



OIEC

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION
OFICINA INTERNACIONAL DE LA EDUCACIÓN CATÓLICA
OFFICE INTERNATIONAL DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT CATHOLIQUE

OIEC STATUTES ADOPTED BY THE OIEC EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN ROME ON 22 JUNE 2022

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PREAMBLE

The International Office of Catholic Education ("OIEC") was founded in the Hague on 20th September 1952 pursuant to a *nihil obstat* obtained from the Secretariat of State by the Archbishop of Utrecht in 1951. The first Statutes were approved by the Holy See in 1956, placing OIEC under the protection of the same Archbishop. OIEC became a consultative body of UNESCO in 1958 and of the UN in the same year (achieving special consultative status in 1998). In the Council of Europe, it gained consultative status as an International Non-Governmental Organisation in 1965 and participatory status in 2001.

In 1965 the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education '*Gravissimum Educationis*' strongly emphasised the necessity of fostering co-ordination and co-operation at an international level, and recalled the words of Pope St Paul VI in his allocution to OIEC on 25th February 1964.

The Statutes of OIEC were revised in 1974, and again in 1994, each revision receiving the approval of the Holy See.

TITLE I: GENERAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 1: IDENTITY

The International Office of Catholic Education ("OIEC") consists of the national representative bodies for Catholic schools. It is erected canonically as a public juridical person. It has a worldwide membership which reflects the universality of the Catholic Church. OIEC relates to the Holy See, especially through close links with the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

ARTICLE 2: HEAD OFFICE

The head office is located at the Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle), Via Aurelia 476, Rome. Any change of head office shall be determined by the Council, subject to confirmation by the following General Assembly.

ARTICLE 3: OBJECTS

OIEC has the following objects:

3.1 to participate in the universal Church's mission by promoting Catholic education throughout the world;

3.2 to collaborate with the bodies of the universal Church (and particularly with the Dicastery for Culture and Education of the Holy See as the principal dicastery of reference for the matter of education), and in relationship with Episcopal Conferences and other Christian international organisations concerned with education;

3.3 to ensure, in collaboration with the Holy See, the representation of Catholic schools in international bodies, particularly those concerned with education;

3.4 to promote the development, in every region of the world, educational communities representing the world's largest network in education, with a specific focus on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children;

3.5 to connect the different members, particularly in the Regions, and to initiate links of active solidarity and mutual support between them;

3.6 to defend and promote the effective exercise of freedom of education, and to foster relationships of understanding and partnership with civil society of the countries in which Catholic schools are present;

3.7 to promote research into the contribution of Catholic education and Catholic schools to society.

TITLE II: MEMBERS

ARTICLE 4: CATEGORIES OF MEMBERS

OIEC has four membership categories:

4.1 Constituent Members

These are bodies:

4.1.1 recognised by the ecclesiastical authority competent according to canon law (normally the competent Bishops' Conference in each country), and

4.1.2 responsible for coordinating and/or representing Catholic schools in a given country.

4.2 Associate Members

These are the institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life which are engaged in educational service and that have an international presence.

4.3 Collaborating Members

These are persons or organisations who are willing to collaborate actively with OIEC.

4.4 Honorary Members

These are persons or organisations who are recognised as having made a significant and sustained contribution to the work of OIEC.

ARTICLE 5: MEMBERSHIP

5.1 All applicants for membership shall send in a request accompanied by the necessary information and a commitment to adhere to OIEC's Constitution in order to contribute to its vitality and activities, and pay the annual membership subscriptions determined by the General Assembly.

5.2 Any member who has not paid annual membership subscriptions for two successive years shall lose the right to vote until the situation is regularised, unless an explanation is provided that is satisfactory to the Council.

TITLE III: STRUCTURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A) STRUCTURES

ARTICLE 6: THE VARIOUS ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

The structures of OIEC include:

- the General Assembly,
- the Council
- the Executive Committee
- the General Secretariat
- the Regional Secretariats
- the Finance Committee
- the Legal Committee

ARTICLE 7: THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

7.1 Composition

7.1.1 The General Assembly, the supreme body of the OIEC, shall consist of all the Constituent Members, a determined number of Associate Members, the Secretary General and the Regional Secretaries. Only these full members have the right to speak and vote at the Assembly.

