Union of Cities THE HANSA

Cultural route of the Council of Europe
Itinéraire culturel du Conseil de l'Europe

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

# Articles of Association for the International Union of Cities **THE HANSA**

## § 1
## Name, Headquarters, Financial Year

1. The union of the Hanseatic towns in the International Hanseatic Federation bears the title "Union of Cities THE HANSA", subsequently called THE HANSA.

2. Headquarters of THE HANSA is in the Hanseatic town of Lübeck.

3. Financial year is the calendar year.

## § 2
## Aims and Tasks

1. Based on the cross-border Hanseatic philosophy and history, THE HANSA has the task of reinvigorating the thoughts and the spirit of the European Hanseatic towns and communities and promoting the self-awareness of the Hanseatic towns and communities. It aims at developing the cooperation between them in order to contribute to the economic, cultural, social and political unification of Europe. It also aims at strengthening the self-confidence of the Hanseatic towns and communities so that they can fulfil their duties as places of living democracy.

2. The following activities in particular should contribute to achieve the objectives:
   - Campaigns in the field of public relations that highlight the common features of the Hanseatic towns;
   - Exchange of culture and traditions;
   - Knowledge, social and information transfer;
   - Strengthening of the economic and trade contacts with a focus on fair trade;
   - Involvement of young people (Youth Hansa) in the development of THE HANSA.

## § 3
## Membership

1. Any town/community that belonged to the historic Hanseatic League, was associated with it or in which Hanseatic trading posts or representative bodies were located for a considerable period of time can become a member of THE HANSA.

2. The application for membership should be done in writing through the relevant bodies of the town/community to the Commission. The Assembly of delegates decides on the application based on the recommendation of the Commission.

3. Withdrawal from THE HANSA should be done in writing to the Hansa Office in Lübeck by the Hanseatic town/community with a legally binding signature of the official representative.

4. The expulsion of a member town/community – which should be justified – is done on the decision of the Assembly of delegates with a 2/3 majority of the members of THE HANSA. If less than 2/3 of the members of THE HANSA are present in the Assembly, which has to decide the expulsion of a member city, the expulsion can be decided within 3 months in an extraordinary Assembly of delegates with a 3/4 majority of the members present in the Assembly.

   In the invitation to the extraordinary Assembly of delegates this voting regulation should be explicitly mentioned.

**§ 4**
**Bodies and Institutions**

1. THE HANSA has the following bodies:
   - Assembly of delegates
   - Commission
   - Board

2. THE HANSA has the following institutions:
   a) Hansa Office
   b) Hanseatic Day (annual festival)
   c) project groups
   d) Youth Hansa (youth organization)
   e) Hanseatic Guild
   f) the Hansa Association

**§ 5**
**Assembly of delegates**

1. The Assembly of delegates is composed of the delegates of the member towns/communities. Each Hanseatic town/community has the opportunity to appoint delegates, their status shall be specified in the registration for the Hanseatic Day.

   The members of the Hanseatic Guild and the members of Youth Hansa have the right to participate in the Assembly of delegates in advisory capacity.

2. The Assembly of delegates meets annually by written invitation of the President during the Hanseatic Day. The agenda shall be given in the invitation; the notice period for the invitation shall be a at least one month.

3. The Hansa Office is responsible for the organisation of the Assembly of delegates, in close coordination with the Hanseatic town/community hosting the Hanseatic Day. Minutes shall be kept of the meeting of the Assembly of delegates, signed by the President and the keeper of the minutes (Hanseatic Office). All members of the HANSA shall receive electronic copies of the minutes.

4. The Assembly of delegates has the quorum, regardless of the number of Hanseatic towns/communities present.

5. Each Hanseatic town/community has one vote. The decisions of the Assembly of delegates are made with a majority of the members present who are entitled to vote provided that nothing else has been stated in the Articles of Association. Abstentions are considered as non-registered votes. In the event of a tied vote the proposal is deemed to be rejected.

