

DIRECTIVES OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SUPERIORS GENERAL

I. Nature of the Union (Art. 1)

The International Union of Superiors General (UISG) is essentially a union of persons.

II. Aim and Mission (Art. 2)

While respecting the autonomy, nature and spirit of each Institute, the Union offers a forum to Superiors General of every continent where, by bringing together the diversity of their charisms, cultures, experiences and insights, they may find mutual enrichment and support in their specific ministry. The Union thus serves the apostolic religious life of women as a whole and promotes an exchange of gifts among the particular Churches. (VC 52, 43, 47)

III. Membership (Art. 3)

Membership of the UISG is open to any Superior General of an apostolic Congregation or Institute of women religious which has received either Diocesan or Pontifical approbation.

Superiors General who wish to be members of the Union express their acceptance of its Statutes and Directives, their desire to participate in its activities, and their willingness to contribute to its financial support in accordance with the indications given by the Council of Delegates.

The UISG, at its headquarters and in the Constellations, seeks ways and means to give information about the existence, aim and mission of the Union to newly elected Superiors General and to others who are not yet members.

IV. General Organization and Basic Legislation (Art. 4)

The structures of the Union are designed to facilitate networking, an exchange of information and reflection, and solidarity at the international level.

The Union has the authority to draw up its own Statutes and Directives.

The Statutes state the nature and purpose of the Union, its relations with other ecclesial and non-ecclesial international bodies, and its internal organization.

The Directives indicate how the Statutes are to be implemented. They are periodically reviewed and may be modified by a two-thirds majority vote of the Council of Delegates, in response to ongoing developments in Consecrated Life and its mission in the Church and in the world, without detriment to the integrity of the Statutes, and in creative fidelity to the original spirit of the Union.

V. Relations of Communion (Art. 5-8)

with the Apostolic See

The Union seeks to develop an ongoing dialogue with the various Dicasteries of the Apostolic See and brings to their notice the aspirations, preoccupations and experiences of apostolic women religious. At the same time, the UISG keeps its members informed about the concerns and initiatives of the Dicasteries and draws attention to documents of the Apostolic See.

with the Union of Superiors General (USG)

The Board of Directors seeks to develop a relationship of partnership with the Union of Superiors General through joint meetings of the Executive bodies of the two Unions, mutual invitations to each Union's Plenary Assembly, participation in the establishment and in the work of joint permanent and "ad hoc" commissions, and collaboration in common projects.

with Conferences of Religious

The Union seeks to maintain relations of inter-communication and collaboration with these Conferences at various levels.

The Executive Secretary keeps the Conferences informed about UISG activities.

The Delegates of the Constellations and other Superiors General keep in touch with the Conferences of Religious in their country/region/continent and collaborate with them. They bring to the Plenary Assembly and the Council of Delegates the particular areas of concern, reflection and activity of their national Conference and share with the Conference the reflections and orientations of the Council of Delegates.

with other ecclesial or non-ecclesial organizations

The Union is open to cooperation with other forms of consecrated life and with international lay organizations, participating in joint reflection in view of a more effective response to the challenges and needs of the times. (VC 54)

The Union is open to dialogue and collaboration with organizations of other religions that are committed to the pursuit of evangelical values in areas of justice, peace, the integrity of creation, and promotion of the dignity of women. (VC 102)

VI. Constellations (Art.9)

The UISG members are grouped in Constellations, which reflect the multicultural dimension of the Union.

composition and establishment

The Board of Directors, according to the criteria given by the Council of Delegates, decides the establishment and composition of Constellations, as well as their subsequent modifications. These criteria allow for:

- * diversity and flexibility;
- * building on existing links and structures;
- * solidarity and inclusiveness;
- * attention to issues related to culture, language, distance, communication. This may include regional meetings within the Constellations.

Each Constellation draws up its own internal regulations (Norms), which are in conformity with the UISG Statutes and Directives.

The number of Constellations should not exceed 55.

The Board of Directors, in consultation with the Superiors General and the Delegates concerned, assigns countries to a Constellation.

The criteria for their placement include:

- * possibility of access to meetings of Superiors General;
- * possibility of two-way communication with the Delegate and Substitutes elected by the Constellation.

When a Congregation or an Institute elects a new Superior General, she will normally belong to the same Constellation as her predecessor. Should she wish to move to another Constellation, she dialogues with the Delegates of the Constellations concerned and gives her motives.

election of the Delegates and Substitutes

The number of Delegates to which a Constellation is entitled is decided by the Board of Directors in accordance with the criteria given by the Council of Delegates and in accordance with the indications given in its Norms.

Each Constellation elects the number of Delegates and Substitutes to which it is entitled from among the Superiors General who belong to the Constellation and are members of the Union.

