

BULGARIA

NARODNO SABRANIE

I. STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION

Name of the House	:	National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria
Committee responsible for EU integration	:	Committee on Foreign and Integration Policy
Date of setting-up	:	31 January 1996
Legal basis	:	Constitution, rules of procedure and organisation of the National Assembly, rules of procedure of the committee on Foreign and Integration Policy.
Composition	:	25 members. The Chairman and members are elected by the plenary at the beginning of each legislative term. Their distribution reflects the size of the different political groups in Parliament and the Chairman is usually a member of the biggest group. Half the members of the EU-Bulgaria Joint Parliamentary Committee are members of the Committee on Foreign and Integration Policy. Those members of the JPC who are not members of the committee may attend the meetings in advisory capacity.

The meetings of the committee are held behind closed doors. The committee usually meets once a week, although the Chairman of the Assembly, the Chairman of the committee, or one third of its members may convene extra meetings.

II. MANDATE AND INSTRUMENTS

Mandate:

- The committee monitors and assesses the integration strategy of the government. It conducts hearings on the common policies of the European Community and the national strategy in this sector. It studies the reports issued by the government on its priorities related to the integration policy of the country. Starting from 1998, the committee will monitor the government's participation in the meetings of the Council of Ministers.
- It exercises a preliminary control on relevant legislation going through Parliament.
- In addition, the chairman of the committee chairs the delegation of the National Assembly to the EU-Bulgaria Joint Parliamentary Committee.

Modalities and instruments of control:

Matters can be referred to the committee both by the government and by the House. The committee can also set its own agenda. It is entitled to discuss both general policy questions and precise legislative texts, and is kept informed of developments in European law through reports by, and hearings of, government officials.

The instruments at the disposal of the committee to exercise its mandate are the following:

- It can conduct hearings with government officials in order to exercise its monitoring role
- It publishes written reports on a range of issues relating to EU integration
- It can adopt recommendations of a general nature or relating to particular pieces of legislation. However, these are not binding on the House or the government. They are transmitted to the chairman of the National Assembly who then submits them to the appropriate ministries and institutions.
- In some cases, the committee can decide, following a hearing, to reopen a specific debate in the plenary of the Assembly.
- It holds press conferences to inform the public about its work.

Other parliamentary bodies dealing with European issues:

- EU-Bulgaria Joint Parliamentary Committee