 minutes speaking time, or 5 minutes per person, shall be allotted to unaffiliated Members of Parliament.

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

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

1. the total time taken up by speakers from the Group;

2. the time taken up by the Chairperson of the Group;

3. the time taken up by speakers from the Group for making rejoinders and for raising points of order, except for matters referring to the manner of conducting proceedings.

(4) Up to three interventions by Members of the National Assembly may be allowed to express opinions dissenting from those of the Parliamentary Group to which they belong. The speaking time allotted to a Member of the National Assembly can be no more than 3 minutes.

(5) If a speaker exceeds the time allotted in pursuance of paragraphs 1 through 4, the Chairperson, having called him/her to order, shall have the right to rule him/her out of order.

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

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

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

(3) No more than three rejoinders may be issued with respect to the same intervention.

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

Article 57. (1) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Members of the National Assembly who have been offended personally and referred to by name in an intervention during a plenary session shall be entitled to a personal explanation, limited to 2 minutes.

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

(3) The right to a justification of a nay vote shall be restricted to such Members who have not spoken at all during the debate.

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

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

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

Article 59. (1) Where a motion concerning a point of order has been filed, a single Member may be given the floor to issue a dissenting opinion. Thereafter, the motion shall be put to a vote immediately, without a debate.

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

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

(2) Where a proposal to adjourn the session has been made concurrently with another, to suspend the session, the proposal to adjourn shall be put to the vote first.

Article 61. (1) Where deliberations are disrupted by unruly or disorderly conduct, or where dictated by other important reasons, the Chairperson may suspend the session for a certain period of time.

(2) Any Parliamentary Group may request a suspension of a session by no more than 30 minutes, once per session. The Chairperson shall grant such request immediately and shall 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 session, or within one hour before the close of business. The interval between two successive suspensions may not be less than one hour.

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

Article 63. (1) Votes shall be cast in person. Members may vote 'yea', 'nay' or 'abstention'. Unless otherwise provided, all acts of Parliament shall be passed by an open vote. At the discretion of the National Assembly, an individual act of Parliament may be passed by a secret ballot.

(2) An open vote may be taken by any of the following means:

1. the computerised voting system;

2. a show of hands;

3. a roll-call in alphabetical order whereby the Members reply from their seats 'yea', 'nay' or 'abstention';

4. signing the bill in person; or

5. electronic roll-call, using the computerized voting system to show on screen the Members' names and the way they have voted.

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

(4) A vote by secret ballot shall use ballot papers.

Article 64. A motion for a vote in accordance with Article 63(2), items 3, 4 and 5, or for a secret vote may be

submitted by one-tenth of all Members of the National Assembly or by a single Parliamentary Group. Such motion shall be put to the vote without a debate. One Member of each of the Parliamentary Groups objecting to such a motion shall be heard.

Article 65. (1) Before taking the vote the session Chairperson shall direct the Members to take their seats. Voting time for the purposes of Article 63(2), item 1, shall be limited to 30 seconds, but no less than 15 seconds.

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

Article 66. (1) Matters shall be put to the vote in the following order of precedence:

1. motions to reject;
2. motions to defer to a subsequent session;
3. motions to substitute;
4. motions to edit or alter a text;
5. text under debate which may also include already approved editorial alterations;
6. motions to supplement;
7. the core motion.

(2) Where two or more motions of the same nature have been submitted, they shall be put to the vote in their order of precedence.

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

(2) In case of a tied vote, the motion shall be deemed rejected.

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

(2) Should the voting procedure or the result thereof be disputed immediately after its completion, the Chairperson may direct for the vote to be retaken. The result of the second vote shall be final.

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

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

Article 70. (1) Full stenographic records shall be kept of the sessions of the National Assembly; these shall be completed on the day of the session or on the following day at the latest. Said records shall be signed by the stenographers, by the two duty Clerks and by the session Chairperson not later than the week following their completion.

(2) Attached to the stenographic record shall be the texts of bills and explanatory memoranda, of the resolutions and other acts of the National Assembly, and any proposals made in respect thereof, whether read out or not on the floor, and the printouts of voting results from the computerised system.

(3) Stenographic records from plenary sessions not held in camera, as well as a printout of the vote taken using the computerised voting system, shall be posted within 7 days on the website of the National Assembly.

Article 71. Any Member of the National Assembly may review the stenographic records of his/her speeches and demand the correction of errors therein within three days following the taking of the record. Any dispute as may arise shall be resolved by the session Chairperson subject to a report by the duty Clerks and the stenographer in the presence of the Member concerned.

Article 72. (1) Corrections of any factual errors in the enactments of the National Assembly not yet promulgated in State Gazette can only be made upon a written request by the rapporteur of the respective Committee, upon instructions by the President of the National Assembly and with the approval of the sponsor of the bill, or solely upon instructions by the President.

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

(3) Corrections of factual errors in already promulgated enactments of the National Assembly may only be made upon instructions by the President of the National Assembly.

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

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

Chapter Eight

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

Article 73. (1) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Bills along with the explanatory memoranda supporting them and the ex-ante impact assessment shall be submitted to the President of the National Assembly in both hard copy and electronic format and shall be entered without delay in a public register designated as "Bills". When bills are submitted by the Council of Ministers, they shall be supported by:

- a) Proof of compliance with European law, for purposes of harmonisation;
- b) Proof of consideration of the opinions received related to the bill;
- c) Proof of compliance with the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

When bills are submitted by Members, the ex-ante impact assessment shall be performed in line with the Methodology, annexed to these Rules.

(2) In the explanatory memorandum the sponsor of the bill shall state the expected implications, including the financial impact, of the proposed law's application.

(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.

(4) (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Bills unsupported by explanatory memoranda and/or ex-ante impact assessment, shall not be assigned in accordance with Article 74 by the President of the National Assembly till the noncompliance has been rectified, of which the sponsor shall be notified. In this case, the period under Article 74(1) shall start from the day of rectification of the noncompliance.

(5) (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Bills unsupported by the proofs under paragraph 1, shall not be reviewed by the National Assembly till the noncompliance has been rectified, of which the Chairperson of the Committee in Charge shall notify the sponsor. In this case, the period under Article 75(3) shall be suspended.

(6) (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) For each bill an information folder shall be opened, reflecting the deliberations on it in the National Assembly, and it shall be compiled ex officio until the bill has been adopted or rejected.

Article 74. (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 Rapporteur in charge of each bill.

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

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

Article 75. (1) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Standing Committees discuss bills no earlier than 24 hours of the time of its receipt by the members of the respective Committee. They submit to the President of the National Assembly a reasoned report, by deadlines taking into account the legislative programme and the weekly or fortnight schedule of business of the National Assembly.

(2) (Amended and supplemented, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) When a bill is debated prior to the first vote, the Committee in Charge, prior to considering the bill on its merit, shall ascertain its compliance with the Statutory Instruments Act and the Decree on Its Implementation as well as with these Rules; should any discrepancies be detected, the Committee shall, through the good offices of the President of the National Assembly, instruct the sponsor to bring the bill in line with said Law and Rules within a 7-day time limit. In this case, the period under Article 3 shall be suspended.

(3) Reports on bills shall be submitted to the National Assembly by the Committees in charge for a first vote not later than two months from the date of their submission, and shall be posted on the web page of the Committee in charge within the website of the National Assembly.

Article 76. (1) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Bills accompanied by the documents under Article 73(1), and the report of the Committee in Charge, which they have been assigned to, shall be circulated among the Members no later than 24 hours prior to the start of the session which is to consider the bills. The same period, unless the National Assembly decides otherwise, shall apply to consideration of bills for a second vote.

