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*Kuvendi-Skupština-Assembly*

# Manual

## COMMITTEE HEARINGS



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## CONTENT

INTRODUCTION .....	5
1. COMMITTEE HEARINGS.....	6
1.1 <i>Legislative hearings</i> .....	7
1.2 <i>Oversight hearings</i> .....	8
1.3 <i>Hearings during the Assembly inquiry</i> .....	9
2. PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION OF HEARINGS .....	11
2.1 <i>The initiative for organizing the hearing</i> .....	11
2.2 <i>Identification and selection of witnesses/invitees</i> .....	12
2.3 <i>Preparation and distribution of invitations</i> .....	13
2.4 <i>Publication of the notification for the hearing</i> .....	14
2.5 <i>Organization of the room for the hearing</i> .....	15
3. MANAGING THE COMMITTEE HEARINGS .....	17
3.1 <i>The role of the chairperson and committee members</i> .....	17
3.2 <i>The role of committee staff</i> .....	18
3.3 <i>Hearings progress</i> .....	19
3.4 <i>Reviewing remarks and recommendations gathered during the hearing</i> .....	21
3.5 <i>Transcripts</i> .....	21
3.6 <i>Media</i> .....	22
4. ANNEX.....	23
1. <i>List of activities to be undertaken for organizing a hearing</i> .....	24
2. <i>Calendar for organizing a hearing</i> .....	26
3. <i>Invitations for Committee members</i> .....	27
4. <i>Invitations for participants (Legislative Hearing)</i> .....	28
5. <i>Invitations for participants (Oversight Hearing)</i> .....	29
6. <i>Notification to the media office</i> .....	30
7. <i>Press Release</i> .....	31





# INTRODUCTION

The Committee Hearings manual provides an overview of the best practices for organizing and conducting committee hearings at the Assembly of Kosovo. It aims to unify and advance the procedures and practices that would enable more efficient use of hearings as an important mechanism in the work of committees.

The manual is primarily intended to be used as guidelines for the committee staff, who are responsible for supporting the committees; members of the Assembly (hereafter referred to as MPs); and especially by the committee chairpersons, who have a key role in the organization and management of hearings. This manual may also be useful to other state institutions, civil society, and international organizations that support the work of the Assembly as a tool to promote a better understanding of the role of committee hearings.

The manual was prepared by a working group composed of staff from the Division for Supporting Committees and officials from the National Democratic Institute (NDI). While preparing the manual, the working group focused not only on the best practices in the Assembly of Kosovo, but also on the best practices from the parliaments of developed countries that have longer experience with committee hearings. Hearings are a new practice in the Assembly of Kosovo, and despite the progress achieved during the last 10 years, committees still face challenges in organizing and conducting proper hearings that would help them in fulfilling their duties.

The Rules of Procedures of the Assembly only superficially regulate the matters concerning the organization and conducting of the hearings. Therefore, in its content, the manual provides detailed explanations related to the role of hearings, issues related to organization and management, the role of the chairperson and committee staff on managing the hearings, the mechanisms for evaluating their effectiveness and the role of media coverage of committee hearings.

In order to unify the practices and procedures related to organizing and managing committee hearings, the Legal Department has managed to standardize documents and templates used by committee staff before, during, and after the hearings. Preparation of this manual, the consolidation of relevant documents, continuous trainings for committee staff, and encouragement of MPs to be more committed will help increase the quality of the hearings.

The Legal Department of the Assembly will continue to prepare similar manuals for other aspects of the work of parliamentary committees in order to increase the efficiency of these bodies that carry the main burden of the work of the Assembly. For this occasion, we thank the members of the working group for their dedication and commitment, and express our gratitude to both NDI and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for supporting the preparation and publication of the manual.

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# 1. HEARINGS AT THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

Hearings are a very important and efficient part of committee work, allowing MPs to gather information and evidence needed to successfully perform their legislative and oversight functions. Information, observations and expertise that members gather through hearings greatly affect the quality of decisions taken in the parliamentary committees.

Currently the decision-making process at the committee level is primarily based on the information and knowledge of MPs and their staff. However, that is not sufficient considering the limited resources and capacities of the Assembly to conduct legislative research and public policy analysis. Therefore, hearings are considered a very efficient and low cost mechanism that enable the committees to obtain information, data, analysis and necessary expertise to come up with appropriate decisions.

Hearings make it possible for MPs, committee staff, experts, NGO representatives, interest groups and interested citizens to discuss in detail and elaborate on issues that are being considered by the committees. As a result, a higher degree of legitimacy is attributed to committee decisions and the image and the reputation of the Assembly as the highest legislative representative and oversight Institution in the country will improve.

In the parliamentary activities of committees we recognize several types of hearings, though so far, at least by name, the difference is not evident as all are considered to be "public hearings". In the Assembly's experience thus far, we have encountered parliamentary legislative hearings, oversight hearings and hearings conducted during the parliamentary inquiry. Although in terms of organizing and managing there are no major differences, there are features that are specific to each of these hearing types.

Hearings are usually held in the Assembly building, but in certain cases the committees may decide to conduct consultative hearings in the field, especially if the matter that is being considered affects a particular region. Field hearings aim at obtaining information on how a certain draft law under consideration would affect the lives of citizens or the work of institutions. Field hearings may be one of an oversight nature, in order to verify the applicability of the policies and subsidiary legal acts issued by the ministries or other executive institutions.

