



## Internal Rules

*Revised version adopted at Council meeting in October 2014*

### TITLE I – INTERNAL RULES

#### Article 1: Purpose of the Internal Rules

Article 23 of the Statutes of the international non-profit association “AGE Platform Europe” state that:

*The Council shall have the power to make, repeal and amend Internal Rules for any matter concerned with the administration of the affairs of the Association to complement these Statutes and to define the rules whereby the Association shall function provided they are not inconsistent with these Statutes. Such Internal Rules and any repeals or amendments shall have effect until set aside by the Council*

These internal rules are supplementary and subordinate to the Statutes and in case of a contradiction between the Internal Rules and the Statutes of the Association, the latter shall prevail.

#### Article 2: Amendments to the Internal Rules

In accordance with Article 23 of the Statutes of the Association, the Council adopts and amends the Internal Rules when necessary.

Council members may propose amendments to the Internal Rules by submitting their request in writing<sup>1</sup> with all relevant justifications to the Secretariat at least three months prior to the next Council meeting. Within one month, the Secretariat is responsible for checking the legal implications and conformity with the Statutes of the proposed amendment(s) and for forwarding the request for amendment(s) with the supporting documents to the Executive Committee with its comments. The Executive Committee then verifies whether the request is eligible and can be added on the agenda of the next Council meeting. The request for amendment(s) and the supporting documents are sent to the Council members together with the agenda at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Decisions regarding amendments to the Internal Rules require the qualified majority of two thirds of the votes present or represented. The agreed amendment(s) take(s) effect immediately.

#### Article 3: Communication

English and French are the official working languages of the association. However, in response to identified needs, where resources permit, the association will use other community languages in its work. This applies especially to the proceedings of the

<sup>1</sup> See Article 19.4 of the Internal Rules



General Assembly and for the Statutes and Internal Rules, Newsletter and other official and important documents.

## ***TITLE II – MEMBERS***

### **Article 4: Full members – membership criteria**

When applying for membership, organisations have to demonstrate that they meet the criteria mentioned in the Statutes for the category they wish to join, or to introduce other evidence/arguments to justify why they should be categorised as such. For example to be eligible in the “European Federation” category, organisations which have members in less than one third of European Economic Area countries but which can demonstrate that they are representative of a substantial number of older people in a part of Europe would be considered as meeting the eligibility criteria.

Applicants must use the formal application form and send all relevant documents including financial information to support their application. The Accreditation Committee analyses each application and makes a recommendation to the Council as to whether the applicant meets the requested criteria and the level of membership fees they should be charged.

Organisations “of” or “directly representing” older or retired people versus organisations working “for” older people (relevant to Article 9 (b), Article 13 and Article 16 of the Statutes.

In order to ensure that AGE is truly representative of older people, the following criteria have been introduced in articles 9(b), 13 and 16 on the election of the President, Council members for those countries who have two seats and Executive Committee:

- The President must come from an organisation “of” older people
- At least one of the two Council members from large EU countries must come from an organisation “of” older people
- A majority of Executive Committee members must come from organisations “of” older people.

This is why when applying for membership, applicants have to state whether they are an organisation “of /directly representing older people” or an organisation “working for older people”. Organisations “of/directly representing” older people are requested to justify their statement with reference to all three following indicative criteria or to introduce other evidence/arguments to justify why they should be categorised as such. The indicative criteria which have to be used by applicants are:

- the organisation has in its main decision-making body with a majority of members who are over 55 years old
- the organisation has as members a majority of older and/or retired people, either individually or via member organisations

- there is a direct, constitutional link between the older members and the main decision-making body
- if the organisation provides services to older people, there are mechanisms to ensure that service users are enabled to express their views on service delivery.

## **Article 5: Other types of members**

### **5.1 Accession membership**

In accordance with Article 5 of the Statutes, the Council, in consultation with the Executive Committee and the Secretariat and depending on budget availability, will decide whether or not to offer to refund travel and accommodation expenses to Accession Members in connection with their participation in the meetings and working groups of the Association. The Association will strive to secure the necessary funds to enable Accession countries organisations' full participation in all activities.

Upon accession of their country to the European Union, the Accession members may apply for Full membership in the category of their choice provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

### **5.2 Observer members**

As mentioned in the preamble of AGE Statutes, all members including Observer members must be non-for-profit senior organisations and/or social economy actors (third sector, NGOs...) working with or for older people, who seek to reinforce and give credibility to the views articulated by older and retired people about their opinions, needs and interests.

