

CANONICAL STATUTES

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHARITIES – AIC - aisbl

I - DENOMINATION - HEADQUARTERS

Art. 1: An International Association with a philanthropic, religious and pedagogic objective is constituted called INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHARITIES - AIC AISBL. It shall group associations or federations of associations, feminine or mixed, founded by Saint Vincent de Paul or in keeping with his tradition.

AIC is a private international association of faithful lay people with a legal personality according to Canons 298-311 and 321-329 of the Code of Canon Law.

It collaborates regularly with the Secretariat of State, regarding presence and activity within International Organisations and it maintains regular contact with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the Dicastery of the Holy See that is particularly interested in this matter.

Art. 2: The Headquarters of the Association shall be in Belgium in the Walloon region. Headquarters can be transferred to any other place in Belgium upon simple decision of the Executive Board, to be published within the month of date of change in the Annex to the "Moniteur Belge" (Official Record) and communicated in good time to the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life. (CJC, can. 304.1)

II - GOALS

Art. 3: The AIC shall have as goal the advancement and development of the underprivileged, the combat against all material, physical, moral and spiritual forms of poverty and suffering in any country whatsoever, without political or religious discrimination. AIC shall be a witness of the Charity of Christ in the Tradition of St Vincent de Paul.

(CJC, can. 298.1, 304.1 and E.A. Christifideles laici, in part 110, 111, 115)

III - MEANS

Art. 4: To fulfil these goals, the AIC shall:

- promote research on poverty and suffering, on the means to respond today to the aspirations of the underprivileged (studies, publications, conferences, etc...),
- offer to its members social, civic and spiritual formation and information necessary for action adapted to real needs (seminars, formation sheets and courses, etc...),
- ensure communication and cooperation among its members (encounters, news, bulletins, etc...),
- participate in the combat against poverty and in the efforts of the universal Church, intergovernmental organizations and private international bodies, be they Christian or non-Christian,
- undertake or support concrete programs.

(cfr. CJC, can.327/329; Christifideles laici, n.30, especially the part concerning presence and action in the world, in conformity with the Social Doctrine of the Church, at the service of human dignity and

where it is said that clusters of the faithful must become living forces of participation and solidarity to build fairer and more fraternal living conditions).

IV - MEMBERS

Art. 5: AIC shall consist of:

- a) **Full rights members:** associations or federations, grouping all associations or groups of associations in the same country legally formed into legal entities according to the laws and customs of their country, and as defined in articles 1 and 3. These full rights members shall have speaking and voting rights at the assembly of Delegates.
- b) **Associate members:** shall become associate members, local associations or groups of local associations as defined in Articles 1 and 3, but which are not yet organized in one national association per country.

These associate members shall attend the Assembly of Delegates in an advisory capacity only.

Art. 6: Admission of new members shall be subject to the approval of the Assembly of Delegates. Members are free to retire from the association at any time by sending their resignation in writing to the Executive Board.

The status of full rights member or of associate member is lost upon resignation or exclusion pronounced by the Assembly of Delegates for grave reasons, the Association involved having been previously invited to give an explanation. A majority of 2/3 of valid votes is required for a vote on this exclusion.

Outgoing members have no right to the assets of AIC for any reason whatsoever. (can. 307/308)

Art. 7: Full rights members and associated members shall pay annual dues, the amount of which shall be determined by the Assembly of Delegates. The maximum amount is 25,000 EUR.

V - BODIES OF THE AIC

(from here until art.18, v. can. 309, 321,324)

Art. 8: The Assembly of Delegates and the Executive Board are the bodies of the AIC.

VI - ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES

Art. 9: The Assembly of Delegates shall group the full rights members and the associated members.

It shall have full powers to carry out the objectives of the AIC. Besides the powers that are expressly acknowledged by law or the present constitution, it shall elect the President, 2 Vice-Presidents and the other Executive Board members.

It shall meet regularly every 3 years. It shall be presided by the President or, in her absence, by one of the Vice-Presidents. It shall meet at a venue chosen by the Executive Board, the call to meeting having been sent out by the President and the Secretary by e-mail or mail at least three months before the fixed date. The agenda is attached to the call to meeting. It shall be submitted to approval during the first session of the Assembly.

Art. 10: For valid deliberation, half plus one of the full rights members must be present or represented. The missing full rights member must be represented by a full rights member duly appointed. This one cannot represent more than one member at a time.

