

International network promoting the values and principles of volunteering, active citizenship and social justice

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VOLONTEUROPE STATUTES

CHAPTER 1. NAME, PURPOSE, SEAT, DURATION, MEANS.

Article 1. Name, seat and term

- a) On the twenty-first of May 1981, Volonteuropa was established as a non-profit international organisation in accordance to Netherlands law
- b) The current seat for its Secretariat is in the UK
- c) Its duration is for an indefinite period of time.

Article 2. Aims

The purpose of Volonteuropa is to promote unpaid volunteer work, in European countries, in the widest sense of the word. Volonteuropa promotes the rights of all to volunteer and contribute to society. It works to improve the position of volunteers to that they get the same recognition as paid workers, except the payment.

Volonteuropa is committed to an inclusive, diverse and tolerant society and expects all its members and associates to actively promote these values.

Article 3. Methods

- a) Volonteuropa tries to achieve its purpose by all those methods necessary for the promotion of volunteer work in Europe
- b) In particular:
 - to encourage actively in the European countries to bear in mind the interests of volunteer work in their policy making and to pursue a development policy towards this
 - to encourage actively a flow of information relating to matters of volunteer work from the European executive level to the appropriate organisations in member-states, as well as advising the European countries where necessary
 - to organise programmes of international exchange of volunteers and professional workers, who are involved in volunteer work
 - to promote a policy within the European countries that gives support to volunteer work, without affecting its identity
 - to employ staff members
 - to create action programmes involving volunteers from a number of countries in the European Union and European candidate countries, and collect the necessary funds
 - all other legal methods.

CHAPTER 2. MEMBERSHIP

Article 4. Conditions for membership

The members of Volonteuropa are required to:

- a) adhere to the Statutes
- b) to be actively involved in volunteering
- c) to be accepted by the Board
- d) to pay their dues in time

Article 5. Types of membership

Volonteuropa shall be open to membership from amongst volunteer organisations, other agencies committed to volunteers, volunteering and social action (civil society, government, education, institutions and private sector organisations) and to individuals (volunteers). Membership is valid for 1 year and runs from 1 April until 31 March the following year.

Volonteuropa shall also be open to associates.

As a membership organisation, Volonteuropa must have at least five member or associate organisations in five different countries.

Members and associates may be admitted from any European country which is a member of the Council of Europe. Applicants from other countries may join as members or associates on a case-by-case basis, to be approved by the AGM.

Article 6. Benefits of membership

These will include:

- a) Nomination for the Board and vote
- b) Ownership of association and the network it represents
- c) Voice in European institutions, with key European stakeholders and priority access for relevant events
- d) Reduced annual conference fee
- e) Contribution and access to the network for the exchange of information, best practice, research and other

Article 7. Benefits of associate status

These will include:

- a) Reduced annual conference fee
- b) Contribution and access to the network for the exchange of information, best practice, research and other
- c) Access to a range of events

Article 8. Membership and associate dues structure:

The Board has the authority to make exceptions with regards to the specific membership dues paid by individual volunteers or any other membership groups (as in Article 5).

Current details of the dues payment structure to be found in the current Code of Practice.

- a) Civil society
- b) Government, education and institutions

- c) Private sector
- d) Individuals (volunteers)
- e) Associate

Article 9. Termination

Membership terminates by:

- a) Resignation at own request
- b) Expiration of the membership period
- c) Discharge by the Board

CHAPTER 3. GOVERNANCE

Article 10. General Assembly

The General Assembly has full power to realise the aims of Volonteurope.

Article 11. Meetings

The General Assembly meets at least once a year (one of such meetings coincides with the Annual Conference) at the invitation of the Board and whenever it is convened by the secretary or upon the request of at least 10% of its members. Its agenda is established by the Board.

Article 12. Voting procedure

Decisions are taken on the simple majority of the members present, except for:

- a) amendment of the deed
- b) establishment or modification of the Code of Practice
- c) dismissal of members of the Board
- d) dissolution of Volonteurope

all of which need a 2/3 majority of members present.

CHAPTER 4. ADMINISTRATION

Article 13. The Board

Volonteurope is managed by a minimum of 7 and maximum of 10 -person Board with alternates allowed, elected by the membership, either at the General Assembly, or by postal ballot, or electronic ballot, beforehand. Arrangements for rotating terms of office are further detailed in the Code of Practice.

The Board may co-opt non-voting members as required.

The term of the office is 3 years up to a maximum of 3 terms. Any exceptions would have to be agreed unanimously by the Board.

Article 14. Meetings of the Board

The Board meets at least twice a year, convened by the General Secretary or at the request of at least 3 of its members. During the meetings:

- a) Deliberations are valid only if one third of its members is present (quorum) and if an Officer is present

- b) Resolutions are taken by a simple majority of the members present
- c) Voting about matters is oral, about persons in writing
- d) Every member of the Board present at the meeting holds one vote

Article 15. Composition

The Board is composed of persons from the membership who have paid their membership fees. The Board is required to reflect the full range of membership by geography and type of member.

