

# INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HISTORY AND THEORY OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

## CONSTITUTION

— draft (22 February 2024) —

*On 22 February 2024, the ICHTH Board decided that the present draft of the Constitution will be put on the agenda of the next ICHTH General Assembly for a vote on approval with its unanimous recommendation. The President ([antoondebaets@ichth.net](mailto:antoondebaets@ichth.net)) welcomes comments from ICHTH members on the draft.<sup>1</sup>*

### Article 1. DEFINITION

The International Commission for History and Theory of Historiography (ICHTH) is a non-profit organization affiliated to the International Committee of Historical Sciences (ICHS) / Comité International des Sciences Historiques (CISH).

### Article 2. OBJECTIVES

ICHTH brings together scholars engaged in research on, promotes the study of, and encourages debates and exchanges involving different approaches to, the theory of history, the history of historiography, the philosophy of history, historical methodology, and historical culture (hereinafter “the ICHTH focus areas”).

### Article 3. ACTIVITIES

To achieve its objectives, ICHTH seeks:

- 3.1 To encourage and coordinate an international network of researchers and work together with international or national organizations and bodies promoting the discussion of the ICHTH focus areas.
- 3.2 To provide a strategic center for advancing and coordinating efforts to promote interest in the ICHTH focus areas and for various ways of knowing the past among scholars of different cultural backgrounds around the world;
- 3.3 To encourage and support conferences, workshops and consultancies aimed at promoting the ICHTH focus areas in a variety of learning situations;
- 3.4 To establish and maintain close links with learned journals, academic institutions and networks specializing in the ICHTH focus areas; and
- 3.5 To award ICHTH book prizes for the history and theory of historiography.

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<sup>1</sup> *Background.* Reading the 2017 [ICHTH Constitution](#), the President came upon some inconsistencies and gaps in the text. Therefore, he invited Toby Mendel, senior human rights lawyer and executive director of the [Centre for Law and Democracy](#) in Halifax, Canada, to jointly review the text. This led to three successive rounds of proofreading resulting in this new draft. Toby Mendel is prepared to give further advice on points of contention, should these arise during our discussions. In November 2022, the President prepared a memo, entitled “A New Draft of the ICHTH Constitution.” The Executive Committee meeting of 6 December 2022, the Board meeting of 25 February 2023, the Executive Committee meeting of 28 November 2023, and the Board meeting of 19 February 2023 then discussed the memo. After the latter meeting, a motion was passed to forward the draft to the full membership with the unanimous recommendation of the Board. The new draft changes the text in many places and contains several new passages. However, in essence it is the same text as the old one: no crucial passages were deleted, unrecognizably altered, or added; they were only refined and sometimes rearranged for greater clarity and in conformity with international custom. Drawing up a comparative table of text changes, though, would be very complicated: it is quicker to read the new draft at once. The new draft should make ICHTH’s work more transparent and democratic.

#### Article 4. NON-DISCRIMINATION

- 4.1 ICHTH does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, political or other opinion, or sexual orientation, in any of its activities or operations.
- 4.2 ICHTH seeks to avoid regional or ethnocentric assumptions in order to ensure that it reflects the diversity of the ICHTH focus areas.

#### Article 5. RESOURCES

The resources of ICHTH consist of annual membership fees and donations.

#### Article 6. MEMBERS

- 6.1 ICHTH is open to scholars worldwide who conduct research in the ICHTH focus areas, have a PhD in history or another relevant scientific discipline, have other proven qualities or achievements in the ICHTH focus areas, and respect this Constitution.
- 6.2 Any exceptions to these conditions need explicit justification.
- 6.3 The Board approves applications for membership.
- 6.4 The Board maintains a record of members in good standing and the financial status of their membership.
- 6.5 An ICHTH member may resign at any time by providing written notice to the President of the Board.
- 6.6 Members have the right to:
  - a) Participate in and contribute to the activities and work of ICHTH;
  - b) Participate in General Assembly meetings;
  - c) Make inquiries to the Board about the activities and finances of the ICHTH;
  - d) Vote in elections and decisions of the General Assembly;
  - e) Run for elected positions in the ICHTH; and
  - f) Receive such other benefits as the Board or General Assembly may decide.

