

NATIONAL DEFENCE COMMITTEE

Regulations

CHAPTER I

Name, composition and responsibilities

Article 1

(Name)

1. The National Defence Committee is a parliamentary standing committee that addresses questions involving national defence and the armed forces.
2. The National Defence Committee also deals with maritime affairs that are overseen by the Ministry of National Defence.

Article 2

(Composition)

The Committee's composition is determined by the Assembly of the Republic.

Article 3

(Competences)

The National Defence Committee is specifically competent to:

- a) Consider members' and government bills and, acting in conjunction with the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Portuguese Communities, treaties concerning matters within its sphere of competence, and produce the relevant opinions;
- b) Consider the presentation of legislative initiatives, in accordance with Article 132 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic;
- c) Vote on the details of texts that the Plenary has passed with respect to the general principles;
- d) Monitor the involvement of Portuguese military contingents abroad, especially when that involvement arises from meeting Portugal's international military commitments or the participation of the armed forces in humanitarian or peace-keeping missions undertaken by international organisations of which Portugal is a member;
- e) As laid down in the Constitution and the law, monitor and consider Portugal's participation in the process of constructing the European Union, within the Committee's areas of competence;
- f) Monitor the implementation of the policy for technical-military cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries;
- g) Consider petitions within its areas of competence;
- h) Gather information on political and administrative problems that fall within its areas of competence and provide the Assembly, when it deems appropriate, with the elements necessary to consider the acts of the Government and the Public Administration;
- i) Check that the Government, the Administration and the Armed Forces comply with the legislation in force on matters within its areas of competence, in which respect the Committee may also suggest to the AR such measures as it deems appropriate;
- j) Propose to the President of the Assembly that the Plenary hold thematic debates on matters within the Committee's area of competence so that the Conference of Leaders may decide whether or not they are opportune and of interest, and appoint a rapporteur if the proposal is approved;
- l) By the end of the legislative session, draw up its draft activity plan and respective draft budget for the following legislative session, to be submitted to the President of the Assembly for consideration;
- m) Draw up reports on matters within its area of competence;
- n) Draw up and pass its own regulations.

Article 4

(The Committee's powers)

1. The Committee may ask members of the Government and the Armed Forces and any citizens or bodies, particularly senior managers, members of staff and contracted staff of the state's direct and indirect administration and the state's business sector, to take part in its work.
2. For the proper exercise of its functions the Committee may:
 - a) Set up subcommittees and working groups to monitor specific matters;
 - b) Carry out studies;
 - c) Request information or opinions;
 - d) Ask any citizens to give evidence on their own behalf or representing organisations to which they belong;
 - e) Requisition or retain specialists to assist it in its work;
 - f) Undertake information or study missions;
 - g) Hold parliamentary hearings;
 - h) Organise meetings and seminars on topics the Committee deems opportune;
 - i) Undertake visits to institutions and bodies related to its sphere of action;

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- j) Participate in the periodic meetings of counterpart committees of the national Parliaments of the European Union countries, and in those of international bodies to which the Committee is invited.
3. All the documents under examination or already examined by the Committee that do not contain restricted information must be posted on the Assembly of the Republic's website.
4. Journalists have the right to access all the documents distributed for each meeting of the Committee unless they contain restricted information.

Article 5 (Subcommittees)

1. Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure, the Committee may set up subcommittees, establish their composition and define their area of competence.
2. The President of the Assembly of the Republic shall be informed of the names of the chairpersons and members of the subcommittees.
3. The conclusions of the work done by subcommittees must be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

CHAPTER II Bureau and coordinators

Article 6 (Composition)

The Bureau is made up of the Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons.

Article 7 (Competences)

In addition to the competences that are specifically entrusted to it by the Committee, the Bureau is responsible for organising the Committee's work.

Article 8 (Chairperson's competences)

The Chairperson is responsible for:

- a) Representing the Committee;
- b) Convening Committee meetings and setting the order of business;
- c) Directing the Committee's work;
- d) Convening and directing the Bureau's meetings;
- e) Issuing justifications for full Committee members' absences;
- f) Participating in the Conference of Parliamentary Committee Chairpersons, and informing it about the progress of the Committee's work.

Article 9 (Vice-Chairpersons' competences)

The Vice-Chairpersons shall deputise for the Chairperson whenever he/she is absent or unable to perform his/her functions, and for performing the tasks he/she delegates to them.

Article 10 (Parliamentary group coordinators)

Each parliamentary group shall tell the Committee Chairperson the name of the group's coordinator.

CHAPTER III Functioning

Article 11 (Convening meetings and order of business)

1. The Committee meets on a weekly basis, preferably on Tuesdays at 15:30, although it may meet on any day or at another time, and may meet whenever considered necessary.
2. Meetings are scheduled by the Committee itself or by the Chairperson.
3. The order of business is set by the Committee or by the Chairperson.

Article 12 (Notification of meetings)

1. Notification of Committee meetings must be made in writing and sent out such that Members are effectively aware of them at least 24 hours in advance.
2. Members who were absent from the previous sitting or meeting or are not present when a sitting or meeting is convened orally must be notified in writing under all circumstances.
3. Notification of meetings shall be sent to the full members of the Committee and the information that a meeting has been convened shall be sent to the alternate members.
4. Failure to attend a Committee meeting is always communicated to the Member on the next working day.

