

BALTIC ASSEMBLY STATUTES¹

CHAPTER 1 FOUNDATIONS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

Article 1. Baltic Assembly

1. The Baltic Assembly (BA) is an international organisation for co-operation among the parliaments of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania, founded on the basis of the Joint Decision adopted by the members of the Supreme Councils of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania in Vilnius on 1 December 1990. It functions on the basis of the Agreement of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania on Parliamentary and Intergovernmental Co-operation of the Baltic States signed in Tallinn on 13 June 1994, the present Statutes and other legal acts adopted by the Baltic Assembly and its bodies.

2. The Baltic Assembly shall be an entity under international law, with the headquarters of its Secretariat based in Riga, Latvia.

3. The Baltic Assembly shall have its own symbols and a flag, the use of which shall be governed by the appropriate regulations approved by the Session.

Article 2. Composition of the Baltic Assembly

The parliament of each of the Baltic States shall appoint from 12 to 20 parliamentarians to the Baltic Assembly (national delegation, including its chairman and vice chairman), in accordance with the approved rules of procedure and the principle of proportional political representation in the national delegation. The number of delegation members shall remain unchanged for the entire term of office of the relevant parliament.

Article 3. Principles of Activities of the Baltic Assembly

The Baltic Assembly shall consider issues and various projects which are of interest to the members of the national delegations and the member states; adopt decisions in compliance with the principles of equality, mutual benefit and unanimity; and develop co-operation with other regional, international, and inter-parliamentary organisations.

Article 4. Languages of the Baltic Assembly

1. The official languages of the Baltic Assembly shall be Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian.

2. Other languages shall be used in the work of the Baltic Assembly in the cases specified by these Statutes or by agreement among the delegations.

¹ The consolidated text of the Statutes contains the amendments adopted on 27 May 2000, 14 December 2002, 29 November 2003 and 19 December 2004.

CHAPTER 2 BODIES OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

SECTION 1 SESSION OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

Article 5. The Session of the Baltic Assembly

1. The supreme body of the Baltic Assembly shall be the Session.
2. Sessions shall be regular and extraordinary.

Article 6. Competence of the Session of the Baltic Assembly

1. The Session of the Baltic Assembly shall be competent to adopt decisions on all issues pertaining to BA activities.
2. The following shall be within the exclusive competence of the Session of the Baltic Assembly:
 - 1) adoption and amendment of the Statutes;
 - 2) approval of the BA symbols and adoption and amendment of the regulations on their use;
 - 3) fixing the venue and time of a regular Session;
 - 4) approval and amendment of the agenda of the Session;
 - 5) formation of standing and *ad hoc* committees and commissions and appointment of their chairmen and vice chairmen;
 - 6) approval of the head of the Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly;
 - 7) adoption and amendment of the Regulations on the Secretariat;
 - 8) hearing of the BA Presidium's report on the work accomplished in the period between sessions;
 - 9) approval of the BA budget and the report on its implementation;
 - 10) adoption of declarations, recommendations, resolutions, decisions and statements; and
 - 11) adoption of recommendations on making changes in the composition of the Presidium.

Article 7. Quorum of the Baltic Assembly Session

1. A regular or an extraordinary Session of the Baltic Assembly shall have the power to act if more than half of the members of each national delegation are present.
2. The registration of the members of the delegations shall be conducted before the opening of the Session and upon the request of the national delegations.

Article 8. Regular Sessions

1. A regular Session of the Baltic Assembly shall be held once a year in the presiding country.
2. The exact date of the next regular Session shall be fixed by a decision of the previous regular Session. When determining the date for the Session, the dates of national parliamentary elections shall be taken into account.
3. The term of presidency of the Baltic Assembly shall be one calendar year and the presidency shall be held alternately by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Not later than two months before the beginning of the Session, the presiding state shall set the exact venue of the Session, and the secretary of its delegation shall notify the Baltic Assembly Secretariat and the secretaries of other national delegations thereof.
4. When necessary, the Baltic Assembly Session may change the host country, venue and time of the Session; however, when the decision on holding the next Session is made, the principle of rotation should be applied equally to all BA member states.