#### Article 7. MEMBERSHIP FEES

- 7.1 Members of ICHTH are required to pay the annual membership fee.
- 7.2 The Board may provide an exemption from the membership fee upon application where this is justified based on the lack of resources available to the member.
- 7.3 The amount of the fee is decided by the General Assembly upon proposal by the Board.
- 7.4 Any member who has not paid the annual fee cannot participate in the General Assembly or exercise the right to vote.
- 7.5 Any member who has not paid the membership fee for three consecutive years is considered to have resigned.

#### Article 8. ORGANS

The organs of ICHTH are:

- 8.1 The General Assembly; and
- 8.2 The Board.

#### Article 9. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 9.1 *Convening Meetings*
  - a) A General Assembly meeting is convened by the Board at least every five years, or when at least one-fifth of the paid-up members make a written application to hold it. The meeting may be held in person or virtually.

- b) Members will be notified of the meeting and provided with a copy of the draft agenda no later than two months before the date of the General Assembly meeting.
- c) The draft agenda, including new matters proposed by members, shall be subject to adoption by the membership at the opening of the General Assembly meeting.

## 9.2 *Competencies*

The General Assembly will, in addition to any other duties assigned by this Constitution:

- a) Elect, after approval of the President of the Board, a President of the Session, in charge of chairing the General Assembly, and a Secretary of the Session, in charge of keeping the minutes of the General Assembly;
- b) Approve the minutes of the preceding General Assembly;
- c) Adopt the budget, financial report, and annual accounts of ICHTH, as presented to it by the Board;
- d) Set the agenda for ICHTH's future action; and
- e) Elect the members of the Board.

## 9.3 *Decisions*

- a) Decisions of the General Assembly are taken by consensus, and if consensus cannot be reached, by a plurality of the votes of the members participating in the vote.
- b) Decisions are valid when at least one-fifth of the members in good standing participate.
- c) A vote may be taken at a physical meeting of the General Assembly or via electronic means.
- d) Any member in good standing can participate in a vote directly or by proxy.
- e) A proxy must be delivered in writing, be signed by the relevant member and indicate the name of the member to whom the proxy vote is assigned.
- f) Proxy statements must be handed to the President of the Session at the opening of the meeting, and no member can hold more than two proxy votes.

## Article 10. BOARD

10.1 The Board undertakes to promote the ICHTH objectives and activities.

### 10.2 *Membership of the Board*

- a) The Board is composed of twelve members, of which not more than two may hold the same nationality, as well as the former President as an ex officio member with no voting rights.
- b) The Board is elected by direct and secret vote of the members during the General Assembly meeting.
- c) Any member can nominate new Board candidates at the General Assembly.
- d) Board members are elected for a term of five years and may be elected for no more than two consecutive terms.
- e) Board members may resign at any time by providing written notice to the President.
- f) A Board member may be removed permanently from the Board at a meeting of the Board by a two-thirds majority vote of the other members, after having been given at least two weeks' notice of the proposal to remove him or her, along with reasons, and an opportunity to respond to any allegations, for:
  - i) having missed three consecutive meetings of the Board without any valid reason; or
  - ii) having acted in a manner which is manifestly inappropriate, for example by disrupting a meeting or showing serious disrespect for another member of the Board.
- g) Where a member of the Board resigns or is removed and more than six months remain in her or his term, the Board elects a new member with a majority of votes to replace that member, with the term of the incoming member running until the end of the Board's term.

