



CONSTITUTION

As adopted by the XXVIX IFJ World Congress
Angers, France June 2016

SECTION I: Titles & Headquarters

1. The name of the organisation is the International Federation of Journalists. Its headquarters is based in Residence Palace, International Press Center, Block C, Rue de la Loi 155, 1040 Brussels, Belgium at the time when this Constitution was approved.

SECTION II: Character

2. a) The International Federation of Journalists is a confederation of journalists' trade unions. It has been created to deal with matters related to trade unionism and the practice of the profession of journalism. It is established in the context of support for pluralist democracy and fundamental human rights. It is independent of all ideological, political, governmental and religious bodies. It represents and assists its member organisations in education and research in protection of core labour rights and all professional matters and has and promotes continental and regional groups made up of those member organisations.

b) The International Federation of Journalists is an Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif as defined under Belgian law. The Administrative Committee is responsible for meeting the Federation's obligations as an AiSBL.

SECTION III: Objectives

3. The aims and objectives of the Federation are:

- a) To protect and strengthen the rights and freedoms of journalists;
- b) To respect and defend freedom of information, media freedom and the independence of journalism particularly through research and monitoring of violations and taking action to defend journalists and their work;
- c) To uphold and improve professionalism and to promote high standards of journalism and journalistic education;
- d) To improve and defend the social and working conditions of all journalists, and to encourage and support member unions in collective bargaining;
- e) To promote co-operation between member unions, and to support trade union development, by means of the organisation of continental and regional groups;
- f) To promote and maintain editorial democracy;
- g) To promote the social role of journalists and the profession of journalism, particularly its contribution to democracy and freedom;
- h) To encourage the provision of professional and trade union education and training for journalists;
- i) To co-ordinate action to ensure the safety of journalists and to incorporate safety training in collective agreements between member unions and employer organisations;
- j) To encourage member unions to provide goodwill and assistance for members of other member unions who may be working in their territories;
- k) To establish and maintain close relations with relevant international, government and non-government organisations in pursuit of these objects;
- l) To fight for authors' rights and international reimbursement systems;
- m) To promote mainstreaming equality in journalism and to encourage member unions to pursue this objective.
- n) To fight against hate speech

o) To fight for the protection of sources and against all kinds of data retention by governments and corporations

SECTION IV: Membership

4. The Federation may admit to full membership national trade unions whose constitutions and activities are consistent with the character and objectives of the Federation and which conform to the following definitions:

a) It is a journalists' trade union; that is, a representative, democratic organisation whose primary functions are to defend, maintain and advance (particularly by collective bargaining) the professional, ethical, moral and material rights of journalists. For the purposes of this definition, a journalist is one who devotes the greater part of his/ her working time to the profession of journalism and who derives from it most of his/ her income being employed or working as a freelance.

b) It is devoted to media freedom; that is, in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, freedom in the collection and dissemination of information by all forms of media, and freedom to express opinion and comment, including the freedom to criticise and oppose governments, political and economic bodies whether public or private.

5. Membership of the Federation is not open to journalists' unions which include employers in their regular membership, nor to non-union organisations which operate in specific sectors of the profession.

6. When a union admitted to the Federation is organised on an industrial basis its membership shall be recognised only in relation to the number of its members who are journalists.

7. National organisations of journalists which are not journalists' trade unions as defined in paragraph 4(a), but which are devoted to media freedom as defined in paragraph 4(b), may be admitted as associate members.

8. Except as specified by this Constitution, associate members may participate in all Federation activities. They may be represented at Congress by one delegate but shall not have the right to vote, to nominate or to be nominated for office. With the assistance of the Federation, associate members shall do all in their power to attain and conform with the conditions of full membership and shall, when appropriate, seek full membership. Any associate member that has not sought within 3 years of the date of this amendment, or their acceptance (whichever is later) to upgrade their membership into full membership shall be reported to the IFJ Executive Committee for the consideration of whether they should continue in membership.

9. Member unions have the right of access to all working documents of the Federation and to receive all information upon request at any time. (Only exception: sensitive personal data).

SECTION V: Application for Membership

10. An application for membership of the Federation shall be made to the General Secretary in the prescribed form and shall be accompanied by the Constitution of the applicant organisation. The General Secretary shall advise all member unions of each membership application.

11. The Executive Committee shall consider each application. It may, provided two-thirds of Executive Committee members present vote in favour, admit an applicant to full membership or

associate membership. It may reject an application or defer an application for further consideration at its next meeting.