Travel and accommodation costs of observer members will not be covered by the Association, but their involvement in all activities will be actively encouraged by other means (through information dissemination and feedback retrieval and by facilitating their participation at meetings at their own costs).

## **Article 6: Admission of new members**

All organisations applying for membership of AGE must complete the formal application form (available on the website or upon request), and forward it to the Secretariat for the attention of the Accreditation Committee, together with a copy of

- the organisation's most recent Annual Report
- the organisation's latest financial Report and accounts
- the organisation's updated Constitution, Statutes or other legal document establishing the organisation, and all modifications thereto.
- Information about their membership :
  - for organisations composed of individual members: an updated estimation of their membership
  - for organisations grouping associations: an updated list of their member associations including relevant details (address, telephone,



- fax, e-mail and website address) on electronic format for inclusion in AGE's website
- o the declaration of compliance to the eligibility criteria and of adherence to the Guiding Principles ( Annex 1 of the Application Form) duly signed by the person authorized to represent the organization externally.

All applications received up to four weeks prior to a Council meeting will be examined by the Accreditation Committee who will report to the next meeting of the Council. If an application is received less than 4 weeks before a Council meeting, the Accreditation Committee may decide to take it to the following Council meeting.

The Accreditation Committee reports to the Council, listing all applications received since the last meeting of the Council. For each application, the Accreditation Committee will recommend one of the following: acceptance; rejection; application to be considered at the next Council meeting because received less than 4 weeks before the Council meeting; further investigation by the Accreditation Committee.

If the Council approves an application, the application will be provisionally accepted pending ratification by the next General Assembly. Applicants who are provisionally accepted will receive a letter informing them of this fact, and will be asked to pay the appropriate membership fee. They will then be entitled to receive all information and to attend meetings in accordance with the Statutes and the Internal Rules, until their application is ratified by the General Assembly.

A letter will also be sent to applicants who are rejected by the Council, or whose application is to be considered at the following meeting, or whose application requires further investigation. If an applicant is rejected by the Council, the Accreditation Committee will provide a written explanation of the grounds on which the application has been rejected. The Accreditation Committee may decide to advise rejected applicants of the possibility of applying for another category of membership. The rejected applicant will have the right to appeal against the rejection to the following General Assembly.

Any applicant who is rejected by the General Assembly may apply again in the following year.



## Article 6.1 Request to change category

Members shall submit in writing<sup>2</sup> to the Accreditation Committee their request to change the category to which they belong as soon as they determine they no longer meet the eligibility criteria for that category or if they wish to change category. All relevant documents must be submitted to the Accreditation Committee with the request to change category. The Accreditation Committee will examine the request and will make a recommendation to the Council. No change can be made between the date of notification of a General Assembly and the date of that General Assembly.

## Article 7: Resignation, suspension and expulsion

Members must submit their resignation in writing<sup>3</sup> to the President.

In the event a Member fails to either:

- respect the Statutes, interests or objectives of the Association;
- pay the membership fee after a second and final reminder has been sent; or
- refrain from undertaking activities bringing the Association into disrepute.

The Accreditation Committee shall discuss the matter with the Member prior to making a recommendation to the Council with regard to the suspension or expulsion of the Member. If the Council confirms the recommendation made by the Accreditation Committee, the proposal is put forward to the next General Assembly. The Member shall be given the opportunity to defend its case at the General Assembly. If the decision of suspension or expulsion is confirmed by the General Assembly, it shall have immediate effect.

## Article 8: Membership fees

Membership fees for the following year are decided by the General Assembly.

### 8.1 Fees for Full members

Fees for Full members are calculated on annual basis. Further information of fees is available on AGE website and upon request.

Applicants are requested to calculate their fee level and, except for members paying the maximum amount, to provide supporting documentation (financial report of the previous year).

If the Accreditation Committee is not satisfied with the figure proposed, it will write to the member concerned explaining its concerns. If the member does not provide a satisfactory answer, the President of the Accreditation Committee will make a confidential report to the Executive Committee. A copy of this report must be sent to the member concerned in advance of the meeting, leaving enough time for the

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<sup>2</sup> See Article 19.4 of Internal Rules

<sup>3</sup> See Article 19.4 of Internal Rules

member to write to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will then make a final decision on the level of fee to be paid by that member, and will communicate its decision to the member in writing.

## **8.2 Fees for Accession Countries Members**

Fees for Accession members are the same as Observer members (c.f. 8-3 and 8-4).

## **8.3 Fees for Observer Members**

Fees for Observer members in 2014 are 350 Euro.