7.1.2 The members of the Assembly with the right to speak but not the right to vote are also: Associate Members without the right to vote, Collaborating Members, Honorary Members and Permanent Representatives with the right to speak only.

7.2 Organisation

7.2.1 The Constituent Members shall normally participate in the General Assembly, through a representative delegation. The head of the delegation shall normally be responsible for the vote of the delegation, but a Constituent Member may appoint any person to exercise its right to vote at a General Assembly.

Any person entitled to vote at a General Assembly may appoint a proxy to represent him or her and to vote on his or her behalf.

For certain issues, the Council may decide that only full members may participate in the deliberations.

7.2.2 The Associate Members as a whole shall not have more than 10 votes, which shall be determined by decision of the group.

7.2.3 The agenda of the General Assembly shall be determined by the Secretary General and shall be subject to the Council's approval.

7.2.4 The Executive Committee and the Secretariat of the General Assembly shall be those of the Council.

7.2.5 The General Assembly shall be legally constituted when the absolute majority of the members with the right to vote are present or represented.

7.3 Frequency of meetings

7.3.1 The General Assembly shall be convened by the President or by the Secretary General by delegation from the President.

7.3.2 The interval between two Ordinary General Assemblies shall be three years in principle, but cannot exceed four years. The General Assembly shall be convened with at least 3 months' notice. The convocation shall include the agenda of the meeting.

7.4 Votes

Except in special cases mentioned in the statutes, decisions are determined by an absolute majority of the members present or represented.

7.5 Role of the general assembly

7.5.1 The Ordinary General Assembly shall determine the OIEC's main lines of activity.

7.5.2 It shall elect the elected members of the Council and the Secretary General and appoint the Treasurer.

7.5.3 It shall discuss and approve the activity report, plan of action and statement of accounts presented by the Council.

7.5.4 It shall set the level of subscriptions of members.

7.5.5 It shall approve the Bye Laws and Rules of Procedure proposed by the Council. However, if the Council has adopted the proposal with a 2/3 majority of its members, the Bye Laws or Rules of Procedure and any amendment thereto are applicable provisionally until the following General Assembly.

7.6 Extraordinary General Assemblies

Extraordinary General Assemblies may be convened by the Council or at the request of an absolute majority of the Constituent and Associate Members who, in their collective request, must provide the agenda and explain the purpose for which the meeting is being called.

ARTICLE 8: THE COUNCIL

8.1 Composition

8.1.1 The Council shall consist of the following Members with the right to speak and vote:

- 3 to 4 Constituent Members per Region,
- 2 to 4 Associate Members,
- the Secretary General,
- the Regional Secretaries.

8.1.2 In addition, the following Advisory Members have the right to attend and speak, but not vote:

- 1 to 3 Collaborating Members elected by the Council,
- the Permanent Representatives.

8.2 Organisation of the Council

8.2.1 The Council shall be appointed for the period between two consecutive Ordinary General Assemblies.

8.2.2 The Constituent Members of Council shall be elected at the proposal of each of the Regions.

8.2.3 The Associate Members of Council shall be elected at the proposal of the group of Associate Members.

8.3 Role of the Council

8.3.1 The Council shall ensure the implementation of the General Assembly's decisions and shall take all necessary measures for the proper functioning of OIEC, including its financial administration.

8.3.2 It shall set the date and venue of the next General Assembly.

8.3.3 It shall prepare the General Assembly and decide the contents of the agenda.

8.3.4 It shall appoint the delegations or empower the President or the Secretary General to do so.

8.3.5 It shall authorise the Secretary General to sign Conventions and Agreements with other bodies and national or international institutions.

8.3.6 It shall approve the accounts and vote the budget.

8.3.7 The Associate Members of the Council shall elect the Associate Member of the Executive Committee.

8.3.8 It shall establish the Finance Committee.

8.3.9 Subject to the Statutes and Bye Laws, the Council may regulate its own organisation and procedure.

8.4 Votes

Except in special cases provided for in the statutes, the Council's decisions shall be determined by an absolute majority of members present or represented.

ARTICLE 9 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

9.1 Composition

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice-Presidents, one Associate Member of the Council, the Treasurer and the Secretary General. The Regional Secretaries may be invited to the meetings of the Executive Committee.

