

# **STATUTE OF THE SOCIALISTS, DEMOCRATS AND GREENS GROUP**

## **I. AIMS AND TASKS OF THE GROUP**

The aim of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group (SOC Group) is to advance the realization of our core values within the Organization and in the Member States of the Council of Europe. The core values of the SOC Group are freedom and democracy, equality, justice, sustainability, and solidarity. They are our moral compass for political action.

All members of the SOC Group are committed to these values, and we will uphold, pursue, and promote them to the best of our abilities. Acting in a transparent, trustworthy, and faithful manner, we will be guided by the highest standards of integrity.

The SOC Group is a progressive European force which was founded on the principles of democratic socialism and environmentalism. We believe in uniting people on a local, regional, national, European, and international level. That is why we have always worked alongside workers, feminists, environmentalists, youth, and civil rights movements and will continue to do so. We strongly believe that we need allies in our fight for just societies and fulfilling lives for all.

The SOC Group will always be a resolute defender of the cause of human rights, of the promotion of peace and social justice, and a strong advocate for sustainable development.

The SOC Group must seek to ensure that a candidate enjoying its confidence takes part in every election concerning the bodies of the Council of Europe. Mindful of the need to improve gender equality and inclusiveness within the Organization, the SOC Group will take active measures to increase the diversity of its chosen representatives as well as within the Organization itself.

## **II.**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **A. MEMBERS**

1. The SOC Group consists of members of the Parliamentary Assembly (representatives and substitutes) who adhere to the basic principles and core values described in the preamble of this Statute.
2. Membership of the SOC Group is automatically extended to members of the Parliamentary Assembly (representatives and substitutes) who belong to a party having official status (member, associate, or observer) with the Socialist International, Party of European Socialists, Progressive Alliance, or European Green Party.
3. Membership of the SOC Group can automatically be extended to members of the Parliamentary Assembly belonging to a party already represented within the SOC Group subject to the approval of the Bureau of the Group. Should the Bureau disagree, article 6.b will be applied.
4. Members of the Assembly belonging to parties not already represented within the SOC Group or belonging to no party, can request membership to the Group if they share the core values of the Group.

5. A request for membership shall be submitted to the Secretariat of the Group. The request shall be in writing and should include information on the political affiliation of the applicant and a statement on the applicant's adherence to the core principles of the Group.
6. Each request for membership shall be included in the agenda of the Bureau for information. It should be presented to the members of the SOC Group of the same national delegation, which should give their opinion on the request. The request shall then be submitted to the Plenary Assembly of the SOC Group for decision, according to the following procedure:
  - a. The membership request can be accepted by acclamation if no opposition to the request is expressed.
  - b. If one or more members of the SOC Group object to the request, the Plenary Assembly of the Group shall decide on the matter by a two-third majority vote of the members present.
  - c. Should a request for membership be rejected, an applicant can only resubmit their request two years after the last decision of the Plenary Assembly of the Group.
  - d. The Bureau shall submit additional Rules of procedure on the conduct of membership votes to the Plenary Assembly of the SOC Group for approval.

## **B. GUESTS & MEMBERS FROM COUNTRIES IN PARTNERSHIP FOR DEMOCRACY**

1. Members of countries in Partnership for Democracy and special guest delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly belonging to parties or belonging to no party, that share the core values of the Group can be given the right to participate in all meetings of the Plenary Assembly of the SOC Group, subject to the same procedure as described in Article 6.
2. Representatives of the Party of European Socialists, the Socialist International, the International Union of Socialist Youth, the European Green Party, the Federation of Young European Greens and of Pirate Parties International have the right to take part in all meetings of the Plenary Assembly.
3. Subject to an agreement of the Bureau of the Group, other non-members of the Parliamentary Assembly may be invited to activities, seminars, working groups, and for special items on the agenda of meetings of the Bureau and the Plenary Assembly of the Group.

## **C. SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION FROM THE GROUP**

1. If the conduct of a member of the SOC Group violates the values of the Group or the standards of conduct decided by the Group, they may temporarily be suspended from their work within the Group; this decision shall be taken by the Plenary Assembly of the Group by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present. The Plenary Assembly can decide on a suspension for the minimum period of two Part-sessions and a maximum of four Part-sessions of PACE. The decision is only valid if the question has been included in the agenda of the meeting. The Bureau of the Group shall inform the party involved

about the decision.