Their mandate is for three years, renewable once.

In the event that a Delegate ceases to be a Superior General, or for some other reason is prevented from completing her mandate, the first Substitute replaces her with the right to vote.

If the latter cannot complete the mandate, the second Substitute replaces her.

In the event that the Delegate is unable to attend the Council of Delegates, one of the Substitutes replaces her and has the right to vote.

role and function of Delegate(s) and Substitutes

Assisted by the Substitutes, a Delegate is at the service of communion and of animation:

- * she promotes communication and solidarity among the members within the Constellation ;

- * she provides for the implementation of the Norms.

A Delegate maintains regular contact with the Board of Directors through the Executive Secretary and she contributes to the reflection and action of the Union at the international level, especially by participating in the Council of Delegates.

Internal Regulations (Norms)

Each Constellation draws up its own Norms.

They must be in conformity with the UISG Statutes and Directives and be adapted to local circumstances.

The Norms are approved by the members of the Constellation and ratified by the Board of Directors.

The approval of the Norms and their subsequent modifications requires a two-thirds majority vote of the Superiors General belonging to the Constellation.

The Norms of the Constellation indicate the modalities for the election of the Delegate(s) and the two Substitutes by the Superiors General of the Constellation.

The Norms make provision for the animation and organization of the Constellation by:

- * team work among the Delegate(s) and the Substitutes;
- * regular two-way communication between them and the Superiors General belonging to the Constellation;
- * regular two-way communication between the Delegate and the UISG Secretariat in Rome;
- * organization of meetings of Superiors General;
- * relations with national/regional Conferences of Religious;
- * financial administration;
- * secretarial services.

particular nature of the Constellation of Rome

The Superiors General of international Institutes having their generalate in or around Rome are invited to belong to the Constellation of Rome. This group is called to more direct collaboration with the Board of Directors, the Executive Secretary, and the various services offered at UISG headquarters, and make themselves available to participate in the work of permanent and “ad hoc” commissions.

VII. Plenary Assembly (Art. 10-12)

Each Constellation seeks ways in which to provide for the participation of as many Superiors General as possible in the preparation for the Plenary Assembly of the Union and for their representation at these meetings.

The Plenary Assembly is ordinarily held in Rome.

The Board of Directors determines the theme. It will always be one of current interest to consecrated life at the international level.

Details concerning the theme and other matters, which will be the object of consultation at the Plenary Assembly, are sent to UISG members at least six months beforehand.

VIII. Council of Delegates (Art. 13-15)

The Council of Delegates has particular responsibility for the ongoing dynamism of the Union. Through the presence of Delegates representing the Constellations in every continent, it reflects the richness and diversity of apostolic religious life throughout the world.

place where the Council of Delegates is held

The Council of Delegates that follows immediately after a Plenary Assembly generally takes place in or near Rome. The Council of Delegates between Plenary Assemblies may be held elsewhere.

activities of the Council of Delegates

The Council of Delegates, held between Plenary Assemblies, listens to the reality of each continent, noting the developments in religious life and the questions of particular concern. In the light of this information, the Council of Delegates proposes orientations.

The Council of Delegates, held immediately after a Plenary Assembly, receives a report from the Board of Directors which includes information concerning the activities of the various permanent and "ad hoc" commissions.

The Council of Delegates takes up the recommendations of the Plenary Assembly and determines the orientations for the coming triennium and a global plan of action. This plan includes measures for promoting research, reflection and effective solidarity, and the means of financing the Union's operation and activities.

The Council of Delegates may make recommendations to the Board of Directors for the further study of certain questions.

IX. The Board of Directors (Art. 16-23)

mission and operation of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is at the service of communion and has particular responsibility for the ongoing animation of the Union in accordance with its Statutes and Directives, and the orientations given by the Council of Delegates.

The members of the Board of Directors are called to follow the life of the Union. They represent the Union in the Council of "16" and in other meetings with the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL).

extension of the competence and efficacy of the Board of Directors

To better carry out its mission, the Board of Directors calls upon the services of resource persons with expertise and experience in particular fields.

The Board of Directors provides for ongoing theological reflection and sets up the necessary “ad hoc” commissions to study issues of particular concern and to plan the Plenary Assembly and the Council of Delegates.

The Board of Directors also invites the Superiors General belonging to the Constellation of Rome to offer other forms of collaboration.

the election of the President and of the members of the Board of Directors

The election of the President and the Board of Directors takes place during the Council of Delegates that follows immediately after the Plenary Assembly. The modalities of election and the process of discernment are proposed by the Board of Directors and approved by the Council of Delegates held between Plenary Assemblies.

