

Rules on Public Access to Proceedings in the Croatian Parliament and its Working Bodies

THE CROATIAN PARLIAMENT

acting pursuant to Article 79 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and Article 254 of its Standing Orders has adopted at its session of 20 May 2005 the following:

RULES ON PUBLIC ACCESS TO PROCEEDINGS IN THE CROATIAN PARLIAMENT AND ITS WORKING BODIES

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

These Rules shall regulate: attendance by representatives of civic associations, non-governmental organisations and citizens as observers at sessions of the Croatian Parliament (hereinafter: Parliament) and its working bodies, methods for making audio and video recordings of such sessions, arrangements for direct transmission of proceedings, methods for registering domestic and foreign journalists in Parliament, and the web pages of Parliament.

Article 2

Sessions of Parliament and its working bodies shall be open to the public.

ATTENDANCE OF CITIZENS AT PARLIAMENTARY SESSIONS

Article 3

- (1) Representatives of civic associations, non-governmental organisations and individual citizens may observe proceedings in Parliament in the northern gallery of the Main Chamber.
- (2) Based on their written applications, representatives of civic associations and non-governmental organisations shall be granted approval to attend proceedings from the Public Relations Office (hereinafter: Office).
- (3) Citizens may submit requests for approval to attend proceedings from the Office either in person or in writing.
- (4) Each application to attend proceedings shall be submitted to the Office not later than three days prior to the session to which it pertains. The Office shall prepare a list of names of representatives of civic associations, non-governmental organisations and citizens in the order of their application.
- (5) Should the number of applicants exceed the number of available seats in the northern gallery, the Office shall notify thereof in writing each applicant who will not be able to attend proceedings two days prior to said session.

Article 4

- (1) The list of names of representatives of civic associations non-governmental organisations and citizens who have been granted approval to attend proceedings in Parliament shall be submitted by the Office to the Secretary and Sergeant-at-Arms of Parliament not later than one day prior to the commencement of the session.
- (2) Upon entry into the building of Parliament, representatives of civic associations, non-governmental organisations and citizens shall present their identity cards or any such other identification document and undergo security control measures.
- (3) While observing proceedings in the Parliament, representatives of civic associations, non-governmental organisations and citizens shall neither disturb nor hinder the course of proceedings (e.g. applause, loud talk, use of mobile telephones, holding placards, taking photographs, etc.).

Article 5

- (1) The Secretary of Parliament may grant approval to attend proceedings in Parliament outside of the times specified in Articles 3 and 4 hereof if any change occurs in the agenda and there is a well-reasoned interest in attendance, and if a well-reasoned application has been submitted outside of the times specified in Articles 3 and 4 hereof.
- (2) By way of exception, the Secretary of the Parliament may, for reasons of security, deny approval to attend proceedings in the Parliament regardless of times and actions taken under Articles 3 and 4 hereof.

Article 6

As their guests, deputies may invite up to three citizens who wish to observe proceedings in the Parliament per day. Each deputy shall notify thereof the Secretary of the Parliament three days prior to the relevant session.

Article 7

For reasons of security, the Presidency of the Parliament may suspend attendance by representatives of civic associations, non-governmental organisations and citizens at the sessions of the Parliament until such reasons cease to exist.

VISITS TO THE PARLIAMENT BY ORGANISED GROUPS OF CITIZENS

- (1) Organised groups of citizens may visit Parliament for tours and to learn about the history and work of Parliament.
- (2) A group may consist of up to 50 persons.
- (3) Each group shall notify the Office of their intention to visit Parliament at least five days in advance and the Office shall approve their visit in accordance with available space and the order of applications. A maximum of three group visits shall be allowed per day.
- (4) While touring Parliament, each group of citizens shall observe order and silence, taking into account of the dignity of Parliament.
- (5) Animals, with the exception of guide dogs, shall not be allowed in the building of Parliament.
- (6) By way of exception, the Secretary of the Parliament may, for reasons of security, deny approval to visit Parliament regardless of the time and actions taken under Article 3 hereof.

AUDIO- AND VIDEO-RECORDINGS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS

- (1) The proceedings of Parliament shall be recorded and transmitted live on the parliamentary channel for the purposes of deputies and the Parliamentary Staff Service.
- (2) The proceedings of Parliament and, as and if required, those of its working bodies shall be subject to audio-recording. Audio-recording shall be performed by the Parliamentary Staff Service.
- (3) All audio-recordings shall be held in the archives and serve as a basis for making transcripts (phonograms), which shall also be held in the archives.