2. If a member gravely violates the values of the SOC Group or the standards of conduct decided by the Group or continues to behave in a manner contrary to these values and standards after their suspension, they can be excluded from the Group. The Plenary Assembly of the SOC Group shall decide by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present. This decision is only valid if the question has been included in the agenda of the meeting.
3. If a member gravely violates the values of the SOC Group or the standards of conduct decided by the Group outside of the ordinary meeting times of the Plenary Assembly of the Group, the Bureau of the Group can decide on interim measures until the next Plenary Assembly meeting.
4. The same provisions shall apply to members of countries in Partnership for Democracy and special guest delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly as well as representatives as described in Article B.3, with the provision that in the Plenary Assembly a two-thirds majority vote is required.
5. If a member knowingly decides to run as a candidate against a member that has been nominated by the Group to take on any elected post within the Parliamentary Assembly, including the function of Rapporteur, they may temporarily be suspended from their work within the Group or be excluded from the Group, depending on the gravity of the offence.

The procedures set out in articles C.1, C.2 and C.3 apply accordingly.

6. The Bureau shall submit additional rules of procedure on the conduct of suspension and expulsion proceedings.

### **III. BODIES OF THE SOC GROUP**

#### **A. PLENARY ASSEMBLY**

1. The Plenary Assembly of the SOC Group consists of the members of the SOC Group.
2. At least two weeks before the beginning of the Part-Session, the Chair or their substitute shall send the convocation to the meetings of the Plenary Assembly of the SOC Group to the Members, as well as the agenda of the meetings. In urgent or special circumstances, shorter notice can be given.
3. As a general rule, the Plenary Assembly meets three times during each Part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly. In its meetings, the Plenary Assembly considers all the items on the agenda and allows for adequate discussion if possible.
4. As a general rule, the Plenary Assembly of the SOC Group deliberates on important issues regarding the work of the Assembly and tries to reach a common position of the Group. Members who have declared political or ethical reasons for their disagreement with the position of the Group, are not bound by it.
5. The Plenary Assembly has the following tasks:
  - a. Election of the Chair and 1st Vice-Chair – reflecting a gender balance.
  - b. Approval of the other members of the Bureau of the SOC Group including the

Treasurer and the two Auditors.

- c. Decisions concerning membership requests according to II.A. Article 6.
  - d. Approval of the list of Coordinators for the Committees.
  - e. Decisions concerning the Statute.
  - f. Taking note of the approval of the annual financial outlook by the Bureau.
  - g. Proposals for items to be included in the agenda of the next meeting of the Group.
  - h. Decisions on the fundamental initiatives to be taken by the Group.
  - i. Confirmation of the requests and decisions of the Bureau of the SOC Group.
  - j. Determination of the position of the Group as to the election of:
    - a.i. President of the Parliamentary Assembly
    - a.ii. Chair(s) of the Committees
    - a.iii. Vice-Chairs (s) of the Committees
    - a.iv. Secretary General of the Council of Europe
    - a.v. Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe
    - a.vi. Secretary General of the Assembly
    - a.vii. Commissioner for Human Rights
    - a.viii. Judges to the European Court of Human Rights
    - a.ix. Other posts elected by the Assembly
  - k. Appointment of working groups for the examination of certain questions
6. A document summarizing the decisions taken, and the debate held during the meetings of the Plenary Assembly shall be drawn up by the Secretary

## **B. PRESIDENCY OF THE GROUP**

1. The Presidency of the Group is composed of the Chair and the 1st Vice-Chair and is supported by the Secretary of the Group.
2. The Presidency can appoint advisors to assist them in their work. Advisors should be experienced members of the SOC Group and the Assembly such as former Chair of the Group or President of the Assembly.
3. Elections of the SOC Group's candidate to the Presidency of the Assembly as well as the Chair and 1st Vice-Chair of the SOC Group are to be held over several rounds by secret ballot.
4. After the second round, the candidate with the smallest support will be eliminated. The candidate who gets one more vote than the half of all votes cast is elected.
5. If only one candidature is proposed, the candidate shall be declared elected by acclamation.
6. The mandate of the Chair and 1st Vice-chair of the Group is renewable by election every two years and may be renewed four times.

## **C. BUREAU OF THE GROUP**

1. The Bureau of the SOC Group is composed of the Chair, the 1st Vice-Chair, the incumbent & former Chairs of Committees (from the previous mandate), the Treasurer, the two

Auditors, the Chair of the Women's Group and by other members allocated as follows:  
National delegations having:

