



Statute of the European Society of Culture

Effective from:

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Statute of the European Society of Culture approved by the Constituent Assembly, held in Venice from 28 May to 1 June 1950, with amendments from subsequent Assemblies.

Preface

In seventy years of life, work and experience, the European Society of Culture has had ample occasion to test the ideas that inspire it and the purposes that justify its existence. Its history shows that it has lived, acted and developed in full coherence with its founding inspiration, namely a high and strong concept of culture as the creation of values and of the responsibility inherent to people of culture, wherever they were, for the purpose of rapprochement, understanding and peace, in the polis as in the civitas maxima, especially in periods of crisis and transition.

Over the years, the scope of this commitment progressively widened, from the Society's concept of a "politics of culture". This expanded in line with analyses of prevailing current trends, which it has never ceased to conduct and update.

The critical examination of the Society's activity confirms its ongoing justification. Promoting active engagement in the area identified by cultural politics in public life will be certainly no less necessary for the challenges of the 21st century than it was during the second half of the 20th. On the one hand, fragmentation; on the other, globalization; both cases require inner and transnational dialogue. Cultural politics has the same urgency as East-West dialogue during the Cold War, a dialogue that the Society defended and maintained with determination. And despite progress achieved, the building of Europe - understood as all geographical Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals - remains to be completed, in a world that must move from interdependence to solidarity, in the spirit of openness and universality championed by the Society.

Therefore, even if specific objectives differ, the importance of cultural responsibility has not changed since the distant days when this awareness and conviction were embodied in the founding charter when the founding members - scholars of every discipline and persuasion, professionals, writers, artists, philosophers, clergymen, scientists, such as Julien Benda, Thomas Mann, Henri Matisse, Benedetto Croce, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Patrick M. S. Blackett, and others - signed the first version of this statute (approved at the Constituent Assembly on 31 May 1950), introduced by the following preamble.

Preamble

The crisis of Europe, whose roots are very deep, has now worsened to the point of clearly revealing the state of economic, social and political disintegration in our continent. Yet, despite many prophets of ruin, one must not conclude that the decline of our civilization is irreversible, however seriously it may appear to be compromised. The very violence of the



struggle and the importance of the forces in play instead show that Europe suffers only from an adolescent illness. But the disorder in which we now find ourselves threatens to jeopardize the renewal of the European organism. It is now necessary to achieve a deeper awareness of this crisis and its meaning, in order to awaken the forces capable of overcoming it.

These are the terms in which the European question must be framed. We must work for the freedom of spiritual exchange among people. While many dialogues risk being interrupted, this common will is itself a commitment. So we cannot accept an irreparable rupture caused by ideological or political reasons, regardless of how sharp the conflict may be. It is precisely for people of culture to state such a rejection, since they are responsible for values without which no true social life is conceivable.

The fruits of this culture can be used to the benefit or to the detriment of society. It is therefore necessary to resist the misuse of culture by persons who may be inclined to do so, at the mercy of interests and passions, too often inflamed and unleashed in our times by institutions and doctrines. This task could no longer be assumed by any person of culture alone. The European Society of Culture therefore presents itself as a free association of persons who, conscious of their own responsibility, wish to combine their efforts to give their action maximum authority and effectiveness.

Convinced that culture cannot be a private good for anyone, the members of the Society intend to place their activity in the service of humanity.

In this spirit, it was founded, with administrative support from the "Ente Autonomo La Biennale di Venezia"

Note:

The 8th Ordinary General Assembly deemed that the worldwide development of the European Society of Culture could call into question the legitimacy of its designation as "European". It therefore formally clarified that the name was adopted not to impose a geographic limit on expansion, but to express its belonging to the civility of the universal, which drew its origin and greatest impetus from Europe.

I. PURPOSES

Tasks of the Society

Article 1

The association known as the European Society of Culture has the purpose of uniting, through ties of solidarity and friendship, people of culture who, conscious that they must act in common understanding, for the safeguarding and improvement of conditions necessary for the assertion of culture as creation of values - the *raison d'être* of our civilization - thus contribute to solving the crises currently affecting the world. This



involvement of culture as a subject of historical events is what we call the “politics of culture”, which they undertake to implement and promote by every useful and effective means.

