

European Rural History Organisation
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Constitution of the association

European Rural History Organisation (EURHO)

(registered according to the Vereinsgesetz 2002 of the Republic of Austria)

1. Name, seat, area of activities and general agreements

- 1.1. The name of the association is “European Rural History Organisation (EURHO)”.
- 1.2. The association’s seat is located in St. Pölten, Austria, and its area of activities potentially covers the whole world.
- 1.3. The foundation of sub-associations is intended.
- 1.4. The working language of the association shall be English.
- 1.5. The association’s annual term is the same as the calendar year.

2. Aims

The association is a non-profit organisation concerned to promote the study of all aspects of rural history in Europe and more generally worldwide.

3. Means

- 3.1. The non-material means to achieve these aims comprise
 - (i) conferences, lectures and seminars;
 - (ii) publications in printed and electronic form;
 - (iii) the dissemination of a newsletter and other information;

- (iv) homepage and other internet resources;
- (v) research projects;
- (vi) the promotion of the teaching of rural history.

3.2 The material means to achieve these aims comprise

- (i) annual fees paid by institutional members;
- (ii) bi-annual fees paid by individual members;
- (iii) donations, subsidies and legacies;
- (iv) the profits of the association's events and publications;
- (v) raised research funds;
- (vi) sponsoring contracts and such other income as the association can access.

4. Categories of membership

4.1. There shall be two categories of membership: institutional and individual members.

4.2. Institutional members shall be legal persons or groups of physical persons concerned with the furtherance of rural history and subscribing to the aims of the association.

4.3. Individual members shall be physical persons who attend the association's main conference.

5. Acquisition of membership

5.1. Admission to institutional membership which includes an annual fee to the association shall be decided by the Management Committee. Admission to individual membership follows automatically from personal registration for the association's main conference which includes a fee to the association.

5.2. Prior to the legal registration of the association, institutional and individual members may be accepted by the founders or the preliminary Management Committee.

6. Termination of membership

6.1. Membership ceases through death or expiration (in the case of individual members), the loss of the legal status (in the case of institutional members), voluntary cancellation or exclusion.

6.2. Individual membership expires 60 days before the next main conference; it can be prolonged through duly registration.

6.3. Voluntary cancellations are valid from the end of the respective calendar year onwards after three months' notice has been given to the Secretary.

6.4. The Management Committee shall exclude a member when the membership fee shall be 18 months in arrear, when he/she/it violates his/her/its duties as a member or when he/she/it behaves dishonourably.

7. Members' rights and duties

7.1. Each representative of an institutional member and each individual member has full voting rights and may be nominated for functions in the association's bodies.

7.2. Each member has the right of being handed out a copy of the association's constitution.

7.3. The members have the right of being informed about the activities and finances of the association at the General Meeting.

7.4. The members have the right of being informed about the audited accounts; if this happens in the General Meeting, the Auditors shall be involved.

7.5. The members have the duty to promote the aims of the association and omit any activity suited to damage the association's reputation. They have to conform to the associations' constitution and resolutions. They have to duly pay their membership fees approved by the General Meeting.

7.6. Each institutional member may nominate one representative to the Management Committee for the period of membership.

7.7. All individual members shall be entitled to nominate one representative to the Management Committee in one of the following geographical categories according to their normal place of residence:

(i) Scandinavia,

(ii) North-West Europe (Ireland, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg),

(iii) South-west Europe (France, Spain and Portugal),

(iv) Central Europe (Germany, Switzerland and Austria),

(v) Eastern Europe (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and the states of the former

USSR) and

(vi) Southern Europe (Italy, Greece, the former Yugoslav states, Bulgaria and Romania).

There shall be two representatives drawn from the rest of the world.

