



FILING SUBMISSIONS WITH THE SAEIMA

Priorities of the Saeima include openness, cooperation with society and its involvement in the legislative process. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, all persons have the right to file submissions with the Saeima. Submissions are received and reviewed in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima, the Law on Submissions, the Official Language Law, other relevant legal acts and principles of good governance.

Submissions are a significant source of information, which is used by individual MPs, committees and parliamentary groups in their daily work.

The Saeima receives approximately 4,000 submissions every year.

Written submissions can be:

- sent by mail addressed to Latvijas Republikas Saeima, Jēkaba iela 11, Rīga, LV-1811;
- emailed to saeima@saeima.lv;
- filed in person at the Visitor and Information Centre on Jēkaba iela 16 (on business days from 9:00 to 16:30);
- dropped in the mail box in the main building of the Saeima on Jēkaba iela 11;
- filed via the portal www.latvija.lv.

The Saeima also accepts documents signed with a secure electronic signature.

The staff members of the Visitor and Information Centre can help to put a submission in writing in a clear and concise manner.

ADDRESSEES

Upon filing a submission, it is advisable to address it to a specific official, committee or organisational unit of the Saeima.

If the submission is personal, this must be indicated by marking the envelope *personal*.

FORMAT

According to the Law on Submissions, a submission must contain the full name of the submitter and a postal address to which the response should be sent. The submission must be signed. The submitter is free to provide any other information that could be helpful in contacting them. According to the Official Language Law, the submission must be written in Latvian. The submission may be supplemented with copies (not originals) of explanatory documents.

The submitter is responsible for the content of the submission.

PROCEDURE FOR REVIEWING SUBMISSIONS

Before a submission is forwarded to the addressee, its compliance to the relevant laws is checked.

The Saeima provides a response in substance within a month after the submission is registered. If the content of the submission does not require a response in substance, the Saeima informs the submitter within seven business days that the submission has been received.

If the submission concerns another institution, which is discernible from the content of the submission, the Saeima forwards the submission to the relevant institution within seven business days and informs the submitter thereof.

If the submission does not contain the full name and postal address (in case of electronic submissions – also an e-mail address) of the submitter, the submission may be left unreviewed. A submission may also be left unreviewed if its content is abusive, if it is incomprehensible or if a response to a similar submission has already been issued to the same submitter.

According to Article 2.4. of the Law on Submissions, submissions filed in an electronic form without electronic signature are reviewed in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the head of the institution and the principles of good governance.

Non-response to a submission filed with the Saeima may be appealed to the Presidium of the Saeima. According to legal acts and court practice, several areas within the scope of the Law on Submissions are not subject to judicial control (for example, electronic submissions without secure electronic signatures, forwarding or non-forwarding of submissions, individual correspondence with MPs).

COLLECTIVE SUBMISSIONS

In order to broaden opportunities for public involvement in the legislative process, the Saeima has provided that at least 10,000 citizens may submit a collective submission to the parliament.

Collective submissions can be signed by citizens of Latvia who have reached 16 years of age on the day that the submission is filed. Signatures may be collected electronically as long as the possibility to identify signatories and protect personal data is ensured. All signatures (at least 10,000) must be collected in favour of a specific initiative addressed to the Saeima.

A collective submission must contain a request to the Saeima and a brief justification for it; it must also specify the natural person authorised to represent the signatories of the collective submission. The collective submission must be supplemented with an appendix containing at least 10,000 signatures, and reference to that must be made in the submission.

A collective submission must not contain a request which is clearly unacceptable in a democratic society or is plainly offensive; a collective submission shall not undermine values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities.

Electronically filed collective submission must be supplemented with technical information confirming the signing of the collective submission and enabling verification of the number of signatories, their full names and ID numbers. The Saeima may request the submitter to clarify the submitted documents to ensure that they are in compliance with statutory requirements.

PROVIDING INFORMATION

Upon receiving a request from a private entity, the Saeima provides the information at its disposal according to the Freedom of Information Law and within the time limits set forth therein: within 7 days:

- if the submitter has to examine the information at the Saeima because the amount of information requested is sizable or if the distribution of information outside the Saeima is impossible due to specific storage requirements;
- if the Saeima does not have the requested information; in that case, it issues a notice stating where the information can be obtained;
- if the requested information is available on the Internet free of charge; the Saeima has the right to refuse to provide this information and to give instead the address of the website where the information may be found;

within 10 days:

- if the information has been requested only in an electronic format and if it does not require additional processing;

within 15 days:

- if the requested information does not require additional processing;

within 30 days:

- if the requested information requires additional processing; in that case, the submitter is informed thereof within 15 days.

PROCESSING OF SUBMISSIONS

Upon receiving a request from the submitter, the Saeima can provide information about the processing of the submission and the deadline for receiving a reply by phone +371 6708 7321 (on business days from 8:30 to 17:00), by e-mail info@saeima.lv or at the Visitor and Information Centre of the Saeima. This information is provided in accordance with the Law on Submissions, the Freedom of Information Law and the Personal Data Protection Law.

OVERVIEW ON RECEIVED SUBMISSIONS

The Public Relations Department of the Saeima gathers information, prepares a monthly overview on submissions re-

ceived by the Saeima and submits it to the Mandate, Ethics and Submissions Committee of the Saeima. The Committee is composed of two representatives from each parliamentary group, who inform other MPs on the submissions received. All overviews are publicly available on the Committee's website. The Public Relations Department also informs the Committee on the activity of the Visitor and Information Centre.

N.B.

The Saeima is a legislature. It does not provide legal counselling or social assistance, nor does it examine complaints concerning decisions made by public administration, law enforcement agencies or public officials. The Saeima does not provide official explanations of laws, nor does it resolve personal problems of private entities.

