

2015
Budapest

Constitution of INTERSTENO



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Art. 1 (Name, registered office and nature of the association)

1.1 The International Federation for Information and Communication Processing has been formed under the name INTERSTENO, hereinafter referred to as "the Federation".

1.2 The official seat and jurisdiction of the Federation is in Bonn. It is entered in the Register of Publicly Acknowledged Associations.

1.3 The administrative headquarters of the Federation shall be situated at the residence of the Secretary-Treasurer.

1.4 The Federation is a disinterested organization with no profit-making goals. The Federation's funds and property may be used only for purposes in accordance with the Constitution. No financial gain from the organization accrues to its Members and no expenditures may be made outside the purposes of the Federation.

1.5 The Federation does not permit any political or religious discussions.

Art. 2 (Purposes of the Federation)

2.1 The Federation is a volunteer nonprofit organization, as defined by the section of German Law on activities enjoying tax privilege. It promotes international thinking and understanding among people of all nations.

2.2 The Federation's domains of activity are reporting and text and information processing.

"Reporting" is defined as the capturing of the spoken word and converting the spoken word into text.

"Information processing" is defined as the technical production and processing of text and text-related data by using available techniques and technologies for the purpose products accessible to various users for communication and information purposes.

2.3 The purposes of the Federation are:

- a. to provide an international platform for all people involved with one or more of its domains of activity;
- b. to encourage mutual understanding of the cultures and values in the countries of its Members concerning its domains of activity;
- c. to organize world championships and other international contests in its domains of activity;
- d. to organize congresses and conferences;
- e. to associate people in all countries involved with one or more of its domains of activity;
- f. to encourage the maintenance of high standards of competence and performance of its Members;
- g. to promote the use of new technologies and proper technical research which can enhance services offered by its Members;
- h. to cooperate with national and local governments, nongovernmental organizations or international public and private agencies, e.g., UNESCO;
- i. to collect and disseminate information concerning its domains of activity, including the experience of professional Members who work for governments, public institutions, and private companies;
- j. to advance joint studies concerning its domains of activity;

k. to defend the professional interests of its Members.

Art. 3 (Structure of the Federation)

The bodies of the Federation are:

- a. the General Assembly;
- b. the Council;
- c. the Board;
- d. the Jury;
- e. the Scientific Committee;
- f. the Auditing Committee.

Art. 4 (Categories of Members)

4.1 Members of the Federation are the National Groups, Associated and Individual Members, and Honorary Members.

4.2 National Groups are full Members of the Federation. A National Group must be an artificial person, e.g., a corporation or organization, under private or public law. Each country is permitted only one national group which may organize itself at its own discretion and must represent one or more of the Federation's domains of activity.

4.3 Associated Members are companies, associations, organizations, and parliamentary reporting services who are interested in the Federation's domains of activity.

4.4 Individual Members are persons who are interested in the Federation's domains of activity.

4.5 At the suggestion of the Council, the General Assembly may confer the title of Honorary Member on any private person who has rendered special services to the Federation. If the title is conferred to a person who has been President of Intersteno, his/her title will be "Honorary President." Honorary Members and Honorary Presidents may attend the meetings of the Council and the General Assembly but are not permitted to vote.

Art. 5 (Admission of Members)

5.1 A prospective National Group must apply in writing to the Board for membership in the Federation and must offer proof that it represents at least one of the domains of activity referred to in Article 2.2. The Council, upon the proposal of the Board and subject to ratification by the General Assembly, may approve the application.

5.2 When membership in the Federation is requested by two or more organizations in a country that represent the same domain of activity and they are unable to form one National Group, the Council, upon the proposal of the Board and subject to ratification by the General Assembly, is authorized to resolve this conflict as it deems appropriate.

5.3 A prospective Associated or Individual Member must apply in writing to the Board for membership in the Federation and must offer proof that his/her or its membership will be beneficial to the Federation.

5.4 The Council, upon the proposal of the Board, may admit Associated and Individual Members from countries where no National Group exists.

5.5 The Council, on the proposal of the Board, may admit Associated and Individual Members from countries where a National Group exists unless such admission is deemed detrimental to the interests of the National Group.