(2) The Chairperson of the Committee in charge shall request, in respect of bills sponsored by individual Members, the opinion of the Council of Ministers or the relevant line Minister. The Council of Ministers or the relevant line Minister shall rule on the bill within two weeks of the date of said request.

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

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

(5) For bills pertaining to the judicial system, the Chairperson of the Committee in charge may request an opinion from the Supreme Judicial Council.

(6) (Supplemented, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Members of the public and legal entities shall have the right to submit written opinions on bills.

(7) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Opinions as per paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 shall be posted on the web page of the Committee in Charge within the website of the National Assembly, and provided to the Committee members.

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

(9) The report of the Committee in charge to be submitted for the first vote shall also state the expected implications, including the financial impact, of the proposed law's application, as well as a summary of all opinions submitted and a summarized opinion of the Committee.

Article 77. (1) Bills shall be put to the vote twice, at two separate sessions.

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

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

(4) For the purposes of the first vote a bill shall be debated in principle and in its entirety. The Members of the National Assembly shall pass judgement on the bills' main provisions.

Article 78. (1) (Supplemented, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Standing Committees shall consider concurrently all bills on the same subject matter tabled before the National Assembly by the date on which the Committee in Charge initiated deliberations thereupon. All such bills shall be discussed concurrently by the National Assembly. The National Assembly shall put each of said bills to a separate vote. When a bill is related to the introduction of requirements of the European Union law or to initiated infringement proceedings, deriving from the European Union law, it is possible for it not to be discussed and voted concurrently with other bills. The first sentence shall also not apply where the Committee in Charge, with a majority of two-thirds of the Committee members, has adopted a resolution that a bill shall be discussed separately.

(2) Where more than one bill on the same subject matter has passed the first vote, the Committee in charge, together with the sponsors of the bills passed at first reading, shall, within 14 days, consolidate such bills into a single bill to be submitted to the President of the National Assembly and circulated among the Members who will be invited to make proposals in writing in relation thereof.

Article 79. (1) (Previous text of Article 79, supplemented, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) A bill rejected at first reading may be resubmitted and reconsidered only after substantial amendments have been made to its main provisions, which shall be reflected in the explanatory memorandum thereto, and not earlier than three months after its rejection. The first sentence shall not apply when a bill is related to the introduction of requirements of the European Union law or to initiated infringement proceedings, deriving from the European Union law.

(2) (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Provisions of a bill rejected at first reading, cannot be resubmitted and reconsidered in accordance with Article 80(1), if the conditions set out in paragraph 1 are not fulfilled, with the exception of those related to editorial or legal and technical alterations.

(3) (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Proposals made in accordance with Article 80(1), rejected by the National Assembly cannot be resubmitted and reconsidered as bills, if the conditions set out in paragraph 1 are not fulfilled, with the exception of those related to editorial or legal and technical alterations.

Article 80. (1) (Supplemented, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Members of the National Assembly may propose amendments and supplements in writing to a bill that has passed the first vote or a proposed common bill in accordance with Article 78(2) within 7 days from the passing of the bill or from its provision to the Members, which shall be underpinned in accordance with the Methodology, annexed to these Rules. Proposals shall be addressed through the good offices of the President of the National Assembly to the Chairperson of the Committee in Charge and are entered into a public register of the National Assembly. By way of exception, the National Assembly may extend the period with up to three weeks or reduce it, but no shorter than three days.

(2) (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Whenever a proposal is submitted under paragraph 1 on a bill related to the introduction of requirements of the European Union law, or with an initiated infringement proceedings deriving from the European Union law, the Members shall state the reasons for adoption, objectives and expected results and shall perform analysis for compliance with the Union Law. In respect of proposals the Chairperson of the Committee in Charge shall request the opinion of the Council of Ministers or the relevant line Minister.

(3) (Previous paragraph 2, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Not later than the next day following the expiry of the time limit as per paragraph 1, the draft report for the second vote shall be posted on the web page of the Committee in Charge within the website of the National Assembly.

(4) (Previous paragraph 3, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) In respect of proposals submitted by Members, the Chairperson of the Committee in Charge may request the opinion of the Council of Ministers or the relevant line Minister.

(5) (Previous paragraph 4, amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Within 14 days from passing of a bill by the Committee in Charge, it shall submit to the National Assembly a report containing:

1. Any written proposals made by Members within the time limit under paragraph 1, along with the Committee's opinion thereon;
2. (Supplemented, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The Committee's proposals concerning the bill under consideration, including where the Committee adopts such proposals subject to a motion by any of its members made during a session of the Committee; the proposals of Members, except for those related to editorial or legal and technical amendments, shall be supported by arguments.

(6) (Previous paragraph 5, amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The report as per paragraph 5 shall be posted without delay on the web page of the Committee in Charge within the website of the National Assembly.

Article 81. (1) For the purposes of the second vote the National Assembly shall debate and vote on bills chapter-by-chapter, section-by-section or text-by-text. Where no written proposals or objections have been made, the relevant texts shall not be read out in the plenary room. The relevant texts shall in this case be appended to the stenographic record as an integral part thereof.

(2) For the purposes of the second vote only proposals brought forward by Members in pursuance of Article 80 shall be considered, together with any proposals by the Committee in charge included in its report. Editorial alterations shall be allowed as well. No proposals inconsistent with the principles and scope of the bill as first voted and passed shall be considered or put to the vote.

(3) Any Member may support the proposals made in an intervention of 5 minutes maximum for each such proposal.

(4) The voting shall be conducted in accordance with Article 66. No interventions or new motions shall be allowed during a vote. Only motions submitted by Members of the National Assembly in accordance with Article 80, motions by the Committee in charge, editorial alterations made in the course of the debate as well as motions to reject a text or postpone the vote thereon shall be put to a vote.

(5) If, while reporting the Bill for a second vote in plenum, the rapporteur reads out a text whose content deviates from that proposed in the report of the Committee in charge, without any editorial alterations having been made as prescribed, the text proposed in the report of the Committee shall be put to the vote.

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

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

(2) Within three days from receipt of such a decree, the President of the National Assembly shall direct the Committee in charge to report to the Members on said presidential decree and the reasoning thereof.

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

(4) A majority of half of all Members of the National Assembly plus one shall then be necessary to vote the bill into law.

(5) If the bill so returned does not receive the required majority and is contested in principle, it shall be subject to reconsideration in accordance with the standard procedure for deliberation on, and enactment of, new bills.

(6) If the bill so returned does not receive the required majority but only individual provisions are contested, the procedure laid down in Article 81 shall apply and only such contested provisions shall be put to the vote.

Article 84. In case where a bill on the ratification of an international treaty is considered, the text of such treaty cannot be amended. Dissenting opinions regarding a multilateral treaty may only be issued where allowed by the treaty itself.

Article 85. (1) Draft resolutions, declarations and addresses may be tabled for debate by any Member or any Parliamentary Group.

(2) Draft decisions, draft declarations and draft addresses shall be submitted in both hard copy and electronic format and shall be entered forthwith in a public register designated as "Draft decisions, draft declarations and draft addresses".

(3) Draft resolutions, draft declarations and draft addresses shall be assigned by the President of the National Assembly among the relevant Standing Committees within three days of submission; the President shall notify Members thereof in accordance with Article 74(3).

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

(5) Drafts for resolutions, declarations and addresses shall be put to a single vote.

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

Article 86. Draft resolutions on points of order, on organisational or technical matters are not assigned to Standing Committees unless the President of the National Assembly decides otherwise.

Article 87. (1) Reports under Article 84, items 16 and 17 of the Constitution contain an account of the work of the relevant authority in applying the law during the relevant period, and the problems and challenges encountered, including in the implementation of the recommendations made by the National Assembly in consideration of the previous report.

