



## **CONSTITUTION OF THE UNESCO STAFF UNION**

### **Amendments adopted by the Extraordinary Assembly on 29 October 2015**

#### **ARTICLE I: Purpose**

The main purposes of the Staff Union of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, hereinafter referred to as the Union, are:

- (a) to safeguard the collective and individual rights and interests of members of the Union as UNESCO staff members;
- (b) to preserve and strengthen the unity of the staff of the UNESCO Secretariat as a body of international civil servants;
- (c) to help achieve the purposes set out in the Constitution of UNESCO, more particularly by promoting the efficient functioning of the Secretariat and by stimulating among its members interest in UNESCO's objects and programme;
- (d) to ensure that staff working conditions are satisfactory and are in accordance with the principles set forth in the Constitution, the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules and all other relevant provisions, so as to enable the members of the Secretariat to serve the Organization with the greatest possible effectiveness;
- (e) to improve the status of staff members; to see that staff morale is maintained, and to aid those of its members who find themselves in difficulties;
- (f) to organize cultural and recreational activities for the UNESCO staff.

#### **ARTICLE II: Relations with the Director-General**

In accordance with Staff Regulation 8.1 and the relevant provisions of the Staff Rules, the Union shall maintain liaison between the Director-General and the staff and shall represent the latter in all negotiations with him; it shall participate with the Director-General and the officials appointed by him in the study of any matter affecting, or liable to affect, the rights and duties of staff members and in the search for solutions in keeping with their interests.

### **ARTICLE III: Relations with external bodies**

The Union shall cooperate with the staff associations and unions of the organizations of the United Nations system and participate in the work of any other coordinating body of those associations. It shall also cooperate with the associations of former international civil servants, in particular the Association of Former UNESCO Staff Members (AFUS), and with their federation. It may also cooperate with the staff associations and unions of other international organizations, and in general with any body having objects similar or complementary to its own.

### **ARTICLE IV: Membership**

All members of the staff of UNESCO as defined by the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules shall be eligible for membership in the Union. Any UNESCO staff member wishing to join the Union shall request membership and pay the annual membership fee specified in Article XII. He or she shall then receive a membership card which shall be evidence of membership and entitle him or her to participate in the activities of the Union. This card shall be renewed each calendar year on payment of the membership fee.

### **ARTICLE V: Associate members**

Former members of the Secretariat shall be eligible for associate membership. Any person meeting these conditions and wishing to join the Union shall request membership and pay the membership fee specified in Article XII. He or she shall then receive an associate membership card entitling him or her to participate in the Union's activities and which must be renewed every calendar year on payment of the membership fee. Associate members shall not have the right to vote at the Staff Assembly, nor may they take part in referendums or in the election of members of the Council.

### **ARTICLE VI: Resignation**

Members or associate members wishing to resign shall so inform the President of the Union in writing. Resignation takes immediate effect, but the entirety of the membership fee for the current calendar year shall remain due.

### **ARTICLE VII: Organs and structure of the Union**

The organs of the Union shall be: the Staff Assembly, the Council and the Executive Bureau. Only members of the Union may participate in them, as explained through Article IV.

### **ARTICLE VIII: Staff Assembly**

1. The main organ of the Union shall be the Staff Assembly, consisting of all members of the Union. Associate members may participate, without the right to vote, in meetings of the Staff Assembly.
2. The Staff Assembly shall determine the general policy of the Union, adopt its budget, on the proposal of the Council and in consultation with the auditor, establish the Rules of Procedure and the Financial Regulations of the Union, and decide on the main activities of the Union. The Staff Assembly shall confirm every year the selection of the auditor of the Union.
3. Each fully paid-up member shall have one vote in the Staff Assembly. Decisions shall be reached by simple majority, except in cases in which a two-thirds majority is required by the provisions of this Constitution. The term "majority" shall mean a majority of the votes cast.

4. The Staff Assembly shall be convened by the Executive Bureau. It shall meet in ordinary session once a year. It may be convened in extraordinary session on its own initiative, by decision of the Council with a two-thirds majority, or at the request in writing at least 20% of the members of the Union.
5. The Staff Assembly shall elect its President in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure.
6. The Staff Assembly shall consider the reports and proposals submitted to it by the Executive Bureau, by the Council or by members of the Union in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure.
7. Decisions of the Staff Assembly shall be binding upon all other organs of the Union; they may be changed only by a further decision of the Staff Assembly or by a referendum.

