

Elections of Members of Parliament Act

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CHAPTER 1

Article 1

This Act shall define the terms and conditions for the election of Members of Parliament, as well as the terms and conditions for filling in seats made vacant before the expiry of the term of office in the event of termination of powers of Members of Parliament.

Article 2

Elections shall be held on the basis of general, equal and direct suffrage by the secret ballot.

Article 3

(1) All Bulgarian citizens above the age of 18 as of the election day inclusive, except for those under legal disability or persons serving imprisonment sentences, shall have the right to elect Members of Parliament.

(2) All Bulgarian citizens above the age of 21 as of the election day inclusive and without any other citizenship, except for those under legal disability or persons serving imprisonment sentences, shall have the right to be elected as Members of Parliament.

Article 4

(1) Each voter shall be entitled to one vote.

(2) The vote of each voter shall be equal to the vote of any other voter.

Article 5

(1) Elections shall be held on a non-working day for the whole country.

(2) Elections shall be scheduled by the President of the Republic not later than 60 days prior to the election day.

(3) The President of the Republic shall endorse the specimens of the ballot papers and promulgate them in The State Gazette not later than 55 days prior to the election day.

Article 6

(1) Elections shall be held on the basis of the proportional representation system with election tickets of parties, coalitions and independent candidates registered in multi-seat constituencies.

(2) The D'Ondt method shall be applied to the allocation of seats among parties and coalitions at a nationwide level.

(3) The parties and coalitions which have carried at least four per cent of the valid votes at the nationwide level, as well as the independent candidates who have carried at least as many votes as the constituency quota shall participate in the allocation of seats.

Article 7

(1) The Council of Ministers and the regional and municipal administration in cooperation with the election committee shall carry out the organisational and technical preparation for the elections.

(2) The costs for the preparation and holding of the elections, except for the production costs of voting ballots, shall be borne by the state budget in accordance with the accounts drawn up in consultation with the Central Election Committee.

(3) Any applications, petitions and other certificates under this Act shall be exempted from government charges or fees.

CHAPTER 2

Article 8

The following election committees shall be established for holding elections:

1. Central Election Committee – one for the whole country. This Committee shall be appointed to serve until the termination of the powers of the National Assembly;
2. Constituency Election Committees – one for each constituency;
3. District Election Committees – one for each election district.

Article 9

(1) The Central Election Committee shall be appointed by a Decree of the President of the Republic within the time limits under Art. 5, para 2 upon consultation with the parliamentary parties and coalitions. It shall consist of up to 25 members and include a Chairperson, Deputy Chairpersons, and a Secretary.

(2) No party or coalition shall have a majority in the Central election Committee through its representatives therein. The Chairperson and the Secretary shall belong to different political parties and coalitions.

Article 10

(1) Members of the Central Election Committee shall be persons with university degrees and the majority shall belong to the legal profession. Bulgarian citizens eligible under Art. 3, para 2 shall be appointed members of the Central Election Committee.

(2) No member of the Central Election Committee may be a Member of Parliament or candidate for Member of Parliament, a judge in the Supreme Administrative Court, a serviceman in the Armed Forces or an officer in the Ministry of the Interior while serving in this capacity.

Article 11

Members of the Central Election Committee shall receive remuneration as determined by the President of the Republic.

Article 12

(1) The Central Election Committee shall appoint Constituency Election Committees at the proposal of Regional Governors as consulted with parliamentary parties and coalitions not later than 45 days prior to the election day. Other parties or coalitions may also join the consultations. Parliamentary political forces shall be entitled to have representatives in each Constituency Election Committee.. (2) Regional Governors shall submit their proposals not later than 50 days prior to the election day.

(2) Regional Governors shall submit their proposals not later than 50 days prior to the election day.

(3) Failing to submit a proposal within the time limits under para 2, Regional Governors shall send the minutes taken at the consultations and the written proposals or objections of the parties or coalitions to the Central Election Committee forthwith.

Article 13

A Constituency Election Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, two Deputy Chairpersons, a Secretary and members. The total membership shall be as follows:

1. For constituencies with up to nine seats inclusive – from 11 to 13 members;
2. For constituencies with ten or more seats – from 15 to 17 members.

Article 14

A District Election Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson, a Secretary and members. The total membership shall be as follows:

1. For districts with up to 300 voters inclusive – up to seven members;
2. For districts with over 300 voters – up to nine members.

Article 15

The remuneration of Constituency and District Election Committees shall be determined by the Central Election Committee.

Article 16

The Central Election Committee and Constituency Election Committees shall have seals.

Article 17

Expert working groups may be established at the Central Election Committee and the Constituency Election Committees. The remuneration of experts shall be determined by the Central Election Committee.

Article 18

(1) Constituency Election Committees shall appoint District Election Committees at the proposal of Mayors as consulted with parliamentary parties and coalitions not later than 25 days prior to the election day. Other parties or coalitions may also join the consultations. Parliamentary political forces shall be entitled to have representatives in each District Election Committee.

(2) Mayors shall submit their proposals not later than 30 days prior to the election day.

(3) Failing to submit a proposal within the time limits under para 2, Mayors shall send the minutes taken at the consultations and the written proposals or objections of the parties or coalitions to the Constituency Election Committee forthwith.

(4) Failing to appoint the District Election Committees within the time limits under para 1, Constituency Election Committees shall send the whole documentation to the Central Election Committee forthwith. The latter shall appoint the District Election Committees.

Article 19

(1) The proposals of parties and coalitions on the appointment of election committees shall include a list of substitutes, where the nominees are incapable of performing their functions on a long-term basis.

(2) Substitution shall take effect: for the Central Election Committee upon a Decree of the President of the Republic; for Constituency Election Committees upon a decision of the Central Election Committee; and for District Election Committees upon a decision of the

Constituency Election Committee.

Article 20

- (1) Persons eligible under Art. 3, para 2 shall be appointed members of the Constituency and District Election Committees.
- (2) Parties and coalitions shall nominate their representatives in writing.
- (3) No Regional Governor or Deputy Regional Governor, Mayor or Deputy Mayor or person under Art. 10, para 2 may become members of Constituency and District Election Committees.
- (4) No party or coalition may have a majority in a Constituency or District Election Committee with its representatives. The Chairperson and the Secretary shall belong to different parties and coalitions.

Article 21

- (1) Election committee members shall be deemed officials within the meaning of the Criminal Code, while discharging their duties.
- (2) Election committee members shall be entitled to unpaid leave or paid annual leave at their choice for the time they need to serve in the respective committee. The duration of the leave shall be recognised for social security and health insurance purposes.
- (3) The social security and health insurance payments for members of the Central Election Committee and Constituency Election Committees shall be covered by their employers in pursuance of the Mandatory Social Security Code, the Health Insurance Act and the Protection against Unemployment and Employment Encouragement Act from the time of their appointment to the respective committee to the completion of their service there.
- (4) The members of the Central Election Committee and Constituency Election Committees who are registered as unemployed shall receive also compensation under Chapter Four, Section III of the Protection against Unemployment and Employment Encouragement Act from the time of their appointment to the respective committee to the completion of their service there.
- (5) Election committee members may not wear the distinction signs of parties, coalitions or initiative committees or engage in canvassing, while discharging their duties.

Article 22

- (1) The meetings of election committees shall be legitimate when attended by more than a half of their members.
- (2) The decisions of an election committee shall be signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary. Where either of them is absent, the decision shall be signed by a Deputy Chairperson.
- (3) Minutes shall be taken at the meetings of election committees and they shall be signed as set out in para 2.
- (4) Canvassers may attend the meetings of Constituency Election Committees. Their statements, opinions and objections shall be put on the record.

