

Legal version in French

## **STATUTES (by-Laws) OF THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY**

### **PREAMBLE**

Political Parties at European level contribute to forming European political awareness and to expressing the will of the citizens of the Union." (Article 10.4 of the Treaty on the European Union-Lisbon Treaty and Article 12.2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union-the Charter).

On the basis

- of the Christian view of mankind and the Christian Democratic concept of society,
- of their joint will to create a federal European Union as a Union of free peoples and citizens conscious of their own responsibilities,

the Christian Democrat, Centrist and like-minded parties of the European People's Party as heirs of Europe's Founding Fathers accept these responsibilities and create an association. This association will be a member of the Christian /Centrist Democrat International (IDC-CDI), a worldwide organisation of Christian Democrats and like-minded political parties and the International Democrat Union (IDU), a worldwide organization of Conservative, Christian Democrat and like-minded political parties of the centre and centre right.

### **I. NAME – ADDRESS – OBJECTIVES - DURATION**

#### **Article 1 NAME – LEGAL BASE - LOGO**

The association, an alliance of political parties at European level, is named "Parti populaire européen / Europese Volkspartij / Europäische Volkspartei / European People's Party", abbreviated as "PPE/EVP/EPP"). This name must always be preceded or followed by the words "parti politique européen/Europese politieke partij, European political party" or the abbreviation "PPEU/EUPP/EUPP".

The EPP pursues its aims, carries out its activities and is organized and financed in conformity with the conditions laid down in the Regulation (EU/EURATOM) N° 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and political foundations, as amended.

For the matters not regulated by the referred European Regulation the association is governed by the Belgian Code of Companies and Associations (hereinafter the "CCA").

The EPP does not pursue profit goals.

The logo of the association is defined in annex 1 to the by-laws.

#### **Article 2 ADDRESS**

The registered office of the association is established in the Brussels' Region.

The Presidency is authorized to transfer the registered office of the association to another location within this Region and to establish other offices and/or subsidiaries within or outside this judicial district.

#### **Article 3 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

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The purpose of the association is to:

- promote and foster close and ongoing collaboration among its members for the purpose of implementing their common policy at European level;
- encourage and organise unanimous action by its members at European level;
- work (i) to achieve free and pluralistic democracy, (ii) for respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law on the basis of a common programme promote the process of unification and federal integration in Europe as a constituent element of the European Union.

In order to realize this purpose and in order to establish, develop, implement and promote its policies, the association organizes several discussion and decision forums, major events and fact finding missions according to strict democratic principles and issues publications of all sorts.

The association is also authorised to execute all legal instruments (including real estate transactions) directly or indirectly useful or necessary for the promotion and achievement of the above-mentioned aims.

Through their national policies the member parties of the association support positions taken by the association in the context of the European Union. In the context of national responsibilities, they shall maintain their own name, their identity and their freedom of action. The association is represented in the European Parliament by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) (Group of the EPP in the European Parliament).

Member parties oblige parliamentarians elected to the European Parliament on their list, and/or sent to the like-minded or associated Groups at the Parliamentary Assemblies of the CoE, the OSCE and NATO, the European committee of the regions, Union for the Mediterranean and EURONEST, to join the EPP Groups therein.

**Article 4 DURATION**

The association is incorporated for an indefinite duration.

**II. MEMBERSHIP**

**Article 5 MEMBERS WITH VOTING RIGHTS**

The number of members is unlimited, but may not be less than two. Requests for membership shall be submitted to the President and Secretary General in writing. They shall comprise a statement on the adoption of the Political programme, the EPP Code of Conduct on Ethical Behaviour in Politics, as well as the by-laws and the internal regulations of the association, in addition to a copy of the by-laws and programme in its original language and in English of the applicant party. The EPP President and Secretary General should be notified in writing of any change in the by-laws of any member. The Presidency will transmit the application for membership to the Political Assembly following the recommendation of the Working Group EPP Membership.

Without prejudice to article 5 *bis* and subject to what follows, the Political Assembly is authorised to grant, at its own discretion, the applicant one of the following member status in the EPP: (1) Ordinary Member Party, (2) Associated Member Party, (3) Member Association or (4) Individual Member (as defined here below).

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(1) Ordinary Member Parties

The member status of Ordinary Member Party can be granted to any Christian Democrat or like-minded party, based in the European Union, which subscribes to the association's political programme and the EPP Code of Conduct on Ethical Behaviour in Politics, and which accepts the association's by-laws and internal regulations.

