



STATUTES (English version)

of the Association

A.I.E.P.

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES EXPERTS EN PHILATELIE

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 as *Association Internationale des Experts en Philatelie*. The name according to Austrian Association Act is I.V.P.E. *Internationale Vereinigung der Philatelie-Experten*, in the international communication the association acts as A.I.E.P. Association Internationale des Experts en Philatelie.

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.

After the last establishment of the A.I.E.P. in Zurich, the association, based on Austrian law, in particular the Association Act 2002, Federal Law Gazette I No. 66/2002, as amended, now establishes its seat in Vienna.

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 expertizing and/or forgeries.

Article 3 ***Membership and Affiliations***

The members of the A.I.E.P. are composed of the following types of experts, who are ordinary, associate or honorary members, natural or legal persons:

Ordinary members are

- A) Philatelic experts who issue confirmations and declarations,
- B) Philatelic experts who do not issue confirmations and declarations, but who act as regular or occasional advisers to philatelists, other experts, organisations or expert committees.

Extraordinary Members are

- C) Philatelic experts who are no longer active but are supporting members.

Honorary Members are

those to whom Honorary Membership is conferred by the General Assembly in recognition of special services.

In order to strengthen the bonds of mutual cooperation, the General Assembly may invite philatelic organisations with similar purposes to become friendly associations of the A.I.E.P. Friendly associations have neither rights nor obligations 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 expertizing is concerned with the examination of the authenticity and condition of stamps or postal history items;

- b) Philatelic expertizing 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 ***Expertizing 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 issue certificates (for genuine items) and statements (for forgeries);
- d) 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;
- e) A statement is used for all forged items and shall contain a detailed description, date and signature.
- f) The expert should not sign, initial or mark an item, unless the owner of the item is asking for that.
- g) 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;
- h) 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;
- i) The expert shall be free to determine the fees for his services; this should be made known to the consignors in advance;
- j) The expert shall be liable for erroneous certificates only up to the amount of his fee, unless it can be proved that he acted wilfully and/or out of negligence;
- k) The expert shall be fully liable for errors committed wilfully and/or out of negligence;
- l) Consignors who submit philatelic items for expertizing to a member of the A.I.E.P. are deemed to have unconditionally accepted the above expertizing 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;
- i) The members of the Association with registered office in Zurich who are listed in the records of the A.I.E.P. at the date of the resolution on the statutes of the Association with registered office in Vienna shall be accepted as members of the Association without observing the formalities for acceptance. They shall be informed that they may object within a period of two months from the date of the resolution, whereby the acceptance shall become invalid. The Board shall be responsible for the implementation.

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 affected 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 reminder. 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.

In addition, the necessary financial means are raised through sponsorship contributions and voluntary support.

Ordinary members have a seat and a vote in the General Assembly and the right to vote and stand for election for the functions of the organs of the Association. They also have the right to use the abbreviation A.I.E.P. after their own name.

Article 9
Resignations

Membership in the A.I.E.P. ends by:

- a) voluntary resignation, at the end of the current calendar year;
- b) expulsion, at the request of the Board by the General Assembly with a two-thirds majority of the votes of the members present or represented.

Expulsion requires the existence of an important reason, such as non-payment of the membership fee and/or subscription amount, serious violation of the Statutes, violation of the A.I.E.P. Code of Ethics, unauthorised use of the A.I.E.P. name or logo on statements, certificates or guarantees for philatelic items outside the approved specialities indicated in the official membership list, etc.

The decision of the General Assembly shall be made in two parts, the first decision point concerns the determination of the important reason together with the reasons, the second decision point concerns the pronouncement of the exclusion.

Any termination of membership shall result in deletion from the list of members.

In urgent cases, the Board may suspend the membership of a member with immediate effect and order the deletion of the member from the list of members until the General Assembly has decided on the exclusion.

Article 10
Bodies of the Association

The bodies of the Association are the Board, the General Assembly, the Auditors and the Commission of Arbitration.

Article 11
The Board

The Board consists of the following members:
the President, as well as the Vice-President (Deputy President);
the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary;
the Treasurer and the Deputy Treasurer.

