



**SERVICE CIVIL
INTERNATIONAL**

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Service Civil International (SCI)

Constitution

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TITLE 1

FORM – NAME – LEGAL SEAT – AIM – DURATION

Article 1 – Legal form, Name

1. The Association is an International Not-for-Profit Association under the Belgian Law of 27 June 1921 with subsequent updates to the law.
2. It carries the name “The Association of Service Civil International” or in short “Service Civil International”, or “SCI”. The email address is: coordinator@sci.ngo.
3. It has been recognised by Royal Decree on 21 January 1994.

Article 2 – Legal Seat

1. The legal seat of the Association is situated in Belgiëlei 37, B-2018 Antwerpen, Belgium.
2. The legal seat of the Association can be moved to any other place in the legal jurisdiction of Antwerp by the decision of the International Executive Committee (IEC).

Article 3 – Aim

1. The aims of the Association are to promote peace, international understanding and solidarity, social justice, sustainable development, and respect for the environment.
2. The Association believes that all people are capable of living together with mutual respect and without recourse to any form of violence to solve conflicts.
3. The Association can achieve its aim and belief in the following ways:
 - a) promoting and organising voluntary service activities in co-operation with local communities as well as other local, national and international organisations, as a means of fostering greater confidence between people of different social, cultural, political or religious backgrounds by working, learning and living together;
 - b) acting in a non-violent way as a catalyst for change within individuals and society;
 - c) supporting victims of violence, social, economic and political injustice, and those who suffer from hunger, disease or the destruction of their environment;
 - d) taking appropriate non-violent international action in situations of tension, war and injustice;



- e) supporting actions which promote international solidarity, justice, mutual understanding, participation in policy-making at all levels, and respect for individuals as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
 - f) supporting people's own initiative to organise themselves to solve their own problems;
 - g) not undertaking any work which competes with paid labour or causes strike-breaking;
 - h) understanding its work as an alternative to military service and contributes to the abolition of military service everywhere by establishing a non-violent international voluntary service.
- 4. This list is not limitative and must be interpreted in the broadest sense.
 - 5. The Association does not carry out industrial or trade businesses and does not aim to provide any material advantage for its members.
 - 6. It can carry out any activity directly or indirectly related to its aim. It can cooperate and participate in any activity or Association that corresponds with its aim.
 - 7. It can own or buy all goods and property estates necessary for realising its aim and execute towards it all rights as proprietor or otherwise.
 - 8. It can borrow money and sign credit contracts.

Article 4 – Duration

The Association has an unlimited duration.

TITLE II

MEMBERS

Article 5 – Members

- 1. The number of members of the Association is unlimited.
- 2. The minimum number of effective members is three.
- 3. Membership is open to all groups of individuals, nationally or internationally, be it registered or not, that share the aims and objectives of the movement, without regard to gender, age,



race, colour, religion, nationality, social status, political views, sexual orientation and other grounds for discrimination.

4. There are Branches (also called Effective Members), Groups (also called Admitted Members) and Contacts (also called Like-Minded Organisations).

A. Branches, also called Effective Members

1. Any national or regional (in the sense of relating to a distinct geographic area within a country or a group of countries) voluntary work organisation can become and remain a Branch of SCI provided it meets the following requirements:
 - i) it has a written constitution which reflects the aims and objectives of the SCI International Constitution and its actions reflect the aims and objectives of the SCI International Constitution;
 - j) it has a clearly defined individual and/or local group membership structure, from which the governing body is elected;
 - k) there is evidence of sound financial management, including the publication of annual accounts;
 - l) it holds general meetings of members at least once every two years for the purposes of electing its governing body, receiving reports and planning activities;
 - m) it undertakes to keep the International Committee and appropriate international office informed of its activities and plans;
 - n) it appoints delegates to represent it within the International Committee Meeting (ICM);
 - o) it undertakes to make an agreed annual contribution to international funds;
 - p) there is evidence of recognition or registration by relevant authorities or bodies;
 - q) it has had Group status for at least two years;
 - r) its application is supported by at least two Branches, by any other SCI Branches in the same country, based on the mentoring plan as mentioned under B.1.g;
 - s) it has been accepted by the ICM by a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.
2. Branches are entitled to participate and vote in ICMs of the Association and to nominate candidates to stand for election to the IEC.
3. They also have the right to use the name "Service Civil International" or the abbreviation "SCI" on publications, letterheads or official documents, provided that it is always used in conjunction with the Branch's national or other geographical identity. If another name is used, it must state that it is a Branch of Service Civil International.