(2) Associated Member Parties

The member status of Associated Member Party can be granted to any political party of Christian Democrat or like-minded orientation, based outside the European Union, from states whose applications for membership of the European Union have been introduced and / or states belonging to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which subscribes to the objectives referred to in article 3 of the by-laws and to the association's political programme and EPP Code of Conduct on Ethical Behaviour in Politics, and which accepts the association's by-laws and internal regulations. Associated Member Parties, or their representatives within the organs and bodies of the association, shall not participate in decisions involving the policies and structure of the European Union nor of its institutional system. If the state in which the Associated Member Party is established effectively becomes a member of the European Union, such Associated Member Party shall automatically become an Ordinary Member Party as from the date of the adherence of such state to the European Union.

(3) Member Associations

The member status of Member Association can be granted to any Member Association within the meaning of article 26 of the by-laws and section VIII of the internal regulations and which subscribes to the association's political programme and EPP Code of Conduct on Ethical Behaviour in Politics and accepts the association's by-laws and internal regulations.

The member status of Member Association has been granted to the following associations:

- European Democrat Students (EDS)
- European Union of Christian Democratic Workers (EUCDW)
- Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP)
- Small and Medium Entrepreneurs of Europe (SME EUROPE)
- EPP Women (EPPW)
- European Seniors Union (ESU)

The way in which these Member Associations are integrated in the association is further described in article VIII of the Internal Regulations.

(4) Individual Members

In addition, all members of the EPP Group in the European Parliament elected on a list of a member party are also members ex officio of the association (hereinafter referred to as "Individual Members"). Other members of the European Parliament can become Individual Members of the association by decision of the Political Assembly on the proposal of the Presidency of the association. The speaking and voting rights of the Individual Members within the organs of the association are personal and inalienable.

If a candidate for membership in the association is a legal person within the meaning of the law applicable to it, it must name in its application for membership a natural person who will represent it in the association. The same provision applies if the candidate does not have legal personality under the law applicable to it. It shall then designate a natural person who will act on behalf of all members of the candidate member without legal personality, as its representative. In case of a change of representation, the President of the association is immediately informed in writing.

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**Article 5 bis MEMBERS WITHOUT VOTING RIGHTS**

Without prejudice to article 5 and subject to what follows, the Political Assembly is, on the proposal of the Presidency, authorised to grant, at its own discretion, the applicant one of the following member statuses without voting rights: (1) Observer Member Party, (2) EPP Partner or (3) Associated Entities (as defined here below).

(1) Observer Member Parties

The member status of Observer Member Party can be granted to parties close to the EPP, from (i) European Union Member States, (ii) states which have applied for European Union membership as well as from (iii) European states that are members of the Council of Europe, upon the condition of the adoption of the association's political programme and the EPP Code of Conduct on Ethical Behaviour in Politics, and the acceptance of the association's by-laws and internal regulations.

(2) EPP Partners:

The member status of EPP Partner can be granted to any political party outside the EU represented in an International Organization such as the Council of Europe, NATO, OSCE and / or Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), upon the condition that such party has a likeminded EPP orientation, accept the association's by-laws (including the objectives referred to in article 3 of the by-laws), internal regulations and political programme. Membership of the Centrist Democrat International (IDC-CDI) and/or International Democrat Union (IDU) is a positive criteria.

(3) Associated Entities

The member status of Associated Entity can be granted to any entity based in a European Union Member State or a third country whose activities and positions taken are in line with the EPP program and which subscribes to the association's political programme and EPP Code of Conduct on Ethical Behaviour in Politics and accepts the association's by-laws and internal regulations.

The member status of Associated Entity has been granted to the Robert Schuman Institute.

The way in which the Robert Schuman Institute is integrated in the association is further described in article XIV of the Internal Regulations.

**Article 6 COMPLIANCE WITH CODE OF CONDUCT**

Every application for the member status of Ordinary Member party, Associated Member Party, Member Association, Observer Member Party or Individual Member, who is not a member ex officio of the association, must include a written statement confirming that the applicant undertakes to comply with the values, principles and provisions set out in the association's EPP Code of Conduct on Ethical Behaviour in Politics as approved and amended from time to time in accordance with article 25 and 16 of the by-laws (hereinafter referred to as the "EPP Code of Conduct").

The EPP Ethics Committee shall draw up a procedure to be applied as part of the application process, with a view to verifying the compliance with the EPP Code of Conduct of any applicant, having confirmed its adherence to the EPP Code of Conduct in accordance with this article.

