

# STATUTES OF THE EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM FOR MULTILINGUALISM

## **ARTICLE 1: NAME, PLACE, DURATION, AND LEGAL STATUS**

- 1.1 A European non-profit organisation is established. The name is: "The European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism" or "ECSPM" in its abbreviated form.
- 1.2 This organisation will carry on the work of the "Civil Society Platform to Promote Multilingualism" which was launched by the European Commission with the support of the Directorate of Education and Culture in 2009, and re-launched in 2012, involving 29 European networks and/or organisations that were mandated to work together to develop: (a) coherent plans to raise Europeans' awareness regarding the value and the opportunities that Europe's linguistic diversity provides, (b) effective strategies which might make it possible for Europeans to learn at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue, starting from an early age, and (c) proposals with which to facilitate the mainstreaming of multilingualism in relevant programmes and policies of the European Union.
- 1.3 The organisation's registered office is established in Denmark: Lyngbyvej 32D, 2.t.h., DK-2100 Copenhagen. Therefore, the procedures, responsibilities and rules of the European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism (henceforth ECSPM) shall be interpreted under Danish Law. If the ECSPM office is transferred to another address in Denmark, the members are notified, and the new address is announced on the ECSPM website. If it is relocated to another jurisdiction, ECSPM procedures must be reviewed and made amenable to the law in the new jurisdiction.
- 1.4 The ECSPM is an independent international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation, which is registered according to Danish Law: Registration No. CVR 37116866.

## **ARTICLE 2: MISSION STATEMENT**

The ECSPM is an alliance for the languages spoken in Europe, as well as for research, policies on and practices of multilingualism, making possible the cooperation between European, national, and international networks, organisations, federations, organisations and research units (e.g., university centres and institutes) that view multilingualism as an asset for European economic, social, cultural development, and as a facilitator for intellectual growth, social, and personal development.

ECSPM aspires to be a strong voice of Europe's civil society promoting language policies for and research on multilingualism in all aspects of social life by way of focusing on people, and on their ability to use a variety of semiotic resources to access education, social affairs and culture, to participate as active citizens in Europe, shaping its making, to benefit from better communication, wider employment and study opportunities.

To achieve these aims, the ECSPM intends to raise further awareness about Europe's linguistic resources, and to facilitate intercultural dialogue. It will continue drafting policy documents with which to advise the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and individual European countries, providing counsel on how to implement relevant policies effectively.

Furthermore, it wishes to ensure that all students in Europe have the right to use their mother tongue to access knowledge, to acquire literacies in their own language and to learn two additional languages. It will also continue to try to ensure that Europe's rich linguistic and cultural resources are maintained, as they are viewed as crucial for the future of Europe, its economic, political and social development.

