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Constitution of the Slovak Republic

passed by the Slovak National Council
on 1 September and signed on 3 September 1991

Preamble

We, the Slovak nation, mindful of the political and cultural heritage of our forebears, and of the centuries of experience from the struggle for national existence and our own statehood, in the sense of the spiritual heritage of Cyril and Methodius and the historical legacy of the Great Moravian Empire, proceeding from the natural right of nations to self-determination, together with members of national minorities and ethnic groups living on the territory of the Slovak Republic, in the interest of lasting peaceful cooperation with other democratic states, seeking the application of the democratic form of government and the guarantees of a free life and the development of spiritual culture and economic prosperity, that is, we, citizens of the Slovak Republic, adopt through our representatives the following Constitution:

CHAPTER ONE

Part One

Basic Provisions

Article 1

The Slovak Republic is a sovereign, democratic, and law-governed state. It is not linked to any ideology or religious belief.

Article 2

(1) State power is derived from citizens, who execute it through their elected representatives or directly.

(2) State bodies can act only on the basis of the Constitution, within its limits, and to the extent and in a manner defined by law.

(3) Everyone can do what is not forbidden by law and no one must be forced to do anything that is not laid down by law.

Article 3

(1) The territory of the Slovak Republic is united and indivisible.

(2) The borders of the Slovak Republic can be changed only by a constitutional law.

Article 4

Natural wealth, underground water, natural medicinal springs, and waterways are in the ownership of the Slovak Republic.

Article 5

(1) Conditions for the acquisition and loss of the citizenship of the Slovak Republic are determined by law.

(2) No one must be deprived of the citizenship of the Slovak Republic against his will.

Article 6

(1) Slovak is the state language on the territory of the Slovak Republic.

(2) The use of other languages in dealings with the authorities will be regulated by law.

Article 7

On the basis of its free decision, the Slovak Republic can enter into a state alliance [zvazok] with other states. The right to secession from this alliance must not be restricted. The decision on entering into a state alliance with other states or on secession from this alliance will be made by a constitutional law and a subsequent referendum.

Article 8

The state symbols of the Slovak Republic are the state emblem, the national flag, the state seal, and the national anthem.

Article 9

(1) The state emblem of the Slovak Republic is represented by a red early Gothic shield featuring a silver double cross on the middle of three blue symbolic mountain peaks.

(2) The national flag of the Slovak Republic consists of three long bands -- white, blue, and red. The front side of the national flag of the Slovak Republic features the state emblem of the Slovak Republic.

(3) The state seal of the Slovak Republic is represented by the state emblem of the Slovak Republic, with the inscription "Slovak Republic" positioned in a circle around it.

(4) The national anthem of the Slovak Republic is the first two stanzas of the song "Nad Tatrou sa blýska" [Lightning Flashes Over the Tatra Mountains].

(5) Details concerning the state emblem, the national flag, the state seal, and the national anthem and their use will be set out in a law.

Article 10

(1) Bratislava is the capital of the Slovak Republic.

(2) The status of Bratislava as the capital of the Slovak Republic will be set out in a law.

CHAPTER TWO

Basic Rights and Freedoms

Part One

General Provisions

Article 11

International treaties on human rights and basic liberties that were ratified by the Slovak Republic and promulgated in a manner determined by law take precedence over its own laws, provided that they secure a greater extent of constitutional rights and liberties.

Article 12

(1) People are free and equal in dignity and their rights. Basic rights and

liberties are inviolable, inalienable, secured by law, and unchallengeable.

(2) Basic rights and liberties on the territory of the Slovak Republic are guaranteed to everyone regardless of sex, race, color of skin, language, creed and religion, political or other beliefs, national or social origin, affiliation to a nation or ethnic group, property, descent, or another status. No one must be harmed, preferred, or discriminated against on these grounds.

(3) Everyone has the right to freely decide on his nationality. Any influence on this decision and any form of pressure aimed at assimilation are forbidden.

(4) No one must be restricted in his rights because he upholds his basic rights and liberties.