The legal basis for organizing and conducting hearings is provided in the Rules of Procedures of the Assembly. Article 66 clearly specifies that the committees may conduct hearings to obtain information from independent experts, representatives of interest groups and other relevant persons. Although they have had a considerable impact on the revision and amendment of draft laws, much remains to be done to advance this as a regular parliamentary practice.

## 1.1. *Legislative hearings*

Legislative hearings are among the most efficient mechanisms used by the Assembly committees during the revision and amendment of draft laws. These hearings enable representatives of state institutions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), specialized institutes, experts, academic community, interest groups and interested citizens to actively participate in the final stage of the law-making process. This does not mean that consultations with these actors are not conducted at the top level of ministries or government; rather, that the Assembly, as the only institution directly elected by the people, serves as an ultimate filter for draft laws.

Laws are made for citizens so the Assembly, through the committees' serving as working bodies, enables all parties affected by the draft law to provide their specific comments and recommendations. Hearings enable the active participation and engagement of all aforementioned stakeholders in matters of public interest, increase the public trust in the Assembly, and serve as an element of transparency in the legislative activity.

### *The Rules of Procedure of the Assembly Article 65: Public Hearings*

*1. The Committee may conduct public hearings to receive suggestions on the issues that are being considered, from public organizations, experts, representatives of interest groups and others.*

*2. To clarify the facts, the Commission may conduct extensive discussions with persons that provide information.*

A mechanism that enables the revision of the draft law by a wide range of experts from various fields creates a higher degree of acceptance. Since all entities affected by the law will have the opportunity to be involved, then even the implementation of the law will be easier. In the case of Kosovo, where the involvement of citizens by the state



institutions in the decision making process has been neglected for many decades, legislative hearings are of a special importance.

In cases when a draft law or a government policy is under the jurisdiction of two different Assembly committees, it is possible to conduct joint legislative hearings. Joint hearings save time and financial resources for the committees and increase the legitimacy of the decisions as they involve a larger number of MPs. However, joint hearings are rarely conducted, as involving two different committees requires greater coordination and engagement in the organizing, conducting, and managing of the hearing.

## 1.2 *Oversight hearings*

Assembly Committees play the central role in exercising the Assembly's oversight function. Each committee should ensure that the ministries, operating within their scope of responsibilities, are transparent and constantly accountable to the Assembly on the implementation of policies and government programs, legislation and, above all, on the management of public finances. In this regard, oversight hearings by the committees have proven to be a very efficient mechanism for conducting continuous supervision over the ministries and other state institutions.

Although the Rules of Procedures do not envisage oversight hearings as a specific category, Article 73 provides committees with broad authority when overseeing the implementation of laws and government policies. This authority enables them to organize hearings of oversight character, and to call ministers, deputy ministers, and leaders or officials of other state institutions, to provide explanations and information related to the implementation of government programs, problems with implementation of laws, sensitive political issues or other issues under their jurisdiction.

### *The Rules of Procedure of the Assembly*

#### *Article 73: The authority of committees on overseeing the implementation of laws*

- 1. Each committee, within the scope of its responsibilities, is authorized to supervise the implementation of law by the Government, respectively by the Ministry.*
- 2. Respective ministries should report to functional committees on the implementation of the law without a formal request at least once a year.*



*3. In order to exercise the authority mentioned above, the committees must:*

*a) Examine and study the effectiveness of the laws in force, within their scope of responsibility and their implementation and propose measures on concrete cases;*

*b) control the overall activity of the relevant ministry.*

During the course of the oversight hearings, the minister should provide explanations and information as requested by the committee and answer any questions submitted by the committee members. These hearings are usually open to the media and civil society representatives but can also be closed on certain occasions. Besides government institutions, committees can invite the leaders of independent institutions that report to the Assembly on specific hearings.

Though, in general, the Assembly committees are overloaded with a huge number of draft laws in procedure, there have been efforts to oversee ministries within their scope of work through various activities. In this regard it is worth mentioning the monitoring of the implementation of a number of laws in which oversight hearings with ministers and other ministry representatives have been useful.

### *1.3 Hearings during the parliamentary inquiry*

Inquiry committees are important instruments used by the Assembly to exercise its oversight role over the executive branch and to inquire specific issues of public interest. Inquiry committees are mainly created in cases of abuse of power or public finances by public officials, especially by those enjoying immunity. During the parliamentary inquiries, the committee should conduct hearings where the entities involved can provide information and evidence.

#### *Law on Parliamentary Inquiry*

##### *Article 19: Witnesses*

*Paragraph 4. Committee invites witnesses to clarify the different circumstances relating to the matter being inquired.*

*Paragraph 6. Witnesses are obliged to respond to the Committee's invitation to provide evidence. The invitation letter must include the date and time, place, the issue for which evidence is filed, the rights of the witness in the proceedings and the legal consequences in case of not responding to the Committee's invitation by the witness.*



The establishment of inquiry committees by the Assembly is defined in Article 77.2 of the Constitution and specified in Article 71 of the Assembly Regulation, while other details on organizing and functioning of inquiry committees are defined in the Law on Parliamentary Inquiry. According to the law, during the hearings, inquiry committees should invite witnesses to clarify the different circumstances relating to the issue inquired. In the hearings during the parliamentary inquiry, inquiry committee invites experts too, who are obligated by the law, to appear and report in writing to the questions raised by the Committee always retaining neutral in their conclusions.

All the evidence and information compiled during the hearings will be reviewed by the committee members and then will be incorporated in the final report, which will be reviewed and approved by the Assembly. The process of parliamentary hearings during the inquiry is very complicated, as it requires one to manage the sensitive nature of the inquiries and the ongoing confrontations between rival political forces. Therefore, the committee's chairperson and especially its clerk play a crucial role in preparation and management of the hearing.

