

CONSTITUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE CARPATHIAN REGION UNIVERSITIES

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PART I GENERAL REGULATIONS

Article 1. Official Title

The official title of the association is the "ASSOCIATION OF THE CARPATHIAN REGION UNIVERSITIES" (ACRU), hereafter referred to as "The Association". The present Constitution will regulate the composition, objectives, and operation of the Association.

Article 2. Nature of The Association

1. "The Association" is an integrated network of universities whose main objective will be the advancement of academic, cultural and scientific co-operation, taking advantage of the particular dynamics of the long established historic and cultural links which have developed in the Carpathian Region. It

will also address itself to the co-ordination of various activities in the field of international university relations, to the development of specific mechanisms for the immediate transmission of information, and to the exchange and support of contacts between member universities and interested third parties, promoting social, educational and technological development among neighbouring countries, communities and regions.

2. Since the Association is registered in Slovakia as a not-for-profit organisation of international scope, its legal residence is in Slovakia and it must abide by the laws of the Slovak Republic.
3. The Association is founded for an indefinite period of time, in effect from the moment the present Constitution, whose approval will be submitted to the constituent council of the same body, come into force.

Article 3. General Aims

Acting within the spirit of tolerance which underpins understanding among the peoples of the region and specifically in the fields of cultural exchange, the Association will have the following general aims:

1. The reinforcement of communication channels among member universities in order to encourage the exchange of teaching and research staff.
2. The organisation of forums to study and debate questions of a regional nature.
3. To foster the mobility of the university community as a support for increased knowledge of languages and cultures.
4. To cooperate with local authorities, NGOs, international institutions, etc., with the aim to promote the development of the Carpathian region.

Article 4. Specific Aims

The Association will give particular attention to the following objectives:

1. The gathering, dissemination and mutual exchange of information about member universities and their activities in the fields of education, research, developmental plans, and services.
2. The promotion of joint activities concerning:
 - Periodic meetings among members.
 - Working committees dwelling on specific topics.
 - Strengthening the links with foreign and international institutions having similar aims.
3. The definition and development of a common approach:
 - The representation of the interests of the Association to the public and private institutions of the member countries.
 - The search for and acquisition of resources for the development of international projects.
 - The framing of proposals and general recommendations to national bodies of the member countries with special responsibility in matters pertaining to university affairs.
 - The promotion of international aspects of higher education.

Article 5. Action concerning students

With reference to students of member universities, the Association will:

1. Facilitate and promote their mobility within the Association network.
2. Promote exemption from enrolment fees on the basis of a general agreement among member universities or by mutual reciprocation.
3. Grant total or partial recognition of studies undertaken in member universities, once the established requisites have been satisfied.
4. Enable linguistic preparation of students by offering free language courses on the part of the host university.
5. Give help and assistance in finding free accommodation for exchange students wherever possible, based on mutual agreements and reciprocal arrangements.
6. Promote the exchange of curriculum information and, where possible, the exchange of academic material and the development of distance learning through the application of new technology to education.
7. Stimulate debate on curriculum development and set up joint programmes.
8. Encourage social, cultural and complementary sporting activities.

Article 6. Action concerning teaching staff

With regard to the teaching and research staffs of member universities, the Association will pay particular attention to:

1. The promotion of mobility within the university network.
2. The encouragement of joint research programmes between association members and collaboration with public and private entities in the countries of member universities.
3. The contribution of the training of post-graduate students through master, doctoral, specialist and other post-graduate courses.

Article 7. Action concerning administrative personnel

The Association will promote and enable the mobility of administrative personnel within the network in order to improve language skills and cultural and technical training.

PART II ORGANS

Article 8. Membership

1. Apart from the founding universities, membership of the Association will be open to any university, which at any time following the constituent council, applies in writing for membership to the President of the Association, and is accepted by a two-thirds majority of the universities present in the annual general meeting.