Article 13

(1) Duties can be imposed only on the basis of law, within its limits, and while complying with basic rights and liberties.

(2) Limits to basic rights and liberties can be set only by law, under conditions laid down in this Constitution.

(3) Legal restrictions of constitutional rights and liberties must apply equally to all cases that meet the set conditions.

(4) When restricting constitutional rights and liberties, attention must be paid to their essence and meaning. These restrictions must not be used for any other than the set purpose.

Part Two

Basic Human Rights and Liberties

Article 14

Everyone is worthy of having rights.

Article 15

(1) Everyone has the right to life. Human life is worthy of protection even prior to birth.

(2) No one must be deprived of life.

(3) Capital punishment is not permitted.

(4) If someone was deprived of life as a result of an action that does not represent a criminal act, this does not constitute a violation of rights according to this article.

Article 16

(1) The inviolability of the person and its privacy is guaranteed. It can be limited only in cases defined by law.

(2) No one must be tortured or subjected to cruel, inhuman, or humiliating treatment or punishment.

Article 17

(1) Personal freedom is guaranteed.

(2) No one must be prosecuted or deprived of freedom other than for reasons

and in a manner defined by law. No one must be deprived of freedom solely because of his inability to comply with a contractual obligation.

(3) A person accused or suspected of a criminal act can be detained only in cases defined by law. The detained person must be immediately informed of the reasons for the detainment, interrogated, and either released or brought before the court within 24 hours at the latest. The judge must question the detainee within 24 hours of taking over the case and decide on his or her custody or release.

(4) An accused person may be arrested only on the basis of a written, substantiated court warrant. The arrested person must be brought before the court within 24 hours. The judge must question the arrested person within 24 hours of taking over the case and decide on his or her custody or release.

(5) A person can be taken into custody only for reasons and for a period defined by law and on the basis of a court ruling.

(6) The law will specify in which cases a person can be admitted to, or kept in, institutional health care without his or her consent. Such a measure must be reported within 24 hours to the court, which will then decide on this placement within five days.

(7) The mental state of a person accused of criminal activity can be examined only on the basis of the court's written order.

Article 18

(1) No one must be subjected to forced labor or services.

(2) The provision of section 1 does not apply to

a) work assigned according to the law to persons serving a prison term or some other punishment substituting for a prison term,

b) military service or some other service assigned by law in lieu of compulsory military service,

c) services required on the basis of the law in the event of natural catastrophes, accidents, or other dangers posing a threat to life, health, or property of great value,

d) activities laid down by law to protect life, health, or the rights of others.

Article 19

(1) Everyone has the right to the preservation of his human dignity and personal honor, and the protection of his good name.

(2) Everyone has the right to protection against unwarranted interference in his private and family life.

(3) Everyone has the right to protection against the unwarranted collection, publication, or other illicit use of his personal data.

Article 20

(1) Everyone has the right to own property. The ownership right of all owners has the same legal content and deserves the same protection. Inheritance of property is guaranteed.

(2) The law will specify which property other than property listed in Article 4 that is essential to meet the needs of society, the development of the national economy, and public interest can be owned only by the state, community,

or designated juridical persons. The law can also specify that certain property can be owned only by citizens or juridical persons resident in the Slovak Republic.

(3) Ownership is binding. It must not be misused to the detriment of others or at variance with general interests protected by law. By exercising ownership, no harm must be done to human health, nature, cultural monuments, and the environment beyond limits set by law.

(4) Expropriation or enforced restriction of the ownership right is admissible only to the extent that it is unavoidable and in the public interest, on the basis of law, and in return for adequate compensation.

Article 21

(1) A person's home is inviolable. It must not be entered without the resident's consent.

(2) A house search is admissible only in connection with criminal proceedings and only on the basis of the judge's written and substantiated order. The method of carrying out a house search will be set out in a law.

(3) Other infringements upon the inviolability of one's home can be permitted by law only if this is inevitable in a democratic society in order to protect people's lives, health, or property, to protect the rights and liberties of others, or to ward off a serious threat to public order. If the home is used also for business or to perform some other economic activity, such infringements can be permitted by law also when this is unavoidable in meeting the tasks of public administration.