## 2. PLANNING AND ORGANIZING THE HEARINGS

To achieve the effect for which they were created as an Assembly mechanism, hearings should be scheduled well before time and neatly organized by MPs and the committee staff. Legislative and oversight committee activities are generally outlined at the beginning of the year when the committee develops and approves its annual work plan. At this point the committee decides which draft laws will be reviewed during the year and will organize legislative hearings. Simultaneously, the timing of the conduction of the periodic oversight hearings will be decided.. Obviously, due to their nature, not all the oversight hearings can be envisaged at the beginning of the year so the committee has the discretion to conduct such hearings whenever they are seen to be necessary.

MPs and committee staff must be clear about some of the criteria and necessary conditions that need to be taken into account when planning, organizing, and conducting hearings. Initial procedures related to the instigation of a hearing must be clarified, followed by the timeframe for its planning and organizing, its purpose, identification of the invitees, preparation and distribution of invitations, publication of the notification, preparation of the agenda, and other issues of administrative nature which are necessary for putting together an effective hearing.

### 2.1 *The initiative for organizing the hearings*

All members of the committee have the right to initiate a hearing, although legislative hearings are envisaged within the annual work plan. Usually for each draft law that is to be forwarded for a debate at the Assembly, the committee should appoint a working group composed of its members and appoint a chairperson, who is responsible for the activities related to the revision of that draft law.

Members of the working group should work with the committee clerk on clearly defining the purpose of conducting the legislative hearing and to specify the main points of the draft law on which there are contradictions within the committee and which will require clarification. The proposal, together with related explanations, will be discussed at the committee meeting, while the decision to conduct a hearing can be brought only by the committee through a majority vote.



Planning and organizing hearings takes time and commitment, so the timeframe from the date of the decision until the date of the holding of a hearing should be at least 10 working days. This deadline is necessary so that the committee staff can prepare and organize the hearing. This allows committee members to study the issue better, but also gives more time to the witnesses/invitees to prepare remarks, suggestions, recommendations and their evidence in writing.

The decision to conduct a public hearing, along with the comments and suggestions offered by MPs during the discussion, should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. These data will serve the committee clerk on preparing the notification for the hearing and the invitation that should be sent to the invitees.

## 2.2 *Identification and selection of witnesses/invitees*

Selection of the invitees is one of the most important tasks in planning the hearing. Once key issues of the draft law are identified, the chairperson of the working group, in cooperation with the committee chairperson and the clerk, should prepare the list of invitees. The list of invitees is to be prepared primarily based on the Committee's database of experts and CSOs. All committee members have the right to nominate certain individuals or organizations that they consider capable of providing input during the reviewing and amending of the draft law. The final list of invitees should be prepared three days after the decision for organizing the hearing is made (seven working days prior to the hearing).

### *Database on experts and NGOs*

*Each Assembly committee has its database of experts, institutions and nongovernmental organizations that serves as a key resource for identifying and selecting the invitees at the legislative hearings. The database must be constantly updated and should include the full spectrum of the civil society and community experts that are specialized in the field of committee's competencies.*

Committees should aim to invite the government representatives at the legislative hearings, namely the ministry that has sponsored the draft law. After the government representatives have been selected, the committee should identify the civil society organizations, various associations, interest groups and institutions or experts of the same field that can provide comments and recommendations for improving the quality of the draft law.

At the same time, any civil society organizations, independent experts or certain groups of citizens who believe that they can provide input in the review and amendment process and who are not invited by the committee, should be offered the opportunity to attend the hearing. Those interested can directly contact the committee staff, whose contact information should be provided at the hearing notification published on the website or through the Civil Society Liaison Office to be established in the Assembly. Publication of the notification on committee hearings in newspapers, radio and other media can increasingly influence the hearings visibility.

From the Civil Society Liaison Office, the request should be sent to the committee clerk, who then in cooperation with the committee chairperson and the draft law rapporteur decides on their inclusion on the participants list for the legislative hearings. However, the committee clerk should make sure that before the final list of invitees is prepared, the liaison officer with the civil society is contacted to ensure that all possible requirements are addressed. Then, the final list of invitees should be sent to the police officers at the main gate of the Assembly in order to allow entry of the invitees on the day of the hearing.

The number of invitees at the oversight hearings is limited. Usually the committee decides to invite ministers, deputy ministers and other senior ministry officials, heads of independent institutions, or other officials of the state institutions. Depending on the nature of the issue being overseen by the committee, civil society organizations that have helped the committee in the process of supervision or specialized institutions contracted by the committee for this purpose may be invited.

## 2.3 *Preparation of the invitations*

Once the final list of invitees is prepared, the committee clerk, in cooperation with other committee staff, should begin preparation of official invitations for participation at the hearing. The invitation must clearly specify the venue, date, day and time the hearing will take place. The invitees should be asked to confirm their participation at least two days before the hearing takes place. The contact information for responsible committee staff must be outlined in the invitation in order for the invitees to confirm attendance.

The package that is sent to the invitees must contain: official invitation signed by the committee chairperson, the agenda of the hearings and a copy of the draft law. If the draft is too extensive, the invitees may be invited to offer their observations and recommendations for a part of the draft law only, on which committee considers they have more expertise. However, in practice, the invitees usually focus on the issues that are of greater interest to them.