Article 9. Extraordinary Sessions

1. A proposal to convene an extraordinary Session may be submitted by each national delegation individually or jointly with other delegations.
2. The proposal to convene an extraordinary Session must be well founded, indicating the issues subject to consideration.
3. The decision to convene an extraordinary Session shall be made during a regular Session; in the period between sessions the decision shall be made by the Presidium.
4. The decision to convene an extraordinary Session shall be adopted by consensus of the national delegations or by the members of the Presidium.
5. The Session or the Presidium shall define the agenda, venue and time of an extraordinary Session.

Article 10. Agenda of the Session

1. The Presidium shall submit a draft agenda of the Session to the national delegations not later than two weeks before the beginning of a regular Session or upon the convocation of an extraordinary Session. The agenda of the BA Session must include the issues subject to consideration and a preliminary schedule of the Session. Draft documents shall be attached to the agenda.
2. The time allotted for speeches and answers to questions shall be set while considering the agenda of the Session.
3. After opening the Session, the presiding officer shall put the agenda to a vote.
4. The Session may, on the basis of consensus, amend the agenda at any time.

Article 11. Conduct of the Session

1. The work of the Session shall be directed by the President of the Baltic Assembly or by one of the Vice Presidents.
2. The presiding officer of the Session shall ensure its smooth functioning.

Article 12. Openness of the Work

1. The work of the Baltic Assembly shall be open to the public.
2. The Baltic Assembly may declare the Session or a part thereof closed by a joint decision of the national delegations.

Article 13. Recording and Taking Minutes on the Session

1. The work of the Baltic Assembly Session shall be tape-recorded, and the minutes of it shall be taken.
2. The minutes shall include the following: venue and time of the Session, names of the presiding officers and participants, agenda, speakers and the essence of their speeches, full texts of the decisions adopted, and the results of voting.
3. The minutes of the Session shall be signed by the President or Vice Presidents, and by the head of the Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly.
4. The minutes of the Session shall be taken in English and translated into the official languages of the Baltic Assembly.
5. Copies of the minutes of the Session shall be distributed to the members of the national delegations within two months after the end of the Session.
6. After the minutes of the Session have been signed, they shall be published and entered on the BA website on the Internet.

Article 14. Adoption of Decisions at the Session

1. The Session of the Baltic Assembly shall adopt its decisions by voting.

2. Each national delegation shall have one vote. A decision shall be deemed adopted if all the national delegations have voted in favour of it.

SECTION 2 PRESIDIUM OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

Article 15. Composition of the Baltic Assembly Presidium

1. The Presidium shall be formed for organising the work of the Baltic Assembly.
2. The Presidium of the Baltic Assembly shall comprise the chairman of each national delegation and his/her deputy appointed by the parliament of the respective state.

Article 16. President and Vice Presidents of the Baltic Assembly

1. The work of the Presidium shall be directed by the President and two Vice Presidents of the Baltic Assembly.
2. At the end of each Session of the Baltic Assembly, the chairman of the national delegation of the next presiding state shall become the President of the Baltic Assembly for the next calendar year. The incumbent President shall perform his/her functions till 1 January.
3. The chairmen of the other two national delegations shall become Vice Presidents of the Baltic Assembly.
4. In the absence of the President of the Baltic Assembly, his/her duties shall be carried out by the Vice President from the state which presided last. When the latter is not available, the duties of the President of the Baltic Assembly shall be carried out by the other Vice President.

Article 17. Tasks and Competence of the Presidium

1. The Presidium shall direct the preparation of sessions, co-ordinate the work of the BA bodies during sessions and between them, supervise the implementation of the budget of the Baltic Assembly, represent the Baltic Assembly and maintain relations with international organisations, as well as with the parliaments and governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and fulfil other tasks prescribed for the Presidium under the present Statutes and the documents adopted on the basis thereof.
2. It shall be within the competence of the Presidium:
 - 1) to draw up the strategy and principal directions for the development of Baltic Assembly activities;
 - 2) to co-ordinate the co-operation with the Prime Ministers who make up the Baltic Council of Ministers;
 - 3) for solving conceptual issues, to convene the Consultative Council which shall comprise: the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly and the chairmen and vice chairmen of the committees of the Baltic Assembly;
 - 4) to set tasks and priorities for the Baltic Assembly activities;
 - 5) to maintain relations of the Baltic Assembly with other international organisations;
 - 6) to register the members of BA committees and commissions;
 - 7) to register BA party groups (factions) and their members;
 - 8) to hold a competition to select a candidate for the head of the Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly and to present the selected candidate to the Session for approval;
 - 9) to convoke an extraordinary Session of the Baltic Assembly;
 - 10) to present a draft agenda of the Session;
 - 11) to appoint responsible committees for considering the submitted documents;