Art. 6 (Resignation and expulsion of Members)

6.1 Should National Groups and other Members wish to resign their membership, they must give notice in writing to the Secretary-Treasurer three months before the end of the current year. Members who have resigned shall remain liable to pay the membership fee owing for the year in which they resigned. The Secretary-Treasurer shall inform the Council as soon as is practicable.

6.2 The Council, upon the proposal of the Board and subject to ratification by the General Assembly, is authorized to propose expulsion of any National Group or other Member (a) who has not paid their membership fee for more than two years or (b) whose actions are contrary to the Federation's interests.

6.3 The Secretary-Treasurer shall immediately notify by registered letter the National Group or other Member of the proposal and reasons for expulsion. The National Group or other Member must respond within one month of date of the registered letter. If the response includes a request to give an oral explanation, such Member must appear before the General Assembly. If there is no response, the General Assembly shall ratify the proposal for expulsion.

Art. 7 (Representation)

The Federation is represented legally by the President and, in the absence of the President, by one of the Vice-Presidents or the Secretary-Treasurer.

Art. 8 (General Assembly; composition and powers)

8.1 The General Assembly is the highest authority of the Federation and consists of the delegates of the National Groups and of the Associated and Individual Members.

8.2 The General Assembly shall exercise the powers vested in it by statute or the Constitution.

8.3 The purposes of the General Assembly are:

- a. to elect, upon the proposal of the Council, the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Secretary-Treasurer and one other Member of the Board;
- b. to nominate, upon the proposal of the Council, the Auditing Committee;
- c. to ratify the budget provisionally approved by the Council;
- d. to ratify the accounts of the Federation for the period expired since its last meeting, as provisionally approved by the Council after review of the Auditing Committee's report;
- e. to establish, upon the proposal of the Council, the annual membership fees for National Groups and other Members for the next two years;
- f. to authorize the Council to establish the fees for National Groups and other Members for a third year in the event the next meeting of the General Assembly cannot take place within two years, provided that these fees will not exceed the fees for the previous year by more than five percent;
- g. to amend, upon the proposal of the Council, the Constitution;
- i. to ratify, upon the proposal of the Council, the Bylaws and any amendments of the Bylaws referred to in Article 22;
- j. to decide upon any other proposal submitted by the Council;
- k. to dissolve the Federation.

Art. 9 (General Assembly; frequency, notice and procedures)

9.1 As a rule, the General Assembly meets during the international congresses of the Federation. In any event, the General Assembly meets once every three years.

9.2 Upon the request of at least half of the Members of the Federation, an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly may be called whenever required in the interests of the Federation.

9.3 The National Groups and other Members shall be invited to a meeting of the General Assembly at least three months in advance. The invitation shall include an announcement of the agenda.

9.4 A record is to be kept of each meeting of the General Assembly. Resolutions are to be recorded verbatim. The record is to be signed by the President and the Secretary-Treasurer or their representatives.

9.5 Decisions can be made only upon items appearing on the agenda.

Art. 10 (General Assembly; voting and decisions)

10.1 Each National Group may appoint four delegates and up to ten additional delegates based on the number of inhabitants of its country and its participation in the previous three Intersteno congresses, excluding a congress organized by the National Group. The Council, upon the proposal by the Board and subject to ratification by the General Assembly, shall appoint the extra delegates. Each delegate has one vote and only delegates attending the meeting of the General Assembly may vote.

10.2 Each National Group may send other representatives to the General Assembly but these representatives are not permitted to vote.

10.3 Each Associated Member has one vote and only delegates attending the meeting of the General Assembly may vote.

10.4 Each Individual Member has one vote and only delegates attending the meeting of the General Assembly may vote.

10.5 Associated and Individual Members may send other representatives to the General Assembly but these representatives are not permitted to vote.

10.6 Election of the board shall take place by secret ballot.

10.7 The General Assembly is entitled to make decisions irrespective of the number of delegates present. Except as outlined in Article 23.3 and Article 24.3, a simple majority of votes is decisive. Members of the Board are not permitted to vote.

Art. 11 (Council; composition and powers)

11.1 The Council consists of one delegate from each National Group, one delegate for Associated Members, one delegate for Individual Members, and the Members of the Board. The Board may invite guests to attend a meeting of the Council.