## **8.4 Discretion**

Organisations with limited resources may ask for their fees to be reduced by submitting their request in writing<sup>4</sup> to the Accreditation Committee together with relevant information. The Accreditation Committee shall analyse their request carefully and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee who shall decide on their request. The level of fees a member is contributing will not affect its level of involvement in the Association's activities.

## **8.5 Payment of fees: procedure for payment, reminders, renewal**

Fees are calculated on the basis of a calendar year and are payable at the beginning of the year. All members receive a bill from the Secretariat in January of each year. The bill is payable within one month.

For new members, fees become due on provisional acceptance of membership. Any member, who is provisionally accepted after the first six months of the year, will be asked to pay half the annual fee. New members will receive a bill for the agreed fee level within two weeks following the provisional approval of their application by the Council. The bill is payable within one month.

Fees bills are to be paid in EURO by international postal money order or international bank money order to the bank account indicated on the bill. All bank and transfer costs are to be covered by the member. Cheques are no longer acceptable.

If a member has failed to pay its fees two months after it has been billed, the Secretariat will send a first reminder in writing.

If a member still fails to pay its fees two months after the first reminder has been issued, the Secretariat will send a second and final reminder in writing with a request that the fee should be paid immediately.

Members who have failed to pay their fees one month after the second and final reminder has been issued are referred to the Accreditation Committee. The Accreditation Committee will contact the failing member to discuss the issue before

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<sup>4</sup> See Article 19.4 of Internal Rules

making a recommendation to the following Council who will decide whether or not to exclude the member.

## TITLE III – GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Article 9: Procedure for the nomination and election of the President

Each full member is entitled to nominate one candidate for President. Candidates must meet the eligibility criteria laid down in the Statutes, Article 9 b) and Internal Rules, Article 4. The Secretariat and the Accreditation Committee may take appropriate steps to ascertain whether candidates meet the criteria.

Nominations must be made in writing<sup>5</sup> to the Secretariat 6 weeks prior to the General Assembly. Nominations must include a statement in writing (maximum of one side of A4 paper) in support of the candidacy. These statements will be sent to the members together with the complete list of candidates at least four weeks prior to the General Assembly. In the event of a contest, the agenda for the General Assembly will include brief presentations by the candidates.

The election of the President shall require an absolute majority, and will be conducted using the SAV system (see Appendix).

In accordance with Article 12 of the Statutes, only delegates of Full Members in good standing will receive 1 ballot paper each.

The votes will be counted at the General Assembly. The Accreditation Committee is responsible for scrutinising the election. The results will be announced at the Assembly.

The President is elected for a term of 3years, renewable once.

The rules on the term of office will not preclude individuals who have previously served on the Council in another capacity becoming President. Similarly, immediate past Presidents will be eligible for election to the Council in another capacity, if properly nominated and elected in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes and Internal Rules.

#### 9.1 President

Elected by the General Assembly the President is accountable to the General Assembly and reports to the Council.

The President must adhere to and comply with AGE principles. S/he must always act in the best interest of the Association and in accordance with the agreed policies and code of conduct.

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<sup>5</sup> See Article 19.4

The President has the following powers and Tasks:

- Chairing the meetings of the General Assembly, Council of Administration and Executive Committee.
- Supervision, on behalf of the Executive Committee, of the activities of the Secretariat in coordination with the Secretary General.
- If so required by the urgency of the matter, the President can take any appropriate measure after having consulted with the members of the Executive Committee and the Secretary General. S/he will report such action to the following meeting of the Executive Committee who will be asked to ratify this decision.

The President has the casting vote when there is an equal number of votes cast on a point of the agenda. This applies to all statutory meetings governed by the internal rules and statutes, chaired by the President, or a Vice President if s/he is replacing the President, as set out in these statutes or the internal rules.

## **Article 10: Notice to be given and agenda**

### **10.1 Agenda**

The agenda for the General Assembly must cover the following items: the adoption of the agenda for the meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes Article 10, a full report of activities and financial report covering the period since the last General Assembly, the work programme and budget for future activities, the report of the Accreditation Committee on applications for membership and if necessary the elections for the President and the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes and Internal Rules governing terms of office and re-elections. The Council may put other matters on the agenda as appropriate.

### **10.2 Proposal of motions or agenda items for the General Assembly**

In accordance with Article 10 of the Statutes, Full members may propose motions or request topics to be debated by the General Assembly.

To be in order, a motion or a request to include a subject on the agenda must be submitted to the Secretariat in writing<sup>6</sup> and must state which member is making the submission. If the motion or request is received less than 48 hours before the beginning of the meeting, the Secretariat is entitled to refuse to accept it.

