

Internal Rules of Procedure of the Ethics Committee of the Socialist International

(This document has been discussed and adopted by the Committee based on the relevant articles of the Statutes of the Socialist International, procedures followed in the work of the Committee and proposals considered to ensure an open, democratic and fair functioning.)

CHAPTER I – THE FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMITTEE

Article 1 – Mission

The Ethics Committee is in charge of:

- examining all the applications for membership in the Socialist International,
- monitoring respect for the Ethical Charter by the member parties (full, consultative or observer),
- formulating recommendations to the Council on decisions for membership and proposing sanctions in cases of non-compliance with the SI Statutes or the Ethical Charter.

The Committee also gives recommendations on requests for change of status.

Article 2 – Composition

The Ethics Committee is composed of fifteen member parties and fraternal organisations elected by the Council among the Council members. Its composition respects the geographical balance of the SI.

The Chair is elected by the Committee.

The quorum of the Ethics Committee comprises eight member parties.

Representatives of SI member parties, fraternal or associated organisations and regional committees, can, in exceptional cases, be invited at the proposal of the Committee's Chair or the SI Secretary General, to submit on a consultative basis, supplementary information about specific cases of interest to the Committee. The Committee expresses its opinion about the invited persons.

The support of the Committee's work is ensured by the SI Secretariat.

Article 3 – Organisation of the work

The Committee's Chair and the SI Secretary General propose the programme and agenda of work. The members of the Committee may submit items for the agenda to the Committee's Chair and to the SI Secretary General.

Article 4 – Frequency of meetings

The Committee meets as often as required depending on the issues that fall within its remit, but at least twice a calendar year in addition to the meetings organised in connection with Councils.

Article 5 – Procedures for decision-making

In all procedures undertaken within its remit, the Committee seeks to instil a spirit of fraternity.

In order to guarantee the greatest freedom of expression within the Committee, the debates are held behind closed doors. The members of the Committee are required to observe discretion and collegiality in relation to the nature of the positions taken during the debate.

The decisions are adopted by a majority of two-thirds plus one of the members present and are then submitted as proposals to the Council.

Only the Chair of the Committee, the SI Secretary General or a member with a special mandate can speak about the reasons behind the proposals.

These are revealed to the Council or to the Congress only by specific demand.

These may be given to the party concerned upon their request.

CHAPTER II – PROCEDURE FOR EXAMINATION OF PARTIES APPLYING TO THE SI

Article 6 – Membership applications

All candidate parties must address their membership applications to the SI Secretariat.

The SI Secretary General acknowledges receipt of the application and sends the applying party a questionnaire. The SG informs the party that the examination of its application requires at least two sessions of the Committee and that membership can only be approved by the Congress.

If necessary, the Committee asks the opinion of parties already members in the same country and of the relevant regional committee.

The SI Secretary General completes the list of applications for examination at the next meeting.

Only membership applications completed, as mentioned above, with the replies to the questionnaire and the statutes of the party, will be examined by the Committee.

Article 7 – Examination of membership applications

The Committee nominates an internal rapporteur tasked with gathering enough information about the applying party and the political situation in the relevant country. If possible, the rapporteur is chosen from outside the geographical area of the applying party, but in any case, the rapporteur must not find himself/herself in a situation of conflict of interest with the applicant party.

The rapporteur presents a synthesis of this information to the Committee.

If necessary, the Chair of the Committee and/or the rapporteur respond to the request of an applying party to be listened to, before the documentation is examined by the Committee. It is not envisaged to listen to an applying party in Committee meetings.

The Committee examines the suitability of membership based on the following criteria:

1. Respect for the SI Ethical Charter – A Reminder:

- *To carry through progressive politics that favour well-being of individuals, economic expansion, equitable trade, social justice, the protection of the environment in the spirit of sustainable development.*

- *To oppose all social and economic politics to the advantage of privileged groups, and promote the creation of a global economic system which will lead to more equitable and fair North-South relations.*
- *To combat corruption in all its forms and the obstacles to good governance.*
- *To defend pluralistic democracy. This implies:*
 - *the freedom of citizens to choose between political options in the framework of free, frequent and transparent elections;*
 - *the possibility of a change of government through peaceful means and the free expression of citizens;*
 - *respect of the rights of minorities and individuals;*
 - *an independent and impartial judicial system based on the law;*
 - *a free and pluralistic press;*
 - *democratic running of political parties.*
- *To guarantee, under all circumstances, the respect of human dignity and to act in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the other important conventions adopted by the United Nations and its institutions.*
- *To ban the death penalty.*
- *To respect and reinforce the fundamental human rights, be they individual rights (respect of private life, freedom of thought, belief, education, sexual orientation and right to equal treatment etc.), social rights (freedom of trade unions, right to strike, social protection etc.) or political rights (freedom of association, universal vote).*
- *To foster gender equality in every area of private and public life, including within our parties, in decision-making positions in all fields and at all levels.*
- *To fight against all forms of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, language, religion, philosophical or political beliefs*
- *To fight against all ultra nationalist, fundamentalist, xenophobic and racist trends and to refrain from all forms of political alliance or co-operation, at any level, with any political party inciting or trying to inflame prejudices, ethnic or racial hatred.*
- *To reject and resolutely oppose any drift to authoritarianism as well as any political system which allows or practises the violation of human rights to conquer or impose its power (political assassination, torture, arbitrary detention, press censorship, banning or repression of peaceful demonstrations, etc.).*
- *To support international action in favour of peace, tolerance, dialogue, understanding and cooperation among peoples.*
- *To abstain from using military force to gain power or to lead a foreign policy, beyond the framework authorised by the relevant international organisations.*
- *To strive to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and to facilitate disarmament.*
- *Strengthen the role of the United Nations and regional institutions which work towards achieving peaceful solutions to conflicts.*