Article 23

- (1) The Central Election Committee shall:
 1. monitor the implementation of this Act within the territory of the country and at the diplomatic missions abroad;
 2. provide methodological guidance to and supervise the activities of Constituency and District Election Committees;
 3. support a web site on the Internet to publish decisions, methodological instructions, estimated and final results of the elections and other documents and data;
 4. set out the terms and conditions for Bulgarian citizens to vote abroad not later than 50 days prior to the election day;
 5. appoint Constituency Election Committees and District Election Committees where the Constituency Election Committee has failed to appoint them within the prescribed time limits;
 6. register parties and coalitions to run the elections, determine their election ballots and issue certificates;
 7. hear petitions against decisions and actions of Constituency Election Committees, issue a final decision thereon within three days and announce it forthwith;
 8. set out the terms and conditions for participation of observers not later than 50 days prior to the election day and issue certificates to them;
 9. approve and promulgate in The State Gazette the methodology for determining the number of seats in the constituencies and the results of the election not later than 55 days prior to the election day;
 10. determine the number of seats in the multi-seat constituencies on the basis of a uniform representation rate for the whole country in accordance with the number of the population;
 11. set out the terms and conditions for the competitive bidding for the computer processing of the results of the election not later than 54 days prior to the election day;
 12. assign the computer processing of the results of the election to the winner in the competitive bidding not later than

40 days prior to the election day;

13. issue methodological guidance to the Constituency and District Election Committees with regard to the implementation of this Act;

14. set out the terms and conditions for conducting opinion polls on the election day not later than 20 days prior to the election day;

15. announce the results of the elections and issue certificates to the Members of Parliament elected on the basis of the proportional representation system;

16. promulgate the results of the elections in The State Gazette immediately after they are announced;

17. set out the procedure for verifying double voting and assign its application to a team of experts;

18. make the results of the verification under subpara 17 available to the parties concerned and seize the prosecutor's offices in the event of established double voting;

19. provide the results of the voting by election districts for the whole country on a magnetic carrier to the participants in the elections and publish them in the Internet;

20. publish the results of the election by election districts for the whole country in a special bulletin and on a magnetic carrier not later than 40 days after the election day;

21. submit a copy of the records of the District and Constituency Election Committees to the State Archive Stock;

(2) The decisions of the Central Election Committee shall be communicated by means of publication in a bulletin of the Bulgarian News Agency.

(3) The decisions of the Central Election Committee under para 1, subparas 5, 6, 8, 12 and 14 shall be subject to appeal before the Supreme Administrative Court within three days of their communication. The Court shall issue a final judgement within three days.

Article 24

(1) The Constituency Election Committee shall:

1. monitor the implementation of this Act within the territory of the multi-seat constituency;

2. appoint District Election Committees;

3. monitor and supervise the drawing up and announcement of election rolls, the establishment of election districts, the printing of ballots and the issuance of certificates for voting elsewhere;

4. monitor the creation of conditions for physically handicapped persons to vote;

5. approve the numbering of election districts;

6. register election tickets of parties, coalitions and independent candidates and announce them in public;

7. register canvassers of candidates running for Parliament;

8. verify the signatures gathered in support of independent candidates;

9. submit the details of registered candidates for verification by the Committee under Art. 4, para 1 of the Access Act to the Documents of the Former State Security Service and the Former Intelligence Service of the General Staff immediately after the registration is completed;

10. communicate the results of the verification under subpara 9 to the leadership of political parties and coalitions and the initiative committees for the nomination of independent candidates;

11. provide District Election Committees with ballot boxes, voting ballots and envelopes, forms for records, transcripts and blueprints, while supervising their storage, distribution among districts and transportation;

12. hear petitions against decisions and actions of District Election Committees and issue a final decision thereon forthwith;

13. establish the voting results in the constituency;

14. announce the elected independent candidates and issue certificates to them;

15. submit the district records, the constituency records and other papers to the Central Election Committee.

(2) The decisions of Constituency Election Committees shall be announced at a generally accessible place in the buildings where they are located.

(3) The decisions of Constituency Election Committees under para 1, subparas 2, 6, 7 and 8 shall be subject to appeal before the Central Election Committee within three days of their announcement. The latter shall issue a decision within three days and announce it forthwith, whereby such decision shall be final.

Article 25

(1) District Election Committees shall:

1. monitor the implementation of this Act within the voting premises and in the area of the election district;
2. assist the arrangement of the voting premises as required by law and with a view to ensuring the access of physically handicapped persons;
3. ensure the free and calm conduct of voting in the election district;
4. count the votes, draw up the records of the results of the voting in the election district and submit the records to the Constituency Election Committees within 24 hours after the end of voting;
5. submit the other papers and materials to the municipal administration within the time limits under subpara 4;
6. hear petitions and rule on them forthwith;
7. announce the results of the voting in public.

(2) The instructions of the Chairperson of the District Election Committee shall be binding on all citizens at the voting premises. Such instructions may be repealed at a decision of the District Election Committee.

CHAPTER 3

Article 26

(1) Election rolls shall be drawn up by the municipal administrations in the communities where the population registrar is kept and signed by the Mayor of the municipality or the Mayor of the mayoralty or the Proxy Mayor and the Secretary of the municipality. In cities divided into wards, election rolls shall be signed by the Mayor and the Secretary of the ward.

(2) Each voter shall be entered into one single election roll.

Article 27

(1) Election rolls shall be compiled for each election district separately. They shall be printed on the basis of the National Population registrar by the Civil Registration and Administrative Services Department at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.

(2) Election rolls shall be drawn up on the basis of permanent addresses.

(3) Election rolls shall specify alphabetically the full name of the voter, his or her personal identification number, the permanent address or the current address specified by the voter where the current address does not coincide with the permanent one, and the type and number of identity document, and a Notes column shall be added.

(4) Rolls shall include all Bulgarian citizens eligible under Art. 3, para 1.

(5) Where the name of the community, street, housing area or number of housing building was changed during the preceding six months, the roll shall feature also the old name or number.

Article 28

(1) The names of disenfranchised or deceased citizens as of the election day shall be deleted from election rolls.

(2) The names of citizens who have moved abroad at least two months before the election day and have not returned until the submission of the rolls to the District Election Committees shall be deleted.

(3) The deletion under para 2 shall be done at an application of the persons who have left the country or officially in accordance with the data made available by the Ministry of the Interior from the applications for issuing Bulgarian identity documents.

(4) The names of citizens who have the right to vote at the respective district but have been missed in the election rolls shall be added thereto.

(5) The adding of names shall be done by the bodies under Art. 26, para 1 pending the submission of rolls to District Election Committees at the request of the voter given in writing or on the election day by the District Committee at the request of the voter and upon presentation of an identity document.

(6) Where the persons under para 2 return to the country after the completion of the election roll, they shall be entered in pursuance of paras 4 and 5.

(7) Persons who have served their imprisonment sentence or are no longer under legal disability shall be entered into the election rolls upon presentation of the respective document to the municipality, ward or mayoralty.

(8) Any refusal to delete or add a name may be appealed before the District Court within two days. The Court shall hear the petition in public, while summoning the petitioner and the bodies under Art. 26, para 1, within two days and issue a final judgement which shall be announced forthwith.

(9) Any refusal by a District Election Committee to add a name under para 5 may be appealed before the Constituency Election Committee which shall issue a decision on the petition forthwith.

Article 29

(1) Election rolls shall be announced by the bodies under Art. 26, para 1 not later than 40 days prior to the election day at visible places

within the territory of the respective election district. These rolls shall not feature the personal identification numbers and the numbers of the identity documents of the voters.

(2) At the places where the election rolls are announced, the respective District Election Committee shall announce the findings of the report under Art. 6, para 2, subparas 1, 5 and 7 of the Access Act to the Documents of the Former State Security Service and the Former Intelligence Service of the General Staff on the registered candidates within five days after the registration is completed;

Article 30

(1) Conscripts in the Armed Forces shall be entered into the election rolls of the election district which is the closest to their military unit.

(2) The list of the persons under para 1 shall be drawn up and signed by the commander of the unit and it shall be sent to the Mayor of the municipality or the ward or the mayoralty for entering into the election rolls not later than 45 days prior to the election day.

(3) The bodies under Art. 26, para 1 at the permanent address of such persons shall be advised of their entering into the rolls so that to delete them from the respective election rolls.

