

## GENERAL ASSOCIATION RULES

### Premise

The present Association rules apply to all members and were prepared in accordance with the principles that are also included in the Statutes of the Association V.I.T.A-A.T.I.V (hereinafter referred to as the "Association"). It is both the wish and the continuous effort of each Association member to comply with all points of the Association rules. The present Association rules have been discussed in the General Assembly of the founding members, decided unanimously and signed; any alterations and extensions require the approval of the General Assembly by a qualified majority.

Whenever there is a need to adapt the current Association rules to the activities and operations of the Association, corresponding updates will be made. After the Association rules have been signed by the founding members, they will appear on the website of the Association. The present Association rules and their updated versions are considered as decisive reference for all members of the Association.

### Objectives

The Association follows the objectives as laid down in the Statutes and as described in the document "*Aims of the Association V.I.T.A-A.T.I.V*". In this document are defined both the objectives and the mental attitude of the Association and in which way it intends to achieve these objectives.

### Rules of Conduct

The points that deal with aspects of behaviour among the members are inspired by pedagogical and relational concepts of one of the founding members of the Association. Apart from those aspects of behaviour which are implicitly or explicitly already included in the document "*Aims of the Association V.I.T.A-A.T.I.V*" there are the following rules of conduct:

- a) It is understood and it is expected that each member respects the right of any other member to have an opinion and/or its own position; that it is not allowed to behave offensive or disrespectful towards other Association members with different attitudes to issues of ethics, culture, philosophy, spirituality, morality, sports, science, education, psychology, sexuality, economic or existence.
- b) It is understood and it is expected that any expression of a different opinion or belief towards other Association members can only take place and can be accepted if it is done in a polite and respectful way, showing respect to the other Association members as persons and to their opinions or beliefs.
- c) It is understood and it is expected that each Association member:
  - 1.) in principle respects the time of the Association members who have assumed responsibilities (or may not) within the Association and that all Association members commit themselves not to cause any loss of time to said members.
  - 2.) tries to do everything in his power not to cause unnecessary loss of time to other Association members and, if necessary, to require only such indispensable information that is not already available at various information points, i.e. on the Website, on the Bulletin board, in the Newsletters, in the Statutes, in the Aims of the Association, in the General Association Rules and their updates.
- d) It is understood and the members are expected (in order to maintain the good reputation of the Association and its members) neither to grumble about the working methods of the Association nor to spread slanderous rumours (both internally and outside of the Association). In demonstrable cases of offensive behaviour of a member or of behaviour that may damage the reputation of the Association and/or its members, a temporary suspension or definitive expulsion from the Association could be initiated. The same procedures could be initiated if a member should aim to create discord, to spread rumours or to violate the honour of the Association and/or its members.
- e) It is understood and it is expected that the members of the Association do not spread information that concern the privacy of the single members (and of the Association) without a previously obtained and verifiable permission. Regarding the protection of privacy, first of all the regulations of the existing general laws (General Civil Code, Penal Code, Copyright Act) shall apply and, in addition, also the agreements reached in the Statutes and in the General Association Rules, as well as personal agreements.
- f) It is understood and is expected that an Association member does not put pressure on another member because he wants to learn from him the names of members or persons which he met on the various meetings of the Association or by using the interactive platform of the Association's homepage; apart from that it is common courtesy and "bon ton" to refer directly to the persons concerned if one wishes to obtain personal information about them. This, to avoid a split in the relationship between the careless informant and the member concerned who may not appreciate the disclosure of information relating to his privacy.

### Activities of the Association

Each member is free to decide whether and what activities and/or events (which are authorized or organized by the Association and are intended for his membership status) it would like to attend.

To participate there is no need for:

- a) contributions of any kind, except for those activities and/or events where a fee was agreed upon;
  - b) additional contributions and/or cooperation beyond what eventually has been agreed with the Association in written.
- Each activity and/or event will be coordinated by a competent person in charge. The Association may, for each activity and/or event that it approves or organizes, create an own supplementary guidance. It is understood and it is expected that during the activities and/or events (authorized and organized by the Association) the members show an honourable behaviour which is appropriate for the nature of the event and complies with the principles of the Association. If the Association or the host of the event should suffer damage caused by dishonourable conduct of members, those members shall be personally held responsible. Furthermore, against such dishonourable members adequate measures will be taken and applied by the competent bodies of the Association. Against the decisions of these bodies of the Association, there is no possibility of appeal.