Motions may not contain more than 250 words and must clearly state what action/decision is proposed to the General Assembly. Motions are discussed and voted upon at the General Assembly. The Council is then responsible for taking action to implement the motion and reports back to the next annual General Assembly. If no decision can be made at the GA, the motion is referred to the Council for further discussion. The Council is then responsible for presenting a new proposal at the next General Assembly. If the matter addressed in the motion is urgent, the

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<sup>6</sup> See Article 19.4 of the Internal Rules

General Assembly can mandate the Council to take action before the next General Assembly.

## **Article 11: Proceedings at Meetings and Decisions**

### **11.1 Participation in General Assemblies**

Each Full Member in good standing is entitled to appoint one delegate to the General Assembly. Each Accession or Observer Member is entitled to appoint one observer to attend the General Assembly. The attendance of additional observers or participants is at the discretion of the Secretariat, in consultation with the Council.

The Secretariat may take appropriate steps to ascertain which individuals have been properly authorized as delegates or observers. However, members must take responsibility for communicating their choice of delegate by returning the registration form to the Secretariat at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

There is no automatic entitlement of Full Members or others to refund of travel, accommodation or subsistence expenses in relation to attendance at the General Assembly. The Council, on the advice of the Secretariat, will decide for each General Assembly on whether any help with expenses can be offered, and on what basis.

### **11.2 Proxy voting in the General Assembly**

Members have the right to vote by proxy, by naming the authorised delegate of another member to vote on their behalf. Members wishing to vote by proxy must inform the Secretariat in writing<sup>7</sup> at least 48 hours in advance of the beginning of the meeting. The Secretariat may not accept any other form of notification, or notification from any other source.

No delegate may exercise more than one proxy vote, in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes.

The matter of how a proxy vote is cast is entirely decided between the two parties concerned. The Secretariat, Accreditation Committee and Council will not enter into any discussion with members who are dissatisfied with the casting of a properly authorised proxy vote.

### **11.3 Quorum and majority**

In the case of a tie, the President has the casting vote.

In the case of a postal vote, the correspondence will be addressed to the authorized delegates who were nominated to attend the last General Assembly.

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<sup>7</sup> See Article 19.4 of the Internal Rules

## **Article 12: Voting rights**

Only Full members who have paid their membership fees for the year are entitled to vote.

## **TITLE IV – COUNCIL**

### **Article 13: Composition**

#### **13.1: Elections of Member State representatives to the Council**

All national and regional organisations in full membership of AGE will each have 1 vote in the election of the representative(s) of their own Member State. European Federations and Organisations may not vote in the election of Member State representatives. No national or regional associations may vote in the election of representatives from another Member State.

Elections will be held during the course of the General Assembly, if members within one Member State have not already agreed on the nomination of their representative(s) to the Council. .

Each member eligible to vote in the election of the representative(s) of a Member State may nominate 1 candidate to stand in the election of their own Member State. Nominations must be made to the Secretariat in writing<sup>8</sup> two weeks prior to the General Assembly. The list of candidates is sent to the Full members of the relevant Member State at least one week prior to the General Assembly.

The Secretariat and the Accreditation Committee will be responsible for arranging the verification of lists of candidates and of those eligible to vote.

At the start of the election, each Member State delegation will be asked to name a Returning Officer. If agreement is not reached, the Accreditation Committee will nominate a Returning Officer, who may not be a member of that delegation.

The following Member States will be entitled to elect 2 representatives to the Council: France, German, Italy, Spain, Poland, and the UK. At least 1 of the representatives must be from an organisation “of” or “directly representing” older people. The rules covering definition of organisations for this purpose are dealt with above in Article 4.d. of the Internal Rules.

Voting will be conducted using the SAV and STV systems (see Appendix).

The Accreditation Committee will arbitrate in the event of a dispute.

If there are no candidates, then the Council may co-opt someone from the Member State in question. The Council shall first seek a representative of a Full Member

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<sup>8</sup> See Article 19.4 of the Internal Rules

organisation. If this is not possible, the Council has discretion to select any person who can represent the interests of older people in that Member State.

### **13.2 Substitute Council members**

For each of the representatives of Member States, of the European Federation and of the European Organisations, a substitute will be elected at the same time and using the same procedure as for the election of the Council member. Elections of Council members and substitutes shall be confirmed by the General Assembly.

The choice of Full members and substitutes shall aim at an optimal participation of older people in the Association,

### **13.3 Power of co-option**

The Council shall have the power of co-opting additional members only to ensure representation of all Member States.

