

International Society for Knowledge Organization (ISKO) Charter and Preamble

I. Preamble

1. It is the declared purpose of the International Society for Knowledge Organization to provide personal contacts and opportunities for cooperation to the world-wide community of colleagues who devote themselves to the creation, expansions, revision, and application of tools for the organization of knowledge according to conceptual points of view.
2. The International Society for Knowledge Organization therefore considers itself in the first and foremost place as an association of personal members which, however, does not bar institutions from likewise acquiring membership together with their personal representatives.
3. Thus, responsibility and initiative to make this society their worldwide forum lies in the hands of the personal members collaborating in their concern for knowledge organization in common efforts, refraining therefore from pursuing their subjective interests and respecting the postulates of integrity and truth, mutual recognition and assistance.

II. Charter

Art.1: Name of the Society

The Society bears the official name "Internationale Gesellschaft für Wissensorganisation e.V." and is to be registered at the Amtsgericht (District Court) of Frankfurt, FRG.

The English translation of the name is: "International Society for Knowledge Organization". Translations into other languages must be approved by the Executive Board, hereinafter called "Presidency".

Art.2: Legal Seat, Legal and Non-Profit Character of the Society

1. The Society's legal seat is Frankfurt, FRG.
2. The Society will engage in the exclusive and direct pursuit of nonprofit activities and will thus assume the character of a non-profit organization primarily for the promotion of science as well as of culture and education. Consequently, all income and any profits achieved shall be assigned to the Society's aims according to the charter. The Society thus acts selflessly and, therefore, does not primarily pursue economic aims.
3. In view of the foregoing the members of the Society will be paid no dividends or monies by virtue of their membership.
4. No person may be favoured by any administrative expenditure alien to the Society's aims or by a disproportionate remuneration of work or services undertaken.
5. All the Society's officers and active members will work on a honorary basis. Expenses for materials and services will be refunded only if previously approved in writing by the Presidency.

Art.3: Financial Year

The financial year is the calendar year.

Art.4: Aims and Tasks of the Society

It is the aim of the Society to promote research, development and application of all methods for the organization of knowledge in general or of particular fields by integrating especially the conceptual approaches of classification research and artificial intelligence. The Society stresses philosophicological, psychological and semantic approaches for a conceptual order of objects.

In particular, the Society will

- a) awaken and support an understanding for the practical and heuristic usefulness of such an organization of knowledge;
 - b) promote on a national and international level the exchange of information and experience of scientists and practitioners in this area, especially by giving advice in the construction, perfection and application of such organization tools as classification systems, thesauri, terminologies, nomenclatures as well as the syntactical tools going with them,
 - c) observe internationally the progress made in this work;
 - d) concentrate on major points of this knowledge field in special working groups;
 - e) hold regular meetings in order to support these activities.
2. The Society works on an international level. If conducive to its goals, the Society will collaborate with other groupings, associations, and institutions pursuing similar aims.
 3. The Society pursues these aims among other things by:
 - a) promoting and carrying out studies, research work, conferences and other categories of scientific cooperation;
 - b) disseminating knowledge to research workers, scientists and the general public.
 4. The official organ and communication medium of the Society for the international scientific exchange is the journal "International Classification".

Art.5: Membership

1. Any natural person with an obvious and evident interest in the aims of the Society can become a member.
2. The Society accepts persons of all countries and nations as members.
3. A legal entity fulfilling the same preconditions as a natural person and recognizing the scientific aims of the Society can become a "corporate member" with the same rights as a personal member.
4. The Society has the following membership categories:
 - a) Regular members: every natural or legal person;
 - b) Sponsoring members: natural or legal persons or

institutions that support the Society's aims by financial or other contributions:

- c) Honorary members: Natural persons having earned great merits for the Society. They will be nominated by the Presidency and elected by the General Assembly.
5. Members Rights
All members are
- a) entitled to vote in the General Assembly,
 - b) eligible to any Office in the Society,
 - c) entitled to participate in the Society's conference and to make use of its facilities and of the members' privileges.
Only natural persons are eligible for election.
6. Members' Duties
All members declare through their membership application that they will recognize the Society's aims, its Charter and its basic resolutions and will pay their membership fee within the first quarter of the year.
7. Beginning of Membership
- a) Regular membership must be applied for in writing.
 - b) Membership commences exactly on the day when membership is confirmed by a member of the Managing Presidency.
8. Termination of Membership
Membership will be terminated:
- a) by withdrawal from the Society, which must be announced to the Presidency in writing not later than October 1st of any year;
 - b) by the member's death or with the cessation of his or her legal capacity;
 - c) by expulsion: The Presidency may expel a member for compelling reasons, especially if the member is more than two years in arrears with the payment of his or her membership fee. Before such expulsion the member will be invited to explain the reasons for his or her actions.

Art.6: Financing

The Society will obtain the necessary funds from: Membership fees, income from meetings of all kinds, publications and other services as well as donations, subsidies, gifts, bequests and other contributions from members and non-members.