B. Groups, also called Admitted Members

1. Any national or regional (in the sense of relating to a distinct geographic area within a country or a group of countries) voluntary work organisation can become and remain a Group of SCI provided it meets the following requirements:
 - a) it has a written constitution which reflects the aims and objectives of the SCI International Constitution and its actions reflect the aims and objectives of the SCI International Constitution;
 - b) it has a clearly defined individual and/or local group membership structure from which the governing body is elected;
 - c) there is evidence of sound financial management, including the publication of annual accounts;
 - d) it holds general meetings of members at least once every two years for the purposes of electing its governing body, receiving reports and planning activities;
 - e) it undertakes to keep the International Committee and appropriate international office informed of its activities and plans;
 - f) it undertakes to make an agreed annual contribution to international funds;
 - g) its application is supported by at least two Branches and by any other SCI Branches in the same country. The Branches supporting the application have to include a mentoring plan in which they describe the measures to take for the integration of the organisation into SCI;
 - h) it has been accepted by the ICM by a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.
2. Groups are entitled to participate in all SCI ICMs but they have only an advisory role.
3. Groups may use the name “Service Civil International” or the abbreviation “SCI” in the same way as Branches provided that they state clearly in all publications and communication that they have Group status.

C. Contacts, also called Like-Minded Organisations

1. A Contact is a national or regional organisation that is in an early stage of co-operation with SCI and has expressed their intention of becoming an SCI member or a partner organisation in future.
2. Contact organisations are accepted as such by the relevant SCI Working Group or, in the absence of a relevant Working Group, by the IEC.
3. Contact organisations may attend the ICM upon invitation, but have no right to vote.

D. Partner Organisations



1. Other organisations that the Association cooperates with may be recognised as Partners in accordance with the SCI Partnership Procedures document, but only by the ICM.
2. Partner Organisations may attend the ICM upon invitation, but have no right to vote.

E. Individuals

Individuals who share the aims and objectives of the movement, without regard to gender, age, race, colour, religion, nationality, social status, political views, sexual orientation and other grounds for discrimination can become a member of a Branch or Group of the Association (as defined before) to take part in decision-making of the Association.

Article 6 – Admission of New Branches and Groups

1. To become a Branch or Group of the Association, the organisation needs to direct its candidature to the IEC.
2. The IEC will consult with the relevant Working Group if available, which may advise on the candidature.
3. If the IEC finds that the candidate in principle fulfils the conditions as listed above, they will report the candidature to the International Committee Meeting that will decide to accept the member or not with a two thirds majority.

Article 7 – End of Membership – Change of Status

1. A member can end its membership of SCI by itself by informing the IEC of this in writing.
2. The membership can only be ended voluntarily at the end of a calendar year and on the condition that all debts to the Association have been paid.
3. A Branch may choose to change to Group status at any time. The IEC shall inform the ICM of this decision.

Article 8 – Suspension of membership – Expulsion – Downgrading

1. A member may only be expelled or downgraded by the ICM by a two-thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote and after the member has been heard or, in the absence of the member or a message from it, there is proof that reasonable efforts have been made to hear its position.
2. A Branch may be downgraded to the status of a Group. A Branch or Group may be downgraded to the status of a Contact.

A. Expulsion



1. The IEC can suspend a member if there is reason to believe that it is acting outside the spirit of the International Constitution or is likely to bring SCI into disrepute.
2. A suspended member has the right of appeal to the ICM, which may reverse the decision of the IEC.

B. Downgrading

If a member has not fulfilled its obligations as defined in Article 5 for more than two years after being reminded several times, or if there is clear indication that the member has ceased to exist as an organisation, the IEC or the competent regional Working Group may propose to the ICM its expulsion or its downgrading in status.