6. The Assembly of delegates deals with the fundamental questions of the member towns/communities of THE HANSA.

   In particular, the Assembly of delegates is responsible for:
   a) the acceptance of new member towns/communities
   b) the expulsion of member towns/communities
   c) changes in the Articles of Association and the dissolution of THE HANSA
   d) the election of the four additional members of the Board (on advice from the Commission, direct nominations from the Assembly of delegates are also possible)
   e) the confirmation of quick and urgent decisions
   f) applications for hosting the Hanseatic Day
   g) the licensing and conclusion of projects by THE HANSA on advice of the Commission
   h) the control of the Commission and Board
   i) the moral and financial support of Youth Hansa
   j) the awarding of honorary membership after previous consultation within the Board
   k) the moral and financial support of the Hanseatic Guild

7. The Assembly of delegates is led by the President.

**§ 6**
**Commission**

1. The Hanseatic towns/communities in the affected states elect one – Germany five – of their Hanseatic towns/communities that will represent them in the Commission.
   The following countries which currently have active member towns/communities as well as Youth Hansa and the Board have seats and votes in the Commission:

| **Country** | **Seats** |
|---|---|
| Germany | 5 |
| Finland | 1 |
| Norway | 1 |
| Sweden | 1 |
| The Netherlands | 1 |
| Poland | 1 |
| Belgium | 1 |
| England | 1 |
| Russia | 1 |
| Estonia | 1 |
| Latvia | 1 |
| Lithuania | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Belarus | 1 |
| France | 1 |
| Iceland | 1 |
| Spain | 1 |
| Youth Hansa | 1 |
| Board | 5 |
| **Total** | **26** |

The Commission is automatically increased by one seat each time a hitherto unrepresented country joins the union. The host city of the last Hanseatic Day, the host cities of the following three Hanseatic Days and the chairpersons of project groups shall be invited to the meetings of the Commission as advisory members.

The Hanseatic Guild also has the right to send a representative to take part in the meetings of the Commission in advisory capacity.

2. The members of the Commission are elected for a term of three years. Before the expiry of this term the countries elect the Hanseatic towns/communities through which they want to be represented in the Commission. Re-election of the members of the Commission is possible.

3. The Commission is led by the President.

4. The Commission meets at least twice a year.

5. The Commission has in particular the following tasks:
   a) advisory right on the election of the four representatives of the Board
   b) preparation of the Hanseatic Day
   c) preparation of the Assembly of delegates
   d) work on concrete proposals regarding the policy and organisation of THE HANSA for the Assembly of delegates
   e) supervision of the structure and further development of THE HANSA
   f) coordination of the project work of THE HANSA on advice of the Board and decision on all proposals concerning subsidies, sponsorships and funds for individual projects and any applications for funding of projects
   g) recommendation about the delivery and conclusion of projects to the Assembly of delegates
   h) recommendation about applications for hosting the Hanseatic Day to the Assembly of delegates
   i) decision about the admission of individuals to the Hanseatic Guild
   j) recommendation to the Assembly of delegates as regards confirmations of urgent decisions of the Board

6. The Commission has the quorum if more than half of the member towns/communities are present. It makes decisions with the simple majority of those members present who are entitled to vote. Abstentions are considered as non-registered votes. In the event of a tied vote the vote of the President decides.

7. The Commission meets at the written invitation of the President. The agenda shall

be included in the invitation; the notice period for the invitation shall be at least one month.

8. The Hansa Office, in close coordination with the host town/community, is responsible for the management of the Commission. Minutes shall be kept of the meeting of the Commission, signed by the President and the keeper of the minutes (Hanseatic Office). All members of the THE HANSA shall receive electronic copies of the minutes.

**§ 7**
**The Board**

1. The Board consists of the President and four representatives from different Hanseatic towns/communities. The President bears the title of “Vormann” and is the chairperson of the Board. The President is the mayor of the Hanseatic town of Lübeck. From its group the Board chooses a first representative with the title of first Vice President during the term of office. The other three Board members bear the title of Vice President.