Article 22

(1) The privacy of correspondence and secrecy of mailed messages and other written documents and the protection of personal data are guaranteed.

(2) No one must violate the privacy of correspondence and the secrecy of other written documents and records, whether they are kept in privacy or sent by mail or in another way, with the exception of cases to be set out in a law. Equally guaranteed is the secrecy of messages conveyed by telephone, telegraph, or other similar means.

Article 23

(1) Freedom of movement and of abode are guaranteed.

(2) Everyone who is rightfully staying on the territory of the Slovak Republic has the right to freely leave this territory.

(3) Freedoms according to sections 1 and 2 can be restricted by law if it is unavoidable for the security of the state, to maintain public order, protect the health and the rights and liberties of others, and, in designated areas, also for reasons of environmental protection.

(4) Every citizen has the right to freely enter the territory of the Slovak Republic. A citizen must not be forced to leave his homeland and he must not be deported or extradited.

(5) A foreign national can be deported only in cases specified by law.

Article 24

(1) The freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, and faith are guaranteed. This right also comprises the possibility to change one's religious belief or faith. Everyone has the right to be without religious belief. Everyone has the right to publicly express his opinion.

(2) Everyone has the right to freely express his religion or faith on his own or together with others, privately or publicly, by means of divine and religious services, by observing religious rites, or by participating in the teaching of religion.

(3) Churches and religious communities administer their own affairs. In particular, they constitute their own bodies, inaugurate their clergymen, organize the teaching of religion, and establish religious orders and other church institutions independently of state bodies.

(4) Conditions for exercising rights according to sections 1 to 3 can be limited only by law, if such a measure is unavoidable in a democratic society to protect public order, health, morality, or the rights and liberties of others.

Article 25

(1) The defense of the Slovak Republic is a matter of honor for each citizen.

(2) No one must be forced to perform military service if this runs counter to his conscience or religious belief. The details will be specified in a law.

Part Three

Political Rights

Article 26

(1) The freedom of speech and the right to information are guaranteed.

(2) Everyone has the right to express his views in word, writing, print, picture, or other means as well as the right to freely seek out, receive, and spread ideas and information without regard for state borders. The issuing of press is not subject to licensing procedures. Enterprise in the fields of radio and television may be pegged to the awarding of an authorization from the state. The conditions will be specified by law.

(3) Censorship is banned.

(4) The freedom of speech and the right to seek out and spread information can be restricted by law if such a measure is unavoidable in a democratic society to protect the rights and liberties of others, state security, public order, or public health and morality.

(5) State bodies and territorial self-administration bodies are under an obligation to provide information on their activities in an appropriate manner and in the state language. The conditions and manner of execution will be specified by law.

Article 27

(1) The right of petition is guaranteed. Everyone has the right, alone or with others, to address requests, proposals, and complaints to state bodies and territorial self-administration bodies in matters of public or other common interest.

(2) A petition must not be used to call for the violation of basic rights and liberties.

(3) A petition must not interfere with the independence of a court.

Article 28

(1) The right to assemble peacefully is guaranteed.

(2) Conditions for exercising this right will be set out in a law in the event of assemblies in public places, if such a measure is unavoidable in a democratic society to protect the rights-and liberties of others, public order, health and morality, property, or the security of the state. An assembly must not be made conditional on the issuance of an authorization by a state administration body.

Article 29

(1) The right to freely associate is guaranteed. Everyone has the right to associate with others in clubs, societies, or other associations.

(2) Citizens have the right to establish political parties and political movements and to associate in them.

(3) The enactment of rights according to sections 1 and 2 can be restricted only in cases specified by law, if this is unavoidable in a democratic society for reasons of state security, to protect public order, to forestall criminal acts, or to protect the rights and liberties of others.

(4) Political parties and political movements, as well as clubs, societies, and other associations are separated from the state.

