**Estonia – The Parliament of Estonia/ The Riigikogu**

1. Website:

<https://www.riigikogu.ee/>

2. Locating Relevant Documents/Files On-line:

*A.RULES OF PROCEDURE*

**1. Name:** Riigikogu Rules of Procedure and Internal Rules Act

**2. URL**: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/518112014003/consolide>

**3. What is the date for the most recent revision on the rules of procedure?**

3/17/2019

**4. Is there a section of the rules of procedure that covers voting rules? If so, indicate the section.**

Sections 76 through 89 cover voting rules.

**5. If available, please list the rules governing the use of roll call votes.**

**General Rules:**

“78. Required majority

The Riigikogu makes its decisions by a majority of votes in favour, unless otherwise provided in the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia or this Act.

“79. Public and secret votes

(1) Voting at the sittings of the Riigikogu is public.

(2) Voting by secret ballot takes place only in the following cases:

1) election of the President of the Republic;

2) election of the President and Vice Presidents of the Riigikogu;

3) appointment to office of the Chief Justice and justices of the Supreme Court;

4) appointment to office of the Auditor General;

5) appointment to office of the Chancellor of Justice and the Deputy Chancellors of Justice;

6) appointment to office of the Chair of the Supervisory Board of the Bank of Estonia and appointment of members to the Supervisory Board of the Bank of Estonia.

80. Voting in person

Members of the Riigikogu vote in person.

81. Methods of voting

(1) An electronic voting system is employed for voting.

(2) In the election of the President of the Republic and the President and Vice Presidents of the Riigikogu, ballot papers are used for voting.

(3) When it is not possible to use the electronic voting system, voting takes place by a show of hands or, if this Act requires a secret vote, by ballot.”

**Voting using the electronic voting system:**

“83.  Voting procedure

 (1) One minute before the vote, the chair of the sitting notifies the members of the *Riigikogu* of the vote by sounding a signal that is transmitted throughout the enclosed premises of the *Riigikogu.*

 (2) The chair or deputy chair of a standing committee or faction may demand a recess of up to ten minutes before the vote.

 (3) Immediately before the vote, the chair of the sitting clearly states the matter that is being put to the vote and assures himself or herself that all members of the *Riigikogu* understand it unambiguously.

 (4) The chair of the sitting confirms the decision to put the matter to the vote by a stroke of the gavel.

 (5) Before the voting results are ascertained, no one in the session hall is allowed to express himself or herself aloud.”

“85.  Announcement of voting results

 (1) The chair of the sitting announces voting results and confirms them by a stroke of the gavel.

 (2) Once confirmed, the voting results may not be contested.”

**Voting by ballot:**

“86. Preparation for voting

 (1) If necessary, the chair of the sitting declares a recess in order for ballot papers to be prepared.

 (2) The ballot paper shows the names of the candidates in the order of their nomination, or boxes containing the choices *poolt* [in favour], *vastu* [against] and *erapooletu* [abstaining].

 (3) After the ballot papers have been prepared, the chair of the sitting declares the recess ended.

**(** 4) Before the vote is announced, the National Electoral Committee or the voting committee examines and seals the ballot box. Thereafter, the chair of the sitting explains the voting procedure to the members of the *Riigikogu.*

 (5) The vote is announced by the chair of the sitting.

87.  Voting procedure

 (1) The National Electoral Committee or the voting committee provides each member of the *Riigikogu* with a ballot paper by reference to the roll of the members of the *Riigikogu*. Each member of the *Riigikogu* must present an identity document. Each member of the *Riigikogu*confirms the receipt of the ballot paper with his or her signature.

 (2) Members of the *Riigikogu* complete the ballot paper in the voting booth. Members mark the ballot paper with a cross in the box next to the name of the candidate in favour of whom they wish to vote or to the answer that they favour. If the ballot paper only shows the name of one candidate, members put a cross in the box marked *poolt* [in favour] or *vastu* [opposed] on the ballot paper.

 (3) After completing the ballot paper, the member of the *Riigikogu* places it in the ballot box.

 (4) If a member of the *Riigikogu* spoils his or her ballot paper before placing it in the ballot box, he or she is entitled to obtain a new ballot paper from the voting committee. The member must return the spoiled ballot paper to the National Electoral Committee or the voting committee.

 (5) The chair of the sitting declares the vote closed thirty minutes after the vote was announced.

88.  Ascertaining and announcing of voting results

 (1) Votes are counted publicly after the voting has ended.

 (2) Ballot papers on which more than one box is marked or on which no box is marked are deemed to be invalid.

 (3) The National Electoral Committee or the voting committee draws up a report concerning the voting results.

 (4) The chair of the sitting announces the voting results.”

**6. If the documents are available in multiple languages, does it seem like the same number of documents/files are available in the different languages?**

The rules of procedure are available in English and Estonian.