7.8. A call for nominations to the Management Committee shall be posted on the association's website and circulated among its members no less than 28 days before the General Meeting. The call for nominations shall close 14 days before the General Meeting. Each candidate shall require two nominations from individual members in the geographical category for which the nomination is being made. In the event of there being more than one nomination to any one of these categories, the Secretary shall arrange for a ballot to be held at the main conference in advance of the General Meeting, those individual members from the area in question being entitled to vote.

8. Bodies of the association

The bodies of the association comprise the General Meeting (9 and 10), the Officers (11 to 13), the Management Committee (14 and 15), the Auditors (16) and the Board of Arbitration (17).

9. General Meeting

9.1. The General Meeting is a "Mitgliederversammlung" according to the Vereinsgesetz 2002. An ordinary General Meeting takes place every two years at the association's main conference.

9.2. An extraordinary General Meeting takes place within 60 days

- (i) when decided by the Management Committee or the ordinary General Meeting;
- (ii) when applied for by at least one tenth of the members;
- (iii) when decided by the Auditors (§ 21/5 Vereinsgesetz),
- (iv) when decided by a court-appointed curator.

9.3. The date, time and location of the General Meeting together with an agenda shall be posted on the website and be circulated to its members by email no less than 28 days (in case of an ordinary General Meeting) or 60 days (in case of an extraordinary General meeting) before. The General Meeting is to be convened by the Management Committee, the Auditors or a court-appointed curator.

9.4. Members of the Management Committee may be free to propose matters for discussion at the General Meeting. Motions may be moved at the General Meeting by at least three members when announced no less than seven days before via email to the Secretary.

9.5. Valid resolutions – except for applications for the convention of an extraordinary General Meeting – can only be made for items of the agenda.

9.6. All members shall be entitled to attend and vote at the General Meeting. Each member has one vote. The right to vote may be conferred to another member through written authorisation.

9.7. The General Meeting is able to vote on motions regardless of the number of members present.

9.8. Normal resolutions require a simple majority of the valid votes of those present. Resolutions concerning the amendment of the constitution or the dissolution of the association require two thirds of the valid votes of those present.

9.9. The President or, in his/her unavoidable absence, one of the Vice-Presidents selected by the Management Committee shall chair the General Meeting. In case of their unavoidable absence, the eldest member of the Officers present shall be the chair.

10. Duties of the General Meeting

The General Meeting has the following rights and duties:

- (i) resolution about the calculation of the income and expenses for the following term of office;
- (ii) confirmation of the report (with a special emphasis on the main conferences) and accounts for the preceding term of office after hearing of the Auditors;
- (iii) election and supersession of the Officers nominated by the Management Committee;
- (iv) confirmation of legal acts between the Audits and the association;
- (v) discharge of the Officers;
- (vi) approval of the membership fees fixed for both institutional and individual members by the Management Committee;
- (vii) debates and resolutions concerning the amendment of the constitution or the dissolution of the association;
- (viii) debates and resolutions concerning other items of the agenda.

11. Officers

11.1. The Officers comprise five persons: one President, two Vice-Presidents, one Secretary and one Treasurer.

11.2. The Officers shall be appointed by the General Meeting on the nomination of the Management Committee. The President shall be a member of the Management Committee at the time of his/her election. The Secretary shall circulate to all members of the Management Committee a call for nominations no less than 42 days before the date of the ordinary General Meeting. Nominations shall be received by him no less than 21 days before. Each person offering themselves shall be nominated by two members of the Management Committee. In the event of more than one person being nominated, the Secretary shall arrange for a ballot to be held at the Management Committee meeting which precedes the General Meeting at which the nomination shall be confirmed. The Management Committee will have regard to the gender, geographical distribution and academic eminence of the Vice-Presidents when making nominations.

11.3. The Officers shall be empowered to co-opt another member in the event of an Officer (except for the President) falling vacant for the current term of office; this co-option has to be confirmed subsequently by the following General Meeting. In case of the Officers' incapacity for work for a long time span, the Auditors shall organise an extraordinary General Meeting in order to elect new Officers. In case of the Auditors' incapacity for work, any other member may apply for a court-appointed curator who shall organise an extraordinary General Meeting in order to elect new Officers.

