

Charter

of the

*Association of European Election Officials
(ACEEEO)*

Adopted by the meeting of the General Assembly, 27 November, 1998 - Vilnius, Lithuania and amended according to the resolutions of the General Assembly, 16 June 2000 - Warsaw, 28 September 2002 - Moscow, 25 October 2003 - London, 1 September 2006 – Jurmala, and 13 November 2013, written procedure.

Preamble

This Charter establishes an organization to be known as the Association of the European Election Officials (ACEEEO), hereinafter referred to as the Association.

On behalf of the chief electoral officials of Europe, the undersigned are convinced that the historic mission of democracy includes:

Providing political liberty and a favourable environment for fair political, economic and social development;

Fostering free, fair and transparent elections and universal and secret suffrage as the most appropriate means to establish and consolidate representative democracy;

Recognizing the importance of election bodies to function on an impartial basis; and

Recognizing that the exchange of information on electoral proceedings, free and unhindered access to such proceedings, and methods of consultation and recommendations, between the institutions and persons in charge of carrying out the elections constitutes essential elements to achieving the effective consolidation of democratic institutions through electoral processes.

The undersigned are fully aware of the need for a formalized Association of European Election Officials.

Mission

The mission of the Association is to provide a non-partisan forum, independent of national governments, for the exchange of information among election officials and experts throughout Europe to discuss and act upon ways to promote open and transparent elections with the objective of supporting good governance and democracy.

Chapter I

Objectives

Article 1.1

The Association shall have the following objectives:

- a. Promotion of open and transparent elections throughout an exchange of experiences and information relating to election law and procedure, technology, administrative practice, voter education;
- b. Promotion of the training and further education of election officials and international observers;
- c. Promotion of the principle of independent and impartial election authorities and administrators;
- d. Development of professional election officials with high integrity, strong sense of public service, knowledge of electoral practice, and commitment to democratic elections;
- e. Promotion of the principle of participation in electoral processes by citizens, political contestants, and non-partisan civic organizations; and
- f. Development of resources for election-related information and research.

Article 1.2

The Association shall be a non-profit, regional organization, which is independent from political parties and governments with a legal standing based on international law.

Chapter II

Membership

Article 2.1

There shall be the following categories of membership:

- ~~a.~~ Institutional members: To be composed of European election organs as determined by each Institutional Member State's domestic legislation, which subscribe to this Charter. Institutional Members shall have full voting rights and the opportunity to fully participate in all Association activities, including conferences and meetings of the General Assembly.
- b. Associate Institutional Members: To be composed of election organs from other States that subscribe to this Charter. Associate Institutional Members shall have a non-voting status, but may fully participate in Association activities, including conferences and meetings of the General Assembly.
- c. Member-Supporters: To be composed of interested national and international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals, who subscribe to this Charter. Member-Supporters shall have a non-voting status, but may fully participate in Association activities, including conferences, and meetings of the General Assembly.
- d. Honorary Members: To be composed of individuals, elected by voting members, for extraordinary service to the Association in support of free and fair elections and who

subscribe to this Charter. Honorary Members shall have a non-voting status, but may fully participate in Association activities, including conferences and meetings of the General Assembly.

Article 2.2

- a. The General Assembly shall establish additional rules of admission and maintenance of membership upon recommendation of the Executive Board or the Secretary General.
- b. The Executive Board shall make decisions concerning categories of membership.
- c. The General Assembly shall establish membership fees for the various membership categories upon recommendation of the Executive Board or the Secretary General. Membership fees shall be submitted to the Secretariat and counted among the assets of the Association.
- d. Election authorities, other institutions, associations, or organizations, and individuals may apply for a category of membership to the Executive Board, which will examine the application and make a recommendation to be circulated among members of the General Assembly. The General Assembly will vote to accept or reject the application.
- e. Any election authority, other institution, association, or organization, or individual applying for membership shall, without reservation, subscribe to the Charter of the Association.
- f. A member of the Association may leave the Association after due written notification of its decision. The terms for such notification shall be established by the Secretariat and approved by the Executive Board.
- g. Failure to pay membership fee shall lead to a loss in voting rights until those fees are paid.
- h. Members may be expelled or suspended in their membership for due cause, including but not limited to violations of this Charter and continued failure to pay membership fees, by a two-thirds vote of a quorum of the full voting membership in the General Assembly.
- i. Membership for any individual, institution, or organization may be neither refused, terminated, nor altered in status or name for reasons of political affiliation, ideology, or nationality.

Chapter III

Organs and Their Functions

Article 3.1

The Association shall have the following organs:

- a. The General Assembly;
- b. The Executive Board
- c. The Secretariat
- d. The Advisory Board under the Secretary General's direction .