(4) The Ministry of Defence shall provide the Civil Registration and Administrative Services Department at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works with information about the location of conscripts as of the election day for the purposes of entering them into the election rolls under para 1.

Article 31

(1) Conscripts who are on leave and stay in the community of their permanent address on the election date shall be entered into the election roll of their district in case their names have been deleted there.

(2) When allowing the leave under para 1, the commander of the unit shall immediately advise the Mayor of the municipality or the ward or the mayoralty at the location of the military unit to delete the conscript from the election roll under Art. 30, para 1.

(3) Where conscripts are transferred to the military unit after the submission of the list under Art. 30, para 2 but prior to the submission of the rolls under Art. 30, para 1 to the District Election Committees, such conscripts shall be entered into the election rolls of the districts under Art. 30, para 1. In such cases, the commander of the units from which the conscripts have been transferred shall immediately advise the Mayor of the municipality or the ward or the mayoralty at the location of this military unit to delete such persons from the election rolls there.

Article 32

(1) Any voter may request the elimination of incomplete or wrong data on the election roll with an application given in writing to the Mayor of the municipality or the ward or the mayoralty.

(2) The respective administration shall accept applications not later than seven days prior to the election day.

(3) The Mayor of the municipality or the ward or the mayoralty shall examine the application within two days and issue a substantiated decision thereon, announcing it in public forthwith.

(4) Any person concerned may appeal against the decision before the District Court within two days. The Court shall examine the petition in public, while summoning the petitioner and the Mayor, within two days and issue a final judgement which shall be announced forthwith.

Article 33

(1) The election rolls at health establishments, recreational facilities, homes for aged people or others or on vessels sailing under the Bulgarian flag shall be drawn up by the head of the establishment or facility or home or by the captain of the vessel respectively.

(2) The head of the establishment or facility or home or the captain of the vessel shall advise the bodies under Art. 26, para 1 of the persons included on the rolls so that to delete them from the election rolls at their permanent address.

Article 34

Heads of prisons shall draw up the rolls of arrested persons who are nor serving an enforceable sentence.

Article 35

(1) Bulgarian expatriates who are in the country on the election day may vote at the place of their permanent address. Where such persons have been deleted from the election rolls prior to their submission to District Election Committees, they shall be re-entered into the rolls by the bodies under Art. 26, para 1.

(2) Where the persons under para 1 have arrived to the country not earlier than 24 hours prior to the submission of the election roll to the District Election Committee, they shall be entered into the election roll by the District Election Committee upon presentation of an identity document certifying their arrival to the country within the said time limits.

Article 36

(1) The bodies under Art. 26, para 1 shall issue certificate for voting elsewhere in one single copy to voters who have stated in advance that they will not vote in the district at their permanent address.

(2) Certificates shall be issued not later than 10 days prior to the election day.

(3) Persons who have received certificates shall be deleted from the election roll.

(4) Certificates shall be recorded into a special register.

(5) Holders of certificates for voting elsewhere shall be entered into an additional election roll signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary of the District Election Committee at the place of their stay on the election day. The certificates for voting elsewhere shall be attached to this roll.

(6) Holders of certificates for voting elsewhere shall be entitled to vote at the place of their permanent address. The Committee shall enter such voters into the additional roll to which the certificates under para 1 shall be attached.

(7) Voters whose current and permanent address are located in different communities may request to be entered into the election roll at their current address not later than 14 days prior to the election day.

(8) The request under para 7 shall be given in writing before the bodies under Art. 26, para 1 at the place of the current address of the person. After the entry, they shall officially advise the bodies under Art. 26, para 1 at the place of the permanent address of the person not later than seven days prior to the election day so that to delete the name from the roll at the permanent address.

Article 37

(1) Election rolls for voting abroad shall be drawn up by the heads of diplomatic missions on the basis of personal statements expressing the will to vote not later than the election day.

(2) Voters who have not been entered into the election roll prior to the election day shall be entered into the roll by the District Election Committee.

Article 38

(1) Any adjustments of election rolls shall be announced forthwith.

(2) Any deletion from the election rolls shall be made automatically prior to their printing or by means of a horizontal line so that to leave the deleted name legible where the deletion is done after the printing of the rolls.

CHAPTER 4

Article 39

(1) For the purposes of holding elections, the territory of the country shall be divided into 31 multi-seat constituencies, including three constituencies in the city of Sofia and two constituencies in the city of Plovdiv. The other constituencies shall coincide with the boundaries of administrative regions.

(2) The President of the Republic shall determine the names, boundaries and numbering of constituencies not later than 55 days prior to the election day.

(3) The Central Election Committee shall determine the number of seats for each constituency on the basis of a uniform representation rate for the country depending on the number of the population not later than 50 days prior to the election day, while applying the largest residual method.

Article 40

(1) Voting and counting of votes shall be conducted by election districts.

(2) Mayors of municipalities shall issue orders to establish the election districts within the territory of the municipality not later than 55 days prior to the election day and propose their numbering to the Constituency Election Committees.

(3) The order of the Mayor shall be announced in public. It shall be subject to appeal before the Regional Governor within three days and the Regional Governor shall issue the final decision within three days.

Article 41

(1) Any election district may include up to 1,000 voters.

(2) Communities shall have as many districts as the times the number 1,000 is included in the number of voters. Additional districts may be established in the case of a residual.

(3) Where communities are territorially separate, the Mayor of the municipality may establish election districts with at least 20 voters.

(4) Election districts in cities divided into wards shall follow the ward boundaries.

(5) At health establishments, recreational facilities, homes for aged people and others and vessels sailing under the Bulgarian flag abroad, election districts shall be established provided that at least 20 voters are present there.

(6) Election districts under para 5 shall be established by the heads of the establishments or facilities or homes or the captains of the vessels.

(7) Arrested persons who are not serving an enforceable sentence may vote in prison where it is possible for an election district to be established in pursuance of the requirements under para 5.

(8) Heads of Bulgarian diplomatic missions abroad shall establish election districts provided that at least 20 voters have personally stated their will to vote.

Article 42

Captains of vessels sailing under the Bulgarian flag and leaving the country prior to 7 p.m. on the day preceding the election day shall receive voting papers and materials from the District Election Committee at the location of the vessel.

CHAPTER 5**Article 43**

(1) Candidates to run the elections shall be nominated by parties or coalitions or by initiative committees nominating independent candidates.

(2) Candidates for Parliament nominated by parties and coalitions shall be arranged on election tickets by multi-seat constituencies. Each independent candidate shall have an independent ticket.

(3) Election tickets of parties and coalitions shall be arranged and proposed for registration by their central leadership.

(4) Coalitions shall run the elections with a common election ticket in each multi-seat constituency. Parties participating in the coalition may not run the elections with independent tickets.

(5) The number of candidates on an election ticket may not exceed double the number of seats in the multi-seat constituency.

Article 44

(1) Any candidate for Parliament may be proposed for registration by one single party or coalition in not more than two multi-seat constituencies.

(2) Where a candidate has been registered by more than one party or coalition, the earliest registration shall be valid.

(3) Where a candidate under para 1 has been registered in more than two constituencies, the earliest two registrations shall be valid.

(4) An independent candidate may be proposed for registration by one single initiative committee and in one single multi-seat constituency.

(5) Where an independent candidate has been registered in more than one constituency, the earliest registration shall be valid.

(6) Constituency Election Committees shall advise the Central Election Committee of the registrations within 24 hours after the expiration of the deadline for registration.

(7) The Central Election Committee shall ascertain and declare invalid the registrations violating paras 2, 3 and 5. It shall announce its decision within three days and advise the Constituency Election Committee and the respective candidates, parties and coalitions and initiative committees forthwith.

Article 45

(1) Election tickets shall be registered by Constituency Election Committees into a separate register upon presentation of the following documents:

1. nomination by the central leadership of the party or coalition or initiative committee;
2. statements by the candidates that they agree to be registered by the parties or coalitions or initiative committees which have nominated them;
3. statements by the candidates that they comply with the requirements under Art. 3, para 2, specifying their permanent address and personal identification number.