### *Submission of written comments and recommendations*

*It is very important that the invitation points out that the invitees are required to submit their comments and recommendations related to the draft law or to the issue for which the hearing is organized in writing. See the Annex, Sample 2 "Invitation for Participants."*

Invitations along with any related material should be sent to all of the invitees in electronic form and hard copy when possible. Committee staff should contact the invitees that have not confirmed their participation on the phone, in order to ensure that they have received the invitation.

## *2.4 Publication of the notification for the hearing*

Once the date of the hearing is set and the preliminary list of invitees is ready, the committee clerk prepares the public notification on the hearing. The notification should be posted on the Assembly official website at least seven days prior to the hearing. The public notification should include the day, date, time and the Assembly room in which the hearing will take place.

When dealing with oversight hearings, the clerk should ensure that immediately after the decision to convey an oversight hearing is made, the notification together with the invitation are instantly submitted to the relevant ministry. The notification should contain the agenda as well as the contact information for the office of committee staff. The clerk must ensure that, through the Assembly Office for Media and Public Relations, the notification is sent to all accredited journalists that cover the Assembly proceedings.

After publishing the hearing notification, the committee officer should prepare the official invitation with all relevant supporting materials and send it to the committee members. The invitation should be sent to the mailboxes and emails of all the committee members at least four working days before the hearing. The final list of the invitees for the hearing should be attached to the invitation, in order for committee members to be prepared.

## 2.5 *Organizing the room for the hearing*

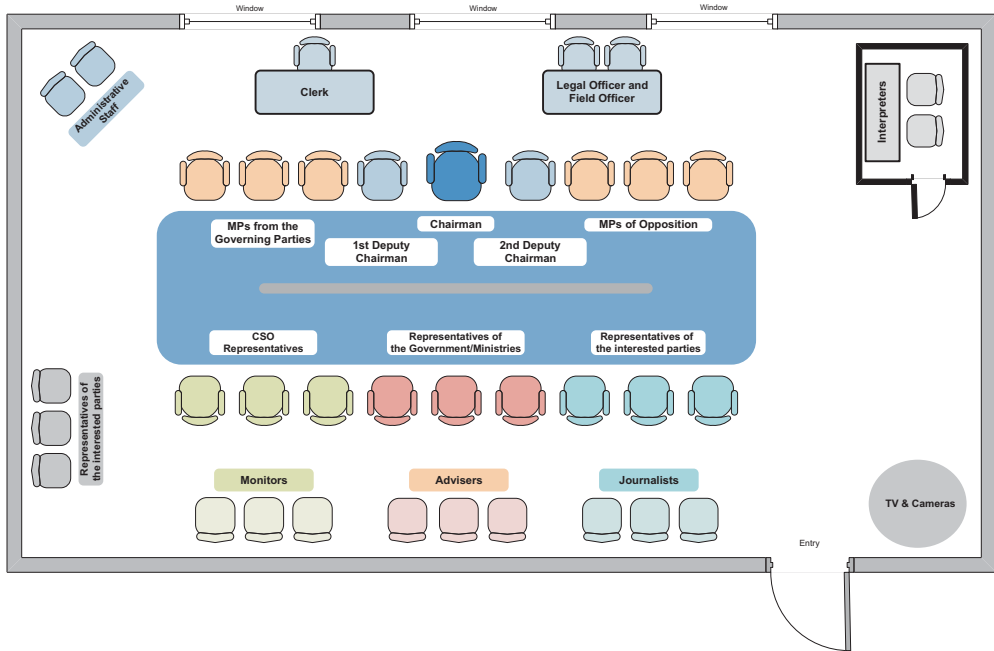
Hearings are usually held in the rooms of the Assembly building intended for regular committee meetings. Most of the rooms in which the committee meetings are conveyed are small, and considering the relatively large number of participants in the hearings, especially at legislative ones, only a few of the rooms fulfill the necessary conditions.

The room in which the hearing will be conducted should be booked as early as possible and the committee clerk should ensure that the necessary space to accommodate committee members and staff, government representatives, representatives of all organizations and institutions invited, as well as individual experts and journalists, is available. The room should provide sufficient space for cameramen and photographers as well, who are covering the hearing. The committee clerk should usher the invitees to their seats and inform them of the structure and time limitations for presentations.

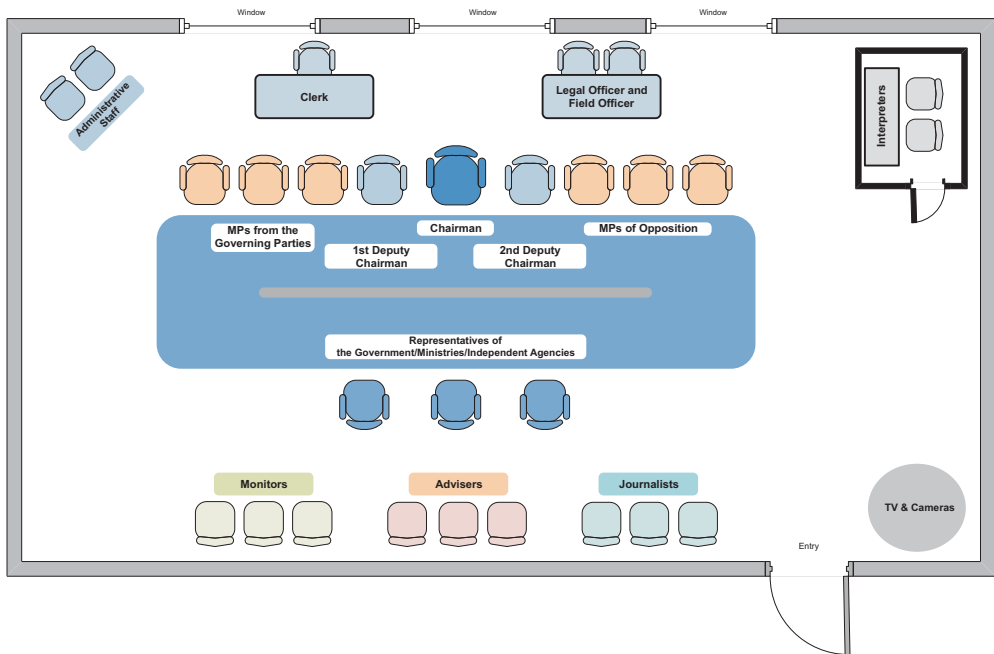
The room must have all necessary sound and translation equipment, as well as the space in which translators will be accommodated. Sound equipment must be tested at least an hour before the hearing. The name tags should be placed in front of each committee member. The name tags, including the institution they represent, must be placed in front of each government representative and other invitees from state institutions or civil society. At the beginning of the meeting all the participants are required to provide personal information in a registration form prepared by the committee staff in order to verify the number of participants and the institutions they represent.

