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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NETHERLANDS - RULES OF PROCEDURE

translated from Dutch - for information purposes only

CHAPTER I. DEFINITIONS

Section 1. Definitions

In these Rules of Procedure:

- a. "the House" means the House of Representatives of the Netherlands;
- b. "the President" means the President of the House;
- c. "minister" means a minister or a state secretary;
- d. "documents" means documents within the meaning of the 1995 Public Records Act;
- e. "printing" includes publication on the Internet.

CHAPTER II. COMMENCEMENT AND END OF MEMBERSHIP

Section 2. Admission of members

1. Each newly appointed member shall provide evidence of his election by submission of the documents prescribed by law.
2. The credentials and the documents relating to them shall be placed on deposit for inspection by the members at the office of the Secretary General of the House.
3. The House in its old composition shall decide, in so far as possible, on the admission of members who have been declared appointed after a periodic retirement or dissolution.

Section 3. Loss of membership

1. If a member submits, for decision, to the House the decision made by the President that this member has ceased to be a member on the ground that he does not fulfil the requirements for membership, or holds an office incompatible with membership, the House shall not give a ruling until after a committee of inquiry, appointed for this purpose from among its members, has published its report. The committee shall hear the member in question if he expresses the wish that he be heard.
2. Subsection 1 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to a member of the European Parliament.

CHAPTER III. THE PRESIDENT, THE DEPUTY PRESIDENTS AND THE PRESIDIUM

Section 4. Appointment of a President

1. At the last sitting in its old composition the House shall adopt a draft profile of the new President to be appointed. The House shall decide on this subject at the first sitting in its new composition. Subsequently, the acting President shall enable the members to run for the vacant post, and the House shall appoint a President.

2. Until such time as a President has been appointed in a new session, a former President shall act as President for the time being, with the most recently retired President having precedence. In the absence of a former President, the most recently retired Deputy President shall act as President; if there are two or more former Deputy Presidents, who have retired at the same time, their order of ranking in the Presidium, of which they were members simultaneously, shall be decisive. In the absence of a former Deputy President, the member who has been in office in the House for the longest period of time shall act as President; where members have been in office for the same period of time the oldest in age shall have precedence.

3. In case of a premature vacancy of the office of President, the House shall adopt a candidate profile as soon as possible. Subsequently, the acting President shall enable the members to run for the vacant post, and the House shall appoint a President.

4. In case of a premature vacancy of the office of president, and so long as no President has been appointed a Deputy President shall act as President, whereby the order of ranking in the Presidium shall be decisive. In the absence of a Deputy President, the last retired former President shall act as President. In the absence of a former President, the last retired former Deputy President shall act as President. If there are two or more former Deputy Presidents who retired at the same time, their order of ranking in the Presidium, of which they were members simultaneously, shall be decisive. In the absence of a former Deputy President, the member who has been in office in the House for the longest period of time shall act as President; where member have been in office for the same period of time the oldest in age shall have preference.

Section 5. Appointment of Deputy Presidents

After each appointment of a President, the House shall appoint such number of Deputy Presidents as it may determine, with their order of ranking being determined by the order of their appointment.

Section 6. Duties of the President

The duties of the President shall mainly comprise:

- a. managing the business of the House and the Presidium;
- b. ensuring that the Rules of Procedure are complied with;
- c. implementing any decisions taken by the House;
- d. representing the House.

Section 7. The President's attendance at committee meetings

The President may attend the meetings of every committee of the House.

Section 8. Deputizing for the President

1. Where the President is unavailable, one of the Deputy Presidents, designated in accordance with the order specified in section 5, shall act as the President.

2. Where neither the President nor any of the Deputy Presidents are available, the President shall be replaced temporarily in accordance with the arrangement referred to in section 4, paragraph 2.

3. An acting President shall have the same duties and powers as the President.

Section 9. Presidium

1. The President and the Deputy Presidents together constitute the Presidium. For each member of the Presidium, the President shall appoint a deputy who will attend the

meetings of the Presidium in the absence of the member in question. The House may reserve to itself the right to make this appointment.

2. The Presidium may not take decisions if not more than half of its members or their deputies are present; in the event of a tied vote, the President shall decide.

3. Other members may be invited by the President to attend meetings of the Presidium; they have an advisory vote.

4. The Presidium may appoint one or more advisory committees. Before taking a decision with regard to parts of its duties, the Presidium shall hear the relevant committee or committees, except in very urgent cases.

5. The Presidium shall be assisted by the Secretary General and the directors.

CHAPTER IV. THE BUDGET

Section 10. The budget; financial control

1. Every year, The Presidium shall draft the budget of the House for the next year and shall send it in good time to the House for adoption, and to the Minister concerned.

2. The Secretary General is responsible, on behalf of the President, for the House's financial control. This responsibility can be delegated tot others, entirely or in part.

3. The House shall adopt a regulation containing rules for the allocation of finances to the parliamentary groups and for the financial control.

CHAPTER V. THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

Section 11. Composition of the parliamentary groups

1. The members who have been declared elected by the central electoral committee from the same list of candidates shall be regarded as a single parliamentary group at the start of the session. If only one member from a particular list of candidates has been elected this member shall be regarded as a parliamentary group on its own.

2. Any later changes in the composition of a parliamentary group shall be notified to the President by the parliamentary group in question.

3. Each parliamentary group shall inform the President of the composition of its executive committee.

Section 12. Creation of new parliamentary groups

1. Where a parliamentary group is split up, leading to the creation of one or more new parliamentary groups, the budget of the original parliamentary group shall be reallocated to all the political groups involved in the split, in proportion to the number of members of each political group.

2. If a new parliamentary group is created by the combination of two or more political groups into on, the budget of the new parliamentary group may not exceed that of a parliamentary group of the same size, as referred to in section 11, paragraph 1.

3. To enable obligations to staff of the original parliamentary group to be met, the Presidium may make a temporary arrangement, notwithstanding paragraphs 1 and 2.

CHAPTER VI. THE HOUSE'S ADMINISTRATION

Section 13. The Secretary General and the administrative staff

1. The House appoints and dismisses the Secretary General.
2. All other matters relating to the legal status of the Secretary General shall be dealt with by the Presidium.
3. The Presidium appoints and dismisses the Directors general.
4. All other matters relating to the legal status of the Directors General and the deputy clerks shall be dealt with by the Secretary General.
5. All the other members of the administrative staff are appointed and dismissed by the Secretary General.
6. The Secretary General may delegate the powers mentioned in subsections 4 and 5.

Section 14. Management of the House's administration; archive management

1. The Secretary General shall manage the House's administration, under the supervision of the Presidium.
2. The Secretary General is responsible, on behalf of the House, for the management of the archives of the House.
3. The Secretary General may delegate his mentioned in subsections 1 and 2.

CHAPTER VII. THE COMMITTEES

Part 1. General provisions

Section 15. Appointment of committees; assistance

1. The House shall establish the committees prescribed according to the provisions of these Rules of Procedure.
2. Every committee shall be assisted by a clerk or by a deputy clerk (clerk), designated by the Secretary General, and by one or more other officials of the House, designated by the Secretary General.

Part 2. standing committees, general committees, theme committees and temporary committees

Section 16. Standing committees

The House shall establish a Standing Committee on the policy area of each government department, with the exception of the ministry of General Affairs. The House shall also establish a standing committee on European Affairs and a standing committee on Kingdom Relations.

Section 17. General committees

1. The House may establish general committees on subjects which are of special importance to the exercise of its duties or which relate to virtually all Ministries.
2. A general committee is appointed for the duration of a session.
3. The House may charge other committees with the task to deal with such subjects.

Section 17a. Theme committees

1. The House may establish theme committees on topics of great social importance which do not relate to a specific ministry.
2. A theme committee can be established for the duration of one session at the most.

Section 18. Temporary committees

1. The House may establish temporary committees on specific subjects.
2. The appointment decree of a temporary committee shall in any event:
 - a. contain an accurate description of the subject on which the Committee is to report to the House;
 - b. specify the period for which the committee is appointed.
3. The period referred to in paragraph 2 (b) may be extended by the House at the request of the Committee.

