CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ENGLISH BRAILLE (ICEB)

TO BE ADOPTED AT THE SEVENTH ICEB GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ON 18TO to 22 October 2020, LONDON, ENGLAND

SUBMITTED BY THE BYLAWS COMMITTEE IN TERMS OF SUB-ARTICLE PARAGRAPH (A) OF THE CONSTITUTION OF ICEB READ WITH SUB-CLAUSE 4.1.2 OF THE BYLAWS.

1. VACANCIES

PROPOSAL

It is proposed that the following additions are made in the constitution:

1. The executive committee shall have powers to fill vacancies that occur during the term.
2. With the exception of the president, any filling of vacancies shall take cognisance of representivity of member countries.

COMMENTS: Currently, the constitution does not have a provision dealing with vacancies that might occur during the term. The two provisions must thus be added into the constitution as paragraphs (e) and (f) of sub-article 6.2 “Term of office”. For the sake of completeness, it will be proposed that the subheading reads: “Term of office and filling of vacancies”, in order to include the proposed insertions.

1. FINANCES

BACKGROUND

At the Executive meeting, it was suggested that treasurers from other countries should participate in the reviewing of financial statements to specify that instead of an official review by an accountant we require a treasurer from another braille authority to review the finances.

PROPOSAL: Resultantly, it is proposed that a replacement of sub-article 8.3.1 is made as follows:

PROPOSED WORDING:

1. That, after determination by the executive committee in consultation with the Finance Committee, financial statements shall be reviewed by a treasurer from a member country. In view of this, such determination  must be done with the understanding that the reviewing treasurer must not be from the same country as the ICEB treasurer. The secretary shall inform the member country of the decision of the Executive inviting such member country to review financial statements.

CONSTITUTION: Here is what currently is captured in the constitution:

8.3.1 The ICEB accounts must be reviewed each year by a certified accountant. The Executive Committee may call for an audit with a view to ensuring the financial integrity of ICEB.

BYLAWS: Here is what is currently captured in the bylaws document in subsection 4.1.1:

•  review the financial statements prior to their presentation to the General Assembly.

1. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Currently the constitution does not have a committee on public relations.

PROPOSAL: That the additional sentence dealing with public relations as a permanent committee is made in sub-article 7.4 of the constitution.

PROPOSED WORDING:

“Public Relations, with the Chair and members appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Committee.”

1. CROSS-REFERNCING (CONSTITUTION-BYLAWS)

Proposed that reference to the Bylaws by the Constitution or vice-versa, should be made in order to guide users of the two documents to know where to find such empowering or enabling provisions.

1. IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT DETERITORIALISED

COMMENT: Currently the constitution does not have clarity as to the deteriolised position of the immediate past president. Sub-article 6.5.2 (b) of the constitution stipulates that the president does not represent his or her country. We argue that this position should also include the immediate past president.

PROPOSAL: That a New paragraph (d) is inserted to deal with the status of the immediate past president to the effect that s/he is deteritorialised.

PROPOSED WORDING:

“The immediate past president shall remain deteritorialised for the duration of the term.”

1. FUNDING OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

COMMENT: currently sub-article 8.5 stipulates that the executive committee has the responsibility to reimburse executive members to attend meetings. Sub-paragraph 6.1.2 lists officers, which include the immediate past president. It is therefore argued that all officers are reimbursed for attendance of meetings.

PROPOSAL: That addition on 8.5 is made to include all officers. Further that an addition is made braking down the type of meetings ICEB shall fund, or a portion thereof.

Please note: this matter was not adequately address at the Bylaws committee discussions. It would require further discussions by the executive and the General Assembly, dealing with:

* Whether the reimbursement should be apportioned in terms of meetings;
* Which meetings, if the above is to the affirmative, are going to be reimbursed; and
* Whether, if the first bullet is to the negative, there needs be a specific meeting for which officers should be reimbursed.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: That the immediate past president should be reimbursed for either the mid-term executive meeting, or the general assembly, or apportionment of one of the two meetings, on a sliding scale determined by the executive.

**BYLAWS (ALREADY IMPLEMENTED)**

ORGANISATIONS OTHER THAN A RECOGNISED AUTHORITY SEEKING MEMBERSHIP: a new number (1.1.3) was added with the wording: “If an organisation or individual from a Full Member country seeks Associate Membership in ICEB, the Executive Committee will exercise its power to accept or reject the application based on consultation with the braille authority of that country.”

CONFIRMATION OF VOTES TAKEN ELECTRONICALLY: A new number (3.4.2) was added, reading: “All votes conducted via email shall be ratified at a subsequent face-to-face or at any meeting conducted in real time via telephonic or electronic means.”

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

Clause 2 sub-clause 2.1 establishes conditions under which the executive committee establishes the date and venue for the General Assembly. The previous bylaws did not include unforeseen situations which might require other type of meetings than a physical meeting. With the rude awakening by the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICEB exco decided to include a bylaw that specifically empowers the executive to alternate meetings of the General Assembly if circumstances so compel.

The addition to the current sub-clause 2.1 was then added, with some minor amendments made on sub-clause 2.1.1.

It is amended as follows:

2.1.1 The Executive Committee shall establish the exact date and venue of the next General Assembly, and shall inform full and associate members, and publicise the date and venue information at least one year in advance of the convening of the General Assembly.

2.1.2 ICEB Executive Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, decide on a virtual general assembly replacing a pre-planned face-to-face general assembly contemplated in bylaw 2.1.1 above, read together with subsection 5.1(b) of the constitution.

PUBLIC RELATIONS (not yet implemented)

The Public Relations Committee shall:

* Assist in carrying out the duties of the ICEB Public Relations Officer;
* Create materials and identify outlets for publicity and promotional activities, including press releases and newsletters.
* Make known to the outside world the policies, decisions and activities of ICEB.
* Promote the teaching and use of braille; and
* Establish and maintain relationships with relevant bodies, including outreach to non-member countries of ICEB.

CLOSING REMARKS

All bylaws contained herein have been implemented in terms of sub-article 8.4.2(b), of the constitution, read with bylaw 5, which prescribes that: “bylaws shall take effect upon approval unless otherwise indicated.” In terms of bylaw 5, implementation of approved bylaw takes effect immediately after that approval by the executive.