(2) Election tickets shall be registered at Constituency Election Committees not later than 30 days prior to the election day.

Article 46

(1) Independent candidates for Parliament may be registered in only one multi-seat constituency, where the candidate has been supported by the necessary number of voters with permanent address within the territory of the constituency as follows:

1. in constituencies with up to four seats inclusive – 1,100 voters;
2. in constituencies with five seats – 1,200 voters;
3. in constituencies with six seats – 1,300 voters;
4. in constituencies with seven seats – 1,400 voters;
5. in constituencies with eight seats – 1,500 voters;
6. in constituencies with nine seats – 1,600 voters;
7. in constituencies with ten seats – 1,700 voters;
8. in constituencies with eleven seats – 1,800 voters;
9. in constituencies with twelve seats – 1,900 voters;

10. in constituencies with thirteen or more seats – 2,000 voters.

(2) Independent candidates may not be put on the election tickets of parties and coalitions.

(3) Initiative committees for the nomination of independent candidates consisting of three to seven voters with permanent addresses within the territory of the constituency shall be established. Initiative committees shall be registered with the Constituency Election Committee. Each voter may participate in one single initiative committee.

(4) Any voter supporting the nomination of an independent candidate shall certify his or her support with his or her own signature before a member of the initiative committee. Such voter shall specify also his or her name, personal identification number and permanent address.

(5) Members of initiative committees under para 4 shall be liable within the meaning of the Criminal Code for the authenticity of the signatures given in their presence.

(6) The list of signatures shall be submitted to the Constituency Election Committee not later than 27 days prior to the election day.

Article 47

(1) Within 24 days prior to the election day, the Constituency Election Committee shall establish the results of the signature lists under Art. 46 and advise the Central Election Committee forthwith.

(2) Where a Constituency Election Committee or the Central Election Committee establishes that an independent candidate has not been supported by the required number of voters, the registration shall be cancelled at a decision which shall be communicated to the initiative committee forthwith. Where the decision has been made by the Central Election Committee, it shall communicate the decision to the Constituency Election Committee forthwith.

Article 48

(1) Where the requirements under this Act have not been observed, the Constituency Election Committee shall refuse to register candidates, election tickets and initiative committees, giving the reasons thereof in writing and communicating its decision forthwith.

(2) Any refusal under para 1 shall be subject to appeal before the Central Election Committee within three days of its communication.

(3) In the event of refused registration or declared invalidity of the registration of a candidate on the election ticket of a party or coalition, the latter may propose for registration another candidate not later than ten days after the date of the refusal or the statement on the invalidity but not later than seven days prior to the election day.

(4) Where a candidate on the registered election ticket of a party or coalition dies or is incapable of running the elections on a long-term basis, the party or coalition may nominate another candidate in pursuance of the provisions of para 3.

(5) Parties and coalitions may request that the registration of a person on their election ticket be cancelled on grounds of evidence of collaboration with the former state security service. In such cases, parties and coalitions may nominate another candidate not later than seven days prior to the election day.

Article 49

(1) Parties may run the elections on their own or in coalition with other parties and coalitions.

(2) Any party and coalition may run the elections only in one single coalition in all constituencies.

Article 50

(1) Only parties and coalitions registered with the Central Election Committee may run the elections.

(2) The central leaderships of parties and coalitions shall submit applications for registration not later than 46 days prior to the election day, specifying the preferred basic and reserve colour of the ballot, as well as the full name of acronym to be printed on the ballot.

(3) Parties shall attach the following documents to the application:

1. a certified copy of the court decision of the Sofia City Court on the registration of the party updated as of the date of scheduling the elections, as well as a copy of The State Gazette issue where the court decision is promulgated;
2. specimens of the signatures of the persons representing the party and a specimen of the seal.

(4) Coalitions shall attach the following documents to the application:

1. the documents under para 3 for each of the parties participating in the coalition;
2. the decision on the establishment of the coalition signed by the persons representing the parties, specimens of the signatures of the persons representing the coalition and a specimen of the seal of the coalition, if any.

(5) Where the coalition includes another coalition, the latter shall present the documents under para 4. The documents under para 3 shall be presented for the other parties in the coalition, as well as the decision on its establishment.

(6) The Central Election Committee shall send the list of the registered parties and coalitions to the Constituency Election Committees.

Article 51

Each candidate for Parliament may have canvassers to assist him or her and to represent his or her interests before government

institutions, non-governmental organisations and election committees.

Article 52

(1) Candidates for parliament holding positions in the public administration shall interrupt their service upon their registration and get unpaid leave or annual paid leave at their choice for the period from the registration to the announcement of the results of the election inclusive.

(2) The leave shall be recognised for social security and health insurance purposes.

(3) Where the registration is cancelled, the leave under para 1 shall be discontinued as of the date of cancellation. Where the cancellation is repealed, the leave shall be deemed to be uninterrupted.

(4) Elected candidates, working in central government or municipal institutions, enterprises or companies with central government or municipal interest exceeding 50 per cent or organisations, shall be entitled to return to their previous positions upon termination of their powers or, where the position is closed, to occupy another equivalent position at the same central government or municipal institution, enterprise or company with central government or municipal interest exceeding 50 per cent or organisation or at another one with their consent.

(5) Where the previous position of the elected candidate is occupied by another person, the employment relationship with the other person shall be terminated without serving any notice.

(6) The provisions under para 1 shall not apply to Ministers and the Prime Minister. Their powers shall continue also after their registration as candidates for Parliament.

Article 53

(1) During the election campaign, registered candidates for parliament and canvassers may not be arrested or held criminally liable except for cases of existing grave offences.

(2) Candidates for Parliament and canvassers shall be deemed officials within the meaning of the Criminal Code from the time of registration of election tickets to the announcement of the results of the election.

(3) Where the registration of a candidate for Parliament is cancelled, the rights and obligations under paras 1 and 2 shall be terminated as of the date of the cancellation. The cancellation shall be valid for the candidate's canvassers as well.

CHAPTER 6

Article 54

The election campaign shall start 30 days prior to the election day and end 24 hours prior to the election day.

Article 55

(1) Citizens, parties and coalitions, initiative committees, candidates and their canvassers shall be free to canvass orally or in writing at election meetings and in the mass media.

(2) The election canvassing shall be conducted in the official language.

(3) Election meetings shall be held in public. The organisers and the bodies of the Ministry of the Interior shall be responsible for maintaining order at the meetings.

(4) Civil servants in the central and municipal public administration, servicemen in the Armed Forces, employees of the Ministry of the Interior, judges, prosecutors and investigating officers, as well as persons holding elective positions in trade union organisations may not engage in canvassing.

(5) The Minister of Defence, together with the Central Election Committee, shall determine the terms and conditions for conscripts to become aware of the programs of parties, coalitions and candidates. No canvassing shall be allowed in military units. Commanders of military units shall provide conscripts with free access to the press, radio and television in their leisure time, as well as during their garrison leaves, and access to other election events in the community where the garrison is located.

Article 56

Independent candidates and parties and coalitions registered to run the elections shall be entitled to equal access to the sources of information needed for the purposes of the election campaign.

Article 57

(1) The editor-in-chief of a daily newspaper or a periodical which has published a material infringing upon the rights and good name of a candidate shall publish the response in the earliest following issue.

(2) The response shall be published at the same place and the same font.

(3) The response shall be published free of charge up to the size of the material to which it replies.

Article 58

(1) During the election campaign, candidates, parties and coalitions and initiative committees may prepare and disseminate posters, advertisements, appeals and other canvassing materials. Each canvassing material shall bear the name on behalf of which it is issued.

(2) Canvassing materials shall be put at places specified by the Mayor or, when they are put out on buildings and fences, with the consent of the property owner or manager.

(3) The use of public transport for canvassing purposes shall be prohibited.

(4) The use of canvassing materials which threaten the life and health of citizens, private, municipal or state-owned property and the traffic safety or materials infringing upon good morals, the dignity and good name of candidates shall be prohibited.

