

# STATUTES

## Article 1: General

The "International Association of Philatelic Experts" (hereafter referred to as "A.I.E.P.") is a non-profit organisation founded in Merano-Meran, Italy, on 10 October 1954.

The A.I.E.P. is an association of philatelic experts who may issue philatelic opinions, statements, certificates and guarantees under their personal responsibility. The Association does not accept any responsibility whatever for the opinions of its members.

The A.I.E.P. is independent of other national or international associations and organisations; it believes in the co-operation with international philatelic bodies. The legal seat of the A.I.E.P. is Zurich.

## Article 2: Objectives of the A.I.E.P.

The objectives of the A.I.E.P. are:

- a) To unite the leading philatelic experts of all nations and to promote and encourage personal contact and co-operation between them;
- b) To facilitate and promote exchanges of views and opinions;
- c) To uphold common interests;
- d) To inform its members of new technologies in the production and/or detection of forgeries;
- e) To co-operate in the detection of forgeries of all kinds and to support national and international organisations which are similarly engaged;
- f) To impress on collectors and dealers the role of expert opinions for the benefit and protection of philately;
- g) To issue and/or support studies and publications dealing with expertising and/or forgeries.

## Article 3: Membership and Affiliations

The members of the A.I.E.P. comprise the following types of experts:

- A** Professional philatelic experts who regularly issue large numbers of certificates;
- B** Expert philatelists who issue certificates;
- C** Expert dealers and/or auctioneers who issue certificates;
- D** Individual members of expert committees whereby the committee issues collective opinions, but the individual committee members do not issue certificates;

- E** Experts who do not issue certificates but who are active as regular or occasional consultants to philatelists, other experts, organisations or expert committees;
- F** Expert Committees.

Each member of the A.I.E.P. has the same rights and duties.  
Honorary membership is awarded by the General Meeting, in recognition of special merits.

In order to strengthen the bonds of mutual co-operation, the General Meeting may invite similarly engaged philatelic organisations to become Affiliates of the A.I.E.P. Affiliated organisations have neither the rights nor the duties of members.

#### **Article 4: Areas of Specialisation**

The A.I.E.P. regards it as a fundamental principle that, in order to acquire and maintain the highest possible standard of philatelic knowledge, an expert must necessarily limit his activities to a particular field of expertise ("areas of specialisation") in which he is highly specialised and thus best qualified.

Each member's areas of specialisation shall be stated in the official list of members. If deemed necessary, the Board may reduce or otherwise limit a member's areas of specialisation.

Should a member subsequently wish to extend his areas of specialisation, he shall notify the President accordingly. The Board shall then decide whether the application for extension should be submitted for approval by the General Meeting. The General Meeting decides on such extensions of a member's areas of specialisation with a two-thirds majority of votes by the members present or represented.

Each member of the A.I.E.P. has the right to add the initials "A.I.E.P." after his name and to use the name and the English or French version of the official logo of the Association on letterheads, statements, certificates, guarantees, etc., provided that such statements, certificates and guarantees are issued exclusively in connection with the areas of specialisation for which the member is enrolled in the official list of members.

Members should generally refrain from acting as experts outside the fields of expertise indicated in the official list of members. Members are definitely not authorised to use either the name, initials or logo of the A.I.E.P. on any statements, certificates or guarantees for any philatelic items outside the approved fields of expertise indicated in the official list of members. If a member disregards this principle, he shall be liable for deletion from the membership list.