The order of the seats during the hearings is of great importance for the working progress, therefore committee staff should ensure that the room is available at least one hour before the hearing in order to do the necessary modifications. During the hearings, committee members should sit on the right side of the room (in reference to the main door of the room), while the government representatives, civil society and representatives of expert's community should be sitting opposite to them.

The seat of the committee clerk should be near and behind the committee chairperson, while other supporting committee staff members should be placed at the auxiliary desks. If during committee work, members of the Assembly need support from their political staff (assistants or consultants from their parliamentary group), those staff members should sit behind the MP seats. The civil society representatives monitoring the work of the committee and the media representatives should be placed at the back, as well. The official Assembly interpreters are to be placed in the translation booths. There should be designated areas for the cameramen and photographers on both sides of the room. Models for seat arrangement during legislative and oversight hearings are as shown in the following schemes.



*Scheme 1. Seat arrangement during the legislative hearing.*



*Scheme 2. Seat arrangement during the oversight hearing.*



## 3. MANAGING THE HEARING

Hearings are among the most important activities of parliamentary committees, but also the most complicated to manage. This is because the committee members, government representatives, interest groups, civil society organizations, various associations, independent experts and representatives from the academic community all assemble in a room to discuss specific draft laws or issues under the committee's consideration.

Taking into account that draft laws often cover very sensitive issues, the potential for tensions between the political forces represented at the committee disagreements among the participants from the government, and confrontations between interest groups and other representatives is quite real; therefore, the management of hearings is often a challenge for the committee chairperson.

In addition to the effect they have on improving the quality of the comments and recommendations provided by the invitees, hearings are also a media event. As such, hearings should be used as an excellent opportunity to enhance the image and reputation of the committee in the eyes of the public. Efficient management of hearings by the committee chairperson creates a good impression among the people and shows a high degree of involvement of different stakeholders in the lawmaking process.

Therefore, it is very important that all the necessary arrangements for facilitating the management of the hearing by the chairperson are done at the planning and organizing

Committee chairpersons, committee members and committee clerks, along with their teams, should be clear on their responsibilities before, during, and after the hearing. Well organized and managed hearings help in building sound relations with government officials, interest groups, civil society organizations, various associations and independent experts, thus ensuring continuous and constructive cooperation.

### 3.1 *The role of the chairperson and committee members*

The committee chairperson has a central role in planning, organizing, and especially managing the hearings. In cooperation with the chairperson of the working group on the draft law and the committee clerk, the chairperson must ensure that all the necessary preparations for conducting the hearing are done carefully and on time.



A day before the hearing is conducted, or at least an hour before the hearing, the committee chairperson should convene a meeting with the chairperson of the working group and the committee clerk to verify if everything related to planning and organizing is in order, and to prepare a final scenario for managing the hearing.

The hearing is chaired by the committee chairperson. In the absence of the committee chairperson, the hearing should be chaired by the first or the second deputy chairperson. The chairperson is responsible for chairing and maintaining order during the hearing. The chairperson leads the discussions, gives the floor to the invitees, gives the floor to MPs for their comments and questions, and ensures that discussions flow in accordance with the committee rules and procedures.

The chairperson should be well informed in advance on the issues to be discussed and be able to predict the critical points of the discussion. The chairperson may face confrontations and significant disagreements between the participants; therefore, he/she must show authority and capability in managing such situations. While the hearing is taking place, the chairperson should remain neutral in the discussions; he/she should listen to the comments and recommendations of the participants and try to give as few comments as possible, especially when they may be perceived to support one group or another.

Committee members and especially those of the working group should be prepared to confront the observations and recommendations provided by participants. For this they should seek assistance from the clerk and other committee staff, but also from the Parliamentary Research Service that provides support to the committees and MPs through legislative research.

During the hearing, committee members may put forward questions and seek clarifications from the participants in order to have an accurate picture of the concerns of the various interest groups. In this way they can make appropriate decisions on the most controversial issues, of course always putting the public interest in the first place.

### *3.4 The role of the committee staff*

Committees should be supported by a clerk, a senior field analyst, and, depending on the scope and volume of the work, one administrative clerk. The team of committee staff should support all activities in the planning, organization, and implementation stages, providing professional, legal, and procedural advice and efficient administrative support. Committee staff should demonstrate dedication, impartiality, and a high degree of professionalism.