**Article 7 MEMBERSHIP FEES AND MEMBERSHIP PUBLICATION**

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Ordinary Member Parties, Associated Member Parties, Member Associations, Observer Member Parties and EPP Partners individually pay annual dues of no more than 500.000 (five hundred thousand) euros. The amount of the dues is determined annually by the Political Assembly. Dues are payable within two weeks of having been set and communicated by the Political Assembly to the members.

Ordinary Member Parties, Associated Member Parties, Member Associations, Observer Member Parties publish the political programme and logo of the EPP on their websites, in a clearly visible and user-friendly manner, from the date on which the Political Assembly granted them member status and for the entire duration of their membership.

**Article 8 REGISTER AND EXCLUSIVITY**

The Presidency keeps a membership register at the registered office of the association. This register lists the surname, first name, place of residence, date and place of birth of members or, in the case of legal persons or de facto associations, the name, legal form, address of the registered office, identity of the representative and, where applicable, the registration number in accordance with existing legislation and/or regulations. All members may consult this register at the registered office of the association.

The EPP membership is strictly exclusive. In no case may an EPP member as defined under Articles 5 and 5 bis under Section II of the by-laws also be a member of any other Political Party at European Level recognized under Regulation (EU/EURATOM) N° 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and political foundations.

A member of the EPP that is found to be also member of another Political Party at European Level will be automatically excluded according to Article IX, c. of the EPP Internal Regulations.

**Article 9 RESIGNATION, SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION**

Any member may resign from the association at any time. The member gives notice to the Presidency of the decision to resign by written notification.

Members that resign are obliged to fulfil their financial obligations toward the association for the year during which the resignation is submitted and for all previous years.

The suspension and the exclusion of a member may only be decided by the Political Assembly. It is not obliged to disclose its reasons. A proposal for the exclusion of a member may only be submitted by the Presidency, or seven Ordinary or Associated Member Parties from five different countries. The Presidency invites the member concerned to the meeting of the Political Assembly and may hear the member concerned. The Political Assembly can take any action it deems appropriate against an Individual Member, who is not a member ex officio of the association. A proposal for the exclusion of an Individual Member who is a member ex officio of the association may only be submitted by the Presidency of the EPP Group in the European Parliament.

If a Member Party is not any more a viable political force in its respective country and, in particular, has not been represented in regional or national or European Parliament(s) for two consecutive parliamentary terms, the EPP Presidency can recommend\_ to the Political Assembly its suspension or exclusion, according to the procedures stated in the previous paragraph.

If a member, other than an Individual Member who is a member ex officio of the association, does not comply with the EPP Code of Conduct, the Presidency can, upon recommendation of the EPP Ethics Committee, recommend to the Political Assembly the suspension or exclusion of

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that member, according to the procedures stated above. In this case, the Political Assembly shall investigate the alleged violations of the EPP Code of Conduct, invite the member concerned to a hearing and render a reasoned decision.

If a member, other than an Individual Member, does not continuously publish the political programme and logo of the EPP on its website in a clearly visible and user-friendly manner, the EPP Presidency can recommend to the Political Assembly its suspension or exclusion, according to the procedures stated above. In this case, the Political Assembly shall invite the member concerned to a hearing and render a reasoned decision.

A member's affiliation ceases automatically upon death, disqualification, liquidation or in cases of temporary administration, court-ordered settlement or insolvency. The affiliation of an individual member ends automatically when this member is no longer a member of the European Parliament and the affiliation of a Member Association ends automatically when this member does no longer fulfil the criteria that were necessary for its preliminary recognition as a Member Association and which are set out in the internal regulations.

Members that resigned or were excluded and the legal successors of such members or of deceased members have no claims on the assets of the association and may never be reimbursed for dues paid, contributions or any other payments made to the association, unless otherwise expressly provided for in the by-laws.

In no case may a member that resigned or was excluded demand the communication of or a copy of the accounts, the placing of official seals on the property of the association or the drawing up of an inventory.

**Article 9 (bis) STATEMENTS – MEMBERS LIST**

The EPP does not bear responsibility for statements issued on behalf of the EPP by members without prior approval of the EPP President.

The list of member parties as defined in article 5 and 5 *bis* is defined in annex 2 to the by-laws.

**III. ORGANS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

**Article 10 ORGANS**

The organs of the association are:

- (i) The Presidency
- (ii) The Political Assembly
- (iii) The Congress.

The EPP strives towards equal participation of women and men in all its organs.

