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Standing Orders of the National Council

(SO-NC)

of 3 October 2003 (Status as of 7 September 2020)

The National Council,

on the basis of Article 36 of the Parliament Act of 13 December 2002¹ (ParlA), and having considered the report of the Political Institutions Committee of the National Council dated 10 April 2003²,

decrees:

Chapter 1 Constitution

Art. 1 Constitutive sitting

¹ Following the general election, the newly-elected Council shall convene to hold its constitutive sitting on the day determined by law.

² At this meeting, the Council:

- a. hears speeches by the Oldest Member and by the youngest designated member of the Council elected for the first time;
- b. establishes the constitution of the Council;
- c. swears in the members of the Council present whose election was uncontested or declared valid;
- d. establishes possible incompatibilities;
- e. elects the President;
- f. elects the First Vice-President;
- g. elects the Second Vice-President;
- h. conducts a summary election of the Tellers;
- i. conducts a summary election of the Deputy Tellers.

AS 2003 3623

¹ SR 171.10

² BBl 2003 3468

Art. 2 Oldest member

¹ The Oldest Member is the council member who has served the longest uninterrupted term. If two or more members of the Council have served the same term, the older member shall take precedence.

² The Council Bureau for the previous legislative period shall designate the Oldest Member based on the report of the Federal Council on the results of the National Council elections.

³ If the Oldest Member is unable to assume office, the office shall be assumed by the council member next in line in accordance with paragraph 1 of this Article.

Art. 3 Tasks of the Oldest Member

¹ The Oldest Member:

- a. designates the eight other members of the Provisional Bureau in accordance with Article 43, paragraph 3 ParIA;
- b. chairs the Provisional Bureau;
- c. chairs the Council until the new President is elected.

² The other tasks of President are carried out by the President of the previous legislative period until the new President is elected.

Art. 4 Tasks of the Provisional Bureau

¹ The Provisional Bureau shall:

- a. verify whether the elections of the majority of council members have remained uncontested or have been declared valid, and if so, propose that the Council declare that it is constituted;
- b. verify whether any of the newly elected members of the council are subject to the incompatibility provisions of Article 14 letters b-f ParIA, and, if applicable, propose a declaration of incompatibility;
- c. ascertain the results of the votes and elections in the Council, until the new Bureau is elected.

² The other tasks of the Bureau are carried out by the outgoing Bureau of the previous legislative period until the new Bureau is elected.

Art. 5 Swearing-in

¹ All persons present in the chamber shall rise for the swearing-in.

² The President shall request the Secretary-General to read out the solemn promise or oath.

³ Persons swearing the oath raise shall three fingers of their right hand and say the words «I swear»; persons making the solemn promise say the words «I solemnly promise».

Chapter 2 Organs**Section 1 President and Presiding College****Art. 6 Election**

¹ The Council shall elect the members of the Presiding College immediately after its constitution, and shall do so for the following years of the legislative period at its first sitting of the parliamentary year.

² It shall take appropriate account of the size of the parliamentary groups and the official languages.

³ If a vacancy arises in the Presiding College during the term of office, the Council shall elect a substitute member for the remaining period; if the post of President becomes vacant, the Council shall hold a substitute election if the President leaves office before the start of the summer session.

Art. 7 Tasks

¹ The President shall fulfil the tasks conferred on him or her by law and shall:

- a. chair the Council's meetings;
- b. establish the agenda, subject to Council decisions to the contrary, taking into consideration the programme of the parliamentary session established by the Bureau;
- c. chair the Presiding College and the Bureau;
- d. represent the Council in its external dealings.

² If the President is unable to chair the meeting, or wishes by way of exception to participate in a debate, he or she shall be replaced provisionally by the First Vice-President, or if need be by the Second Vice-President.

³ If neither Vice-President is able to chair the meeting, the presidency shall be assumed by the following persons in this order:

- a. a predecessor; if more than one is present in the Council, the council member who more recently exercised the office shall take precedence;
- b. the council member who has served the most terms of office; if two or more council members have served the same term, the older member shall take precedence.

⁴ The Vice-Presidents:

- a. support the President;
- b. carry out with the President the tasks conferred on the Presiding College by law.

⁵ Decisions of the Presiding College require the approval of at least two of its members.

Section 2 The Bureau

Art. 8 Composition and procedure

¹ The Bureau comprises:

- a. the three members of the Presiding College;
- b. the four Tellers;
- c. the presidents of the groups.

² In the case of impediment, the Tellers may be substituted by their replacements, and the group presidents by any member of their group.

³ The allocation of seats of Tellers and their replacements among the parliamentary groups is regulated by Articles 40 and 41 of the Federal Act of 17 December 1976³ on Political Rights; for their term of office, Article 17 paragraph 1 and 4 apply *mutatis mutandis*.

⁴ The President participates in votes in the Bureau. In the event of a tie, he or she has the casting vote.

Art. 9 Tasks

¹ The Bureau:

- a. plans the activities of the Council and sets out the session programme, subject to decisions by the Council to modify the list of items of business, or to add or withdraw such items;
- b. determines the remit of the standing committees and institutes special committees;
- c. allocates items of business to the committees for preliminary consideration, co-reporting or final examination and sets deadlines; it may delegate this task to the President;
- d. coordinates the activities of the committees and decides which committee is competent in the event of disagreement;
- e. schedules the meetings of the committees for the year;
- f. decides on the number of committee members;
- g. elects the presidents, vice-presidents, and members of the committees on the recommendation of the parliamentary groups;
- h. ascertains the results of elections and votes; the President may call on other members of the council if the Tellers and their replacements are impeded;

³ SR 161.1

- i. examines whether incompatibilities exist under Article 14 Par1A, and, if necessary, proposes that the Council confirm the existence of any incompatibility;
- j. handles all other issues of organisation and procedure in the Council.

² The Bureau consults the presidents of the committees before taking decisions on matters concerning paragraph 1 letters b, c, and e.

Section 3 Committees and Delegations

Art. 10 Standing Committees

The following standing committees exist:

1. Finance Committee (FC);
2. Control Committee (CC);
3. Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC);
4. Science, Education and Culture Committee (SECC);
5. Social Security and Health Committee (SSHC);
6. Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy Committee (ESPEC);
7. Security Policy Committee (SPC);
8. Transport and Telecommunications Committee (TTC);
9. Economic Affairs and Taxation Committee (EATC);
10. Political Institutions Committee (PIC);
11. Legal Affairs Committee (LAC);
- 12.⁴ Immunity Committee (IC).

Art. 11 Special committees

In exceptional cases, the Bureau may institute special committees. Prior to doing so, it shall consult the presidents of the standing committees whose area of competence may be affected.

Art. 12 Delegations

Unless otherwise provided in an act or ordinance of the Federal Assembly, the provisions on committees set out in the Parliament Act and in these Standing Orders apply *mutatis mutandis* to the standing and non-standing delegations.

⁴ Amended by No I of the NC Decree (Immunity Committee) of 30 Sept. 2011, in force since 5 Dec. 2011 (AS **2011** 4633; BBl **2010** 7345 7385).