

# BY-LAWS OF IHEYO

*Adopted by the General Assembly in Vijayawada, India on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2006, and amended by the General Assembly in the Hague, the Netherlands on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2007, and amended by the General Assembly in Potsdam, Germany on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2008*

## Article 1. Name and Duration

With this, the international non-profit organisation will be founded. It shall be called the International Humanist and Ethical Youth Organisation. The organisation shall be known by the acronym "IHEYO". The official language of IHEYO is Dutch, the working language is also English. The organisation comes under the provision and regulations of the title III from the Belgian law of June 1921 concerning the non-profit organisations and the foundations (article 46 to 57).

The organisation is being founded for an unlimited period.

## Article 2. Location

IHEYO has its head office in Vrijzinnig Centrum Geuzenhuis, Kantienberg 9, 9000 Gent, Belgium. The seat can be transferred to any other place in Belgium by the decision of the General Assembly, to be published in the Belgian Governmental Gazette and communicated with the Federal department of Justice.

## Article 3. Purpose

### ***Section 1. Main Identity***

The main identity of IHEYO is:

To bring into active association youth groups and young humanist individuals throughout the world interested in promoting humanism, as is described in the Amsterdam Declaration 2002.

### ***Section 2. Aims***

IHEYO aims to achieve the following non-profit goals of international benefit:

- To promote the development of cooperation among member organisations and humanist youth, especially on the international level;
- To promote circulation of information and expertise among member organisations and humanist youth;
- To carry out educational and cultural action in order to promote a Humanist vision of cultural, social and ethical values;
- To represent its members to any and all international governing institutions on all questions related to the organisation's purpose;
- To contribute and give a voice to youth humanism on the international level.

### ***Section 3. Activities***

- The organising of an annual General Assembly.
- The organising of exchange activities such as conferences, internships and trainings.
- Stimulating and informing members about possible collaborations with other members or non-members.
- To support the development of the activities of member organisations, especially those in 'developing' countries.
- The publishing of an electronic newsletter for members and publishing of an online website where people can interact.

## **Article 4. (applying for) Membership**

### ***Section 1. Applying for Membership***

The organisation is accessible for foreigners and Belgians.

Each organisation or individual applying for membership must complete the official membership form and submit it to the Executive Committee of IHEYO. To be admitted as a member, the organization must agree with IHEYO's main identity and aims, and be accepted by the General Assembly. A majority vote of represented full members at a General Assembly shall be sufficient to admit a member.

### ***Section 2. Humanist organisations***

A humanist organisation may have members that do not consider themselves humanists. To be considered a humanist organisation, it is sufficient that the goals of the organisation are based on and consistent with IHEYO's main identity and aims.

### ***Section 3. Full Members***

Full membership is open to youth branches of humanist organisations and humanist organisations dedicated to the activities of youth under the age of 35. These humanist organisations must be formally constituted within a country and be democratically reigned. Organisations can only become full member when they have a legal status in their country. Also, youth branches of humanist organisations can only become member when they have an own legal identity. Humanist organisations that are democratically governed, but not formally constituted, cannot be a full member because they lack a legal base. Full members have the right to vote at the General Assembly.

### ***Section 4. Consultative Members***

Consultative membership is open to any humanist association. Consultative members do not have a vote at the General Assembly, but they do have speaking rights.

### ***Section 5. Individual Members***

IHEYO recognizes that some individual young people who want to be involved in Humanism might live in isolated areas where a group is not available. Individual members have to be under the age of 35. They do not have voting rights at the General Assembly. The EC has the power to accept or refuse individual membership. The list of new members is presented to the GA, which has the option to exclude members.

### ***Section 6. Member organisations' duties***

The EC shall every year require all member organisations to send a copy of their annual report and action plan, plus English summaries of the same, and an updated list of board members, to the Secretary-General.

All full members not attending the General Assembly are upon request required to transfer their vote to another members' delegation, according to the rules concerning transfer-votes in these By-Laws.

The member organizations shall fulfil the requirements mentioned in this section within 60 days after the EC sends the requests.