(5) The destruction of canvassing materials put in accordance with the requirements of this Act shall be prohibited until the end of the election day.

(6) Mayors of municipalities, wards or mayoralties or Proxy Mayors shall remove or seize the canvassing materials put in violation of this Act at a decision of the Constituency Election Committee and, if needed, with the assistance of the bodies of the Ministry of the Interior. On the election day, such materials may be removed also at a decision of the District Election Committee.

Article 59

(1) No canvassing shall be allowed from 24 hours prior to the election day to 8 p.m. on the election day.

(2) No findings of opinion polls in connection with the elections may be announced during the time set out in para 1.

(3) On the election day, opinion polls may be conducted outside the buildings where election districts are located through interviewing people who have already voted at the exit provided that the poll does not impede the voting process. The findings of such exit polls may be announced after 7 p.m.

Article 60

(1) The election programs of radio and TV operators shall start 30 days prior to the election day and end 24 hours prior to the election day.

(2) The Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National radio shall cover the election campaign in the form of introductory and final statements, special news and debates.

(3) The use of the programs of the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio for the purposes of the election campaign shall not be allowed beyond the time allotted for the forms under para 2.

(4) The management of the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio shall observe the principles of equal treatment and objective coverage in covering the events of parties, coalitions and candidates for Parliament in their news programs.

(5) The teams, forms and topics of the debates shall be specified jointly by the General Directors of the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio and authorised representatives of the parties and coalitions, while taking into account their parliamentary representation. These conditions shall be subject to approval by the Central Election Committee not later than 31 days prior to the election day.

Article 61

In the election campaign on the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio there shall be prohibited the use of elements of commercial advertising or the participation of candidates and representatives of parties and coalitions in commercials.

Article 62

The sequence of presentation of parties and coalitions at the time of the statements, news and debates shall be announced by the Central Election Committee upon casting lots in the presence of representatives of the parties and coalitions not later than 31 days prior to the election day.

Article 63

The election campaign on the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio shall start and end with five-minute statements by the candidates or representatives of parties and coalitions.

Article 64

(1) The Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio shall cover the election campaign of parties and coalitions in special news.

(2) The total duration of the special news for the whole election campaign period shall reach up to 120 minutes for the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio each but not more than five minutes a day.

Article 65

(1) The Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio shall offer the candidates for Parliament and the representatives of parties and coalitions TV and radio time for three debates with duration of up to 180 minutes.

(2) Parliamentary parties and coalitions shall be allotted at least a half of the time under para 1, while the rest of the time shall be allotted to the other parties and coalitions.

(3) Debates may be conducted with the simultaneous participation of candidates for parliament and representatives of all parties and coalitions registered to run the elections.

Article 66

(1) Initiative committees and independent candidates, as well as parties and coalitions shall use regional radio and TV centres during the election campaign period under the terms and conditions laid down for the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio.

(2) Regional radio and TV centres shall offer up to two hours of radio and TV time for debates of candidates and representatives of parties and coalitions.

(3) The terms and conditions for participation in the debates shall be established by lasting lots not later than 31 days prior to the election day. The heads of regional radio and TV centres, together with representatives of the parties, coalitions and initiative committees, shall specify the teams, forms and conditions for these broadcasts and also the topics of the debates.

Article 67

(1) The other radio and TV operators, including cable TV channels, may offer time for election campaign coverage under the same terms and conditions and at the same prices to independent candidates, parties and coalitions.

(2) The owners of the radio and TV operators under para 1 or their representatives shall announce the terms and conditions for election campaign coverage in writing.

(3) The terms and conditions under para 2 shall be submitted to the Central Election Committee for radio and TV operators with national coverage or to the Constituency Election Committees for radio and TV operators with regional and local coverage not later than 10 days prior to the beginning of election campaign broadcasts

Article 68

Parties, coalitions and initiative committees shall pay for the election campaign broadcasts on the Bulgarian National Television and the Bulgarian National Radio at prices established by the Council of Ministers not later than 40 days of the election day. Payment shall be effected before the broadcasting of the program.

Article 69

Where the broadcast has infringed upon the rights and good name of a candidate, the latter shall have the right to response in pursuance of Art. 18 of the Radio and Television Act. The request may be submitted to the respective radio or TV operator within 24 hours after the time of the broadcasting.

Article 70

(1) Where radio and TV operators violate the rules for the conduct of the election campaign, petitions may be served within 24 hours after the time of the broadcasting.

(2) Petitions shall be served to:

1. the Central Election Committee, where the license of operators has national coverage;
2. the Constituency Election Committee at the principal office of business of the operator, where the latter has regional or local coverage.

(3) Where the petition has been served to a committee which is not competent on the issue, this committee shall refer it to the relevant committee forthwith and advise the petitioner thereof.

(4) The competent Constituency Election Committee shall examine the petition within 24 hours and issue a decision which will be final.

Article 71

(1) The election campaign shall be financed through own resources of the independent candidates and the parties and coalitions, as well as through gifts donated by individuals and legal entities.

(2) The gifts under para 1 may not exceed BGL 10,000 per individual and BGL 30,000 per legal entity.

(3) The financing of the election campaign by legal entities in which the central government or municipal interest exceeds 50 per cent shall be prohibited.

(4) The financing of the election campaign by foreign individuals or legal entities or by joint ventures in which the foreign interest exceeds 25 per cent shall be prohibited.

Article 72

The total financing under Art. 71, para 1 may not exceed:

1. BGL 1,000,000 for parties;
2. BGL 2,000,000 for coalitions;
3. BGL 200,000 for initiative committees.

Article 73

Within a month after the election day, parties, coalitions and initiative committees shall report the funds raised and spent during the

election campaign to the National Accounts Office.

CHAPTER 7

Article 74

(1) The voting for parties and coalitions shall be performed with colour ballots in blue, red, green or orange or white ballots with up to three colour stripes, whereby the combination of the colours of the national flag or identical combinations of certain colours shall be prohibited.

(2) The ballot shall specify the number of the constituency, the name of the party or coalition, as well as the names of the persons on the election ticket. The names shall be arranged on the ticket and numbered successively.

(3) Parties or coalitions shall run the elections with colour ballots or white ballots with colour stripes in accordance with the registration with the Central Election Committee.

(4) Parties and coalitions shall be entitled to receive the same ballot which they used in previous elections.

(5) Where two or more parties apply for the same ballot, the latter shall be given to the party or coalition which has used such ballot on its own or in coalition in two or more parliamentary elections. Where all participants in a coalition that ran the previous parliamentary elections with a common ballot give their consent in writing with the ballot to be given to one of them, the ballot shall go to such participant. If there is no such party or coalition, the party or coalition with the earliest application shall be entitled to get the ballot.

(6) Where two or more parties or coalitions apply for the same ballot, the latter shall be given to the party or coalition which has used such ballot on its own or in coalition in more parliamentary elections. If they have run the same number of elections, the party or coalition with the earliest application shall be entitled to get the ballot.

Article 75

(1) Independent candidates shall be voted for with white ballots. The ballots shall specify the number of the constituency, the words "independent candidate" and the name of the candidate.

(2) Where two or more candidates with the same name have been registered in the constituency, the ballot shall feature the words "independent candidate No. ...". The District Election Committee shall determine the number by casting lots in the presence of the independent candidates or their canvassers.

Article 76

(1) Parties and coalitions shall pay the production costs of the ballots they use to run the elections. The number of the ballots printed shall be equal to the number of voters in the country plus ten per cent.

(2) Initiative committees and independent candidates for Parliament shall pay the production costs of the ballots which the candidates use to run the elections, The number of ballot printed for each independent candidate shall be equal to the number of voters in the multi-seat constituency plus ten per cent.

(3) The Council of Ministers shall announce the production costs of the ballots not later than 45 days prior to the election day.

(4) Parties and coalitions shall provide the Central Election Committee with a bank document on the transfer of the amount under para 1 to the account of the Council of Ministers not later than 31 days prior to the election day.