9.2 Functions of the Executive Committee

9.2.1 The Executive Committee shall ensure the planning and coordination of the meetings of the General Assembly and of the Council.

9.2.2 It shall discuss and adopt the agenda for the Council submitted by the Secretary General.

9.2.3 It shall carry out any tasks requested by the Council.

ARTICLE 10: THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

The General Secretariat shall be OIEC's permanent executive body. It shall be under the direction of the Secretary General and under the control of the Council.

ARTICLE 11: THE REGIONS

11.1.1 A “Region” is an entity consisting of the grouping of several Constituent Members.

11.1.2 Regions are established, altered or suppressed by the General Assembly. The Council may provisionally establish or alter a Region with a 2/3 majority of its members, subject to ratification by the following General Assembly.

11.1.3 Each Region shall establish the structures and organisation best suited to it, headed by a Regional Secretary. For geographic, linguistic or cultural convenience, a Region can be subdivided by the Council into several “sub-regions”.

11.2 Function of the Regions

11.2.1 They shall share the objectives of the OIEC.

11.2.2 They shall participate in consideration of the themes selected and developed by the OIEC at the international level, and in the action plans approved by the Assembly and the Council.

11.2.3 The relationships between OIEC, each Regional Secretariat and the members of that Region shall be established in an agreement between OIEC and each Regional Secretariat.

11.2.4 Each agreement with OIEC will be drawn up in consultation with the episcopal conferences of the Region and the Holy See. In accordance with the statutes of OIEC, it shall specify in particular the following:

- how the designation of representatives of the Region are made to the Council, including representation of any sub-regions;
- the method of designation of Regional Secretaries;
- the relationship between membership of the Region and membership of OIEC;
- the responsibility for collecting the OIEC membership subscriptions;
- the rights of OIEC in the Region;
- OIEC’s involvement in the approval of the Region’s Statutes;
- the role of the Region within the area it covers.

ARTICLE 12: THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

12.1 The Council shall set up a Finance Committee of which the Secretary General and the Treasurer shall be members *ex-officio*.

12.2 The Committee shall be responsible for:

12.2.1 seeking sources of financing other than the constitutionally established membership subscriptions,

12.2.2 keeping the Council Members constantly aware of their responsibilities concerning the administration of OIEC's funds.

ARTICLE 13: OTHER COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

13.1 The Secretary General, after consultation with the Council, shall establish:

- a Legal Commission consisting of between 2 and 4 members with a mandate equal to the Council's; and
- such other committees or commissions as are approved by the Council.

13.2 The remit of the various committees and commissions shall be set out in the Bye Laws.

ARTICLE 14: RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL BODIES

Relations with other national or international bodies shall be established by virtue of an Agreement approved by Council after consultation with the Holy See.

B) OFFICERS AND FUNCTIONS

ARTICLE 15: THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE-PRESIDENTS

15.1 Election

15.1.1 The Presidency rotates between the Regions, with each Region taking its turn at the time of the election. The President shall be elected by Council from amongst the Council Members of the Region in question at the proposal of the Council Members from that Region.

15.1.2 The Vice-Presidents, one for each region, shall be elected by the Council from amongst the Council Members of the Regions that are not holding the rotating Presidency, as proposed by each of those Regions.

15.1.3 The President and the Vice-Presidents shall be elected for the period between two consecutive Ordinary General Assemblies.

15.1.4 Nominations for the office of President shall be submitted to the Holy See for the *nihil obstat*. Accordingly, the Region which is responsible for nominating the President shall put forward a nomination no later than three months before the opening of the General Assembly.

ARTICLE 16: THE SECRETARY GENERAL

16.1 Election

16.1.1 To elect the Secretary General, an absolute majority of votes of all Members present or represented at the General Assembly shall be required; in the case of a tie, a simple majority of votes shall be required on the second ballot.

16.1.2 Nominations for the office of Secretary General shall be submitted to the Holy See for the *nihil obstat*. Accordingly, a call for nominations shall be made no later than six months before the opening of a General Assembly and closing no later than three months before it.

16.1.3 The Secretary General shall be elected for the period between two Ordinary General Assemblies and shall always be eligible for re-election.

16.1.4 In the case of a casual vacancy in the office of Secretary General, the Council shall designate someone to fill the unexpired term, following the same timetable as set out in 16.1.2 above.