- 12) to draw up a draft budget in conjunction with the BA Secretariat and to consider the draft report on the implementation of the budget to be presented at the Session by the Budget and Audit Committee;
 - 13) to bring the documents adopted at sessions of the Baltic Assembly to the attention of the national parliaments;
 - 14) to organise a meeting with the speakers of the national parliaments during the Session of the Baltic Assembly;
 - 15) in the period between sessions, to make decisions on behalf of the Baltic Assembly regarding topical/conceptual issues if there is a consensus among the national delegations;
 - 16) resolve other issues which are within its competence.
3. The Presidium shall draw up a report on the work accomplished in the period between sessions and present it at the Baltic Assembly Session.

Article 18. Meetings of the Presidium

1. Meetings of the Presidium shall be held at least four times a year.
2. A meeting of the Presidium shall be convened by the President of the Baltic Assembly, who fixes the venue and time of the meeting and submits a draft agenda of the meeting.
3. A meeting of the Presidium may be attended by committee chairmen, members of the national delegations, representatives of the relevant committees of the national parliaments and other persons invited by the Presidium. At least once a year the Presidium shall invite chairmen and vice chairmen of the committees and representatives of the Baltic Council of Ministers to its meeting to evaluate the activities of the current year and to set priorities for the next year.
4. The BA Secretariat shall ensure that minutes of Presidium meetings are kept. The venue and time of a meeting, names of the participants, issues considered, main viewpoints expressed and decisions adopted shall be entered in the minutes. The minutes shall be signed by the presiding officer of the meeting and by the person who took the minutes.
5. Technical services for meetings of the Presidium shall be provided by the BA Secretariat.
6. Copies of Presidium meeting minutes in the English language shall be forwarded to the members of the national delegations not later than within two weeks after a Presidium meeting.

Article 19. Decisions of the Presidium

1. The Presidium of the Baltic Assembly shall have the power to act if its meeting is attended by one member of the Presidium from each BA member state, including the President of the Baltic Assembly.
2. Decisions of the Presidium shall be adopted by consensus. In the event of failure to reach a consensus, the President of the Baltic Assembly may make a proposal to put the issue on the agenda of the Session. In this case, the Session shall adopt a decision by consensus of the national delegations.

SECTION 3 COMMITTEES OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

Article 20. Committees of the Baltic Assembly

1. BA committees shall be appointed for the preparation and consideration of issues which are of interest to the Baltic Assembly.
2. The standing committees of the Baltic Assembly shall be the following:

- 1) Economic Affairs, Communications and Informatics Committee;
- 2) Education, Science and Culture Committee;
- 3) Environmental Protection and Energy Committee;
- 4) Legal Affairs and Security Committee;
- 5) Social Affairs Committee.

3. For dealing with specific issues, the Session of the Baltic Assembly may set up ad hoc committees, defining their composition, scope and term of authority, and the procedure for reporting on their activities.

Article 21. Tasks and Competence of Standing Committees

1. The tasks of the standing committees shall be to consider the issues which fall within their sphere and are of interest to the members of the national delegations and the BA member states, to work out joint positions on such issues, and to consider and prepare for adoption at sessions the documents which have been referred to them by the Presidium.

2. The committees of the Baltic Assembly shall:
 - 1) prepare the issues within their competence for consideration at sessions;
 - 2) prepare drafts of the documents referred to them by the Presidium for consideration at sessions;
 - 3) initiate drafts of documents;
 - 4) oversee the implementation of the documents prepared by them and adopted by the BA;
 - 5) bring the relevant documents adopted at BA sessions to the attention of the appropriate committees of the national parliaments;
 - 6) resolve other issues which are within the competence of BA committees, and
 - 7) present reports on their work to the Session of the Baltic Assembly.