**7. How exactly did you locate these files? (i.e. if you were going to write instructions for someone else to find them, what would that look like?)**

Google search “Estonia rules of procedure”, and click on the link from the “Riigi Teataja” page. This website is extremely difficult to navigate and this was the only way I found to this file.

**8. Looking at the documents available on-line, are there specific language skills you think would be required to code information of interest from them? If so what are these?**

No, because there is an English translation.

**9. Is there anything else you think we should know?**

No.

**10. Does the legislature or an official source publish a document/file for previous versions of the rules of procedure? If so, repeat questions 2-8.**

In the Estonian version of the Rules of Procedure, under the “legislation” tab, there is a tab “compare editions” which allows you to compare side by side older versions of the rules of procedure.

20/02/2019:

**16)** subsection 77 (2) is amended and worded as follows:

“(2) The presence of members of the Riigikogu shall be verified at the beginning of the sitting of the Riigikogu.”;

**17)** subsection 83 (1) is amended and worded as follows:

“(1) Two minutes before a vote, the chair of the sitting shall notify the members of the Riigikogu thereof by a signal transmitted to the premises of the Riigikogu.”;”

Those were the only edits on the voting rules I could find since the document’s publication in 2004.

URL: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/107032019001>

All other information is the same.

*B.RECORD OF LEGISLATIVE VOTING*

**1. Please indicate the terminology for the type of votes as reported in the working language of the legislature (e.g., scrutin public ordinaire).**

“by” means voting for

**2. Looking at the documents available on-line, are there specific language skills you think would be required? If so what are these?**

No, google chrome translate works fine.

**3. Does the legislature or an official source publish a document/file covering the voting record online (separate from the plenary minute)?**

Yes.

**If so:**

**-Where can one find these documents? Please provide instructions for how someone would find them.**

For each plenary session, there is a “votes” tab and a “verbatim report” tab. This brings you to a page that shows the breakdown of the votes by for or against. If you click on the link under “content”, you will get a breakdown of the vote by individual.

**-What types of votes are reported (e.g., the roll call vote record for individual legislators)?**

Individual votes are recorded (so yes, roll call).

**4. If you find on-line documents, does this seem to be all the relevant documents for a specific time period? If so, what is the time period? If not, can you describe what is missing?**

This information, like the verbatim report, is only available beginning in 2016.

**5. Can one automate downloading of these files? If so, please provide any available computer code for that purpose.**

Not sure.

**6. Did we download all the information available in the sources indicated in this section? If not, please indicate which source and years we are missing.**

Not sure.

*C.MINUTES OF PLENARY SESSION*

**1. Please indicate the terminology for the type of information as reported in the working language of the legislature:**

The minutes are also called “verbatim report”.

**2. Does the legislature or an official source publish a document/file covering the specific information online? If so, where (please provide instructions for how one would find them)? If an official source is not available, please list any secondary sources**.

Yes. The “Agendas and minutes” can be found, with the website in Estonian but using google chrome translate, under the tab “Action”.

Here is an example link: <https://www.riigikogu.ee/tegevus/paevakorrad-ja-protokollid/?startDate=23.09.2018>

**3. If you find on-line documents, does this seem to be all the relevant documents for a specific time period? If so, what is the time period? If not, can you describe what is missing?**

Minutes are available starting in 2016 (the 13th Riigikogu). From 2007 (the 11th Riigikogu) until 2016, there are agendas for what was done during the plenary session but not the actual minutes. The website allows you to see when plenary sittings occurred back until 1998, but they don’t have the agendas or minutes for the years 1998-2006.

**4. Can one automate downloading of these files? If so, please provide any available computer code for that purpose.**

Not sure. All minutes are available in PDF (in Estonian).

**5. Looking at the documents available on-line, are there specific language skills you think would be required to code information of interest from them? If so what are these?**

Not sure, google chrome translate seems to work fine since the minutes are available online.

**6. Did we download all the information available in the sources indicated in this section?**

Not sure.

*D. ATTENDANCE*

**1. Please indicate the terminology for the type of information as reported in the working language of the legislature:**

Their attendance report is called “Presence control”.

From the Rules of Procedure:

“76. Quorum of the Riigikogu

At additional sittings and during extraordinary sessions, the Riigikogu has a quorum if more than one half of its members are present.

77. Attendance check of the members of the Riigikogu

(1) The quorum of the Riigikogu is verified by checking the attendance of the members of the Riigikogu.

(2) The attendance of the members of the Riigikogu is checked at the beginning of the sitting and before the final vote on a bill or draft resolution that requires at least the majority of the members of the Riigikogu in order to pass.

(3) During the additional sitting or extraordinary session of the Riigikogu, attendance is also checked before any other votes if this is requested by a member of the Riigikogu.”

**2. Does the legislature or an official source publish a document/file covering the specific information online? If so, where (please provide the URL)? If an official source is not available, please list any secondary sources**.

