

Statutes of the President of the Republic's Roundtable on National Minorities

Proceeding from the spirit of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia;

Relying on the will of the Republic of Estonia to ensure respect for human rights in accordance with international treaties and conventions;

Endeavouring to promote stability, dialogue and mutual understanding between different population groups residing in Estonia,

The President of the Republic of Estonia, on July 10, 1993, resolved to convoke a ROUNDTABLE - a standing conference of representatives of ethnic minorities and stateless persons residing in Estonia and of political parties.

I. General Provisions

1. The Roundtable is a standing conference operating under the auspices of the President of the Republic.
2. The function of the Roundtable is to discuss matters of political and public life, including societal, ethnic, economic and social-political issues.

II. Founding Principles and Membership

3. The members of the Roundtable are appointed by the President of the Republic, taking into consideration the need to have as many different national minority associations and political parties represented as possible
4. The President shall appoint his Plenipotentiary to the Roundtable.
5. Members of the Roundtable shall be independent in their activities.
6. Members of the Roundtable may not be citizens of other states.

III. Objectives

7. The objective of the Roundtable is to work out recommendations and proposals concerning:
 - 1) the formation of a stable and democratic society in Estonia, as well as the integration into Estonian society of all people who have linked their lives to Estonia or wish to do so;
 - 2) the resolution of the social-economic, cultural and legal problems of aliens and stateless persons permanently residing in Estonia as well as of ethnic minorities;
 - 3) support for persons seeking Estonian citizenship;
 - 4) the resolution of questions related to the learning and use of the Estonian language;
 - 5) the preservation of the cultural and ethnic identity of ethnic minorities residing in Estonia;
 - 6) the opportunities and conditions for voluntary remigration of persons born outside Estonia to their historical homeland or their migration to third countries.

IV. Procedural Rules

8. The sessions of the Roundtable shall be held at least once every three months. Extraordinary sessions may be convened if a written request is submitted to the President's plenipotentiary by at least one third of all the members of the Roundtable. Extraordinary sessions shall be convened and chaired by the President's plenipotentiary.
9. The time and agenda of regular Roundtable sessions shall be fixed at the previous session. The agenda shall be confirmed at the beginning of each current session.

10. Roundtable sessions shall be opened and closed by the President's plenipotentiary. The sessions shall be chaired by a member of the Roundtable, who was chosen at the previous session.
11. Minutes shall be taken at each Roundtable session, a copy of which shall be sent to the members of the Roundtable. The minutes shall be confirmed at the next regular session of the Roundtable. The minutes shall be kept in the Office of the President of the Republic.
12. Members of the Roundtable may invite specialists and observers to attend the sessions after consulting with the President's plenipotentiary. Invited persons may participate in the discussion of agenda items, but may not take part in voting.
13. The Roundtable may form working groups, whose suggestions and recommendations shall be submitted to the Roundtable for discussion.
14. The plenipotentiary of the President of the Republic may enlist the services of specialists and observers in the work of the Roundtable.
15. The Roundtable is competent to pass resolutions when at least half of its members are present.
16. On matters pertaining to the arrangement of its own activities, the Roundtable shall adopt resolutions. On matters pertaining to the resolution of problems of political and public life, the Roundtable shall make proposals and recommendations.
17. Decisions on procedural questions shall be taken by a majority of votes.
18. The proposals, recommendations and statements of the Roundtable concerning matters of political and public life shall be considered adopted if at least two-thirds of the members present vote in favor. Members of the Roundtable shall have the right to request that their dissenting opinions be noted in any adopted documents.
19. The Plenipotentiary of the President of the Republic to the Roundtable shall forward the proposals and recommendations approved by the Roundtable to the President of the Republic.
20. The Plenipotentiary of the President of the Republic shall forward the proposals and recommendations of the Roundtable to the Riigikogu (Parliament) and to the Government of the Republic, as well as to the individual commissions of the Riigikogu concerning those draft laws which are under their review.
21. The public shall be informed of the activities of the Roundtable. Only approved documents shall be released for publication.
22. The preparation and conducting of Roundtable sessions shall be arranged by a special office under the Plenipotentiary of the President of the Republic.

V. Funding of the Operations

23. The expenses connected with the operations of the Roundtable shall be covered by the Office of the President of the Republic, which will use for this purpose
 - 1) resources allocated by the Government of the Republic;
 - 2) contributions from other countries and from domestic and international organizations, as well as donations from individuals, intended for the Roundtable.
24. At the beginning of each year of activity, the President's plenipotentiary shall submit to the Roundtable a draft budget of projected expenses for the coming year. The budget shall be approved by the Roundtable by a simple majority. The President's plenipotentiary shall inform the Roundtable at each regular meeting as to the resources that have been spent. All extra-budgetary expenses, which exceed 10,000 kroons must be approved in advance by the Roundtable.

VI. Final Provisions

25. Amendments to the Statutes of the Roundtable may be tabled by any member of the Roundtable. The amendments to the Statutes shall be discussed if they are backed by at least a third of the Roundtable

members, and they shall be passed by an affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the Roundtable members.

26. The operations of the Roundtable shall be terminated by the President of the Republic. Roundtable members may propose to the President of the Republic that the operations of the Roundtable be terminated. Such a proposal must be supported by at least two-thirds of all the members of the Roundtable.

27. The Statutes of the Roundtable shall be endorsed by the President of the Republic.

Adopted at the Roundtable session on 11 February 1998.

ENDORSED BY
Lennart Meri
President of the Republic
February 17, 1998