11.4. The term of office of the Officers is two years. Re-nomination of the President is possible only for one additional term; the other Officers may be re-nominated for more than one additional term.

11.5. The Officers' meeting is to be convened by the President or, in case of his/her unavoidable absence, one of the Vice-Presidents in written form. In case of their unavoidable absence, any other Officer may convene the meeting.

11.6. The President or, in his/her unavoidable absence, one of the Vice-Presidents, selected by the Management Committee, shall chair the Officers' meeting. In case of their unavoidable absence, the Officers present shall nominate a chair.

11.7. The Officers meet at least every two years before the General Meeting. In the meantime, decisions are made as follows: The Officers shall be consulted by email on any issue that requires their decision, and shall be given seven working days (excluding weekends and generally accepted public holidays) to reply to the Secretary, the Secretary being responsible for the determination of the balance of opinion amongst the Officers.

11.8. Resolutions require a simple majority of the valid votes. In case of equality of votes, the chair of the Officers' meeting shall have the determining vote.

11.9. Except for death or expiration of the term of office, the function of an Officer ends through suspension (11.10.) or demission (11.11.).

11.10. The General Meeting may suspend an Officer or all Officers. This becomes legally effective only after approval of a replacement.

11.11. An Officer or all Officers may declare his/her/their demission. This becomes legally effective only after approval of a replacement.

12. Duties of the Officers

The Officers manage the association. They are the "Leitungsorgan" according to the Vereinsgesetz 2002. They fulfil all duties not assigned to other bodies of the association. Their task area comprises:

- (i) the accounting with current records about the income and expenses and the inventory of assets;
- (ii) compilation of the accounts and report for the preceding term of office and the calculation of the income and expenses for the following term of office;
- (iii) preparation and convention of the General Meeting;
- (iv) information of the members about the association's activities (with a special emphasis on the main conferences), the current accounting and the audited accounts;
- (v) management of the association's property;
- (vi) engagement and dismissal of the association's employees.

13. Special duties of the Officers

13.1. The President manages the association's current activities, chairs the Officers' meetings, the Management Committee and the General Meeting and represents the association in the academic and public spheres.

13.2. The association's written copies must be signed by the President or the Secretary, in financial matters by the President or the Treasurer. Legal acts between an Officer and the association require the approval by another Officer.

13.3. Delegations of the right to represent the association or to sign legal acts shall only be made by those Officers listed in par. 13.2.

13.4. In case of exigent circumstances, the President may make decisions belonging to the task area of the other Officers, Management Committee or General Meeting; these require subsequent confirmation by the responsible bodies.

13.5. The Secretary shall be responsible for the minutes of the Officers' meetings, the Management Committee and the General Meeting. He/she supports the President in managing the association, with special regard to website, newsletter, membership administration, annual reports and legal requirements. In years when there is no General Meeting, the Secretary shall prepare an annual report, including the accounts, which shall be approved by the Management Committee and posted on the association's website. In years of a General Meeting, the Secretary shall prepare a report about the association's activities and accounts for all years since of the previous term of office which shall be approved by the General Meeting for approval and posted on the association's website. The association may appoint an assistant at a fee to be agreed by the Management Committee to undertake some of the duties of the Secretary or may make payments to an institution for the supply of office services.

13.6. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the management of the organisation's income and expenses, especially with regard to the negotiation of membership fees, the financial management of the main conferences and the preparation of accounts and reports for approval by the Management Committee and General Meeting. The Treasurer shall be authorised to open and operate bank accounts on behalf of the association; he/she may delegate this right to the Secretary.

13.7. Should the President, Secretary or Treasurer be unable to carry out his/her duties for a limited time, one of the Vice-Presidents shall replace him/her for the duration of such inability.

