

CONNECT  
THE ENGLISH SPEAKERS CULTURAL CLUB, BERLIN

CONSTITUTION  
Version of January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005

**§ 1 Name, Place, Fiscal Year**

1. The club has the name "Connect – The English Speakers Cultural Club, Berlin". It shall be registered and then bear the extension "e.V."
2. Place of the club is Berlin.  
The club was founded on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003.
3. The club is neutral in regards to politics and confessions and is open to people of every origin.
4. Fiscal year is the calendar year.
5. The club solely aims to achieve non-profit and cultural goals according to the section "Steuerbegünstigte Zwecke" of German tax laws.

**§ 2 Purpose of the club**

1. Connect wants to enhance the personal and cultural connections between speakers of the English language in Berlin.  
The goal of the club is to promote the unity of the English speaking community in Berlin and to enrich their life in Berlin.  
Personal exchange among native speakers of English and other persons interested in the English language and culture shall also promote the idea of international understanding.
2. The club aims at cultural, integrating and educational goals.  
The club tries to reach its goals for example by
  - a. Regular meetings of native speakers of English and other persons interested in English language and culture
  - b. Organisation of special events in order to improve the members' knowledge of other countries. This includes for example celebrating national holidays of English speaking countries (e.g. UK, Ireland, USA, Australia, New Zealand) in the typical way.
  - c. Organisation of study tours to English speaking countries, primarily to learn about the culture of the country.
  - d. Publishing a club journal
  - e. Visiting English speaking cultural events

**§ 3 Non-profit Aspects and Usage of Financial Means of the Club**

1. Connect exclusively pursues non-profit and cultural goals. The club does not pursue gainful goals.
2. Financial means of the club may only be used for purposes compliant with this constitution. The members do not receive any contribution from the club. By leaving the club they have no claims on the club's financial means. No person may be favoured by expenses not compliant with the purpose of the club or by exceedingly high contributions.
3. Members and volunteers can only claim compensation for proven expenses.
4. The executive committee may decide on hiring a general manager. This decision has to be confirmed by the general meeting.

#### **§ 4 Membership**

1. Only natural persons can be members of the club. Connect consists of members with the right to vote. The executive committee decides on accepting members. This decision needs not to be justified.
2. All members have to renew their membership at the beginning of the fiscal year.
3. Applications are given in writing to the executive committee.
4. Members pay their annual membership fees according to the standing orders.
5. Only such members who have paid their membership fee have the right to vote at the general meeting.
6. The club does not discriminate against age, profession, nationality, class, race, gender, background, religion or physical or mental affliction.
7. Any member can leave the club at any time by informing the executive committee.
8. The obligatory language in the club is English.

#### **§ 5 Loss of Membership**

Membership ends due to:

- a) Death of the member
- b) Leaving the club
- c) Non renewal of the membership: Six weeks after the beginning of the fiscal year, the members have to renew their membership by paying their membership fee.
- d) Exclusion: The exclusion of a member is carried out by majority decision of the executive committee, if the member in question disregards the constitution or resolutions of the general meeting and/or damages reputation of Connect or individual members, especially because of losing the civil rights, or acts against the interest of the club.

#### **§ 6 Organs**

The organs of the club are

- a) The general meeting
- b) The executive committee

#### **§ 7 The Executive Committee**

1. Composition
  - 1.1. The club is led by the executive committee. It consists of elected members.
  - 1.2. The executive committee is responsible for managing Connect and carrying out resolutions.
  - 1.3. The elected committee consists of president, vice president, treasurer, secretary and fundraiser. No member may take over more than one position in the executive committee.
  - 1.4. All members of the executive committee have to be regular members of Connect. Loss of membership automatically means loss of all positions in the committee.