Article 9 – Contribution

The ICM can decide to have the members pay an obligatory annual contribution.

TITLE III

GOVERNANCE

Article 10 – Governance

The governing body of the Association is the International Committee Meeting (ICM). They appoint the International Executive Committee (IEC) and establish Working Groups.

TITLE IV

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Article 11 – Executive – Election – Dismissal

1. The Association is managed by the International Executive Committee (IEC), comprised of minimum four and maximum eight members.
2. They are elected by the International Committee Meeting (ICM) by a normal majority of those present and entitled to vote. ICM elects executives directly to the roles of International President, International Vice-President, International Treasurer, or Member.
3. Their term of office is limited to two years and may be renewed three times only, not necessarily consecutively.



4. Exceptionally a member may be elected to serve for a fourth term only by approval of a special resolution to the ICM accepted by a two third majority of those present and entitled to vote which should take place before the general election.
5. After serving three terms or exceptional fourth term (consecutive or not) the incumbent will not be eligible for office any more in a lifetime.
6. The membership of the IEC ends legally in one of the following ways:
 - a) automatically at the end of a member's term;
 - b) by voluntary resignation (in writing to the IEC);
 - c) with the death of the member;
 - d) after an exclusion.
7. A motion to exclude one or more members from the IEC must be made by at least two Branches and must be sent in writing to the IEC at least six weeks before the start of the ICM. To be carried, the motion must be supported by a majority of at least two thirds of those present and entitled to vote.

Article 12 – Vacancy

1. In the case of vacancies arising, due to the resignation or death of IEC members or places remaining unfilled at an ICM, the IEC may co-opt individuals to fill the vacant spaces until the next ICM. Such co-opted members shall not have voting rights.
2. If the position of President, Vice-President or Treasurer is vacant, the IEC may appoint from among their elected members an acting President, Vice-President or Treasurer to serve in this capacity until the next ICM.
3. At least sixteen weeks before an ICM, Branches must be invited to nominate candidates to fill the specific vacancies (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Member) arising on the IEC.
4. Candidates may be any individual member of a Branch or Group of SCI who is deemed to have relevant skills or experience.
5. To qualify they must be proposed and seconded by two different Branches or Working Groups or by one Branch and one Working Group.
6. Candidates may be elected to any vacancy that exists at the time of the ICM, as long as their nomination matches the character of the vacancy (i.e. International President, International Vice-President, International Treasurer or Member).
7. A notice regarding the candidature of individuals for election to the IEC must be sent to all Branches at least eight weeks before the start of the ICM.



Article 13 – Tasks of the International Executive Committee (IEC)

The IEC has in particular the following powers and responsibilities:

- a) to interpret and ensure implementation of policy and decision as determined by the ICM;
- b) to make recommendations to the ICM regarding matters of policy, development, structure and membership;
- c) to employ all salaried staff working for SCI's international structures and to ensure that adequate provision is made for their remuneration, support and supervision; or to delegate such responsibilities to other SCI international structures or Branches;
- d) to promote cohesion within SCI and ensure that it is represented in appropriate external bodies or forums;
- e) to ensure that the international structures of SCI carry out their business in accordance with the International Constitution and the policies laid down by the ICM;
- f) to raise funds, whether from Branches' contributions or other sources, to ensure an adequate level of co-ordination between Branches, between and within SCI's international structures and with external bodies;
- g) to encourage the formation of new Groups and Branches;
- h) to acquire or dispose of property or equipment for the benefit of SCI;
- i) to interpret the International Constitution between meetings of the ICM;
- j) to ensure that all necessary arrangements are made for meetings of the ICM;
- k) to inform the ICM in case the IEC did receive no communication from a Branch or Group in the entire period from one ICM to the next ICM;
- l) the annual and financial accounts, management and policy;
- m) the financial transactions, opening and closing bank accounts, giving out related mandates.
- n) to establish Think Tanks

This list contains examples and is not limitative.

Article 14 – Invitations

1. The IEC is called together and chaired by its President, or in case s/he is absent, by its Vice-President, Treasurer or one of its Members by order of experience as IEC member.