## **Article 5: Ethical Principles**

The A.I.E.P. requires its members to unconditionally accept the following ethical and moral principles which it considers fundamental to the activity of the philatelic expert:

- a) Philatelic expertising is concerned with the examination of the authenticity and condition of stamps or postal history items;
- b) Philatelic expertising must be undertaken with honesty, integrity and impartiality and with an understanding and specialised knowledge of the subject. These qualities, associated with high standards, are the most important element in the make-up of an expert;
- c) The expert is bound by professional secrecy. He is relieved of this obligation only in dealing with public authorities for cases which fall under the sanction of the law;
- d) The expert who is also a philatelic dealer or auctioneer shall most conscientiously avoid passing judgements which might appear selfish or partial; he must place the common good before self-interest;
- e) In purchase and exchange transactions, the expert must refrain from unduly influencing the other party to his own advantage;
- f) The ethics of the profession preclude a public debate between experts of differing views. The expert may express his opinion on different items in public but he shall not pass judgement on the work of a colleague unless he is required to do so by a competent authority;
- g) The good faith of an expert must not be questioned as long as no conclusive evidence to the contrary is available.

## **Article 6: Expertising Regulations**

The following regulations are to be followed, unless local practices or rules or laws regulate the matter in a different way:

- a) The expert shall examine the items submitted to him for their authenticity and condition;
- b) The expert shall carry out his work to the best of his knowledge and belief and in accordance with the current state of knowledge in the field of philatelic expertise;
- c) The expert may give „opinions“ and/or issue “statements,” “certificates“ and “guarantees;“
- d) An „opinion“ usually consist in applying a signature, initials or mark to a philatelic item, without releasing an accompanying written document;
- e) For items of minor value and for forgeries, normally only brief statements will be issued. A “statement“ normally contains:
  - A brief description or a photostat of the item;
  - The findings of the expert: genuine, forged, partly forged, etc.;
  - Date and signature;
- f) A “certificate“ shall contain:
  - A detailed description of the item;

- The findings of the expert: genuine, forged, partly forged, etc.;
  - A detailed description of the quality and state of preservation;
  - In case the expert has signed, initialled or otherwise marked the item, such signature, initials or mark should be mentioned;
  - A photograph, photostat or scan of the item;
  - Date and signature;
- g) A “guarantee“ shall contain:  
The same details as a certificate, plus a statement to the effect that the expert guarantees that the genuineness, quality and preservation of the item correspond to the description given in the certificate. The word “guarantee,“ or equivalent, must be written on such certificate. If the guarantee has a time limit, this must be clearly stated on the certificate. Such guarantee implies that the expert is prepared to accept full liability in case his certificate is proved to contain a material error;
- h) The expert shall be free to sign, initial or mark an item as he sees fit. However, the A.I.E.P. strongly recommends to its members not to apply any indelible marks on any philatelic items. The expert shall be free to mark an undoubtedly forged item as such, thereby assuming full responsibility for such action;
- i) The expert shall qualify his opinions with the formula “in my opinion“ or other words to that effect as is the custom in his country;
- j) The expert should keep copies of his certificates regarding major items, in his custody for at least ten (10) years from their date of issue;
- k) If an expert considers it appropriate not to express an opinion on an item submitted to him, he may refrain from doing so and refer the consignor to another expert or apply to him himself;
- l) The expert shall be free to determine the fees for his services; this should be made known to the consignors in advance;
- m) The expert shall be liable for erroneous “opinions,“ “statements“ and “certificates“ only up to the amount of his fee, unless it can be proved that he acted wilfully and/or out of negligence;
- n) The expert shall be fully liable for erroneous “guarantees;“
- o) The expert shall be fully liable for errors committed wilfully and/or out of negligence;
- p) Consignors who submit philatelic items for expertising to a member of the A.I.E.P. are deemed to have unconditionally accepted the above expertising regulations of the A.I.E.P., provided that these Statutes have been officially published, or been brought to the attention of such consignors.

## **Article 7: Applications for Membership**

Membership of the A.I.E.P. is open to all types of qualified philatelic experts, as specified in Article 3.

The persons forming part of an Expert Committee which is a member of the A.I.E.P. do not automatically acquire the A.I.E.P. membership; if they wish to become members, they must apply separately, for an individual membership.