## **Article 5. Leaving, Removal and Changing**

### ***Section 1. Leaving IHEYO***

Any member may withdraw from IHEYO by notifying the Executive Committee of its resignation in writing. This resignation shall take effect two weeks (14 days) after the notification is received by the Executive Committee.

### ***Section 2. Removal by the General Assembly***

The General Assembly, acting on a proposal from the Executive Committee, may terminate an organisation's membership, through a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the full members. The organisation in question will be allowed an opportunity to defend itself in front of the General Assembly prior to voting.

Cause for removal will include a member organisation acting in clear violation of IHEYO's purpose as stated in the By-Laws, or acting in clear violation of the By-Laws themselves, or leaving membership fees unpaid for at least three consecutive years, or not sending in their annual report or action plan, or not using or transferring their GA-vote. The Executive Committee shall be required to give notification to the organisation in question that their membership is being considered for termination sixty (60) days before the meeting of the General Assembly where the vote is to take place.

The notification should include an explanation of the reasons why termination is being considered. The organisation in question may submit its defence in writing or in person to the General Assembly.

Organisations that have left or have been removed and their legal heirs (in case of deceasement) cannot obtain any rights on the financial resources of the organisation.

### ***Section 3. Changing membership status***

The GA, acting on a recommendation from the EC, can with ordinary majority vote (1/2) adjust a member organisations status from full to consultative membership. The Executive Committee shall be required to give notification to the organisation in question that their membership is being considered for status change at least sixty (60) days before the meeting of the General Assembly where the vote is to take place. The organisation in question will be allowed an opportunity to defend itself in front of the General Assembly prior to voting. Reasons for changing membership status are not using or transferring their GA vote in accordance with article 4, section 6, paragraph 2.

## **Article 6. Dues**

### ***Section 1. Payment***

Members have to pay a membership fee, decided upon by the General Assembly through a proposal of the Executive Committee. The membership fee shall be paid in full to the Treasurer by January 31 of each year. Voting at the General Assembly is depending upon full dues having been paid.

The membership depends on the number of members in the member organisation; large member organisations pay more than the small organisations. The minimum fee is 1Euro per year.

If any member cannot pay the stipulated fees, then the member concerned has to formally state why they cannot to the EC. The EC will then decide if they (the affected organisation) can remain a full member with voting right.

## **Article 7. The General Assembly**

### ***Section 1. Composition***

The General Assembly is comprised of all voting members and non-voting members. The not working (consultative) members can participate in the meeting as consultatives.

### ***Section 2. Purpose***

The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the IHEYO. Decisions are made by simple majority of voting members, except when stated otherwise. The General Assembly can only validly decide when half or more of the full members is present or represented.

The General Assembly decides on the following issues:

- To amend the bylaws as specified in Article 8;
- To elect and dismiss members of the Executive Committee;
- To allow or deny organisations admission into full or consultative membership, on recommendation by the Executive Committee;
- To decide about membership dues;
- To adopt the annual budget as prepared by the Treasurer;
- To acquire and dispose of real estate;
- To discharge the Executive Members;
- To dissolve IHEYO as specified in Article 8.

### ***Section 3. Delegates***

Delegates have the full right to speak, suggest proposals of any kind and to vote on behalf of his or her organisation. Each organisation needs to appoint in a written statement in advance to the General Assembly, the person or persons who will represent the member organization at the General Assembly. A representative must be under 35 years of age.

### ***Section 4. Observers***

Observers have the right to speak and to suggest proposals. One IHEU representative has the right to attend and to speak at the General Assembly. Other individuals are free to attend, but they will not have speaking rights in front of the General Assembly unless the General Assembly allows it.

### ***Section 5. Annual Meeting***

The date of the Annual Meeting shall be communicated by the Executive Committee to all members ninety (90) days prior to its occurrence. The agenda of the Annual Meeting shall be arranged by the Executive Committee, but including any question one-fourth (1/4) of the full members has requested to be discussed. The latter requests should be submitted to the Secretary-General in writing prior to the Annual Meeting. The agenda of the Annual Meeting shall be sent to member organisations at least thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting.