12. An applicant whose application is rejected by the Executive Committee may appeal against that decision to the next Congress. Any three member unions who disagree with an Executive Committee decision to admit an applicant to membership may appeal against that decision to the next Congress. In either case the appeal must be lodged in writing with the General Secretary within three months of the decision being notified.

13. The procedure for changing the status of an associate member to full membership shall be the same as that prescribed in the preceding articles.

14. Membership of the IFJ becomes effective once the successful applicant has paid the amount of the subscription due covering the year of admission. Unions shall pay an amount for the remaining part of the year following the date of admission.

SECTION VI: Expulsion and Resignation

15. A member union may be expelled from membership by decision of Congress if:

- a) It no longer meets the conditions of membership as set out in Article 4 of this Constitution; or
- b) It acts in a manner contrary to the principles or objects or in a manner likely to damage the interests of the Federation; or
- c) It is more than 12 months late in paying its membership fees.

16. A provisional decision to expel a member may be made by the Executive Committee after a proper investigation of the circumstances and provided two-thirds of committee members present vote to do so. Any such decision shall be notified immediately to the member in question. The member may appeal against the decision to the next Congress, which shall confirm or reverse the decision, but in the meantime the member shall be suspended from membership.

17. Any member may resign from the federation by giving six months' notice in writing to the General Secretary.

SECTION VII: Congress

18. Congress shall be the supreme governing body of the Federation.

19. Congress shall be composed of delegates from the full member unions and the associate members. Full members shall be entitled to appoint delegates on a national basis and shall have votes at Congress, according to the following scale:

- Up to 100 members 1 delegate/vote
- Up to 600 members 2 delegates/votes
- Up to 1.200 members 3 delegates/votes
- Up to 2.400 members 4 delegates/votes
- Up to 4.800 members 5 delegates/votes
- Up to 8.000 members 6 delegates/votes
- Up to 12.000 members 7 delegates/votes
- Up to 15.000 members 8 delegates/votes
- Up to 26.000 members 9 delegates/votes.

b) Gender equality for delegations: Affiliates shall aim to ensure that the number of women/men delegates shall be at least proportional to their share of the union's membership. Nevertheless each delegation consisting of more than three delegates shall aim to include at least one man/woman delegate and each delegation consisting of more than five shall aim to include at least 2 men/women delegates.

20. Congress shall normally meet every third year. The Executive Committee may convene an extraordinary Congress at any time if two-thirds of its members vote in favour. The Executive Committee shall convene an extraordinary Congress if half of the Federation's full members make such a demand in writing.

21. Member unions shall be advised of the place and dates of the normal Congress meeting not less than 8 months in advance of the start of the meeting. Invitations and a provisional agenda shall be sent to members not less than six months in advance, and working documents not less than one month in advance, of the start of the Congress.

22. Proposals from member unions, the Executive Committee and regional organisations of the IFJ, must be submitted to the General Secretary not less than five months before the start of Congress, except where this Constitution specifically provides otherwise.

Proposals to amend this Constitution or to dissolve the Federation may be submitted only in accordance with the procedure set out in Section XI. Proposals submitted out of time may be considered by Congress only if a majority of voting delegates agree.

23. Notice of an extraordinary Congress shall be sent to member unions not less than six weeks before the opening of such Congress.

24. The Congress at its normal meetings shall:

- a) Elect a Congress Presidium;
- b) Adopt the Working Rules for Congress including the allocation of proxy votes, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, and establish a quorum;
- c) Establish such Congress Commissions, working groups and/or procedures as are necessary for the efficient conduct of Congress and to assist the participation of delegates;
- d) Receive, discuss and vote on a report from the General Secretary on behalf of the Executive Committee, and a report from the Honorary Treasurer in the finances of the Federation;
- e) Decide on appeals on matters of membership;
- f) Decide on proposals to amend the Constitution;
- g) Determine financial strategy for the next three-year Congress period;
- h) Decide on full membership and associate membership fees for the next three-year Congress period;
- i) Determine policies and the working programme for the following three-year period;
- j) Decide on proposals submitted for the agenda by member unions;
- k) Elect the Officers of the Federation and the other members of the Executive Committee as provided in Section VIII

25. Decisions of the Congress shall be made by a simple majority of votes cast, except that a two-thirds majority of votes cast shall be required

- a) To adopt a proposal to amend this Constitution;
- b) To determine the financial strategy;
- c) To decide membership fees.

A proposal to dissolve the Federation shall be carried only if it is supported by two-thirds of the votes cast. The quorum required for voting on the dissolution of the Federation shall be 50% of votes represented at Congress.

