

Constitution

as amended by the 47th Liberal International Congress in Noordwijk, 7 June 1996

Objects

1. The Liberal International is an association of parties, groups and individuals from countries throughout the world who support Liberal principles and who accept the Liberal Manifesto of 1947, the Declaration of Oxford of 1967 and the Liberal Appeal of Rome of 1981, hereafter called the basic documents of the Liberal International.
2. Its purpose is to win general acceptance of Liberal principles which are international in their nature throughout the world, and to foster the growth of a free society based on personal liberty, personal responsibility and social justice, and to provide the means of co-operation and interchange of information between the member organisations, and between men and women of all countries who accept these principles.

Organisation

3. The following will constitute the executive bodies of the Liberal International:
The Congress
The Executive Committee
The Bureau

Membership

A. Member Organisations

4. Membership shall be open to national political parties and other national political organisations that accept the basic documents. Membership shall also be open to recognised international organisations of Liberal parliamentarians and to an international liberal youth organisation which accepts the basic documents.
5. Membership of the Liberal International is incompatible with membership of other political internationals.
6. It is desirable that in each country where there is a political party recognised by the Liberal International any member organisation in that country should maintain a close relationship with it.
7. Each member organisation shall file a copy of its constitution with the Permanent Secretariat.
8. The Executive Committee shall by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting decide whether or not an application for affiliation shall be accepted. This decision

shall be reported for confirmation to the next following meeting of the Congress, for which confirmation a two-thirds majority of the votes is required.

9. The Executive committee shall have power, by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, to suspend from 1 to a maximum of 3 years, any member organisation which it considers does not adequately represent Liberal opinion in its country. The Executive Committee shall decide the conditions of the suspension. The Executive Committee can with the same procedure disaffiliate a member organisation. Such a procedure can also be started during a suspension period. At least two months' notice of intention to propose disaffiliation shall be given to the member organisation concerned. This decision shall come into effect immediately on a provisional basis and shall be reported for confirmation to the next following meeting of the Congress. The same procedures should apply for any member organisation which by October 1st of the current year has not paid its subscription for the current year and for the year before.
10. When a country is already represented by a national political party a second member organisation from that country may not be affiliated except with the consent of that national political party.
When such consent is not given, the Executive Committee can decide by a three-quarters majority of those present and voting whether or not this application for affiliation should be accepted. This decision shall be reported for confirmation to the next following meeting of the Congress, for which confirmation a three-quarters majority of the votes is required.
11. The affiliation of the second member organisation from any one country will not entitle that country to additional representation on the Executive Committee or Congress. The allotment of seats on the Executive Committee shall be decided between the member organisations concerned, or, if necessary, by the Executive Committee.
12. A third, and further member organisation from any one country may be affiliated on the same terms as a second member organisation.

B. Individual Membership

13. Individual members may join the Liberal International on the following terms :
 - (a) The minimum annual subscription shall be fixed by the Executive Committee;
 - (b) Individual members shall be entitled to attend the annual Congress as non-voting delegates. They shall not be entitled to vote unless they are appointed as delegates by a member organisation;
 - (c) Individual members shall receive free of charge all regular publications of the organisation and shall share in any services which the organisation may provide for members of member organisations,
 - (d) No Individual member shall be enrolled without the consent of the member organisation of the same country and of the Executive Committee.

C. Observer Organisations

14. A political party or other organisation that is in sympathy with the principles of the basic documents may be granted observer status for a period of three years. Before the end of the third year the observer organisation should have applied for Membership or should re-apply for Observer status. If this does not happen the affiliation of the organisation ceases immediately.

The procedure of articles 7-9 applies.

If the consent of the national political party is not given, the procedure of article 10 applies.

Observer organisations have the right of representation but in no case the right to vote.

15. Political Institutes or other organisations that do not operate as a political party can join the Liberal International as Co-operating organisation. This status can be granted by the Executive Committee by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Co-operating organisations have the right of representation but in no case the right to vote.

The Congress

16. The Congress shall be the prime legislative body of the organisation, and shall have the power to direct the policy of the organisation.
17. The Congress shall meet at least once every two years.
18. The Congress shall consist of:

- (a). The Officers, who shall be:

The President(s) of Honour

The President

Vice Presidents

Up to three Treasurers

- (b) Up to a maximum of 20 delegates per country nominated by member organisations from that country.

Votes per country as follows:

- (i) a basic number of ten votes. In the case where there are several member organisations these votes shall be equally divided between the organisations. If these organisations all agree they can make another allocation of these votes;

- (ii) in addition, for every member party in that country: one vote for each 100.000 votes or a major part thereof, cast for that party at the last general election, up to a maximum number of 20 votes.

In a country where there are also observer organisations up to a maximum of 3 non-voting delegates from those observer organisations.

In a country where the only affiliates are observer organisations up to a maximum of 10 non-voting delegates.