Article 30

(1) Citizens have the right to participate in the administration of public affairs either directly or through the free election of their representatives.

(2) Elections must be held within deadlines that do not exceed the regular electoral period as defined by law.

(3) The right to vote is universal, equal, and direct and is exercised by means of secret ballot. Conditions for exercising the right to vote will be set out in a law.

(4) Citizens have access to elected and other public posts under equal conditions.

Article 31

The legal definition of all political rights and liberties and their interpretation and use must enable and protect the free competition of political forces in a democratic society.

Article 32

Citizens have the right to put up resistance to anyone who would eliminate the democratic order of human rights and basic liberties listed in this Constitution, if the activity of constitutional bodies and the effective use of legal means are rendered impossible.

Part Four

The Rights of National Minorities and Ethnic Groups

Article 33

Membership of any national minority or ethnic group must not be to anyone's detriment.

Article 34

(1) The comprehensive development of citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic is guaranteed, particularly

the right to develop their own culture, together with other members of the minority or ethnic group, the right to disseminate and receive information in their mother tongue, the right to associate in national minority associations, and the right to set up and maintain educational and cultural institutions. Details will be set out in a law.

(2) In addition to the right to master the state language, citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups also have, under conditions defined by law, a guaranteed

- a) right to education in their own language,
- b) right to use their language in dealings with the authorities,
- c) right to participate in the solution of affairs concerning national minorities and ethnic groups.

(3) The enactment of the rights of citizens belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups that are guaranteed in this Constitution must not be conducive to jeopardizing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Slovak Republic or to discrimination against its other inhabitants.

Part Five

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

Article 35

(1) Everyone has the right to a free choice of profession and to training for it, as well as the right to engage in entrepreneurial or other gainful activity.

(2) Conditions and restrictions with regard to the execution of certain professions or activities can be specified by law.

(3) Citizens have the right to work. Citizens who are unable to exercise this right through no fault of their own are provided for materially by the state to an appropriate extent. The conditions will be defined by law.

(4) A different regulation of rights listed under sections 1 through 3 can be specified by law for foreign nationals.

Article 36

Employees have the right to equitable and adequate working conditions. The law guarantees, above all

- a) the right to remuneration for work done, sufficient to ensure the employee's dignified standard of living,
- b) protection against arbitrary dismissal and discrimination at the place of work,
- c) labor safety and the protection of health at work,
- d) the longest admissible working time,
- e) adequate rest after work,
- f) the shortest admissible period of paid leave,
- g) the right to collective bargaining.

Article 37

(1) Everyone has the right to freely associate with others in order to

protect his economic and social interests.

(2) Trade union organizations are established independently of the state. It is inadmissible to limit the number of trade union organizations, in the same way as it is inadmissible to give some of them a preferential status, be it in an enterprise or a branch of the economy.

(3) The activity of trade union organizations and the founding and operation of other associations protecting economic and social interests can be restricted by law if such a measure is unavoidable in a democratic society to protect the security of the state, public order, or the rights and liberties of others.

(4) The right to strike is guaranteed. The conditions will be defined by law. This right does not extend to judges, prosecutors, members of the armed forces and armed corps, and members of the fire brigades.

Article 38

(1) Women, minors, and persons with impaired health are entitled to an enhanced protection of their health at work as well as to special working conditions.

(2) Minors and persons with impaired health are entitled to special protection in labor relations as well as to assistance in professional training.

(3) Details concerning rights listed in sections 1 and 2 will be set out in a law.

Article 39

(1) Citizens have the right to adequate material provision in old age, in the event of work disability, as well as after losing their provider.

(2) Everyone who is in material need is entitled to assistance necessary to ensure basic living conditions.

(3) Details concerning rights listed in sections 1 and 2 will be set out in a law.

Article 40

Everyone has a right to the protection of his health. Based on public insurance, citizens have the right to free health care and to medical supplies under conditions defined by law.

Article 41

(1) Marriage, parenthood, and the family are under the protection of the law. The special protection of children and minors is guaranteed.