Part 3. Other Committees

Section 19. Committee on the Examination of the Credentials of the House of Representatives

1. There shall be a Committee on the Examination of the Credentials of the House of Representatives. It shall report to the House in writing or orally on the admission of the members and, if necessary, on the course of the elections and the adoption of the result.
2. The first paragraph shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to persons declared to have been appointed member of the European Parliament.

Section 20. Standing committee on Petitions and Citizen's Initiatives

1. There shall be a standing committee on Petitions and Citizen's Initiatives the procedure of which is regulated in a set of rules to be adopted separately by the House.
2. It is charged with reporting on all petitions and citizen's initiatives passed to it by the House or a Committee of the House. It is also charged with matters relating to the National Ombudsman if there is a reason for this.
3. standing committee on Petitions and Citizen's Initiatives checks if a citizen's initiative meets the admissibility criteria, referred to in section 132a, and the formal requirements, laid down in the rules referred to in subsection 1
3. Each report on a petition shall contain a clear conclusion or proposal to deal with the petition.
4. The Committee is competent to consult orally or in writing with the government and the National Ombudsman.
5. The Committee may request a Standing or General Committee to advise it or to institute an inquiry on its behalf and to report to it on this, after which it will itself report to the House.

Section 21. The Procedure Committee

There shall be a Procedure Committee, which advises the House, either on request or on its own initiative, on the procedure of the House and these Rules.

Section 21a. Committee on national expenditure

1. There shall be a Committee on national expenditure. It is charged with dealing with matters concerning the legitimacy en efficiency of the disbursement of public funds and with informing, advising and supporting the House and the committees in the practice of budgetary estimates law and financial scrutiny. The information, advice and support shall extend not only to the budgetary items but also to major projects designated by the House and to the budgetary and accounting aspects of policy proposals and decisions of the Government.

2. Reports of the Court of Audit (Algemene Rekenkamer) and government documents relating to accounting matters shall be submitted directly to the Committee. The President and the first and second deputy-Presidents may decide to submit such a document to another committee too: section 119, paragraph 4, shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

3. No decisions shall be taken on a proposal to the House to request the Court of Audit to initiate an investigation until the Committee has given an opinion.

Section 22. The Intelligence and Security Services Committee

1. There shall be an Intelligence and Security Services Committee.

2. Notwithstanding section 25, subsection 1, the leaders of the political groups, referred to in section 11, subsection 1, are members of this committee. The President shall appoint the members of the committee.

Section 22a. Advisory committee

The Presidium may set up advisory committees for the purpose of its own duties.

Part 3a joint committees

Section 23. Maintaining interparliamentary relations

1. The establishment of an Office of the Clerk for Inter-Parliamentary Relations shall be regulated by separate Rules to be adopted by the two Houses of the States General.

2. A joint committee shall be set up according to the Rules referred to in section 1. The joint committee is in charge of the management of the service providing to both Houses and the various delegations. The management of services, as regards content, to both Chambers and the various delegations is in the hands of joint committee, to be set up on the basis of the regulation mentioned before. The joint committee advises the President and the members of both Houses on matters of interparliamentary relations.

Section 24. Joint committee of appeal for the Parliamentary Reporting Office

1. The responsibility for the Parliamentary Reporting Office, for the performing of its tasks, the publication of its reports on the proceedings of the meetings of the States General as well as for the period during which the records are to be kept, shall be laid down in a separate Regulation to be adopted by both Chambers of the States General.

2. The competence to make corrections in the reports produced by the Office or to undo adjustments made therein lies with the Joint Commission of Appeal for the Parliamentary Reporting Office to be set up according to the said Rules.

Part 3b Interparliamentary Kingdom consultation

Section 24a. Interparliamentary Kingdom consultation

If the Interparliamentary Kingdom consultation is chaired by a member of the House of Representatives or his substitute, these rules of procedure shall apply, unless one of the participating committees lodges an objection beforehand.

Part 4. The members and the chairperson

Section 25. The Committee members

1. The President shall determine how many members a Committee is to have. The House may decide otherwise.

2. The President shall appoint the members and, in so far as he considers this desirable, deputy members.

3. Discharge from membership or deputy membership may be granted by the President on request. The President shall fill any vacancies which arise as a result as well as any other vacancies.

4. The members and deputy members of Committees, with the exception of General Committees, shall be appointed anew at the start of every session. Until these appointments have been made, the Committees in office in the previous session shall continue to exist in their old composition.

Section 26. The Committee chairperson

1. The first meeting of a newly appointed Committee shall take place at the invitation and under the chairpersonship of the President. At this meeting the Committee shall appoint from among its members a chairperson, who is charged with the control of the further business, and a deputy chairperson.

2. The appointment to the office of chairperson or deputy chairperson shall be made anew at a meeting called for this purpose after a committee has been reconstituted in a new composition as referred to in section 25, paragraph 4, and when the office of chairperson or deputy chairperson falls vacant during a term of office.

3. The names of the chairperson and deputy chairperson shall be communicated to the House.

4. If there is no chairperson or the chairperson is unable to attend, he shall be replaced by the deputy chairperson or the longest sitting member of the House. Where members have sat for the same length of time, the eldest in age shall take precedence.

Part 5. Powers

Section 27. Powers of Committees

For the proper discharge of its duties, a Committee is in any event empowered to:

- a. apply to a Minister in order to obtain all documents of which it considers it has to take cognizance;
- b. enter into oral or written consultation with a Minister;
- c. hold round table talks
- d. hold hearings;
- e. make working visits;
- f. obtain information from an advisory body;
- g. call in external experts;
- h. propose the designation of a major project to the House.

Section 28. Forms of oral consultation

Oral consultation with a Minister may:

- a. relate to a bill referred to a Committee (a committee debate on draft legislation);
- b. relate to a budget bill, or a part thereof, referred to a committee (committee debate on a budget bill).
- c. relate to another document referred to a Committee (a committee debate on a policy document)¹;

d. be intended for the regular exchange of views on general policy (a general committee debate).

Section 29. Hearings

1. Notice of the holding of a hearing shall be given to the members of the House and on the Internet.

2. If a Committee wishes to hear civil servants, it shall invite them through the intermediary of the relevant Minister.

Section 30. Advisory Bodies

1. The members may make proposals to request advice from external advisory bodies as referred to in Section 17 of the Advisory Bodies Framework Act. Such a proposal is addressed to a Committee of the House.

2. The Committee shall send the proposal and its advice to the Presidium. The Presidium shall submit the proposal, together with the advice of the Committee and its own advice, to the House.

3. The House shall decide on the proposal.

Section 31. Major projects

Rules with regard to major projects shall be laid down in a separate regulation, to be adopted by the House.

Part 6. Reports

Section 32. Reports

1. A Committee shall report to the House on the documents referred to it. These reports shall deal as concisely as possible with the matters relating to the document. The Committee is entitled to omit that which it considers irrelevant.

2. The House may decide that a Committee need not publish a report on documents referred to it, if the Committee considers that such documents cannot be dealt with in public.

3. A Committee shall in any event report on its public, oral consultations with a Minister.

4. All reports to be published by a Committee shall be drawn up under the responsibility of the clerk of the committee.

Part 7. Committee meetings

Section 33. Times of meetings

1. The Committee shall meet at such times as it itself determines. If it has not taken a decision on this, its chairperson shall determine these times.

2. The chairperson shall in any event call a meeting of the Committee within a reasonable period whenever the Government so requests or a quarter of the members of the Committee express a wish for a meeting, stating reasons.

Section 34. Attendance at meetings

1. Members and deputy members of a Committee shall have access to all its meetings.

2. All members of the House shall have access to a committee debate on draft legislation and a committee debate on a policy document at which motions may be proposed. They have the right to take part in the deliberations.

3. A Committee may, at their request, grant one or more members of the House who are neither a member nor a deputy member of the Committee permission to attend an other Committee meeting than referred to in paragraph 2; in such a case, the relevant member shall be competent to take part in the deliberations.

Section 35. Chairpersonship

1. The chairperson of a Committee meeting shall have the same powers as those to which the person presiding over an assembly of the House is entitled, provided always that an exclusion pursuant to section 60 applies only to the public meetings of the Committee on the day on which the exclusion occurs.