Attendance is linked in the minutes. At the beginning of each session, the Vice-Chairman will announce “Attendance check”. Then there will be a link to “presence control”.

**3. What years are available on this source?**

Attendance is reported from 2016-present.

**4. Can one automate downloading of these files? If so, please provide any available computer code for that purpose.**

Not sure.

**5. Looking at the documents available on-line, are there specific language skills you think would be required to code information of interest from them? If so what are these?**

No, google chrome translate works fine and the attendance report is easy to interpret.

**6. Did we download all the information available in the sources indicated in this section?**

Not sure.

*E. ROLL CALL VOTE REQUEST*

**1. In the available on-line documents, can you identify a request for a roll-call vote? If so, are there specific words or other indications that systematically identify the requester?**

The chair of the sitting always announces the vote with a clock/bell (section 83, rules of procedure). They then ask, “Is the Honorable Riigikogu ready to vote?”. If nobody argues, then the vote continues.

I am not sure that regular legislators are allowed to request a vote because the rules of procedure don’t outline any sort of procedure for that.

**2. Do the available on-line documents report a justification for a request for a roll-call vote? If so, are there specific words or other indications that systematically identify the justification?**

See part 1.

**3. How is the decision to accept or deny the roll-call vote request made (this may be found in the rules of procedure)?**

See part 1.

**4. In the available on-line documents, can you identify whether the request was accepted? If so, are there specific words or other indications that systematically identify this?**

See part 1.

*F. DISCUSSION BEFORE THE VOTE*

1. Roll-call votes:

**a. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the names of participants who participated in discussion before a vote? If so, where can this be found?**

You can find this information in the minutes, before the Vice-Chairman announces the vote.

**b. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the length (in words) of a participant’s speech? If so, where can this be found?**

It is not provided, so you would have to do a separate word count.

2. Indication Votes:

**a. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the names of participants who participated in discussion before a vote? If so, where can this be found?**

Yes, in the minutes for that day.

**b. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the length (in words) of a participant’s speech? If so, where can this be found?**

One would have to do a separate word count because it is not already calculated.

*G. VOTING*

1. Roll-call votes:

**a. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the subject of the vote? If so, where can this be found?**

The subject of the vote appears in the same page as the voting results, under the heading “Contents” at the top of the page.

**b. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the procedural type (motion/agenda/article of a bill/amendment/etc…) of the vote? If so, where can this be found?**

This information is also at the top of the page of the voting results, under “the draft”.

**c. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the result of the vote (e.g., the motion passed)? If so, where can this be found?**

This information is also at the top of the page of the voting results, under “the decision”.

**d. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the method (electronic, calling of names, etc..) of the vote? If so, where can this be found?**

The default and most common is electronic voting. Ballot-voting is only used for the election of certain people (section 81 of rules of procedure). In the case where electronic voting is not working, they would do a vote by a raise of hands. However, this is rare and I was not able to find an example of this.

**e. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the breakdown of the vote outcome (e.g., yes/no/abstain) in the aggregate? At the level of individual legislator? If so, where can this be found?**

Yes, there is vote outcome broken down by individual legislator. See part B, section 3 for directions.

**f. In the available on-line documents, can you determine whether there were any arguments documented during the vote (e.g. , a protest over procedure)? If so, where can this be found?**

This information would be found in the minutes.

2. Indication votes:

**a. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the subject of the vote? If so, where can this be found?**

According to the Rules of Procedure:

“79. Public and secret votes

(1) Voting at the sittings of the Riigikogu is public.

(2) Voting by secret ballot takes place only in the following cases:

1) election of the President of the Republic;

2) election of the President and Vice Presidents of the Riigikogu;

3) appointment to office of the Chief Justice and justices of the Supreme Court;

4) appointment to office of the Auditor General;

5) appointment to office of the Chancellor of Justice and the Deputy Chancellors of Justice;

6) appointment to office of the Chair of the Supervisory Board of the Bank of Estonia and appointment of members to the Supervisory Board of the Bank of Estonia.

**b. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the procedural type (motion/agenda/article of a bill/amendment/etc…) of the vote? If so, where can this be found?**

All indication votes are about the election of people.

**c. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the result of the vote (e.g., the motion passed)? If so, where can this be found?**

This is found in the minutes, not any voting record.

**d. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the method (electronic, raising of hands, etc..) of the vote? If so, where can this be found?**

Secret voting is done by ballots.

**e. In the available on-line documents, can you determine the breakdown of the vote outcome (e.g., yes/no/abstain) in the aggregate? If so, where can this be found?**

No.

**f. In the available on-line documents, can you determine whether there were any arguments documented during the vote (e.g. , a protest over procedure)? If so, where can this be found?**

This would be found in the minutes, but is highly unlikely because there is a set procedure for the election of people.

*NOTES ON ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT COULD BE RELEVANT*