10.3 The members of the Board elect the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Program Chair and the Treasurer (the “Executive Committee”) from among themselves, who shall hold office for the full term of the Board, and who shall have the following responsibilities, in addition to any others provided for specifically in this Constitution:

- a) President: generally lead the work of the ICHTH, chair meetings of the Board and represent the ICHTH;
- b) Vice President: support the President and take over his or her tasks in his or her absence;
- c) Secretary: take minutes at meetings and generally ensure that the documents and records of the ICHTH are maintained in good order;
- d) Program Chair: lead on matters relating to the programming of ICHTH activities; and
- e) Treasurer: ensure that the financial and membership records of ICHTH are maintained in good order and that it operates within the scope of its resources.

10.4 The Board executives may delegate responsibilities to other members of the Board.

10.5 The President, the Vice President and the Secretary handle all the correspondence with the ICHS/CISH and with ICHTH members.

10.6 Contracts, engagements, deeds, transfers and other legally binding instruments entered into on behalf of ICHTH which create binding obligations must be signed by the President and at least one other member of the Board.

#### 10.7 *Board responsibilities*

The Board will, in addition to any other tasks assigned by this Constitution:

- a) Prepare the agenda and make other arrangements relating to the General Assembly meeting, and convene that meeting;
- b) Carry out the decisions of the General Assembly;
- c) Manage all of the work of ICHTH; and
- d) Prepare the quinquennial budget, financial report, and accounts for consideration by the General Assembly.

#### 10.8 *Representation*

- a) ICHTH is represented at ICHS/CISH by the President and, if this is not possible, by the Vice President.
- b) For other missions and representational tasks, the Board can appoint one or more of its members.

#### 10.9 *Meetings*

- a) The Board meets at least once annually for regular meetings, which are called by the President and may be held in person or virtually.
- b) A special meeting of the Board may be called at any time by the President or upon a written request of at least four Board members.
- c) The Secretary gives all Board members written notice of the time and, as relevant, the venue of a regular meeting at least 14 days in advance and circulates a written copy of the proposed agenda at least seven days in advance, while notice of a special meeting is given as far in advance of the meeting as is practical.
- d) A majority of Board members, not including the ex-officio Board member, constitutes quorum.
- e) Any Board member may introduce a resolution to be voted on by the Board.

- f) Decisions of the Board are made by a simple majority of the members present and voting, unless a larger majority is required by the rules of the Board, provided that in case of an equality of votes, the member presiding at the meeting has a casting vote in addition to his or her original vote.
- g) The Board may vote to allow decisions to be taken via electronic means of voting outside of the context of an in-person meeting.
- h) The President presides at all meetings of the Board, provided that where the President is absent the Vice President presides and, where he or she is absent, the members present elect from amongst themselves a member to preside over the meeting.
- i) The Secretary, or in his or her absence the member so appointed by the members present, takes and keeps minutes of all meetings in a form approved by the Board.
- j) The minutes are submitted to the Board for formal approval and adoption at its next meeting.
- k) A member of the Board who has a direct or indirect interest in any matter to be discussed at a meeting of the Board discloses the nature of such interest to the other members present at the meeting before the matter is discussed. Any such disclosure is recorded in the minutes of the meeting and the Board determines, without the participation of the concerned member, whether that member may take part in any deliberation or decision relating to the matter in question.

10.10 The Board adopts such other rules in relation to meetings and other matters as it deems appropriate, subject to compliance with the rules in this Constitution.

#### **Article 11. MODIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

- 11.1 The present Constitution can be modified at a General Assembly meeting by an absolute majority vote of the members participating in the vote, provided that at least one-fifth of the members in good standing participate in the vote.
- 11.2 Any proposal to modify the Constitution must be circulated to the membership at the same time as the agenda of the meeting and be listed as an item for consideration on the agenda.

#### **Article 12. DISSOLUTION**

The ICHTH can decide on its dissolution at any time, by a two-thirds majority vote of the members, provided that at least one-fifth of the members in good standing participate in the vote.

*This Constitution was approved by the ICHTH General Assembly on ... It replaces the previous version of 2017.*