### ***Section 6. Convening Extraordinary Meetings by Executive Committee***

The Executive Committee may convene Extraordinary Meetings of the General Assembly, if it receives such a request in writing from one fourth of the full members, indicating the item or items to be placed on the agenda. Sixty (60) days notice must be given to the General Assembly prior to such a meeting.

### ***Section 7. Voting at a Meeting***

If a member is unable to send a delegate, the right to their vote may be transferred to another delegation by informing the Secretary-General in writing, by post or fax. A delegation may have only such voting right. But one person cannot have more than three votes. Votes submitted in writing must be signed by the President or equivalent official of the full member organisation. An EC-member can not have transfer votes. If it is deemed necessary, secret ballot voting may be allowed. The request from a single delegate is sufficient to require secret balloting. There cannot be decided upon issues that are not on the agenda.

### ***Section 8. Number of votes***

Each voting member has one vote, except organisations with over 1000 members have two votes and organisations with over 3000 members have three votes. Only members under 35 years of age are considered. In the case of umbrella organisations, the members of member organizations are counted.

### ***Section 9. Register***

The decisions of the General Assembly will be taken down in a register, signed by the chairman and preserved by the Secretary General, who will keep this register available at the official seat of the organisation.

## **Article 8. Amending the By Laws and Dissolution of the International organisation**

Unabated the application of the articles 50§3,55 en 56 of the law concerning national non-profit organisations, international non-profit organisations and foundations, every proposal, for amending the By Laws or for dissolution of the organisation, needs to be made by the executive committee or by at least three-fourth of the full members.

The executive committee needs to inform the members at least three months in advance about the date of the General Assembly meeting where such proposal(s) will be discussed and decided upon.

The General Assembly can only validly discuss and decide on the proposal(s) in case two thirds of the full members are present or represented.

A decision is accepted only when it has three-fourth or more of the votes.

In case the General Assembly does not get a quorum of two thirds of the full members present or represented, a second meeting shall be conveyed that will take place at earliest, 15 days after the first meeting that can take definitive valid decisions in regards to the proposal(s) with three fourth or more of the votes, disregarding the number of present or presented members.

The changes on the bylaws will come into force after the approval by the qualified authority according to the article 50§3 of the law and after publication in the Belgian governmental gazette according to article 51§3 of the law in question.

The General Assembly decides on the way of dissolution and on settlement of the organisation.

The possible positive balance after settlement, needs to be allocated to a private legal person without profit having a similar goal as that of the organisation that has been dissolved. Or when there is no such person, it needs to be allocated to a non-profit goal.

## **Article 9. The Executive Committee**

### ***Section 1. General Structure and Function***

The Executive Committee shall be comprised of at least four (4) and not more than twelve (12) persons between the ages of 18 and 35 who are affiliated with member organisations of IHEYO. Effort should be made to have as much diversity in the board as possible.

### ***Section 2. Offices***

The offices are the following: President, Secretary-General, Treasurer, 1 to 2 Vice-Presidents, a deputy treasurer and regular members. Other offices may be created by the Executive Committee.

### ***Section 3. Election***

The members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the General Assembly for a term of two years. Each year, at least two (2) but not more than six (6) EC-members are chosen. Their term ends at the Annual meeting held in the second year after their election. A vote of simple majority shall be sufficient to elect an Executive Committee member. A term of office may be ended by resignation, death or dismissal by the General Assembly.

All official documents concerning the election, removal or ending of terms will be conveyed to the Federal Government of Justice for the file of the organisation. The information will be drafted according the law. And it will be published in the Annexes of the Belgium statemagazine, paid by the organisation.

### ***Section 4. Termination of Term of Office***

The term of office for Executive Committee members shall end if they cease to be affiliated with a full member organisation of IHEYO. An individual shall be limited to three consecutive terms in office, but may run again at a later time for non-consecutive office.

Resignations shall be tendered in writing to the Secretary-General two weeks (14 days) prior to the resignation taking effect.

Dismissals shall be pronounced by the General Assembly following a proposal from at least one-half (1/2) the members of the Executive Committee, and a two-thirds (2/3) vote of represented full members at a General Assembly, provided that two-thirds (2/3) of represented full members constitutes at least fifty percent of the total full membership.

