



# FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT BY-LAWS

## **Article 1**

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament consists of the representatives of Finnish communities abroad. Communities joining the Expatriate Parliament have to confirm the by-laws of the Expatriate Parliament and inform the Secretariat on the ratification of the by-laws, in writing.

## **Article 2**

Each community is entitled to send one of its members as a representative to the plenary session of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. A community with more than 500 members may send two representatives, and a community whose membership exceeds 1000, may send three representatives.

The community has to inform the Secretariat of its desire to participate in the plenary session within the time limits set in the standing order. The Parliament will make the final decisions on representation rights.

## **Article 3**

The Expatriate Parliament convenes every second or third year. The Parliament may also convene at the expatriate communities' initiative, if the Speakers' Council so decides. A more extensive formal session will be arranged every fifth year, during anniversary years of the Republic of Finland.

## **Article 4**

The Chairman of the Finland Society will act as the Speaker of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. The plenary session will elect the Deputy Speakers and their alternates from among those candidates who have been nominated in the regional meetings preceding the plenary.

The Deputy Speakers and alternates should represent different geographical areas, which have been confirmed by the plenary of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. They must live in the region they represent. The Speaker and the Deputy Speakers together form the Speakers' Council, which convenes also between sessions.

The Speakers' Council should represent, in as wide a manner as possible, different groups of expatriate Finns.

## **Article 5**

Each Finnish expatriate community, having ratified the by-laws, the Speakers' Council and the Finland Society have the right to submit initiatives to the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. The initiatives must be submitted to the Secretariat by a set deadline. Respectively, the initiatives, and the expert opinions acquired by the Secretariat concerning them, must be sent to the parliament representatives well before the session.

## **Article 6**

When the Finnish Expatriate Parliament is in session, the representatives convene in the plenary sessions and participate in committee work. The committees formulate draft resolutions, which will be presented to and discussed at the plenary session.

## **Article 7**

The standing committees are: the Citizenship Committee, the Cultural Committee, the Youth Committee, the Study and Training Committee, the Committee for Political and Official Issues, the Social Committee, the Senior Committee, the Statutory Committee, the Finance Committee and the Information Committee. Other

committees can be set up if needed.

Geographical representation should be guaranteed in the committees.

## **Article 8**

The Speakers' Council will convene together with the committee chairmen in an extended Speakers' Council session, if needed.

## **Article 9**

The languages used by the parliament are Finnish, Swedish, English and Russian.

## **Article 10**

Minutes are kept at all Finnish Expatriate Parliament's sessions.

## **Article 11**

The office of the Finland Society acts as the Secretariat of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. It is committed to act according to the decisions made by the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and to promote their execution by approaching Finnish authorities and where possible foreign authorities, as well as other parties, and actively reporting the decisions.

## **Article 12**

To amend these by-laws, a two-thirds majority is required at the Expatriate Parliament session. To amend the Parliament's standing order, a simple majority is required at the Expatriate Parliament session.



# THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT'S STANDING ORDER

## 1 §

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament will assemble in session every second or third year.

## 2 §

The Finland Society will send an invitation to all registered Finnish organizations primarily by e-mail no later than six months before the session.

## 3 §

The Finnish organizations are to inform the Finland Society of their participation no later than three months before the session. The motions which each organization wishes to be considered are also to be submitted at the same time. The Finland Society should also be given the names of the representatives, their substitutes, and observers, as well as any other persons wishing to follow the work of the Parliament, no later than six weeks before the session.

## 4 §

The Finland Society will send the registered representatives and observers the agenda for the session, including all motions, primarily by e-mail, no later than one month before the session. A report on the procedures carried out to execute the decisions of the previous session is to be issued at the same time. A summary of the motions and the report of activities shall be published on the website of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

## 5 §

At the beginning of the session, all the registered organizations, a list of representatives and an agenda including all the issues discussed during the session will be approved. Observers present are to be noted as well.

## 6 §

Parliamentary sessions are led by the speaker. If he or she is unable to attend, the session shall be led by a vice chair of the Finland Society, or, if they are unable to attend, a Deputy Speaker elected by the Speakers' Council.

## 7 §

At the beginning of each session, the Parliament will decide on the proposal by the Speakers' Council on the committees in accordance with article 7 in the by-laws. The speaker will appoint summoners for the committees. The committees will elect the necessary officials by themselves. The committee sessions are closed to outside persons.

## 8 §

After coming to order, the Parliament's work will proceed with a general debate on the Finland Society's report. At the same time, the discussion will act as the preliminary debate on the motions. During the general debate, every representative is entitled to state his or her opinion on any issue related to Finnish expatriates or expatriatism, regardless of whether there has been a motion made on the matter. Permissions to speak are to be requested in writing and allotted in the order received. By the Parliament's permission, the speaker can limit the length of the allotted speaking times, digress from the agenda or declare the discussion finished. Short counter-statements or rebuttals are allowed in connection with each statement. In regard to the general debate, a decision can be made on including an urgent matter in the agenda and its referral to the appropriate committee.

## 9 §

Standing and temporary committees will draw up a report on each referred bill which will include a draft resolution. This can be either a stand on the matter or a decision not to take a stand on the issues mentioned in the bill. Committees may consult experts if they wish.

## 10 §

In the final session, the committees' representatives will present the committees' bills for the Parliament's approval. The motions are to be issued to all of the representatives in writing before the final decision. Possible counter-statements presented in the session, except for those related to a rejection, are also to be issued in writing before the resolution.

## 11 §

The Parliament will make its resolutions either by consensus or by voting. Votes are to be carried out by a show of hands. As to the election of individuals, a closed ballot is to be carried out if required. At least half of the representatives are to be present when taking a vote. The Parliament's Deputy Speakers will act as vote-counters.

## 12 §

The secretariat of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament will draw up the minutes of the parliamentary session, to be inspected by the Deputy Speakers. No later than two months after the session, the minutes are to be sent by e-mail to all member communities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and to all representatives and observers who participated in the session. The minutes shall be published on the website of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

## 13 §

In other respects, the Parliament will follow the Finnish law governing associations.