**IV. PRESIDENCY**

**Article 11 COMPOSITION – ELECTION – INCOMPATIBILITIES – INVITEES – VOLONTARYTY – REPLACEMENTS**

The association is managed by the Presidency, the executive organ, within the meaning of article 10:9 of the CCA. The Presidency is composed of:

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- (i) the President of the EPP;
- (ii) the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Council, the High Representative on Foreign and Security Policy, the President of the European Parliament (to the extent that these persons are affiliated to the EPP);
- (iii) the Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament;
- (iv) the Honorary President(s);
- (v) ten Vice-Presidents;
- (vi) the Treasurer; and
- (vii) the Secretary General.

Except for the Honorary President(s) who are elected by the Political Assembly, and for the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Council, the High Representative on Foreign and Security Policy, the President of the European Parliament, the President of the Group of the EPP in the European Parliament, who are *ex officio* members of the Presidency, the members of the Presidency are elected by the Congress by secret ballot and by separate vote, for a renewable term of three years.

The Congress elects first the President who, subsequently, proposes to the Congress a Secretary General to be elected. Only representatives of Ordinary and Associated Member Parties are eligible for these functions.

Candidates who obtain a simple majority of the valid votes cast are elected. Abstentions are not considered valid votes. Prior to the Congress, a special voting regulation for the election of the President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary General and Treasurer, will be approved by the Political Assembly.

Candidates for the functions of President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer must be nominated, in writing, to the Secretariat General, seven days prior to the date of the election. Presidents and Secretaries General are entitled, on behalf of Ordinary and Associated Member Parties and on behalf of Member Associations, to propose candidates provided that all candidates are member of an Ordinary or Associated Member Party. All Ordinary and Associated Member Parties and all Member Associations shall be informed of the names of the candidates not less than three days prior to the elections.

The members of the Presidency may resign at any time, by giving notice to the Presidency of the decision to resign by written notification. Their mandate is at any time revocable by the Congress.

Ceasing to be a member of an Ordinary or Associated EPP Member Party also constitutes simultaneous resignation from the EPP Presidency.

If a mandate falls vacant, the Political Assembly shall in accordance with the previous paragraphs of this article, elect a replacement following a call for candidatures. At the following Congress, confirmation of this election is requested and the Congress determines the duration of the term of office. Members of the Presidency may be re-elected.

Members of the Presidency whose terms of office are coming to an end must, before expiry of the term, call a Congress for the purpose of electing new members of the Presidency. If they fail to do so, they are obliged to remain in office until such time as a replacement can be found, without prejudice to their responsibility for any damage caused by their omission.

On the proposal of the President, and in accordance with the requirements of the agenda, the following persons may be invited to attend meetings of the Presidency:

- members of the European Commission who are member of a Member Party;

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- The President and/or the President of the EPP, like-minded or associated Groups, at the Parliamentary Assemblies of the CoE, the OSCE and NATO, the European committee of the regions, Union for the Mediterranean and EURONEST.

The following persons are permanently invited:

- (1) the Deputy Secretary(ies)-General of the EPP;
- (2) The Secretary-General of the EPP Group in the European Parliament.

The EPP President and/or Secretary General can attend, at will, any meetings of any organs of EPP Groups and Associations.

The members of the Presidency are not remunerated for the exercise of their mandate, unless decided otherwise by the Political Assembly.

In case the President would be prevented to fulfil his powers, as attributed to him by these by-laws and the internal regulations, he will delegate one of the Vice-Presidents as his representative.

**Article 12 POWERS – RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Presidency has the powers attributed to it by the law, these by-laws and the Internal Regulations. Its competences consist inter alia of:

- ensuring the implementation of decisions taken by the Political Assembly;
- preparing the annual accounts and budget;
- ensuring the permanent political presence of the EPP;
- monitoring the work of the General Secretariat, and more in particular the budget management;
- issuing statements on behalf of the EPP in the framework of its political program further to a decision of the Political Assembly;
- proposing candidates for the function of Deputy Secretary(ies) General to the Political Assembly in agreement with the Secretary General;
- proposing candidates for nomination as Honorary President to the Political Assembly;
- ensuring the coherence of membership policies between the EPP and EPP Groups in international organisations, institutions, bodies and assemblies;
- adopting internal regulations for matters that fall within the scope of its competences;
- implementing the recommendations of the EPP Ethics Committee and formulating proposals to the Political Assembly as to the further implementation by the Political Assembly of these recommendations.