- a. more than ten members in the SOC Group: one seat every year
  - b. six to ten members: one seat every two years
  - c. three to five members: one seat every three years
  - d. less than three members: one seat every four years.
2. National delegations are encouraged to appoint the gender currently underrepresented in the Bureau as their representative to the Bureau. The members appointed by the national delegations are considered as Vice-Chairs of the Group.
  3. The Secretary of the SOC Group has the right to attend Bureau meetings, the right to speak, but not the right to vote.
  4. The former Chairs of the Group and former SOC Chairs of the Assembly have the right to attend Bureau meetings, the right to speak, but not the right to vote.
  5. At least two weeks before the beginning of the Part-Session, the Chair or their substitute shall send the convocation to the meeting of the Bureau of the SOC Group to the members, as well as the agenda of the meeting. In urgent or special circumstances, shorter notice can be given.
  6. The decisions of the Bureau are taken by a simple majority vote of the members present.
  7. Any member of the Bureau who is prevented from attending a meeting can be replaced on their own proposal by a Group member of the same national delegation; If the Chair, the Treasurer, or the Auditors are prevented from attending a meeting, they shall not be replaced. In case of the Chair's unavailability, the meeting is chaired by the 1st Vice-Chair. In the event both are not available, the Presidency, beforehand, shall appoint an acting Chair among the Vice-Chairs.
  8. Except for the Chair and 1st Vice-Chair, the Treasurer, the two Auditors, the Chair of the Women's Group, the incumbent and former Chairs of Committees, all the members of the Bureau are appointed for a period of one year.
  9. Outgoing members are re-eligible.
  10. The Bureau has the following tasks:
    - a. Management of the SOC Group.
    - b. Preparation for the positions of the SOC Group towards the work of the Parliamentary Assembly.
    - c. Appointment of the Treasurer and the two Auditors. Their respective mandate is renewable every two years and may be renewed four times.
    - d. Appointment of the Secretary of the Group and supervising of their work, as well as the appointment of a possible collaborator.
    - e. Approval of the annual financial outlook.
    - f. Appointment of a member to undertake a particular task.
    - g. Establishing and maintaining contact with the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly, with the S&D Group in the European Parliament with the Committee of Ministers and relevant bodies.
    - h. Contacts with the Party of European Socialists as well as with Socialist International, Progressive Alliance and European Green party and other relevant Organisations.

- i. Decisions on the representation of the SOC Group in meetings in PACE, Council of Europe and in other Organisations.
- j. Decision on holding and organization of symposia of the SOC Group.
- k. Decision on holding and organization of press conferences.

## **D. COORDINATORS**

At the beginning of each year, in January, the Bureau appoints a coordinator responsible for each Committee of the Assembly and who has the right to attend Bureau meetings, the right to speak, but not the right to vote.

## **E. WOMEN'S GROUP**

1. The SOC Women's Group (WG) brings together all women members affiliated to the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group (SOC Group).
2. The aim of the WG is to discuss the agendas of the Parliamentary Assembly and of the Committees, and to identify gender related topics and debates, where mobilisation is needed. It aims to address important issues for women, amend hostile reports and ensure gender equality and representation in all leading positions.
3. The WG is run by a Chair, whose mandate is renewable by election every two years and may be renewed four times.
4. She is supported in her tasks by a Vice Chair, whose mandate is renewable by election every two years and may be renewed four times.
5. The election of the Chair and of the Vice Chair are to be held over several rounds by secret ballot. After the second round, the candidate with the smallest support will be eliminated. The candidate who gets one more vote than the half of all votes cast is elected.
6. If only one candidature is proposed, the candidate shall be declared elected by acclamation.
7. The WG holds its meetings during each Part session of the Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg. The convocation to the meeting is sent out by the Chair or her substitute to all members at least one week prior to the meeting.

## **F. WORKING GROUPS**

1. Upon the proposal of the Bureau, the Plenary Assembly can constitute working groups to examine certain questions.
2. Each working group shall elect a Chairperson from among its members by simple majority vote.
3. The working group shall be dissolved when its task is completed.

## **G. SECRETARIAT**

1. The SOC Group has an executive Secretary and can have, if funds permit, an administrative collaborator.
2. The Secretariat's tasks, under the supervision of the Presidency and the Bureau, in accordance with their instructions, include:
  - a. Assisting the Presidency in its work. Assisting members of the Group in their work within the Assembly.
  - b. Following the work of the Committee meetings of the Assembly and assisting the Coordinators of the Group.
  - c. Planning and organizing the meetings of the Plenary Assembly and of the Bureau and, occasionally, organizing extraordinary meetings and seminars.
  - d. Preparing the agenda and drafting the working documents for the meetings of the Plenary Assembly and the Bureau.
  - e. Preparing the minutes of the meetings of the Plenary Assembly.
  - f. Follow-up of the Bureau's and the Plenary Assembly's decisions.
  - g. Keeping the Group's archives and files.
  - h. Preparation of the budget and management of the expenses of the Group.
  - i. Maintaining contact with the Secretariat of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly, the Secretariat of national member Parties, the S&D Group, and the Greens Group of the European Parliament and other international organizations related to the work of the SOC Group.
- 3.
- 4.

## **IV. FINANCES**

1. The finances are managed by the Treasurer, who will present an annual report to the Bureau of the Group on the financial situation for approval.
2. The two Auditors validate this report
3. Once the report has been approved by the Bureau, the responsibility for it lies with the Bureau.
- 5.

## **V. PUBLICITY**

6. The political and parliamentary activity of the SOC Group should be made accessible to the public and the press through a wide range of media and other forms of communication.