Except in special cases provided for in the Constitution, decisions shall be made by simple majority vote of the full rights members present or represented and brought to the knowledge of all members. Each full rights member has one vote.

Questions not appearing on the agenda cannot be dealt with without unanimous consent.

The meetings of the General Assembly can also be validly held by video or teleconference. It must be possible to monitor attendance, proxies, and actual deliberations and decisions with recorded votes.

The Executive Board may authorize any member to vote remotely before a General Assembly held by video or teleconference, according to the modalities previously established in the convocation.

Decisions of the General Assembly may be taken in writing on the basis of a unanimous agreement of all members without a meeting, except for the amendment of the statutes.

Art. 11: Resolutions passed by the Assembly of Delegates shall be inscribed in a register signed by the President and the Secretary and kept at the International Secretariat, headquarters of the organization. It shall be at the disposal of the members.

Art. 12: Jurisdiction of the Assembly of Delegates:

Having full power to carry out the objectives of the AIC, the Assembly of Delegates shall:

- a) determine the main guidelines, fundamental options and the program of activities of the AIC and its working bodies,
- b) undertake all studies and initiatives it considers necessary in the framework of the objectives outlined in the Constitution,
- c) create bodies which are judged to be useful,
- d) vote on draft budgets and determine the amount of annual dues for the member associations,
- e) hold elections provided for in the Constitution,
- f) examine and vote on the Activities Report of the Executive Board and the measures taken by it between two Assemblies of Delegates,
- g) examine and vote on the financial report,
- h) decide upon amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws,
- i) upon proposal of the Executive Board, decide on the admission and the exclusion of member associations.

VII - THE EXECUTIVE BOARD (E.B.)

Art. 13: AIC shall be administered by an Executive Board composed of from 8 to 10 persons.

The President and 2 Vice-Presidents are full right members of the Executive Board.

a) Application for elections:

- Are empowered to submit their application to the Executive Board, the full rights members associations and the Executive Board.
- Shall only be admitted the applications of persons members of an association itself a full rights member. In certain exceptional circumstances, the Executive Board can however authorise an associate member association to submit applications to the Executive Board.
- Each application must be submitted in writing. A curriculum vitae, the agreement of the national applicant as well as the agreement of the National President of her association must be attached.
- It must reach the International Secretariat 6 months before the session of the Assembly of Delegates, the International Secretariat having to call for applications 9 months before this session.
- 3 months before the Assembly of Delegates, the name of the applicants and their curriculum vitae are brought to AIC members' attention by the International Secretariat.
- The applicants for Presidency must have fulfill at least one mandate as Executive Board member.

b) Elections

The Executive Board members are elected by secret ballot by the Assembly of Delegates.

To be elected, the President must have the absolute majority of the votes submitted by the full-rights members that are present or represented.

c) Taking up their post

All members of the Executive Board take up their post from the end of the session of the Assembly of Delegates in which they have been elected.

If there is a hitch, duly justified, to take up one's post as Executive Board member, another person designated by the International President may stand in for this defaulting member till the end of her mandate.

d) Specific Mandates

In case of Presidency vacancy between two Assemblies of Delegates, the Executive Board names the Vice-President who will deputize in the interim.

Duration of this mandate is the same as the preceding mandate. The international president commits herself to renouncing to any role in the national association.

Duration of the mandate for President, Vice-Presidents and Executive Board members shall be three years, renewable once. Except in the case of the President, the same person may hold office on the Executive Board for a maximum period of 9 consecutive years.

The mandate of the members of the Executive Board may, for grave reasons, be revoked by the Assembly of Delegates, by a vote of 2/3 majority of the full rights members present or represented.

Art. 14: The Executive Board shall appoint, among its members, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

Art. 15: The Executive Board shall meet at least once a year, upon invitation of the International President and the Secretary. The invitation encloses the agenda. The Executive Board deliberates legitimately when half of the members are present.

Resolutions shall be taken by a majority vote of the members present. In the event of a tie, the President shall have the casting vote.

The meetings of the Executive Board can also be validly held by video or teleconference. It must be possible to monitor attendance, proxies, and actual deliberations and decisions with recorded votes.

Art. 16: Resolutions of the Executive Board shall be inscribed in a register signed by the President and the Secretary and kept on file at the Secretariat General, headquarters of the association. They shall be made available to the members associations of the AIC.