**Article 13 MEETINGS**

The members of the Presidency shall meet at least eight times annually, upon convocation by the President, by letter, fax or email at the latest two weeks in advance, unless in case of urgency. The meetings take place on the day and at the time and place stated in the convocation notice. The notice also contains the agenda, which is fixed by the President. The Presidency may only debate on the items on the agenda, unless all the members are present and unanimously agree to deliberate and to approve the agenda set at that time.

The Presidency shall validly deliberate if a majority of its members are present.

In case of failure to achieve this quorum, a second meeting shall be convened with the same agenda, which can validly deliberate, regardless of the attendance quorum.



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Decisions shall be taken with a simple majority of the votes cast by the members of the Presidency present. All members of the Presidency shall have one vote. In case of a tie, the President has the casting vote. Abstentions and blank votes are not considered valid votes.

The meetings are chaired by the President.

The Secretary General or a Deputy Secretary General shall draw up the minutes of the meetings, which shall be kept at the registered office of the association.

Membership of the Presidency is strictly personal, meaning that a representative of a member of the Presidency will not be admitted to meetings. The mandate of the elected members of the Presidency will automatically expire if, during the course of the year, a member has not participated in at least half of the meetings.

On the proposal of the President, the Presidency may share work between its members or mandate certain members for specific tasks and delegate specific powers to one or more of its members.

**Article 14 DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

If the President considers it advisable, the Presidency may approve a proposal by having all members of the Presidency sign for approval a circular setting out the proposal.

In this case, the Presidency is not required to call a meeting. The circular must include the following information:

- a statement that the text is a proposal for a decision of the Presidency;
- a statement that the decision shall only be approved if signed by all the members of the Presidency;
- a statement that the decision may not be amended and that no reservations may be expressed by members of the Presidency;
- a statement that all the members of the Presidency must return the document signed and with the handwritten words "read and approved";
- a statement that the signed circular must be returned within ten days to the association.

The meetings of the Presidency may also be organized by video- or teleconference.

**V. POLITICAL ASSEMBLY**

**Article 15 DEFINITION – COMPOSITION**

The Political Assembly is the strategic organ and the general assembly, within the meaning of article 10:5 of the CCA, of the association.

It is composed of:

a. members *ex officio*:

- members of the Presidency;
- members of the Presidency of the Group of the EPP in the European Parliament;
- Presidents of Ordinary or Associated Member Parties, Member Associations or their mandated representatives;
- Presidents of national delegations of member parties of the Group of the EPP in the European Parliament;

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- Members of the Presidency of the European Parliament, members of the European Commission and the President or the first Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions, provided they belong to an Ordinary Member Party;
- Presidents of the EPP, like-minded or associated Groups, at the Parliamentary Assemblies of the CoE, the OSCE and NATO, the European committee of the regions, Union for the Mediterranean and EURONEST, provided that they are member of an Ordinary Member Party or Associate Member Party.

The mandate of these members of the Political Assembly ends when they lose the capacity in which they became member of the Political Assembly.

b. delegated members:

- Representatives of Ordinary Member Parties and Associated Member Parties.
- The Ordinary Member Parties and Associated Member Parties shall nominate their delegates together with an equivalent number of substitutes.
  - o The delegates and voting rights of Ordinary Member Parties are assigned proportionally to the number of Individual Members of the association;
  - o The delegates and voting rights of the Associated Member Parties are assigned by the Presidency.

The mandate of these members of the Political Assembly ends when the delegation by which they became member of the Political Assembly comes to an end. The composition of the Political Assembly is calculated by the Secretary General twice in a legislature of the European Parliament (i): at the beginning and (ii) half-way through the European parliament legislature (any delay in these calculations is limited to a maximum of six months). This calculation must be approved by the Political Assembly.

c. non voting members

- The deputy Secretary(ies) General of the Association;
- The Secretary General of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and the equivalent EPP Secretaries General of the EPP, like-minded or associated Groups, at the Parliamentary Assemblies of the CoE, the OSCE and NATO, the European committee of the regions, Union for the Mediterranean and EURONEST;
- Two representatives of each Observer Member Party;
- One representative of each EPP Partner and each Associated Entity.

On the proposal of the President, the Political Assembly may invite certain personalities to give advice.