The Board elects from amongst its members, and by secret ballot, officers of the association: a President, a Vice-President and a Vice-President (finance) to serve for 3 years. The President shall be the representative of the host organisation. One of the places on the Board is allocated to the organisation hosting the Secretariat. The Code of Practice reflects the specific responsibilities of Board Members. The Board recognises the General Secretary as the main executor for the decisions of the Board, however any legal, financial and employment matters associated with the employment of the General Secretary are the responsibility of the host organisation.

Article 16. Power of the Board

The Board has the power to manage and administer, subject to the approval of the General Assembly. Its responsibility concerns more especially:

- a) The strategic direction and policy-making of the network
- b) The establishment of committees and working groups
- c) The collection of funds, grants and subsidies
- d) The annual report and accounts to be presented to the General Assembly
- e) The proposal of standing orders

Further details relating to the administration of these tasks are to be found in the Code of Practice.

Volonteuropa is represented within and outside of the law by the President together with the General Secretary, or if they are absent, by their representatives.

Article 17. Termination

Membership terminates by:

- a) the expiration of the period for which the relative member has been appointed;
- b) resignation at own request;
- c) decease;
- d) discharge by the Board:
This decision should be taken – after having heard the relative member of the Board by absolute majority of votes, in a meeting where, apart from the member of the Board at issue, the full Board is present.
If the complete Board is not present, a new meeting will be called where, regardless of the number of members present, a decision may be taken on the discharge, provided that there is absolute majority of votes. The member of the Board at issue has, if present, no voting power;
- e) dismissal by the court of justice in such cases as mentioned by the law.

Article 18. The Secretariat and the Host Organisation

The Secretariat is provided by a host member organisation who will have representation on the Board. The host organisation is accountable for the finances, audit and employment of any staff. The Board's role in these matters is advisory only.

The tasks of the Secretariat include:

- a) helping to prepare and organise the meetings of the Board, the General Assembly, Officers, committees and working groups, including preparing papers and proposals for the Board and officers, writing minutes and ensuring that decisions are implemented
- b) maximising Volonteuropa's potential, working with the membership, to have a strong voice for volunteering and social action at political and institutional level in Europe
- c) promoting the network and its membership across Europe
- d) maintaining up-to-date membership records, coordinating the flow of information across the network and maximising the use of new communication technologies to keep members informed and contributing
- e) coordinating and stimulating conferences and events, helping with fundraising, preparing materials and making them accessible
- f) keeping all the accounts and finances for the network, working with the host organisation
- g) assisting in all the other tasks to support the membership.

CHAPTER 5. FINANCE

Article 19. Budgets and accounts

The financial year is from 1 April up to and including 31 March the following year.

The Secretariat shall keep proper financial records and an annual report of the network's accounts should be available for the Board.

A register of members shall be kept following decisions of the Board and be available for examination at reasonable times.

Article 20. Financing

The resources of Volonteuropa may consist of:

- a) members' dues, proposed by the Board and approved by the General Assembly
- b) gifts, grants and donations
- c) public or private subsidies
- d) revenues from operations and activities connected with the object
- e) other assets legally obtained.

CHAPTER 6. AMENDMENT OF STATUTES

Article 21. Amendment of the deed

- a) The Board informs the members of Volonteuropa of any amendment of the articles of the deed, proposed by the Board or by a minimum of 3 members. The decision to amend the articles of the deed can only be made by a majority of at least 2/3 of the valid votes recorded during a General Assembly convened for that purpose. At least one month's notice must be given for the convocation of the meeting. If this General Assembly does not assemble 2/3 of the effective members, a new assembly shall be convened under the same conditions as stated above.
- b) Modification of the articles of the deed only becomes effective after drawing up a notarial deed.
- c) The Board is obliged to deposit a certified copy of the deed together with the modified articles at the office of the public register held by the Chamber of Commerce in the jurisdiction of Volonteuropa.

Article 22. Dissolution

- a) As to dissolution, the stipulations in the first paragraph of Article 21 are similarly applied.
- b) Volonteupe is dissolved:
 - by insolvency after having been declared bankrupt or by annulment of bankruptcy because of the condition of the estate;
 - by sentence of the court in those cases mentioned by the law.

Article 23. Settlement

- a) Settlement will be effected by the Board, after approval of the General Assembly
- b) Volonteupe will continue to exist after its dissolution if and as far as necessary for the settlement of the affairs
- c) During settlement the stipulations in the articles of the deed remain in force as much as possible
- d) The General Assembly stipulates the destination of the remaining possessions – after payment of all debts – on the understanding that the balance should be appropriated for an aim linked with the aims of Volonteupe.