11.2 The delegates of the National Groups are appointed by the National Groups for each meeting of the Council.

11.3 The delegate of the Associated Members shall be elected by the Associated Members during the General Assembly.

11.4 The delegate of the Individual Members shall be elected by the Individual Members during the General Assembly.

11.5 The Council shall evaluate, amend when necessary, and approve the proposals of the Board.

11.6 The purposes of the Council are:

- a. to decide provisionally upon the budget and the fees for National Groups and other Members, as presented by the Board, for the next and second year;
- b. to decide provisionally upon the accounts of the Federation covering the period since its last meeting;
- c. to elect the Jury President and the other Members of the Jury referred to in Article 18 upon the proposal of the Board or at least five Members.
- d. to elect the chairman and the other Members of the Scientific Committee referred to in Article 16 upon the proposal of the Board or at least five Members.
- e. to decide upon the proposals of the Board regarding the alteration of the Constitution, the adoption and alteration of the Bylaws referred to in Article 22, the regulations for the international contests, the admission of new Members, the nomination of the Auditing Committee, the creation of ad hoc committees to study or resolve special problems, and the creation of professional sections;
- f. to approve the advice of the Board regarding proposals of National Groups and other Members about subjects not mentioned in Article 11.4.e;
- g. to admit Associated and Individual Members from countries where no National Group exists;
- h. to admit Associated and Individual Members from countries where a National Group exists unless such admission is deemed detrimental to the interests of the National Group;
- i. to present proposals to the General Assembly for the election of the Members of the Board or to appoint provisionally these Members if no meeting of the General Assembly is held before the end of their term of office.

Art. 12 (Council; frequency, notice and procedures)

12.1 The Council shall be called to a meeting by the Secretary-Treasurer. The Council shall meet at least once every year.

12.2 At the request of five National Groups, an extraordinary meeting of the Council shall be called by the Secretary-Treasurer.

12.3 The Secretary-Treasurer shall invite the National Groups, representatives of Associated and Individual Members, and guests to a meeting of the Council at least five months before the date of the meeting. The invitation shall include the closing date on which Members of the Federation may submit proposals to the Council.

12.4 At least two months before the date of the Council meeting, the Secretary-Treasurer shall inform the National Groups, the representatives of Associated and Individual Members, and guests of the proposals submitted by the Board.

12.5 At least one month before the date of the Council meeting, the Secretary-Treasurer shall communicate the opinion of the Board regarding the proposals submitted by Members.

12.6 A record is to be kept of each meeting of the Council. The record is to be signed by the President and the Secretary-Treasurer or their representatives.

Art. 13 (Council; voting and decisions)

13.1 The Council may make decisions irrespective of the number of delegates present.

13.2 A simple majority of votes is decisive. The representatives of the National Groups and Associated and Individual Members shall have one vote each and must be present to vote. The Board, as a body, shall have one vote. An equal division of votes means a rejection.

13.3 The Secretary-Treasurer shall inform the Members of the Federation of decisions made by the Council as soon as is practicable.

Art. 14 (The Board; composition and powers)

14.1 The Board is the permanent executive committee of the Federation. The Board consists of the President, two Vice-Presidents, the Secretary-Treasurer, the Jury President, the chairman of the Scientific Committee and one other member.

14.2 In case of absence, the longest-serving Vice-President shall substitute for the President.

14.3 The President, the Vice-Presidents, the Secretary-Treasurer, and one other member of the Board are elected by the General Assembly upon the proposal of the Council for a period of two years. The Jury President and the chairman of the Scientific Committee are ex officio Members of the Board. If the General Assembly is unable to meet and hold an election, the Council is authorized to hold a special election.

14.4 The Council is, upon the proposal of the Board, authorized to appoint a substitute in case of absence of the Vice-Presidents and/or the Secretary-Treasurer. Such a proposal must be communicated immediately to all Members of the Council for their provisional consent.

14.5 The purposes of the Board are:

- a. to ensure the continuity of the Federation's activities and develop strategies for the future;
- b. to promote the formation of new National Groups;
- c. to carry out all administrative duties;
- d. to propose to the Council the program of the Federation's activities for the near future and the regulations for the international contests;
- e. to manage the financial affairs of the Federation and to present an annual budget to the Council;
- f. to establish the agenda for the meetings of the Council and the General Assembly.