26. All elections at Congress shall be by secret ballot and shall be conducted by the Congress Presidium in accordance with the Working Rules.

SECTION VIII: Executive Committee, Officers and Administrative Committee

27. Between Congresses the Executive Committee shall be the governing body of the Federation. It shall consist of the Officers and 16 other members and shall be elected by Congress for a period of office ending at the conclusion of the following Congress. It shall meet at least twice a year. A quorum of 11 voting members shall be required for decisions to be valid. The Committee shall establish its own working rules and procedures within the framework of the Constitution. The Executive Committee shall ensure that at the headquarters of the Federation there is a register of all decisions of the Executive Committee and all decisions of the Congress.

28. The Executive Committee is responsible for ensuring that the policies and the working programme of the Federation are carried out in line with Congress decisions, and shall report on its work to Congress. The Executive Committee shall agree Working Rules for its meetings and shall establish a quorum and, where appropriate, procedures for allocation of proxy votes for absent members.

29. The first meeting of the Executive Committee each year, shall constitute the annual general meeting to approve the audited accounts and budget plan. Members will be informed of the date of the meeting at least 4 months in advance. Provided they are not in arrears, they have the right to send motions at least 2 months in advance and to send an observer. The minutes of that meeting will be distributed to all member unions.

The Executive Committee determines the internal rules of the Federation including compliance regulations for its officers, staff and the conduct of the federation. These rules will be made available to all member unions."

30. The Officers of the Federation shall be the President, the Senior Vice-President, two Vice-Presidents and the Honorary Treasurer. They shall be elected by Congress from nominations made by full member unions. Candidates must be part of their union's delegation. No more than one Officer may be elected from any member union or nation. For the positions of Vice Presidents Congress must elect one man and one woman.

31. In addition to the Officers, the Congress shall elect 16 members of the Executive Committee in accordance with the following provisions:

- a) Nominations may be made by full member unions, and candidates must be part of their union's delegation;
- b) No fewer than two members shall be elected from each of the Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America regions; and no fewer than one member from each of the North America and Oceania regions;
- c) No more than one member may be elected from any member union or nation.

32. Congress shall also elect two reserve committee members from each region and two further reserves not bound by any geographical criteria. The reserve receiving the greater number of votes in each case shall be considered the first reserve. If a member is unable to participate in a meeting of

the Executive Committee he/she must inform the General Secretary at least four weeks before the meeting. The General Secretary shall then call the appropriate reserve to participate in the meeting in the following order: First regional reserve, second regional reserve, first general reserve, second general reserve. In such circumstances the reserve shall have all the rights, duties and powers of a member of the Executive Committee.

33. If following their election any Officer or member of the Executive Committee

a) dies; or

b) resigns from the Executive Committee; or

c) in the opinion of four-fifths of the Executive Committee has become ineligible to hold office in terms of this Constitution;

Within the provision of Rule 28, he/she shall be succeeded as a member of the Executive Committee by the appropriate reserve in the following order: First regional reserve, second regional reserve, first general reserve, second general reserve (the second reserve thereby becoming the first reserve).

If there is no appropriate reserve a replacement shall be selected in a manner determined by the Executive Committee; provided that the Executive Committee may decide not to fill a vacancy if it occurs within a year of the next Congress.

In the event that the position vacant is of an officer, the Executive Committee shall then determine what action to take to fill the position from among the members of the Executive Committee.

34. The General Secretary participates by right of office, without voting rights, in the work of the Administrative Committee and Executive Committee.

35. The Executive Committee shall appoint members of working parties established by Congress to further the activities of the Federation. At least one Executive Committee member shall serve on each working party, and shall be responsible for effective liaison between the working party and the Executive Committee.

36. The President, the Senior Vice-President, the Vice-Presidents and the Honorary Treasurer shall together with the General Secretary constitute the Administrative Committee. The Administrative Committee shall

a) supervise the Federation activities of the General Secretary and deal with financial matters, management and administrative policies, membership questions, matters of concern and prepare wider policy issues for discussion by the Executive Committee; and

b) otherwise act for the Federation between meetings of the Executive Committee within the policies established by the Congress and the Executive Committee. Actions of the Administrative Committee shall be confirmed at the following Executive Committee meeting.

37. The President shall be the leading representative of the Federation. He/she shall convene and chair meetings of the Executive Committee and the Administrative Committee.

38. The Senior Vice-President and the Vice-Presidents shall assist the President in carrying out his/her duties and shall, in order, replace the President if he/she is prevented from carrying out those duties.