Art.7: The Bodies of the Society

The Society's bodies are:

1. the General Assembly
2. the Presidency
3. the Scientific Council
4. the Regional Chapters and Working Groups

Art.8: The General Assembly

1. The General Assembly is the supreme body of the Society
2. The General Assembly is competent for the following
 - a) acceptance and approval of the Presidency's progress report
 - b) approval of the balance of accounts and the Auditor's written examination report;
 - c) a vote of confidence in the Presidency;

- d) election of the members of the Presidency and their deputies;
 - e) election of the Auditor and his two deputies;
 - f) election of Honorary Members;
 - g) fixing of the membership fees;
 - h) acceptance and approval of the financial budget for the next period under review;
 - i) amendments to the Charter;
 - j) a resolution for the dissolution of the Society.
3. An Ordinary General Assembly will be held once every two years at least. The Presidency will invite all members to it and at the same time will publish the agenda not later than three months prior to the date set for the General Assembly. Amendments to the agenda may be passed only by a three quarters majority of all members present at the Assembly.
4. An Extraordinary General Assembly will be convened:
- a) by resolution of the Ordinary General Assembly
 - b) by decision of the Presidency;
 - c) by written request by one third of all members with statement of the reason and the purpose.
5. The General Assembly will be chaired by a chairman elected at the beginning of the meeting.
6. Quorum. Voting and Election
- a) The General Assembly will constitute a quorum regardless of the number of members present,
 - b) Elections and resolutions will be passed by a simple majority; in case of a parity of votes, the President will have the casting vote.
 - c) Members may authorize each other in writing to vote in the General Assembly, Any member so authorized may represent no more than three other members.
 - d) The proceedings of the General Assembly and its decisions will be put on record in minutes countersigned by the Chairman of the General Assembly and by its reporter.
 - e) The General Assembly may pass a special regulation governing the elections proceedings.
7. Amendments to the Charter may only be passed by a three-quarter majority of the members present in the General Assembly if the invitation to the General Assembly included the item "Amendment to the Charter"
8. The General Assembly will elect an auditor and one or two deputy auditors for the auditing of the Society's accounts. They work on a honorary basis and are Society members.
9. The auditor will report the result of any audit to the General Assembly.
10. The balance of accounts specified as to income, expenses and assets will be given in written form to the members if the Presidency so decides.

Art.9: The Presidency

1. The Presidency consists of the following persons, who must all be Society members:
 - a) The President;
 - b) two Vice-Presidents having equal rights,
 - c) the Treasurer;
 - d) and three further members.

2. The Managing Presidency (the Legal Presidency as meant in Art.26 of the German Civil Code) consists of the persons mentioned under a), b), and c). The President on the one hand, and the two Vice-Presidents, and the Treasurer on the other hand are entitled to represent the Society within the meaning of Art.26 of the German Civil Code by themselves, with the Vice-Presidents and the Treasurer only then being entitled to represent the Society when two of them are together, and they will internally represent the Society only if the President is prevented from doing so.
3. The Presidency will be elected for a four years' term. Re-election of its members is permissible.
4. In the event that Presidency members retire from this office before the end of their term or if the General Assembly is not able to elect all Presidency members, the Presidency may complete itself by cooptation from the membership until the next General Assembly session. The cooptation needs a confirmation from the next membership assembly. The Presidency may invite Society members and as well as other persons to its sessions as expert advisers. The Presidency should consist of persons from different countries and of various nationalities.
5. Responsibilities of the Presidency
The Presidency is especially responsible for the following:
 - a) attending to the realization of the Society's aims according to Art.4;
 - b) management of the Society's property and execution of the resolutions passed by the General Assembly;
 - c) preparation of and convening the General Assembly;
 - d) presentation of the progress report and of the balance of accounts for the period under review;
 - e) preparation of the financial budget for the following period;
 - f) consultative cooperation with the Scientific Council with respect to its Program;
 - g) consultative cooperation with the chairmen of the regional chapters and establishment of working groups;
6. Competences within the Presidency
 - a) The Presidency will be convened by the President
 - b) Each Presidency meeting properly convened will constitute a quorum under the condition that at least four of its members take part, including at least two members of the managing Presidency. The Presidency may pass resolutions in written form, if all its members participate in the vote.
 - c) Documents legally binding the Society as well as extraordinary legal business on internal Society matters are to be signed by the President alone or by the two Vice-Presidents jointly as per Art.9, Section 1, b).
 - d) Authorization to transact bank business for the Society on internal Society matters will be granted only by the President together with the treasurer.

- e) The Presidency may adopt business rules for its work.

Art.10: The Scientific Advisory Council

1. The Scientific Advisory Council (hereafter "The Council") gives advice to the Presidency and to the Working Groups in the planning and execution of their tasks and projects.
2. The Council has free choice in the determination of the form and the contents of its advice and of its investigations and work and is not bound to any specific scientific, philosophical, ideological, religious or political opinion. The Council should represent as many different forms of perception and opinion as possible.
3. The Council should consist of a minimum of seven and a maximum 21 qualified scientific members. For the initial constitution of the Council its members will be appointed by the Presidency. Afterwards, additional members will be elected by the members of the Council themselves. The Presidency has the right to submit proposals and to take part in all discussions of the Council without being entitled to vote.
4. The Council elects one of its members as Chairman, who by virtue of this office is at the same time a member of the Presidency.
5. The Council may adopt business rules for its work.

Art.11: The Regional Chapters and the Working Groups

1. The regular members of each country or language area can organize themselves in chapters.
2. Their organization and work must adhere to regulations which must have been accepted beforehand by the Presidency.
3. Within the Regional Chapters and also on an international level Working Groups may be established in which experienced members cooperate on specific projects falling within the general tasks of the Society (Art.4). Organization and work of these Working Groups must adhere to rules established in accordance with the Presidency.

Art.12: Dissolution of the Society

1. The Society may be dissolved only by a three-quarters majority of all members present at a General Assembly expressly convened for the purpose of the Society's dissolution or of all members of the Society in the event of voting by letter.
2. The members will decide about the disposal of the Society's assets by a simple majority. Any remaining assets must be used directly and exclusively for non-profit institutions pursuing the same or a similar purpose as the Society.
3. After the Society's dissolution, or after its present raison d'être has ceased to exist, the assets of the Society will, after any existing debts have been paid, be transferred to a non-profit organization, which must use them directly and exclusively for scientific purposes. The members select this organization at the Membership Assembly according to Art.13,1 above.

Frankfurt, July 22nd 1989