### **Categories of Membership**

As stipulated in the Statutes of the Association, the members of the Association belong to one of the following four categories: Associated Members, Full Members, Honorary Members and Sponsor Members.

Associated Members are those who are interested in the objectives and activities of the association and may participate in associative life either in the form of a

- Interested Associated Member or
- Collaborating Associated Member.

### **Interested Associated Members**

The Interested Associated Members are those who are interested in the activities and objectives of the Association. They can participate in all activities and/or events that are intended for those Interested Associated Members.

### **Collaborating Associated Members**

Collaborating Associated Members are those that except that they are interested in the activities and objectives of the Association, will also actively participate in the Association's work. They inform the Association about the terms of their collaboration, as described in the document "*Additions to the Association Rules for Collaborating Associated Members*". Additionally, Collaborating Associated Members confirm to agree with and accept both the "*Description of the General Internal Procedures for Collaborating Associated Members*" and the "*Additions to the Association Rules for Collaborating Associated Members*". They can participate in all activities and/or events that are intended for both Interested Associated Members and Collaborating Associated Members.

### **Full Members**

Full Members are those who not only fully identify with the Association's objectives, but also actively participate in associative life, in the course of the duties which were officially conferred to them; it is explicitly stated that all Full Members, whether they have a function or not, collaborate and promote the Association within their available time. They inform the Association about the terms of their collaboration, as described in the document "*Additions to the Association Rules for Full Members*". They also confirm to agree with and to accept the "*Description of the General Internal Procedures for Full Members*" and the "*Supplement to the Association Rules for Full Members*". Full members can potentially participate in all activities and/or events.

### **Honorary members**

Honorary members are appointed because they have provided specific services to the Association and to the Association's purpose or because of special (e.g., professional, social or personal) qualifications. Honorary members may potentially participate in all activities and/or events.

### **Sponsor members**

Sponsor members are those who support the Association and its non-commercial purpose with material or financial resources. The modalities of the material or financial support are determined in detail through negotiations. Sponsor Members can potentially participate in all activities and/or events.

### **Accession to the Association in general**

As laid down in the statutes, the Association's Board decides on all applications for membership in the Association. It shall provide the applicant in case of confirmation of membership a written notice via e-mail. The applicant confirms with the sending of his application for membership that he agrees with the Statutes and the General Association Rules and accepts them. The applicant can consider himself officially as an Association member from the moment he receives a written notice from the Association's board which confirms the acceptance of his application.

Before the confirmation of the membership can be sent to the applicant, the membership fee must have been paid. Should the request for membership for whatever reason be rejected, the already paid membership fee will be refunded to the applicant.

Application for membership can be rejected without giving reasons. In any event, the Association is not obliged to respond. Should the applicant not receive written confirmation of acceptance within 30 days, he may consider his request as rejected.

Everyone who wants to join the Association may make his request:

A) either by registering a personal account on the Association's website ([www.vita-ativ.org](http://www.vita-ativ.org)). The registration of a personal account on the website enables interactive communication with other Association members on the Association's website. For example, it allows to place proposals on the (virtual) bulletin board, or to respond to proposals or to agree on common activities. Under the section "Registration" the applicant shall insert his personal data in the appropriate fields and give his agreement to the following points: to the Statutes, the General Association Rules, the Privacy Policy and Terms of Use of the account by clicking on the appropriate field "Accept". A prerequisite for the activation of the user account is the payment of the membership fee to the Association's account. In case of delayed payment, resignation or expulsion from the Association, access to the account will be disabled.