Article 3.2

The General Assembly shall:

- a. Be the supreme organ of the Association;

- b. Be composed of all its members;
- c. Hold a meeting as necessary at least once every two years;
- d. Elect members to the Executive Board of the Association pursuant to Article 3.6 (c); and
- e. Establish its own rules of procedure.

Article 3.3

- a. In cases where two or more Institutional Members come from a single State, those members shall vote as a single bloc.
- b. Institutional Members shall have the right to vote at the time they become members of the Association.
- c. Institutional Members may not delegate their vote to another person who does not represent that State's election organ.
- d. Associate Institutional Members, Member-Supporters, members of the Advisory Board under the Secretary General's direction and Honorary Members may participate in voice, but not vote at meetings of the General Assembly.
- e. One half of the voting representatives of Institutional Members shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the General Assembly.
- f. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority of the voting members present unless otherwise stipulated in this Charter.

Article 3.4

The General Assembly shall consider issues of common interest and adopt decisions in accordance with the provisions of this Charter and its own rules of procedure. It shall in particular:

- a. Consider proposals or questions of common interest submitted by its members, the Executive Board or the Secretariat;
- b. Adopt the policy, and approve the program of work of the Association and the main items of the agenda of its forthcoming meetings;
- c. Approve appropriate fees and contributions for the categories of membership;
- d. Receive and consider the reports on the work of the Association; and
- e. Appoint an auditor and consider the auditor's report.

Article 3.5

The Executive Board shall be composed of:

- a. Seven representatives of Institutional Members from seven different States elected by the General Assembly for a period of 3 years, and
- b. The Secretary General (non-voting; Article 3.9)
- c. Representatives of those two member-countries which are not members of the Executive Board, but are ready to organise a conference and a meeting of the General Assembly in the period of time mentioned in point a.; as provided by a resolution of the General Assembly.

Article 3.6

- a. Members of the Executive Board shall be elected by secret ballot at meetings of the Association.
- b. One member of the Executive Board shall be elected as President of the Executive Board by the members of the Executive Board by an open vote.
- c. In case a member of the Executive Board does not hold a position at a national election institute any more, his or her membership is terminated in the Executive Board. The Executive Board has the right to grant membership for the new official of the Election Committee of the institutional member in the Executive Board on grounds of recommendation presented by the correspondent institutional member.

Article 3.7

The Executive Board shall:

- a. Be accountable to the General Assembly;
- b. Act on behalf of the General Assembly on any matter referred to it by the General Assembly;
- c. Make recommendations to the General Assembly in conformity with the present Charter;
- d. Take actions to implement decisions of the General Assembly;
- e. Approve the budget and operations of the Secretariat and the auditor's report in the operation of the budget;
- f. Approve the internal rules and regulations of the Secretariat;
- g. Determine control mechanisms for supervising the financial activity of the Secretariat;
- h. Oversee the Secretariat in implementing the decisions and recommendations of the General Assembly;
- i. Perform other functions arising from the present Charter and from the recommendations and decisions of the General Assembly;
- j. Act on all matters, except for those that fall exclusively within the jurisdiction of the General Assembly, which need to be addressed in the period between meetings of the General Assembly;
- k. Establish its own rules of procedure subject to direction from the General Assembly;
- l. Hold an ordinary meeting once each year; and
- m. Hold extraordinary meetings when convened by the President and at least three other members of the Executive Board.

Article 3.8.

The Secretariat is the permanent organ of the Association and shall be located in Budapest, Hungary. It shall perform the functions assigned to it in the present Charter and shall carry out the duties entrusted to it by the General Assembly and the Executive Board. It shall perform its duties in cooperation with the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), a private, nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Article 3.9.

The Secretariat shall be composed of the Secretary General and other personnel as may be necessary for the execution of the functions entrusted to it. The Secretary General shall be a person proposed by the Executive Board and approved by the General Assembly and shall serve

as the Secretary of the Board with voice, but not vote. During the temporary absence or disability of the Secretary General, the President of the Executive Board shall appoint a temporary replacement after consultations with the Secretary General, or in his/her absence the Secretariat. The Acting Secretary General may perform his/ her duties continuously for a period not to exceed one year, at which time the post of Secretary General shall be considered vacant. The Secretary General shall:

- a. Act as head of the Secretariat;
- b. Perform functions assigned to it by the General Assembly or the Executive Board;
- c. Collect dues and fees agreed upon by the membership each year;
- d. Have the right to sign financial documents in the name of the Association;
- e. Submit an annual report on the Association's activity and its financial condition to the Executive Board;
- f. Abide by the rules and procedures for operation established by the Executive Board;
- g. Serve as chief operating officer of the Association;
- h. Report to the Executive Board and
- i. Represent the Association in its relations with the officials of member institutions and other regional electoral Associations as well as with other international and regional organizations.