2. The universities will be represented by their Rectors/Presidents or their appointed delegates.
3. Associated membership will be open for interested bodies. An associate member can participate in the ACRU activities, but does not have the right to vote at ACRU decision making processes. The associate membership is offered at a reduced membership fee.
4. Individual membership is open for qualified persons. An individual member can participate in appropriate ACRU activities, but does not have the right to vote within ACRU decision making processes. There is an individual membership fee.
5. Honorary membership is automatically offered to past presidents and is open to outstanding personalities upon the suggestion of a qualified person and agreement of the managing bodies of the ACRU. An honorary member can participate in the ACRU activities, but does not have the right to vote at any ACRU decision making processes. The honorary membership is offered free of membership dues.
6. The member universities failing to meet their obligations regarding paying their membership fees for three consecutive years will lose their voting rights and will not be able to benefit from grants provided by the Association.

Article 9. Managing Bodies

The Managing Body of the Association will be comprised of The General Council, the President, and the Secretary General.

Article 10. General Council

1. The General Council is the highest decision-making organ of the Association. It will be comprised of all member universities, represented by a person duly designated for this purpose as stated in Article 8, Section 2 of this Constitution.
2. The General Council is co-chaired by the President and the Rector of the host university. The chairs submit principal proposals which are to be decided by the General Council.
3. The General Council will have the following responsibilities:
 - To elect the President of The Executive Committee for a period of two years as stipulated in Article 12.
 - To make a report on the candidate for the post of Secretary General, as stipulated in Article 13 of this Constitution.
 - To form the working committees considered appropriate, without infringing Article 15 of this Constitution.
 - To approve the reports and documents referred to in the following Article 11 of this Constitution.
4. The member universities will take rotate the hosting of the Annual General Meeting of the General Council, the venue being decided at the previous General Meeting. Rotation will be rigorously controlled in order to reflect the international character of the Association.
5. The General Council of the Association will be deemed to be constituted when at least half of the Rectors or Presidents or their designated delegates are present.

6. In deciding the above quorum, justified absences for which no replacement was found will not be taken into account.

Article 11. Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee will be the organ of government of the Association, which represents different countries of the member Universities. It will be formed of the President, Secretary General and 3 Vice-presidents (one of them is recommended to be the Former President).
2. The Executive Committee will be responsible for carrying out the Association's programme of activities and be responsible for the preparation of the meetings of the General Council.
3. The Executive Committee will also be charged with the drafting of the following documents and their presentation to the General Council:
 - The Annual Report on activities completed.
 - The Financial Report for the year prior to the meeting.
 - The Budget for the forthcoming year.
 - The strategy, policies and operational programmes for future activities.
 - Proposition, if so required, for the admission of new members.
4. The Executive Committee will meet at least twice a year in order to supervise the administration of agreements and prepare the meetings of the General Council.

Article 12. The President and Vice-Presidents of the Association

1. The President and Vice-Presidents of the Association will be academics from countries participating in the Carpathian region, elected by the General Council. The only requisite is that the candidate of choice be a distinguished academic with experience in research and administration, preferably of international standing.
2. To elect the President of the Association for a period of two years, as stipulated in Article 12.1, one needs a two thirds majority vote of the member universities present.
3. At the end of the President's term of office, through resignation or cessation, the election of a new President will be an item on the agenda of the Annual General Meeting of the Association.
4. Apart from the specific functions stated in this Constitution, and those arising naturally through the office, the President will also be charged by the General Council with the following duties:
 - To represent the Association as its President in its internal and external relations.
 - To convene ordinary or special meetings of the General Council.
 - To execute the decisions of the General Council.
 - To propose the strategy and policies of the Association to the Executive Committee
 - To convene ordinary or special meetings of the Executive Committee
5. The President can create a permanent Secretariat for the period of his office to assist him in executing his duties.
6. The Vice-Presidents are elected by the General Council on the motion of the President of the ACRU according to the same procedure as the President.

Article 13. The Secretary General

1. The Secretary General is a position held by a candidate with post-graduate qualification and experience in international educational activities. He will be appointed by the President.
2. The Secretary General will be responsible for managing the activities of the Association and will be in permanent liaison with the President of the Executive Committee.
3. The Secretary General can be reconfirmed by the General Council; or dismissed by the same body on the recommendation of the President.
4. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Secretary General must submit an annual financial report with an annual budget to the General Council.