Article 22. Appointment of Members of Committees

1. Each member of the national delegation may be a member of one standing committee and, additionally, a member of the Budget and Audit Committee or of the Drafting Committee.

2. Each national delegation shall appoint its members to BA committees in compliance with the principle of equal representation of the national delegations in the committees and, as far as possible, by taking their interests into account.

3. When it is necessary to temporarily replace a committee member on a standing committee, a member of the national delegation may, by the national delegation's decision, be appointed to substitute for him/her. The substitute shall enjoy all the rights and responsibilities of a committee member.

Article 23. Budget and Audit Committee

1. Each national delegation shall appoint to the Budget and Audit Committee two of its members who are neither the chairman nor vice chairman of the delegation.

2. The Session shall approve the composition of the Budget and Audit Committee and, when necessary, change its composition upon the recommendation of a national delegation.

3. The Budget and Audit Committee shall:
 - 1) have the right to examine and check financial documents at any time;
 - 2) draw up a draft of the procedure for the use of funds and other BA resources and present at the Session drafts of appropriate decisions;
 - 3) consider the draft budget of the next year, which has been drawn up by the Presidium and the Secretariat, make amendments thereto and present it with the mediation of the Presidium for adoption at the Session;

- 4) exercise control over BA expenses and at the Session make a report on the implementation of the Baltic Assembly budget for the preceding year and on the validity of the expenses.

Article 24. Chairman and Vice Chairmen of a Committee

1. At the end of each Session, the national delegation of the next presiding state shall appoint chairmen of committees from among its members. The national delegations of the other two states shall appoint vice chairmen of committees. Chairmen and vice chairmen for the next calendar year shall be approved at the BA Session.

2. The committee chairman shall:

- 1) co-ordinate and organise the activities of the committee and draw up a plan of its work;
- 2) convene meetings of the committee and draft their agendas;
- 3) decide whom to invite to the discussion of issues and draft documents;
- 4) preside over a committee meeting;
- 5) when necessary, participate in meetings of the Presidium as a representative of the committee;
- 6) sign the documents of a committee.

3. In the absence of a committee chairman, the vice chairman from the previous presiding state shall act as chairman of the committee. In case of his/her absence, the other vice chairman shall act as chairman.

Article 25. Committee Meetings

1. Meetings of a standing committee shall be held at least three times a year, and meetings of ad hoc committees as often as necessary.

2. Meetings of committees shall be convened by their chairmen who shall make up the agenda and set the venue and time of the meetings. Committee meetings should be held in each BA member state insofar as possible.

3. The members of BA national delegations, representatives of the governments, experts may be invited to attend committee meetings; and other persons may also be invited at the discretion of the committee chairmen. Committees may organise joint events, and chairmen of the respective committees shall decide who will chair these events.

4. Minutes of committee meetings shall be taken by the Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly. The venue and time of a meeting, names of the participants, issues considered, main viewpoints expressed and decisions adopted shall be entered in the minutes. The minutes shall be signed by the presiding officer of the meeting and by the person who took the minutes.

5. Technical services of committee meetings shall be provided by the secretary of the national delegation of the state in which a committee meeting is being held.

6. Copies of committee meeting minutes in the English language shall be forwarded to the members of the committees and the head of the BA Secretariat not later than two weeks after the meeting.

Article 26. Decisions of the Committees

1. A committee of the Baltic Assembly shall have the power to act if its meeting is attended by at least one member of the national delegation from each BA member state, including the chairman or vice chairman of the committee.

2. Decisions of a committee shall be adopted by consensus of the committee members who attend the meeting. In the event of failure to reach a consensus, the chairman of the committee may refer the issue to the Session for consideration.

Article 27. Drafting Committee

1. Before a Session the Presidium, but at the beginning of the Session Baltic Assembly may appoint a Drafting Committee. Each national delegation shall appoint one member to the Drafting Committee.

2. Meetings of the Drafting Committee shall take place during the Baltic Assembly Session.

3. The Drafting Committee shall:

- 1) consider all draft documents to be presented at the Session and, in order to achieve uniformity in style and form, make necessary amendments to them, as well as coordinate these amendments with the committees that have prepared the relevant documents;
- 2) provide its conclusions regarding all the documents subject to adoption at the Session;
- 3) approve the final versions of the draft documents and put them to a vote at the Session.