2. A joint meeting of two or more Committees shall be presided over by the Committee chairperson who is the longest sitting member of the House. Where members have sat for the same length of time, the eldest in age shall take precedence.

Section 36. Decision-making

1. Decisions may be taken only by the members of the Committee, provided always that if a member is not in office or is unable to attend his deputy may exercise his powers.

2. Decisions at a joint meeting of two or more Committees shall be taken by each of the Committees separately. If the decisions are not identical, the matter shall if necessary be decided by the House.

3. The committee on Petitions and Citizens' Initiatives shall not take a decision if no more than half of its members or their deputies are present.

4. If the nature of a proposal is simple and urgent, the members of a committee may decide on the proposal in writing. The chairperson of the committee decides whether the nature of a proposal is simple and urgent. The decision shall be taken as if the House were in plenary sitting voting in conformity with section 69, subsection 3.

Section 37. Public nature of committee meetings

1. The meetings of committees shall be public. The House may decide that meetings of a particular committee may be held in private.

2. A committee may decide to hold its procedural meetings or part of it in private.

3. A committee may decide to hold a private meeting at the proposal of a member of the committee or a Minister. If the proposal is made during a public meeting, the meeting shall be conducted in camera until a decision has been taken on the proposal.

4. A closed committee meeting can only take place on the premises of the House. Members attending a closed meeting must be present in person in the meeting room. In special circumstances the President can decide that the provisions of the two preceding sentences are derogated from.

Section 38. Deleted

Part 8. Forms of oral consultation

Section 39. Committee debate on draft legislation

1. In order to hold a committee debate on draft legislation a committee requires the consent of the House. The House shall decide on a proposal of the President and the first and second deputy Presidents.

2. The committee is not competent to set a maximum speaking time when a debate on new legislation is held. However, the committee may decide that every MP participating in the debate give notice of the desired speaking time beforehand.

3. A verbatim report shall be made of a committee debate on draft legislation.

4. During a committee debate on new legislation motions may be put forward. Section 66 shall apply mutatis mutandis

Section 39a. Committee debate on a budget bill

1. Every committee may hold a debate on a budget bill referred to it.

2. A committee debate on a budget bill is reported verbatim.

3. During a committee debate on a budget bill motions may be put forward. Section 66 shall apply mutatis mutandis.

Section 40. Committee debate on a policy document

1. A Committee may hold a committee debate on a policy document referred to it.

2. A concise report shall be made of a committee debate on a policy document.

3. The Committee may request the House to have a verbatim report made of a document consultation. The House shall decide on a proposal of the President and the first and second deputy Presidents.

4. During a debate on a policy document of which a verbatim report is made motions may be put forward. Section 66 shall apply mutatis mutandis.

Section 41. General committee debate

1. A Committee may hold a general debate on matters relating to its policy area.

2. The agenda of a general committee debate shall be drawn up and published on the internet by a committee beforehand.

3. A verbatim report shall be made of a general committee debate.

Section 42. Oral consultations with civil servants

With the consent of the relevant Minister, information may be provided during oral consultations by civil servants designated by the Minister for this purpose.

Section 43. Plenary sitting after committee debate on a budget bill

1. The House shall set maximum speaking time for each political group for the plenary sitting in conclusion of the committee debate on a budget bill.

2. Voting on all the budget bills and the proposed amendments to them shall take place in connection with each other, preferably within one week.

Section 44. Deleted

Section 44a. Conclusion of a general committee debate during a plenary sitting (two minutes debate)

1. The conclusion of a general committee debate shall be put on the agenda of a plenary sitting only if a member wishes to propose a motion in response to the general committee debate.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 63, subsection 1, each member shall address the House in one stage only.

3. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 64, paragraph 2, maximum speaking time shall be two minutes for each parliamentary group, during which motions, if any, must also be proposed.

Section 45. Concurrent meetings

1. The days and hours when a committee debate on draft legislation or a committee debate on a policy document of which a verbatim report is made shall be held shall be determined by the President.

2. No more than two meetings for consultations as referred to in paragraph 1 shall be held at the same time. At times when the House is sitting, only one consultation meeting as referred to in paragraph 1 may be held.

CHAPTER VIII. PLENARY SITTINGS

Part 1. General provisions

Section 46. Convocation

1. The President shall call a sitting as often as he considers this to be necessary or has been requested in writing to do so by thirty members, stating reasons, or if the government requests so, stating reasons.

2. If the Presidium has adopted general guidelines for the days and hours when the House generally sits, the President shall take as much account of these as possible.

3. The House may also decide itself on what day and at what hour it will meet again, but the President shall then be free, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, to convene the meeting at an earlier or later time.

4. The members shall be given timely written notice of the meeting. If this is not possible, the notice can be given in some other way. The notice calling the meeting shall list the items to be dealt with.

Section 47. Suspension or closure of the meeting

1. The President may suspend or close the meeting if he considers this desirable in view of the course of the business or in order to maintain order.

2. A decision of the House is needed in order to continue a meeting after 11 p.m.

Section 48. Attendance list

Each member present shall sign the attendance list before the start of the meeting. The list shall remain on the table of the Secretary General for signature by members arriving later.

Section 49. Quorum

The President shall open the meeting if the attendance list has been signed by over half of the number of sitting members.

Section 50. Lack of quorum

1. If the requisite number of members is not present on or shortly after the hour for which the meeting has been called, the President shall open the gathering and have the names of the absent members read out. He may give notice of any documents received. Afterwards he shall adjourn the meeting to a later time.

2. The names of both the present and the absent members shall be recorded in the official report of the Proceedings of the House; in the case of the absent members, the reasons given for their absence shall also be recorded.

Section 51. Seating arrangement

1. Each member shall be allocated a seat in the plenary hall. The Presidium may also allocate a particular group of seats to a parliamentary group and leave the division thereof to the parliamentary group.

2. If the President so requests, the members shall take their seats.

3. The Presidium shall arrange for seats to be available for the special delegates of the representative bodies of Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten.

4. The Presidium shall also arrange for seats to be available for the Ministers and persons designated by them to assist them at an assembly.

5. The Presidium may allocate seats to other persons invited by the House.

Section 52. Rostrum

Each member shall speak standing up, unless the President grants him leave to speak seated, and at the rostrum, unless the President allows him to speak from another place.

Section 53. Received documents

1. All documents received since the last assembly shall be included in a list which will be available for inspection on the Secretary General's table during the meeting. In this list, the President shall make proposals about how they should be dealt with. The proposals shall be deemed to have been adopted at the end of the meeting, unless an objection to a proposal has previously been made by a member; in such a case the House shall decide on the relevant proposal. The list and the proposals shall be included in the official report.

2. The President shall remain competent to give notice in the meeting of any documents which he considers to be sufficiently important.

3. The President may set aside unsigned, incomprehensible and offensive documents without further notice.

Part 2. Arrangement of business

Section 54. Arrangement of business

1. The House shall arrange its business either on a proposal by the President or on a proposal by a member.

2. The business shall generally be arranged at the start of the meeting. The President may refuse to raise the subject of the arrangement of business at other times. If the President intends to propose an arrangement of business, he shall mention this in the notice calling the meeting, unless there is no opportunity to do so because of the urgency of the matter.

Part 2a. The thirty members debate

Section 54a. The thirty members debate

1. A thirty members debate shall be held if a request to do so is supported by at least thirty members.
2. The request shall be made during the arrangement of business, stating the subject of the debate.
3. The President sets the day on which the thirty members debate will take place.

Part 2b. Reporting on interparliamentary assemblies

Section 54b. Reporting on interparliamentary assemblies

Heads of delegations who have attended international parliamentary assemblies shall report on their findings in writing to the House.

Part 3. The debate

Section 55. Addressing the House

1. No member shall address the House until after he has asked the President and been given permission by him to have the floor. The President shall give permission to have the floor in the order in which permission is requested, unless the House decides otherwise. The members may have their names entered on the appropriate list of speakers as soon as the President has announced his intention of raising the subject or the House has decided, whether or not subject to reservation, to raise the subject.
2. If Ministers, persons whom they have designated to assist them in the meeting, Ministers Plenipotentiary or special delegates request the floor, the President shall not give permission for them to have the floor until the person who has the floor has finished his speech.
3. If the President wishes to speak on the subject that is under discussion, he shall leave the President's chair, unless what he has to say is necessary for the performance of the duties with which he is charged. He shall not take this seat again while the subject is under discussion.