Applications for membership shall proceed according to the following regulations:

- a) All members of the A.I.E.P. have the right to propose suitable candidates to the Board. The Board shall then decide whether such candidates should be invited to lodge formal applications for the admission as members of the A.I.E.P.;
- b) All applications for membership must contain the following details: The candidate's name, place and date of birth, nationality, full address, profession, areas of specialisation and other qualifications such as philatelic collections, forgeries collections, list of publications, list of exhibition awards, membership of national and international philatelic organisations. If the Board deems it necessary, the candidate may be requested to supply additional information;
- c) With his signature, the candidate shall declare that he accepts to abide by the articles of these Statutes;
- d) The application must be guaranteed by three (3) members of the A.I.E.P. who are required to sign the application form;
- e) The candidate should have at least five (5) years' experience as an expert;
- f) The candidate must clearly define the areas of specialisation for which he applies to be enrolled as an expert in the official list of members. If deemed necessary, the Board may reduce or otherwise limit a candidate's declared areas of specialisation;
- g) Once a year the Board prepares a list of proposed candidates. Members must be informed of the names of all candidates on this list not later than with the invitation to the General Meeting. Any serious objection to the admission of a candidate shall be addressed immediately to the President of the A.I.E.P. who shall notify the Board accordingly. The Board shall then decide whether the candidate's name should remain on the list, or be deleted;
- h) The General Meeting decides on the admission of the candidates appearing on the list presented by the Board. Admission to membership is granted to all candidates who reach a two-thirds majority of votes by the members present or represented.

## **Article 8: Membership and Subscription Fees**

With the exception of honorary members, all members are obliged to pay to the Secretary/Treasurer the annual membership fees. The membership fee for an Expert Committee shall be five (5) times that of an individual member. The membership fee must be paid at latest by 30 June of each year.

All members automatically agree to subscribe to any official publication, or joint publication, by the A.I.E.P. The payment for any such subscription shall be effected together with the payment for the annual membership fee.

Non-payment of the annual membership fee and/or the subscription fee by 30 June, shall be followed by a first and, if necessary, a second written re minder. Non-payment after the second reminder shall automatically entail the exclusion of the member at fault.

The Board proposes the amount of membership fees to the General Meeting, depending on the expenditure foreseen. The subscription fee varies according to the publications actually released.

### **Article 9: Resignations**

Resignation from the A.I.E.P. is possible in the following cases:

- a) Voluntary resignation;
- b) Resignation at the request of the Board, with an indication of the reason;
- c) Exclusion for failure to pay the membership fees, following two fruitless written reminders;
- d) Deletion from the membership list.

Deletions are possible only for serious reasons – such as committing wilful errors contrary to the A.I.E.P. code of ethics, or the unauthorised use of either name or logo of the A.I.E.P. on any statements, certificates or guarantees for any philatelic items outside the approved fields of expertise indicated in the official list of members – by decision of the General Meeting with a two-thirds majority of votes by the members present or represented.

In urgent cases, the Board may suspend a member for up to two years until the General Meeting shall have decided whether the member's temporary deletion from the membership list should be lifted or made permanent.

### **Article 10: The Board of the A.I.E.P.**

The Board of the A.I.E.P. consists of seven members: the President, two Vice-Presidents, the Secretary and three Directors. Every function in the A.I.E.P. is honorary. If a member of the Board fails to attend a General Meeting for three consecutive years, he shall be replaced in office. If a member of the Board is replaced in office, for whatever reason, the Board may provisionally appoint another member in his place, until the next General Meeting shall have elected a successor to the vacant position.

The President is the legal representative of the A.I.E.P. If unable to attend the General Meeting and/or other functions and meetings, he may delegate a Vice President or another member of the Board to take his place. The records of the A.I.E.P. shall be entrusted to the care of the President, the Secretary and the Board. The archives are reserved for the President, who shall hand them over to his successor.

The General Meeting elects the President by secret ballot every four years. The President may not serve more than two consecutive terms in this position. The General Meeting elects the other six members of the Board by secret ballot, for three-year terms on a rotating system, whereby two members are to be elected each year. Each member of the Board is re-eligible. In order to assist the President in the running of the Association, each member of the Board must be prepared to carry out, and take full responsibility for specific duties and work that will be equally distributed within the Board.