2. Sufficient representativity:

- Age of the party;
- Number of members in relation to the country's population;
- Number of elected representatives at national, regional and local level;
- Level of the organisation and quality of the internal democratic process behind the application for membership in the SI;
- Capacity for payment of a membership fee;

3. Political and geo-political interest:

- That the values promulgated by the party conform with the Ethical Charter despite its insufficient representation.
- Presence of the SI in the respective geographical zone.
- Support for a country in a process of democratic transition.
- A party where the evolution of its political positioning and/or of its representation may suggest that membership would strengthen the objectives of the SI.

4. Presence of a member party in the same country:

- Its opinion will be requested.

5. The length of time since the application for membership was received:

- To verify if the wish for affiliation still exists.

Article 8 – Types of proposals following the examination of an application

Following the examination mentioned in the preceding article, the Committee will propose one of the following options:

- to recommend the rejection of the application;
- to ask for additional reports and opinions;
- to recommend specific support from a regional committee or from a member party, prior to a new examination (in case of need, the Committee can decide to invite the applying party to a Council or a Congress meeting in order to follow up this support);
- to recommend affiliation as an observer member;
- to recommend affiliation as a consultative member;
- to recommend affiliation as a full member.

CHAPTER III – EXAMINATION PROCEDURE FOR A CHANGE OF STATUS

Article 9 –Request for change of status

All parties applying for a change of their memberships to a “higher” status must address their requests to the SI Secretariat.

The SI Secretary General acknowledges receipt of the application. He informs the party that its application requires at least two sessions of the Committee and that the change can be approved only at a Congress.

If necessary, the Committee appoints a rapporteur, asks for the opinion of any party already a member in the same country and of the relevant regional committee.

The SI Secretary General updates the list of applications for examination at the next Committee.

Article 10 – Examination of applications for change of membership status

If the case arises, the Chair of the Committee and/or the rapporteur, respond to the request by the party concerned to be heard, before the case is examined by the Committee. It is not envisaged to listen to an applying party in the Committee meetings.

The Committee examines the suitability of the membership based on the criteria established in article 7, and on the way in which the applying party participates in the work of the SI with their current status.

Article 11 – Types of proposals after the examination of an application for a change to another membership status.

Following the examination mentioned in the preceding article, the Committee will propose one of the following options:

- to recommend the rejection of the application;
- to ask for additional reports and opinions;
- to recommend affiliation as a consultative member;
- to recommend affiliation as a full member.

CHAPTER IV – EXAMINATION PROCEDURE REGARDING A PROPOSAL FOR SANCTIONS

Article 12 – The sanctions

Without prejudice to the procedure for sanctions provided for in article 5.2.5 relating to the non-payment of membership fees by a member party for 3 years, the sanctions or measures recommended for the member party (or organisation) which ceases to respect the SI Statutes or the Ethical Charter, are the following:

- additional measures provided for in article 17 of the present rules;
- demotion, the full member in default could be demoted to consultative or observer status;
- suspension – temporary withdrawal of the membership in the SI – the relevant party is not invited to SI meetings during this period;
- expulsion.

Article 13 - Procedures

Expulsion is contemplated in articles 5.1.3 and 5.2 of the Statutes and may be taken only by the Congress with a majority of two-thirds of parties voting.

The Committee can address all default situations or be asked to take action by any full member party.

The Committee examines the situation of the party in default based on the criteria in article 7 concerning membership.

It can listen to the relevant parties as well as take all initiatives tending to restore the situation of default. In particular, it can ask the opinion of other committees, member parties or organisations, organise an on-site mission, or nominate a rapporteur.

Following this, it will make its recommendation to the SI Council which will adopt a position before submitting the case to the Congress.

If necessary, the Committee may propose the suspension of SI membership or measures such as downgrading of status or action by a regional committee or another member party in order to promptly resolve the default situation.

If there is no resolution of the situation within the deadline accepted by the organs of the SI, the Congress will be required to take a definitive decision.

Article 14 - Organisation of ethical monitoring

The SI Secretary General informs the Committee of all situations of default of which he is aware and of all complaints from a full member party or organisation regarding another member party or organisation.

The members of the Ethics Committee monitor the situation of the parties in their geographical zones. They alert the SI Secretary General and the Committee of any situation of concern.

Article 15 – Emergency procedure

In case of a rapid deterioration in the attitude of a member party or of a member organisation conducive to a situation of default with respect to the Ethical Charter, and if this goes against the credibility of the SI or of its members, the Ethics Committee can convene an emergency meeting and propose to the SI President and Secretary General to take urgent measures according to article 7.1 (penultimate paragraph) of the Statutes.

CHAPTER V – OTHER DISPOSITIONS

Article 16 – Re-examination procedures

An applying party which has had its application rejected may request a re-examination of its case at a Congress when this request is submitted by a full member party.

Article 17 – Exchanges of experience and support for member parties

The Committee will define initiatives for the establishment of exchanges of experience and support among the member parties in order to collectively defend and protect the common values and principles of the organisation.