(2) Said reports shall be submitted to the National Assembly not later than March 31st, unless the law provides otherwise.

(3) Reports under Article 84, items 16 and 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria shall be assigned by the President of the National Assembly to the respective Standing Committee within three days from their submission; the President shall notify the Members thereof in accordance with Article 74(3).

(4) The Standing Committee shall consider the report as per paragraph 1 within 15 days from being so directed and shall present its opinion to the President of the National Assembly, while also proposing a draft resolution on the report. Said draft resolution may also contain recommendations to the authority whose work is being considered.

(5) The report as per paragraph 1 shall be included in the agenda of the National Assembly within one month from its submission to the National Assembly and shall be considered not later than three months thereafter.

(6) (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The report in accordance with Article 84, item 16 of the Constitution shall be discussed after the National Assembly has heard the opinion of the Committee and the statement of the President of the Supreme Court of Cassation, and the President of the Supreme Administrative Court respectively, or the Prosecutor General, each for 10 minutes. The debate shall continue with Members' interventions which can also contain questions addressed to the President of the Supreme Court of Cassation, and the President of the Supreme Administrative Court respectively, or the Prosecutor General, who is under the obligation to provide a response. During the debate the Members may put questions related to the report, submitted in writing by members of the public, institutions and non-governmental organisations, to which the President of the Supreme Court of Cassation, and the President of the Supreme Administrative Court respectively, or the Prosecutor General shall respond.

(7) (Previous paragraph 6, amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The report as per Article 84, item 17 of the Constitution shall be discussed after the National Assembly has heard the opinion of the Committee and the statement of the sponsor, each within 10 minutes. The debate shall continue with Members' interventions, which may contain questions to the sponsor, who is under the obligation to provide a response.

(8) (Previous paragraph 7, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) In the course of deliberations on the report under paragraph 1, Members of the National Assembly may propose amendments and supplements to the draft resolution proposed by the Committee.

(9) (Previous paragraph 8, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The sponsor shall respond to the proposals and recommendations thus made.

(10) (Previous paragraph 9, amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The proposals made by Members in accordance with paragraph 8 shall be put to the vote in accordance with Article 66.

(11) (Previous paragraph 10, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) A resolution shall be adopted on the report. The National Assembly may accept or reject the report of the sponsor under Article 84, item 17 of the Constitution. In rejecting the report, the National Assembly must issue a reasoned decision.

Article 88. (1) The National Assembly may also require a report from an authority under Article 84, item 17 of the Constitution on individual aspects of its work, subject to a proposal by the relevant Committee or by one-fifth of all Members of the National Assembly.

(2) In the cases referred to in paragraph 1, the National Assembly shall determine the aspect of interest, the period to be covered by the report, and the deadline for its submission.

(3) The report referred to in paragraph 1 shall be debated in accordance with Article 87.

Article 89. (1) The National Assembly may elect, in whole or in part, a government body pursuant to the current law, in a competitive procedure.

(2) Nominations supported with a brief bio sketch and the relevant documents attesting to the nominee's conformity to the requirements of compatibility, seniority, educational status and all other requisite documents will be posted on the website of the National Assembly not later than 14 days prior to the hearing and in compliance with the provisions of the Personal Data Protection Act.

(3) Non-profit entities registered as charitable bodies for the public benefit as well as professional organizations may, not later than three days prior to the hearing, submit to the Committee their opinions of any nominee, which may include questions to be posed to him/her. The mass media can submit to the Committee questions to be posed to the nominee. Anonymous opinions and tip-offs shall be disregarded. The opinions submitted shall be posted on the website of the National Assembly within three days of receipt thereof in compliance with the provisions of the Personal Data Protection Act.

(4) The nominations shall be reviewed by a Standing Committee of the National Assembly, which shall hear those nominees who meet the requirements of the law, and shall submit a report summarizing the results of the hearing. The hearings shall be public.

(5) The report under paragraph 4 shall contain the conclusion of the Commission regarding the satisfaction by each of the nominees of minimum legal requirements for the relevant position, or the existence of evidence challenging the integrity of any nominee, his/her competence, qualifications, experience and professional skills. The report shall take into account the existence or lack of specific training, motivation, public standing, and public support for the nominee. The Committee may require additional information from the nominee as well as from the relevant competent authority.

(6) The report under paragraph 4 shall be circulated to the Members not later than 24 hours prior to the start of the session at which the nominations will be put to the vote, and posted on the website of the National Assembly.

(7) The National Assembly shall adopt rules of procedure governing the terms, conditions and procedures of nomination of candidates, the submission and public presentation of the supporting documents and the hearing of candidates by the relevant Standing Committee, as well as the procedure of their election by the National Assembly. The draft rules shall be prepared and tabled before the National Assembly by the relevant Permanent Commission in charge of the election of the proposed body.

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

(2) Within 14 days from receipt of such notice the said Committee may issue an opinion to be submitted to the Constitutional Court. In this case the opinion shall mandatorily state the motives of the National Assembly for adopting the act challenged before the Constitutional Court.

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

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

Chapter Nine PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Article 91. (1) Members of the National Assembly may address to the Prime Minister, a Deputy Prime Ministers or any of the Ministers questions on relevant issues of public interest within their respective area of executive powers or pertaining to the functioning of the administration reporting to them.

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

Article 92. (1) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Questions shall be submitted in writing through the good offices of the President of the National Assembly not later than 48 hours prior to the start of the session, at which Ministers are scheduled to reply to them. Questions must be precisely and clearly formulated; they must contain no attacks ad hominem or offensive language; they shall be signed by the respective Member. When a Member is posing a question summarising issues raised at meetings with, and demands of civil organisations and members of the public, this may be noted in the written question. The response may be in verbal or written form. The response shall be in writing when the Member submitting the question has explicitly requested that, when an issue concerning personal rights or interests is raised, or when the questions raised contain requests for supply of detailed numerical data. Written responses shall be given within seven days. A Member of the National Assembly who has posed a question presupposing a verbal response may request in writing a written response not later than 6 p.m. on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight session. A written response shall be given within 7 days from such request for change of the form and may not be delayed any further by the Minister. All questions submitted and the responses thereto shall be in hard copy and in electronic format; they shall be entered without delay into the Parliamentary Oversight public register and posted in the "Parliamentary Oversight" section of the website of the National Assembly.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall notify immediately the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the relevant Ministers of any such questions and of the date and time of the session at which a response is due.

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

(4) (Supplemented, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Whenever a Member who has posed a question is absent from the sessions for a valid reason, the question shall be postponed. The valid reason for such absence shall be substantiated by a letter of the Member addressed to the President of the National Assembly not later than 6 p.m. on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight session. In cases of more than three absences, the Minister shall respond in writing within 7 days of the day of the last absence.

(5) When a written response is received to a question, the Chairperson shall so announce at the earliest

parliamentary oversight session of the National Assembly and shall deliver a copy of said response to the submitting Member. Questions requiring a written response as well as the written responses themselves shall be enclosed with the stenographic record of the plenary session.

(6) Members of the National Assembly may withdraw their questions by a written waiver not later than 6 p.m. on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight session. The President of the National Assembly shall notify the relevant Minister accordingly.

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

Article 93. (1) A Member may submit a question requiring a verbal response; in doing that, he/she shall comply with the provisions of Article 103(1).

(2) The time limit for posing a question shall be 2 minutes.

(3) The response given by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the relevant Minister shall be limited to 3 minutes. The asking Member shall have the right to a rejoinder, limited in duration to 2 minutes, and the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the relevant Minister shall have the right to a counter-rejoinder, likewise limited in duration to 2 minutes.