(2) Special care, protection in labor relations, and adequate working conditions are guaranteed to women during the period of pregnancy.

(3) Children born in and out of wedlock enjoy equal rights.

(4) Child care and the upbringing of children are among the rights of parents; children have the right to parental care and upbringing. Parents' rights can be restricted and minors can be separated from their parents against their will only by means of a court ruling based on the law.

(5) Parents caring for children are entitled to assistance from the state.

(6) Details concerning rights listed in sections 1 through 5 will be set out in a law.

Article 42

(1) Everyone has the right to education. School attendance is compulsory. Its period and age limit will be defined by law.

(2) Citizens have the right to free education at primary and secondary schools and, based on their abilities and society's resources, also at higher educational establishments.

(3) Schools other than state schools may be established, and instruction in them provided, only under conditions defined by law. Such schools may charge a tuition fee.

(4) A law will specify under which conditions citizens who are engaged in studies are entitled to assistance from the state.

Article 43

(1) Freedom of scientific research and in art are guaranteed. The rights to the results of creative intellectual activity are protected by law.

(2) The right of access to the cultural heritage is guaranteed under conditions defined by law.

Part Six

The Right to the Protection of the Environment and the Cultural Heritage

Article 44

(1) Everyone has the right to an auspicious environment.

(2) Everyone is obliged to protect and enhance the environment and the cultural heritage.

(3) No one must endanger or damage the environment, natural resources, and the cultural heritage beyond the extent established by law.

(4) The state looks after an economical use of natural resources, ecological balance, and effective environmental care.

Article 45

Everyone has the right to timely and complete information about the state of the environment and the causes and consequences of its condition.

Part Seven

The Right to Protection by the Court and Other Legal Protection

Article 46

(1) Everyone may claim by the established legal procedure his right to an independent and impartial court hearing and, in cases designated by law, to another body of the Slovak Republic.

(2) Anyone who claims to have been deprived of his rights by a decision of a public administration body may appeal to the court for it to reexamine the lawfulness of that decision, unless specified otherwise by law. The reexamination of decisions concerning basic rights and liberties must not, however, be excluded from the court's authority.

(3) Everyone is entitled to compensation for damage incurred as a result of an unlawful decision by a court or another state or public administration body, or as a result of an incorrect official procedure.

(4) Conditions and details concerning court and other legal protection will be set out in a law.

Article 47

(1) Everyone has the right to refuse to testify if, by doing so, he might expose himself or a person close to him to the risk of criminal prosecution.

(2) Everyone has the right to legal assistance in court proceedings or proceedings before other state or public administration bodies. He has this right from the very start of the proceedings, under conditions defined by law.

(3) All participants in proceedings according to section 2 are equal.

(4) Anyone who declares that he does not have a command of the language in which the proceedings according to section 2 are conducted has the right to an interpreter.

Article 48

(1) No one must be removed from the jurisdiction of his law-assigned judge. The jurisdiction of the court is established by law.

(2) Everyone has the right to have his case tried in public, without needless procrastination, and in his presence and to deliver his opinion on all pieces of evidence. The public can be excluded only in cases specified by law.

Article 49

Only the law established which conduct constitutes a criminal act and what punishment or other form of deprivation of rights or property may be inflicted upon those who committed it.

Article 50

(1) Only the court shall decide on guilt and punishment for criminal acts.

(2) Every defendant is considered innocent until the court establishes his guilt by means of a legally valid verdict.

(3) The accused has the right to be granted the time and opportunity to prepare his defense, either himself or through a defense counsel.

(4) The defendant has the right to refuse to testify and must not be denied this right under any circumstances.

(5) No one must be made criminally liable for a deed for which he has already been sentenced or of which he has already been acquitted in a legally valid manner. This principle does not rule out the application of extraordinary corrective means in harmony with the law.

(6) The criminal liability of a deed is assessed, and punishment is meted out, according to the law valid at the time when the offense was committed. A more recent law will be applied if it is more favorable for the perpetrator.

