CONSTITUTION of the European Society for Rural Sociology

Approved by the General Assembly held on 27 August 1997 in Chania, Greece.

Article 1. Name, Domicile and Duration

1. The Society is known as the Europese Vereniging voor Agrarische Sociologie, (or in French, German and English respectively as 'Sociéte Européenne de Sociologie Rurale`: 'Europäische Gesellschaft für Land- u. Agrarsoziologie' and 'European Society for Rural Sociology'). Hereinafter it will be referred to as 'the Society'.

2. The domicile of the Society is at Wageningen, The Netherlands.

3. The Society shall last for indefinite period.

Article 2. Objectives and Means

1. The objectives of the Society are the furtherance of:

a. the generation and dissemination of knowledge on rural sociological issues;

b. international co-operation and the exchange of information and experience in the field of rural sociological research;

c. the training of rural sociologists;

d. the application of rural sociological research to the well-being of society; all in the widest sense.

2. The Society endeavours to attain its objectives by:

a. the organisation of congresses and other meetings;

b. the organisation of training seminars;

c. the furtherance and co-ordination of international research;

d. the publication of a journal;

e. the exchange of rural sociologists;

f. any other lawful means intended to assist the achievement of the objectives of the society.

Article 3. Membership

Membership is open to any individuals or corporate bodies who are interested in the aims and work of the Society. The Society offers the following types of membership:

a. ordinary members: individuals who are, or have been, professionally engaged in researcher higher education in rural sociology or in related fields;

b. student members: individuals studying rural sociology or related subjects at a centre of higher education, such membership to last not more than six years;

c. associate members: individuals who are professionally engaged in rural sociology or in related fields but who are members of another regional Society for Rural Sociology and who reside outside Europe;

d. sponsoring members: individuals or corporate bodies who wish further and support the objectives of the Society;

e. honorary members: individuals who are elected as such by the General Assembly of the Society for outstanding services in the field of rural sociology and to the Society. Such members shall be proposed to the General Assembly only by the Executive Committee, whose decision must be unanimous.

f. collective membership can be offered to individuals named by a national or international institution, with their subscription being paid by that institution, provided those named hold the normal qualifications for membership of the Society, and the Executive Committee agrees to the particular arrangements.

Article 4. Application for membership

1. Applications for all categories of membership, excluding honorary membership, shall be addressed in writing to the Executive Committee.

2. Nominations for honorary membership shall be proposed and seconded by two ordinary members of the Society and submitted in writing to the Executive Committee.

3. The Executive Committee decides whether or not to accept the application and the type of membership to be offered. In the case of a rejection by the Executive Committee, the General Assembly has a right to overrule this rejection.

Article 5. Suspension of membership

The Executive Committee is entitled to suspend a member for a period of up to three months if that member acts in a manner contradictory to the interests of the Society. During the period of suspension, rights attached to membership cannot be exercised.

Article 6. Termination of membership

1. Membership shall be terminated by:

a. death;

b. written resignation from the member;

c. by the decision of the Executive Committee, when a member does not observe the duties of membership, no longer fulfils the requirements of the type of membership that is held; or acts in contradiction to the constitution, bylaws the decisions of the Society in an unreasonable manner, or in any other way injures the Society.

2. Termination of membership by written resignation normally requires a minimum of eight weeks notice and will take effect from the end of the calendar year.

3. Termination of membership by a decision of the Executive Committee shall be communicated in writing within two weeks of the Executive Committee`s decision.

4. A member so deprived of membership shall have a right of appeal to be heard at the next general Assembly following. Notice of such an appeal should be received in writing by the Executive Committee within six weeks of the original decision.

5. Otherwise, termination of membership by a decision of the Executive Committee shall be endorsed at the next General Assembly following.

6. When, for whatever reason, membership ends in the course of a calendar year, the fees payable for the full year shall normally remain due..

Article 7. Finances

1. The Society is financed by membership fees, donations, legacies, the sale of the Society`s journal and other lawful means.

2. Members are obliged to pay a yearly fee, the amount of which shall be proposed by the Executive Committee and fixed by the General Assembly. Fees may differ by type of membership.

3. The Executive Committee has the right to grant partial exemption of membership fees in particular cases.

4. The members of the Executive Committee and Scientific Committee act in an honorary capacity, but their reasonable expenses may be reimbursed from the funds of the Society.