Article 94. (1) The Members of Parliament shall be entitled to address queries to members of the Council of Ministers.

(2) Such queries must be pertinent to the main aspects of the work of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, or the administrations reporting to them.

(3) Queries concerning general government policy shall be addressed to The Prime Minister.

(4) A Member may submit a query requiring a verbal response; in doing that, he/she shall comply with the provisions of Article 103(1).

Article 95. (1) Queries shall receive a response within 14 days of being filed. The response may be in verbal or written form. A response must be given in writing if the Member submitting the query has expressly so requested. A Member of the National Assembly who has submitted a query requiring a verbal reply may request in writing a written response not later than 6 p.m. on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight session. A written response shall be given within 7 days from such request for change of the form and may not be delayed any further by the Minister. All queries filed and the responses given thereto shall be submitted in hard copy and in electronic format; they shall be entered without delay into the Parliamentary Oversight public register and posted in the 'Parliamentary Oversight' section of the website of the National Assembly.

(2) The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister or the relevant Minister may request an extension of the deadline by which a response is due, but by no more than seven days past the deadline as per paragraph 1.

Article 96. Queries shall be submitted in writing, signed by the submitting Member, through the good offices of the President of the National Assembly. Queries must be precisely and clearly formulated; they must contain no attacks ad hominem or offensive language.

Article 97. (1) The session Chairperson shall announce newly submitted queries at the start of each parliamentary oversight session.

(2) The President of the National Assembly shall give due notice to the Prime Minister, the relevant Deputy Prime Minister or Minister of such queries and of the date and time of the session at which a response is due.

(3) The response to a query shall be deferred if the submitting Member is absent from the session for a valid reason. The valid reason for such absence shall be substantiated by a letter of the Member addressed to the President of the National Assembly not later than 6 p.m. on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight session.

Article 98. Members of the National Assembly may withdraw their queries by written waiver not later than 6 p.m. on the day preceding the scheduled parliamentary oversight session; the Chairperson shall announce such withdrawal at the beginning of the parliamentary oversight session and shall notify thereof the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister or Minister concerned.

Article 99. (1) When the National Assembly proceeds to consider a query, the submitting Member may be given 3 minutes to elaborate thereupon. The time for response to a query shall be limited to 5 minutes.

(2) After a query has been responded to, the submitting Member shall have the right to ask no more than two clarifying questions within a time limit of 2 minutes total, while the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister or Minister shall have 3 minutes for a response. Where the response to a query is provided in writing, no clarifying questions shall be allowed.

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

Article 100. (1) Where a written response to a query has been received, the Chairperson shall so announce at the earliest parliamentary oversight session of the National Assembly and shall deliver a copy of said response to the submitting Member.

(2) Queries requiring a written response and the written responses thereto shall be enclosed with the stenographic records.

Article 101. (1) Subject to a motion by no less than one-fifth of the Members of the National Assembly, the query shall be put to a debate and a resolution shall be adopted. Motions for debate, together with a draft resolution to be adopted after a response has been given to the query, shall be submitted to the Chairperson before the close of the plenary session.

(2) The debate shall be scheduled for the following session dedicated to parliamentary oversight. After the President of the National Assembly has scheduled a debate, no Members of the National Assembly shall be allowed to withdraw their signatures from the motion. The debate shall be held in the presence of the relevant Minister, in accordance with the procedure as per Chapter Seven herein, and shall be limited to one hour. The time for debate shall be allotted to the Parliamentary Groups in proportion to their size, starting from 5 minutes for the smallest group and up to 5 minutes total for unaffiliated Members.

(3) Draft resolutions may also be proposed by any individual Member. Where more than one draft resolution has been proposed, they shall be put to the vote in their order of precedence. The voting shall be conducted in accordance with Article 66.

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

(2) The Prime Minister shall be the first to respond, followed by the Deputy Prime Ministers or the line Ministers; the latter shall take turns responding on the principle of rotation.

(3) Questions and queries addressed to the Prime Minister, a Deputy Prime Ministers or a line Minister shall be posed in their order of precedence.

(4) To questions and queries on the same subject matter the Prime Minister, the relevant deputy Prime Minister or line Minister shall give a common response, whereby the provisions of Article 93 and Article 99, respectively, shall apply.

(5) Failure by the Prime Minister, a Deputy Prime Minister or a Minister to provide a response within the statutory time period shall result in him/her being summoned, within ten days, to appear before the National Assembly in person and give an explanation about his/her non-performance of said obligation.

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

Article 103. (1) A Member of the National Assembly may submit no more than two questions and one query requiring a verbal response within a single plenary week.

(2) Members may not pose a question or query to which a response has already been given.

(3) Where a question or query does not conform to these Rules, or is not addressed to the Cabinet Minister within whose line of responsibility lies the issue at hand, the President of the National Assembly shall advise the submitting Member to rectify such inconsistencies within three days. The same time limit shall be given to the Member thus advised to challenge in writing the declared inadmissibility of the question or query. Following consultations with the Presidents' Council regarding the declared inadmissibility of the question or query being thus challenged, the President shall make the final decision, of which the Member shall be notified. If the decision is to allow the question or query, the time limit for a response under Article 92(1) or Article 95(1), respectively, shall be set as from the date of the final decision.

Article 104. (1) In the course of the last hour and a half of the session, on the first Wednesday of each month, the Prime Minister and the relevant Deputy Prime Ministers shall appear before the National Assembly and take verbal questions on matters of relevance to the general policy of the Government from Members of the National Assembly during the session itself. Questions thus asked may not contain requests for them to supply detailed numerical data.

(2) Each Parliamentary Group shall be entitled to two verbal questions on relevant issues, whereas unaffiliated Members of Parliament shall be entitled between themselves to a total of two questions.

(3) The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Ministers to whom a question is addressed shall reply immediately upon hearing it. In the absence of the Prime Minister or a Deputy Prime Minister for valid reasons, the President of the National Assembly shall, in consultations with him/her, re-schedule the meeting for the absent official to answer verbal questions on relevant issues.

(4) The order of precedence for posing verbal questions on relevant issues as per paragraph 1 shall be determined in accordance with the size of the parliamentary groups in descending order, with unaffiliated Members being the last in line. Second questions are to be posed in the same order of precedence, once the first series of questions have been answered.

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

(6) The Parliamentary Groups cannot exercise their right as per Article 51(6) during the time allotted for responses to verbal questions on relevant issues.

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

- (2) The debate shall commence at the session 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 session.
- (4) Said resolution shall be considered passed if more than one half of the Members of the National Assembly in attendance vote in favour.
- Article 106. One-fifth of the Members of the National Assembly may propose a vote of no confidence in the Council of Ministers or the Prime Minister by proposing a reasoned draft resolution to that effect.
- Article 107. (1) The debate on a draft no-confidence resolution shall commence not earlier than 3 days and not later than 7 days after the submission of the motion.
- (2) During the debate no amendments or supplements to the draft resolution shall be allowed.
- (3) The resolution may be put to the vote not earlier than 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 have voted in favour.
- Article 108. Where a vote of no confidence in the Council of Ministers is rejected, a further no-confidence vote may be proposed on the same grounds not earlier than 6 months thereafter.
- Article 109. (1) The Council of Ministers shall submit to the National Assembly a summarized annual report on the implementation of the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights and of the European Court of Justice passed in litigation against the Republic of Bulgarian.
- (2) The report referred to in paragraph 1 shall be considered at a joint meeting of the Legal Affairs Committee and the Religious Affairs and Human Rights Committee and at a plenary session of the National Assembly within three months of its submission.

