

## BIEN Statutes

*The rough outline of these Statutes was adopted by BIEN's General Assembly meeting in Antwerp on 24 September 1988. The specific phrasing was approved by BIEN's Executive Committee meeting in Brussels on 5 December 1988. The name of the network and articles 1, 4 and 5 were modified by BIEN's General Assembly meeting in Barcelona on 20 September 2004. Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and appendix were modified by BIEN's General Assembly meeting in Cape Town on 4 December 2006, which added articles 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.*

**1. Purpose:** BIEN's aim is to serve as a link between individuals and groups committed to, or interested in, basic income, i.e. an income unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement, to stimulate and disseminate research and to foster informed public discussion on this topic throughout the world.

**2. Membership:** Individual membership in BIEN is acquired by payment of a lifetime membership fee to be set by the General Assembly. The fee confers voting rights at BIEN's General Assembly (as defined in Article 2). Corporate membership is acquired by payment of a higher fee to be set by the General Assembly.

### **3. General Assembly:**

- a. BIEN's General Assembly (GA) is its sovereign body. It comprises all BIEN's individual members who are present at the GA meeting and no one else. It meets on the occasion of BIEN's regular international conference.
- b. The GA's actions must follow BIEN's statutes, the agenda set prior to the meeting, and the time constraints of the meeting. Decisions are taken as the simple majority of those present (with the exception of the elections and amendments to statutes), and shall be valid regardless of the number present. No proxy votes are allowed. The Secretary shall take such action necessary to ensure that all present members are able to vote and all those voting are members.
- c. The GA shall elect the members of the Executive Committee (EC), approve the accounts, consider applications for affiliation from national networks or other relevant organizations as submitted by the EC, and consider any other matter submitted by the EC.
- d. The GA may delegate contingency powers on a specific matter to the EC, and it may instruct the EC to decide on a specific matter, including proposed amendments to the statutes and the creation of executive functions.
- e. The GA meeting shall be conducted by the Chair or another person designated by the EC except for the election of the EC.
- f. At the beginning of each GA meeting, the EC proposes a member of BIEN as a rule keeper and asks the GA to approve the nominee by majority vote. If the nominee is rejected, the EC shall nominate another person until it finds a rule keeper acceptable to the majority of the GA. The rule keeper is in charge of advising the chair on the procedures to follow in accordance with (1) BIEN's statutes, (2) other procedural rules explicitly adopted by the GA, (3) recorded precedents, and (4) a standard set of rules for conducting meetings endorsed by the GA, in that order of priority. Until the GA decides to replace it, the standard set of rules will be provided by Roberts Rules of Order, 1915 version ([www.robertsrules.org](http://www.robertsrules.org)).

- g. The time and date of each meeting of the General Assembly shall be chosen by the EC. The Secretary shall notify the membership of the date of each meeting of the General Assembly by email not later than 120 days in advance of each meeting.
- h. At least 30 days prior to the GA meeting, the Secretary shall send to the membership, by email, the agenda of the meeting, including any motions and proposed amendments to the statutes, the parliamentary procedure to be used, the publication information of that procedure, and, if possible, where it can be found on the web.

