

THE ANNUAL MEETINGS OF ASSOCIATIONS

24 September 2020

On 15 September, the Parliament passed a bill to temporarily change the Limited Liability Companies Act, Limited Liability Housing Companies Act, Co-operatives Act, Associations Act and some other community laws in order to limit the spread of Covid-19. The act is similar to the one passed last spring. **It will enter into force on 1 October and will remain in force until 30 June 2021.**

For TREY's associations, the most relevant content of the law is section four, which applies to Associations Act. The most relevant exception to the original Act is offering a remote connection. Below we explain what this exception means.

Organising a remote meeting

The executive committee of an association may allow remote participation specified in the section 17 of Associations Act in the meeting of an association, which is held by the 30 June 2021. Remote participation is possible even when such an arrangement is not allowed in the rules and the association has not approved voting and election rules referred to in the Act.

Below a few remarks on the arrangements required by a remote meeting (based on the book by Halila and Tarasti, 2017).

- **A remote meeting cannot replace a normal meeting**, but an association may offer a remote participation **in addition to** regular participation in the meeting. An association cannot prevent the members from attending the meeting by appealing to the remote participation. This means that the meetings have to have a concrete place in which they are organized even if some attendees participate by using internet connection.
- The invitation of the meeting should include the time and location of the meeting and mention that there is an opportunity for remote participation.
- Remote participation may be arranged before or during the meeting. As the former is such a complicated process, it will not be explained here.
- Each member of the association has a right to participate in the meeting during its entire duration. That is, if the internet connection of a member is interrupted, the meeting cannot be continued until the problem has been solved. However, according to the report of the Ministry of Justice to the Legal Affairs Committee of the parliament, the interruption of the remote connection of one or a few members would not create a basis for a reprimand.
- In the meeting, as usual, it is necessary to document how many representatives entitled to vote are present.
- When holding an election in the meeting, the secret voting must be guaranteed when Associations Act or the rules so require. Voting can be

arranged for example by using anonymous polls of Zoom video conferencing tool or Google Forms. When doing so, the votes must however be compared to the list of representatives entitled to vote to ensure that the votes match. **Whatever polling system you use, please test and practise it well before the meeting.**

Additional Information

If you have any questions, you may contact TREY's specialist in association affairs:

Mikael Lehtonen

mikael.lehtonen@trey.fi

040 713 0079

Telegram: @treymikael