### **ARTICLE 3: AIMS, OBJECTIVES, ROLES, ACTIVITIES**

- 3.1 Understanding multilingualism as a means to attaining cultural development, a product of quality education, a route to conviviality, a facilitator to the mobility and employability of European citizens and an instrument for prosperity, the ECSPM sets out to be actively involved in research and project work that focuses on multilingualism in the fields represented by its member organisations.
- 3.2 It is envisaged mainly as an *electronic* platform, functioning as an on- and off-line forum for the exchange of views, the discussion of issues, for the drafting of language and language education policy documents, the development of research proposals and the execution of project work in groups composed of people with shared interests and expertise, proposed by the members. The ECSPM is also a structure for fostering popular and civic ownership of the concept of multi- and plurilingualism.
- 3.3 Having functioned in the past in an advisory capacity to the European Commission, and especially to the Directorate General of Education and Culture, it will continue to offer its advice to DG EAC, but will also be in communication with other Directorates of the European Commission, and especially DG of Translation, DG for Communication Networks, Content & Technology, DG for Informatics, DG of Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, to ensure that Europe's linguistic and cultural wealth is viewed and treated as an asset for Europe, that research in related fields is funded and that education for plurilingual and intercultural competences is available for everyone.
- 3.4 The ECSPM is open to all European and international organisations actively working to: (a) advocate a more inclusive language policy in Europe act in favour of, and suggest ways of managing linguistic diversity across and within European countries; (b) promote multilingualism and plurilingualism in educational and other social institutions, as well as in the public space, the arts and the media; (c) support human translation in all languages spoken in the European countries; (d) encourage research into bi- tri- and multilingualism; e) embrace language technologies, such as automated translation, as imminently important for the elimination of language barriers between people and nations, enabling a truly multilingual Europe.
- 3.5. The ECSPM sets out to:
  - Enter into dialogue with European Institutions in order to ensure that the principles of multilingualism and the interest in the work carried out by ECSPM members and partners are taken into account.
  - Promote the organisation's forum discussions and research by ECSPM members and partners, and encourage joint projects.
  - Provide members and partners with information relating to their area of interest and activity, but also provide other European federations, institutions, networks, organisations, organisations, and social groups with information and news about the activities of the ECSPM as a whole and of its individual members.
  - Organise or partner with conferences, seminars, or symposia on key thematic topics that are of interest to ECSPM's members and partners.
  - Oversee the promotion of relevant research and practices taking place in Europe and internationally.
  - Ensure that the role of multiple language acquisition, as well as the role of plurilingual and intercultural competences are recognised as fundamental for international relations,

academic studies, employment, social mobility and social cohesion in a Europe that understands that its pluralistic societies are likely to prosper best when tolerance, solidarity and comradeship are cultivated and when people from diverse linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds are integrated.

- Engage in activities which serve the purposes of the ECSPM, conveying its viewpoints to European organisations, institutions and countries.

#### **ARTICLE 4: MEMBERS**

- 4.1 The ECSPM is made up of networks and organisations which were full or associate members of the initially European Commission launched “Civil Society Platform to Promote Multilingualism and consequently became members of the ECSPM. It is also constituted by additional federations, networks, organisations, and research centres/units/institutes concerned with issues related to languages, to bi- tri and/or multilingualism.
- 4.2 In order to avoid duplication and have workable forms of highly committed organisations, whenever an organisation is part of a bigger structure representing its interests at the European level, it is in principle the European structures alone that take part, channelling contributions up and down the line.
- 4.3 The organisation is intended for non-governmental bodies of civil society only. Public authorities, whether national, regional or local, are not invited to participate. Furthermore, members must meet the following criteria:
- They must be made up of and/or be working for the benefit of European countries or social groups, not of natural persons
  - They must carry out non-profit-making activities
  - They must be structured according to the principles of democratic governance
  - They must be engaged in furthering the public interest, contributing to process of a multilingual communication in education, the arts, cultural life and/or the public sphere; contributing to furthering the cause of multilingualism and language learning in formal and informal education; to the development of intercultural and plurilingual competences, as well as in facilitating the process of conveying the needs of the population, and taking these needs into consideration.
- 4.4. Rights and obligations of members:
- 4.4.1 They may determine the ECSPM’s priorities and courses of action, while they may also contribute towards its activities on a permanent basis.
- 4.4.2 They must nominate a representative, a natural person, who shall be the “contact” point with the “Executive Committee” (henceforth ExCom) and the other members of the ECSPM, and it is the representatives’ responsibility to keep their organisation informed about the work of the ECSPM and to request that, where possible and appropriate, their organisation becomes engaged in research and project work carried out by the ECSPM or by its members and partners through involving people who are qualified for each task. Where applicable, any change in representative must also be brought to the attention of the Secretariat as soon as possible.
- 4.4.3 They shall be informed on a regular basis of the activities underway and be invited to involve qualified people to take part in ECSPM activities.
- 4.5. Resignation–Exclusion of a member