Once the hearing is set, the committee clerk, in cooperation with its chairperson and the chairperson of the working group on the draft law, should prepare the action plan for organizing the hearing. The action plan clearly defines the key activities for planning and organizing the hearing and timelines for their implementation, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the committee members and officials supporting the committee's work. The clerk, jointly with the committee chairperson, should ensure the implementation of the action plan and the hearing progress.

#### *Use of other Administration services*

*Given that the organization and conduction of the hearings is a very complex activity, the committee clerk should utilize the services and the help provided by other divisions within the Administration of the Assembly. Here cooperation with other divisions of the law department, Parliamentary Research Services, the Office for Media and Public Relations, the Service Office for Members of Assembly, and the Division of the Translations and of Logistics should be specifically mentioned.*

Committee staff, especially the clerk, should build and maintain good relations with the leaders of legal offices of the ministries under the committee's scope, civil society organizations, specialized institutions, independent experts and organizations that are engaged in the areas covered by the committee.

### 3.5 *Hearings progress*

Committee chairperson and committee members should arrive at room where the hearing will be taking place several minutes earlier to the. A committee staff member should welcome the invitees at the entrance of the room, while another official should direct them to their designated seats, always ensuring that the name tags are located in front of them. Once committee members, invitees, committee staff, translators and the media representatives are settled in their seats, the committee clerk signals the chairperson that everything is ready and he/she may open the hearing.

After the opening remarks, the committee chairperson provides a general overview on the purpose of the hearing, highlighting the main aspects for which the committee expects clarifications and recommendations, and explains some of the rules to be respected during



the hearing. As implied by the name itself, the hearing is an activity organized by the committee with the aim of hearing from the invitees.

Therefore, the chairperson quickly gives the floor to the participants in accordance with the order determined jointly with the committee clerk, reminding them on the time available. Since time is limited, the chairperson should ask the participants to be focused and specific, and offer concrete suggestions or remarks. During the hearing, the committee members and other participants may address the committee in one of the official languages, while the simultaneous translation should be provided at all times.

Each of the participants in the legislative hearing should be allowed five minutes to provide their observations and concrete recommendations. After the discussion, the speaker should be asked to submit the observations and recommendations in writing on the spot or after the hearing to the committee clerk. At the same time, it may be requested that the speaker send them through e-mail to the committee clerk. At the oversight and inquiry hearings, the length of discussion for the invitees is not limited as long as it is on one of the topics on the agenda, while the discussions of the members of Assembly are limited to 10 minutes.

The committee chairperson should then give the floor to the committee members to put specific questions to the participant who just finished their presentation. MP questions should be specific and focused on the observations and recommendations provided by participants. The chairperson may also decide to give the floor to the representatives of the ministry that sponsored the draft law in order to provide clarifications and comments.

None of the committee members or other participants at the meeting may take the floor without the chairperson's permission. The chairperson has the right to terminate the speech of a committee member or a participant who does not respect the rules or uses non-parliamentary language. Such situations, especially when there are confrontations between representatives of different interest groups or between committee members, should be carefully managed by the committee chairperson.

Once all of the discussions are completed and all the aspects of the issue have been reviewed, the chairperson closes the hearing. The chairperson thanks the participants for their contribution and notifies them that their observations and recommendations submitted in writing will be carefully reviewed by the committee in the upcoming meetings.

### 3.6 *Reviewing remarks and recommendations gathered during the hearing*

Upon completion of the hearing, the committee clerk should ensure that all comments and recommendations submitted in writing by the participants are collected. In cases when participants have not submitted them in writing, the clerk should advise them to submit their inputs by email, but not later than one working day from the day the hearing, because the materials should be processed and prepared for review at the next committee meeting.

The committee clerk, in cooperation with the field analyst, should analyze the observations and recommendations submitted by the participants at the hearing and in consultation with the committee chairperson, prepare a report that highlights the most disputable issues revealed by the participants. A document in a table format should be attached to the report reflecting the most questionable articles of the draft law and recommendations or alternatives offered by different interest groups during the hearing.

This material should be made available to the working group on the draft law at the following meeting, in which all the recommendations offered should be examined and analyzed. At a later stage they will be drafted in a form of concrete proposals for amendments to the draft law. The hearing effectiveness will be primarily evaluated based on the number of amendments prepared by the working group as a result of recommendations derived from the hearing. The final report of the working group with all proposed amendments should be put at the agenda for revision and final approval by the committee.

Even at the oversight and inquiry hearings, the compiled observations should be reviewed at the following committee meetings and serve as the basis for reaching conclusions and preparing specific recommendations. A part of the materials provided during the hearing can be incorporated at the committee's final report, which should be sent for revision and approval in plenary session.

### 3.5 *Hearings transcript*

It is very important that the discussions during the hearings are recorded and that a transcript is prepared after the meeting. Committee clerks must ensure that the unit for preparation of transcripts is notified on time and all the necessary equipment is available. The transcript should be available and posted at the Assembly website not later than one week after the hearing is conducted.



Although the human and technical resources of the Assembly are limited, the transcript during the inquiry and oversight hearings should always be prepared, while for the legislative hearings that are more frequent, when discussions cannot be recorded, the minutes or a summary of the discussions should be prepared. Thus, the committee clerk must ensure that one of the officials takes notes during the meeting and then prepares the minutes.

The minutes are the summary of discussions and issues raised by the committee members and other participants at the hearing. Committees should prepare and make the minutes from the hearing public for the needs of the members, hearing participants and the wider public.

The minutes of the hearing must include the day, date, venue and the reference number of the hearing as well as the time it started. The names of committee members, staff and chairperson of the hearing should also be included, as well as the summary of discussions by the committee members and the participants. The list of names of the other participants should be attached to the minutes.