#### **ARTICLE IX: Council**

1. The Council shall consist of fifteen members of the Union, elected for two years by the members of the Union by universal suffrage in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Rules of Procedure.
2. Not more than five members of the same nationality shall serve on the Council at any one time.
3. The Council shall be responsible to the Staff Assembly.
4. The Council shall ensure that the opinions of associate members are expressed at its meetings.
5. The Council's functions shall be as follows:
  - (a) to elect from among its members an Executive Bureau of five persons, to whose members it may add if necessary;
  - (b) to ensure that the actions of the Executive Bureau remain in conformity with the decisions taken by the Staff Assembly or adopted by referendum;
  - (c) to implement a consultation and information policy so as to enable each councillor to keep informed of the opinion of staff members and to be their spokesperson;
  - (d) to assist the Executive Bureau in planning and conducting the activities of the Union;
  - (e) to present to the Staff Assembly at each of its ordinary sessions a written report on the Union's activities.
6. Resolutions and decisions passed by the Council shall be binding on the Executive Bureau.
7. Each councillor is responsible for ascertaining the views of the members of staff and for transmitting those views to the Executive Bureau.
8. The Council may submit to the Staff Assembly any reports or proposals which in its view will contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the Union.

9. The Council may decide by a two-thirds majority that an extraordinary session of the Staff Assembly shall be held, or that a referendum shall be organized.
10. The Council shall be convened by the Executive Bureau at least once a month; the Executive Bureau must convene the Council on receipt of a written demand subscribed by at least one third of the councillors.

#### **ARTICLE X: Executive Bureau**

1. The Executive Bureau shall consist of at least five members, elected for one year from among the members of the Council, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.
2. The Executive Bureau is made up of a President, a Secretary-General and three members-at-large, according to the provisions set out in the Rules of Procedure (Article XV.6). The functioning of the Bureau shall be determined by the Rules of Procedure (Article XV).
3. The President of the Executive Bureau shall be the President of the Union.
4. Not more than three members of the same nationality shall serve on the Executive Bureau at any one time. If the President and the Secretary-General elected from among the members of the Council are of the same nationality, the post of Secretary-General shall be subject to rotation. The rotation shall take place every three months. The principle of rotation may also be used where necessary on decision of the Council in the event that the President and the Secretary-General are not of the same nationality.
5. The Executive Bureau shall be responsible to the Council for carrying out the decisions taken by the Staff Assembly or adopted by referendum and for the functioning of the Union generally.
6. The Executive Bureau shall keep the Council regularly informed of its activities and shall submit to the Council, orally or in writing, reports and statements on the affairs of the Union and on all matters likely to be of concern to members of the staff.
7. The Executive Bureau may establish such working groups as it considers necessary, under the authority of one of its members.
8. The Executive Bureau may convene the Staff Assembly in extraordinary session:
  - (a) when it deems it necessary in the interest of the Union;
  - (b) at the request of the Council, subject to the conditions set forth in Article VIII;
  - (c) upon written request signed by at least 20% of the members of the Union.
9. The Executive Bureau shall organize consultations of staff members by referendum subject to the conditions set forth in Article XI.
10. The Executive Bureau shall have the assistance of a permanent secretariat, whose members are not eligible to the various organs of the Union during the period they perform their duties.

## **ARTICLE XI: Referendum**

1. A referendum shall be arranged by the Executive Bureau when so decided by the Staff Assembly or the Council. The referendum shall be organized with the assistance of the tellers elected by the Staff Assembly in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.
2. The referendum shall be open to all fully paid-up members of the Union. Barring exceptional circumstances recognized by the Staff Assembly or the Council, voting by correspondence shall be permitted in accordance with the conditions set forth in the Rules of Procedure for members working away from Headquarters.
3. Decisions adopted by referendum are binding upon all organs of the Union and may be changed only by a new referendum.

## **ARTICLE XII: Finance**

1. The resources of the Union to be used to carry out the tasks set forth in this Constitution shall be derived from the fees of members, associate members, and from supplementary contributions, gifts and subventions.
2. The scale of annual membership fees shall be proposed by the Council and approved by the Staff Assembly, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.
3. The Secretary-General elected by the Council shall have the custody of the funds and shall keep the accounts of the Union, assisted by the permanent secretariat, in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Regulations. He or she shall submit every year to the Staff Assembly a financial report of the Union.
4. The annual financial report of the Secretary-General and the supporting documents shall be verified by the auditor and submitted to the Staff Assembly.

## **ARTICLE XIII: Disputes**

Any dispute arising out of the interpretation of this Constitution shall be settled in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

## **ARTICLE XIV: Rules of Procedure**

The provisions of this Constitution shall be supplemented by Rules of Procedure adopted by the Staff Assembly by a two-thirds majority.

## **ARTICLE XV: Revision**

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the Staff Assembly, subject to ratification by referendum in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure. It shall enter into force as soon as it has been approved in conformity with the Constitution and Rules of Procedure of the Union, subject to its approval by the Director-General.