SECTION 4

PARTY GROUPS (FACTIONS) AND OTHER INTEREST GROUPS

Article 28. Party Groups (Factions) of the Baltic Assembly

1. In order to express similar political interests and views and on the basis of an appropriate joint declaration, the members of the national delegations may form party groups (factions) consisting of at least five members from at least two national delegations.

2. A party group (faction) shall elect a chairman and a vice chairman and shall inform the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly about this.

3. An individual member of the national delegation may belong to only one party group (faction).

4. The party groups (factions) shall have the right to present draft documents to the Presidium or to the Session and may propose to put the documents to a vote.

5. The party groups (factions) shall function in accordance with the Regulations on Activities of the Party Groups (Factions) of the Baltic Assembly, which are an integral part of the Baltic Assembly Statutes.

Article 29. Other Interest Groups of the Baltic Assembly

Other interest groups shall function in accordance with the regulations on activities of interest groups of the Baltic Assembly, which shall be an integral part of the Baltic Assembly Statutes

SECTION 5

SECRETARIAT OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

Article 30. General Provisions

1. The Secretariat shall supervise regular activities of the Baltic Assembly and its bodies.

2. The Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly shall comprise the head of the BA Secretariat and the secretaries of the national delegations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (BA national secretaries). The BA Secretariat shall have its own staff.

3. Activities of the head of the Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly and the secretaries of the national delegations shall be co-ordinated according to the present Statutes and other documents adopted on their basis.

CHAPTER 3
PROCEDURE FOR PREPARING
THE DOCUMENTS OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

SECTION 1
SUBMISSION OF DRAFT DOCUMENTS

Article 31. Documents That Can Be Adopted by the Baltic Assembly

The Baltic Assembly shall express its position in the form of a resolution, declaration, recommendation, appeal, decision, statement, proposal, opinion or memorandum.

Article 32. Right to Initiate Documents

1. The Presidium, a member of the national delegation, a committee, a party group (faction) or a national delegation of the Baltic Assembly shall have the right to initiate documents in any form.

2. Only the Presidium shall have the right to initiate documents pertaining to organisational aspects of the work of the Baltic Assembly and in cases specified by these Statutes.

Article 33. Submission of Draft Documents

1. A draft of a document of the Baltic Assembly shall be submitted to the Presidium.

2. A draft document to be considered at a regular Session must be submitted to the Presidium not later than a month and a half before the beginning of the Session.

3. In exceptional cases, the national delegation shall have the right to present a draft document at the beginning of the Session.

4. Draft documents to be considered at an extraordinary Session may be submitted at the beginning of such a Session.

Article 34. Requirements for Initiating a Document

1. A draft document shall be submitted to the Presidium in one of the official languages of the Baltic Assembly, together with a translation into English. The author (initiator) of the draft shall attach to it an explanatory note justifying the need to adopt the said document.

2. The draft document must bear the date and the full names and signatures of the initiators or their representatives.

Article 35. List of Draft Documents

1. The secretary of the delegation of the state presiding at the Baltic Assembly shall make a list of the draft documents which have been submitted in time for consideration at the Session and which meet the requirements laid down in the Statutes and shall send it to the Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly and the secretaries of the national delegations of other states, together with the draft documents.

2. The list of the documents to be considered at the Session may be supplemented or abridged, as necessary, on the basis of decisions of the bodies that are competent to prepare draft documents.

SECTION 2

PROCEDURE FOR PREPARING DRAFT DOCUMENTS

Article 36. Appointment of a Responsible Committee

1. Immediately after receiving a draft document, the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly shall appoint a responsible committee to work on the initiated draft, taking into account the sphere of activity of each committee. The secretary of the delegation of the state presiding at the Baltic Assembly shall put the responsible committee on the list of draft documents and shall organise the translation of the draft and its forwarding to the members of the responsible committee through the secretaries of the national delegations.

2. For a draft document submitted, by way of exception, by a national delegation at the beginning of the Session, the Presidium shall immediately appoint a responsible committee and forward the draft document to the Drafting Committee.

3. If necessary and if the committees consent, the Presidium may assign the draft document to another responsible committee.