16.2 Role of the Secretary General

16.2.1 The Secretary General is the legal representative of OIEC. He or she shall organise and manage OIEC's General Secretariat. He or she shall be accountable to the General Assembly and the Council for the management of the Secretariat General. He or she shall carry out any other functions assigned to the Secretary General in the Bye Laws.

ARTICLE 17: THE REGIONAL SECRETARIES

17.1 The Regional Secretaries, elected in each Region by their respective bodies, shall form together with the Secretary General a collegial body for the purposes of promotion, reflection and action.

17.2 They shall be entrusted with OIEC's activities in their respective Regions and serve as the link between OIEC and all the members of their Region.

17.3 They shall ensure the liaison between the members of their Region and OIEC at world level.

17.4 They shall keep the Secretary General regularly informed of everything that concerns OIEC in their Region.

17.5 They shall draw up an annual report and present it to the Council and the General Assembly.

ARTICLE 18: THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

18.1 The Permanent Representatives shall be designated by the Secretary General and accredited by him - except in the case of *ex-officio* accreditation - to represent OIEC habitually in a city in any governmental or non-governmental Institutions with which OIEC maintains cooperative or advisory relations.

18.2 The Permanent Representatives shall work closely with the Regional Secretaries and take part, to the extent possible, in meetings with the regions.

18.3 The permanent representatives will implement all directions and decisions approved by the Council.

ARTICLE 19: THE TREASURER

19.1 The Treasurer shall be the administrator of OIEC's finances in accordance with the instructions of the General Assembly and the decisions of the Council.

19.2 He shall check the accounts regularly to facilitate Council's supervision and shall present a financial report covering the years that have lapsed since his last report to the General Assembly on behalf of Council.

19.3 He shall draw up the budget for the ensuing period and submit it for approval by the General Assembly on behalf of Council.

19.4 The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Council. In the case of a casual vacancy in the office of Treasurer, the Council shall designate someone to fill the unexpired term, following the same timetable as set out in 19.5 below.

19.5 Nominations for the office of Treasurer shall be submitted to the Holy See for the *nihil obstat*. Accordingly, a call for nominations shall be made no later than six months before the opening of a General Assembly and closing no later than three months before it.

TITLE IV: FINAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 20: AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS

20.1 Any amendments or additions to the articles of this Constitution shall be made by a resolution passed at an Extraordinary General Assembly which has been convened for that purpose. Amendments may also be included in the Agenda of an Ordinary General Assembly provided that notice of the resolution has been given to the Members of OIEC with the convocation to the said Assembly.

20.2 In order to be passed, the resolution shall require approval by a 2/3 majority of the Members present or represented, provided also that 2/3 of members in the Assembly with right to vote are present or represented.

20.3 When, however, a proposal to make an amendment or an addition (notice of which has previously been given, as stipulated above, to each Member of OIEC) shall have been made by the Council itself, only a simple majority of the Members in the Assembly with right to vote present or represented shall be required. Nevertheless, if during the notification period given by the Council more than 1/3 of the Members of OIEC indicate their opposition to this procedure in writing, the proposal can only be adopted by the normal procedure.

20.4 Any proposed amendment or addition to the Statutes and any text eventually adopted shall be submitted to the Holy See for approval. No text shall come into effect until that approval has been obtained.

ARTICLE 21: DISSOLUTION

21.1 The decision to dissolve OIEC shall only be made by an Extraordinary General Assembly especially convened for that purpose.

21.2 This decision shall be adopted by 2/3 of the members present or represented which have the right to vote in the Assembly.

ARTICLE 22: TRANSLATION

In case of doubt about the translation of the present Constitution, the original French text shall be the only reference.

ARTICLE 23: BYE LAWS

23.1 OIEC shall have Bye Laws, consistent with the Statutes, which shall regulate more particularly any matters which may be considered necessary for its good governance. In particular, the Bye Laws may provide for any meetings provided for in the statutes to be held virtually so that members may be present by electronic means whereby each member of the meeting has the ability to communicate with all other members.

23.2 Bye Laws may be made and amended by the General Assembly. Bye Laws may also be made or amended by a proposal of the Executive Committee approved by a 2/3 majority of the Council.