14.6 The Secretary-Treasurer shall be the point of contact for communication with the other Members of the Board and other bodies of the Federation, and is responsible for the bookkeeping of the Federation.

14.7 The Secretary-Treasurer shall provide an annual report of activities of the Board and a budget for the next year. After approval of the Board, the Secretary-Treasurer shall present the report and the budget to the Council.

14.8 The Jury President shall keep the Board informed of developments regarding the international contests and shall advise the Board regarding proposals from National Groups or Associated and other Members.

14.9 The chairman of the Scientific Committee shall keep the Board informed of scientific and technological developments in the Federation's domains of activity and the contacts by the committee with persons involved with one or more of the Federation's domains of activity in countries where no National Group exists.

Art. 15 (The Board; voting and decisions)

15.1 Each Member of the Board has one vote.

15.2 The Board aims at unanimity in its decisions. In case of abstention of one of its Members, an equal division of votes means that a proposal has been rejected

Art. 16 (The Scientific Committee)

16.1 The chairman and at least three additional Members are elected by the Council on the proposal of the Board or at least five Members for a period of two years. Outgoing officers are eligible for reelection.

16.2 The purposes of the Scientific Committee are:

- a. to explore scientific and technological developments in the Federation's domains of activity;
- b. to propose cultural and scientific programs to the Board;
- c. to establish contacts with professional groups in countries where no National Group exists and to inform the Board so that the Board may promote the formation of National Groups in these countries;
- d. to organize lectures during Intersteno congresses in conjunction with the organizing committee and/or during other Intersteno meetings in conjunction with the Board.

Art. 17 (The Auditing Committee)

17.1 The General Assembly shall nominate an Auditing Committee consisting of three delegates.

17.2 Three National Groups shall appoint, in rotation, a delegate to the Auditing Committee. The Secretary-Treasurer shall determine the rotation so that only one National Group is eligible to appoint a delegate at any one time. A National Group is not eligible to appoint a delegate if it has done so at the last meeting of the General Assembly.

17.3 The Secretary-Treasurer shall provide the Auditing Committee with all financial documents necessary for examination.

17.4 Prior to the meeting of the General Assembly, the Auditing Committee shall examine the financial documents of the Federation, and report its findings during the meeting of the General Assembly

Art. 18 (The Jury)

18.1 The Jury is responsible for the international contests of the Federation. The Jury compiles the results of the participants and announces these results at the end of the contests.

18.2 The purposes of the Jury are:

- a. to organize the international contests and to resolve any and all disputes arising during the contests;
- b. to propose to the Board changes in the competition regulations in conjunction with the needs of the organization for the next congress and the developments of techniques and technologies;
- c. to advise the Board of proposals of the National Groups and other Members regarding the regulations for the competitions.

18.3 The Jury consists of a President and a number of other Members. These other Members are responsible for the coordination of one or more of the contests.

18.4 The Jury President and the other Jury Members are elected by the Council on the proposal of the Board or at least

five Members for a period of two years. Outgoing officers are eligible for reelection.

18.5 The Jury chooses a task force of persons among those nominated by Members of the Federation to assist the Jury in its activities. During the competitions the Jury may also be assisted by other persons nominated by Members of the Federation.

Art. 19 (Professional sections)

19.1 Within the framework of the Federation, professional sections may be formed. A professional section is a fellowship of a specific professional group. It consists of organizations of that specific professional group and may be formed only if organizations from five different countries take part in it.

19.2 The Council, upon the proposal of the Board and subject to ratification by the General Assembly, is authorized to allow the formation of a professional section.

19.3 The purposes of a professional section may not be contrary to the purposes of the Federation. In consultation with the participants of the section, the Board shall establish a regulation for the section and may appoint a committee consisting of representatives of its participants. The Board shall coordinate the activities of the committee.

19.4 When organizations belonging to a professional section resign their Membership or are expelled and, as a consequence, fewer than five organizations from different countries remain, this section will cease to exist on the basis of this Constitution, and the Secretary-Treasurer shall immediately inform all Members of the Federation.