Chapter Ten

PARLIAMENTARY HEARINGS, ENQUIRIES AND SURVEYS

- Article 110. (1) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The National Assembly or its elected Committees may conduct hearings on matters concerning state or public interests.
- (2) When the National Assembly proceeds with a hearing, the sponsor of the proposal for a hearing shall be given 5 minutes to report on the matter at hand. The persons being heard shall be given 10 minutes to inform the National Assembly on the subject matter of the hearing. Each of the Parliamentary Groups shall be allowed to ask each individual person being heard 2 questions, and the unaffiliated Members, one question between themselves, with 2 minutes' time limit for each question. The persons being heard shall respond to each question immediately upon hearing it. The Parliamentary Groups shall have the right to issue an opinion on the responses given by the persons being heard, which shall be limited in time to 5 minutes.
- (3) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The Parliamentary Committees may summon Government Ministers and other officials to appear at their meetings and answer their questions. Stakeholder organisations and individuals may also attend such meetings. Within 7 days after the hearing the respective Committee shall submit to the President of the National Assembly a report of the hearing which shall be provided to the Members of the National Assembly.
- Article 110a. (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) (1) The National Assembly or its elected Committees may conduct enquiries and inquests on matters concerning state or public interests.
- (2) The Parliamentary Committees may summon Government Ministers and other officials to appear at their meetings and answer their questions. Stakeholder organisations and individuals may also attend such meetings.
- Article 111. Any and all government agencies and officials of the government and municipal administration as well as members of the public shall be under obligation to supply the required information and documents relevant to such hearings, enquiries and inquests, even if such information constitutes a state or official secret.
- Article 112. The form in which such information is to be supplied shall be determined by the National Assembly or its relevant Committee.
- Article 113. (1) Officials and members of the public, where summoned, must appear before the Committees of the National Assembly and supply any information and documents as may be required.
- (2) The summons for such an appearance shall be served by the offices of the National Assembly.

Chapter Eleven

PARLIAMENTARY MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT ON EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS

- Article 114. (1) Within 7 days after its adoption, 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.
- (2) The President of the National Assembly shall circulate said Annual Programme as referred to in paragraph 1 among the Standing Committees. Within three weeks from receipt thereof, the Standing Committees shall prepare their proposals for an Annual Work Programme of the National Assembly on Matters of the European Union, taking into consideration the Work Programme of the European Commission for the relevant year.
- (3) Within 14 days from the expiry of the time limit referred to in paragraph 2, the European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee shall, while taking into account the suggestions of the other Standing Committees, prepare a draft for the Annual Work Programme of the National Assembly on matters of the European Union. The annual work programme contains a list of the draft legislation of the European Union institutions in respect of which the National Assembly carries out monitoring and control functions. The draft Annual Work Programme is to be adopted by the National Assembly after a debate.
- (4) The President of the National Assembly shall forward the adopted Annual Work Programme under paragraph 3 to the Council of Ministers.
- (5) In case of newly emerging circumstances the European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee may propose, on its own initiative or subject to a proposal by other Standing Committees, supplements to the Annual Work Programme of the National Assembly on Matters of the European Union, which shall be adopted following the procedure of paragraph 3.
- Article 115. (1) The Council of Ministers shall submit to the National Assembly a framework position paper on the draft legislation of the European Union institution included in the Annual Work Programme as per Article 114(3), within 3 weeks from the adoption of a decision by the European Affairs Council under the Council of Ministers, for the purpose of endorsement of the circulation of said Act.
- (2) In case where newly emerging circumstances require amendments to the initial Bulgarian position, the Council of Ministers shall in due course inform the National Assembly of such circumstances and of the proposed amendments to the position.
- Article 116. (1) Within the time limit as per Article 74(1), the President of the National Assembly shall assign to the European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee and the competent Standing Committees the Framework Position Paper submitted by the Council of Ministers in pursuance of Article 115(1). The draft legislation shall be drawn from the database as per Article 119 and shall be enclosed with the framework position paper.
- (2) The European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee may, at its own initiative or subject to a proposal by a Standing Committee, issue a parliamentary reservation with respect to the draft legislation of an institution of the European Union included in the Annual Work Programme as per Article 114(3). Such parliamentary reservation makes it incumbent upon the Government to not issue an opinion on the draft legislation at the Council of the European Union until the National Assembly has passed judgement thereupon, but not later than the third meeting of the preparatory body of the Council reviewing the draft legislation.
- Article 117. (1) The European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee shall debate draft legislation of the institutions of the European Union and the framework position papers thereupon with reference to the relevant reports of the competent Standing Committees, if such have been submitted. The European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee shall prepare a report on the draft legislation.
- (2) The Standing Committees shall review draft legislation on compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality within the time limit as per Article 6 of Protocol (No. 2) to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.
- (3) Where a breach of the subsidiarity principle has been established in draft legislation of an institution of the European Union, the European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee shall issue a reasoned opinion.
- (4) The European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee shall submit said report or said reasoned opinion to the President of the National Assembly, who shall then forward it to the Council of Ministers and the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission within the time limits set forth in Article 6 of Protocol (No. 2) to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.
- Article 118. The National Assembly shall address a reasoned request to the Council of Ministers to file a motion with the European Court of Justice claiming a breach of the subsidiarity principle in a piece of draft legislation.
- Article 119. The National Assembly shall set up and maintain a database for the storage of draft legislation and other documents of the institutions of the European Union.
- Article 120. (1) The European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee shall conduct hearings of candidates for positions in the European Union institutions nominated by the Council of Ministers.
- (2) The candidates under paragraph 1 shall appear before the European Affairs and European Funds Control Committee and answer questions posed by its members.
- Article 121. (1) The National Assembly shall participate in the mechanisms for assessment of the implementation of

EU policies within the area of freedom security and justice, in the political scrutiny of Europol and in the assessment of the operations undertaken by Eurojust.

(2) The National Assembly shall participate in the procedures for review of the European Union Treaties.

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

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

Article 122. The National Assembly may conduct hearings of the Prime Minister on the position of the Republic of Bulgaria to be presented at upcoming meetings of the European Council.

Article 123. The Council of Ministers, acting in pursuance of Article 105(3) of the Constitution, shall keep the National Assembly apprised on matters relating to the obligations arising for the Republic of Bulgaria from its membership in the European Union.

Article 124. (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) At the start of each 6-month Presidency of the European Union, the Council of Ministers, acting in pursuance of Article 105(4) of the Constitution, shall submit to the National Assembly a report on the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the decision making process of the European Union during the outgoing Presidency and the priorities for the Republic of Bulgaria during the current Presidency. The National Assembly shall hear the report of the Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister.

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

Chapter Twelve MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Section I Legal Status

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

Article 127. (1) The Members of the National Assembly shall retain their positions of employment in state or municipal bodies, in state-run or municipal enterprises, in companies with more than 50 percent state or municipal stake or in other entities supported by the national budget, while taking an unpaid leave of absence therefrom for the duration of their term as Members. The above shall also apply to managers of commercial companies with a more than 50 percent government or municipal stake who are parties to a management contract, for the term of the contract.

(2) Where an act of a government or other authority is needed for a person to be reinstated to a previously held position, the relevant authority shall issue such an act.

Article 128. The period during which Members of the National Assembly have served as such shall count as length of service in their profession, respectively as seniority in the position occupied before their election to the National Assembly.

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

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

Article 130. (1) Members of the National Assembly may not occupy concurrent positions in a government authority or perform any functions incompatible with the status of a Member of the National Assembly under law.

(2) Members of the National Assembly shall have no right to 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 bodies and academic bodies of schools of higher learning and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences with the exception of positions as a single manager.