### **13.4 Election of representatives of European Federations**

Each European Federation in full membership of AGE and in good standing is entitled to nominate one representative to the Council. If there are more than 5 Federations in membership, and if more than 5 valid nominations are received, then the Secretariat and the Accreditation Committee are to call an election at the GA. Each European Federation will have one vote in this election, and voting will be conducted using the SAV system.

The Accreditation Committee will arbitrate in the event of a dispute.

There will be no more than 1 representative per Federation. If there are fewer than 5 Federations in membership, then there will be the same number of Federation representatives as there are Federations in membership.

### **13.5 Representatives of European Organisations**

All European Organisations in full membership of AGE and in good standing will have 1 vote in the election of the 2 representatives of European Organisations to the Council. No European Federation, or National or Regional Association may vote in this election.

Elections will be held during the course of the General Assembly.

All European Organisations eligible to vote in the election are entitled to nominate 1 candidate. Nominations must be made in writing to the Secretariat at least 48 hours before the start of the General Assembly.

The European Organisations will be asked to name a Returning Officer. In the event of an election, voting will be by the SAV system (see Appendix).

The Accreditation Committee will arbitrate in the event of a dispute.

### **13.6 Bye-elections and vacancies**

If a Council member resigns, there will be a bye-election at the next General Assembly. If a new member is elected more than half-way through the term of the out-going member, the new member will be entitled to stand again twice.

### **13.7 National co-ordinations of AGE members**

To facilitate and support members' involvement in AGE work and decision making process, Council members may set up formal or informal national co-ordinations to consult with all AGE members in their country on a regular basis.

#### **Article 14: Powers of Council members**

If a Council member is unable to attend a meeting, he/she shall inform his/her substitute and forward all relevant information to enable the substitute to take action on his/her behalf at the Council meeting.

To enable substitutes to replace their Council member at any time, all information and documents sent to Council members will be copied to the substitutes.

#### **Article 15: Meetings, working methods and decision making process**

The draft agenda shall be sent to all Council members and substitutes together with the call for meeting at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

In the case of an important decision that cannot wait for the next meeting of the Council, the Executive Committee may seek the advice or consent of the Council in writing<sup>9</sup>.

With the permission of the President, the Council may invite members of staff and other persons to attend all or part of the Council meetings as advisers or observers.

There is no automatic entitlement to travel, accommodation or subsistence expenses in connection with attendance at Council meetings. The Executive Committee, on the advice of the Secretariat, will consider for each meeting whether any help may be offered with expenses, and on what basis.

The Secretary General attends the meetings of the Council.

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<sup>9</sup> See Article 19.4 of the Internal Rules

Another member of staff will attend to assist the Secretary if required,

Other members of staff may be asked by the Secretary General to present reports, answer questions, or to observe discussions on topics which are relevant to their work.

## **Article 16: Executive Committee**

### **16.1 Elections for Executive Officers**

The Executive Officers will be elected by the Council from among its number at the first meeting of the Council following the General Assembly at the end of the term of office of the Members of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee will always act in the common interest of the Association and of the whole membership of the Association.

AGE members in countries with only one representative at the Council ('small' and 'medium' size countries) can nominate another Council member to represent them in AGE Council when their representative is elected at the Executive Committee to ensure that their national perspective continues to be adequately represented. However, the concerned country(ies) will still have only one vote. Country's Full members designate among themselves which one of them has the vote at the Council meeting.

### **16.2 Terms of office of Members of the Executive Committee**

When a Council member is elected at the Executive Committee, this nomination is valid for three years from the date of his/her election by the Council and is renewable once. If his/her mandate at the Council ends during that period, the mandate can be prolonged by up to three years to enable him/her to fulfil his/her Tasks at the Executive Committee, provided that he/she is re-elected/nominated as the representative of his/her country or category of member.

### **16.3 Gender balance**

In electing the Members of the Executive Committee, the Council must ensure that out of the President and the 4 Vice-Presidents, there must be at least two women and at least two men.

### **16.4 Candidates and voting**

Any member of the Council may stand for election for Executive Officers except where the rules on Terms of Office (16.2 above) prevent them doing so. Every member present at the meeting shall have 1 vote, and voting will be conducted using the SAV system.

The elections for the posts will take place in the sequence: Vice-President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. The President will call for nominations for each post at the beginning of the election for that post.

After the first election for a Vice-President, the President will rule on the implications of the requirement of gender balance for the candidates for the second election for a Vice-President.

Candidates may stand for as many posts as they wish.

### **16.5 Powers and functions**

The Executive Officers must adhere to and comply with AGE principles. They must always act in the best interest of the Association and in accordance with the agreed policies and code of conduct.