Section 55a. Attendance of Members of the European Parliament elected in the Netherlands at debates of the House

1. The House may decide that Members of the European Parliament elected in the Netherlands are invited to provide information and thereto attend the deliberation about a subject under discussion.
2. The President allocates these MEPs a seat.
3. The President decides on the position on the speakers' list of these MEPs.
4. The House may set maximum speaking time for the contribution of these MEPs.
5. Section 57 applies mutatis mutandis.

Section 56. Personal business; proposal on a matter of order

1. The order of speakers may be interrupted if a member requests the floor for personal business or raises a point of order.
2. The President shall give permission for a member to have the floor for personal business only after a provisional indication of the business. The decision whether something constitutes personal business shall be taken by the President.
3. A proposal on a matter of order may be made either by the President or by a member.

Section 57. Interruptions

The President may allow interruptions, consisting of brief statements or questions without any introductory remarks.

Section 58. Warning; withdrawal of words

1. If a person who has the floor strays from the subject of debate, the President shall call on him to return to the subject in hand.

2. If a member or a Minister uses offensive language, causes a disturbance, violates his duty of secrecy as referred to in chapter XIIA, fails to observe confidentiality as referred to in chapter XIIB or signifies his approval of or incites the commission of unlawful acts, he shall be reprimanded by the President and given the opportunity to withdraw the words that have given rise to the warning.

Section 59. Order to yield the floor

1. If a person who has the floor makes no use of the opportunity referred to in section 58, paragraph 2, or continues to stray from the subject of debate, to use offensive language, to cause a disturbance, to violate his duty of secrecy as referred to in chapter XIIA, to fail to observe confidentiality as referred to in chapter XIIB or to signify his approval or incite the commission of unlawful acts, the President may order him to yield the floor.

2. A member who has been ordered to yield the floor may no longer take part in the debate on the subject under discussion at that meeting.

Section 60. Exclusion from a meeting

The President may exclude a member addressing the meeting to whom section 59 has been applied and any other member who has been guilty of acts of the kind referred to in that section from further attendance at the meeting on the day on which the exclusion occurs.

Section 61. Non-inclusion of words in the report *Deleted.*

Section 62. No appeal to the House

No appeal to the House shall lie against decisions taken by the President pursuant to sections 58 to 61.

Section 63. Number of times that a member addresses the House

1. No member shall address the House more than twice on the same subject or address the House on the same subject after the end of the second stage, unless the House has given him leave to do so.

2. Speaking on personal business or on a proposal on a matter of order shall not be counted when determining how many times a member has spoken on the same subject.

Section 64. Maximum speaking time

Notwithstanding section 43, subsection 1, the House may limit the maximum speaking time on a subject per political group, considering the size of each group, and the

ministers' speaking time. It can also be decided that the deliberation will be limited to one stage.

Section 65. Finishing speaking

As soon as the maximum speaking time prescribed for the speeches or for the explanations of votes has expired, the President shall request the person who has the floor to stop speaking. He shall then immediately comply with this request.

Section 66. Moving motions

1. Each member who has the floor may propose motions on the subject under discussion. Such a motion shall be formulated briefly and clearly, be in writing and be signed by the person making it. It may be dealt with only if it has been countersigned or seconded by at least four other members.

2. Unless the House has given leave for this, a motion shall not be proposed during the first stage. Presentation during the first stage shall in any event be possible if the debate relates to a report of oral consultations.

3. The text of a motion shall be read out by the person moving it.

4. Motions shall be dealt with at the same time as the debate on the subject in question, unless the House decides that this should be done later.

Section 67. Closure of the debate

1. If no one else wishes to speak, the President shall close the debate.

2. If the President considers that the subject has been adequately elucidated from different sides, he may propose to the House, notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1, to close the debate of the House earlier. No debate shall be held on such a proposal.

3. The closure of the debate of the House may also be proposed on the same ground by a member present in the plenary hall. The proposal may not be explained and shall not be the subject of debate.

Section 68. Closure of the debate at a fixed time

On a proposal of the President or of a member present in the plenary hall, the House may also decide that its debate on a subject will be closed at a time to be stated in the proposal. No debate shall be held on such a proposal. If it is carried, the President shall have the power to divide the available time on a fair basis.

Part 4. Voting on business not relating to persons

Section 69. Taking a decision; voting

1. After the debate has been closed, the House shall, if necessary, proceed to take a decision.

2. Voting on motions may be postponed; if a vote is not held at the first meeting held within two months of the decision to postpone (not including recesses), the motion shall be deemed to have lapsed. The House may decide otherwise.

3. Voting shall be by a show of hands.

4. A vote need not be held if none of the members requests one. In such a case, the President proposes that the decision be taken without a vote. However, members present in the plenary hall may request that it be noted that they wish to be deemed to have

voted against; in such a case, the decision shall be deemed to have been taken by the votes of the other members.

Section 70. Roll-call vote

1. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 69, paragraph 3, a roll-call vote shall be held if a member so requests.

2. A roll-call vote shall also be held if, in the opinion of a member, the proportions of votes on a show of hands are not clear. A roll-call vote may not be held if the result of a vote on a show of hands has been adopted.

3. In the case of a roll-call vote, the question of the attendance list number at which the vote will start shall be decided by lot.

4. In the case of a roll-call vote, each member shall cast his vote by uttering the word "Yea" ("voor") or the word "Nay" ("tegen").

5. If it is found in the case of a roll-call vote that the number of members required for a quorum is no longer present, the President may either suspend the meeting for some time and continue it if sufficient members are present at the time of reopening or adjourn the meeting and call a new meeting at a later time.

Section 71. Mistake in casting a vote

1. If a member makes a mistake in casting his vote in a roll call vote, he may rectify this mistake before the next member has voted. If he does not notice his mistake until later, he may ask after the end of the vote for a note to be made of his mistake; however, this shall not alter the result of the vote.

2. If a member makes a mistake in voting by show of hands, he may rectify this as long as the President has not yet determined the voting result. If he does not notice his mistake until later, he may ask after voting for a note to be made of his mistake, but this shall not alter the result of the vote.

Section 72. Tied vote

1. In the event of a tied vote, the proposal shall be deemed not to have been adopted if all the members are present.

2. If not all the members are present, the taking of a decision shall be postponed until a subsequent meeting. If there is again a tied vote, the proposal shall be deemed not to have been adopted.

Section 73. Explanation of vote

1. After the vote, explanations of votes may be made.

2. The President may allow explanations of votes to be made after the closure of the debate, but in that case immediately before the vote. In such cases, the debate may not be reopened after an explanation of vote has been made.

3. An explanation of vote may not last longer than two minutes.

Part 5. Voting on persons

Section 74. Counting of votes in voting on persons

Voting on persons for appointments, nominations or elections shall be by ballot papers placed in a box. In the case of such a ballot, the President shall appoint four members as tellers. After the first appointed teller has stated the number of ballot papers found in the

box and the President has stated the number of members present, the first appointed teller shall announce the result.

Section 75. Completion of the ballot papers

A ballot paper shall be filled in for each candidate separately and shall contain a clear indication of the person. The House shall decide in cases of doubt.

Section 76. Fewer ballot papers than quorum

If the number of ballot papers found in the box is fewer than the number of members required to form a quorum at the meeting, section 70, paragraph 5, shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Section 77. Invalid votes

Ballot papers that are not filled in or not properly filled in shall not count for the purpose of determining a majority.

Section 78. Void ballot

The voting shall be void:

- a. if the number of ballot papers found in the box exceeds that of the members who have signed the attendance list and this difference may have influenced the result;
- b. if the number of properly completed ballot papers is fewer than the number of members required to form a quorum at the meeting.

Section 79. Free ballot

The first vote shall be "free". If no one obtains an absolute majority in this first ballot, a second ballot shall be held and shall once again be free.

Section 80. Third ballot

If no one obtains an absolute majority in the second ballot either, a third ballot shall be held, on this occasion between the four persons who obtained the most votes in the second ballot. If votes were cast only for three or four persons in the second ballot, the third ballot shall be between the two persons who obtained the largest number of votes.