(5) Initiative committees or independent candidates shall provide the Constituency Election Committee with a bank document on the transfer of the amount under para 2 to the account of the Council of Ministers not later than 31 days prior to the election day. Constituency Committees shall advise the Central Election Committee of the transfer forthwith.

(6) Where a party or coalition fails to present a bank document on the transfer under para 4, the Central Election Committee shall cancel the registration and the election tickets registered thereof and advise all Constituency Election Committees forthwith.

(7) Where an initiative committee of an independent candidate it has nominated fails to present a bank document on the transfer under para 5, the Constituency Election Committee shall cancel the registration of the initiative committee and the independent candidate and advise the Central Election Committees forthwith.

Article 77

(1) In the course of the voting process, ballots shall be put into opaque envelopes.

(2) The ballots of parties and coalitions and of independent candidates shall be of the same size.

Article 78

(1) The voting shall take place by the election districts at special voting premises.

(2) Not later than 20 days prior to the election day, Mayors of municipalities shall send the list of addresses of election districts to the Constituency Election Committees.

Article 79

(1) No canvassing materials of parties, coalitions and independent candidates may be placed on the voting premises or at a distance of less than 50 metres from the entrance of the building where the voting premises are located over the period from 24 hours prior to the election day to the end of voting.

(2) Where the District Election Committee finds out materials under para 1, it shall remove them immediately and, if needed, with the assistance of the Mayor or the Proxy Mayor and the bodies of the Ministry of the Interior.

Article 80

(1) Prior to the election day, the District Election Committee shall receive from the municipal administration and the Constituency Election Committee:

1. ballot boxes;
2. voting ballots and envelopes;
3. election rolls;
4. forms of district records;
5. forms of transcripts and blueprints of district records;
6. other auxiliary and technical materials.

(2) The Chairperson of the District Election Committee and the Mayor of the municipality, ward or mayoralty and an authorised representative of the Constituency Election Committee shall sign a statement of delivery of the papers and materials.

(3) The Chairperson of the District Election Committee shall become responsible for the keeping of the papers and materials after the statement of delivery is signed.

Article 82

(1) Specimens of the voting ballots shall be placed in front of the voting premises.

(2) Voting booths shall be installed on the voting premises so that to ensure the secret ballot. Booths shall enable physically handicapped persons to vote.

(3) After the premises are prepared for the voting process, they shall be sealed with a paper strip bearing the signatures of the members of the District Election Committee present.

(4) Servicemen of the Ministry of the Interior shall guard the voting premises from the outside.

Article 82

(1) The Chairperson of District Election Committee shall break the seal of the voting premises and open the election day at 6 a.m., where more than a half of the committee members are present. In the case of absence of quorum, the Constituency Election Committee shall be informed.

(2) Where a sufficient number of members of the District Election Committee fail to appear within an hour, the Constituency Election Committee shall involve the necessary number of alternate members.

(3) Where the Chairperson of the District Election Committee is absent, the Constituency Election Committee shall appoint the Deputy Chairperson as Chairperson and a member of the District Election Committee as a Deputy Chairperson. Where the Deputy Chairperson or the Secretary of the District Election Committee is absent, the Constituency Election Committee shall appoint a member of the District Election Committee as a Deputy Chairperson or a Secretary.

(4) Where the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson and the Secretary of the District Election Committee are absent, the Constituency Election Committee shall complete the membership of the District Election Committee and appoint a Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson and a Secretary from among the members and the alternates.

(5) The Central Election Committee, at the proposal of the Constituency Election Committee, may allow the beginning of voting in some districts at 5 a.m.

Article 83

(1) Candidates, canvassers, representatives of parties, coalitions and initiative committees, observers, journalists and voters may attend the opening of the election day on the voting premises.

(2) The Chairperson of the District Election Committee shall verify the availability of the papers and materials under Art. 80, para 1. The ballot box shall be checked whether it is in proper condition and whether it is empty. After the inspection, the box shall be closed and sealed with paper strips signed by the committee members present.

(3) The Chairperson shall announce the election day open.

Article 84

(1) Canvassers, representatives of parties, coalitions and initiative committees, observers and journalists may attend the voting process on the voting premises.

(2) The committee members, canvassers and observers shall check from time to time the availability of sufficient number of ballots for each election ticket in the voting booths when there is no voter inside.

(3) The distribution of envelopes and ballots in advance shall be prohibited.

Article 85

- (1) Voters shall prove their identity with the identity card or personal (green) passport.
- (2) Conscripts shall prove their identity with their military card.
- (3) Voters abroad shall prove their identity with the (overseas) passport.
- (4) Sailors on ships shall prove their identity with sailor's passports.

Article 86

- (1) The Chairperson or an authorised committee member shall compare the details in the identity document to the election roll and allow the voter to cast his or her vote.
- (2) Where any discrepancy is observed between the personal identification numbers as indicated in the identity document and the election roll, the personal identification number as indicated in the identity document shall be entered into the Notes column of the election roll.
- (3) Holders of certificates for voting elsewhere shall submit the certificates to the Committee which shall check the details therein and attach them to the additional election roll. The certificates shall be integral parts of the roll.

Article 87

- (1) Voters shall receive an empty voting envelope from a member of the District Election Committee and go to the voting booth to vote. Only one voter may be in the booth at any time.
- (2) Voter shall cast their votes by:
 1. putting the selected election ticket into the envelope and closing it;
 2. going out of the booth and dropping the envelope into the ballot box;
 3. signing the election roll.
- (3) Having cast their votes, voters shall get their identity documents back and leave the voting premises.

Article 88

- (1) Votes shall be cast personally.
- (2) Where the voter is a physically handicapped person and is unable to perform the required voting actions on his or her own, the Chairperson of the Committee may allow an accompanying person designated by the voter to help the latter. Where the decision of the Chairperson is challenged by a member of the Committee, the dispute shall be finally resolved by the District Election Committee. In such cases, the Committee shall specify the name and personal identification number of the accompanying person in the Notes column of the election roll. Where the physical handicap prevents the voter from signing personally, a committee member shall write a cross in the signature column and specify the case in the records.
- (3) No person shall be allowed to accompany more than two voters.
- (4) No committee member may accompany a voter.
- (5) No persons other than voters casting their vote shall be allowed to stay at a distance of less than three metres from the voting booths when a voter is inside.
- (6) No voting outside the voting premises shall be allowed.
- (7) Voters shall be prohibited to take envelopes and ballots outside.
- (8) The taking of ballot boxes outside the voting premises during the voting process and the counting of votes shall be prohibited.

Article 89

- (1) Where the ballot box is filled with envelopes, its opening shall be sealed with a paper strip signed by the committee members so that to prevent the insertion of any further envelopes. The full box shall remain on the table.
- (2) The Chairperson shall check whether the second box is in proper condition and whether it is empty. The box shall be closed and sealed with paper strips signed by the committee members present and the voting shall continue.

Article 90

- (1) Voters shall cast their votes until 7 p.m. Where voters who have not voted yet are still in front of the voting premises at 7 p.m., the voting process shall continue until they exercise their right to vote but not later than 8 p.m.
- (2) The District Election Committee may interrupt the voting process where material breaches of the election process are observed. The voting process shall continue after their elimination. The decision on the interruption of the voting process shall be communicated immediately to the Central Election Committee through the Constituency Election Committee.
- (3) If it is necessary to restore public order and at a decision of the District Election Committee, the Chairperson may seek the assistance of the Mayor or the Proxy Mayor and the bodies of the Ministry of the Interior.

(4) Persons whose behaviour infringes upon good morals or persons carrying objects threatening the life and health of citizens shall not be allowed to enter voting premises.

(5) No armed persons shall be allowed to enter the voting premises except for the cases under para 3.

CHAPTER 8

Article 91

(1) Voters shall cast their votes until 7 p.m. Where voters who have not voted yet are still in front of the voting premises at 7 p.m., the voting process shall continue until they exercise their right to vote but not later than 8 p.m.

(2) The District Election Committee may interrupt the voting process where material breaches of the election process are observed. The voting process shall continue after their elimination. The decision on the interruption of the voting process shall be communicated immediately to the Central Election Committee through the Constituency Election Committee.