B) or by sending via e-mail the forms "*Application for Membership*" and "*Privacy Policy Application*" which can be found on the Association's website ([www.vita-ativ.org](http://www.vita-ativ.org)) under the section "Forms". The printed forms are to be filled out completely, signed, scanned and to be sent via e-mail to the Association's Board ([application@vita-ativ.org](mailto:application@vita-ativ.org)). In this case, there will be no registration on the Association's website and no interactive use options will be available. In principle, any passwords for the use of additional features of the website ([www.vita-ativ.org](http://www.vita-ativ.org)) are provided only upon receipt of payment of the membership fee.

### **Accession to the Association as Interested Associated Member**

It shall apply the guidelines described under the point “Accession to the Association in general”)

### **Accession to the Association as Collaborating Associated Member**

For everyone who applies for membership as Collaborating Associated Member it is also necessary to accept and agree to the *"Additions to the Association's Rules for Collaborating Associated Member"*. Everyone who submits an application for membership as Collaborating Associated Member, according to the standard procedures, has first of all to be accepted as Interested Associated Member. Possible exceptions to this practice decides the Association's Board in its sole discretion.

### **Accession to the Association as Full Member**

Everyone who wants to become a Full Member, must, apart from his application for membership, be also supported by another Full Member (or Honorary Member). A further precondition for becoming a Full Member is to participate in an interview which is carried out by at least one other Full Member (or Honorary member), and also to accept and agree to the *"Additions to the General Association Rules for Full Members"*. Everyone who submits an application for membership as Full Member, according to the standard procedures, has first of all to be accepted as Collaborating Associated Member. Possible exceptions to this practice decides the Association's Board in its sole discretion.

### **Resignation and Expulsion from the Association**

Each member can – as provided in the Association's Statutes – resign from the Association at any time, however, by complying with its commitments with the Association. Membership in the Association may expire upon voluntary resignation or expulsion decided by the Association's Board. It may appeal to the Arbitration Commission against this decision within 30 days after having received the notice of expulsion from the Association; however, the Arbitration Commission is not obliged to respond. Should the member receive no response from the Arbitration Commission within 30 days after its appeal, the decision on expulsion can be considered as final.

### **Rights and obligations of members**

The equality of the dignity of the member and its individuality is recognized and all fundamental and personal rights are guaranteed within the Association's life.

- a) It is understood and it is expected that each member wishing to make a contribution (whether through cooperation in the Association, whether through cooperation in activities of the Association) sends a written proposal for cooperation to the relevant area manager and clarifies whether his cooperation is free of charge or whether he wishes to be paid for it and what other conditions must be met. A proposal for cooperation can only be considered as accepted if the requesting member has received a written positive notice from the Association.
- b) It is understood and it is expected that - apart from written agreements that a member has signed with the Association - a member will not demand recognition for contributions or collaborations that he had decided to offer to the Association for free.
- c) It is understood and it is expected that members that may wish to present their own ideas (not free of charge) to other members or to the Association shall proceed in the following way: before they tell others about their ideas it is recommended to take adequate precautions (using any suitable means for providing evidence) and to inform in advance about conditions and expectations they have, so that their interests may be protected. Those members who, intentionally or unintentionally, should not follow this agreed procedure cannot:
  1. assert a claim against other members or against the Association
  2. see themselves as the authors of these ideas, nor demand to be seen by others as such
- d) It is agreed that the members may submit the following proposals to the Association:
  1. that activities, initiatives, events or other shall be organized and be approved provided they comply with the objectives of the Association
  2. that activities, initiatives, events or other shall be organized by the Association and among members and be approved provided they comply with the objectives of the Association.
- e) It is understood and it is expected that the members of the Association do not organize activities in the name or on behalf of the Association without proven written permission of the competent bodies of the Association.
- f) It is understood and it is expected that the members of the Association respect the cultural character of the Association (as expressed in the document *"Aims of the Association"*) and do not join the Association with the deliberate intention to receive private and economic benefits through personal or social relationships they build within the Association.
- g) It is understood and it is expected that the members of the Association do not organize meetings (in the name of the Association or not), aimed to address questions and issues that concern directly or indirectly the Association or that might damage relations between the members, without prior invitation and/or authorization by the Association's Board. In the event of unauthorized meetings, the Association's Board may impose appropriate sanctions against such members who demonstrably participated in such meetings.
- h) It is understood and it is expected that the members shall answer questions (i.e. from family members, friends, colleagues or acquaintances) about the Association in general or about various internal procedures in such way that:
  1. they stick exactly to the principles and refer only to such principles which are explained in the Association documents (*"Statutes of the Association"*, *"Aims of the Association"*, *"General Association Rules"*).
  2. they try to avoid in this context own personal interpretations. Members that do not stick to this principle are responsible.
- i) It is understood and it is expected that the members pay the membership fee on time and as described in the section "membership fee".
- l) Apart from assumed obligations with the Association the members are not obliged to make any further contributions (or other commitments of practical, emotional, economic, moral, spiritual or intellectual nature). In addition, all