Article 3.10.

The Secretary General and the personnel of the Secretariat shall not seek or take instructions from any Government or from any authority outside the Association and shall refrain from any action that may be incompatible with their position as representatives of the Association or that may compromise the integrity of the Association.

Article 3.11.

The Secretariat shall be responsible for the administration and financial affairs of the Association and shall inter alia:

- a. Submit reports on the Association's activity and its financial condition to the regular sessions of the Executive Board and at any time upon request;
- b. Prepare arrangements for meetings of the General Assembly, the Executive Board and the Advisory Board;
- c. Make recommendations concerning the work of the Association for consideration by the appropriate organs of the Association;
- d. Prepare surveys, studies, information and guidance on legal and political matters essential for broadening and deepening cooperation among member institutions;
- e. Draft proposals and agreements on matters arising from the decisions and recommendations of the General Assembly, the Executive Board, and the Advisory Board;
- f. Prepare the budget of the Association and, upon the approval of the Executive Board, submit it to the General Assembly;
- g. Serve as the depository of the Association's documents and official records;
- h. Establish relations of cooperation, in accordance with decisions reached by the General Assembly and the Executive Board, with other regional and international electoral

- organizations or any other organizations which are concerned with electoral processes;
- i. Notify members of the dates of meetings of the General Assembly, the Executive Board and the Advisory Board, and of all events open to the membership; and
 - j. Prepare minutes of the Executive Board and the General Assembly meetings.

Article 3.12.

- a. The budget of the Association shall be financed by contributions of the members, to be determined by the General Assembly; and funds solicited by the Secretariat, on behalf of and with the approval of the Executive Board, from external sources.
- b. The Secretariat may accept, on behalf of the Association, any gifts contributions, or bequests to the Association, subject to the approval of the Executive Board.
- c. The Secretariat is responsible for the accountancy of the Association.
- d. The Secretariat prepares and presents the annual financial report for the members of the Executive Board.

Article 3.13.

The Advisory Board under the Secretary General's direction

The members of the Advisory Board are designated by the Secretary General. The Secretary General supervises activities of the Advisory Board.

Members of the Advisory Board shall be internationally acknowledged experts with comprehensive election experience, and represent themselves in the Advisory Board.

Chapter IV.

Miscellaneous Provisions

Article 4.1

The members of the Association agree to:

- a. Implement, to the extent practicable, the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly;
- b. Render to the Association and its officers the assistance needed in the execution of their duties as defined by the present Charter;
- c. Provide material and information necessary for the maintenance of a resource center of election-related materials as requested by the Secretariat of the Association;
- d. Keep the Secretariat informed of progress made in the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly; and
- e. Make appropriate contributions for the operation of the Association as determined by the General Assembly.

Article 4.2

- a. The Charter shall not affect the rights and obligations of the members of the Association arising out of agreements which they have already concluded.
- b. Any agreement already concluded or which may be concluded in the future between a member and any other organization shall not be binding on any other members.
- c. Members of the Association who wish to establish closer cooperation, either with each other or with other organizations or groups, other than provided for in the Charter, may conclude agreements to that effect, provided that they do not violate the spirit and intent of the Charter.
- d. It is not the intent of the Association to interfere with the sovereign concerns of States represented in the Association.
- e. Members of the Association may form bilateral or multi-lateral agreements with each other provided that they do not violate the spirit and intent of the Charter.

Article 4.3

- a. The association may establish and maintain relations with other regional and international electoral organizations. The nature and forms of such relations shall be determined by the Executive Board in agreement with the organizations concerned.
- b. The Association may invite other organizations or individuals that are not members of the Association to participate in the deliberations of the Association as observers. The Executive Board must approve the conditions of cooperation with other organizations and individuals.
- c. The Association may, upon invitation, participate in the deliberations of other organizations.

Article 4.4

The official languages of the Association shall be the languages of each Institutional Member. The working language of the Association shall be English and Russian. The list of working languages may be extended for specific activities and meetings by a decision of the Executive Board.

Chapter V.

Amendments

Article 5.1

- a. Amendments to this Charter document shall be adopted by at least two thirds of the voting members voting in person or by prior written instruction to the President of the Executive Board at a meeting of the General Assembly.
- b. Amendments must be sponsored by at least three voting members or be approved by the Executive Board in order to be considered by the General Assembly. Amendments must be communicated to the full membership at least 60 days before the General Assembly meeting.
- c. The Executive Board shall report to members the implications of proposed amendments at least three weeks before the meeting where the amendments shall be considered.