- 4.5.1 Any member may decide to withdraw from the organisation with immediate effect provided that the Secretariat has been notified of the resignation by one of the means of communication laid down by the Internal Rules of Procedure.
- 4.5.2 Any member that contravenes or is no longer consistent with the provisions of the statutes or Internal Rules of Procedure or that acts in such a way that is detrimental to the organisation or its members may be excluded from the organisation on the basis of a majority vote of the annual or an extraordinary General Assembly.
- 4.6. Membership fees
- 4.6.1 The amount of the annual contribution made by members is determined annually, on the basis of the cost for the maintenance and further development of the ECSPM website, as well as of the planning and execution of various activities that the ECSPM undertakes, upon approval of the General Assembly.
- 4.6.2 The general secretary keeps a record of all expenditure and informs the ExCom regularly. S/he also handles the organisation's bank account, always consulting the president about each transaction.

#### **ARTICLE 5: PARTNERS**

- 5.1 The members may decide with a majority vote to sign a partnership agreement with European, national or international organisations which are not members of the ECSPM. The motion comes forth by the ExCom. The partnership agreement must specify the aim, objectives and duration of the partnership according to the procedure laid down by the ECSPM's Internal Rules of Procedure.
- 5.2 The partnership agreement may be signed with an organisation which is concerned with language issues and the promotion of multilingualism, even though these may not be their principal field of activity. This organisation must share the basic aims and objectives of the ECSPM and demonstrate its commitment to the organisation.
- 5.3 The partnership agreement may be temporary and signed for a specified period, after which the partnership will either be renewed or automatically lapse. Alternatively, it may be signed as a permanent partnership, announced on the ECSPM website. In either case, the members may decide with a two thirds majority vote to terminate a permanent or temporary partnership agreement if they consider that the agreement is not being respected by the partner. If the partnership is terminated, the partner organisation shall receive notification in writing and will have the right of reply.
- 5.3 Rights and obligations of partners
- 5.3.1 Partners may suggest courses of action, projects and events, while they may also contribute towards ECSPM's activities.
- 5.3.2 They must nominate a representative, a natural person, who shall be the "contact" point with the ExCom and the other members of the ECSPM, and it is the representatives' responsibility to keep their organisation informed about the work of the ECSPM and to request that their organisation becomes engaged in research and project work carried out by the ECSPM or by its members through involving people who are qualified for each task. Where applicable, any change in representative must also be brought to the attention of the Secretariat as soon as possible.
- 5.3.3 They shall be informed on a regular basis of the activities underway and be invited to involve qualified people to take part in ECSPM activities.