- 1.5. At least two members of the executive committee must be native speakers of English.
- 1.6. The members of the executive committee are the legal representatives of Connect.  
For legal and other issues, three members of the executive committee act jointly.
- 1.7. In order to validate a resolution by the executive committee, all members of the elected committee have to be present and the resolution requires a majority of the votes.
- 1.8. The executive committee is elected by the general meeting for a period of two years from the day of election. It remains effective until a new committee is elected. If one member leaves the committee during this period, even temporarily, the committee elects a supplementary member (from the members of the club) for the remaining period or until the return of the original member. A member of the executive committee can hold the same position only for a maximum of two concurrent periods. Exceptions have to be approved by the general meeting.

## **§ 8 General Meeting, Elections, Periods**

### **1. Votes, Chairmanship**

In the general meeting, every present regular member has one vote. The general meeting is responsible for the following issues:

- a) Receiving the annual report of the executive committee.
- b) Determining amount and due date of the annual fee.
- c) Election and voting out of members of the committee.
- d) Resolutions and changing the constitution and termination of the club.

The general meeting is held by the president, else the vice-president or another member of the elected committee. If no member of the elected committee is present, the general meeting elects one chairman for the meeting.

The general meeting is not public. Guest may be permitted by the president of the meeting. The meeting decides about permission of press or broadcast services.

### **2. Invitation, Protocol**

The executive committee calls in the general meeting once a year, latest three weeks before the end of the fiscal years. This invitation is written, it must include the agenda and be sent out at least two weeks in advance.

A protocol logs the decisions of the general meeting. It is to be signed from the president of the meeting and the writer of the minutes. It shall contain the following statements: Date and place of the meeting, name of the president of the meeting and the writer of the minutes, number of members present, agenda, results of the individuation votes and decisions and way of voting. Changes of the constitution have to be listed in detail.

### **3. Resolutions and votes**

Once the invitation to the general meeting have been sent out according to this constitution, the general meeting has a quorum, independent of the number of members present. The standing orders regulate the procedure of voting. Voting has to be written if a third of the members present at the voting demand it. The general meeting sets the resolutions with simple majority of the valid votes, abstentions are not counted. Changes of the constitution (including the purpose of the club), however, require a majority of three quarters of the valid votes, termination of the club a majority of four fifth.

The general meeting elects the executive committee. The standing orders regulate the election procedure.

For elections, this procedure applies: If a candidate does not reach the majority of the valid votes in the first run, the election is repeated with only the two candidates with the highest numbers of votes.

4. **Exceptional general meetings**

The executive committee can always call for an exceptional general meeting. This is the case if the majority of the executive committee sets that resolution, if the interest of the club requires such a meeting or if 10% of the members sign a written request to the executive committee to hold such a meeting, including the purpose and the reasons. For exceptional general meetings, the regulations mentioned above apply accordingly.

5. **Belated changes for the agenda**

Every member can, until one week before the day of the meeting, hand a written request to the committee to include other issues on the agenda. The president of the meeting has to update the agenda accordingly in the beginning of the general meeting. The general meeting decides about requests on changes of the agenda which are stated during the meeting. Such changes require simple majority. Changes of the constitution, termination of the club and election or voting out of members of the committee can only be on the agenda if the respective requests have been sent to the members with the invitation and the agenda.

**§ 9 Membership fees and financial means**

1. The amount of the membership fees is suggested by the executive committee and decided upon by the general meeting with simply majority.
2. Membership fees are not refundable on leaving the club.
3. Connect receives its funds from membership fees, donations, public subsidies and fundraising events.

**§ 10 Termination of the Club and Transfer of the Financial Means**

1. The termination of the club can only be decided upon with a majority according to § 8. Unless the general meeting decides otherwise, the president and the vice-president are under joint responsibility for the liquidation. The same applies if the club is terminated for another reason or loses its legal status.
2. If the club is terminated or loses its special tax status, the financial means of the club go to the Ireland Fund of Germany e.V., Mehlemer Strasse 25, 50968 Köln, who may use these means exclusively for non-profit or charitable purposes.

This changed constitution has been approved by the annual general meeting on January 15, 2005 in Berlin.