Section 81. Fourth ballot

If no absolute majority is obtained in the third ballot, a fourth ballot shall be held between the two persons who obtained the most votes in the third ballot.

Section 82. Interim ballot

If it is not clear from the result of the second or third ballot between whom the further ballot must be held, an interim ballot shall be held to decide this.

Section 83. Tied vote

1. If there is a tied vote in an interim ballot or in a ballot between two persons, the matter shall be decided by lot.

2. In order to arrive at this decision, the requisite slips containing the names shall be put, properly folded, into the box by one of the tellers and then taken out and read out one by one by another teller. The person whose name is on the slip of paper first taken out shall be the elected person.

Section 84. Elections not mentioned in the Constitution

If it concerns appointments, nominations or elections not mentioned in the Constitution, the House may determine in a special case that other rules shall apply.

Section 85. Election of persons by the Committees

The election of persons by the Committees shall take place in the same way as those by the House, provided always that in the case of the third ballot the election shall be between the two persons who obtained the most votes in the second ballot.

Section 86. Presentation to the King

The President shall arrange for the nominations of persons whose appointment is made by Royal Decree to be presented orally or in writing to the King.

Part 6. Final provisions

Section 87. Official Report and Proceedings

1. The Secretary General shall arrange for a verbatim report of the debate (proceedings) to be made of each meeting and of each gathering referred to in section 50. The Rules referred to in section 24, paragraph 1, shall apply to this report.

2. The Secretary General shall arrange for an official report to be drawn up of each meeting and of each gathering referred to in section 50. This report shall in any event include the names of the members who were present and of those who vote 'Yea' or 'Nay', a brief statement of the contents of all documents received, and all decisions taken by the House or by the President. The official report shall be approved by the President and the Secretary General, in confirmation of which it will be signed by them, and shall be kept in the Record Office of the House of Representatives.

3. If, in response to questions put during the public debate, Ministers or the persons who assist them at a meeting answer such questions partly in writing and partly orally before the end of the debate, the written answers shall be included in an annexe to the report of the meeting at which the other questions were answered orally.

Section 88. Deleted

Section 89. Report or minutes of a meeting held in camera

1. The House may decide that official reporters from the Parliamentary Reporting Office may be present at a meeting held in camera. In such a case, a verbatim report of the proceedings shall be made in accordance with the appropriate rules; unless the House decides otherwise either immediately or at a later date, however, such a report shall not be printed but shall be kept locked up in the Record Office of the House of Representatives, unless the House decides otherwise

2. If the House has not decided that official reporters from the Parliamentary Reporting Office may be present, minutes shall be kept by the Secretary General. These shall be read and proposed for approval immediately or at a subsequent meeting in camera. In addition to what is stated in section 87, paragraph 2, second sentence, such

minutes shall contain a concise report of the debate. They shall be kept locked up in the Record Office of the House of Representatives unless the House decides otherwise.

CHAPTER IX. PROCEDURE ON BILLS, KINGDOM BILLS, PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS, OTHER DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO A COMMITTEE AND TREATIES

Part 1. Bills

Section 90. Referral

1. Bills shall be referred by the President and the first and second deputy-President to a standing or general committee.

2. The decision shall be communicated in writing to the members as soon as possible. If the decision has not been taken unanimously, it shall not be implemented before notice has been given of it at a public meeting of the House. When this notice is given, the House may decide otherwise. A proposal to this effect may be made by each member.

Section 91. Debate on broad outlines

On the proposal of the Committee, the House may decide that a general debate should be held on a bill before the Committee starts to consider it.

Section 92. Legislative report

1. Before the Committee starts to consider a bill, the clerk of the Committee shall advise on whether it is desirable that a legislative report is published on the bill.

2. A legislative report shall be drawn up by the clerk of the Committee.

Section 93. Submission of comments

1. The members of the House shall be entitled to submit their written comments on a bill to the Committee within such period as the Committee decides. Notice of the said period shall be given to the members of the House.

2. The Committee shall determine the period referred to in the first paragraph within fourteen days of the date on which the bill is referred to it.

3. The Committee may decide that the comments of the members of the House shall be submitted not only in writing in the manner provided for in paragraph 1 but also at a meeting open to all members of the House. Each member of the House shall be entitled to take part in a meeting as referred to in the first sentence.

Section 93a. Rapporteur

A committee may appoint one of its members rapporteur on a bill referred to it.

Section 94. Report

1. The Committee shall publish a report showing, whether or not subject to reservations, that it considers that the bill has been sufficiently prepared to be dealt with in a public meeting of the House.

2. A report shall be immediately printed, distributed to the members and sent to the Government. Annexes to reports shall also be printed and distributed, unless the

Committee determines that they should be deposited for inspection. If the annexes are of a confidential nature, they shall be deposited for confidential inspection by the members.

3. After receipt of the memorandum drawn up in respect of the report, the Committee may decide to publish a further report.

Section 95. Time limits

1. After a bill has been referred to a Committee, the Presidium may set a time limit within which the Committee must adopt its report.

2. If the Committee cannot be ready within the prescribed period, it shall ask for an extension of the time limit. The decision on this shall be taken by the Presidium. This decision shall be communicated in writing to the members of the House as quickly as possible. Notice of it shall also be given in a public meeting of the House. If the decision has not been taken unanimously, the House may decide otherwise when the notice is given. A proposal to this effect may be made by every member. If a time limit has been extended once by the Presidium, a further extension may be granted only by the House, unless the House has been prorogued until further notice, in which case the Presidium may grant a further extension.

3. If the Committee fails to publish a report within the prescribed period, the House may open the debate without a report having been published.

Section 96. Proposal of amendments

1. From the time when a bill has been referred to a Committee, each member shall be entitled to propose amendments, accompanied by a brief explanation.

2. An amendment shall be duplicated and distributed with the utmost speed.

Section 97. Admissibility of amendments

1. An amendment is not admissible if its tenor is contrary to that of the bill or if there is no direct connection between the subject matter of the amendment and that of the bill.

2. An amendment shall be deemed to be admissible as long as the House has not declared it inadmissible. A proposal to this effect may be made, if necessary by an interruption of the order of the day, either by the President or by one of the members.

Section 98. Alteration and withdrawal of amendments

The first signatory shall be entitled to make changes to the amendment. The first signatory shall also be entitled to withdraw the amendment, but only with the consent of the House if the debate has closed.

Section 99. Sub-amendments

The rules governing amendments shall also apply to proposals to alter amendments proposed by another member.

Section 100. Adoptance of amendments

1. The President shall announce during the debate on a bill that an amendment has been adopted if:

- a. the Minister indicates that he can assent to the content of a proposed amendment;
- b. the President has assured himself that none of the members present in the plenary hall object to the adoptance of the amendment.

2. An adopted amendment shall be part of the bill from the time of the announcement referred to in paragraph 1; it shall no longer constitute a separate subject of debate.
3. An amendment may not be adopted during a committee debate on draft legislation.

Section 101. General debate in two stages; section-by-section consideration

1. The general debate on a bill shall take place in two stages.
2. The House may decide after the general debate to deal one by one with the separate sections and the amendments proposed to them and finally to deal with the preamble to the bill.
3. The House may decide to adopt a different procedure.

Section 102. Consideration of bill and section-by-section consideration in a committee debate on draft legislation.

1. On the proposal of the President and the first and second deputy-Presidents made after hearing the Committee, the House may decide:
 - a. that, without prejudice to the provisions of section 91, a committee debate on draft legislation will be held about a bill before it is considered in an assembly of the House;
 - b. that, after the general debate on a bill, the debate on the separate sections and the preamble to the bill will take place in a committee debate on draft legislation.
2. In a committee debate on draft legislation as referred to in paragraph 1 (b), the sections of a bill and the amendments proposed to it shall be considered in the same way as is prescribed for the consideration of sections and amendments in the meeting of the House.

Section 103. Order of voting; lapsing of amendments

1. The following order shall be observed when voting on an section or its preamble and on the amendments proposed to it: voting shall take place first on the sub-amendments, then on the amendments and finally on the section or the preamble.
2. Where there are several amendments to the same part of a bill, the most far-reaching amendment shall be put to the vote first. In the event of a dispute on this, the House shall decide.
3. The House may decide that parts of an amendment, of an section or of the preamble shall be put to the vote separately.
4. The House may decide that amendments must be deemed to have lapsed as a result of the making of other alterations.