Part Eight

Common Provisions for Chapters One and Two

Article 51

The rights listed under Article 35, Article 36, Article 37 section 4, Articles 38 through 42, and Articles 44 through 46 of this Constitution can be

claimed only within the limits of the laws that execute those provisions.

Article 52

(1) Wherever the term "citizen" is used in Chapters One and Two of this Constitution, this is understood to mean citizen of the Slovak Republic.

(2) Foreign nationals enjoy in the Slovak Republic basic human rights and liberties guaranteed by this Constitution, unless these are expressly granted only to citizens.

(3) Wherever the term "citizen" is used in previous legal regulations, this is understood to mean every person, wherever this concerns the rights and liberties that this Constitution extends regardless of citizenship.

Article 53

The Slovak Republic grants asylum to foreign nationals persecuted for upholding political rights and liberties. Asylum may be denied to those who acted at variance with basic human rights and liberties. Details will be defined by law.

Article 54

The law may restrict the right of judges and prosecutors to engage in entrepreneurial and other activity and the right listed under Article 29 section 2; the right of employees of state administration bodies and territorial self-administration bodies in designated functions listed under Article 37 section 4; and the rights of members of armed forces and armed corps listed under Articles 27 and 28, if these are related to the execution of their duties. The law may restrict the right to strike for persons in professions that are vital for the protection of life and health.

CHAPTER THREE

Part One

The Economy of the Slovak Republic

Article 55

(1) The economy of the Slovak Republic is based on the principles of a socially and ecologically oriented market economy.

(2) The Slovak Republic protects and promotes economic competition. Details will be set out in a law.

Article 56

The Slovak Republic establishes a bank of issue. Details will be set out in a law.

Article 57

The Slovak Republic is a customs territory.

Article 58

(1) The financial management of the Slovak Republic is administered by its state budget. The state budget is adopted by means of a law.

(2) State budget revenues, the rules of budget economy, and the relationship between the state budget and the budgets of territorial units will be set out in

a law.

(3) Special-purpose funds linked to the state budget of the Slovak Republic are established by law.

Article 59

(1) There exist state and local taxes and fees.

(2) Taxes and fees may be levied by law or on the basis of a law.

Part Two

Supreme Control Office of the Slovak Republic

Article 60

The Supreme Control Office of the Slovak Republic is an independent body carrying out control of the management of budgetary resources, state property, property rights, and state claims.

Article 61

(1) The Supreme Control Office is headed by a chairman. The chairman and deputy chairmen of the Supreme Control Office are elected and recalled by the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

(2) Any citizen of the Slovak Republic who may be elected to the National Council of the Slovak Republic may be elected chairman of the Supreme Control Office.

(3) The same person may be elected chairman of the Supreme Control Office for a maximum of two consecutive five-year terms.

(4) The posts of chairman and deputy chairmen of the Supreme Control Office are incompatible with any other post in state bodies, territorial self-administration bodies, or bodies of juridical persons engaged in entrepreneurial activity.

Article 62

The Supreme Control Office submits reports on the results of its inquiries to the National Council of the Slovak Republic at least once a year and whenever requested to do so by the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

Article 63

The sphere of competence, powers, and internal organizational structure of the Supreme Control Office will be set out in a law.

CHAPTER FOUR

Territorial Self-Administration

Article 64

(1) The community is the basic element of territorial self-administration.

(2) The community is an independent territorial and administrative unit of the Slovak Republic comprising persons who are permanently resident on its territory.

(3) The self-administration of higher territorial units and their bodies will be established by law.

Article 65

(1) The community is a juridical person that, under conditions set out in a law, independently manages its own property and financial resources.

(2) The community finances its needs, first and foremost, from its own revenues, as well as from state subsidies. The law specifies which taxes and fees represent communities' revenue. State subsidies may be claimed only within the limits of the law.

Article 66

The community has the right to pool its resources with those of other communities in the interest of ensuring matters of common interest.

Article 67

The community decides independently in matters of local self-administration. Duties and restrictions may be imposed on it only by the law. Territorial self-administration is enacted at meetings of community residents, by means of a local referendum, or through community bodies.