The criteria for election include a level of competence and availability for the functions the Board of Directors has to fulfil, a complementarity of charisms and of apostolic experience and a broad representation of the various continents. The candidates for election are chosen from among the Superiors General belonging to the Constellation of Rome.

On the first ballot, elections are by an absolute majority of the votes of those present; if a second ballot is necessary, a relative majority is sufficient.

The modalities for election indicate the manner of designating the Vice-President who will replace the President in case of need.

Immediately after their election, the names of the members of the Board of Directors are communicated to CICLSAL.

replacement of a Board Member

In the event that a Board Member is unable to complete her mandate, if there are more than six months until new elections are to take place, the Board of Directors appoints a replacement chosen from among the alternates.

The Extended Board (Art 19)

competence, mission and mandate

The Extended Board is a structure at the service of the Union that is operative only on very specific and important questions. As it is not possible to convoke a Council of Delegates when important decisions need to be made, the Delegates and Substitutes of the Rome Constellation can be called upon. The mission of the Extended Board is to help the Board of Directors in their discernment, reflection and decision-making when very important and precise matters related to the life and patrimony of the Union arise.

The decisions taken by the Board of Directors after consultation with the Extended Board, and with some Experts, will be communicated by the President to the Delegates of the Constellations who will communicate them to the members of their own Constellations.

X. and XI. Finance Committee (Art 24 – 27)

The Finance Committee is composed of a Chairperson, the Finance Administrator and no fewer than three other General Treasures or experts in this area appointed by the Board of Directors. It is accountable to the Board of Directors

Under the direction of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the Finance Committee ensures an ongoing study of the financial situation of the Union and makes its recommendations to the Board of Directors and the Council of Delegates. It gives particular attention to questions related to the patrimony of the Union and its healthy administration, to the payment of membership fees, and it monitors income and expenditure associated with the production and distribution of the UISG Bulletin and with the holding of the Plenary Assembly and of the Council of Delegates.

At the Council of Delegates that immediately follows the Plenary Assembly, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee presents the triennial Financial Report.

the Finance Administrator

The Finance Administrator is at the service of the Union and is responsible for the administration of the goods of the Union and the maintenance of the building and equipment. It is essential that her work be done in close collaboration with the Executive Secretary and Finance Committee Chairperson to whom she is also accountable.

meetings

The Finance Committee meets three times a year at fixed dates and when important matters arise. The meetings of the Finance Committee can be convoked by the Chairperson and/or by the Finance Administrator.

XII. Secretariat (Art 28 – 30)

appointment, role and functions of the Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary is chosen for her competence and her knowledge of Consecrated life, the Church and the world. She needs to be available full-time to carry out her functions.

She works with a team chosen by the Board of Directors from among the staff members and with which she has regular meetings. Together they discern the decisions concerning the present and future life of the Secretariat, having always in mind the good of the Union. She keeps the Board of Directors informed.

It is the Executive Secretary who provides for the practical implementation of the decisions and resolutions of the Board of Directors and the Council of Delegates. She accompanies the various permanent and "ad hoc" commissions in the fulfilment of their tasks. She ensures the regular two-way flow of communications within the Union and maintains contact with the Dicasteries of the

Apostolic See and other ecclesial or non-ecclesial organizations with which the Union is in relation.

Secretariat: its mission and its functions

Under the direction of the Executive Secretary, who works in collaboration with the Board of Directors, the various services at UISG headquarters provide the Union with a nerve centre of animation, communication and organization, which also enables the Constellations to remain in contact with one another.

An international team of Religious of different Congregations and of laypersons constitutes the permanent staff at UISG headquarters. Through the particular fields of competence of its members, the diversity of their charisms and of their experience, this team has an essential role in the life and mission of the Union.

Specific tasks may be confided to persons outside the permanent staff if necessary.

functions

The functions of the Secretariat include

- * collaborating in reflection and research, under the direction of the Board of Directors;
- * inviting and receiving communications from the Constellations;
- * transmitting to the members of the Union communications from the President, the Executive Secretary, etc.;
- * assisting the functioning of the permanent and "ad hoc" commissions and other activities;
- * preparing the Plenary Assembly and the Council of Delegates;
- * preserving and classifying the Archives of the Union.

An important task of the Secretariat is the preparation and distribution of the UISG Bulletin; it is a means of keeping the members of the Union in touch with ongoing theological reflection and open to the universal dimension of Consecrated Life and its Mission.

The Executive Secretary and her team set out the roles and functions of the permanent staff and the inter-relation of the various services.

The Executive Secretary informs the Board of Directors of the different changes.

XIII. Dissolution of the Union (Art 31)

In this matter Canon Law must be followed.

These Directives were voted on the 13th May 2007 at the Assembly of Delegates that took place in Rome.

Original in English