Section 104. Final vote on a bill

After all the sections and the preamble have been put to the vote, the final vote on the bill as a whole shall be taken.

Section 105. Second reading

1. If the bill has been altered in the course of the debate or as a result of the voting, the House may decide to postpone the final vote until a following sitting.
2. Alterations may be proposed in the meantime which have become necessary as a result of alterations made before the voting or as a result of the voting; these proposals may also serve to rectify manifest errors. The proposals referred to in the first sentence may be made by the Government and by the relevant committee.

3. Alterations proposed in this way shall be immediately put to the vote, unless they constitute a reason for the House to reopen the debate.

Section 106. Change of serial numbers, references etc.

1. Changes in the serial numbers of sections, paragraphs of sections or parts thereof which have become necessary as a result of alterations made to a bill and changes in the references to sections, paragraphs of sections or parts thereof which are a consequence thereof shall be made by the President.

2. The House may decide to drop all or part of the changes referred to in paragraph 1.

Section 107. Sending of bill to the Senate

The President shall send a bill passed by the House to the President of the Senate, together with the following message: "The House of Representatives of the States-General of the States General hereby sends the bill passed by it to the Senate".

Section 108. Return of defeated bill

Where a defeated bill was presented by or on behalf of the King, the President shall return the bill to the King, together with the following message: "The House of Representatives of the States General has rejected the bill returned herewith".

Part 2. Kingdom bills

Section 109. General rule

The procedure for the consideration of Kingdom bills shall be the same as that of other bills, subject to the following special rules.

Section 110. Written preparation

The preparation of the public debate in the House on a Kingdom bill shall be conducted in writing.

Section 111. Setting of a time limit

Proposals for the setting of a time limit within which the representative body of Aruba, Curacao or Sint Maarten is entitled to publish a written report on a Kingdom bill and proposals that the Government be requested to set such a time limit must be made in a meeting of the House either by the President or by one of the members.

Section 112. Report of the representative assembly

The written report of the representative assembly shall be printed, distributed to the members and sent to the Government.

Section 113. Passing by less than three fifths of the votes

If, after the Minister Plenipotentiary or the special delegate has stated that he is against the bill, the House passes the bill by a majority of less than three fifths of the votes cast, the President shall not send the bill to the Senate but shall give notice of such passing of the bill to the Prime Minister. If the latter states that the bill is maintained, the President shall send it to the Senate after all.

Part 3. Private members' (Kingdom) bills

Section 114. Lodging of private members' (Kingdom) bills

1. One or more members may introduce an initiative bill or an initiative Kingdom bill into the House by lodging it with the President, in writing and signed.

2. A Kingdom bill initiated by members shall be sent by the President, forthwith upon receipt thereof, to the representative assembly of Aruba, Curacao or Sint Maarten, as the case may be.

3. Subsections 1 and 2 shall apply mutatis mutandis to the submission and forwarding of proposals made by the Minister Plenipotentiary of Aruba, Curacao or Sint Maarten, referred to in section 15, subsection 3, of the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Section 115. Hearing the Advisory Department of the Council of State

1. Before a bill or Kingdom bill initiated by members is considered by the House, the House shall hear the Advisory Department of the Council of State (Raad van State).

2. The House may also hear the Advisory Department of the Council of State on the subject of the bills referred to in paragraph 1 after the procedure of consideration has started. A proposal to this effect may be made by a member, if necessary by interrupting the order of the day, at any time before the final vote on the bill as a whole.

Section 116. Procedure for considering private members' (Kingdom) bills

1. The procedure for consideration of bills or Kingdom bills initiated by members shall be the same as that for bills or Kingdom bills introduced by or on behalf of the King, provided that where reference is made to action by a Minister the members initiating the bill shall act in his place and that they shall not take part in the examination of the bill.

2. Members initiating a bill may arrange to be assisted in the meetings of the committees and of the House by a maximum of four persons designated by them for this purpose.

3. If Ministers wish to address the House during its consideration of the bill, they shall be allowed to do so after the private members initiating the bill, unless the House decides otherwise.

Section 117. Sending of private members' (Kingdom) bill to the Senate

Where a bill or a Kingdom bill initiated by one or more members is passed, the President shall send the bill to the President of the Senate, together with the following message: "The House of Representatives of the States General hereby sends the bill passed by it to the Senate. It has instructed ... to defend the bill in that House".

Section 118. Defence in the Senate

Unless the House decides otherwise, the members initiating the bill shall be charged with the defence referred to in section 85 of the Constitution.

Part 4. Other documents referred to a Committee

Section 119. Referral

1. The President and the first and second deputy-President may decide to refer to a Committee documents other than a bill. These documents may originate from the cabinet as well as from one or more members of the House.

2. Before the President and the first and second deputy-President decide to refer a document as referred to in paragraph 1 to a Committee, they shall examine whether the document is preceded by a separate section listing points for decision and a section stating the financial consequences.

3. The President and the first and second deputy-President may propose to the House that a document be returned to the Government in order that the points for decision referred to in paragraph 2 be appended.

4. A decision to refer a document shall be brought to the attention of the members in writing as quickly as possible. If the decision is not taken unanimously, it shall not be implemented before notice thereof has been given in a public meeting of the House. The House may decide otherwise at the time of such notice. A proposal to this effect may be made by every member.

5. If a decision of the President and the first and second deputy-President is not forthcoming, each member may make a proposal in a public meeting of the House for the document to be referred to a Committee.

Section 120. General debate on referred documents

The House may decide, on the proposal of the committee, that the general debate on a document referred to a committee shall occur before the committee starts its examination.

Section 121. Submission of comments

1. The members of the House shall be entitled to submit their written comments on a document referred to a Committee within such period as the Committee decides. Notice of the said period shall be given to the members of the House.

2. The Committee shall determine the period referred to in the first paragraph within fourteen days of the date on which the document is referred to it.

3. The Committee may decide that the comments of the members of the House shall be submitted not only in accordance with the written procedure referred to in paragraph 1 but also at a meeting open to all members of the House. Each member of the House shall be entitled to take part in a meeting as referred to in the first sentence.

Section 121a. Rapporteur on a document referred to a committee

A committee may appoint one of its members rapporteur on a document referred to it.

Section 122. Time limits

1. After a document has been referred to a Committee, the Presidium may set a time limit within which the Committee must adopt its report or its list of questions.

2. If the Committee cannot be ready within the prescribed period, it shall ask for an extension of the time limit. The decision on this shall be taken by the Presidium. This decision shall be communicated in writing to the members of the House as quickly as possible. Notice of it shall also be given in a public meeting of the House. If the decision has not been taken unanimously, the House may decide otherwise when the notice is given. A proposal to this effect may be made by every member. If a time limit has been extended once by the Presidium, a further extension may be granted only by the House, unless the House has been prorogued until further notice, in which case the Presidium may grant a further extension.

3. If the Committee fails to publish a report or list of questions within the prescribed period, the House may open the debate without a report or list of questions having been published.

Section 123. Document consultation

A committee debate on a policy document may be held in respect of a document referred to a Committee.

Part 5. Treaties

Section 124. Treaty lodged for tacit approval

1. As soon as a treaty is presented to the House for tacit approval, the Secretary General shall note the date of receipt on the accompanying letter and the date on which the wish that the treaty be submitted to the States General for its express approval may be expressed at the latest. He shall ensure that the accompanying letter, with the said note, is distributed in printed form to the members without delay and, if it concerns a treaty that affects Aruba, Curacao or Sint Maarten, is sent to the relevant Minister Plenipotentiary. The first day of the period referred to in the approval and publication of treaties Kingdom Act shall be deemed to be the day following that of the receipt of the treaty presented for approval.

2. The wish may be expressed by or on behalf of the House or by at least thirty members. If it is a treaty which affects Aruba, Curacao or Sint Maarten, it may also be expressed by the relevant Minister Plenipotentiary.