## **ARTICLE 6: ADMINISTRATIVE BODY**

- 6.1 The organisation's administrative body is called the Executive Committee and this body is in charge of the daily administration of the organisation, implementing the decisions made by the General Assembly and representing it in all administrative, judicial and extra judicial acts. It is equipped with all of the powers that do not fall within the sphere of competence of the General Assembly.
- 6.2 The ExCom is made up of a minimum of five (5) "administrators" elected by the General Assembly for a three-year term. All or some of these administrators may be re-elected for one more three-year term but after six years of term no one has the right to run for office again, unless the General Assembly makes a special motion to this effect.
- 6.3 The ExCom fellows occupy the positions of President, ExCom member and General Secretary who is also in charge of the organisation's finances. If funding becomes available through project work, donations, etc., and there is a need for the position of Treasurer, the General Assembly decides whether (a) to select a member of the ExCom to take on this role, or (b) to elect or hire a new administrator. It is noted that administrator functions are terminated upon death, resignation, civil disability or dismissal. Dismissal is decided upon by the ExCom or upon a proposal by the General Assembly under the conditions laid down by the Internal Rules of Procedure.
- 6.4 The President, a de facto member of the ExCom, and the rest of the members are elected by the General Assembly with a majority vote through the procedure described in the Internal Rules of Procedure.
- 6.5 The ExCom shall meet at least three times a year (face-to-face or virtually) and, while no proxies may be issued, it may validly deliberate if the President and half of the administrators are present.
- 6.6 Decisions are made by a majority vote. Abstentions will not be taken into account. If a member of the Committee is absent from three consecutive meetings without good reason, he or she shall be considered to have resigned. In the event of a vacancy, the Committee shall be entitled to appoint a provisional replacement until the next General Assembly.
- 6.7 Meetings of the ExCom are convened by the President, through the Secretariat each time the interests of the organisation render a committee meeting necessary or at the request of one third of the ExCom members. In the event of the latter, the invitation must go out within two weeks from the receipt of the request. Invitations to meetings of the ExCom must be sent out, by any means of communication mentioned in the Internal Rules of Procedure, at least two weeks in advance. The invitation must mention the agenda, where the meeting will be held, and the date and time of the ExCom meeting, which may be held either as a face-to-face meeting, as a conference call or a video conference. In this case, the details of the conference call or videoconference will be provided a week in advance.
- 6.8 The minutes of ExCom meetings must be retained by the Secretariat and they are made available, upon official request to active members, if there is 'justified personal interest'.
- 6.9 The powers and duties of the administrators are described in the Internal Rules of Procedure. If necessary, if called for by the urgency of the matter, the President shall have the power to carry out all appropriate actions following consultation of the members of the ExCom
- 6.10 Representation of the organisation with regard to third parties and in legal proceedings:

- 6.10.1 All acts which commit the ECSPM, except where special powers have been granted, are signed by two administrators or by the President who will not have to justify to third parties the powers conferred upon them for this purpose.
- 6.10.2 The ECSPM shall be represented legally either as an applicant or a defendant by two administrators or by the President alone, or by a single administrator who has been specifically appointed for this purpose by the ExCom.

### **ARTICLE 7: THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

- 7.1. The general management body of the organisation is called “the General Assembly”. This is the highest level of authority within the organisation, and it has all the powers necessary for achieving the organisation’s objectives. The General Assembly consists of all the active members of the organisation in good standing, and they all have one vote.
- 7.2. The General Assembly cannot delegate the following:
- Approve the Internal Regulation (bylaws) and ratify its amendments
  - Amend the statutes
  - Elect and remove ExCom members
  - Discharge duties to the ExCom members
  - Approve budgets and accounts
  - Set the annual fee to be paid by the members
  - Ratify or exclude members
  - Dissolve the organisation
  - The approval of the yearly work plan
- 7.3. Convening and agenda
- 7.3.1 The General Assembly is held at least once a year, if possible in conjunction with a conference, symposium, seminar which is of interest to the members of the ECSPM (see article 3.5 #4 above). The Assembly may be held in person or by means of virtual participation.
- 7.3.2 The purpose of the annual General Assembly is to discuss issues that have been of concern to the members as outlined by the ExCom. Other important purposes of the General Assembly are: (a) members voting for the approval of the annual accounts and discharging the Committee as well as the Auditors, if applicable, over the past year, (b) members voting on the approval of the budget as prepared by the ExCom, (c) performing elections for roles mentioned in the Statutes.
- 7.3.3 Extraordinary General Assemblies can take place at the initiative of the ExCom members, or the President.
- 7.3.4 In the event where the General Assembly calls for a face-to-face meeting, the convocation will be sent by the Secretariat at least two months before the date of the General Assembly. This notification will be sent to the active members by e-mail or any other electronic means, and the notice will indicate the date, place and the agenda of the meeting proposed.
- 7.3.5 The people who may attend the General Assembly are the organisation’s active members; i.e., those who are up to date with their membership fees for the year in question. It is these members who have the right to vote.
- 7.3.6 Each full member organisation must nominate a representative, who is a natural person, in order to participate in the General Assembly (with funding for travel and accommodation from his/her organisation) and be able to vote on the organisation’s behalf. Each full