#### **4. Executive Committee:**

- a. The Executive Committee (EC) shall administer the affairs of BIEN in between meetings of the General Assembly (GA). Within the limits set by the decisions of the GA, the committee takes any action it judges useful to the pursuit of BIEN's purposes.
- b. The EC shall consider and decide upon any specific matter remitted to it by the GA.
- c. The EC shall call for bids for organizers of the next BIEN International Congress and shall determine the location of the Congress unless it decides to put that issue before the GA. The EC shall appoint a person or a committee to organize the Congress.
- d. The EC consists of no more than the following 9 members, and with the consent of the GA, it may be reduced to not less than 5 members:
  - 1. CHAIR (or CO-CHAIR) OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC)
  - 2. VICE-CHAIR (or CO-CHAIR) OF THE EC
  - 3. SECRETARY (& TREASURER)
  - 4. NEWSLETTER EDITOR
  - 5. WEB MANAGER
  - 6. REGIONAL COORDINATOR
  - 7. AT LARGE MEMBER
  - 8. AT LARGE MEMBER
  - 9. CONGRESS ORGANIZER
- e. EC members serve for a 2-year term commencing at the end of the General Assembly meeting and concluding either at the end of the next GA meeting or two years and six months after their election, whichever comes first.
- f. The Congress Organizer (9<sup>th</sup> member of the EC) shall be appointed by the EC. His or her term of office begins when appointed and ends at the close of the GA meeting at the Congress he or she organizes. He or she will be a full voting member of the EC during his or her term of office. If an elected member of the EC is appointed to organize the next Congress the EC may appoint someone else from the Congress Organizing Committee to be the 9<sup>th</sup> voting member of the EC. He or she is a full, voting member of the EC in all ways except one: he or she serves at the discretion of the rest of the EC. His or her duties can be changed or his or her position terminated at any time by a majority decision of the EC.
- g. The EC must define and may change the duties of each of the nine members of the EC. The EC must publish (on its website or by an email sent to members) the duties of each office. It must make the duties of each office available to the members for reference during the General Assembly. The EC may not change the duties of an elected member during his or her term of office without his or her consent.
- h. The EC may create any additional executive functions it deems in the interest of BIEN. It may appoint non-EC-members to fulfil these functions. The EC shall publish (as above) the executive functions it has established, the duties of each

function, and the person who will be fulfilling each function. Such appointees serve at the discretion of the EC, which can change their duties at any time, and they do not have voting rights at EC meetings.

- i. Meetings of the EC shall observe whatever rules of procedure are acceptable to a majority of its members. Votes, if requested by the Chair, may be taken in person or by phone or email if agreeable to a majority of the members.
- j. The EC shall meet at least once between each Congress and once during each Congress at the Chair's initiative. It may meet more often if agreeable to a majority of the members. The Chair shall notify the members of the EC of the time and location of each meeting of the EC after attempting to find an agreeable time and place. If funds are needed and available, the EC may decide that BIEN shall pay a member's transportation to an EC meeting.
- k. The Chair may invite non-members to attend meetings of the Executive Committee if it is acceptable to a majority of EC members, but they may not vote.
- l. The EC shall negotiate the terms of any contract to be entered into by BIEN and may delegate this task to one or more of its members by majority vote.
- m. The EC shall consider applications for affiliation from national networks or other relevant organizations and, when considered in accordance with the requirements for affiliation, pass them on to the GA for final approval.
- n. The EC shall report its accounts to the GA and request approval.
- o. If any member of the EC is unable to perform his or her duties during his or her term of office, he or she shall inform the Chair. The EC may appoint a non-voting member to perform his or her duties or ask another member of the EC to perform his or her duties.

**5. International Board:** BIEN's International Board consists of all present and former members of the Executive Committee and of representatives from relevant organizations whose list is determined by the General Assembly. It meets to take decisions within the competence of the General Assembly that cannot wait until the latter's next meeting. Its chair is elected for a two-year term by the General Assembly using the procedure specified in Article 7.

**6. Amendment of Statutes:** The GA can amend the statutes according to the following procedure: The Secretary must receive the proposed amendment in writing or by email in time to put the proposal on the agenda for the GA meeting and notify the membership of such a proposal by email 30 days in advance of the meeting. The Secretary may decline to put a proposed amendment on the agenda if he or she does not receive the proposed amendment at least 45 days in advance of the meeting. Proposed amendments must be seconded at the GA meeting before they can be discussed. The GA may make small changes to proposed amendments before approval as long as they do not constitute new proposals. The rule keeper shall determine whether a proposed change in an amendment is small or whether it constitutes a new proposal.

**7. Elections:** The members of the EC and the Chair of the International Board are elected by the General Assembly in the following manner:

- a. The Chair shall turn the conducting of the meeting over to the Chair of the International Board during elections for members of the EC and shall resume conducting the meeting when the election for the new Chair of the International Board begins. If either the Chair or the Chair of the IB happen to be candidates for the election they are supposed to preside over, or if for some other reason it is

inappropriate or impossible for them to fulfil this role, they are replaced in that capacity by another member of BIEN nominated by the EC and endorsed by the GA with a simple majority.