members are free to decide whether, how and when they want to make further contributions (of any kind) to the Association.

m) Based on the directives on privacy and compliance with data protection laws, it was agreed that the Association is not entitled to hand out to members and/or third parties (except government agencies) a list with the names of the registered Association members without the prior and voluntary consent of each individual Association member. If access to the mentioned list of names is denied it is done for the purpose of compliance with these privacy rules.

### **Possible cooperation of the Association and related procedures**

One of the many objectives of the association is to promote opportunities of interaction, both among the members of the association, as well as between the Association and other institutions or Associations (in the area of ethics, culture, philosophy, morality, sports, science, pedagogy, psychology, sexuality and economy, including spiritual and existential issues). For the coordination of such cooperation it is foreseen to appoint for each area (or for several areas) an area manager, 4 assistants to the area manager, and a supervisor of the area managers. The appointment of the area manager and the supervisor of the area managers (whose roles are defined as a support of the functions that are determined in the Statutes) is the responsibility of the Association's Board. As area manager or supervisor of the area managers only voting members may be appointed. The appointment of the 4 assistants of the area manager is the responsibility of the supervisor of the area managers who defines the beginning, the duration and termination of these functions. Usually, only members with voting rights can perform the function of an assistant of the area manager, unless the supervisor of the area managers applies a derogation.

It is noted that it is not intended to compensate any spending that may arise in connection with the exercise of the functions of the area manager, supervisor of the area managers or assistant to the area manager, (i.e. spending on a PC or special software, on printing, on services of experts or secretaries or otherwise) except in those cases where a relevant written agreement has expressly been made with the Association.

Proposals and requests for the appointment of an area manager can be submitted by e-mail by the Association's Board, by the Arbitration Commission and by the interested party itself (if it is a voting member). These proposals and requests should be addressed to the Association's Board (board@vita-ativ.com). The Association's Board starts the evaluation and decision process only after receiving a positive feedback by the supervisor of the area managers on the work program which was sent to him by the prospective area manager.

### **Information regarding different cooperation in the Association**

There are two types of cooperation: general and specific cooperation.

For general cooperation it is not necessary to obtain one of the functions as explained in the previous point (area manager, 4 assistants to the area manager).

For a specific cooperation, however, one (or more) functions will be assigned to the member, as explained in the previous point (area manager, 4 assistants to the area manager).

#### **General cooperation:**

1.) All members (Interested Associated Members, Collaborating Associated Members, Full and Honorary members) may propose or request that courses, seminars, conferences, meetings etc. are organized. The corresponding requests shall be addressed to the area manager in charge.

2.) Collaborating Associated Members, Full and Honorary Members may make a request for general cooperation in courses, seminars, conferences, meetings etc. The corresponding requests shall be addressed to the area manager in charge.

3.) In addition, Collaborating Associated Members, Full and Honorary Members may make a request for assuming certain responsibilities regarding courses, seminars, conferences, meetings etc. The corresponding requests shall be addressed to the area manager in charge.

#### **Specific cooperation:**

1.) Full and Honorary Members may make a request to be appointed as area manager. These requests shall be addressed to the Association's Board. The corresponding work programs shall be addressed to the supervisor of the area managers.