Section 125. Expression of the wish by the House itself

1. If the House decides to express the wish, the President shall give immediate notice hereof to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to the President of the Senate. If it is a treaty that affects Aruba, Curacao or Sint Maarten, the President shall give notice hereof to the relevant Minister Plenipotentiary.

2. A proposal to express such a wish must be made in a meeting of the House either by the President or by one of the members.

3. If such a proposal does not obtain a majority but at least thirty members vote in favour of it, section 127 shall apply.

Section 126. Expression of the wish on behalf of the House by the President

The wish that the treaty be submitted to the States General for its express approval may be expressed on behalf of the House by the President. Before taking such a decision, he shall if possible consult the appropriate Committee or Committees. He shall express this wish to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and shall immediately inform the House and the President of the Senate when he has done this. If it is a treaty that affects Aruba, Curacao or Sint Maarten, the President shall also give notice hereof to the relevant Minister Plenipotentiary.

Section 127. Expression of the wish by thirty members

If thirty or more members express the said wish, they shall do this by written notice to the President, who will in turn give immediate notice hereof to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The President shall immediately inform the House, the President of the Senate and, if it is a treaty that affects Aruba, Curacao or Sint Maarten, the relevant Minister

Plenipotentiary too, which members have expressed the wish and when he informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs hereof.

Section 128. Expression of the wish by the Minister Plenipotentiary

1. If the Minister Plenipotentiary expresses the said wish through the intermediary of the President, the latter shall give immediate notice to the House, the President of the Senate and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In the event of notification to the House and the President of the Senate, he shall also state when he gave notice to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. If the Minister Plenipotentiary expresses the said wish, the President shall, as soon as he learns this, give immediate notice to the House.

2. If a proposal as referred to in section 125 relates to a treaty that affects Aruba, Curacao or Sint Maarten, the relevant Minister Plenipotentiary shall be given the opportunity to attend the oral proceedings relating to such proposal and to supply such information to the House as he considers desirable.

Section 129. Accession to and denunciation of a treaty

If the States General is informed of the proposal to accede to or denounce a treaty, the provisions of sections 124-128 shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Part 6 Expression of the wish that the subject be laid down in law

Section 130. Expression of the wish that the subject be laid down in law

1. If the wish is expressed that a subject or the coming into force of a (draft) decision be laid down in law, the Secretary-General shall make a note of the date of reception on the accompanying letter, as well as the date on which the wish may be expressed at the latest. He shall make sure that the accompanying letter, with the said notice, is published without delay. The date of reception is considered to be the first day of the term applying to the submitted (draft) regulation.

2. The procedure referred to in subsection 1 shall apply when the wish is expressed to receive information or to enter into consultation.

Section 130a. Expression of the wish by the House itself

1. If the House decides to express the wish in question, the President shall notify the minister in charge and the President of the Senate thereof.

2. A proposal to express the wish has to be made in a sitting of the House, either by the President or one of the members.

Section 130b. Expression of the wish by the President, on behalf of the House

The wish that a subject be laid down in law can be expressed by the President, on behalf of the House. Before taking this decision the President shall, if possible, consult with the relevant committee or committees. He shall notify the House, the minister in charge and the President of the Senate of the expression of the wish without delay.

Section 130c. Expression of the wish by thirty members

If thirty or more members want to express the wish in question, they shall do so by written notification to the President, who shall notify the House, the minister in charge and the President of the Senate thereof, without delay.

CHAPTER X. PETITIONS

Section 131. Procedure for dealing with the conclusions of the committee on Petitions and Citizens' Initiatives

1. When conclusions proposed by the committee on Petitions and Citizens' Initiatives are considered publicly, each member may propose amendments to these conclusions. The provisions concerning amendments to bills shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to such proposals, provided always that amendments whose tenor is contrary to that of the conclusions of the committee are permissible.

2. If the House rejects the proposed conclusions without replacing them with other conclusions, the documents shall be referred to a temporary committee or, if the conclusions were already proposed by a temporary committee, to a new temporary committee, which will present a further report on this to the House.

Section 132. Minister decides not to act on a decision; referral

If the House has accepted the conclusions contained in a report of the committee on Petitions and Citizens' Initiatives in which a Minister is invited to take some sort of action or not to take any action and the Minister states in a letter that he does not intend to act on such decision, this letter shall be referred to the committee on Petitions and Citizens' Initiatives, which may propose to the House that this document, together with any other documents in its possession, be referred to a standing committee or a General Committee in order that it may present a further report on this to the House.

CHAPTER XA. CITIZEN'S INITIATIVE

Section 132a

1. The citizen's initiative is a proposal to have an issue examined by the House and focuses on creation, amendment or withdrawal of a legal provision or on the government's policy.

2. The citizen's initiative cannot relate to

- a. local government issues;
- b. a question or complaint about or an objection against the government's policy;
- c. an issue about which the House has made a decision less than two years before submission of the citizen's initiative, except if there are substantial and sufficiently new facts or circumstances which were not known at the time of deliberation about the issue by the House;

- d. taxation or budget bills;
- e. issues that are contrary to the Constitution or to the norms and values that are deeply rooted in Dutch society.

3. Further conditions may be laid down in the regulations referred to in section 20.

4. Those who put forward the proposal may be invited to give an explanation.

5. The House shall take a decision on every citizen's initiative that occurs on the agenda.

CHAPTER XI. REQUESTS TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR INFORMATION

Part 1. The interpellation

Section 133. The interpellation

1. If a member requires information from one or more Ministers about a subject that is not part of the business of the day, he may, by specifying the main points on which he wishes to ask questions, ask the leave of the House to hold an interpellation. Such leave may be requested orally when the business of the House is being arranged. The President may also permit a request for an interpellation at another time.

2. The House shall grant the leave if the request to hold an interpellation is supported by at least thirty members.

3. If the House grants the requested leave, it shall decide either immediately or later on what day the interpellation will be held. The Minister concerned shall be invited to be present at the meeting on the specified day. If the matter is very urgent and the Minister is present, the House may decide that the interpellation will be held immediately. The Minister shall then provide the requested information immediately, if this is possible for him; if it is not possible, the House shall adjourn the interpellation procedure to a later time.

4. Unless the interpellation is held immediately, the interpellant shall inform the President as quickly as possible what questions he will put during the interpellation. Unless the President has a serious objection to the questions on account of their form or content, he shall forward them to the Minister concerned. The President shall inform the members of any questions that have been forwarded.

5. During an interpellation, the interpellant shall not speak more than twice and another member more than once, unless the House grants leave for this.

Part 2. Written questions

Section 134. Lodging of written questions

1. A member who wishes to put written questions to one or more Ministers shall lodge these questions with the President. The questions should be brief and clearly worded.

2. The President shall forward the questions to the relevant Minister, unless the President has a serious objection to them on account of their form or content. The President shall inform the members of questions that have been forwarded and shall publish them.

Section 135. Answering written questions

1. If the Minister is not able to answer the questions within three weeks, he shall inform the President accordingly and state the reasons.

2. The Secretary-General is in charge of the publication, every three months, of a list of questions waiting to be answered for more than six weeks.

3. The questions with the written answers shall be included in the Appendix to the Proceedings.

Part 3. Question time

Section 136. Question time

1. Question time shall take place on Tuesday at the start of the meeting. Ministers must be available for question time, unless they have other obligations that are prevailing according to the President.

2. A member can put forward no more than one subject about which they would like to ask questions during question time. The member in question shall inform the President in writing, stating the subject, by 12 noon on Tuesday at the latest. Questions cannot be put forward earlier than on Tuesday at noon in the previous week, or, if this is later, immediately after conclusion of the last sitting of the previous week.

3. The President decides which questions can be asked within question time.

4. In a special case the House may set a different time for question time. The President shall then decide the time at which the subject of the questions should be notified to him.

5. The President shall invite the relevant Ministers to question time and shall inform them of the subject of the questions. Subsequently, the President shall publish the subject of the questions.

Section 137. Deleted

Section 138. Order of questioners and speaking times

1. The President shall determine the order in which the subjects are raised during question time.

2. The questioner shall be allowed to address the meeting for a maximum of two minutes in order to put questions to a Ministers and to give an explanation. The Minister shall be allowed to address the meeting for a maximum of two minutes in order to answer the questions. Interruptions by the questioner shall be admitted after 3 minutes.