2. It shall meet at least three times per year and when the interest of the Association requires it or when two Executive Members ask for it.
3. The meetings will be held in physical, virtual or hybrid form. The invitation shall indicate the form. If physical or hybrid, the meeting shall be held in the legal seat of the Association or on the place mentioned in the invitation
4. The invitation can be sent by email or any other means of communication as agreed by the IEC members.
5. The International President will invite all members of the IEC at least four weeks in advance and will send out an agenda for the meeting at least two weeks in advance.
6. Under special conditions, meetings may be called in a shorter time frame.

Article 15 – Meetings

1. The IEC can meet and take decisions legally if at least one half of its members is present, either physically or virtually.
2. All decisions in the IEC are taken with a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote. In the case of a tied vote, the vote of the President is decisive.

Article 16 – External Legal Representation

Except for special delegation by the IEC, the President or in his/her absence the Vice-President represents the Association towards third parties legally, be it as prosecutor or as defendant.

Article 17 – Daily Management – International Coordinator – Special Mandates

A. Daily Management – Mandates

1. The IEC can delegate the daily management of the Association and the external representation related to the daily management to one or more general secretaries, who may or may not be a member of a Branch or Group of the Association and should not be an elected member of the IEC.
2. Among general secretaries will be an International Coordinator who shall run the Secretariat.
3. The International Coordinator is appointed by the IEC and participates in the meetings of the IEC (with advisory role) as an ex officio member of the IEC.
4. The IEC can also give out special and limited mandates to one or more special mandatories.



5. The general secretaries and special mandatories exercise the power of attorney over the Association and can take binding decisions in its name within the limits set by this Constitution.
6. The IEC can overrule the decisions taken by the general secretaries or special mandatories in cases that they exceed the limits of action set by this Constitution.

B. International Insurance Commission (IIC)

1. The IEC shall establish an International Insurance Commission (IIC) for the purpose of ensuring the proper administration of the SCI Insurance Scheme, including the provision of advice and support to the Scheme administrator.
2. The International Insurance Commission shall be accountable to the IEC.
3. The IIC shall consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of five members, including the International Treasurer.
4. The members are appointed by the IEC and reviewed annually.

C. Financial Advice and Consultancy Team (FACT)

1. The IEC shall establish a Financial Advice and Consultancy Team (FACT).
2. It shall advise and support the Association on all matters related to finances.
3. The team is accountable to the IEC.
4. It shall present each year a report and a plan of action.
5. FACT shall consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of five members, including the International Treasurer.
6. The members are appointed by the IEC and reviewed annually.

D. Working Groups

1. Working Groups are comprised of a minimum of three Branches to develop or coordinate work in a particular geographic or thematic area and must adhere to the “Rules for Working Groups” as agreed by the ICM.
2. Additional rights and responsibilities of Working Groups shall be established as necessary by the ICM through the Rules for Working Groups.

E. Think Tanks

1. Think Tanks are ad hoc groupings comprising of experienced SCI activists with expert knowledge and/or experience volunteering to work on specific topics of an international character, other than those dealt with by the bodies described under A-D above, that are established by an IEC decision.



2. Think Tanks' role is advisory to the IEC and their mandate, duration, operation and membership (including which IEC members and/or staff participate) are described in the relevant IEC decision that establishes them. Think Tanks report to the IEC that oversees their operation. The IEC reports to the ICM about their work.

TITLE V

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE (GENERAL ASSEMBLY)

Article 18 – Composition of the International Committee Meeting (ICM)

1. The ICM shall be comprised of all Branches, Groups and Working Groups.
2. Each Branch shall have one vote.
3. Groups and Working Groups only have advisory role.
4. The legally constituted General Assembly (ICM) represents all members; its decisions are binding for all members, also for those not attending and the members who are not in favour of the decision taken.