Art. 17: The Executive Board shall be entrusted with the management and administration of the AIC, except for those duties attributed to the Assembly of Delegates. It may delegate day-to-day management to its President, to the Secretary or any other person approved by it.

Art. 18: All documents which are binding upon the Association shall be, with the exception of special proxies, signed by the International President and the person to whom day-to-day management is delegated who are not accountable to a third party.

Art. 19: Legal actions, both as plaintiff and as defendant, are pursued by the Executive Board, represented by its President or a member of the Executive Board appointed by her for this purpose.

Art. 11 - Jurisdiction of the Executive Board

The members of the Executive Board shall assume collective responsibility for the entire AIC and not act as a representative of their respective associations.

The Executive Board shall assume administration of AIC. It shall therefore:

- a) prepare the meetings of the Assembly of Delegates to which it makes suggestions deemed useful for the fulfilment of the objectives of the AIC,
- b) ensure the execution of the decisions taken by the Assembly of Delegates; it may create permanent or temporary working groups or commissions for which it is responsible and determine the tasks and methods of functioning of these working groups or commissions,
- c) see to the proper functioning of the bodies created by AIC, in the framework of its Constitution and By-Laws and coordinate the activities of these bodies,
- d) propose candidatures to the Executive Board,
- e) study requests for admission from the associations,

- f) deliberate on the choice of persons to be invited to the Assembly of Delegates,
- g) prepare modifications to the Constitution and By-Laws,
- h) be responsible for the Secretariat and the Treasury General,
- i) report on its mandate and on all its activities at the ordinary meeting of the Assembly of Delegates,
- j) it may appoint a Permanent Committee responsible for work between Board meetings. The International President of the AIC is, ipso facto, President of the Permanent Committee,
- k) in an emergency, take all measures necessary to defend the interests of the AIC.

VIII - BUDGET and FINANCE

Art. 21: The fiscal year shall end every year on December 31st. Every year the Executive Board shall approve the accounts temporarily and submit this balance sheet, to the members of the Assembly of Delegates for their information.

At the statutory assembly, the Executive Board shall submit to members of the Assembly of Delegates, for approval, the balance sheet for the past 3 years and the draft budget for each of the ensuing 3 years.

Allowance should be made for a percentage of increase required by economic conditions.

Art. 22: At the statutory assembly, the Assembly of Delegates determines the amount and due date of the annual dues of full rights member Associations and the contributions of the associate member Associations. Allowance should be made for a percentage of increase required by economic conditions.

Non-payment of dues shall entail the withdrawal of voting rights and the right of representation recognized by article 5 of these Statutes.

(can.309, 310, 325)

IX - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND DISSOLUTION

Art. 23: Any proposal requesting amendments to the Constitution or dissolution of the Association must come from the Executive board or at least from three AIC full rights members.

The Executive Board shall notify AIC members of the date on which the Assembly of Delegates will decide on the said proposal, at least three months in advance. A decision shall only be accepted if it is voted by a majority of 2/3 of the present or represented members.

However, the amendment concerning the goals for which the association is constituted, shall only be adopted by a majority of 4/5 of the votes of the present or represented members.

If 2/3 of the members are not present or represented at the first meeting, a second meeting can be convoked who may deliberate legitimately whatever be the number of present or represented members, and adopt amendments by majorities as fixed above.

Statutory amendments shall be submitted to the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life for approval.

The Assembly of Delegates shall decide upon the manner of dissolution and the liquidation of the Association. Before convoking the Extraordinary General Assembly for dissolution, the Executive Board will inform the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life and this Dicastery must give its prior consent.

In all cases of voluntary or judicial dissolution, after discharging of debts, the patrimony will be affected to a non-profit-making association with a similar objective. (can.326, 1 and 2)

X - GENERAL PROVISION

Art. 24: All matters not explicitly provided for the present Constitution and, particularly publications to be made in the annex to the "**Moniteur Belge**", shall be regulated in conformity with the provisions of the Code of Canon Law.

XI – SPECIAL MEASURES

Art. 25: The Ecclesial Assistant of AIC is nominated by the President with the assent of the Executive Board for a period of 3 years. He must have obtained prior agreement from his Ordinary (cf. CIC, can. 324§2).

AIC shall ask the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life for confirmation of this election.

Art. 26: AIC, private association of faithful lay people is subject to the vigilance of the competent ecclesial authority on matters of faith and customs, of accepting pastoral directives and of submission to the government of this same authority.
(cann.753, 305 et 323)

Official text in French