The Executive Committee is collectively responsible for ensuring that decisions taken by the Council are carried out and for taking the administrative and executive actions for which it has been mandated by the Council.

The role of the Vice-Presidents is to support the President in his/her functions and to perform the duties of the President if the President is absent or unable to act;

The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that minutes of meetings are recorded and the report is drafted within a reasonable deadline after each meeting.

The Treasurer is responsible for the overall management of the finances, including the preparation of the budgets in cooperation with the Secretary General and Office Manager.

An Executive Officer is nominated by the Executive Committee – in consultation with the whole staff team – to act as Staff Liaison.

Where appropriate, the Secretary General may delegate the Task of representing AGE in an external event to a member of the Executive Committee or to another Council member or expert. Participation of Executive Committee and Council members as well as AGE experts in external events should be encouraged to make the best use of the expertise available in the network and promote the active involvement of AGE members in the network.

### **16.6 Working methods**

All persons mandated to represent AGE will be guided in their public statements by the established policies and positions of the organisation and will consult the Secretary General on the statements they will make in public on behalf of the organisation.

## **Article 17: Accreditation Committee**

The Accreditation Committee shall meet up to four weeks prior to each Council meeting to examine applications received within the deadline of four weeks prior to a Council meeting. The Chair of the Accreditation Committee reports back to the Council after consultation with the Executive Committee. In case the Chair is unable to attend the Council meeting, another member of the Accreditation may replace him/her.

## **Article 18: Other Committees**

### **18.1 Nomination of Task Forces**

In accordance with Article 18 of the Statutes, the Council may decide to set up other committees such as Task Forces. They can be either ad hoc or permanent.

Task Forces are internal working and advisory bodies composed of experts nominated by the Council. Members of Task Forces have no external representative role except when mandated by Secretary General to represent AGE's views at a specific event.

All Full members can nominate experts for the Task Forces based on clear job descriptions and expert profiles. Experts can join more than one ad-hoc Task Force and there are no limits in the number of experts who can join from a same country. Council members will just be asked to check that they have no major concern with any of the nominees from their country (such as for example link with the industry).

### **18.2 Role of Task Forces**

The Task Forces play a key role in helping AGE implement its objectives and work programme in their respective policy field: they bring the national perspective into AGE's work and help the Secretariat draft common statements on the policy areas they work on. These statements are then submitted to the AGE Council for discussion and approval.

AGE's mission is to influence EU policies on the basis of its members' feedback and grass-roots evidence and AGE general policy guidelines agreed by the General Assembly. Task Forces collect feedback from both members and external experts on a range of dossiers which are on the EU agenda and can have an impact on older people and our members' policy priorities.

New Task Forces can be formed if needed (when new dossiers are put on the EU agenda). In this case, the Executive Committee will propose additional topics to the Council. Some Task Forces, working on specific and/or short-term policy process/dossier, will be also closed down once their mission (position paper, contribution to a consultation etc.) is fully accomplished.

Task Forces will function mainly virtually i.e. their experts are expected to contribute on regular basis to implement the overall AGE work program and specific objectives of respective thematic Task Force. When needed a core group composed of the most active members will meet physically Webinars and other electronic means will be

tested to create more opportunities for experts to communicate among their ad hoc group and cross groups.

The role of experts participating in Task Forces is to:

- contribute their expertise to AGE's work at EU level while taking account of the views of AGE members in their country.
- provide a first contact point at national level for discussion on AGE's work in the relevant area.
- devote time to support AGE's work by responding to requests for information and consultations sent by the Secretariat.

### 18.3 AGE Task Forces

The following Task Forces have been set up in 2014:

1. **Age-Friendly EU:** Mobilisation for age-friendly environments
2. **European Semester**
3. **Human rights,** age discrimination
4. **Employment** of older workers
5. **Active citizenship** and participation
6. **Adequate income** for a dignified life in old age
7. **Poverty:** Fight against poverty and social exclusion
8. **Consumers' rights**
9. **Financial services:** insurance products, second and third pillar pension products, etc.
10. **Healthy ageing**
11. **Dignified ageing:** protection against elder abuse, access to and quality of long-term care
12. **Accessibility,** Mobility and New Technologies
13. **Standardisation**
14. **Senior tourism**

#### Article 19: Secretariat

AGE Secretariat is responsible for the administrative day-to-day management of the association and for liaising with the EU institutions.

The full composition of the Secretariat and responsibilities of each staff member are posted on AGE website at:

<http://www.age-platform.eu/about-age/age-secretariat>



The staff designates collectively a “staff trusted person”, a person who is willing to provide support and advice to all staff in between staff evaluations. The staff trusted person can be nominated internal staff evaluator by the Executive Committee.