Article 19 – Powers of the International Committee Meeting (ICM)

1. The ICM is the highest and final decision-making body of the Association.
2. The members gather in the ICM to discuss or decide on all matters relevant for the Association and in particular, to:
 - a) recognise, withdraw or revise recognition of Branches, Groups, Contacts and Partner Organisations;
 - b) amend the International Constitution;
 - c) appoint and discharge Auditors;
 - d) elect and dismiss Executives;
 - e) approve the international accounts and budgets;
 - f) dissolve the Association;
 - g) ratify the appointment of the Financial Advice and Consultancy Team and the International Insurance Commission;
 - h) monitor and evaluate the international activities of SCI over the previous year;
 - i) decide on future policies and programmes;



- j) discuss relevant political and social issues and make a statement of their position;
 - k) decide on all other cases stipulated by the Constitution.
3. Without this list being limitative, the ICM has the right to:
- l) receive reports from Branches, Groups, Working Groups, the Financial Advice and Consultancy Team, the International Insurance Commission and staff;
 - m) receive a written report from the IEC, including staff issues;
 - n) approve voting procedures to ensure fair elections;
 - o) approve and withdraw approval of Working Groups.

Article 20 – Regular Annual Meetings

1. The ICM should be held at least once every year at the latest between 1 October and 15 December to discuss and accept the accounts of the previous accounting year, discharge the Executives and the Auditor(s) or Auditing Members if any and accept the budget for the next accounting year. Another ICM is held the latest by the 30th of June virtually each year to discuss and accept the Accounts of the previous year.
2. If the IEC fails to call together the ICM twelve weeks before 15 December, it will be held on 20 December, at the legal seat of the Association or virtually. If this day is a holiday, the meeting will be held on the first working day at the same time and place or virtually.

Article 21 – Special or Extraordinary Committee Meeting

1. A special or an extraordinary meeting of the ICM can also be requested by the Branches, the International President or the Auditor(s).
2. If the International President receives written requests to organise an ICM from at least one third of the Branches, Groups and Working Groups or from the Auditor(s), he/she must do so at the earliest possible opportunity.
3. A formal notification of the meeting must be sent out within four weeks of receiving such requests, and the meeting must be held between twelve weeks and thirty weeks of the date that the notification is posted.

Article 22 – Place of the International Committee Meeting (ICM)

The ICM shall be held in physical, virtual or hybrid form. If physical or hybrid, the place of the ICM shall be at the seat of the Association or in any other place, in Belgium or abroad, which must be notified to the members in writing.



Article 23 – Invitation

1. The ICM will be called together by the IEC.
2. The invitation can be sent by email or any other appropriate means of communication.
3. The invitation with the proposed agenda should be sent out at least eight weeks before the meeting to all Branches and Groups.

Article 24 – Representation

1. Any Branch which is unable to be present at an ICM may appoint a proxy (which must also be a Branch) to vote on its behalf.
2. A Branch may only carry a proxy for one other Branch. Valid proxies must be considered normal votes and counted for establishing simple majority, two-thirds majority and all votes taken.

Article 25 – Form of the Proxies

A letter of appointment, authorised by the committee of the Branch which cannot attend the ICM in full or only a part of it, must be received by post or by electronic mail by the IEC before the start of the ICM (in case of full absence) or before an ICM session (absence starting during the ICM).

Article 26 – Voting by mail in case of absence

1. Mail votes can only be used for the election of members of the IEC.
2. For a mail vote to be valid it must be authorised by the committee of the Branch that cannot attend the ICM, and must be received by the IEC before the start of the ICM by post or by electronic mail.

Article 27 – Agenda, Amendments

1. The IEC proposes the agenda. Each proposal that is directed to the IEC at least six weeks before the meeting and that is signed by at least two Branches has to be included in the agenda.
2. The ICM cannot legally discuss and decide points that have not been included in the agenda, be it explicitly or implicitly.
3. The Executives and all members have the right to propose amendments regarding all points of the proposed agenda but the proposal must be supported by two Branches.
4. Where unforeseeable circumstances make it impossible to include an issue in the agenda in time, the ICM may choose to consider it as an urgent agenda point. An urgent agenda point



must be handed in writing to the chairperson at the beginning of a session. It must be supported or seconded by the delegates of at least two Branches, Groups or Working Groups.

