

Document No 6

For Action

CONSTITUTION AND RULES

I. Amendments proposed shortly before the assembly (executive committee September 2005)

(a) Under Rule I, the last section (6) deals with resignation. There is however, no mention of “withdrawal” or “suspension” of membership that does not entail severance of relationship. In the past there have been some churches that took the step of suspending their relation with the council.

Rule I

6. *Resignation*

A church which desires to resign its membership in the fellowship of the Council can do so at any time. A church which has resigned but desires to rejoin the Council must again apply for membership.

Add When a church suspends its membership or the central committee places the membership of a church in abeyance, because the basis or the theological criteria for membership have not been respected, a progress report shall be presented to the executive committee until a solution is mutually agreed.

(b) Rule I.3 refers to articles I and III of the Constitution and quotes verbatim Article I. Probably there is no reason to quote in full the exact wording of this article.

(c) Rule I – the last few years the central committee has developed a policy on “inactive members” (cf Doc 4 on Membership Matters). Both the term and the notion of “inactive members” do not exist in the current constitutional language of the WCC. Some further thought might be needed as to whether this policy should be gradually interpreted into the language of the rules.

Suggested action: *Points a), b) and c) referring to Rule I – alterations to which can only come into effect until they had been confirmed by the assembly –, the executive committee encourage and monitor a reflection process leading to the final drafting of the amendments as appropriate.*

(d) Under Rule VI (4 a) relating to functions – the programme committee and the finance committee have been referred to as standing committees. There is no definition of the term standing committee in the Rules. If the programme committee and the finance committee are distinguishable from other committees then it may be helpful to express that clearly.

Under the same Rule VI (4 a) reference committee or committees – the wording in the bracket could read as “appointed as needed at each meeting to advise the central committee at that particular session on any issue and/or question that calls for special consideration or action of the central committee.”

Rule VI. 4 a)

In the conduct of its business, the central committee shall elect the following committees:

nominations committee;

executive committee;

permanent committee on consensus and collaboration;

programme committee (~~delete a standing committee~~);

finance committee (~~delete a standing committee~~);

reference committee or committees (appointed as needed at each meeting to advise the central committee new wording at that particular session on any issue and or question that calls for special consideration or action by the central committee).

(e) Rule IX (5) – if the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration is also considered a committee of the assembly, as stated in this Rule, then it should also appear under Rule IV where mention has been made of the nominations committee and the business committee. The second issue related to the permanent committee would be the need to describe how a vacancy in the permanent committee will be filled.

Rule IV. 6. a)

Add **The permanent committee shall be considered a committee of the assembly**

b) Any other committee of the assembly shall consist...

Rule IX. 4.

Add **Any vacancy in the permanent committee will be filled through the same process as the election of its members.**

Suggested action: *the executive committee discuss the amendments proposed in points d) and e) and authorize their submission to the central committee for decision.*

II. Amendments based on the first central committee experience (September 2006)

Experiences during the first full meeting of the central committee were recorded by both members of the committee and consensus facilitators. Taking into consideration these experiences, proposals are being offered herewith for amendments to make certain Rules clearer:

Rule IX. 4

Two co-moderators shall be elected by the membership of the permanent committee, one by the Orthodox members (~~delete of the central committee~~), and one by the other members (~~delete of the central committee~~).

Rule VI.2.

2. Officers

- a) The central committee shall elect...
- b) The general secretary of the World Council of Churches...
- c) **add The officers of the central committee shall function as the business committee for meetings of the central and executive committees.**

Rule VIII.

2. Functions

- a) The executive committee shall be accountable to the central committee...
- b) The executive committee shall be responsible for...
- c) **add The executive committee may take any other action which is normally under the mandate of the central committee if, in the opinion of the officers, timely action is urgently required. All such decisions of the executive committee must be reviewed and ratified by the central committee at its next meeting.**
- d) The central committee may by specific action...
- e) The executive committee shall supervise...

Rule XX.