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

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

Article 132. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall be under obligation to attend the sessions of the National Assembly and the meetings of the Committees to which they are elected.

(2) Any Member of the National Assembly who has a valid reason to leave a session or Committee meeting before the close of business, or to arrive late for a session or Committee meeting, shall notify the duty Clerks or the leadership of the Committee, as the case may be.

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

Article 133. For any matters not explicitly dealt with in these Rules the provisions of the Labour Code and the Social Insurance Code shall apply, unless these come in conflict or are incompatible with the status of Members.

Article 134. (1) Members of the National Assembly cannot be arrested and shall not be liable to criminal prosecution, save for a criminal offence of a general nature and, even then, subject to an authorization by the National Assembly or, when the Assembly is not in session (Article 43(2)), by the President of the National Assembly.

(2) No parliamentary authorization shall be required for making an arrest of a Member caught in the act of committing a serious crime, in which case the National Assembly, or, when the Assembly is not in session (Article 43(2)), its President, shall be notified immediately.

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

(4) No authorization to initiate criminal proceedings shall be required if the Member of the National Assembly has given his/her written consent to that effect. Said Member submits his/her written consent to the President of the National Assembly, who notifies forthwith the Prosecutor General and informs the National Assembly at the earliest session following receipt of the written consent. Once given, such consent cannot be withdrawn by the Member.

(5) (Amended, SG No. 86/2015, effective 6.11.2015) In cases other than those under paragraph 4, the request of the Prosecutor General and the supporting evidence shall be considered by the National Assembly, which shall rule thereon not earlier than 5 days after receipt of said request. If so requested, and if the Member concerned appears before it, the National Assembly shall hear him/her.

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

(7) Where such criminal proceedings lead to a conviction of a premeditated crime punishable by imprisonment and the prison sentence is not suspended, the National Assembly shall adopt a resolution to dismiss the Member concerned ahead of term.

(8) Where the Prosecutor General 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 in paragraphs 1 through 7. The National Assembly may rescind a permission already given.

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

Article 135. Members of the National Assembly cannot be mobilised as reservists in time of war.

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

(2) When such Member of the National Assembly is relieved of his ministerial post, his/her powers as National Assembly Member shall be reinstated, whereas those of his/her substitute shall be terminated. When more than one substitution has been made with candidates on the same ticket, whenever a Member of Parliament is reinstated the substituting Members shall be terminated on the last-in-first-out principle.

Article 137. Central and local government bodies and their administrations shall be obligated to provide full assistance to the Member of Parliament and to supply, on request, any information and documents pertinent to the discharge of his/her duties. A Member of the National Assembly is entitled to full access to State and local authorities and organisations.

Section II Ethical Values

Article 138. A Member of the National Assembly shall exercise his/her powers with due regard for the rule of law and the protection of the public interest, guided by the principles of impartiality to private interests, openness, accountability and transparency.

Article 139. A Member of the National Assembly shall treat members of the public with due respect, regardless of their political affiliation, official position or opinion.

Article 140. (1) A Member of the National Assembly cannot consent to discharge the powers vested in him/her in the private interest of individuals or legal entities.

(2) A Member of the National Assembly cannot consent to the use of their official status for commercial advertising.

Article 141. (1) A Member of the National Assembly must not allow to be placed in financial dependence on, or other affiliation with, individuals or legal entities where such dependence or affiliation could impair the discharge of his/her duties of office.

(2) A Member of the National Assembly shall discharge his/her duties of office without seeking or receiving material or other benefits for him/herself or any persons related to him/her within the meaning of the Conflict of Interest Prevention and Ascertainment Act.

(3) A Member of the National Assembly cannot take any actions that undermine the principle of separation of powers and the independence of State authorities.

Article 142. A Member of the National Assembly shall declare any property, income, and expenses accrued, whether in Bulgaria or overseas, in accordance with the Public Disclosure of Financial Interests of Officials Holding High State and Other Positions Act.

Article 143. Whenever a bill is sponsored, or an intervention is made, or a vote is taken in plenum or in Committee, any Member who has a private interest in the issue at hand within the meaning as per the Conflict of Interest Prevention and Ascertainment Act must state so explicitly.

Article 144. A member of the National Assembly is obligated to protect the confidentiality of information obtained in the discharge of his/her duties of office, as well as any information pertaining to the privacy of other Members.

Article 145. (1) A member of the National Assembly cannot use his/her official position to obtain any special privileges or benefits.

(2) A Member of the National Assembly cannot, in such capacity, receive any gifts exceeding in value one-tenth of his/her basic monthly remuneration for the current month. Gifts valued above that amount shall be handed over to the National Assembly and listed in the public register of the National Assembly.

Article 145a. (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The Anti-Corruption, Conflict of Interests, and Parliamentary Ethics Committee provides explanation to the Members as regards the applications of ethical standards of conduct. At the request of a Member, explanations may be confidential.

Article 146. (1) A Member of the National Assembly may make public his/her contact details: street and e-mail address.

(2) A Member of the National Assembly conducts meetings with voters, including in his/her constituency, except at the time allocated for plenary sessions or Committee meetings.

(3) A Member of the National Assembly may post on his/her web page information regarding his/her scheduled meeting in the constituency, his/her statements, motions and opinions on bills under discussion, as well as the names of his/her aides and their contact details: telephone number and email address.

Article 147. A Member of the National Assembly is entitled to no more than three part-time aides. The National Assembly shall establish and maintain a register of part-time aides. Said register shall identify all persons taking part as service providers on a service contract in the preparation, discussion and adoption of acts or documents of the National Assembly.

Article 148. (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) (1) The Anti-Corruption, Conflict of Interests, and Parliamentary Ethics Committee declares an infringement under this section and shall pass a decision imposing the following measures:

1. reprimand;
2. censure;
3. temporary suspension for one to three sessions of the Committee.

(2) Upon deciding on the measure, the Committee shall take into consideration the seriousness of the infringement and its occasional, repetitive or systematic nature.

(3) A Member of the National Assembly suspended shall not be paid for the sessions from which he/she is suspended.

Article 148a. (New, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) (1) Any Member of the National Assembly, natural or legal person may lodge a complaint or report an infringement of the ethical standards to the Anti-Corruption, Conflict of Interests, and Parliamentary Ethics Committee, by the procedure set forth with the Rules under paragraph 4.

(2) The Anti-Corruption, Conflict of Interests, and Parliamentary Ethics Committee shall decide on imposing a measure in accordance with Article 148(1) once it has heard the Member and has taken note of all materials related to the infringement of ethical standards of conduct. The Committee shall publish its decision in a public register of the National Assembly after it has communicated it to the Member.

(3) The Member shall be entitled to express an opinion on the decision, which shall be published in the register under paragraph 2.

(4) The Committee under paragraph 1 shall set forth rules for application of this section.

Section III

Parliamentary Conduct

Article 149. (1) The conduct of a Member of Parliament shall be based on respect for the authority of the National Assembly, its Members as well as members of the public. Such conduct cannot be disruptive for normal parliamentary proceedings or internal order in the National Assembly building.

(2) Members of the National Assembly shall have no right to interrupt a speaker from their seats, attack anyone ad hominem, use offensive language, gestures or threats against any person, divulge information concerning the private life or compromising the good standing of any citizen, or to behave in an unbecoming manner or disrupt in any way a parliamentary session or Committee meeting.

Article 150. 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 for one session;
6. suspension for up to three sessions.

Article 151. The session Chairperson shall call to order any speaker who does not keep to the matter at hand or disrupts the session in any other way.