Any members (except for members of the Board standing for re-election of their position) who wish to be candidates for the elections of the President, or of the Board, must personally inform the President, in writing, of their intentions to do so. This communication must reach the President at least four months prior to the General Meeting at which the election is to take place. All members will then be informed of the names of the official candidates for elections to the Board at least two months prior to the General Meeting.

Every four years, following the election of the President, the seven members of the Board elect the two Vice-Presidents and the Secretary. Should a Vice-President or Secretary fail to complete the four-year term on the Board, then the Board elects his successor for the remaining part of the four-year term.

#### **Article 11: The General Meeting**

The General Meeting shall be convened annually at the place appointed by the Meeting of the preceding year. The venue and time should be selected so as to coincide with an important philatelic exhibition. If the General Meeting fails to do so, the President shall decide the date and place of the next Meeting and inform the members accordingly.

Invitations to the General Meeting shall be mailed to all members at least one month in advance. They must contain the agenda and, if applicable, the list of any candidates proposed for membership by the Board and to be voted on by the General Meeting.

The quorum shall be deemed to have been reached, regardless of the number of members present or represented.

The President can convene an Extraordinary General Meeting if circumstances demand it. An Extraordinary General Meeting must be convened if it is requested, in writing, by a third of the members.

Each member has one vote. In addition to his vote, no member present may represent more than two (2) members who are unable to attend the General Meeting. Each Expert Committee enrolled as a member has one vote and may be represented by any Committee member delegated by the Chairman of the Committee.

The General Meeting shall decide on the ordinary business by a simple majority of votes of members present or represented. The admission of new members, the extension of members' areas of specialisation, and the deletion of members shall require a two-thirds majority of votes, to be taken by secret ballot, if requested.

### **Article 12: Postal Votes**

In order to allow all members to actively participate in the voting, members unable to attend the General Meetings may make use of the postal vote in the following instances:

- the election of the President;
- the election of members of the Board;
- any other important issue that the Board should decide to open for a postal vote.

An anonymous ballot card will be sent to every member at least two months prior to the General Meeting or other specified event for which the vote is desired. After completing the ballot card according to the directions supplied, it is to be mailed to the Secretary. The special envelopes containing the ballot cards shall be opened at the General Meeting and the cards placed in the ballot box, together with the ballot cards of the members who attend the General Meeting. In the specific case where a ballot includes postal votes, proxies are not admitted to participate, since every member has had the possibility of casting his personal postal vote.

For the purposes of these Statutes – i.e., for the calculation of the votes – members who did cast a postal vote are deemed to be “members represented”.

### **Article 13: The Hunziker Medal of the A.I.E.P.**

The Hunziker Medal (named in memory of the former President of the A.I.E.P., Hans Hunziker) is awarded, annually, by the A.I.E.P. for a significant literary contribution, or research work concerned with forgeries or philatelic expertising, or for outstanding expertising activities.

### **Article 14: Arbitration**

In the event of disputes arising from differences of opinion between experts or complaints on the conduct of a member, a special Arbitration Commission shall be nominated by the Board.

The Board may submit a report and recommendation by the Arbitration Commission to the General Meeting, if appropriate.

## **Article 15: Dissolution**

The A.I.E.P. can be dissolved only if a General Meeting with the dissolution of the A.I.E.P. on its agenda so decides by a two-thirds majority. The financial assets of the Association shall in that case be handed over to another philatelic organisation.

## **Article 16: Amendments to the Statutes**

Amendments to the Statutes may be made following either a motion of the Board or the motion of a member. Such amendments require the approval of a two-thirds majority of the General Meeting at which they are to be considered. Members must be informed of the proposed amendment not later than with the invitation to the General Meeting.

In case of any differences of interpretation, the English version of these Statutes shall be binding.

The present Statutes were approved by the General Meeting held in Milan on 28 October 1998. Amendments were approved by the General Meetings held in Vienna on 3 June 2000, in Brussels on 14 June 2001, and in Sindelfingen on 25 October 2003.