All terms refer equally to both male and female members.

The President (Deputy) together with the Secretary (Deputy) shall represent the Association in all matters, but in financial matters the President (Deputy) together with the Treasurer (Deputy) shall represent the Association.

Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be convened by the President in writing, orally or by telephone and shall be chaired by him. Any member may request that a meeting of the Board of Directors be convened. In this case, the meeting must be convened within 14 days at the latest. If the meeting is not convened within this period, any member of the Board may convene the meeting himself/herself. The holding of a meeting of the Board of Directors, including the passing of resolutions, by video conference is permissible. It is also permissible to pass resolutions in writing, either by circulation or by individual written vote. Transmission by fax or e-mail shall be deemed equivalent to written form.

The Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum at a meeting when at least half of the members are present.

In matters of management, the Board shall decide by a simple majority of votes within the framework of the overall management. In the event of a tie, the chairperson shall have the right to cast the deciding vote.

The election of the members of the Board shall be carried out by the General Assembly by secret ballot with a simple majority of votes. The functions are honorary. Members are elected for a period of four (4) years from the date of election. Re-election is possible, but the President may not hold this office for more than two consecutive terms. In any case, the function of the members of the Board shall not end before a new election has taken place. In the event of the resignation of a member of the Board, the remaining members of the Board may co-opt a substitute member in his place with effect until the next ordinary election. Following the election of the Board, it shall elect from among its members the President (Deputy), Secretary (Deputy) and Treasurer (Deputy) from among its members.

Any member (except a member of the Board standing for re-election) wishing to stand for the election of the Board must personally notify the President in writing of their intention to do so.

The removal of a Board member is possible for good cause by the General Assembly. The decision requires a three-quarters majority of the votes of the members present or represented.

The records of the A.I.E.P. shall be entrusted to the President, the Secretary and the Board. The archives shall be reserved for the President, who shall hand them over to his successor.

The Board is obliged to inform the General Assembly about the activities of the Association and the financial management.

Article 12 ***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. Should it be necessary, the President shall decide to convene the General Assembly in telematic form via an electronic platform.

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 when ten members are present or represented. If at the time of the opening of the General Assembly the quorum is not present, the General Assembly shall wait half an hour before commencing and shall then constitute a quorum irrespective of the number of persons present.

Each member shall have one vote. In addition to his vote, a member present may not represent more than two (2) members who are not participating.

Only Full Members, including Expert Committees, shall be entitled to vote. Each Expert Committee registered as a member shall have one vote and may be represented by any member of the Committee delegated by the Chairperson of that Committee.

Resolutions at the General Assembly shall be passed by a simple majority of votes cast, unless a different quorum is provided for in these Statutes.

Article 13 ***Auditors***

The General Assembly shall appoint at least two independent and impartial auditors. In the absence of the requirements of article 22,2 of the Associations Act 2002, the appointment of an official auditor is not required. The election shall be for the same term of office as that of the Board of Directors.

Article 14
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 by the A.I.E.P. for a significant literary contribution, or research work concerned with forgeries or philatelic expertizing, or for outstanding expertizing activities.

Article 15
The Commission of Arbitration

Disputes arising from the association's relationship shall be settled before a Conciliation Body (Commission of Arbitration). Unless the proceedings before the Commission of Arbitration are terminated earlier, legal disputes may be brought before the ordinary courts of law after a period of six months has elapsed from the date on which the dispute was brought before the arbitration board.

The Commission of Arbitration shall consist of a chairperson and two other members. They shall be elected by the General Assembly for a period of four (4) years, taking into account their impartiality and the fact that they have legal knowledge or training. Decisions in the Commission of Arbitration shall be taken by a simple majority of votes. The parties to the dispute shall be heard by both sides.

Article 16
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 17
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 German version of these Statutes shall be binding.

The present Statutes were approved by the founding members Dr. Thomas Mathà, Mag. Gerhard Babor, Giacomo F. Bottacchi, Ronald Steuer and Diego Carraro in Vienna on December 2, 2022 and integrated by written amendment of 6.4.2023.

