

Statutes

of International Friends of Nature (IFN)

Preamble

The International Friends-of-Nature Federation, founded in 1895, has its roots in the humanistic and social ideas subscribed to by the labour movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The aims and fundamental values of that movement are epitomised in the paradigms of democratic socialism: freedom, justice and solidarity.

These fundamental values of the Friends-of-Nature movement purport, inter alia, that

- economic action is geared to the needs of people and to the preservation of the vital resources of the planet
- nobody must be disadvantaged or advantaged on account of colour, origin, political persuasion, sex or religion
- everybody is involved, on a basis of equality, in shaping social life
- political aims are pursued peacefully and
- nature is treated with respect.

The simultaneous pursuit of social, ecological, humanistic and international goals is one of the Friends-of-Nature movement's major contributions to societal development.

Inspired by this tradition, Friends of Nature are nowadays guided by a comprehensive concept of sustainable development, which implies a lasting, socially and environmentally compatible global design effort aiming at social existence in a spirit of international solidarity.

Article 1: Name and headquarters

1. The name of the organisation, whose activities are not profit-oriented, is "International Friends of Nature", abbreviation: IFN;
Name in German: Naturfreunde Internationale, abbreviation: NFI
Name in French: Internationale des Amis de la Nature (IAN)
2. International Friends of Nature has its headquarters in Vienna.

Article 2: Members, Partners

IFN membership categories shall be Full Members and Associated Members; in addition there shall be the status of Partner. Each member organisation of the IFN must have a legal personality in its own right. Organisations applying for membership have to submit their effective statutes together with their applications. Members are obliged to notify the Management Committee (amendment in German only) of International Friends of Nature of any amendments of their statutes.

Members

1. Full Members

Full Members are national organisations which recognise the aims and statutes of IFN.

New organisations are admitted by the Congress.

Full Members are entitled to vote at the Congress and in the Presidents' Conference and have the right to elect and stand for election.

Full members are obliged to use the name "Friends of Nature" and/or the logo in their publications (papers, newsletters, brochures etc.).

As a rule, only one organisation from any given country can be a Full Member of IFN.

2. Associated Members

Associated Members are national organisations which recognise the aims and statutes of IFN.

New organisations are admitted by the Congress.

The duration of associated membership shall not exceed the period between two Congresses.

Associated Members shall attend Congresses and Presidents' Conferences in an advisory capacity.

Associated Members may use the name "Friends of Nature" and the IFN logo.

Partners

Partners are organisations in countries where there are no Full Members.

The Management Committee shall decide on the admission of Partners.

The effective statutes shall be attached to the application for partnership. Partners are not entitled to vote and not eligible for election. They may use the name "Partner of the International Friends of Nature" in the official language of their respective country and the IFN logo.

Article 3: Aims of International Friends of Nature

1. To promote mutual understanding, friendship and solidarity among the people and states of all nations.
2. To promote the translation into practice of the principle of sustainable development which ensures that social justice and ecological compatibility are combined on a lasting basis.
3. To promote cross-border conservation of environment, nature and landscapes as a contribution to safeguarding the natural basis of our existence.
4. To promote sustainable tourism and environmentally sound leisure-time pursuits.
5. To contribute to the sustainable development of developing countries through measures designed to foster democratisation, to reduce poverty and to safeguard ecological resources, with special emphasis on access to education and on gender equality.
6. To promote the integration of people of different culture, religion or ethnic origin as well as of socially disadvantaged people.
7. To strengthen and coordinate the relations between the member organisations and the partners of IFN and to prepare the ground for the establishment and promotion of new member organisations.
8. To establish and build up relations with other international organisations that are committed to democracy, international understanding and sustainable development.

Article 4: Purpose and Activities of the Organisation

1. To organise international meetings for the purpose of exchanging information and of preparing projects and campaigns designed to strengthen awareness of sustainability.
2. To run projects, campaigns, seminars and events designed to advance the objectives pursued by International Friends of Nature and its member organisations.
3. To contribute to the conservation of environment, nature and landscapes and to sustainable regional development worldwide.
4. To help promote gentle tourism and sustainable regional development.
5. To support social and cultural activities of member organisations.
6. To represent the interests of member organisations in the areas of social, development and environment policies at the European and the international level.
7. To issue publications.
8. To support and assist in the establishment and upgrading of Friends-of-Nature houses, holiday homes and camp sites.
9. To promote Friends-of-Nature youth organisations and groups.

Article 5: Children and Youth Work

Children and youth work is entrusted to International Young Naturefriends (IYNF), whose activities are governed by the IYNF Statutes which are subject to the approval of the IFN Congress.