3. After the answer, the questioner shall be given two minutes speaking time in which to put supplementary questions to the Minister. The minister shall be granted a maximum of one minute speaking time, in which to answer the questions.

4. Subsequently, the President can give the floor to other members of the House to ask questions to the Minister about the same subject, for half a minute per question each. The minister is then given the floor to answer the questions, for a maximum of half a minute per question.

5. Interruptions are not permitted during question time. Moreover, members of one parliamentary group together are allowed to ask no more than two questions as referred to in subsection 4.

Section 139. No motions; end of question time

1. During question time no leave may be requested to hold an interpellation, nor may motions be proposed.

2. Subjects which have not yet been dealt with at the end of the question time shall lapse.

CHAPTER XIA. CABINET (IN)FORMATION

Section 139a. Designation of Cabinet (in)formateur(s)

1. Immediately after the installation of a newly elected House of Representatives, but no later than one week after installation, the House shall have a plenary debate on the election result. The aim of the debate is to designate one or more informateurs or formateurs and to draft the assignment to be carried out by them. If that aim can not be achieved in the same sitting, the House shall decide on the matter in a next sitting, as soon as possible.

2. After completion of an information assignment the House shall draft a formation assignment, in principle within one week thereafter, and shall designate one or more formateurs to carry out the assignment.

3. If the designated informateurs or formateurs terminate their assignment, the House shall draft a new assignment, in principle within one week thereafter, and shall designate one or more informateurs or formateurs to carry out the assignment.

4. If the Cabinet falls before the end of its term of office the House can discuss the desirability and the direction of a new Cabinet formation. Subsections 1 to and including 3 shall apply mutatis mutandis.

Section 139b. Asking for information from the Cabinet (in)formateurs

After conclusion of a(n) (in)formation assignment the House may decide to invite a formateur or an informateur c.q. formateurs or informateurs to give information about the course of the Cabinet (in)formation process.

CHAPTER XII. PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY AND OTHER (PARLIAMENTARY) INVESTIGATION

Section 140. Regulation concerning Parliamentary and external inquiry and investigation.

In a separate regulation, to be adopted by the House, rules shall be laid down about the decision making concerning the realization of and other subjects with regard to:

- a. Parliamentary investigation by means of a parliamentary inquiry or by a temporary committee, and
- b. external investigation.

Section 141. Parliamentary investigation committee

A Parliamentary investigation is carried out by a committee of the House, to be established to this end, the investigation committee.

Section 142. Temporary committee

Parliamentary investigation, other than referred to in section 141, shall be carried out by a committee of the House, to be established to this end, the temporary committee.

CHAPTER XIIA. SECRECY WITH REGARD TO MEETINGS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Section 143. Secrecy with regard to closed committee meetings

1. Secrecy shall be observed with regard to the deliberations in a closed committee meeting, with the exception of what the committee includes in its report.

2. Secrecy shall be observed by those who attended the deliberations and by those who have knowledge of the content of the deliberations or the documents, until the committee lifts the secrecy.

3. The secrecy can be lifted by the committee in a closed committee meeting.

Section 144. Secrecy with regard to plenary sittings behind closed doors

1. Secrecy shall be observed with regard to the deliberations in a plenary sitting behind closed doors, with the exception of what the committee includes in its report.
2. Secrecy shall be observed by those who attended the deliberations and by those who have knowledge of the content of the deliberations or the documents, until the House lifts the secrecy.
3. The secrecy can be lifted by the House in a sitting behind closed doors.

Section 145. Breach of secrecy

1. The Presidium may propose the House to exclude a member who does not observe the secrecy, referred to in sections 143 and 144, from all the meetings of one or more committees.
2. The Presidium may also propose the House to exclude the member referred to in subsection 1 from access to confidential documents, for a period not exceeding the rest of the session.
3. A proposal, referred to in subsections 1 and 2 shall not be made until after the Presidium has allowed the member concerned to be heard.
4. A proposal referred to in subsections 1 and 2 shall be put to the vote at the beginning of the first sitting after the day on which the Presidium decided to put forward the proposal. No deliberations shall be held on this proposal.
5. The President shall notify the member concerned without delay of a decision made by the House pursuant to this section.

CHAPTER XIIB. CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Section 146. Confidential documents

1. The confidentiality of the content of a confidential document shall be observed by any person.
2. At the Office of the Secretary General a register shall be kept of confidential documents submitted to the House or to the committees.
3. In a separate regulation, to be adopted by the House, provisions shall be laid down with regard to the classification and handling of confidential documents. This regulation shall at least contain provisions with regard to registration, deposit for inspection, examination, distribution and multiplication of confidential documents.

Section 147. Breach of confidentiality of the content of a confidential document

In case a member does not observe the confidentiality of the content of a confidential document section 145 shall apply mutatis mutandis.

Sections 148 to and including 150 Deleted

CHAPTER XIIA. REGISTERS

Section 150a. Registers

1. A register shall be kept at the office of the Secretary General in which the members report their outside posts and the (expected) remuneration no later than one week after accepting them, as well as interests that may be reasonably considered relevant. Remuneration is understood to mean wages within the meaning of section 9 of the

Wages Tax Act 1964, with the exception of the income parts, referred to in section 31 of the said Act, or earnings within the meaning of part 3.2 of the Income Tax Act 2001. No later than April 1st after the calendar year in which the remunerations were granted the members shall give notice again of their income in that particular calendar year.

2. A register shall be kept at the office of the Secretary General in which the members report their foreign trips of which the travel and accommodation expenses have been entirely or partly paid for by third parties, no later than one week after their return to the Netherlands.

3. A register shall be kept at the office of the Secretary General in which the members report gifts and benefits received by them, which have a value in excess of 50 euros, no later than one week after receipt of the gift or benefit.

4. The three registers shall be available for public inspection.

5. The Secretary General is charged with publishing, twice a year, the statements in the register of outside posts and benefits.

CHAPTER XIII. THE PRINTING OF DOCUMENTS

Section 151. Publication of documents

1. All documents sent between the Government and the House shall be published digitally, wherever possible immediately, unless a document is classified confidential.

2. These documents shall also be reproduced in another way as soon as the House deems this necessary.

CHAPTER XIV. VISITORS TO THE BUILDING AND THE GALLERIES

Section 152. Visitors to the building and the galleries

1. The Presidium may lay down rules for the admission of visitors to the building of the House and in particular to the galleries. These rules may not prejudice the principle that meetings of the House are public, with the exception of those which are held in camera in accordance with these Rules.

2. All signs of approval or disapproval by visitors are prohibited. The President shall ensure that this prohibition is enforced and that visitors keep properly quiet. He may direct that in the event of infringement any person who causes or has caused a disturbance is to leave and, if necessary, may cause all visitors and persons who are in a particular gallery to be removed.

3. The visitors in a gallery shall be obliged to follow the instructions of the personnel of the House and of the supervisory personnel of the police. In the event of an infringement of this provision, the President shall have the powers referred to in paragraph 2.

CHAPTER XV. FINAL PROVISIONS

Section 153. Review of the Rules

1. Any member may propose in writing that one or more provisions of the Rules be reviewed.

2. A Committee too may make such a proposal, provided that this represents the view of the majority of its members. Such a proposal shall be signed by the members of the Committee who have stated that they are in favour of it.

3. The provisions relating to bills introduced by members shall apply to the proposals referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2. If they are of a simple nature, however, the House may provide that they will be dealt with at a public sitting without a prior examination.

4. The debate on a proposal of the Procedure Committee of the House which the Presidium considers is not of a simple nature shall be prepared by a report of the Committee. This report shall contain all written comments and questions submitted to the Committee by one or more members within a period of at least fourteen days to be set by the Presidium as well as the answers of the Committee.

5. If the House carries a proposal for review, this shall take immediate effect unless the House decides otherwise.

Section 154. Derogation from the Rules

The House may at all times decide to derogate from the provisions of these Rules if none of the members objects to this and if the derogation is not contrary to the Charter for the Kingdom, the Constitution or any other act.

Section 155. Entry into effect

These Rules shall take effect from the day on which the newly elected House meets for the first time after the next elections.

Took effect on 17 May 1994.