From this it follows that the Society has no profit motive.

Article 2

In fulfillment of the preceding article, the Society:

1. discusses the “present conditions of culture” in line with the criteria and priorities established from time to time by the General Assembly (see Articles 8 and 10), highlighting trends and events with cultural and social impact;
2. ensures publication of the journal *Comprendre* according to the program it sets, including research and investigations into phenomena characterising contemporary history, conceptual deepening and operational updating of the politics of culture, and information on the facts concerning society and the members;
3. can carry out educational activities, either independently or in collaboration with other public or private institutions with compatible aims;
4. may take initiatives and organize special cultural and social events aimed at spreading its ideals, its thought and its work.

Article 3

The languages of communication of the Society are French, Italian and English. Other languages are permitted in discussions and publications.

II. SEAT

Article 4

The Society's registered office is in Collodi (Pistoia), in premises granted in concession by the Fondazione Nazionale Carlo Collodi. All organs of the Society are based there, as are the International Secretariat, the Editorial Office, Administration, Current Archive and Library.

III. MEMBERS

Article 5

Members of the European Society of Culture are:

1. persons who took part in the promotional committees for its founding;
2. persons of culture, whose candidacy is proposed in writing by two or more members and received by the Executive Council, whose sharing of the aims of the Society and



willingness to promote them through their own work is confirmed, collaborating in its initiatives and thereby reinforcing, as much as possible, in public opinion the authority required to exercise the action it sets itself;

3. legal entities, public or private institutions and firms, proposed by two members or at the request of an Executive Council member and admitted by it, of proven good standing and able to support it in spirit and according to its purposes. Such persons must be present in the form of their legal representative or a delegate and have one vote in the Assembly.

For the purposes of the previous paragraph, all persons who currently hold, or have previously held, the following roles are to be understood as “persons of culture”: university professors, teachers in upper secondary schools, intellectual professionals, officials of cultural entities or culturally relevant institutions, artists, scientists, economists, writers, essayists, critics, journalists and other persons from whose publications or activities it clearly emerges that their professional effort is devoted to culture.

Article 6

Membership ends:

1. upon duly motivated resignation;
2. by exclusion decision by the Executive Council for stated serious reasons.

Article 7

Non-acceptance and exclusion of members are open to appeal to the General Assembly, which cannot modify the Executive Council's decision in these matters unless by a two-thirds majority of votes cast by those present.

IV. BODIES

A) The General Assembly

Article 8

The General Assembly is the sovereign body of the Society and, pursuant to Article 2, determines the programs and initiatives necessary for the achievement of social purposes.

Article 9

The General Assembly meets in ordinary session at least once each year and whenever the President deems it necessary. It is also convened when at least three members of the Executive Council request it. Approval of accounts is assigned to members resident in Italy, convened annually in Assembly for that purpose. In cases deemed appropriate by the Executive Council and indicated in the call notice, meetings may also be held by audio or video conference, provided the following conditions, recorded in the minutes, are met:



1. the Chairman of the Assembly can verify the identity of participants not physically present;
2. the minute-taker can adequately perceive the acts and proceedings during the meeting;
3. all participants can take part in discussion and voting simultaneously on agenda items and may review, receive and transmit documents.

Given such conditions, the Assembly is considered held at the place where the President and minute-taker are present.

Article 10

The General Assembly examines and approves the President's report on the state of the Society, and takes note of and debates reports under Article 2(1), introduced by the International Secretary General.

Article 11

Topics submitted to vote by the Assembly must appear on the agenda (see Article 19). Votes are taken by simple majority, except in the case provided in Article 7 of this Statute.

Article 12

The General Assembly elects the President, Vice-President, six Vice-Presidents, the International Secretary General, the head editor of *Comprendre* and between forty and fifty members who together form the Executive Council. It may appoint an Honorary President by acclamation.

Article 12bis

The General Assembly elects four members of the Board of Directors among the members; this board is chaired by the President.

Article 12ter

The General Assembly elects three auditors and two substitute auditors.

Article 13

Social offices have a six-year term and are renewable. Vacancies in the Executive Council, Board of Directors or Board of Auditors may be filled by co-option, and the mandate runs until expiration of the term of the body to which they belong. They are submitted for confirmation by the General Assembly at the next session.