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

Article 153. The session Chairperson shall censure any Member of the National Assembly who, having been called to order or reprimanded, persists in disrupting the session or causes disorder in the Plenary room.

Article 154. The session Chairperson shall rule out of order any Member of the National Assembly:

1. whom the Chairperson has already disciplined twice during his/her intervention in pursuance of Article 150, items 1 through 3; or
2. who exceeds the allotted time limit for an intervention, disregarding the Chairperson's direction to wrap up.

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

1. disputes a disciplinary measure imposed upon him/her in a rude and unbecoming manner;
2. continuously or repeatedly disrupts the normal business in the Plenary room;
3. votes with another Member's card.

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

1. insults the National Assembly, members of the Council of Ministers, the President or the Vice President of the Republic or other senior officials or bodies of State power;
2. incites or commits violence in the Plenary room or on the premises of the National Assembly.

(2) A Member of the National Assembly suspended in pursuance of paragraph 1 and of Article 155 shall not be paid for the sessions from which he/she is suspended.

(3) Any Member shall have the right to contest the imposed disciplinary measure before the President of the National Assembly within three days following the imposition of the measure. The President's Council may either confirm, repeal or amend the disciplinary measure imposed, but must support its decision with valid reasons.

Article 157. Information about any disciplinary measures imposed on Members in pursuance of Article 150 shall be posted on the website of the National Assembly.

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

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

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

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

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

§ 2. The National Assembly shall settle by resolution any matter not explicitly dealt with in these Rules.

§ 3. For the purposes of these Rules, Chairperson shall mean the occupant of the Chair at any session 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. "Size of a Parliamentary Group" shall mean the number of members of said group at the moment when the relevant National Assembly resolution is being adopted.

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

(2) The employees in the National Assembly administration shall be parliamentary officials whose status shall be determined in the Rules pursuant to Article 8, paragraph 1, item 13.

(3) The staffing schedule of the National Assembly shall set forth: the size of parliamentary staff, the designations of their positions, the minimum educational status required, the minimum seniority and/or professional experience, the type of employment status, other requirements for occupying the position as well as the pay grade for each position.

(4) The Secretary General of the National Assembly shall discharge urgent administrative functions on behalf of the President of the National Assembly pursuant to these Rules and to the law when the National Assembly term has expired or the National Assembly has been dissolved ahead of term until the election of a new President of the National Assembly.

§ 7. (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) Drafts, documents and other materials, required by the Members for their business in the Plenary room, shall be provided using the internal email system. The date and time of provision shall be considered as the date and time of sending. The President of the National Assembly may, where needed, order that materials be provided in the Plenary room in hard copy – during a plenary session or of Parliamentary Groups.

§ 8. The time limits referred to in these Regulations are calculated in accordance with the Civil Procedure Code. A time limit expires at 6 p.m. on its last day.

FINAL PROVISIONS

§ 9. The provision of Article 48 (1), concerning the live broadcast of open sessions of the National Assembly via the parliamentary television channel (BNT) shall apply from the moment the necessary technical and financial requirements for that are satisfied.

§ 10. These Rules are adopted pursuant to Article 73 of the Constitution and repeal the Rules for the Organisation and Operation of the National Assembly (updated, SG No. 53/2013; amended, SG No. 62 and No. 97/2013).

§ 11. These Rules shall enter into force on the day of their promulgation in State Gazette with the exception of Article 11, the seventh sentence of the Appendix hereto - Financial Regulations regarding the Budget of the National Assembly, which shall enter into force on January 1, 2015.

These Rules were adopted by the 43th National Assembly on November 21st, 2014, and the stamped with the official seal of the National Assembly.

FINAL PROVISIONS

to the Resolution on Supplement and Amendment to the Rules of Organisation and Procedure of the National Assembly

(SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016)

§ 26. This Resolution shall not apply to bills submitted to the National Assembly until its entry into force. Bills under § 9 of the Transitional and Final Provisions to the Supplement and Amendment Act to the Law on Normative Acts (SG No. 34/2016) shall be assigned by the President of the National Assembly without an ex-ante impact assessment.

Appendix

to the Rules

(Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016)

Financial Regulations regarding the Budget of the National Assembly

Article 1. (1) The independent Budget of the National Assembly forms 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 comprises all revenues from the operation of its second level budget spenders, administrative and business expenses, the upkeep of the Parliamentary Groups, the Committee expenses, the expenses of Members of the National Assembly, as well as expenses for international activities and the cost of membership in inter-parliamentary organizations.

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

(5) (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The second-level spenders of budgetary appropriations in the context of the National Assembly are the heads of: the Economic and Social Council; the State Gazette editorial office; the National Public Opinion Survey Centre, the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in Southeast Europe under the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria; the Medical Treatment and Rehabilitation Facility of the National Assembly at Velingrad; the Publishing House and the Catering Complex.

(6) Allocations shall be made on an annual basis from the Budget of the National Assembly for the Student Programme for Legislative Research in the National Assembly. Reports of such research projects shall be posted on the web page of the Programme within the website of the National Assembly.

(7) A designated reserve fund shall be set aside every year in the budget of the National Assembly to cover urgent and/or incidental expenses.

Article 2. (1) The National Assembly President or his/her designate shall determine the budgetary procedure and deadline for preparing a medium term budgetary forecast and a draft for the National Assembly budget on the authority of the Decision of the Council of Ministers on the adoption of a budgetary procedure for preparing a three-year budgetary forecast and a draft for the state budget for the following year.

(2) The Parliamentary Budget and Finance Directorate shall coordinate and prepare the drafts for a medium term budgetary forecast and the National Assembly budget as well as the drafts for the reports accompanying them. A summary of the drafts for a budgetary forecast and budget shall be prepared on the basis of the drafts of the first- and second-level budget spenders. The standing Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee under the Budget and Finance Committee shall review said drafts for a budgetary forecast and budget and issue an opinion thereupon. The drafts for a budgetary forecast and budget, the draft reports and the opinions of the Subcommittee shall be submitted to the President of the National Assembly.

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

Article 4. (Amended, SG No. 86/2016 4.11.2016) (1) The Parliamentary Budget and Finance Directorate shall prepare a report accompanying the annual accounting report on the execution of the National Assembly Budget on the basis of the reports of the first and second-level budget spenders and following an audit of the annual financial statement of the National Assembly on the part of the National Audit Office. The report shall be submitted to the National Assembly President, who shall send it for opinion to the Standing Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee under the Budget and Finance Committee.

(2) The report accompanying the annual accounting report on the execution of the Budget of the National Assembly, along with the audit opinion of the National Audit Office and the opinion of the Subcommittee under paragraph 1 shall be presented to the President of the National Assembly. The President of the National Assembly shall notify in writing the Minister of Finances of the opinion of the Standing Subcommittee under paragraph 1.

(3) The report on the execution of the Budget of the National Assembly shall be adopted by the National Assembly along with the annual report on the execution of the State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Article 5. Members of the National Assembly shall receive a base monthly remuneration equivalent to three average monthly salaries of employees and civil servants in the public sector according to data of 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.

Article 6. (1) The President of the National Assembly shall receive a monthly remuneration by 55 percent higher than the base monthly salary under Article 5 above; the Vice Presidents of the National Assembly, by 45 percent; Standing Committee Chairpersons and Leaders of Parliamentary Groups under Article 9 hereunder, by 35 percent; Deputy Chairpersons of Committees, by 25 percent; standing committee members, by 15 percent, and Parliamentary Clerks, by 10 percent higher than said base remuneration.

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

(3) A Member who holds more than one position of seniority shall receive the higher remuneration of the two and a regular Member's salary for the lower position.