2.) Full and Honorary Members may make a request to be appointed as assistants to the area manager. Such requests shall be addressed to the area manager in charge who will forward it to the supervisor of the area managers.

#### **Membership fee**

The annual membership fee for Associate Members is 60,00 €. Payment can be made annually (1 x 60,00 €) or semi-annually (2 x 30,00 €). The annual membership fee for regular members is 120,00 €. Payment can be made annually (1 x 120,00 EUR) or semi-annually (2 x 60,00 €).

Payment is due until the 25th of the month in which the applicant has received the Association's confirmation of its membership. It is valid for 1 year. For example: if an applicant for ordinary membership receives the confirmation of its membership on November 11, his membership begins with the 1st day of the following month (December 1), provided he pays his annual contribution either one-time until November 25, (120,00 €) - or alternatively, the first half-year rate (€ 60.00) until November 25, and the second half-year rate (€ 60.00) until May 25.

The payment of the membership fee shall be made by bank transfer to the Association's account that is indicated both on the website under the section "Registration" and in the footer of the application form for membership.

#### **Website of the Association**

The official website of the association is [www.vita-ativ.org](http://www.vita-ativ.org). To communicate with its members, the Association uses primarily e-mails. Applications for membership shall be sent to the following e-mail address: [application@vita-ativ.org](mailto:application@vita-ativ.org)

Based on the operational structure of the organization, it is provided that full members and honorary members may receive a personal e-mail address from the Association. This possibility is (usually) reserved for full and honorary members and is not intended for Associated and sponsor members.

The Association's website is:

- 1.) a tool that is used for communication and interaction in general associative life;
- 2.) a tool that is used between the Association members for communication and interaction; therefore, in addition to the already installed functions (which are already active) even more new functions (regarding divided topic areas) will be installed over time.

In addition to the various updates and enhancements to the website functions it is planned to develop:

- 1.) further regulations for new functions related to various topics
- 2.) updates and additions to usage rules for the Association's website.

The modalities how all editorial articles relating to cultural and existential issues can be submitted (and who is the person in charge) will be defined in the corresponding respective regulations.

In addition to the planned editorial articles relating to cultural and existential issues (to be submitted via website) there is the possibility:

- 1.) that members may submit articles about different topics which they consider to be interesting for the general public while proposing that they shall be posted on the Association's website (provided they are approved by the person in charge).
- 2.) that full and honorary members may submit their personal articles (regarding all topics or issues) which then (with the approval of the area managers in charge) may be posted on the Association's website, under the appropriate sections. For technical reasons and in accordance with the principles of mutual respect it should be clear that the authors of these articles posted on the website are not obliged to comment on feedbacks (received by email, writings, letters) on their articles, but that these authors freely decide whether, when, to whom and under what conditions they want to respond to such feedback on their articles.

### **Disciplinary sanctions**

It is understood and it is expected that all members without exception comply with the statutes, the present General Association Rules and with all agreements they have made with the Association and that they support all measures taken by the competent bodies of the Association, so that the association rules are observed. In case of behaviour which does not comply with the rules, i.e. behaviour which causes damage to the Association, its assets or its reputation or disadvantages and/or prejudices, the President, the Association's Board, the Arbitration Commission or any other competent (according to Association's rules) member of the Association may intervene by sounding a note of caution in normal practice and subsequently also enacting a temporary suspension or an expulsion. In the event of repeated non-compliant behaviour the president or any other competent body of the Association may enact an immediate temporary suspension or immediate expulsion.

It is understood that any non-compliance with the rules of conduct and procedures described above constitutes a ground for exclusion. In addition, abusive behaviour towards present or not present Association members or if common decency is offended constitutes an immediate reason of exclusion. Examples include drunkenness, harassment, defamation and insinuation.

### **Association Internal functions**

Association Internal functions are (usually) voluntary functions. Members who alternatively take over functions from other members will stay in office until the end of the term. Proven (and authorized) expenses of members and organs of the Association can be refunded. From case to case also lump sum settlements can be taken into consideration and specifically authorized by the competent organs of the Association.