Article 14

In extraordinary session, the General Assembly deliberates:

1. any amendments to, or changes of, the Statute, approved by a two-thirds majority of members present, also in the forms provided for in Article 9;



2. the dissolution of the Society, which may be decided only by a three-quarters majority of members.

In both cases, voting may also be expressed through mandates collected by the national centers.

B) The Executive Council

Article 15

The Executive Council serves as a link between the national or local centers, the International Executive Board of the Society and the vice-presidents, supporting both the preparation of programs and implementation of Assembly decisions. It carries out recruitment and admission of members, channeling new intellectual forces from each country toward the Society and its purposes.

Article 16

The Executive Council deliberates by a two-thirds majority of councillors present, including in the forms provided by Article 9.

C) Executive Board ("Bureau")

Article 17

The President, Vice-President, Vice-Presidents, International Secretary General and the Director of *Comprendre* constitute the Executive Board of the Society.

Article 18

The Vice-President, Vice-Presidents, International Secretary General and Director of *Comprendre* assist the President in carrying out the Society program, and in execution of his or her statutory duties, implement Assembly resolutions.

Article 19

The Board periodically reviews the progress of social activities and sets, on the President's proposal in consultation with the International Secretary General, the agenda of Assemblies. Any topic proposed in writing by at least one-fifth of members will be included.

Article 20

The President represents the Society in legal matters and may, where appropriate, delegate that representation to the International Secretary General. He or she chairs meetings of the various bodies and presents the Assembly report on the state of the Society (see Article 10).

Article 21



If the Presidency becomes vacant, a new President is elected by the General Assembly at the next session.

Article 22

The Vice-President replaces the President in case of absence or inability and provides any interim replacement as needed.

Article 23

The International Secretary General oversees operation of the seat (see Article 4), the point of reference for all Society relations; convenes statutory meetings, in the first place the Ordinary General Assembly on the "present cultural conditions" (see Articles 2 and 19); supervises special initiatives; serves as editor-in-chief of *Comprendre* and other Society publications.

Article 24

The Director of *Comprendre* is also responsible for the other publications of the Society. He or she may be assisted by an advisory committee, whose members are chosen within the Society and with the President and International Secretary General.

D) Board of Directors

Article 25

The Society is administered by a Board of Directors (see Article 12bis). It meets regularly to prepare the budget plan and final accounts, which are submitted to the Assembly of members resident in Italy pursuant to Article 9.

E) Board of Auditors

Article 26

Financial oversight of administration is ensured by the Board of Auditors (see Article 12ter). It verifies the regularity of financial management and prepares reports on the budget plan and final accounts.

F) Local and National Centers ("Centres locaux et nationaux"), Friends' Associations of SEC

Article 27

The Executive Council may decide to create local or national centers of the Society. The Board of each Center is formed in agreement with the International Secretary General and has the task of assisting the Society in its promotional and organizational activity, using the



support of members already active within its territory. All members of Centers must also be members of the International SEC. A Center established as a foundation or association, according to the law of the country in which it is located, has a representative in the Assembly.

Article 28

In connection with Centers, and thanks to their impetus, Friends' Associations of the Society may be formed. Their purpose is to provide moral support and material means. They are to act in the same field as the corresponding Centers. They are formally recognized by the Society after approval of their statutes by the Executive Council.

V. ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Article 29

The assets of the Society consist of:

1. the initial fund of: ...
2. movable and immovable property that are or may become the property of the Society; the archive, declared of substantial historical interest under Article 36 of Presidential Decree 30th September 1963, No. 1409; and the library;
3. contributions, donations, bequests and grants from natural persons or entities granted for the explicit purpose of increasing the assets;
4. any budget surpluses intended to increase the assets.

Article 30

The resources of the Society are:

1. membership fees, whose amount is set by the General Assembly on the proposal of the President or the International Secretary General;
2. contributions received during Society events;
3. public funding;
4. any other income that contributes to increasing resources available for social activities.

VI. FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 31

In case of dissolution of the Society, pursuant to Article 14(2), liquidation and allocation of assets are carried out by the Executive Board ("Bureau").



Article 32

For matters not provided in this Statute, reference is made to current law.