- b. Candidates must be nominated and seconded by members in advance of the meeting. The nomination must be accepted by the candidate and the candidate must be a member of BIEN. On accepting a nomination a candidate must declare that he or she is willing and able to fulfil the duties of that office as described by the committee. Nominations and seconds are to be received by the Secretary in writing or by email no later than the night before the GA meeting and no earlier than 120 days in advance of the meeting. The Secretary shall make a sign-up sheet available at the International Congress for nominations.
- c. The General Assembly shall have an election by show of hands for each of the following offices one at a time in the following order:
  1. CHAIR (or CO-CHAIR) OF THE EC
  2. VICE-CHAIR (or CO-CHAIR) OF THE EC
  3. SECRETARY AND TREASURER
  4. NEWSLETTER EDITOR
  5. WEB MANAGER
  6. REGIONAL COORDINATOR
  7. AT LARGE MEMBER
  8. AT LARGE MEMBER
  9. CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BOARD
- d. Two candidates may declare an intention to run as Co-Chairs of the EC (rather than Chair and Vice-Chair) but they shall be elected or rejected one at a time if they are opposed by candidates running as a Chair and a Vice-Chair.
- e. The person conducting the meeting may ask for discussion of the nominees and may ask the nominees to address the membership within the time-constraints of the meeting.
- f. For each office, the person conducting the meeting will ask for a vote by a show of hands (among the members) for each of the candidates. Each member may vote for one candidate only. The candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast attains the office. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, the election will follow immediate runoff voting (a variation of instant runoff voting): The candidate receiving the least number of votes is dropped and another vote is taken immediately without further discussion. This process is repeated until one candidate gets a majority of the votes cast. If a vote between two candidates is tied each receiving 50%, the decision will be made by a coin toss.
- g. If there is only one candidate for any office the person conducting the meeting shall call for a vote by acclamation.

#### **8. Impeachment:**

- a. A member of the Executive Committee may be impeached on the ground that he or she has exercised his or her power improperly or has failed to carry out his or her duties satisfactorily.
- b. Any five members of the EC or any 25 members of BIEN may institute impeachment proceedings against a member of the EC by notifying the Chair of the International Board (IB) in writing of the charges and sending a copy to the accused.
- c. Not later than seven days after receiving the charges, the Chair of the IB shall inform all IB members, including all current members of the EC, including the one

accused. The Chair of the IB may suspend the accused from office until proceedings are concluded.

The accused has 30 days to reply to the charges. Once received, the reply is sent to all members of the IB, which has 15 days to decide, by simple majority, whether the accused should be impeached. The accused is notified of the decision by the Chair of the IB, and, if necessary, a new committee member is appointed by the IB following a procedure analogous to the one specified in Article 7.

**9. Affiliates:** National or Regional Affiliates of BIEN include all Recognized National Networks officially recognized prior to the approval of these amendments. Networks may apply to become BIEN affiliates if they have some regular activity (such as conferences, meetings, a newsletter, or other publications), and if they promote basic income only rather than as part of a wider agenda, and basic income in general rather than one specific form of basic income or one that ties it necessarily to some other policy such as one specific type of funding. In addition to national networks, the GA may recognize as affiliates associations whose activities similarly focus on basic income on a supra-national, sub-national, or sectoral basis. To become an affiliate, the organization must send a letter to the Secretary detailing its activities, leadership, and process for determining the leadership. The Secretary shall inform the EC. If the EC approves the network's affiliation, it then refers the matter to the GA for final approval or rejection. An affiliate may be dropped by the EC and GA if it fails to maintain the status defined in this article, and an affiliate is automatically dropped if it ceases to exist. A motion to drop an affiliate must first be approved by the EC and then referred to the GA.

**10. Effective Dates:** If approved by the General Assembly, these Statutes as amended will go into effect immediately and will govern the conduct of the rest of the General Assembly meeting in which they are approved. They will remain in effect unless and until they are amended by the GA under the rules specified above.

**Appendix:**

1. All life members of the Basic Income European Network on 20 September 2004 become life members of the Basic Income Earth Network.
2. In the event of dissolution of BIEN, its assets shall be transferred to a recognized charity with a related purpose, to be determined by the General Assembly, if it meets before dissolution. If the GA does not meet before dissolution, the Executive Committee shall select a charity and ask for the membership's approval by email. If a majority of the responses that arrive within 30 days are favourable the request is approved.