- d. Amendments to the Charter shall come into force upon approval by the General Assembly per requirements of Article 5.1.a.
- e. Any dispute regarding the interpretation of the present Charter shall be settled by a majority vote of the Executive Board unless otherwise overturned by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly.

Chapter VI.

Dissolution

Article 6.1

- a. This Association may be dissolved by a resolution of the General Assembly. Such resolution of dissolution must be adopted by at least two thirds of the voting members voting in person or by prior written instruction to the President of the Executive Board at a meeting of the General Assembly.
- b. Upon dissolution the General Assembly shall further decide concerning the disposal of the assets and the payment of liabilities of the Association.
Assets shall be transferred to such non-profit and non-government organization which is dedicated to democratic processes and promoting professionalism in the conduct of elections.

Chapter VII.

Transitional Provisions

Article 7.1

The present Charter shall come into force immediately after its adoption by (10) eligible Institutional Members as defined by Article 2.1 of this Charter. As past contributors to the Association, the International Foundation for Election Systems and the Association of Electoral Administrators of Great Britain shall be eligible to be Member-Supporters.

Article 7.2

Upon coming into force this Charter will replace the Articles of Association for the “Regional Association of Electoral Officials for Central and Eastern Europe.”

Article 7.3.

Mandates of the members of Executive Board of the Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials elected in 2003 for the purpose of maintaining continuity and until

establishing new Executive Board of the Association of European Election Officials , will be lengthened until 2007.

Annex I of this Charter includes the list of prevailing members of the Executive Board.

Article 7.4.

The following structure of annual membership fees listed in EURO shall come into force in January 1, 2015 and may only be changed in accordance with provisions set forth in this Charter:

1. Institutional Members shall each pay one thousand eight hundred EUROS (1800 EUROS). This includes the registration fee of one of the representatives of the member on the annual conference of the Association.
2. Associate Institutional Members shall each pay nine hundred EUROS (900 EUROS)
3. Member-Supporters shall each pay nine hundred EUROS (900 EUROS)
4. Honorary members shall not be responsible for paying membership fees (Annex II of this Charter includes the list of Honorary members).

The amount of annual membership fees shall be reviewed by the General Assembly every three years on the report of the Secretariat.

Annex I. – Members of the Executive Board, 2013-2016

1. Irena Hadžiabdić - Member of the Central Election Committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
2. Arnis Cimdars - Chairman of the Central Election Committee of the Republic of Latvia,
3. Zenonas Vaigauskas - Chairman of the Central Electoral Committee of the Republic of Lithuania,
4. Dr. Iurie Ciocan - Chairman of Central Election Commission of Moldova,
5. Kazimierz W. Czaplicki - Secretary of the National Electoral Commission of the Republic of Poland
6. Ana-Maria Patru – Chairperson of the Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania,
7. Stanislav V. Vavilov – Vice Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

Annex II. – Honorary Members of the Association

1. Mr Henryk Bielski, Counsellor of the National Electoral Office of the Republic of Poland
2. Mr Jeffrey Carlson, Former Programme Officer, IFES
3. Mr Marijan Ramušćak, Judge of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Croatia
4. Mr Sabri Coskun, Former President of the Higher Council of Elections, Republic of Turkey
5. Mr Bengt Save-Söderbergh, Former President of the International IDEA
6. Mr Paul DeGregorio, Former Executive Vice President, IFES
7. Mr Mikhailo Ryabets, Former Chairman of the CEC of Ukraine
8. Mr Ilirjan Celibashi, Former Chairman of the CEC of Albania
9. Mr Alexandr A. Veshnyakov, Former Chairman of the CEC of the Russian Federation
10. Mr Richard Soudriette, Former Chairman of IFES
11. Mr Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Former Electoral Officer of Canada
12. Mr. Samuel Younger, Former President of the Electoral Commission of the UK
13. Mrs. Livia Skultetyova, Director of the Department of Elections and Referendum, Ministry of the Interior of Slovakia
14. Mr. Zoltán Tóth, Former Secretary General of the ACEEEO (1991 – 2011)
15. Mr. Vladimir Shapoval, Former Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine
16. Dr. Leonardo Valdes, Former President Councilor of the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico
17. Mr. Zurab Kharatishvili, former chairman of the Central Election Commission of Georgia

Annex III. – Secretary General of the Association

The Secretary General of the Association is Mr. Zsolt Szolnoki.