10. Decision-making by vote

- a) Some matters require decision by vote, rather than by consensus. These include:
 - 1) constitutional changes (two-thirds majority);
 - 2) elections ...
 - 3) adoption of yearly accounts...
 - 4) **add appointment of the auditors (simple majority).**

Suggested action: *the executive committee discuss the proposed amendments and authorize their submission to the central committee for decision.*

III. Amendments related to consultative bodies

Decisions taken by the central committee (September 2006) had an impact mainly on the way the consultative bodies are referred to in the Rules. Here are efforts to streamline the Rules with the decisions of the central committee:

<p>Rule VI 1.d) Moderators and vice-moderators of committees, commissions and boards joint consultative bodies...</p> <p>Rule VI 4.d) ...shall elect <i>appoint</i> commissions and boards joint consultative bodies...</p> <p>Rule VII 1.d) ...committees, commissions and boards joint consultative bodies...</p> <p>Rule VII 1. ...committees, commissions and boards joint consultative bodies...</p> <p>Rule X 1.c) ...commissions, boards and advisory groups joint consultative bodies</p> <p>Rule X 3.f) ...size of boards, in particular the board of the Ecumenical Institute; joint consultative bodies...</p> <p>Rule X 3.g) appoint other advisory groups for specific areas or constituencies, as required. The size and periodicity of meetings of such advisory groups are to be determined in light of the tasks assigned and the resources available.</p>

It should be noted that the above mentioned amendments should reflect in the constitution.

<p><u>Constitution (to be confirmed by the assembly)</u></p> <p>V 2. c) 3) to elect committees, commissions and boards joint consultative bodies.</p> <p>V 4. ...of its committees, boards, working groups and joint consultative bodies and commissions...</p>

Suggested action: *the executive committee discuss the proposed amendments and authorize their submission to the central committee for decision.*

V. Amendments as a consequence of the structural organization (central committee 2006 Doc. No GEN04)

The new structural organization, endorsed by the central committee in September 2006, will lead to the following amendments of Rule XII. There will be a change of terminology (“directors” for programme and management are now “associate general secretaries” for programme and management) and the “Staff Executive Group”, which had *de facto* become redundant, will formally come to an end:

XII. Staff

1. *The central committee shall elect or appoint or provide for the election or appointment of persons of special competence to conduct the continuing operations of the World Council of Churches. These persons collectively constitute the staff.*
2. *The general secretary shall be elected by the central committee. He or she is the chief executive officer of the World Council. As such, he or she is the head of the staff. When the position of general secretary becomes vacant, the executive committee shall appoint an acting general secretary.*
3. a) *In addition to the general secretary, the central committee shall itself elect one or more deputy general secretaries, the associate general secretary for programme and the associate general secretary for management.*
b) *The executive committee shall appoint all programme and executive directors and programme staff and shall report its actions to the central committee.*

Specialized, administrative and house staff shall be appointed by the general secretary.

4. *The staff leadership group shall consist of the general secretary (moderator), the deputy general secretary or secretaries, the associate general secretary for programme and the associate general secretary for management, the director of communication, and the executive director for planning and integration. Other staff may be invited for specific items on the agenda.*

The staff leadership group is the chief internal management team. Its overall responsibility is to advise the general secretary in his/her role as chief executive officer of the Council. It has the task of ensuring that all activities of the Council are carried out in an integrated and coherent manner. For this purpose it will:

- a) *Implement policies and priorities established by the central and executive committees and facilitate proposals to be submitted to them.*
 - b) *Provide for overall coordination, decide on priorities and the direction of the Council's activities.*
 - c) *Manage and allocate human and financial resources, propose the budget to the finance committees of the executive and central committees and ensure that programme planning is integrated with anticipated resources available.*
 - d) *Assist the general secretary in the appointment of staff and special reference groups.*
5. *The normal terms of appointment for the general secretary and for the deputy general secretary or secretaries shall be five years. Unless some other period is stated in the resolution making the appointment, the first term of office for all other staff appointed by the executive or central committee shall normally be four years from the date of the appointment. All appointments shall be reviewed one year before their expiration.*
 6. *Retirement shall normally be at sixty-five for both men and women and in no case shall it be later than the end of the year in which a staff member reaches the age of sixty-eight.*

Suggested action: *The executive committee discuss the proposed amendments and authorize their submission to the central committee for decision.*

V. By-laws

(a) The Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation mandated by the central committee (September 2006) has elaborated new By-Laws (Doc 6.1)

(b) The Churches' Commission on International Affairs had also been mandated by the central committee (September 2006) to elaborate new By-Laws. The matter is on the agenda of the commission, meeting in Geneva, 11-13 September 2007.

(c) In its first meeting, the newly established Youth Body has made the proposal to be named "Echos – Commission on Youth in the ecumenical movement" (cf Doc. 8, Programme Report). The proposal should be examined also as to whether by-laws might be needed for a consultative body now claiming the character of a "commission". It could be noted that such a task should not be particularly difficult, since the terms of reference for the body prepared and approved by the central committee (September 2006) could be easily translated into by-laws.

Suggested action: *The executive committee discuss the three proposals and authorize their submission to the central committee for decision.*