(3) If it is necessary to restore public order and at a decision of the District Election Committee, the Chairperson may seek the assistance of the Mayor or the Proxy Mayor and the bodies of the Ministry of the Interior.

(4) Persons whose behaviour infringes upon good morals or persons carrying objects threatening the life and health of citizens shall not be allowed to enter voting premises.

(5) No armed persons shall be allowed to enter the voting premises except for the cases under para 3.

Article 92

The District Election Committee shall establish the results of the vote and reflect them into the district records.

Article 93

The opening of the ballot boxes and the establishment of the results of the voting may be attended by candidates, canvassers, representatives of parties, coalitions and initiative committees, observers and journalists.

Article 94

District records shall be drawn up in triplicate on three-layered carbon copy paper. Each counterpart shall include a sheet with separate pages. Before the records are filled in, a blueprint of identical form and contents shall be drawn up.

Article 95

(1) District records shall be signed by all committee members after their drawing up. After the signing, the Chairperson shall announce the results of the voting.

(2) Any amendments to the records after their signing may be made prior to the announcement of the results of the voting. Amendments shall be countersigned by all committee members and the word "amendment" shall be written next to them. Obvious mistakes shall be subject to amendment after the results are announced as well.

(3) No committee member may refuse to sign the records. The refusal of a committee member to sign the records shall be specified therein. A member who disagrees with the contents of the records shall sign them with a dissenting opinion.

(4) Where objective obstacles prevent a committee member to sign the records, this is specified therein, together with the reasons.

(5) The failure of a committee member to sign the records shall not render the records invalid.

(6) A transcript from the records shall be put at a visible place in front of the voting premises.

(7) Candidates, canvassers, representatives of parties, coalitions and initiative committees and observers shall be entitled to receive transcripts from the records.

Article 96

Before the ballot box is opened, the following data shall be entered into the records:

1. details of the election district, including the names of the committee members and the names of the other persons present at the election day and the closing of the voting process;
3. the number of votes on the main election roll;
4. the number of voters on the additional election roll;
5. the number of voters who have cast their votes in accordance with the number of signatures put on the election rolls;
6. the number of certificates for voting elsewhere.

Article 97

(1) In the course of the establishment of the results of the voting:

1. one envelope shall correspond to one vote which may be valid or invalid;
2. the vote shall be valid only where the content of the envelope unambiguously expresses the will of the voter;
3. the number of voters who have cast their votes shall be equal to the number of envelopes found in the ballot boxes.

(2) An envelope containing one or more ballots of the approved format for the same election ticket shall correspond to one valid vote.

(3) The vote under para 2 shall be valid also in any of the following cases:

1. the envelope contains items which are not ballots of the approved format;
2. there are deviations in the ballots due to defects or mistakes in their production;
3. the ballots contain signs, words or names given in the voter's own hand or there are mechanical damages, stains or deletions.

(4) An envelope which does not contain ballots of the approved format or an envelope containing ballots of the approved format for different election tickets shall correspond to one invalid vote.

(5) Ballots found in the ballot boxes without envelopes shall not be counted in the establishment of the results of the election. These ballots shall be inscribed with the words "without any envelope" and packed separately.

Article 98

(1) All items except for the blueprints shall be removed from the table before the opening of the ballot box.

(2) Only one member designated by the Committee shall have access to the envelopes and ballots under the monitoring and supervision of the other members.

(3) The ballot box shall be opened and the envelopes shall be taken out one by one, put with the front side down and counted.

(4) Where a second ballot box has been used in the voting process, it shall be opened after the envelopes from the first box are finished and the taking out and counting of envelopes shall continue.

(5) After the envelopes are counted, they shall be opened one by one and their contents shall be taken out.

(6) Envelopes and ballots shall be arranged in piles as follows:

1. a pile of envelopes which do not contain ballots of the approved format, including empty envelopes;
2. a pile of envelopes containing ballots of the approved format for different election tickets; these ballots are cancelled by writing the word "cancelled" thereon and put back into the envelope;
3. piles of ballots for election tickets from the envelopes under Art. 97, para 2; where the envelope contains two or more ballots of the approved format for the same election ticket, one of them is put on the pile of the respective ticket, while the other ballots are cancelled by writing the word "cancelled" thereon and put back into the envelope;
4. a pile of the envelopes under Art. 97, para 2.

(7) Where a dispute arises in connection with the content of an envelope, the case shall be described on the records.

Article 99

(1) The District Election Committee shall count the number of votes cast in the election district.

(2) The number of votes for each election ticket shall be equal to the number of ballots in the respective pile under Art. 98, para 6, subpara 3.

(3) The number of invalid votes shall be equal to the sum total of the envelopes under Art. 98, para 6, subparas 1 and 2.

(4) The total number of valid votes shall be equal to the number under Art. 98, para 6, subpara 4.

Article 100

The following details shall be entered consecutively into the records of the District Election Committee:

1. the number of envelopes found in the ballot boxes;
2. the votes cast for each election ticket;
3. the total number of valid votes;
4. the number of invalid votes;
5. the number of requests, objections and petitions and the decisions made thereon.

Article 101

The counterparts of the records for the Constituency Election Committee and the Central Election Committee shall be delivered by the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson, the Secretary and a committee member to the Constituency Election Committee. The other papers and materials shall be delivered to the municipal administration.

Article 102

- (1) The Constituency Election Committee shall accept and verify the district records.
- (2) Where the Constituency Election Committee finds out obvious mistakes in the district records, the latter shall be referred back to the District Election Committee for amendment.
- (3) Upon accepting the district records, the Constituency Election Committee shall issue and sign a receipt specifying the numerical information in the records. The members of the District Election Committee shall put the receipt next to the transcripts from the district records.

Article 103

- (1) On the basis of the information from the district records, the Constituency Election Committee shall report the results of the voting in the multi-seat constituency and draw up the constituency records.
- (2) Constituency records shall be drawn up in duplicate on two-layered carbon copy paper. Each counterpart shall include a sheet with separate pages. Before the constituency records are filled in, a blueprint of identical form and contents shall be drawn up.
- (3) The votes from the vessels where election districts have been established shall be added to the voted in the multi-seat election constituency under Art. 42.
- (4) The votes from abroad for the parties and coalitions and the independent candidates shall be added to the voted in the multi-seat election constituencies in accordance with the methodology set out in Art. 23, para 1, subpara 9.

Article 104

- (1) Constituency records shall be signed by all committee members.
- (2) After the signing, the Chairperson shall announce the elected independent candidates and the results of the voting for the election tickets of parties and coalitions.
- (3) Where obvious mistakes are found out, amendments may be made in the constituency records. Amendments shall be countersigned by all committee members and the word "amendment" shall be written next to them.
- (4) No member of the Constituency Election Committee may refuse to sign the records. A member who disagrees with the contents of the records shall sign them with a dissenting opinion.
- (5) Where objective obstacles prevent a committee member to sign the records, this is specified therein, together with the reasons.
- (6) The failure of a committee member to sign the records shall not render the records invalid.
- (7) A transcript from the records shall be put at a visible place in front of the buildings where the Constituency Election Committee is located.
- (8) Candidates, canvassers, representatives of parties, coalitions and initiative committees and observers shall be entitled to receive transcripts from the constituency records.

Article 105

Constituency Election Committees shall create data bases through computer processing of district records in the constituencies and the cabled records from abroad and the vessels sailing under the Bulgarian flag.

Article 106

- (1) The Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson, the Secretary and a member of the Constituency Election Committee shall submit the first counterpart of the constituency records, the first counterparts of the district records and copies of the receipts under Art. 102, para 3 to the Central Election Committee not later than 48 hours after reception of district records.
- (2) After verification of the papers under para 1, the Central Election Committee shall issue a receipt to the Constituency Election Committee.
- (3) The papers and materials of the Constituency Election Committee, except for those to be submitted to the Central Election Committee, shall be delivered to the administration of the region where the Committee is located.
- (4) Regional administrations shall keep the election papers and materials until the next elections.
- (5) The election papers and materials from the voting abroad shall be submitted to the Central Election Committee, while those from the voting on vessels sailing under the Bulgarian flag shall be submitted to the municipality under Art. 42. These papers and materials shall be kept in pursuance of the provisions of para 4.