39. The Honorary Treasurer shall supervise the financial policies and performance of the Federation and shall report to the Executive Committee and Congress on those matters.

40. The General Secretary shall be the Chief Executive officer of the Federation. He/ she shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and be responsible to that committee. The competent persons to act in legal matters on behalf of the Federation are the President, the Honorary Treasurer and the General Secretary. When authorised to do so by the Administrative Committee, any two may sign on behalf of the Federation.

SECTION IX: Continental and Regional Groups

41. Continental and regional groups may be set up by affiliate and associate members of the Federation. Such groups may regulate their own activities provided they are in accordance with this Constitution and are consistent with policies established by Congress.

42. There shall be a Finance Commission whose objective is to review the IFJ accounts. The Finance Commission shall be elected by congress and report to Congress. The Finance Commission consists of three lay auditors. None of them belong to any other elected body of the IFJ.

43. There shall be a gender council whose mission is to advise on and coordinate the gender work of the IFJ. It shall have the right to set its working rules, composition and policies under the authority of the Executive Committee, and financed accordingly.

SECTION X: Finance

44. Congress shall determine the basis for the calculation of membership fees and shall decide the membership fees payable by full members and by associate members of the Federation. Membership fees shall be paid in the currency of the nation in which the headquarters of the Federation is situated.

45. The financial year of the Federation shall be from January 1 to December 31. The Executive Committee shall adopt and approve the accounts and budget of the Federation annually.

46. Membership fees for a financial year are due and payable by April 30 of that year unless the Executive Committee decides otherwise. Members admitted to the Federation during a year shall pay membership fees for that year on a pro rata calculation for the unexpired period of the year.

47. Membership fees shall be paid according to the number of regular members declared by unions up to a maximum figure, which shall be determined by Congress.

48. Any member union which is more than six months in arrears with the payment of its membership fees shall be reported to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may direct that the services of the Federation be withdrawn from any such member union.

49. Any member union, which is more than 12 months in arrears with the payment of its membership fees, or with money due for the supply of International Press Cards, shall have no voting rights at Congress. Any such member union may also be expelled from the Federation by Congress.

50. The Executive Committee may in exceptional circumstances exempt member unions from paying all or part of membership fees. Such exemptions to be reviewed at each Executive Committee.

51. The expenses of delegates to Congress and of members of the Executive Committee and working parties shall be paid by their member unions unless otherwise decided by the Executive Committee.

52. Accounts shall be subjected to external audit. Their report, shall be distributed to Executive Committee members and member organisations of the IFJ

53. A Safety Fund shall be deemed to be held on trust, kept in a separate account and administered according to its rules and subjected to external audit. The Executive Committee shall present a special report to the congress. Here shall be given detailed account of income, cash flow and reserves.”

SECTION XI: Amendment of the Constitution and Dissolution

54. Proposals to amend this Constitution must be submitted in writing to the General Secretary no later than six months before the opening day of Congress. Every such proposal must specify precisely the amendment sought, and must be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reason for the amendment. The General Secretary shall immediately forward copies of the proposal and explanatory material to all member unions.

55. A proposal to amend the Constitution shall be carried only if it is supported by two-thirds of the votes cast at Congress. The quorum required for voting on a constitutional amendment shall be 50% of votes represented at Congress.

56. A proposal to dissolve the Federation must be submitted and dealt with in the same manner as a proposal to amend the Constitution. However, such a proposal shall be carried only if it is supported by two-thirds of all the votes represented at Congress.

57. In the event that Congress decides to dissolve the Federation, all liabilities of the Federation shall be discharged. Any remaining assets shall then be divided among the unions which are members at the time equivalent to the proportion of their contributions to the Federation during the current year. If there are insufficient assets to meet the Federation’s liabilities, the outstanding liabilities shall be met by the member unions in similar proportion.

SECTION XII: Miscellaneous

58. Matters not provided for in this Constitution shall be decided by Congress or, if they arise between Congress meetings, by the Executive Committee.

59. This Constitution, which is framed and interpreted according to the conditions and circumstances set out in the Belgian law of October 25th 1919, shall at all times be interpreted and applied in a manner which avoids undue technicality and which best maintains and promotes the character and objectives of the Federation.

60. Where modifications to the constitution are agreed by Congress, in order to make the changes effective the congress must mandate the President and General Secretary to register the modifications according to the requirement of Belgian law. Modifications to the Constitution shall be submitted for Royal Assent and published in annexes to the Moniteur Belge in accordance with Belgian law.