Article 14. The Auditing Committee

1. An Auditing Committee will approve the financial report for the previous year and if required, audit (or check, or verify) the account books.
2. The Auditing Committee must have at least two members. Each country has the right to propose members for a one-year period.

Article 15. Working Committees

1. The General Council can create temporary or permanent Working Committees and decide on their composition, either on its own initiative or at the instigation of the President, in order to comply with and execute the objectives foreseen in the present Constitution.
2. Any representative of a member university may form part of a Working Committee, taking into account its international character. The person may be the university representative in the Association, or a third-party expert designated by the member university.

Article 16. Organisation of Meetings

1. For the organisation of Annual General Meetings and special meetings the President of the Executive Committee will be helped by an Organising Committee, presided over by the Rector or President of the University hosting the meeting, a Vice-President, who will be the person responsible for international relations in the host university, with the support of other aides.
2. English is the official language in meetings, but all languages of the member countries can be used as well.

PART III GENERAL PROCEDURE

Article 17. Frequency of Meetings

1. The General Council of the Association will ordinarily meet at least once a year. Special meetings will be held as many times as deemed necessary and accordingly convened by the President or the Executive Committee.

2. The general approach and procedure of the General Council will adapt itself to the principles of efficiency, pragmatism and a minimum of bureaucratic formality, in strict accordance with current legislation.

Article 18. Voting

1. Voting can be effected by means of:
 - Assent, which is here understood as the non-manifestation of dissent.
 - A show of hands, with which each member indicates approval.
 - A secret ballot, when this is requested by a third of those present, or when dealing with an issue which affects a member, in which case it can be requested by a single member.
 - e-voting, according to the procedure described in art. 18 p. 3.
2. Decisions regarding co-operation will be based on consensus.
3. In important cases, on the President motion, there can be implemented e-voting through e-mail. The President sends the draft of proposal and receives information containing the position of the member University concerning the proposal and the way it votes by e-mail or fax. If the President does not receive the vote for or against the decision project in the term of two weeks, it is considered to be an assent for the decision project.

Article 19. Minutes and Declarations of Meetings

1. Each Executive Committee meeting will be minuted. The minutes will not be made public. A declaration will be issued and posted on the website of the Association after each Annual Conference.

PART IV ECONOMIC REGULATIONS

Article 20. Funding and Expenditure

1. The funding comes from membership fees that will be complemented from other sources. The membership fee will be renewed every year in the regular meeting of the General Council. The Association may have its own capital assets necessary to fulfil its aims.
2. The funding of the Association will be met by annual quotas from the member universities, subsidies from regional, national, European, and international sources, the Association's own research projects, fees for services rendered, sponsors, donations and any other legal source.
3. The Executive Committee will be obliged to present an analysis of the planned budget at the next meeting of the General Council. Execution will follow approval.
4. The eligible expenditures are as follows:
 - Grants according to the Grant Scheme
 - Support for research projects inside the member universities according to the Grant Scheme

- Travel costs of the Executive Committee members for representing the Association at international events of general interest for ACRU
- Costs of administration of the ACRU secretariat

CONCLUDING REGULATIONS

1. The present Constitution may be modified by the General Council, either on the initiative of the President of the Executive Committee, Country Coordinators, or half of the members of the Association, and recorded as an item on the agenda. In any case, the textual changes must be itemised article by article, and sufficient justification for the modification be given.
2. Any point of order not anticipated in these present Constitution will, by default, be subjected to the legislation on not for profit educational, cultural, university associations currently in force in each member country.
3. The Association may be dissolved by a resolution to this effect made by the General Council, as long as this said proposal be carried by a majority of four-fifths of the total number of Association members, and follows the economic procedure determined by the General Council in accordance with existing legislation. The property of the Association after its cessation may be used only to support institutions or activities that have aims similar to those of the Association.
4. At any time a member may withdraw from the Association by giving written notice to the General Council. Any such withdrawal shall take effect upon expiration of at least six months from the date of the notification of withdrawal.
5. A university will become a member of the Association after the Constitution is signed by an official representative of a university, and, if necessary, after approval of the signing by its Academic Senate.