**Article 16 POWERS – RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Political Assembly has the powers attributed to it by the law, these by-laws and the Internal Regulations. Its competences consist inter alia of:

- ensuring unity of action by the EPP and influencing the achievement of European policy in the spirit of its program;
- electing the Deputy Secretary(ies) General on the proposal of the Presidency;
- stimulating and organizing systematic relations between national parliamentary groups and member parties in agreement with the Group of the EPP in the European Parliament;
- adopting the annual accounts and the budget;
- electing two Internal Auditors in accordance with article 24 of the by-laws;
- deciding on the applications for membership as well as on the recognition of Member Associations;

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- deciding on the exclusion of members and revoking the recognition of Member Associations;
- deciding on the amount of annual dues to be paid by the members;
- formulating recommendations to the Congress as to modifications of the by-laws;
- adopting the Internal Regulations;
- electing the Honorary President(s) on the proposal of the Presidency;
- accepting candidature(s) of EPP candidate(s) for President of the EU Commission;
- deciding on changes to annex 1 to the by-laws on the logo and annex 2 to the by-laws on the list of member parties;
- appointing five members of the EPP Ethics Committee and electing its president;
- approving the EPP Code of Conduct and any amendments thereof, upon the proposal of the EPP Ethics Committee;
- approving the internal regulations of the EPP Ethics Committee, and any amendments thereof, upon the proposal of the EPP Ethics Committee;
- implementing the recommendations of the EPP Ethics Committee upon the proposal of the Presidency;
- reporting to its members on the compliance by the EPP members with the EPP Code of Conduct.

The Political Assembly may establish standing commissions and ad hoc working groups to study specific problems, and decide to dissolve them after having heard the president of the commission or working group.

**Article 17 MEETINGS - DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

On the invitation of the President, the Political Assembly meets at least four times annually, whenever the object or the interest of the association so requires; an extraordinary meeting can be held at the request of either one-third of the Ordinary Member Parties and Associated Member Parties, or of the Presidency of the Group of the EPP in the European Parliament.

The Political Assembly shall validly deliberate if it is convened regularly, i.e. by letter, fax or email at the latest two weeks in advance, unless in case of urgency, and if a simple majority of its members are present. Failure to achieve this quorum can only be established on the basis of a formal motion, introduced during the meeting itself of the Political Assembly. A formal motion, preventing valid deliberation of the Political Assembly, may be introduced by at least seven Ordinary Member Parties or Associated Member Parties from five different countries. If a formal motion has not been introduced, the Political Assembly can validly deliberate, regardless of the fact the attendance quorum has not been reached. If a formal motion has been introduced, and the Political Assembly is thus unable to make a valid deliberation, the President shall convene a second meeting with the same agenda, within at least two weeks and at most two months after the introduction of the formal motion, which can validly deliberate, regardless of the attendance quorum.

The convocation notice sets out the agenda. Meetings are held at the registered office of the association or at the place stated in the notice of the meeting. For an item not listed on the agenda to be validly put to the vote, at least two thirds of members present must consent.

All decisions shall be taken by simple majority of the votes cast by the members of the Political Assembly present. In case of a tie, the President has the casting vote. Abstentions and blank votes are not considered valid votes

The meetings are chaired by the President.

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The Secretary General or a Deputy Secretary General shall draw up the minutes of the meetings, which shall be kept at the registered office of the association. All members will receive copies of these minutes within four weeks of each meeting.

The Political Assembly normally meets "in camera". On the request of the Presidency or of one tenth of the delegates, the Political Assembly may decide to admit the public to the meeting.

**VI. CONGRESS**

**Article 18 DEFINITION - POWERS**

The Congress has the following competences:

- deciding on the political program of the EPP;
- deciding on modifications of the by-laws;
- electing the President, Vice-Presidents, the Secretary General and the Treasurer;
- deciding on the dissolution of the association;
- electing the EPP candidate for President of the EU Commission.

The composition and the functioning of the Congress are regulated in the Internal Regulations.

**VII. SECRETARY GENERAL**

**Article 19 ELECTION – POWERS**

The Congress elects, on the proposal of the President, a Secretary General, in charge of the day-to-day management of the association, including the representation of the association within the limits of the day-to-day management.

This day-to-day management includes inter alia:

- (i) the management of the General Secretariat and exercise of the decisions taken by the organs;
- (ii) the supervision of the cooperation between the General Secretariats of Ordinary Member Parties, Associated Member Parties, Observers, Member Associations, EPP Partners and the General Secretariat of the EPP Group in the European Parliament;
- (iii) the drawing up, in agreement with the President, of agendas for meetings of organs, the supervision of the convening of meetings, their preparation, and the writing of minutes;
- (iv) the responsibility to the Presidency and the Political Assembly for proper and adequate budgetary management;
- (v) the drawing up of a report of the activities of the General Secretariat and organizational perspectives to the Political Assembly at the beginning of each year;
- (vi) Chairs the working group on Statutory Changes. This working group will issue recommendations to the EPP Presidency concerning the revision of the by-laws and internal regulation prior to each Statutory Congress in accordance with article 26 and 27 of the by-laws;
- (vii) verification of the documents of all new membership applications as referred to in article 5, 5 bis and 6 and clearance, in accordance with the President, for transferral to the Working Group EPP Membership.