### **19.1 Nomination of AGE representatives in external events and bodies**

For ad-hoc external representation of AGE in events, meetings, etc. the Secretary General is responsible for selecting the best profile in consultation with the concerned staff members and Executive Committee if relevant. Priority should be given to the active involvement of members and experts when they have the right profile.

For long-term representation of AGE in external bodies, Advisory Groups, etc. the Secretary General consults first with the relevant staff members and expert groups to find the best profiles. S/he sends a proposal with justification to the Executive Committee and/or Council (if time allows for a consultation of the Council). If there are differences of views, a vote is organised. The nomination is signed by the President.

### **19.2 Recruitment and staff evaluation**

The Secretary General is responsible for the appointment of staff, in consultation with the internal staff evaluator. They must give due regard to equal opportunities in the recruitment process, and further seek a balance within the Secretariat that reflects the different languages and Member States of the EU.

The internal staff evaluator assists the Secretary General in the yearly evaluation of staff. The President and internal staff evaluator are responsible for the yearly evaluation of the Secretary General. The internal staff evaluator and Secretary General report to Executive Committee and must make their decisions on the basis of objective and transparent criteria.

### **19.3 Relationship between the Secretariat, the General Assembly, the Council and Executive Committee**

The Secretary General has sole responsibility for the day-to-day management of staff, who report to the Secretary General. The member of the staff trusted person is available to support staff members on such issues.

The Secretary General reports to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall give thought to ensuring that appropriate support, management and opportunities for personal development are provided to the Secretary General.

The Secretary General attends the regular meetings of all governing bodies of the Association. Another member of staff will attend to assist the Secretary if required

### **19.4 Ensuring the principle of membership involvement**





AGE works on the principle that all members have their say in all AGE's activities in relation to policy development and influencing. Ideally, there will be enough time to develop AGE's position on specific policy issues as they arise. To this effect Task Force are set up, which will work closely with the secretariat.

In practice however, it is not always possible to consult members, due to short deadlines or unexpected developments. In the interests of older people, where these are clear, and in order that AGE is seen by policy-makers as an effective representative of its members and as being well-informed about the needs of older people, it may be necessary on some occasions to respond without full consultation.

The following framework will apply:

- a. The General Assembly will receive and vote on the annual work programme, which it is the responsibility of the Secretariat to propose. This proposal should be based on earlier consultation with members, and will refer to the political agenda of the EU institutions as a guide to AGE's policy work.. This does not mean that certain issues, which are not part of the formal EU policy agenda, cannot be addressed. Initiatives can (and should) be taken in relation to topics, which are not part of the EU agenda yet, since AGE should also stimulate the EU institutions to launch activities in areas, which are of importance to older people. In other words, AGE should be proactive as well as reactive in its choice of fields of work. The proposal to the GA will include timely information about the likely sources of funding available for different areas of work, and will link the work proposed to the resources required to carry it out.
- b. The work programme will contain the policy domains where AGE should be active, and specify the aims and intended outcome of AGE's actions in these domains. The Task Forces are asked to help AGE implement its work programme.
- c. A general statement of AGE's principles will function as guidelines for all policy work. This will be developed on the basis of the Preamble to the Statutes, and agreed by the General Assembly.
- d. The work programme sets the general framework. When developments arise, members will be informed by the secretariat, using whatever means of information is most appropriate. Members are expected to take the initiative in alerting the secretariat to their interest in particular areas.
- e. The secretariat should facilitate concrete membership involvement by
  - organizing and running Internet debates
  - providing detailed briefings
  - summarising documents to which a response is required
  - producing a first draft of a position, statement or letter
  - compiling and integrating received comments
  - finalising the position, statement or letter
  - disseminate this to AGE members and the EU institutions
  - facilitate the involvement of AGE members in EU funded projects



- f. When immediate action is required, the secretariat should respond, in consultation with the Council. The following procedure has been agreed after consultation:
- the secretariat prepares a response (letter/position/statement)
  - this is sent to the Council, together with the information/background documents which is being responded to (Commission document, EP report, Council agenda or whatever applies). The Secretariat will also ensure that Council members are reminded of any existing statements of policy agreed by the organisation that are relevant to the topic under discussion. Where there is an existing policy position, the Council will make consistency with this position the main criterion for deciding on the substance of the proposal from the Secretariat.
  - the Council should respond within a short time-frame
  - if no comments are received, the text can be sent as the formal statement by AGE
  - if minor suggestions for changes are made the text can be adapted by the Secretariat and sent out
  - if there are severe disagreements on issues of substance it should not be sent out and should be discussed with the Executive Committee who makes the final decision.
- g. In instances where consultation is difficult – for instance, drafting and tabling amendments to Parliament reports (see below), the secretariat should have the possibility to act, informing the Council afterwards. Where consultation is not possible, the Secretariat will be guided by the agreed policy statements of the organisation, where such statements exist, and the Council will judge the substantive points made by the Secretariat on behalf of the organisation on the basis of their consistency with such statements.

