



CANONICAL STATUTES

STATUTES OF THE UNION OF EUROPEAN CONFERENCES OF MAJOR SUPERIORS (UCESM)

I. PURPOSE AND NATURE

1. The Union of European Conferences of Major Superiors (UCESM) is an association under the authority of the Holy See, through the intermediary of CIVCSVA¹. It is a non-profit making body and may have an unlimited number of members.
2. The purpose of UCESM (cf. Can 708) is:
 - a. to undertake reflection and propose action, through the intermediary of the national Conferences, to help religious in Europe and the members of Apostolic Societies to bear witness to the Gospel in cultural and socio-economic contexts, in the light of the diverse circumstances of time and place;
 - b. to promote collaboration and mutual assistance between the Conferences of Major Superiors (male and female) in the various European nations, and possibly between these Conferences and other international bodies;
 - c. to foster suitable coordination and collaboration between these national Conferences of Major Superiors and Episcopal Conferences as well as the Council of European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE) and the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) and with each bishop;
 - d. to represent the members of UCESM whenever the presence of a representative of European religious congregations and of the members of societies of apostolic life is desired or required.

II. MEMBERS

3. UCESM is open to all canonically established Conferences of Major Superiors from European nations which ask to join. Membership may also be freely terminated by notifying the Executive Committee.
4. Membership of UCESM shall not interfere with the full autonomy of the member Conferences of Major Superiors. However, it involves the rights and duties described in these statutes.
5. UCESM comprises the following organs:
 - a. the General Assembly,
 - b. the Executive Committee,
 - c. the General Secretariat.

¹ Canon 709 of the Code of Canon Law; Pastor Bonus, 109; Mutuae Relationes, 66.

III. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

6. The General Assembly shall meet in ordinary session at least once every two years. An extraordinary session may be convened at the request of at least one third of the member Conferences.

7. § I. The participants of the General Assembly are the Presidents and Secretaries General (all of whom must be either a religious or a member of a society of apostolic life) of all the Conferences which are members of UCESM.

§ II. Where the Major Superiors of any country are represented by one national Conference, the Vice-President shall also participate at the General Assembly.

§ III. Should the President or Vice-President be unable to attend, (s)he may send a duly authorized representative, who must be a member of the Conference (s)he is representing.

8. For every General Assembly, the Apostolic Nuncio of the place where the General Assembly is held² and a representative of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life must be invited. The following may also be invited as guests:

- a. a representative of the Council of European Episcopal Conferences³;
- b. delegates of the Conferences of Superiors Majors which are not members of UCESM;
- c. representatives of countries which do not yet have canonically established Conferences;
- d. other guests, on the initiative of the Executive Committee.

9. The agenda of the General Assembly shall be set by the Executive Committee, after consulting the members of UCESM.

10. This agenda shall include:

- a. evaluation of the operation of the Union;
- b. general overview of the situation in Europe, above all at ecclesiastical and religious level; and consideration of this situation and study of the proposed action;
- c. election of members of the Executive Committee;
- d. possible preparation of documents on religious life and its mission in Europe;
- e. the creation or disbanding of study commissions;
- f. approval of the financial accounts of the previous financial year and of the proposed budget;
- g. any other relevant business.

11. Where the General Assembly decides to publish a declaration or a document or to take an initiative likely to have a notable influence on the life of the Church in Europe, or having any connection whatsoever with faith or religious life, it shall take care to do so in communion with the Council of European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE) and, possibly, with the CICLESAL.

12. For every vote which takes place in the General Assembly, only the Presidents of each member Conference and, in case of only one national Conference, also the Vice-President, have the right to vote, with due consideration to what has been stated in n.7§III. Secretaries General do not hold voting privileges.

13. With due regard for the prescriptions in nn. 16, 28 and 29, all other decisions of the General Assembly shall be taken by absolute majority.

² cf Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum, IX

³ cf Mutuae Relationes, 65

IV. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

14. The Executive Committee is made up of the President, the Vice-President, and two councillors. It shall meet at least once a year.

15. § 1. The role of the Executive Committee is:

- a. to keep in touch with developments in religious life, mainly in Europe, at all levels, particularly in matters of theological research and apostolic mission;
- b. to organize General Assemblies and make the necessary preparations for the same;
- c. to implement the General Assembly's decisions;
- d. to administer the funds of UCESM and to supervise the management of the Union's budget;
- e. to inform CIVCSVA and the Council of European Episcopal Conferences in good time on the agenda and topic of the General Assembly, and to send them the minutes;
- f. to take all the necessary steps to fill vacancies within it, taking account of the result of the previous elections held at the General Assembly.

§ II. With regard to any public declaration which the Executive Committee might deem useful or necessary, it must take into account what has been stated in n. 11.

16. The President, Vice-President and the two Councillors are to be elected by a two-thirds majority of the valid votes. If this majority is not attained in the first two ballots, a third ballot is required, in which an absolute majority suffices. If this majority is not attained, in a fourth and final ballot election shall be for either of the two candidates who received most votes in the third ballot.

17. § I. They are elected for a period of four years, even if they cease to be members of the National Conference of Major Superiors in the meantime.

§ II. They may be re-elected for a second period of four years (but not for a third in the same office), so long as, at the time of the election, they fulfil the conditions laid down in n. 18.

18. § I. All members of the Executive Committee must be members of National Conferences of Major Superiors at the time of the election. Moreover, the President and Vice-President must be Presidents of their National Conferences at the time when the election is held.

§ II. The Vice-President should be a woman religious if the President is a male religious, and vice-versa.

19. The President shall:

- a. represent the Union in person or through a delegate;
- b. convene and chair the General Assembly and the Executive Committee.

20. The Vice-President shall replace the President in the event of vacancy or absence.

V. THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

21. The General Secretary shall be appointed by the Executive Committee for a period of four years. (S)he can be re-appointed for other periods of four years.

22. (S)he receives her/his mandate from the Executive Committee and shall be accountable to the Committee, particularly to the President.

23. It is the duty of the General Secretary to:

- a. report to the General Assembly on the work of the secretariat;

- b. prepare the meetings of the Executive Committee, draft the minutes and implement its decisions;
- c. ensure that documents are regularly forwarded between Conferences; d. maintain the Union's archives.

24. The Secretariat shall have its seat in Brussels, unless, with the unanimous vote of the executive Council, it is decided otherwise.

VI. THE TREASURER

25. The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Executive Committee for four years. (S)he can be re-appointed for other periods of four years.

26. It is the duty of the Treasurer to:

- a. manage the budget;
- b. submit the biennial budget to the Executive Committee before presenting it to the General Assembly for its approval in accordance with n. 28; c. account for her/his management to the Executive Committee once a year,
- d. account for her/his management at the General Assembly by presenting the financial report for its approval.

27. Finance towards UCESM shall be provided through a subscription, the amount of which shall be voted on by the General Assembly in session.

28. For the approval of the biennial budget by the General Assembly, a two thirds majority is required.

VII. OTHER PROVISIONS

29. For the approval or amendment of these Statutes, a two-thirds majority is required. Such statutes shall not enter into force until after approval by CIVCSVA.

30. For all other provisions not provided for in these Statutes, reference shall be made to the general law of the Church, particularly canons 119 and 164-183 of the Code of Canon Law.