#### ***Section 5. President***

The responsibilities of the President shall be to represent the organization on internal and external matters, to oversee the general operations of IHEYO and to convene the Annual Meeting. The President shall also give a report of the past year's activities of the Executive Committee to the General Assembly.

#### ***Section 6. Vice Presidents***

There is a 1st and 2nd Vice President. The responsibilities of the Vice Presidents shall be to assist the President in his or her duties, and to assume the President's duties in case of his or her absence.

#### ***Section 7. Secretary-General***

The responsibilities of the Secretary-General shall be to keep record of the activities of the Executive Committee and to receive official messages from member organizations directed to the Executive Committee as a whole. The Secretary-General shall also keep record of the events and decisions of both the Executive Committee throughout the year, and of the General Assembly at the Annual Meeting.

#### ***Section 8. Treasurer***

The responsibilities of the Treasurer shall be to receive the annual dues of each member organization and to keep record of members' payment status. The Treasurer shall give a financial report at each Annual Meeting and at each meeting of the Executive Committee.

#### ***Section 9. Meetings of the Executive Committee***

The Executive Committee shall have at least two (2) meetings per year. To hold a meeting, more than one-half (1/2) of the members of the Executive Committee must be present.

#### ***Section 10. Register of the decisions of the Executive Committee***

The decisions will be noted down in a register, signed by the chairman and kept by the Secretary General who will keep this register available for members at the legal seat of the organisation.

### **Article 10. Representation of the organisation towards third and for law**

All documents that bound the organisation, except in cases of special mandates, need to be signed by two Executive Committee members who are appointed by the General Assembly and who don't need to hand over proof to third parties in regard of their authority for the matter.

The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the organisation as claimer or defender in lawsuits and is thereby represented through two executive committee members, or other persons assigned by the executive committee, or through its chairman, or through a General Assembly appointed administrator.

The formal documents concerning the removal or ending of terms of persons that are authorized to represent the non-profit international organisation, will be conveyed to the Federal Government of

Justice for the file of the organisation. The information will be drafted according the law. And it will be published in the Annexes of the Belgium statemagazine, paid by the organisation.

## **Article 11. Relation to IHEU**

### ***IHEU and IHEYO communication***

IHEU and IHEYO will communicate with each other on a regular basis. They will inform each other about each other's activities. Where possible, IHEU and IHEYO can work collaboratively on joint projects or support each other's projects.

## **Article 12. Financial Regulations**

### ***Section 1. Financial Resources***

The financial resources of IHEYO will be comprised of dues from member organisations and any other money IHEYO acquires, through donations or any other source.

### ***Section 2. Governance***

The Treasurer and the President may, with the approval of the Executive Committee, write checks or issue payment, according to the rules in the standing orders.

### ***Section 3. Fiscal Year***

The IHEYO fiscal year shall conclude on each December 31. According to article 53 of the law, year accounts of the previous year as well as the budget for the next year will be made by the Executive Committee and put forward for approval to the General Assembly on the next meeting.

The year account need to be sent, according to article 51 of the law, to the Federal Government department Justice.

### ***Section 4. Audit Committee***

The GA appoints an independent audit committee to check whether there were irregularities in the accounts. Other details concerning the financial regulations will be regulated through the standing orders.

## **Article 14. Procedural Rules**

### ***Section 1. Standing Order***

At any point where official rules of procedure are required for the business of IHEYO, specifically at the meetings of the General Assembly, the procedural rules contained in the standing order shall be the governing rules. The standing order is approved by and shall be amended by the General Assembly. It specifies the rules and regulations that are not specified in these By-Laws.

### ***Section 2. Standing committees and working groups***

The Executive Committee may appoint and dissolve standing committees or temporary working groups as needed

***Section 3. According to law***

Everything that is not included in the By Laws, especially the publication in the Annexes of the Belgian Statemagazine, the organisation shall conduct according the provision of title 3 of the Law of 27 June 1921 in regard to (international) non-profit organisations and foundations.