5. Upon receiving an urgent agenda point, the chairperson should put the decision whether to consider the urgent point to the vote at the earliest possible opportunity.
6. A two-third majority is needed for an urgent resolution or recommendation to be considered.

Article 28 – Quorum – the Principle

1. A quorum at ICM shall be at least half the total number of Branches.
2. A meeting shall have a quorum only if delegates from all regions are present.
3. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote, with the exception of amendments to the International Constitution and the other cases mentioned in this Constitution.
4. Voting happens by a raise of hand, unless the meeting decides otherwise.
5. Elections of Executives and Auditor(s) happen in principle with a secret vote.

Article 29 – Quorum – special cases

1. In the event that an ICM has no quorum or is likely not to have, the IEC must reconvene an ICM after at least sixteen days but within six months of the original date set.
2. If a quorum is not achieved at such a reconvened meeting, the meeting shall proceed as if it had a quorum.

Article 30 – Majority for decisions

The ICM requires a majority of at least two thirds to take decisions about:

- a) amendments to the International Constitution;
- b) the admission of new Branches and Groups;
- c) the relegation of a member from Branch to Group status, or from Group to Contact;
- d) the expulsion of a Branch or Group;
- e) the prolongation of the mandate of a member of the IEC with a fourth term;
- f) the exclusion of a member of the IEC;
- g) the dissolution of the Association.



Article 31 – Unanimous decision making in writing

The Branches all together can take a decision on anything that is normally the responsibility of ICM as long as it is unanimous and in writing. This possibility does not exist for the decisions mentioned in Article 30 and for cases mentioned in the Law.

Article 32 – Minutes

Reports of an ICM will be communicated to all Branches, Groups and Working Groups within four months after the meeting.

TITLE VI

OVERSIGHT, ACCOUNTING YEAR, FINANCIAL RESULT

Article 33 – Oversight

1. Oversight of the Association and control of the financial situation, the annual accounts and the regularity of the Association's activities as shown in the annual accounts, will be carried out by all the Branches to ensure the Association conforms to the relevant legal and constitutional criteria.
2. The auditing power of the individual Branches can be transferred to one or more auditing members elected by the ICM who cannot carry out another task in the Association or accept any assignment or mandate. These members can be represented by an auditor as stated in the Law.

Article 34 – Financial Year

The financial year of the Association starts at January 1 and ends at December 31 of each year.

Article 35 – Financial Result

Any positive financial result enlarges the capital of the Association and can in no way be paid out to the members.



TITLE VII

DISSOLUTION

Article 36 – Voluntary Dissolution

1. A motion to dissolve the Association may be made by any two Branches or the IEC. Such proposals must be made in writing to the IEC.
2. The motion will be placed before the first ICM provided that it has been received at least twenty-five weeks before the start of the meeting and that the members have been informed of the motion at least twenty weeks before the start of the meeting.

Article 37 – Destination of the Assets

Any remaining assets held by the Association at the time of dissolution may, after the payment of any debts, be spent on a not-for-profit activity or organisation with the same or a similar aim.

TITLE VIII

MISCELLANEOUS

Article 38 – Interpretation

1. The term “Service Civil International” or “SCI” as used in this Constitution are intended to relate to the international movement of SCI and not to any of its constituent parts (Branches, Groups, etc.).
2. The term “regional”, except when otherwise defined, is intended to relate to groups of Branches or Groups in the same continental area. When more than two Branches or Groups are established in any continental area, this can be recognised as a region by the ICM.
3. The term “international” is intended to relate to groups of Branches and Groups in more than one region.
4. The term “virtual meeting” means a meeting held without a physical meeting venue, where participants must be able to fully exercise their rights, including decision-making powers, right to speak and make counterproposals in real-time, with the help of a communication connection and a technical aid. In a “hybrid meeting” a number of participants attend in a physical venue and a number of participants attend virtually.



5. Although this Constitution may be translated into other languages, interpretations of the meaning of words, sentences or paragraphs will be based only on the official English translation of the Dutch legal version.
6. In the event of disagreement within the IEC over the interpretation of any part of the International Constitution, the matter will be referred to the ICM for a ruling.