Article 37. Appointment of a Rapporteur and His/Her Tasks

1. Upon receiving a draft, the chairman of the responsible committee shall appoint a person, a rapporteur, who is responsible for the preparation of the draft.

2. The secretary of the delegation of the state presiding at the Baltic Assembly shall be informed about the rapporteur appointed by the committee and shall put his/her name on the list of the draft documents in preparation.

3. The rapporteur shall prepare the draft for a discussion on its substance by the committee and shall, on behalf of the committee, present the said draft at the Baltic Assembly Session.

Article 38. Work of a Responsible Committee on a Draft Document

1. Not later than one month before the beginning of the Session, a responsible committee shall consider the submitted draft document at its meeting. The chairman of the committee shall invite the necessary experts and representatives of the Government for a discussion of the draft document.

2. The responsible committee shall make necessary amendments to the draft document and, not later than one month before the beginning of a regular Baltic Assembly Session, shall adopt a decision on presenting the document for consideration at the Session.

3. If the responsible committee decides to present a draft document for consideration at the Session, it shall forward the document, after amending it as necessary, to the Drafting Committee, together with its conclusion.

Article 39. Preparing a Draft Document

1. At the Session of the Baltic Assembly, the author of a draft document or the rapporteur from the responsible committee shall make a report on the draft. After the presentation, they shall answer questions posed to them.

2. At the end of the question-and-answer period, the presiding officer shall set a deadline for submitting proposed amendments to the draft.

3. Party groups (factions), committees and members of the national delegations may propose amendments. Proposals for amendments must be submitted in writing to the responsible committee.

4. The responsible committee shall consider the proposals for amendments and shall adopt decisions concerning them. Then the text of the draft shall be submitted to the Drafting Committee, which shall consider it and, upon having co-ordinated it with the responsible

committee, shall refer the final version of the draft to the Presidium. The Presidium and the BA Secretariat shall arrange to have the final text of the draft document translated.

5. The final version of the draft, together with the proposals for amendments, shall be again presented for consideration at the Session, where only the rapporteur shall make a report thereon.

6. After the report, the authors of rejected amendments may request a vote on them. After the voting on all amendments, the draft document shall be put to a final vote.

7. The responsible committee and the author of the draft have the right to request that consideration of a draft be suspended at any time. In case consideration of a draft is suspended, the responsible committee, taking into account the agenda of the Session, may reschedule consideration of the draft during the same Session, or it may postpone consideration of the draft. A decision pertaining to this issue shall be adopted by the Session of the Baltic Assembly.

Article 40. Final Document of the Session

1. After adopting decisions on the drafts, the Presidium shall prepare the Final Document and shall present it to the Session for adoption. The Final Document shall list all the documents adopted at the Session, specify the most important issues discussed, indicate the priorities of the Baltic Assembly activities for the next year, as well as indicate where and when the next regular Session will take place.

2. The Final Document, together with the documents adopted at the Session, shall be made available to the public and shall be entered on the BA website on the Internet.

Article 41. Work on Documents Submitted by Way of Exception

1. If a national delegation presents a draft document at the beginning of the Session, the Presidium shall immediately appoint a responsible committee to work on the draft and shall forward it to the Drafting Committee.

2. The Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly shall immediately arrange to have the draft translated and distributed to the members of the national delegations.

3. The responsible committee shall consider the draft, make necessary amendments to it and present it to the Drafting Committee. The latter shall return the draft to the Presidium, together with its conclusions.

4. The Presidium shall put the draft document on the agenda in order of priority.

5. The author of the draft and a representative of the responsible committee shall speak about the draft document. After that, the document shall be put to a final vote, or its consideration shall be suspended.

6. The draft documents which have been submitted by way of exception must be discussed before the Final Document of the Session is considered.

SECTION 3 CONSIDERATION OF OTHER ISSUES

Article 42. Putting Other Issues on the Agenda

When drawing up the agenda of the Session, the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly may, on the advice of the committees, party groups (factions) or members of the national delegations, put on the agenda the consideration of urgent issues and officials' responses to queries.

Article 43. Procedure for Consideration of Other Issues

1. Initiators of proposals shall report on the urgent issues which have been put on the agenda of the Session, and invited officials shall answer any queries.