The following working definitions of whether consultation is feasible or not feasible will be used by the organisation:

Instances where consultation is feasible:

- formal consultations by the Commission if sufficient time is provided for. Members who have indicated their interest when the work programme was adopted will be consulted. When urgent issues arise which are not part of the work programme, all members should be informed and asked if they would like to contribute to the response.
- position papers on documents issued by the EU institutions (usually Commission)

Instances where consultation is more difficult:

- Letters to 'summits' (even if the summit agenda is known, the content of documents under discussion can change considerably);
- Letters to Ministers in Council meetings (same reason as above);

- Amendments to European Parliament reports (very short and often changing deadlines).

## **19.5 Notices**

Whenever the Statutes or the Internal Rules require documents to be submitted in “writing” this shall mean using any of the following means of written communication: letter, fax, e-mail.

## **VII – Funds, Accounts and Budgets**

### **Article 20: Funds**

All accounts and budgets shall be in Euro.

### **Article 21: Gifts and loans**

AGE may accept gifts and loans, provided that this does not affect its independence and AGE remains free to set its own priorities. Gifts and loans to AGE, either from hand to hand or by testament, shall not have effect if they are not authorised by the Council and do not comply with the law.

### **Article 22: Audit**

In compliance with the Belgian Law, the General Assembly must mandate every year a certified auditor to audit the accounts.

If needed the Executive may also hire a certified accountant to help the Secretariat in the daily management of the finances.

The Secretary General will assist the Treasurer in organising the external audit of the annual accounts and will monitor closely the overall management of finances for which he/she is responsible.

### **Article 23: Internal Rules’ amendment**

The Council may amend the Internal Rules as needed from time to time. Amendments to the Internal Rules require a majority voting of two third of the votes present or represented.

### **Article 24: External Representation**



The President and Secretary General are responsible for reporting back to the Council about any statements made on behalf of AGE.

The Secretary General represents the organisation publicly, and in external meetings.



## ANNEX 1

### STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE TO THE RELEVANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND OF ADHERENCE TO THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF AGE Platform Europe (AGE)

On behalf of the organization mentioned hereafter (hereinafter “the Organisation”), I declare that the Organisation complies with the eligibility criteria for membership in the requested category and is conversant with and accepts the Statutes, the Internal Rules and, in particular, the following Guiding Principles set out in the Preamble of the Statutes:

*AGE believes that the ageing of the population in Europe is an important historic achievement that should be celebrated by all Europeans, and that older and retired people should be valued as a resource for our society. However, demographic change is too often presented in negative terms, and the vast contribution of older people to society, often in a voluntary capacity, is overlooked and needs to be recognised. AGE believes that a change of attitudes is needed if society is to become a society for all ages.*

*AGE welcomes the recognition of the existence of age discrimination in Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty, and the creation of a power for the European Union to take action to combat age discrimination. AGE believes that age discrimination is a reality, and that it impacts negatively on the lives of individuals and on our communities and societies. AGE will challenge age discrimination in all spheres.*

*AGE believes that older people should be able to speak out on their own behalf. To this end, AGE places great importance on the leadership and active involvement of older people in all its activities.*

*AGE recognises that older people are not a homogenous group, and that there is great diversity among older people. AGE acknowledges and respects this diversity.*

*AGE believes that there needs to be a greater recognition and understanding at European level of the impact of European policies on older people, and older people must have greater opportunities to promote and defend their rights and interests. AGE works for a more effective civil dialogue at European level, and ensures that civil dialogue recognises and takes account of older people.*

- Name of the Organisation:
- Category of membership for which the application is submitted (see Article 4 and 5 of the Internal Rules):
  - Full Member:
    - European Federation
    - European Organisation



- National/regional Association
- Accession Member
- Observer Member
  
- Type of organisation (see Article 2.1.4 of the Internal Rules):
  - Organisation OF older or retired people
  - Organisation FOR older people
  
- Name of the person authorized to sign on behalf of the Organisation :
  - Title:
  - Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