Article 10

- (1) Sessions of parliamentary working bodies shall be open to the public.
- (2) By way of exception, a session or any segment of a session of a parliamentary working body may be closed to the public if such working body so decides.
- (3) A session of a working body may be subject to audio-recording if so requested by the chairperson of such working body.

LIVE TRANSMISSION OF PARLIAMENTARY SESSIONS

Radio and television channels may transmit the entire course of a parliamentary session live.

REGISTRATION OF JOURNALISTS

- (1) Journalists/correspondents and photographers (photojournalists) who cover Parliament and camera-operators accompanying journalists shall be registered with the Office on the basis of a written application to be submitted by their employers. Any such application shall indicate the journalist's name, date of birth, father's name, identity card number and issuance date and be accompanied by his/her photograph.
- (2) Freelance journalists may apply to the Secretary of Parliament for their registration. Before issuing a registration card, the Secretary of the Parliament may seek an opinion from the Croatian Association of Journalists.
- (3) Based on his/her submitted application, each journalist shall be issued with a registration card containing his/her name, photograph, employer's name and the indication "journalist".
- (4) Registration cards for foreign journalists shall be issued by the Secretary of Parliament, subject to prior opinion obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- (5) Upon entry into the building of Parliament, journalists shall be subject to security measures and, throughout their stay in Parliament, they shall carry their registration cards in a visible place.
- (6) The camera-operator and engineering staff of broadcast and other media shall also be issued with registration cards as described in paragraphs (1) and (3) hereof.

Article 13

Journalists registered to cover the proceedings of Parliament shall be allowed:

- to cover sessions of Parliament and its working bodies;
- to review bills and other motions prepared for parliamentary debate;
- to review the transcripts of sound recordings (phonograms) made at sessions; and
- to review parliamentary documents and archives.

Article 14

- (1) A journalist, camera operator or engineering staff member, who has changed his/her employer or whose employment contract has been terminated, and a freelance journalist who changes his/her profession, shall return his/her registration card to the Office.
- (2) The Office shall be notified by a journalist's employer of any change in the employment status of such journalist and by the Croatian Association of Journalists of any freelance journalist who has changed his/her profession.

Article 15

Journalists, cameramen and engineering staff members who are not registered in accordance with the provisions of Article 12 hereof may, upon written notice submitted to the Office by their employer or, if appropriate, the Croatian Association of

Journalists, receive a daily pass.

ACCESS TO PARLIAMENTARY DOCUMENTS AND ARCHIVES

Article 16

(1) At their request, journalists who are not registered with Parliament, representatives of non-governmental organisations and other institutions, as well as any domestic or foreign natural or legal person shall be granted access to parliamentary documents and archives or any such other materials as may be related to the work of the Parliament in accordance with the procedure stipulated by law.

(2) Any request for such access shall be submitted to the Public Relations Office.

Article 17

The provisions of Articles 13 and 16 hereof shall not apply to materials and documents containing any information that is exempt from the right of access in accordance with law.

(1) Public access to proceedings in the Parliament shall also be ensured through the World Wide Web.

(2) Web pages have been designed for the purpose of:

- informing the public of proceedings in Parliament (bills and other motions prepared for debate, opinions and reports prepared by working bodies and other information on Parliament and its work);
- downloading any information on proceedings in Parliament that is intended for public use from available sources of information; and
- facilitating public access to interactive multimedia services and real-time services (e.g. results of votes at plenary sessions, video and digital transmission of plenary sessions, net meeting, chat and other on-line communication services).

(3) Parliament shall present its proceedings to the public by posting on its web pages daily updated information in the Croatian language and, subject to technical, staff and other capacity, in other international languages.

(4) Public access to proceedings in Parliament shall also be secured by way of communication with deputies, working bodies and the Staff Service through their official e-mail addresses, as well as other methods of on-line communication.

TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 19

(1) The Secretary of the Parliament shall pass an Instruction on the Implementation of these Rules within 30 days of their entry into force.

(2) The Secretary of the Parliament shall issue new registration cards to the persons specified in Article 12 hereof within 30 days of their entry into force.

Article 20

These Rules shall enter into force as of the date of their adoption and shall be published in the official journal of the Republic of Croatia – Narodne novine.



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