2. The Board is elected by the Assembly of delegates with the exception of the President. Direct nominations from the Assembly of delegates are accepted. Representatives from at least three European countries should serve on the Board. The term of office of the Board is identical to the term of office of the Commission and amounts to three years. Re-election of the Board members is possible. Business continues to be carried out by the current President until the Board is constituted.

3. The following tasks are the responsibility of the Board:
   a) preparation of the meetings of the Commission
   b) preparation of the Assemblies of delegates, timing and coordination of the projects of THE HANSA, whereby the Board gives recommendations of the individual projects to the Commission
   c) the final decision about the carrying out of projects lies with the Assembly of delegates
   d) quick decisions about urgent projects
   e) right to nominate the awarding of honorary membership of THE HANSA
   f) urgent decisions

   Urgent decisions on short notice need the subsequent confirmation through the Commission and the Assembly of delegates.

4. The Board meets at the invitation of the President.

5. The Hanseatic Office is responsible for the management of the Board – in close coordination with the inviting Hanseatic town/community.

6. Decisions are made by the Board by majority vote, in the event of a tied vote the vote of the President decides.

7. Minutes shall be kept of the meeting of Board, signed by the President and the keeper of the minutes (Hanseatic Office). All members of THE HANSA Commission shall receive electronic copies of the minutes.

**§ 8**
**Hansa Office**

1. The Hansa Office is in charge of the day-to-day management of THE HANSA. The office is managed by a professional HANSA manager.

2. The Hansa Office has its headquarters in the Hanseatic town of Lübeck.

**§ 9**
**The Hanseatic Day**

1. An essential task of THE HANSA is management of the annual Hanseatic Day. Members of THE HANSA can apply to host the Hanseatic Day. Applications should be made in writing to the Hansa Office. The applications are collected and put to the vote in the Assembly of delegates 15 years before the date of the Hanseatic Day the members have applied for. One year before the voting date the towns are asked to confirm their interest in writing.

2. The Hanseatic Day should give the hosting Hanseatic town/community the opportunity to present their tradition, history, culture and economy to a wide public.

3. The Assembly of delegates decides on the award of the Hanseatic Day on recommendation of the Commission.

4. The Hanseatic Day is financed by the hosting Hanseatic town/community.

5. All Hanseatic towns/communities shall be invited to the Hanseatic Day by the hosting Hanseatic town/community. The host city is responsible for preparing, organising and carrying out the Hanseatic Day.

   The host city must ensure that also from a financial perspective all member towns of THE HANSA are able to take part in these events. Cost effectiveness is therefore essential – especially regarding the participating Hanseatic towns/communities.

6. The organisation of the Hanseatic Day must comply with the "Guidelines for the organisation of the Hanseatic Day".

**§ 10**
**Project groups**

1. The carrying tasks and aims of THE HANSA should be achieved through the implementation of concrete projects.

2. Each member town/community of THE HANSA has the right to submit a project proposal either alone or together with other towns/communities (including non-members) to the Board. After consulting the Board and on recommendation of the Commission, the Assembly of delegates decides on the carrying out of the proposed project.

3. For each project proposal and subsequently also for the potential ensuing carrying out

of the project itself, a project group is formed that consists of representatives of at least five member states/communities of THE HANSA. The project group elects a chairperson, a manager and a treasurer unless external funding bodies require a different project management structure. An implementation plan, an estimated budget and a cost recovery plan should be prepared for every project proposal.

4. Each project is overseen by a member of the Commission. Moreover, the relevant chairpersons of the project groups are advisory members of the Commission.

5. Chairpersons of the project groups present all proposals regarding subsidies, sponsorships and funds for individual projects as well as applications for project subsidies to the Commission for a final decision.

6. During the implementation of the projects and after consulting the Commission the chairpersons of the project groups report to the Assembly of delegates.