5. The Executive Committee shall decide the remuneration or honorarium, if any, to be made to persons who carry out work for the Society in a full- or part-time capacity.

6. The financial year of the Society coincides with the calendar year.

Article 8. Governing Bodies

The business of the Society shall be conducted by

1. the General Assembly;

2. the Executive Committee;

Article 9. General Assembly

1. The General Assembly shall decide the general policy of the Society, according to the recommendations made by the Executive Committee. The business to be transacted shall include:

a. the adoption of the report by the Executive Committee on the activities of the Society;

b. the adoption of the Statement of Accounts prepared by the (Secretary-) Treasurer and previously audited. Auditors consisting of two ordinary members, shall be appointed by the General Assembly;

c. a decision on the annual membership subscription for each type of membership as proposed by the Executive Committee;

d. the election of the President and Vice-President of the Society and members of the Executive Committee.

2. The General Assembly has full power in all matters which are not assigned by law or constitution to the Executive Committee.

3. The General Assembly shall be convened at least once in every three years. The invitation to the meeting, with the agenda, shall be posted to members at least forty days before the date of the meeting.

4. An extra-ordinary General Assembly shall be convened if requested by the Executive Committee or by at least one tenth of all ordinary members.

5. After receiving a request as understood in paragraph 4, the Executive Committee is obliged to convene a meeting of the General Assembly within three months. If the Executive Committee fails to invite the members for that purpose within a period of four weeks after receiving the request, the petitioners are authorised to call the meeting themselves.

Article 10. Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for carrying out the decisions of the General Assembly. It shall annually prepare a report of the activities of the Society and its bodies, including the financial accounts, which shall be sent to all members of the Society.

2. The Executive Committee shall comprise nine members as follows:

a. the President, elected from among and by the ordinary members of the Society present at the General Assembly;

b. the Vice-President, elected from among and by the ordinary members of the Society present at the General Assembly;

c. four members, elected from among and by the ordinary members of the Society present at the General Assembly;

d. the Secretary, ex officio;

e. the Treasurer, ex officio;

f. the Managing Editor of the journal, ex officio.

The members of the Executive Committee, in whatever capacity, are elected to serve for the period up to the next General Assembly; they may stand for re-election on not more than two further consecutive occasions.

3. Nominations for the President, Vice-President and four elected members of the Executive Committee shall normally be received in writing not less than fourteen days prior to the date of the General Assembly. Only when no such nominations has been received by the due date shall nominations be received up to the start of the General Assembly.

4. If, for whatever reason, the President is unable to remain in office throughout the due period , his/her place shall be taken by the Vice-President or another member of the Executive Committee until the next General Assembly following, whereupon arrangements shall be made for a new election.

5. The President shall preside at the various meetings of the governing bodies of the Society. In his/her absence the Vice-President or another member of the Executive Committee shall preside.

6. The Secretary shall

a. be appointed by and hold office during the pleasure of the Executive Committee;

b. be charged with the general administration of the Society and with the organisation of its activities in pursuit of Article 2 of the Constitution. He or she shall receive instructions from the Executive Committee through the President and be accountable to the Executive Committee;

c. be a member of the Executive Committee and take part in all meetings of the governing bodies of the Society. He or she shall be responsible for keeping the minutes of the meetings, which must signed by the President and the Secretary.

7. The Treasurer shall

a. be appointed by and hold office during the pleasure of the Executive Committee;

b. shall be charged with the financial administration of the Society. he or she shall receive instructions from the Executive Committee through the President, and be accountable to the Executive Committee;

c. be a member of the Executive Committee and take part in all meetings of the governing bodies of the Society.

8. If the two offices of Secretary and Treasurer are combined as a Secretary-Treasurer, paragraphs 6 and 7 shall apply jointly.

9. The President together with the Secretary, or in his/her absence the Treasurer, are competent to represent the Society generally and legally.

10. The Executive Committee remains legally constituted even if its membership is below the minimum required by the Constitution.

11. The Executive Committee shall be convened by the President at least once every year. Special sessions of the Executive Committee may also be convened at the request of the President or two of its members.

12. Each member of the Executive Committee shall have the right to vote. The Executive Committee cannot take decisions if less than half of its members are present.

13. For contracting loans, for the purchase, alienation, mortgaging, renting or letting of real estate, and for contracts in which the Society acts as surety, the approval of the General Assembly is required.