Article 6: Working Groups and Special Activity Groups

1. The Management Committee and the Presidents' Conference may set up working groups to deal with temporary tasks of current interest.
2. At the request of 25% of the full members, the IFN Management Committee shall coordinate and support the national working groups in coping with the international aspects of their tasks.

Article 7: Finance

To enable International Friends of Nature to perform its tasks, an annual subscription shall be collected from all member organisations. The amount and the date due for payment shall be determined by the Congress. For its financial obligations the IFN shall be liable with its assets only. The sole exception from this rule shall be actions by officials which are in contravention of civil or criminal law.

Article 8: Resignation

Member organisations may resign from IFN, giving six months notice, prior to the end of the financial year. Until the expiry of the period of notice, they shall have to meet all the obligations incurred under the present Statutes and under decisions taken.

Article 9: Expulsion

Member organisations that prejudice the reputation of International Friends of Nature, that disregard the Statutes and decisions taken or that fail to pay their subscriptions, can be expelled from IFN by a decision of the Presidents' Conference taken with a three- quarter majority. Expelled member organisations are entitled to appeal against this decision to the Congress, within three months of receiving notice of expulsion. Until a decision is taken by the Congress, all the rights and duties of the expelled organisation shall be suspended.

Article 10: Bodies of the Association

The bodies of IFN shall be:

1. The Congress;
2. The Presidents' Conference;
3. The Management Committee;
4. The Audit Commission;
5. The Arbitration Commission.

Article 11: The Congress

1. The Congress is composed of
 - a) the delegates of the member organisations: full members with voting rights, associated members in an advisory capacity;
 - b) the members of the Presidents' Conference;
 - c) seven delegates from International Young Naturefriends;
 - d) the members of the Audit Commission in an advisory capacity;
 - e) the chairperson of the Arbitration Commission in an advisory capacity.
2. In addition to the President, full members are entitled to one delegate for the first 1 000 members. As of 4 000 members, they are entitled to a further delegate and thereafter to one delegate for every additional 4 000 members up to and including 40 000 members. From 40 000 members onwards they are entitled to a further delegate for every additional 5 000 members, who pay membership fees to International Friends of Nature.

One delegate can represent up to two of the votes allocated to his/her organisation. Representation of other federations is not admissible. The right to vote is subject to payment of the

annual subscription to International Friends of Nature.

3. The Congress takes place every three years and is to be convened by the Management Committee six months in advance, with the agenda attached to the letter of invitation.
 4. An Extraordinary Congress may be called either by the Presidents' Conference or by a minimum of four member organisations (with voting rights), provided they have a combined strength of one fifth of all delegates.
 5. The Congress has a quorum, when more than one half of the delegates entitled to vote are present.
 6. The Congress is opened by the President of International Friends of Nature or by his representative. The Congress elects the Congress Presidium and adopts Rules of Procedure.
 7. The Congress shall deliberate and decide on
 - a) positions on fundamental and international issues
 - b) acknowledging and approving the reports, the balance sheets and the profit and loss accounts
 - c) approving the actions of the Management Committee
 - d) motions
 - e) the work programme
 - f) positions on fundamental and international issues
 - g) amendments of the Statutes
 - h) the location of International Friends of Nature
 - i) admission of member organisations
 - j) exclusion of member organisations in case of inconsistency as defined in Article 9
 - k) the election of
 - (1) the Management Committee
 - the President
 - up to five Vice-Presidents
 - the Treasurer;
 - the Secretary General
 - (2) the Audit Commission;
 - (3) the Arbitration Commission.
- The terms of office of the Management Committee, the Audit Commission and the Arbitration Commission begin with the election at the Congress and end with the new election of the above listed bodies and officials at the subsequent Congress.
- l) Confirmation of the President of International Young Naturefriends.
8. Motions can be submitted to the Congress by the bodies of International Friends of Nature, by the member organisations, by International Young Naturefriends. Motions must reach the Management Committee at least four months prior to the Congress. They have to be circulated to member organisations two months prior to the Congress. At the Congress motions can only be submitted, if they are seconded by at least one third of the voting delegates present.
9.
 - a) Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of the voting delegates present.
 - b) At the request of a single member organisation, the adoption of a motion can be made dependent on the majority of voting member organisations being added to the majority of voting delegates.
 - c) A qualified majority of two thirds of the voting delegates present is required for amendments of the Statutes, fixing of the annual subscription and the exclusion of member organisations.
10. The expenses of Congress delegates shall be covered by the member organisations. The expenses of the members of the Presidents' Conference, of the delegates of IYNF, of the members of the Audit Commission and of the chairperson of the Arbitration Commission shall be covered by International Friends of Nature.