7. After completion of each and every project a final report with a financial overview and a final statement is presented to the Assembly of delegates after recommendation by the Commission.

**§ 11**
**Youth Hansa and Hanseatic Guild**

1. Youth Hansa organises its own Articles of Association, these are a constituent part of the Articles of Association of THE HANSA.

2. The Hanseatic Guild organises its own Articles of Association, these are a constituent part of the Articles of Association of THE HANSA.

**§ 12**
**Hansa Association**

The association "HanseVerein – Verein zur Förderung des internationalen Städtebundes DIE HANSE e.V." is registered in Lübeck. It supports the activities of THE HANSA and its development as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, especially as regards the planning and implementation of projects.

The association has its own Articles of Association.

**§ 13**
**Honorary Membership**

1. The work and commitment of an individual for THE HANSA may be rewarded with honorary membership in THE HANSA. The awarding of honorary membership is an appreciation of outstanding commitment and contributions to THE HANSA in accordance with § 2 of the Articles of Association.

2. Applications to award honorary membership to THE HANSA can be made by member towns/communities. The applications should be submitted in writing to the Board with a supporting letter. The Assembly of delegates decides on the awarding of honorary membership to THE HANSA after previous consultation of the Board and on proposal by the Commission.

3. The nominee should be invited to the award ceremony by the Hanseatic town/community in which he/she was involved.

4. The President of THE HANSA awards the honorary membership in the Assembly of delegates.

5. The honorary member receives a certificate signed by the President of THE HANSA and the vice president.

6. No special rights or duties are linked to the honorary membership for the honorary member. The honorary members should be invited to the Hanseatic Days and can be accepted into the Hanseatic Guild if they wish.

**§ 14**
**Membership fees, administrative and staff costs, project costs**

1. The administrative costs for the Hansa Office are borne by the Hanseatic town of Lübeck. On 23 June 2018, the Assembly of delegates made a voluntary agreement to share the staff costs related to the management of THE HANSA among all members. The annual contribution is based on an allocation key of 0.0085 EUR per inhabitant, with a minimum contribution of 150 EUR and a maximum contribution of 2,000 EUR per town/community. Regional Hanseatic federations can make a joint contribution as long as it is not lower than the individual contributions of the towns/communities.

2. The general administrative costs and expenses that arise in the Hanseatic towns/communities through their cooperation in projects, in the Commission, the Board, the Youth Hansa, the Hanseatic Guild, the Assembly of delegates or through their participation in the Hanseatic Day are to be covered individually by the relevant Hanseatic towns/communities.

3. The financing of projects is done by the implementing and supporting Hanseatic towns/communities. These divide the costs proportionately, unless they have made other arrangements. The contributions of the Hanseatic towns/communities taking part in the projects are included in the cost recovery plan, including staff costs and administrative costs.

4. Hanseatic towns/communities that are not involved in the implementation of a project and do not support it cannot be obliged to help finance it.

**§ 15**
**Change to the Articles of Association and dissolution of the HANSA**

1. A change to the Articles of Association requires the agreement of 2/3 of the delegates present. A decision about the dissolution of THE HANSA needs the agreement of 2/3 of the members of THE HANSA.

2. If less than 2/3 of the members are present in the Assembly of delegates deciding on the dissolution of THE HANSA, an extraordinary Assembly of delegates can be scheduled within six months. This assembly can take a decision without regard to the number of member towns/communities present. It needs a 3/4 majority of the members present in the assembly. In the invitation to the extraordinary Assembly of delegates this voting regulation should be explicitly mentioned

3. In the event of dissolving THE HANSA a decision should be taken on the use of any available assets of THE HANSA, if relevant.

**§ 16**
**Effective date of this document**

The Articles of Association enter into force at the Hanseatic Day 2025. All previous versions are no longer valid.

Articles of Association of the International Union of Cities
THE HANSA, June 2025