14. The Executive Committee shall appoint a Scientific Committee.

15. The Executive Committee may appoint other officers and establish other working committees to carry out parts of its work.

Article 11. Scientific Committee

1. The Scientific Committee, as a working committee of the Executive Committee, is charged with matters of a scientific nature, especially

a. the thematic planning and preparation of the Society`s congresses;

b. the furthering of the establishment of Scientific Working Groups concerned with scientific matters;

c. the thematic planning and preparation of training activities;

d. any other activity which would be calculated to assist in the achievement of the scientific objectives of the Society.

2. The work of the Scientific Committee shall be led by the Scientific Secretary who shall be a member of the Executive Committee.

3. The members of the Scientific Committee are nominated by the Executive Committee. The tenure of the Scientific Committee shall normally be for not more than the period between two congresses, but its members may be re-nominated immediately.

4. The Scientific Committee may appoint one or more sub-committees to assist it in carrying out its functions.

Article 12. Scientific Working Groups

1. Scientific Working Groups may be established by at least five ordinary members of the Society working on a specific subject of rural sociological research. Such groups may be given the status of a Scientific Working Group of the Society by a decision of the Executive Committee only after presentation of a work programme and its approval by the Scientific Committee.

2. Membership of Scientific Working Groups is open to all members of the Society.

3. Scientific Working Groups shall elect chairpersons from among their members and may invite guests, who are not a member of the Society, to participate in their meetings.

Article 13. Procedures of the General Assembly

1. All members have access to the General Assembly. All individuals who are members of the Society have a right to vote, and each shall have one vote. Every member has the right to vote for one other member, providing that this member has authorised this in writing.

2. Voting for persons shall be carried out by secret ballot, and on other matters by a show of hands. The adoption of proposals by acclamation is allowed if proposed by the Chairperson.

3. All proposals shall be decided by a simple majority unless the Constitution determines otherwise. When the number of votes cast for and a against is equal the proposal shall be deemed rejected. Voting for membership of the Executive Committee and the Council shall be decided by a simple majority. Where the result of a first ballot is tied a second ballot shall be called for; in which case the candidate with the fewest votes in the first ballot shall be excluded from the second ballot. If voting in the second ballot is again tied, the successful candidate shall be chosen by lot.

4. Members have the right to initiate proposals in the General Assembly when submitted in writing to the Secretary and signed by at least three members. The Executive Committee is obliged to place the proposal on the agenda of the General Assembly if submitted prior to the start of the meeting. The Chairperson shall exercise discretion in respect of proposals not so placed on the agenda.

5. The Chairperson`s statement during the meeting that a decision has been made is conclusive, unless immediately challenged. In that case a new vote will be taken if the majority of the members requires this, or if the original vote was not taken by call or by ballot, one member demands this.

Article 14. Amendments to the Constitution

1. The Constitution may be amended by the General Assembly if a proposal containing the full text of the amendment accompanies the invitation to the meeting and the invitation is sent to members at least forty days before the date of the meeting.

2. The Constitution may be amended only if the proposal is supported by two-thirds of the votes cast.

3. Amendments to the Constitution shall be valid until drawn up in a notarial act. The Executive Committee is obliged to deposit an authentic copy of this act at the office of the Chamber of Commerce in whose territory the Society has its domicile.

Article 15. Dissolution and Liquidation

1. The General Assembly has the power to dissolve the Society under the same condition as formulated in article 16.

2. When in the case of a decision to dissolve the Society, no trustees have been appointed to be charged with the liquidation, the liquidation will be carried out by the Executive Committee.

3. The assets of the Society, if any, will be used for those aims which come closest to the objects of the Society, to be decided upon by the General Assembly.

4. After dissolution the Society will remain in existence as long as it required for the process of liquidation.

Article 16. Standing Orders

1. The Executive Committee, with the approval of the General Assembly, shall issue rules in the form of Standing Orders concerning membership, contributions and fees, activities of the governing bodies, meetings, publications, rights to vote, nominations, management and use of property, and all other items for which rules are deemed desirable.

2. Amendments to the Standing Orders can be made by decision of the General Assembly on a proposal supported by at least ten members of the Society.

3. Standing Orders must not be at variance with the Law or the Constitution unless such variance is explicitly mentioned as permitted by Law or in the Constitution.

Updated, 21 January 1998 -jo