Article 107

The Central Election Committee shall determine the total number of seats for each party and coalition in proportion to the valid votes cast for them in the whole country and abroad on the basis of the D'Ondt method, while observing the methodology under Art. 23,

para 1, subpara 9.

Article 108

(1) Only parties and coalitions which have carried at least four per cent of the valid votes in the whole country and abroad may participate in the allocation of seats at the nationwide level.

(2) The number of seats to be allocated among the parties and coalitions under para 1 shall be equal to the number of Members of Parliament minus the number of elected independent candidates.

Article 109

The seats shall be allocated among the election tickets of parties and coalitions in the multi-seat constituencies, while observing the methodology under Art. 23, para 1, subpara 9.

Article 110

(1) Where a candidate for Parliament nominated by a party or coalition has been elected in two multi-seat constituencies, such candidate shall state in writing before the Central Election Committee which ticket he or she would like to remain elected on within one day of becoming aware of this fact.

(2) In the cases under para 1, the Central Election Committee shall announce the first non-elected candidate on the ticket which the candidate for Parliament has abandoned to have been elected.

Article 111

The Central Election Committee shall announce the results of the voting as follows:

1. the votes cast and the allocation of seats among parties, coalitions and independent candidates – not later than four days after the election day;
2. the names of the elected Members of Parliament – not later than seven days after the election day.

Article 112

Candidates for Parliament and the central leaderships of the parties and coalitions which have run the elections may challenge the legitimacy of the election through the bodies under Art. 150, para 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria before the Constitutional Court within 14 days after the announcement of the results by the Central Election Committee.

Article 113

(1) The Central Election Committee shall create a database through computer processing of constituency records and cabled records.

(2) The data in the database under para 1 shall be collated to the data bases of Constituency Election Committees. In the case of discrepancies or obvious mistakes, the Central Election Committee shall make a decision on each specific case and update the database.

(3) The results of the election on the basis of the proportional representation system shall be determined in accordance with the updated database.

(4) Where the discrepancies or mistakes under para 2 may change the result in the election of an independent candidate as Member of Parliament, the Central Election Committee shall communicate them to the candidates, parties and coalitions concerned.

(5) The bulletin of the Central Election Committee shall be published in accordance with the updated database.

(6) The updated database of the Central Election Committee on a magnetic carrier shall be submitted to the President of the Republic, the Council of Ministers, the parties, coalitions and independent candidates who have run the elections, sociological agencies, libraries, universities, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and other institutions.

(7) The database under para 6 may not be changed or distributed without the permission of the Central Election Committee.

CHAPTER 9

Article 114

The early termination of powers of Members of parliament shall be carried out in pursuance of the provisions of Art. 72 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Article 115

(1) In the case of early termination of the powers of a Member of Parliament, the Central Election Committee shall announce the next candidate on the respective ticket as a Member of Parliament.

(2) A Member of Parliament elected as a Minister shall be replaced by the next candidate on the list during the time of performing the duties of a Minister.

(3) Where no more candidates have been registered on the election ticket or where the early termination of powers refers to a Member of Parliament elected as an independent candidate, the seat shall remain vacant until the end of the term of office of the National Assembly.

CHAPTER 10

Article 116

(1) Whoever violates the provisions of this Act shall be punished with a fine ranging from BGL 50 to BGL 2,000 provided that the violation does not constitute an offence.

(2) Any official committing wilfully a violation under para 1 shall be punished with a fine ranging from BGL 500 to BGL 5,000.

Article 117

The Chairpersons of the Central Election Committee and Constituency Election Committees shall draw up the statements of findings on the violations at a decision of the respective Committee within three days after reception of the report or petition on the violation.

Article 118

Regional Governors at the place of commitment of the violation shall issue penalty statements within three days after reception of the file. Where the penalty instrument is issued against the Regional Governor, the penalty statement shall be issued by the Minister of Public Administration.

Article 119

The establishment of violations, the drawing up of statements of findings and the issuance and attack of penalty statements shall comply with the requirements of the Administrative Violations and Penalties Act and the Supreme Administrative Court Act.

§ 1. Within the meaning of this Act:

1. "Identity document" means:

- a) identity card;
- b) personal (green) passport;
- c) military card of a conscript;
- d) (overseas) passport of a citizen staying abroad on the election day;
- e) sailor's passport of a citizen on a vessel sailing under the Bulgarian flag on the election day;

2. "Political forces" means parties and coalitions;

3. "Coalition" means an election coalition;

4. "Parliamentary parties and coalitions" means those parties and coalitions which carried at least four per cent of the valid votes at the nationwide level at the previous elections and have had sufficient number of Members of Parliament to have a parliamentary faction throughout the term of office of the previous National Assembly;

5. "Observers" means:

- a) representatives of foreign parliaments, the OSCE, foreign parties and movements, as well as persons designated by the parties and coalitions running the elections and invited through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- b) authorised representatives of Bulgarian non-governmental organisations;

6. "Constituency quota" means the quotient of the division of the number of the valid votes cast in the multi-seat constituency by the number of seats allocated to the constituency; where the quotient is not a whole number, the constituency quota is the whole number nearest to that quotient.

§ 2. The Central Election Committee for the elections for the 39th National Assembly shall be the Central Local Election Committee.

§ 3. This Act hereby repeals:

1. The Election of Members of Parliament, Municipal Councillors and Mayors Act (Promulgated, SG, No. 69 of 1991; Amended, Nos. 70, 76 and 98 of 1991; partially repealed with the Local Elections Act, SG, No. 66 of 1995 concerning the election of municipal councillor and mayors, No. 22 of 1997 – Judgement No. 4 of the Constitutional Court of 1997; Amended, No. 24 of 2000);
2. The People's Representatives and People's Councillors Act (Promulgated, SG, No. 32 of 1977; Amended, No. 72 of 1981, Nos. 27 and 87 of 1986, No. 77 of 1991);
3. The Resolution of the Grand National Assembly dated 21 August 1991 on the Access to the National Media during Election Campaigns (SG, No. 71 of 1991);
4. Decree No. 1979 on the Storage of Election Materials (SG, No. 103 of 1976).

§ 4. The provisions of the Public Procurement Act (Promulgated, SG, No. 56 of 1999; Amended, Nos. 92 and 97 of 2000) concerning the time limits prescribed therein shall not apply to the competitive bidding for the computer processing of the results of the election and the production and printing of ballots.

§ 5. The following amendments shall be introduced to the Civil Registration Act (Promulgated, SG, No. 67 of 1999; Amended, No. 28 of

2001):

1. In Art. 95, para 1, the words "or the bodies under Art, 1, para 2 of the Bulgarian Identity Documents Act" shall be inserted after the words "the municipal administration";

2. Para 3 shall be inserted in Art. 114 with the following wording:

"(3) The bodies under Art. 1, para 2 of the Bulgarian Identity Documents Act shall communicate the details of the stated permanent addresses to the ESGRAON registration system within five days.";

3. A new § 6? shall be inserted with the following wording:

"§ 6. The address registration recorded in the personal (green) passport shall be deemed to be the permanent address of citizens who have not specified their permanent address under Art. 95."

§ 6. Prior to the registration of the election tickets with the Constituency Election Committees, the central leaderships of parties and coalitions may request the committees under Art. 4, para 1 and Arty. 4d of the Access Act to the Documents of the Former State Security Service and the Former Intelligence Service of the General Staff to check the persons who have given their consent in writing to be nominated on their election tickets. The check shall be conducted within seven days of the request.

§ 7. This Act shall become effective as from its promulgation in The State Gazette.

This Act was adopted by the 38th National Assembly on 9 April 2001 and the official seal of the National Assembly was affixed hereto.

President of the National Assembly: Yordan Sokolov