### 3.6 *Medias*

Hearings provide a good opportunity for the committees to promote their work and at the same time inform the general public on their role in the law making process. Since the representatives of various interest groups are present during the hearing, the appropriate media coverage becomes even more important based on the fact that the citizens will have greater confidence in the quality of the law once they have seen that the committee consulted the experts and the representatives of the groups of interest during the process

In this respect, cooperation with the Section for Media and Public Relations, functioning under the Assembly Administration, is very important. Through the officials from this section, the committee clerk should ensure the distribution of the notification on committee meetings to the journalists accredited for coverage of the parliamentary work, as well as providing copies of the agenda and other supporting material.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee clerk requests the Office for Media to prepare a press release which would be distributed to the media. The chairperson, in cooperation with the clerk, may decide to organize a press conference at the Assembly media area, which has enough space and has the necessary technical equipment. At the press conferences, the committee members and the representatives of various interest groups should be provided the opportunity to speak for themselves.

## Annexes



## 1. LIST OF ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN WHEN ORGANIZING THE HEARINGS

PRIOR TO THE HEARING			
Progress		Actions	Comments
√	N/A		
Prior to the hearing			Are all the issues related to the hearing cleared with the Committee Chairperson?
			Is the action plan for organizing the hearing prepared?
			Is the room in which the hearing will take place booked?
			Is the public notification prepared and posted on the website, and is it shared with the media?
			Have the invitations been sent to all the invitees and have the ones that did not confirm their participation been contacted over the phone?
			Has the final list of invitees been submitted to the security officials at the main gate?
			Are the translators and the audio/translation equipment arranged and are they tested on the day of the hearing?
			Are the transcript services and equipment booked?
			Is the seating order arranged as per the required scheme for the hearing, and is the area for the journalists designated?
			Are the names tags prepared and are they placed at the tables?
			Is the notification for the hearing posted on the screens at the Assembly building?
			Is the registration form for participants prepared?
			Is a consultative meeting with the committee chairperson on discussions scenarios and progress organized?
			Is the first press release draft prepared?
		Is the media area for conducting a press conference booked?	

√ - The action is realized

N/A - The action is in this case not applicable



AFTER THE HEARING				
Progress		Actions	Comments	
	√ N/A			
After the hearing			Are all materials submitted in writing by the participants collected?	
			Are the participants that did not submit their comments and recommendations notified to submit them in writing within 24 hours?	
			Is the press release finalized and is it distributed to the journalists?	
			Is a thank you letter distributed to participants after the hearing?	
			Is/are the summary report / minutes of the meeting prepared?	
			Is the hearing transcript prepared and is it published on the website?	
			Is the report, together with comments, observations and recommendations provided by the participants, prepared?	
			Are the comments and recommendations, by the participants reviewed at the working group?	
		Is the media coverage at the daily press and television monitored?		

√ - The action is realized

N/A – The action is in this case not applicable



## 2. THE CALENDAR FOR ORGANIZING THE HEARINGS

Progress		Actions
√	N/A	
		<b>10 WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE HEARING</b>
		The committee should decide on the date and time the hearing will take place and prepare the action plan.
		The room in which the hearing will take place should be designated and booked
		Begin preparation of the invitee list in cooperation with the committee chairperson.
		<b>7 WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE HEARING</b>
		Invitations along with related materials should be printed and sent to designated individuals. Invitations should be sent via e-mail as well.
		Arrange for the interpreters, audio and transcript equipment.
		Prepare the public notification on the hearing, post it on the website and send it to the medias.
		Confirm the participation of the invitees.
		<b>4 WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE HEARING</b>
		Send the invitation along with related materials for the hearing to all committee members.
		Prepare name tags
		Prepare the registration form for the participants.
		<b>2 WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE HEARING</b>
		Prepare the information for press release which then should be sent to the Office for Media.
		Coordinate the booking of the media area with the Office for Media, in case the press conference should take place.
		Submit the final list of participants to the Security Office at the main Assembly gate.
		<b>1 WORKING DAY PRIOR TO THE HEARING</b>
		Contact over the phone all the invitees that did not confirm their participation.
		Contact the media and accredited journalists through the Office for Media at the Assembly.
		Conduct the consultative meeting with the committee chairperson on preparing the progress scenario of the hearing.
		<b>THE DAY THE HEARING TAKES PLACE</b>
		Test audio and translation equipment as well as the lights in the room.
		Determine the order of the seats in accordance with the hearing scheme and place the name tags for participants.

SAMPLE 1, INVITATION FOR THE COMMITTEE MEMMEMBERS



Republika e Kosovës  
 Republika Kosovo-Republic of Kosovo  
 Kuvendi - Skupština - Assembly

<b>PËR/ZA/TO</b>	Members of the Committee . . .	[Date/month/year] e.g. 09/12/2010	
		Reference	MK – 000 [no. of meetings]
<b>NGA/OD/FROM</b>	NN . . . Chairperson of the Committee		
<b>SUBJEKTI FREDMET SUBJECT</b>	Committee Hearing		

The hearing will take place

**On [day], on [date/month/year] at [time] , at room [no. \_\_\_\_], in the Assembly building.**

Members of the Committee are invited to attend.

The proposal of the agenda and related materials are attached.