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Article 13

(Quorum)

The Committee may only function and make decisions if more than half the Committee members in full exercise of their office are present.

Article 14

(Functioning)

The Committee's meetings take place at the Assembly of the Republic or anywhere in Portuguese territory, subject to authorisation from the President of the Republic.

Article 15

(Extraordinary Committee meetings)

The Committee may sit outside the normal parliamentary term and while the Assembly is adjourned if this is essential to the smooth running of its work and if permitted, pursuant to the Rules of Procedure.

Article 16

(Cooperation and presence of other Members)

1. The Members who are the authors of the members' bill or draft resolution under consideration may take part in Committee meetings, without the right to vote.
2. Any Member of the Assembly may attend meetings and, if the Committee so authorises, take part in its work, without the right to vote.
3. Members of the Assembly can send written comments to the Committee.

Article 17

(Cooperation with other committees)

The Committee may meet jointly with one or more other committees in order to study subjects that are of common interest. Such meetings may not be used to make decisions.

Article 18

(Parliamentary hearings)

1. The Committee may hold parliamentary hearings.
2. Any of the entities referred to in Article 4 may be heard at parliamentary hearings.

Article 19

(Committee minutes)

1. Minutes shall be kept of each Committee meeting and must include a list of those present and those absent, a summary of the matters addressed, the positions of the Members and parliamentary groups, and the result of votes, with the respective individual and collective explanations of vote.
2. The Committee may decide to record all or part of its meetings.
3. The minutes of public Committee meetings shall be published in full on the Assembly of the Republic's website.

Article 20

(Reports on the Committee's work)

At the end of each legislative session the Committee shall provide the Assembly with information about the progress of its work by means of reports for which the Committee Chairperson shall be responsible and which shall be published in the Journal of the Assembly of the Republic.

Article 21

(Opinions)

1. The Committee Bureau shall be responsible for appointing a Member to draw up each opinion.
2. The Committee Bureau may appoint more than one Member, depending on the scope or complexity of the members' or government bill in question.
3. The Committee Bureau shall distribute the task of drawing up opinions between the various Members in a balanced manner, and Members shall preferably be responsible for drawing up opinions on legislative initiatives from other parliamentary groups.
4. Without prejudice to the application of the provisions of paragraph 3, the opinion shall be entrusted to a Member who requests to do so.
5. Wherever there are several candidates, the opinion shall be entrusted to whoever has produced the fewest opinions. In the event of a tie, there shall be a secret ballot.
6. Opinions on members' or government bills comprise four parts:
 - a) Part I for the recitals;
 - b) Part II for the views of the Member who is author of the opinion;
 - c) Part III for the conclusions;
 - d) Part IV for the annexes.
7. Each opinion must without fail contain parts I and III, which are deliberated upon by the Committee and, furthermore, one of the annexes in part IV must include the technical note drawn up by the staff of the

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Assembly of the Republic.

8. Part II, which is optional, is the sole responsibility of its author and may not be put to a vote, altered or removed without the author's permission.

9. Any Member and any parliamentary group may have their political positions attached to opinions as an annexe in part IV.

Article 22 (Debate)

1. Committee members may speak as many times as they like and without a time limit. Speeches must rotate between the representatives of the various parties who have registered to speak.

2. The Chairperson may, however, schedule discussion times as a whole and by party, while respecting their representativity, in the following situations:

- a) There is a need to meet established deadlines;
- b) The topics to be discussed are complex;
- c) Entities that are not part of the Committee are participating in the debate;
- d) The meeting is public.

Article 23 (Audiences)

1. The Committee may grant audiences, in plenary or via a representation formed for the purpose, to individual persons or representatives of legal persons.

2. Requests for an audience must be made in writing and include details of the identity of the interested parties, a precise indication of the matter to be addressed and the reason why the parties are seeking the Committee's intervention.

3. The Committee shall consider requests for an audience in light of the importance of the subjects and the time at the Committee's disposal.

4. For the purpose of the representation mentioned in paragraph 1, a working group may be set up comprising members of all the parliamentary groups represented on the Committee.

Article 24 (Public nature of the meetings)

1. The Committee's meetings are public.

2. The Committee may meet in camera when this is justified by the confidential nature of the matters to be addressed.

Article 25 (Facilities and support)

1. The Committee shall have its own facilities at the seat of the Assembly.

2. The Committee's work shall be supported by adequate administrative staff and advisors, pursuant to the law.

3. Members may receive technical support from one advisor per parliamentary group, who shall attend Committee and subcommittee meetings, if any, for this purpose.

4. The Committee shall have a document archive.

CHAPTER IV Final provisions

Article 26 (Revision of these Regulations)

These Regulations may be revised upon a proposal made by any member of the Committee, provided that it is included in the order of business beforehand.

Article 27 (Omissions)

Any situation not covered by these Regulations shall be resolved in accordance with the precepts set out in the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic.

São Bento Palace, 24 November 2015

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE
Marco António Costa