The secretary General is also entitled to implement decisions of the Presidency and in particular to authorize an attorney at law to represent the association in judicial proceedings either as applicant or defendant.

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On the proposal of the Presidency and in agreement with the Secretary General, the Political Assembly, following the election of the Presidency, elects the Deputy Secretary (ies) General for a period of three years.

**VIII. REPRESENTATION**

Article 20 PROCEDURE

All legal acts on behalf of the association not falling within the scope of the day-to-day management or of a special delegation of powers, must be signed by the President or by two members of the Presidency.

**IX. Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies**

Article 21 DEFINITION

The Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (hereinafter referred to as "WMCES") is the official European political foundation of the European People's Party. The WMCES will function as the sole and official think-tank of the EPP and shall, in particular, serve as a common European framework for national foundations/think-tanks recognized by EPP member-parties.

WMCES is organized as a separate legal entity with separate financial accounts, operating in accordance with its own by-laws and internal regulations.

**X. PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION**

Article 22 DEFINITION

The EPP is committed to comply with national applicable laws and EU regulations concerning the protection of data and will collect only information that is strictly needed and relevant, and up-to-date and will use appropriate controls to ensure the information is kept secure.

**XI. FINANCIAL YEAR, ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND BUDGET**

Article 23.1 FINANCING

The EPP shall be financed by:

- The general budget of the EU in conformity with the Regulation (EC) N° 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of political parties at European level;
- The annual membership fees of Ordinary Member Parties, Associated Member Parties, Member Associations, Observer Member Parties and EPP Partners;
- Contributions from supporting members.

Article 23.2 MEMBERSHIP FEES

The conditions for the determination of the membership fees are strictly defined in the Internal Regulations. Membership fees and contributions are governed by the conditions and obligations relating to the funding of political parties at European level established in Regulation (CEC) 1141/2014.

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**Article 24 FINANCIAL YEAR – ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND BUDGET**

The association's financial year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

At the end of each financial year, the Presidency closes the accounts for the year ended and establishes the budget for the following financial year in accordance with the applicable legal provisions; the annual accounts are submitted to the Political Assembly for approval.

The Treasurer will assist the Presidency in drawing up the accounts and the budget. He controls the budgetary management of the General Secretary and reports to the Presidency. He is responsible in particular for the financing of the association and its activities, by means of membership fees, donations or otherwise.

Every two years, the Political Assembly elects two Internal Auditors who may not be a member of the Presidency. The mandate of the Internal Auditors lasts two years and is renewable. The Internal Auditors are responsible for the verification of the annual accounts and report accordingly to the Political Assembly.

The surplus is added to the association's assets and in no case may be paid to members in the form of dividends.

To promote transparency the EPP accounts will be drawn up and communicated in accordance to chapter 5 of Regulation (EU/EURATOM) N° 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014.

**XII. ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR IN POLITICS - ETHICS COMMITTEE - CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Article 25 ETHICS COMMITTEE – ELECTION AND POWERS**

The EPP Ethics Committee is composed of five members appointed by the Political Assembly for a renewable term of three years. The chairperson of the EPP Ethics Committee shall be chosen and elected from among the members of the Presidency.

The EPP Ethics Committee drafts an EPP Code of Conduct on Ethical Behaviour in Politics and submits it for approval to the Political Assembly.

The EPP Ethics Committee drafts its internal regulations and submits these for approval to the Political Assembly.

By subscribing to the EPP Code of Conduct, which is a prerequisite for EPP membership, Ordinary Member Parties, Associated Member Parties, Member Associations, Observer Member Parties and Individual Members, accept the responsibility to continuously act so as to maintain and enhance public confidence in the integrity of the political process.