**SAMPLE 2, INVITATION FOR PARTICIPANTS (Legislative hearing)**



**Republika e Kosovës**  
**Republika Kosovo-Republic of Kosovo**  
**Kuvendi - Skupština – Assembly**

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**To:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**From:** **Committee on . . .** [insert the name of the committee]  
**Subject:** **Invitation for . . .** [insert the subject for which the invitees are invited]  
**Date:** [date/month/year]

---

Dear Ms./Mr. (insert the name and surname)

On behalf of the Committee for (insert name of committee) you are hereby invited to attend the hearing on the topic (the name of the draft law or issue).

The hearing is a unique opportunity for representatives of NGOs, experts, representatives from academic community, various associations and interest groups to provide their observations and recommendations on the draft laws in the proceedings or on various issues under revision.

During the hearing you will have five minutes available to present your comments and recommendations, and then answer the potential questions from the Members of Assembly, offering clarification.

Your observations and recommendations should be submitted in writing on the day of the hearing, or should be submitted via email.

The hearing will take place **on** [day] **on** [date / month / year], **at** [time] in the room [nr. \_\_\_\_] Assembly Building.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the Committee Chairperson  
Name of the Committee

**Contact person:**

Clerks Name Surname  
Name of the Committee  
Email address:  
Phone number

**SAMPLE 3- INVITATION FOR PARTICIPANTS (Oversight hearing)**



**Republika e Kosovës**  
**Republika Kosovo-Republic of Kosovo**  
**Kuvendi - Skupština – Assembly**

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**To:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**From:** **Committee on . . .** [insert the name of the committee]  
**Subject:** **Invitation for . . .** [insert the subject for which the invitees are invited]  
**Date:** [date/month/year]

---

Dear Ms./Mr. (insert name and surname of the invitee)

Committee on (insert the name of committee) requires your presence at the hearing organized to examine (*the issue put at the agenda by the Committee*).

During the oversight hearing, you will be required to provide information and data to the committee, with regard to (*issue reviewed*).

In this occasion, you may submit to the committee all materials relevant to the issue under the consideration of the committee in writing.

The hearing will take place **on** [day] **on** [date / month / year], **at** [time] in the room [nr. \_\_\_\_] Assembly Building.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the Committee Chairperson  
Name of the Committee

**Contact person:**

Clerks Name Surname  
Name of the Committee  
Email address:  
Phone number



#### SAMPLE 4 INVITATIONS FOR THE MEDIA



**Republika e Kosovës**  
**Republika Kosovo-Republic of Kosovo**  
**Kuvendi - Skupština – Assembly**

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**To:** Section for Medias and Public Relations  
**From:** Committee on . . . [insert the name of the committee]  
**Subject:** Notification on the hearing  
**Date:** [date/month/year]

---

Dear Ms./Mr. (insert name and surname of the editor)

On behalf of the Committee for (insert name of the committee), we would like to notify you on the hearing to be organized on the topic (the name of the draft law or issue).

In this event the representatives of nongovernmental organizations, experts, representatives from academic community, various associations and interest groups will be present, and they are expected to provide their remarks and recommendations on (draft law X, or the issue X), which will be in revision by the committee.

From your section we request the preparation of a public notification and its posting on the web page, the preparation and distribution of invitations to the media and journalists accredited at Assembly, and following the public hearing, the preparation of a press release.

The hearing will take place **on** [day] **on** [date / month / year], **at** [time] in the room [nr. \_\_\_\_] Assembly Building.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the Committee Chairperson  
Name of the Committee

**Contact person:**

Clerks Name Surname  
Name of the Committee  
Email address:  
Phone number

**SAMPLE 5, PRESS RELEASE**



**Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosovo-Republic of Kosovo  
Kuvendi - Skupština – Assembly**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

Date

FROM THE HEARING AT THE COMMITTEE (insert name of committee)

The Committee (*insert name of committee*) held a hearing on the subject (*insert details of the topic of hearing*), which was attended by the representatives of (*insert institutions, organizations, interest groups etc.*).

During the hearing, the participants provided specific remarks and recommendations related to (*the draft law or other issues that are under Committee's revision*). The discussions were mainly focused on (*insert specific issues*), while the greatest disagreements among the participants related to (*insert key elements on which there was disagreement at the committee*).

(*insert a quote from the committee chairperson or other participants that summarizes the main issues discussed during the hearing*).

A summary report with the information and data gathered during the hearing will be presented to the committee members at the next meeting, scheduled to take place (*insert date, time and place*).

For further information please contact the hearing committee clerk (*insert the name of the committee*):

Name and Surname of the Media Official  
Committee Name  
Email address:  
Phone number



**SAMPLE 6, SIGNATURE FORM FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY**



**Republika e Kosovës**  
**Republika Kosovo-Republic of Kosovo**  
*Kuvendi - Skupština - Assembly*

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**Legislature - III**

**Committee for** (insert name of Committee)

**The list of committee members signatures from the meeting held on** (*insert date and time the meeting was held*)

Position	Name and Surname	Signature	Comment
Chairperson			
First Deputy-Chairperson			
Second Deputy-Chairperson			
Member 1			
Member2			
Member 3			
Member 4			
Member 5			
Member 6			

The list certified and delivered by  
Committee clerk

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The list received by,  
Head of Division for  
Budget and Finance

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**SAMPLE 7, FORM FOR REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS**



**Republika e Kosovës**  
**Republika Kosovo-Republic of Kosovo**  
*Kuvendi - Skupština - Assembly*

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**Legislature - III**

**Committee for** (insert name of Committee)

**The list of signatures of participants at the public hearing held on** (*insert date and time the meeting was held*)

Name & Surname	Institution	Signature	e-mail:

The list certified by,  
 Committee clerk

\_\_\_\_\_