11. Elections: Elections under Article 11, Pt. 7, letter k, shall be by secret ballot.

Article 12: The Presidents' Conference

1. The Presidents' Conference comprises:
 - a) the Management Committee;
 - b) the Presidents of the Full Members or their representatives;
 - c) the President of International Young Naturefriends;
 - d) one representative of each Associated Member (in an advisory capacity);
 - e) the Secretary of International Young Naturefriends and one member of the Audit Commission (in an advisory capacity).
2.
 - a) The Presidents' Conference shall meet at least once a year. It shall be convened by the Management Committee. If at least three member organisations, stating their grounds, request a meeting of the Presidents' Conference, the meeting must be convened within four weeks.
 - b) The Presidents' Conference has a quorum when at least half of the members with voting rights are present.
 - c) Decisions shall be taken by simple majority. In case of a tie, the decision is lost.
3. Meetings of the Presidents' Conference serve the exchange of experience and the framing of policies within International Friends of Nature and have to perform the following tasks:
 - a) monitor and review the execution of decisions taken by the Congress;
 - b) provisionally admit new member organisations and preliminarily fix the annual subscriptions of associated members, subject to their admission by the subsequent Congress;
 - c) approve the budget, the balance sheet and the profit and loss accounts as well as reports.

Article 13: The Management Committee

1. The Management Committee shall be constituted by the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, the Secretary General and the representative of International Young Naturefriends elected by the International Youth Congress. Not more than two honorary members of the Management Committee should belong to the same member organisation. Care shall be taken to achieve geographical and gender balance in the composition of the Management Committee.
2. The Management Committee manages the ongoing business and performs the tasks as laid down in the Statutes and set by the Congress and by the Presidents' Conference. The Management Committee appoints the Secretary General, employs the requisite staff and monitors and reviews the work of the Secretary General.
3. The Management Committee has a quorum when at least two thirds of the voting members are present. Decisions are taken by simple majority. In case of a tie, the decision is lost.
4. The President together with the Secretary General or, in their absence, one of the Vice-Presidents, shall represent the International Friends of Nature in all internal and external matters.

Article 14: The Secretariat

The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary General. The Secretary General's remit is laid down in the Rules of Procedure of the Management Committee.

Article 15: The Audit Commission

The Audit Commission consists of five members. Each member should come from a different member organisation. Four members shall be elected by the Congress. One member shall be elected by International Young Naturefriends and subsequently confirmed by the Congress.

It is the Audit Commission's task to monitor compliance with the organisation's Statutes and the implementation of decisions, to periodically audit the books of account and the cash on hand for consistency with the amounts budgeted and for calculation errors and to report to the Presidents'

Conference and to the Congress.

Article 16: The Arbitration Commission

An Arbitration Commission consisting of five members, shall decide disputes between member organisations or between the latter and the bodies of International Friends of Nature. The Congress shall elect five member organisations which – in the case of an appeal to the Arbitration Commission – shall delegate one member each.

The Arbitration Commission shall constitute itself immediately following its election and shall select a chairperson from amongst its members.

Without being bound by any specific rules, the Arbitration Commission shall decide in all conscience as a collegiate body of five members. Its decisions shall be taken by simple majority. Decisions made by the Arbitration Commission can be appealed against at the subsequent Congress. Appeals have to be lodged within three months.

Article 17: Dissolution

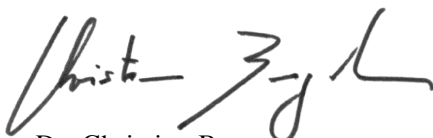
1. A decision on the dissolution of International Friends of Nature can only be taken by a Congress specially convened for this purpose. At least three quarters of the member organisations (with voting rights) must be represented at the Congress, and at least three quarters of the voting delegates present have to vote in favour of the dissolution. The Congress which decides on the dissolution shall, in compliance with paragraph (3) also decide on the appropriation of the assets of International Friends of Nature.
2. The last Management Committee shall notify the responsible authority in writing of the voluntary dissolution and shall announce the voluntary dissolution in an official gazette.
3. Upon the dissolution of the association or the lapse of its fiscally advantaged purpose, its remaining, undiminished assets shall be donated to charities – as defined in §§ 34 ff of the Bundesabgabenordnung (Federal Fiscal Code) – in particular in the fields of nature and environment protection and of sustainable development. This rule shall also apply, if the association is dissolved by official order.

Article 18: Final Provisions


The financial year shall coincide with the calendar year. As a rule, any legal cases arising from the present Statutes shall be heard wherever International Friends of Nature has its headquarters. The German version of the present Statutes is authentic.

The present Statutes were approved by the XX Congress in Liberec / CZ, on the 27th day of September 2008. They shall enter into force immediately and replace all previous Statutes.

Liberec / Vienna
27 September 2008



Dr. Christian Baumgartner
Secretary General



Manfred Pils
President