Art. 20 (The Intersteno congresses and other Intersteno meetings)

20.1 Every two or three years an international Intersteno congress will be held including, if practicable, international contests with world championships and other international activities to be conducted, e.g., lectures.

20.2 The Intersteno congresses shall be organized by one of the National Groups or by the Federation in cooperation with Members.

20.3 An organizing committee shall be formed and a chairperson for the congress appointed.

20.4 The organizing committee, in consultation with the Board, shall prepare a proposal for the congress which must be approved by the Council or, in an emergency, by the Board.

20.5 The organizing committee shall be responsible only for the costs directly linked to the organization of the congress.

20.6 The Federation may provide financial support to the organizing committee.

20.7 International contests with world championships may also be organized in separate Intersteno meetings but may not be called an Intersteno congress. For those meetings, Articles 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, and 20.6 are applicable.

Art. 21 (Accounting period; financial means; liability)

21.1 The Federation shall have an annual accounting period commencing on January 1st and closing on December 31st.

21.2 The revenue of the Federation is composed of:

- a. membership fees;
- b. subscriptions and sale of the Federation's publications;

c. subsidies, donations, and legacies.

21.3 Each National Group shall pay an annual fee for each delegate to whom it is entitled regardless of whether or not the maximum number of delegates have been appointed.

21.4 Upon the proposal of the Council, the General Assembly shall establish a minimum annual fee for the delegates. The Board may propose a temporary reduction of the fee of a National Group in particular cases of difficult economic conditions. The Council is authorized to grant such a reduction for two years, after which time the Board may reconsider the circumstances of the National Group.

21.5 Upon the proposal of the Council, the General Assembly shall establish a minimum annual fee for Associated and Individual Members.

21.6 Members who have not paid the annual fee are not entitled to vote in the Council and the General Assembly.

21.7 Honorary Members shall not be required to pay an annual Membership fee.

21.8 For financial obligations the Federation is liable only with its capital. The National Groups and other Members are not personally liable.

Art. 22 (Bylaws, adoption and alterations)

22.1 The Board may propose Bylaws to give detailed effect to this Constitution. However, the provisions of the Bylaws must not be contrary to the Constitution.

22.2 The Council, upon the proposal of the Board and subject to ratification by the General Assembly, is authorized to adopt and amend the Bylaws.

Art. 23 (Alteration of the Constitution)

23.1 Upon the proposal of the Council, the Constitution may be amended during a meeting of the General Assembly held during a congress or by an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly convened at the request of the Board or five National Groups.

23.2 In the invitation for such a meeting of the General Assembly, the text of the proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be stated in full.

23.3 To amend the Constitution, there must be a two-thirds majority of the votes of all Members present at the meeting of

the General Assembly and at least three-quarters of the National Groups and other Members must be represented.

23.4 If no such quorum is present, a new meeting of the General Assembly shall be called as soon as is practicable, and business may be validly transacted at that meeting regardless of the number of National Groups and other Members represented.

Art. 24 (Dissolution)

24.1 The Federation may be dissolved if it no longer pursues its stated purposes.

24.2 An extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly shall be called to vote upon a proposal of the Board, seconded by the Council, to dissolve the Federation.

24.3 To dissolve the Federation, there must be a two-thirds majority of the votes of all Members present at the meeting of the General Assembly and at least three-quarters of the National Groups and other Members must be represented. If no such quorum is present, a new meeting of the General Assembly shall be called as soon as is practicable, and business may be validly transacted at that meeting regardless of the number of National Groups and other Members represented. In the invitation for such a meeting of the General Assembly, the proposal for dissolution of the Federation shall be stated in full.

24.4 The Federation shall be dissolved by the Members of the Board then in office, acting as a liquidating committee.

24.5 After all liabilities, expenses, and the costs of liquidation have been settled, or all monies required for the purpose deposited, the net assets shall be paid over to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Art. 25 (Final article)

The National Groups and other Members shall submit to the rulings of the Council in all matters not provided for in the present Constitution. These rulings are subject to ratification by the General Assembly.

The first Intersteno congress was held in 1887 in London. This version of the Constitution is adopted in Budapest on July 23rd, 2015, and replaces the version adopted in Paris on July 2011.