- member must inform the organisation, by any of the means of communication mentioned in the Internal Rules of Procedure, at least two weeks before the General Assembly meeting, of the identity of the representative who has been appointed for this meeting.
- 7.3.7 The General Assembly members may vote on the items of the agenda of the day by raising their hand or by using a ballot which has already been prepared (with instructions that must be followed to properly vote in writing). When a member complies with the formalities for a vote in writing, s/he will be accounted for in the attendance quorum as well as in the voting quorum. To qualify, members must communicate their intention to participate in the General Assembly at least four days before.
- 7.3.8 When the General Assembly is in writing the motions for resolutions will be sent by the Secretariat to all members electronically (via email).
- 7.3.9 An extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly can be called on the request of the ExCom and this as many times as is deemed necessary; such a meeting must be organised when one fifth of the members of the General Assembly introduces a written request, indicating the item(s) to be put on the agenda.
- 7.3.10 Letters of notification for the General Assembly, including the agenda, must be sent to each member at least thirty days before the meeting. Letters of notification will be transmitted by email. The General Assembly can only discuss items on the agenda, items introduced by the ExCom during the meeting because of their urgency, or items requested by one fifth of the members present or represented.
- 7.3.11 The President or, in the President's absence, a presiding officer selected by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote, shall chair the General Assembly. The person chairing the General Assembly shall declare the sessions open and closed, outline the agenda, lead the discussions, ensure that the rules are respected, give the floor to speakers and announce any decisions that have been made.
- 7.3.12 With the exception of an amendment to the statutes, and/or to the objectives and the dissolution of the organisation, all decisions of the General Assembly are taken by simple majority of the valid votes of the members present or represented (50%+1). Each member is entitled to cast one vote plus maximum two proxies. Members can be represented at the General Assembly by any other member of their choice belonging to the same size of membership (individual or institutional membership as reflected by the amount of membership fee paid). A member cannot hold more than two proxies.
- 7.3.13 The General Assembly can only discuss or decide validly on amendments of the statutes if those are on the agenda and mentioned in the message of notification. Each proposal to amend the statutes must proceed from the ExCom or from one fifth of the members who have paid their membership fee.
- 7.3.14 Meeting quorum: The total number of members present or represented must cover at least two thirds of all members having a right to vote at the decision-making moment. Voting quorum: Decisions to amend the statutes can only be taken by a two-third majority of the votes of the members present or represented.
- 7.3.15 The General Assembly can only discuss or decide validly on amendments of the objectives or dissolution of the Organisation if those are on the agenda and mentioned in the letter of notification. Each proposal to amend the objectives must be initiated by the ExCom or from one fifth of the members who have paid their membership fee. The ExCom must notify members of the organisation at least three months before the date at which the General Assembly will have to decide upon the proposal(s) concerned.
- 7.3.16 The minutes of the General Assembly must be retained by the Secretariat and made available to active members through hard copy or electronic means.

7.3.17 Decisions concerning the elections of the President and Secretary shall be carried out according to the procedure laid down by the Internal Rules of Procedure.

#### **ARTICLE 8: THE FINANCIAL YEAR**

The organisation's financial year runs from the first of January to the thirty first of December each year.

#### **ARTICLE 9: AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES**

Any amendments to the statutes must be made at the organisation's Annual General Assembly, by a two thirds majority and if the Assembly has the two thirds quorum of members present or represented.

#### **ARTICLE 10: DISSOLUTION**

If the organisation is dissolved, the General Assembly must nominate two liquidators, full members or otherwise, and determine their powers. The General Assembly must determine the end to which the organisation's assets must be used. This must correspond with the objectives set by the organisation.

#### **ARTICLE 11: GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- 11.1 The Statutes and registered office of the organisation, which is registered according to Danish Law (Registration number CVR 37116866), shall be published on the ECSPM website.
- 11.2 The Internal Rules of Procedure adopted by the General Assembly shall provide clarification, if necessary, on the various articles in these Statutes.