**Latvia – Latvijas Republikas Saeima**

1. Website:

<http://www.saeima.lv/en>

2. Locating Relevant Documents/Files On-line:

*A.RULES OF PROCEDURE*

**1. Name:** Rules of Procedure

**2. URL**: <http://www.saeima.lv/en/about-saeima/work-of-the-saeima/rules-of-procedure/>

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

June 14, 2016.

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

Yes, Chapter 6.

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

“132.  Prior to voting, the person chairing the sitting shall announce the voting procedure.

133.  Any Member may request that a proposal be considered and put to a vote part by part (Article 54).

138.  (1) Before voting on a draft law or a draft resolution in its entirety, the person chairing the sitting shall give an order to ring the bell.

(2) During voting no one shall be given the floor.

(3) After the results of the voting have been announced, it shall not be permitted to accept late votes or to change one's vote.

139.  Voting at Saeima sittings shall be open and shall be conducted by means of the electronic voting system or by using ballot papers. In cases and in accordance with the procedure set forth by the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, voting shall be by secret ballot. The Members who have voted "for" or "against" or "abstained" shall be regarded as having participated in the vote.

140.  (1) *(Deleted by the 19 January 2012 Law).*

(2) At least 10 Members may request that after the voting the vote of each Member be read out in the Plenary Chamber (Article 54).

**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 also available in French and Latvian.

**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?)**

From the main website, click on the header “About the Seima”. Then click on “Work of Seima”, and then you will see a link to the Rules of Procedure.

**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, since the document is available in English too.

**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.**

Edits are noted in the text itself.

*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).**

“about” is yes

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

No, the voting records are straightforward when translated in English through google chrome translate.

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

No, the voting records can be found in the verbatim report.

**If so:**

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

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

**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?**

The voting records are available for the 11th Saeima (2011) to the current one

**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:**

“Verbatim reports of Saeima sittings”.

**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, at this link: <http://www.saeima.lv/lv/par-saeimu/arhivs> .

Also available here: <http://www.saeima.lv/lv/transcripts/category/19> (data is just organized differently)

For the current Saeima (13th), go to the “legislative process” tab, then “verbatim reports of Saeima sittings”.

To access minutes from older Saeimas, go to the “legislation” tab and then “archive”.

**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?**

The minutes are available for the 11th Saeima (2011) to the current one.

**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. I think the minutes are only translated in English by the government for the current Saeima.

**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:**

In the voting record, “don’t vote” DOES NOT mean absent. Everyone recorded in the voting record is present.

**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**.

No.

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

11th Saeima (2011) to the current one.

**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, the voting table is straightforward and google chrome translates it fine.

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

Not sure.

*E. ROLL CALL VOTE REQUEST* see section 133 of ROP

**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?**

“Please call!” signifies a roll-call vote, which normally the president of the sitting announces.

A request for a roll-call vote would most likely happen at the beginning of the session, when the president of the sitting goes over the agenda and asks if there are objections to what is being voted on.

The president of the sitting will ask, “Do MPs object to the bill being referred to the commission?” or, “Do members have objections?”

**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?**

If there are objections, the minutes do not say who is objecting. The president of the sitting will just move immediately into the vote.

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

From the Rules of Procedure:

“133.  Any Member may request that a proposal be considered and put to a vote part by part (Article 54).”

“54.    (1) In the cases prescribed in Article 8 and paragraph 2 of Article 31; Articles 40, 41, 49, 51, 52, 65, 77, 82, 84, 90, 92, 93, 98, 104, 117, 127, 133, 135, 136, 140 and 142, only two Members shall be given the floor before a vote – one Member in support of the proposal and the other against it – for not longer than five minutes for each speaker.”

From the Rules of Procedure, it seems that every request for a vote is granted, since it only requires one member to request.

**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?**

The request is accepted if the president of the sitting responds with, “Please call!”

*F. DISCUSSION BEFORE THE VOTE* see sections 51-61 of the ROP

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?**

Yes. From the “contents” link at the beginning of the link, you will see those who participated in debate before a 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 one would have to do a separate word count. In the list of names from the “contents” page, each name is linked to their speech.

2. Indication Votes: N/A – see G, part 2

**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?**

**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?**

*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?**

At the top of the minutes, there will be a link labeled “votes” which will take you to the bottom of the minutes where the voting information is. The subject for each vote is found under “reason”.

**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?**

Yes, in the same place as part a.

**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?**

It is not explicitly stated, but it does give the number of votes for/against.

**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?**

It does not explicitly say, but the default is electronic voting.

From the Rules of Procedure:

“139.  Voting at Saeima sittings shall be open and shall be conducted by means of the electronic voting system or by using ballot papers. In cases and in accordance with the procedure set forth by the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, voting shall be by secret ballot. The Members who have voted "for" or "against" or "abstained" shall be regarded as having participated in the vote.”

**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?**

If you click “voting reason” for the specific vote at the bottom of the minutes, it will take you to a separate page with a table that breaks down the vote by individual legislator.

**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?**

According to Rules of Procedure, “138. (2) During voting no one shall be given the floor.”

2. Indication votes:

The only secret ballot in Latvia occurs in the election of the president: “**36.** The President shall be elected by secret ballot with a majority of the votes of not less than fifty-one members of the *Saeima*.” (from the Constitution).

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

**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?**

**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?**

**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?**

**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?**

**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?**

*NOTES ON ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT COULD BE RELEVANT*