European Blind Union

11th General Assembly, Rome, Italy, 28/30 October 2019

Amendments to the EBU Constitution

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This document sets out the amendments to the EBU Constitution which the Board approved at its meeting of June 218 in Lisbon, Portugal.

# To Article III, Section 4 - Associate members. This reads:

“Associate membership may be conferred by the Board on any body which subscribes to the objects of the EBU:  
  
Provided that:  
  
4.1 the Board shall not confer associate membership on any body until after consultation with the national member representing the country of residence of the body; and  
  
4.2 the Board shall report to the next General Assembly that it has conferred associate membership on a body. The General Assembly may then ratify or rescind the Board's decision. Until such ratification, such associate membership shall be provisional only.”

1. Proposed amendment: It is not clear who can be conferred associate membership. The current text says “any body”. Is associate member status only intended for NGOs or is it also open to institutions, corporations and individuals who share the objects of the EBU? This needs clarification.

Decision: approved. New wording: “Associate membership may be conferred by the Board on any associations or institutions which subscribes to the objects of the EBU…”

1. Proposed amendment: You will recall that the Chance for the Blind Foundation in Poland applied to become an associate member of EBU and that the Board had to turn the application down because our national member was against. This disposition is a potential source of conflict between applicants and national members on which the Board has no effective leverage. The unpleasant situation we had with the Chance for the Blind Foundation could be avoided by providing that applications to EBU associate membership must be entered by the EBU national member in the country of residence of the applicants. One possible way to implement this is to delete 4.1 and amend the first sentence to read: Associate membership may be conferred by the Board, [upon proposals by EBU national members,] on any body which subscribes to the objects of the EBU.

Decision:

approved. New wording: “4.1 an application to EBU associate membership is entered by the EBU national member in the country of residence of the applicant…”

1. Proposed amendment: A Board’s decision to grant EBU associate membership should be definitive and does not need to be ratified by the General Assembly. This proposed amendment is also supported by the fact that the membership fee is due immediately after an application is accepted.

Decision: dropped.

# To Article V - the Board.

1. Proposed amendment: to introduce a mechanism whereby a member of the Board who is unable to fulfill his/her duties can be replaced by the Board.
2. Proposed amendment by: to introduce a mechanism whereby a member of the Board can substitute for one of the three Board representatives on the WBU Executive Committee in case they cannot take part in meetings and attend to business.

Decision: to introduce a new article 1.10 of a more general scope to cover A and B. New wording: “The Board may replace one of its members who is unable to fulfill his/her duties or may transfer his/her responsibilities to another Board member in case he/she cannot attend to business.”

Note: current article 1.10 becomes 1.11.

# To Article VII, Section 2 – Membership contribution.

2.1 reads:

“The membership contribution for any financial year shall be determined by the General Assembly based on objective criteria set by the Board and on contractual agreements between the Organisation and its national members. It shall be payable by no later than 30 June in that year.”  
  
A. Proposed amendment: Add a provision that membership contributions for any financial year may, under exceptional circumstances, be determined by the Board. This would apply more specifically when the Board establishes that a national member is not placed in the right contribution category and needs to be moved to another.

B. Proposed amendment: In practice, the provision that contributions are determined based on contractual agreements between EBU and its members has not been implemented perhaps because it is unrealistic. Delete this reference in 2.1?

Decision: approved. New wording:

“The membership contribution for any financial year shall be determined by the General Assembly based on objective criteria set by the Board. The membership contribution may also, under exceptional circumstances, be determined by the Board, for example when it establishes that a national member is not placed in the right contribution category and needs to be moved to another **or to reduce the membership fee for a specific period of time**. It shall be payable by no later than 30 June in that year”.

# To Article VII, Finance, Section 2.2.3. This reads:

“If it appears that a national member is persistently in arrears with its membership contributions, and if the explanation for non-payment is not credible or has led to no improvement, the Board may at any time deprive that member of its national member status. The Board's decision shall come into effect immediately thereafter but shall have to be confirmed by the next general assembly based on a report by the Treasurer explaining the Board's decision.”

1. Proposed amendment: national members who have not been financial for several years should not be excluded. Instead they could be granted pending membership status to the effect that they will remain members of EBU with no rights to vote or obtain support from EBU until they become financial again. This will solve the unpleasant situation of excluding and disconnecting national members from EBU.

Decision: dropped.

1. Proposed amendment: add in 2.2.1. a provision to give the possibility to the Board to wave the payment of membership fees in exceptional circumstances.

Decision: approved. New wording “If in any financial year a national member fails to pay its membership contribution, it shall explain the reason for non-payment and propose measures that will enable payment to be made as soon as possible. The Board may wave the payment of membership fees in exceptional circumstances such as in war or natural disaster situations.”

# To Article VII - Finance.

1. Proposed amendment: insert a statement in new section 6 referring to the establishment of the Solidarity Fund and to its status and guidelines.

Decision: approved. Wording: “Section 6 – EBU Solidarity Fund. The EBU shall give financial support in the form of loans, grants or other to national organisations of blind and partially-sighted people through its Solidarity Fund. Priority shall be given to projects submitted by EBU member organisations in need.”

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