In the event of the President's death or resignation during his/her term of office, the Management Committee shall nominate, by ballot if necessary, one of the serving Vice-Presidents to serve as President. If they are unwilling, one other member of Management Committee shall be nominated, by ballot if necessary.

13.8. The Officers may not receive any payment from the association but may claim reasonable expenses incurred on the business of the association during their term of office, the sums so paid to be reported to the Management Committee.

14. Management Committee

14.1. The Management Committee is composed of the Officers, the representatives nominated by the institutional members and the regional representatives of the individual members. The Management Committee, on the recommendation of the Officers, shall have the power to co-opt two additional members, to serve only until the following General Meeting.

14.2. The Management Committee is to be convened by the President or, in case of his/her unavoidable absence, one of the Vice-Presidents in written form. In case of their unavoidable absence, any other Management Committee member may convene the Management Committee.

14.3. The President or, in his/her unavoidable absence, one of the Vice-Presidents, selected by the Management Committee, shall chair the Management Committee. In case of their unavoidable absence, the Management Committee members present shall nominate a chair.

14.4. The Management Committee meets at least every two years before the General Meeting. In the meantime, decisions are made as follows: The members of the Management Committee shall be consulted by email on any issue that requires their decision, and shall be given seven working days (excluding weekends and generally accepted public holidays) to reply to the Secretary, the Secretary being responsible for the determination of the balance of opinion amongst the members.

14.5. Resolutions require a simple majority of the valid votes. In case of equality of votes, the chair of the Management Committee shall have the determining vote.

14.6. The term of office of the Management Committee is two years with the option of unlimited re-nomination.

14.7. There shall be a sub-committee of the Management Committee responsible for the planning of each successive conference, of which the Officers are to be ex-officio members, with two

additional members of the Management Committee. The sub-committee shall have the power to co-opt further members. The conference planning committee will offer a general invitation to all associated national societies to host the conference, will make recommendations to the Management Committee as to which to proposal to accept and will liaise with the local organiser.

15. Duties of the Management Committee

15.1. The Management Committee shall be responsible for the nomination of the Officers and two Auditors to the General Meeting.

15.2. It shall be responsible for the approval of annual reports and accounts in those years in which there is not a general meeting.

15.3. It shall determine the timing of the main conferences and their locations.

15.4. It shall determine the membership fees of institutional and individual members. The rate for institutional members shall be determined with regard to the number of members and income of the respective institution. It shall be due on 1 January each year. New institutional members shall pay their rate from 1 January following their admittance by the General Meeting.

15.5. It shall decide about the admission and exclusion of institutional members.

16. Auditors

7.1. The Management Committee shall recommend to the General Meeting two Auditors to serve for two years with the option of unlimited re-nomination. The Auditors shall not be member of any body of the association except for the General Meeting.

7.2. The Auditors have to control the current accounting and the annual accounts with regard to the disposition of funds according to the association's constitution. The Officers have to deliver the necessary information. The Auditors have to report the results of the audit to the Management Committee.

7.3. The audited accounts will be supplied to all members.

7.4. Legal acts between the Auditors and the association must be approved by the General Meeting.

17. Board of Arbitration

8.1 The Board of Arbitration shall settle any disputes which might emerge between members of the association. It is a „Schlichtungseinrichtung“ according to the Vereinsgesetz 2002 and is not a „Schiedsgericht“ according to §§ 577 ff ZPO.

8.2 The Board of Arbitration is composed of three individual members of the association. They shall not be members of the Management Committee. Each opposing party has the right to nominate one member within 14 days. The Management Committee has the right to nominate a third member as a chair within 14 days.

8.3 Resolutions by the Board of Arbitration require more than a half of the valid votes; they are binding upon the association.

18. Termination of the association

18.1. The voluntary termination of the association requires at least two thirds of the valid votes of the General Meeting.

18.2. If the association is voluntarily terminated, any remaining assets, after the payment of necessary legal costs, shall be devoted to the support of any other international organisation supportive of the aims of the association