The competences of the EPP Ethics Committee include inter alia:

- drafting, as well as amending, if need be, the EPP Code of Conduct on Ethical Behaviour in Politics and submitting the EPP Code of Conduct and any subsequent amendments thereto for approval to the Political Assembly;
- outlining the procedure to verify the compliance of applicants with the EPP Code of Conduct;
- drafting, as well as amending, if need be, its internal regulations and submitting these and any subsequent amendments thereto for approval to the Political Assembly;
- monitoring compliance with the EPP Code of Conduct;
- reporting on any alleged infringements of the EPP Code of Conduct;

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- in case of non-compliance with the EPP Code of Conduct, making recommendations to the Presidency to adopt proposals for a final decision on any appropriate measures to be taken by the Political Assembly, including the suspension or exclusion of the concerned member;

The Political Assembly may, upon the recommendation of the EPP Ethics Committee and a proposal of the Presidency, request that a Member Party takes action against one of its members, if it has determined that the respective member has acted in a way that is not compliant with the EPP Code of Conduct.

**XIII. INTERNAL REGULATIONS AND MODIFICATION OF INTERNAL REGULATIONS.**

**Article 26 INTERNAL REGULATIONS - MODIFICATION**

At the proposal of the Presidency, the Political Assembly decides on the Internal Regulations in which issues of internal order and of financial order not mentioned in these by-laws shall be set out. In the Internal Regulations, some additional bodies will be created, such as the EPP Summit and the membership categories of "Member Associations", "Individual Members", "Observer Members" and "EPP Partners" will be defined.

Proposals for modifications of the Internal Regulations may be introduced by the Presidency, Ordinary Member Parties, Associated Member Parties or Member Associations; and by the EPP Group at the European Parliament and the Presidents of the EPP, likeminded or associated Groups, at the Parliamentary Assemblies of the CoE, the OSCE and NATO, the European committee of the regions, Union for the Mediterranean and EURONEST, provided that they are member of an Ordinary Member Party or Associated Member Party. Said proposals must be submitted in writing to the Secretary General four weeks prior to the meeting of the Political Assembly at which they will be considered and they must be notified to the members.

**XIV. MODIFICATIONS OF THE BY-LAWS**

**Article 27 BY-LAWS - MODIFICATION**

Proposals for modifications of the by-laws may be introduced by the Presidency, Ordinary Member Parties, Associated Member Parties or Member Associations and by the EPP Group at the European Parliament and the Presidents of the EPP, like-minded or associated Groups, at the Parliamentary Assemblies of the CoE, the OSCE and NATO, the European committee of the regions, Union for the Mediterranean and EURONEST provided that they are member of an Ordinary Member Party or Associated Member Party.

Proposals must be presented in writing to the Secretary General who will transmit them to the Members of the Political Assembly for deliberation at least four weeks prior to the meeting at which the Political Assembly will deliberate on those proposals.

Proposals shall be presented to the Congress for adoption only if they have obtained a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in the Political Assembly. Approval of modifications to the by-laws presented by the Political Assembly requires a simple majority of the votes cast by the members of Congress present. The Congress may by a two-thirds majority of votes cast by the members present overrule the proposals of the Political Assembly. Abstentions and blank votes are not considered valid votes.

**XV. DISSOLUTION**

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**Article 28 REGULATION**

The association is not dissolved as a result of the death, dissolution or resignation of a member, provided the number of members is not less than two.

The association may be dissolved voluntarily by a decision of the Congress with a three-quarters majority of the members present, in accordance with the rules applicable to its functioning, as set out in the Internal Regulations.

In the event of voluntary dissolution, the Congress elects the liquidator(s). In the absence of liquidator(s), the members of the Presidency will act as liquidators.

In the event of dissolution, the Political Assembly decides on the disposal of the assets. Such disposal must serve a not-for-profit purpose.

**XVI. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

By derogation to article 27 of the by-laws, the Political Assembly is entitled to adopt amendments to the by-laws of the association if such amendments are required or useful with a view to implementing

- (i) Regulation No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations;
- (ii) delegated acts of the European Commission as set out in article 36 of the Regulation, and;
- (iii) current and future Belgian laws and regulations that, directly or indirectly, relate to any aspect of the conversion of a European political party governed by Belgian law into a European Political Party governed by the aforementioned Regulation.

The EPP Code of Conduct, once drawn up by the EPP Ethics Committee and approved by the Political Assembly in accordance with article 16 and 25 of the by-laws, shall be communicated to all current Ordinary Member Parties, Associated Member Parties, Member Associations, Observer Member Parties and Individual Members and shall be binding upon those members having continued their membership of the EPP beyond the date of entry into force of the EPP Code of Conduct set forth in the notice communicated by the Political Assembly.



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Annex 1. The logo of the association.

Annex 2. List of member parties

Annex 1  
EPP logo