2. After hearing the report, speakers may be asked to answer questions.
3. After the questions end, the presiding officer shall open a debate during which each person who desires to speak shall be given the floor in a prescribed manner. Requests to have the floor shall be submitted in writing, and the order of the speeches shall conform to the order of the submitted requests.

CHAPTER 4 PROPERTY, FUNDS AND BUDGET OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

Article 44. Property and Funds of the Baltic Assembly

1. The activities of the Baltic Assembly shall be financed with the funds received as membership fees.
2. The Baltic Assembly may, in accordance with the established procedure, hold and use for its activities the property and funds received as donations, inheritance or proceeds from economic activities relating to its objectives (selling of souvenirs bearing its symbols, publishing of printed matter, etc.).
3. Each national parliament itself shall cover the expenses related to the participation of its delegation at sessions of the Baltic Assembly, in meetings of the Presidium, the committees and the commissions, in the Baltic Council, as well as in the events held by the international co-operation partners of the Baltic Assembly.
4. The expenses necessary for ensuring the activities of the Baltic Assembly shall be shared equally by the parliaments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
5. The head of the Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly shall, in accordance with the Baltic Assembly Statutes, have the right to use the property and funds of the Baltic Assembly.
6. Joint expenses relating to the Baltic Assembly activities shall be financed from the budget of the Baltic Assembly.
7. Immediately after the adoption of the decision on the budget, the Presidium shall inform the parliaments and the governments of the Baltic Assembly member states about the contributions that are to be made to the Baltic Assembly budget.
8. The funds of the Baltic Assembly shall be used pursuant to the Regulations on the Use of the Baltic Assembly Funds, which are an integral part of the Statutes.

CHAPTER 5 CO-OPERATION OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY WITH THE BALTIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Article 45. Organisation of Co-operation

The co-operation between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers shall be based on the 13 June 1994 Agreement on Interparliamentary and Intergovernmental Co-operation of the Baltic States, the 14 April 1996 Protocol on Co-operation between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers, these Statutes and other legal acts. The co-operation between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers shall be implemented by the Presidium and standing committees, and it shall be co-ordinated by the Secretariats of the Baltic Assembly and of the Baltic Council of Ministers.

Article 46. The Baltic Council

1. Each year the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers shall hold a joint meeting – the Baltic Council. The venue and time of the joint meeting and its agenda shall be co-ordinated through the appropriate secretariats on the basis of an agreement

reached between the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic State presiding in the Baltic Council of Ministers.

2. At the annual joint meeting, the Baltic Council of Ministers shall present a report on the co-operation of the Baltic States, joint activities during the past year and plans for further co-operation.

3. At annual joint meetings, as well as during the period between them, members of the Baltic Assembly may submit to the Baltic Council of Ministers, personally or on behalf of the national delegation, individual standing committee or registered party group (faction), oral or written inquiries regarding Baltic co-operation.

4. The Baltic Assembly may address the Baltic Council of Ministers with proposals and recommendations. The Baltic Assembly may request from the Baltic Council of Ministers a progress report on the implementation of Baltic Assembly resolutions.

CHAPTER 6 FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 47. Termination of the Activities of the Baltic Assembly

1. The activities of the Baltic Assembly shall cease in the event of the termination of the validity of the Agreement on Interparliamentary and Intergovernmental Co-operation of the Baltic States.

2. The parliament of each Baltic State may adopt a decision to withdraw from the Baltic Assembly. In this event, the activities of the Baltic Assembly shall be deemed terminated in six months from the day on which the parliament of the Baltic State which made such a decision gave notice of it to the Presidium or the chairmen of other national delegations to the Baltic Assembly.

Article 48. Texts and Interpretation of the Statutes

1. The present Statutes have been drawn up in four languages: Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and English. All the texts shall be equally valid, but in the event of a dispute over them, the English text shall be regarded as the basic one.

2. If necessary, the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly shall, upon receiving the conclusions of the Legal Committee, have the right to interpret these Statutes.

Article 49. Coming into Force of the Statutes

1. These Statutes shall come into force from the moment of their adoption by consensus at the Session of the Baltic Assembly (at a joint meeting of the delegations).

2. Upon the adoption of the present Statutes of the Baltic Assembly, the 8 November 1991 Regulations of the Baltic Assembly and the amendments made thereto shall be null and void.