Article 68

The community may issue generally binding decrees in matters of local self-administration.

Article 69

(1) Community bodies are

- a) the community representative body
- b) the mayor

(2) The community representative body is composed of deputies to the community representative body. Elections of deputies to community representative bodies are held by secret ballot, on the basis of a general, equal, and direct right to vote.

(3) The mayor is elected by citizens of the community by secret ballot, on the basis of a general, equal, and direct right to vote. The mayor of a community constitutes the community's executive body. He executes community administration and represents the community outwardly.

Article 70

The prerequisites for a community to be declared a town, and the method of doing so, will be defined by law, which will also designate the names of town bodies.

Article 71

(1) The execution of designated tasks of local state administration can be transferred by law to the community. The cost of the execution of state administration transferred in this manner will be covered by the state.

(2) In executing state administration, the community may, on the basis of the law, issue decrees that are generally binding within its area of jurisdiction, if empowered to do so by the law. The execution of state administration transferred to the community is steered by law and controlled by the Government. Details will be specified in a law.

CHAPTER FIVE

Legislative Power

Part One

The National Council of the Slovak Republic

Article 72

The National Council of the Slovak Republic is the sole constituent and legislative body of the Slovak Republic.

Article 73

(1) The National Council of the Slovak Republic has 150 deputies who are elected for a four-year period.

(2) Deputies are representatives of citizens. They execute their mandate personally according to their conscience and conviction and are not bound by orders.

Article 74

(1) Deputies are elected by secret ballot in general, equal, and direct elections.

(2) A citizen who has the right to vote, has reached the age of 21, and is permanently resident on the territory of the Slovak Republic can be elected deputy.

(3) Details concerning the election of deputies will be set out in a law.

Article 75

(1) The deputy is sworn in at the first meeting of the National Council of the Slovak Republic in which he participates, by taking the following oath:

"I promise by my honor and conscience to be faithful to the Slovak Republic. I will fulfill my duties in the interest of its citizens. I will observe the Constitution and other laws and work toward their translation into life."

(2) Refusing to take this oath, or taking it with reservations, results in the loss of mandate.

Article 76

The validity of the election of deputies is verified by the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

Article 77

(1) The post of deputy is incompatible with the post of president, judge, prosecutor, member of the Police Corps, member of the Prison Guard Corps, and professional soldier.

(2) If a deputy is appointed member of the Government of the Slovak Republic, his mandate as a deputy does not cease while he executes the government post, but is just not being exercised.

Article 78

(1) A deputy cannot be made criminally liable because of his voting in the National Council of the Slovak Republic or its bodies, which applies also to the period after the expiry of his mandate. For statements made in the National Council of the Slovak Republic or its bodies while discharging the functions of

a deputy, a deputy is answerable to the disciplinary powers of the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

(2) No criminal or disciplinary proceedings can be initiated against a deputy, and he cannot be taken into custody, without the consent of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. If the National Council of the Slovak Republic denies its consent, prosecution is ruled out forever.

(3) If a deputy has been caught and detained while committing a criminal offense, the relevant authority is obliged to report this immediately to the chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. Unless the Mandate and Immunity Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic gives its consent to the detainment, the deputy must be released immediately.

Article 79

A deputy may refuse to testify in matters about which he learned while discharging his office, even after he ceases to be a deputy.

Article 80

(1) A deputy may address an interpellation to the Government of the Slovak Republic, a member of the Government of the Slovak Republic, or the head of another central body of state administration concerning matters within their jurisdiction. The deputy must receive a reply within 30 days.

(2) The reply to an interpellation shall become the subject of a debate in the National Council of the Slovak Republic that may be linked with a vote of confidence.

Article 81

(1) A deputy may surrender the post of deputy.

(2) The mandate of a deputy shall expire if the deputy is sentenced in a legally valid way for a particularly grave deliberate criminal act.

Article 82

(1) The National Council of the Slovak Republic holds permanent sessions.

(2) The constituent meeting of th