- (c) Up to ten delegates nominated by the international liberal youth organisation, having a total number of twenty votes
 - (d) Up to ten delegates nominated by each recognised international organisation of Liberal parliamentarians, having a total number of twenty votes;
19. In order to qualify for representation any organisation qualified under 17(b), (c), (d) or (e) above must have paid its subscription for the current year.
 20. Standing orders for the conduct of the Congress shall be prepared by the Executive Committee and approved by the Congress.
 21. The President shall be elected by the Congress for a period until the next Congress, and shall be eligible for reelection except that no President shall serve for more than three consecutive terms unless no other candidate shall be proposed for the office of President. The same procedure applies for the election and term of the Deputy President.
 22. The Vice-Presidents and Treasurers shall be elected by the Congress for a period of two years, and shall be eligible for re-election except that no Treasurer shall serve for more than three consecutive terms of two years. In the case when no Congress is held in the year the term expires the term is prolonged by one year.
 23. In the event of any of the above Officers retiring during his/her term of office the vacancy shall be filled by election by the Congress immediately following.

The Executive Committee

24. The Executive Committee shall consist of:
 - (a) the Officers as described in 17(a);
 - (b) two delegates per country nominated by member organisations from that country;
 - (c) two delegates nominated by the international Liberal youth organisation;
 - (d) one delegate for each recognised international organisation of Liberal parliamentarians.
25. On invitation by the Executive Committee each observer organisation and member parties who are not part of their countries' delegation to the Executive Committee

- can be represented by one delegate, who will have the right to speak but not to vote.
26. The Chairman of the Executive Committee shall be the President or, If he/her is unable to attend, one of the Vice-Presidents.
 27. The delegates enumerated under article 23(b) to (c) shall be appointed by the member organisations for one year. Member organisations may appoint deputy delegates. If the deputy replaces the delegate at the meeting prior notice of this should be given to the Secretariat. Where more than one member organisation is affiliated from any one country, they shall agree together how the country's representation to the Executive Committee shall be appointed. If they cannot agree, the Executive Committee will decide.
 28. The Executive Committee may co-opt up to two Liberals of international reputation who have not been appointed by any member organisation.
 29. The Executive Committee shall meet at least two times a year. So far as possible no two succeeding meetings should be held in any one country.
 30. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the supervision of the work of the organisation between meetings of the Congress and shall be entitled to pass policy resolutions and to initiate fresh activities. It will also be responsible for all financial matters.
 31. The Executive Committee can appoint special sub-committees for dealing with problems of its organisation, the planning of its activities or for treating political subjects of common interest to the Liberal International member parties. The chairman and members of such sub-committees shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and they shall report back to the Executive Committee.
 32. The Executive Committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure and those for the Bureau, the Treasurers and the permanent secretariat.

The Bureau

33. The Bureau shall consist of:
 - The President(s) of Honour;
 - The President;
 - The immediate Past President;
 - The Deputy President;
 - A number of Vice-Presidents, the number to be decided and the persons to be appointed for a period of two years by the Executive Committee;
 - The Secretary-General;
 - The Treasurers.

34. The Bureau shall be responsible for all administrative and financial matters, and shall report on them and present them for confirmation to the Executive Committee at least once a year.
35. The Bureau shall be responsible for all political matters arising between meetings of the Executive Committee. The Bureau can make public statements on political matters if in its opinion this is necessary. It will submit a written report of its meeting within 30 days to the Executive Committee. This report will be discussed for approval in the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

President of Honour

36. The Congress can, on the proposal of the Executive Committee, appoint a former President of very outstanding merits to Liberalism and to the Liberal International as a President of Honour.

Patrons

37. The Congress can, on the proposal of the Executive Committee, appoint persons who have been for a long time active in thought and deed in Liberalism and in the Liberal International as patrons. Patrons have the right to be present and speak at the meetings of the Executive Committee and of the Congress. At the Congress they have the personal right to vote.

The Permanent Secretariat

38. The head of the Permanent Secretariat shall be the Secretary-General, who shall be the employee of the organisation. He shall be appointed by the Executive Committee, and his /her appointment shall be confirmed by the Congress at its next meeting.
39. The Secretary-General shall appoint his/her own staff with the consent of the Bureau.
40. The Headquarters of the organisation shall be in the country selected by the Executive Committee. It is desirable that it should not be moved from one country to another at less than five year intervals.
41. The Secretary-General shall present a report on the activities of the Liberal International to the Congress.

Finance

42. The minimum annual subscription of any member organisation and of any observer organisation shall be fixed by the Executive Committee. Each member organisation and observer organisation will pay a supplementary sum in accordance with its size. The amount of the supplementary sum will be decided annually by agreement with

the member organisation and observer organisation concerned. The annual subscription is due on the first of January of each year.

43. The organisation may open banking accounts in all affiliated countries. Its main account shall be held in the country in which the Permanent Secretariat is located. Any two of the following shall be entitled to operate or delegate to any Officer or to the Secretary-General the right to operate accounts: the Treasurers and the Secretary-General.
44. The financial year of the organisation shall run from January 1st to December 31st. Accounts shall be audited by a Chartered Accountant at the end of each financial year and shall be presented for approval to the next following meeting of the Executive Committee.

Alterations

45. Amendments to this Constitution shall be made by the Congress on the proposal of the Executive Committee or any member organisation. A two-thirds majority of those present and voting shall be necessary.
46. At least two months' notice of intention to propose such an amendment must be given to the member organisations.

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