(4) For participation in sub-committees, select committees and working groups elected by the Standing Committees, Members of Parliament shall receive remuneration proportionate to the working hours but not exceeding 5 percent of the base monthly remuneration. When the term of a select committee or a working group is extended the Members participating in them may receive additional remuneration at the discretion of the National Assembly.

Article 7. (1) The base monthly remuneration as defined in Article 5 and Article 6 may be augmented by additional monthly payments for length of service and seniority at the rate of 1 percent for every year length of service, 10 percent for a PhD, and 15 percent for a DSc on top of the base monthly salary of a Member of Parliament.

(2) Members of Parliament may receive additional payment for the execution of tasks of national priority.

(3) The remuneration as defined in Article 5 and Article 6 shall be subject to deductions for social security contributions under the Social Insurance Code and the Health Insurance Act, to taxation under the Income Taxes on Natural Persons Act, to other deductions as defined by law, as well as to deductions under Article 13.

Article 8. Members of the National Assembly shall be insured for all risks inherent in third category labour, and also for the risks covered by life insurance.

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

Article 10. (1) Members of the National Assembly shall be reimbursed for travel expenses if using state-run or municipal public transport, the railways, road and sea transport, at first class and sleeping compartment rates, within the entire territory of Bulgaria.

(2) Members of the National Assembly may claim travel expenses if using private bus services in relation to their official duties as Members of Parliament.

(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 air travel in relation to their official duties, limited to 40 one way or return air tickets annually, and all other Members, to 12 one way or 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 Assembly-run housing in Sofia for the duration of their term of office, whereby any costs of housing repairs, standard furniture, burglar alarm or manned security, as well as any taxes and charges under the Local Taxes and Fees Act shall be borne by the National Assembly budget.

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

(6) Members of the National Assembly shall be entitled to individual office space in Sofia, provided by the National Assembly and furnished with the necessary technical and communication equipment, and to a personal Web page supported by the server of the National Assembly.

(7) The National Assembly shall provide, where needed and against payment, rooms in its buildings for members of the European Parliament for the Republic of Bulgaria, furnished with the necessary technical and communication equipment. The cost shall be borne by the relevant Member of the European Parliament.

Article 11. (Effective 1.01.2015 in respect of sentence seven - SG No. 97/2014) The National Assembly shall reimburse Members organized in Parliamentary Groups as well as unaffiliated Members for any additional expenses at the rate at two-thirds of the base monthly remuneration of a Member of Parliament as per Article 5. The amount for reimbursement is provided to either the relevant parliamentary group or the unaffiliated Members. The parliamentary groups determine the method of allocation of funds, reporting and control. Such sums shall be used for paying assistants, for consultations, expert opinions, office rentals and other such expenses pertinent to the Members' work in the National Assembly and in their respective constituencies. Members of Parliament shall account for their expenses to the relevant Parliamentary Group on a quarterly basis; such accounts may also be posted on their web page. Unaffiliated Members of Parliament shall post on quarterly basis information on their web page about their expenses. Any additional costs are taxable pursuant to the Corporate Income Tax Act.

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

Article 13. (1) A Member of the National Assembly who is absent from a plenary session without a valid reason shall have an amount equal to their daily pay deducted from their monthly salary.

(2) A Member of the National Assembly who is absent from a meeting of a Parliamentary Committee, subcommittee or working group without a valid reason shall have an amount equal to their supplement for participation in said meeting deducted from their monthly salary.

(3) Where a Member has been absent from three consecutive plenary sessions, or a total of 5 in the course of one month, he/she shall be liable to a deduction equal to two-thirds of his/her monthly remuneration, whereas the National Assembly shall cover no more than one-third of his additional expenses under Article 11.

(4) In cases where, due to the lack of quorum, a session of the National Assembly is not opened or gets adjourned, the Members of Parliament who were absent without a valid reason shall be liable to a deduction equalling two-thirds of their daily remuneration.

(5) Attendance data shall be collected from registration and vote printouts, through reports by the Chairpersons of Parliamentary committees, subcommittees and working groups and from the stenographic records.

Article 14. Amounts deducted in pursuance of Article 13 shall be credited as savings to the Budget of the National Assembly.

Article 15. (1) Payments under Articles 5 and 7 shall accrue as from Election Day, and for Members of the National Assembly who have assumed office at a subsequent date, from the date on which the Member was declared as being duly elected by the Central Election Committee. Payments under Article 6 shall accrue as from the date of election of the Members of the National Assembly to the respective positions and as Committee members.

(2) Government Ministers elected as Members of Parliament in a subsequent National Assembly shall state in which state body they wish to receive the remuneration they are due during the period before the election of a new Council of Ministers.

Article 16. (1) A parliamentary employee who has become eligible for a pension on the basis of age and social security contributions shall be entitled to a one-off severance package in the amount of one base salary for each year of service with the National Assembly, but not exceeding ten base salaries.

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

Article 17. (Amended, SG No. 86/2016, effective 4.11.2016) The National Public Opinion Survey Centre shall publish on the web page of the Centre within the website of the National Assembly its work plan, all completed surveys or research commissioned by the National Assembly, a Parliamentary Group of a Committee, and its completed ex post impact assessments of laws, as commissioned by the Committees under Article 26(2), paid for by the National Assembly, all publications made and its archive data by year and subject matter.

Appendix
to Article 73(1)

(New, SG No. 86/2016,
effective 4.11.2016)

Methodology for ex-ante impact assessment of bills

ASSESSMENT ELEMENTS	EXAMPLE ARGUMENTS
Basis for legislative initiative	Formulation of the public relations which the legislative initiative aims to regulate. A short presentation is required of the public relations and the reasons for the initiative. Substantiation of the need to adopt the legislative initiative.
Stakeholder groups	The impact assessment includes a short description of the stakeholder groups and the groups affected by the adoption of the legislative initiative (the business in a particular sphere/all entrepreneurs, non-governmental organisations, members of the public/their representatives, state authorities, etc.), the degree to which it affects them, as well as their attitude to the legislative initiative. The expected impact of the legislative initiative on specific groups and public relations is described, as well as the methods employed to determine them, such as research, public consultations, comparative analysis and so on.
Cost-benefit analysis	Description of the economic, social and other costs resulting from the legislative initiative, including for the stakeholder parties. Description of the expected minor and considerable costs. Description of the economic, social and other benefits resulting from the legislative initiative, including for the stakeholder parties. Description of how the expected benefits meet the objectives defined.
Administrative load and structural changes	1) Information on the planned and required administrative changes, such as closures, mergers or establishment of new administrative structures. 2) Information on the estimated administrative load the legislative initiative entails. Information on whether regulatory regimes and charges are to be introduced or altered. Definition as to whether they improve the regulatory environment.
Impact on legislation	Information on the need of immediate or follow-up changes in other pieces of legislation resulting from the adoption of the legislative initiative.

Note. The ex-ante impact assessment of bills shall not necessarily be presented in tabular form.

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43rd National Assembly	Legislation	Plenary sittings	European union	News	History and facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Elections for 43rd National Assembly » Presiding Body » Members of parliament » Parliamentary groups » Parliamentary Committees » Parliamentary Delegations » Friendship Groups » Administration of the National Assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Rules of Organisation and Procedure of the National Assembly » How does a bill become an act? » How does the National Assembly work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Plenary sittings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union » Annual Working Programme of the National Assembly » Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds » Bulgarian Members of the European Parliament » COSAC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » National Assembly archive » Brief history » National Assembly - Chronology » Coat of Arms of the Republic of Bulgaria » National Flag of the Republic of Bulgaria » Anthem of the Republic of Bulgaria » State Seal » Bulgarian Official Holidays » Virtual tour