Articles of Association for DIE HANSE (THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE)

§ 1 Name, Headquarters, Financial Year
1. The union of the Hanseatic towns in the International Hanseatic Federation bears the title “Städtebund DIE HANSE”, subsequently called HANSE.
2. Headquarters of the HANSE 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, DIE HANSE 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 and developing cooperation between these Hanseatic towns and communities with the goal of contributing to the economic, cultural, social and state unification of Europe and in this sense of strengthening the self-confidence of the Hanseatic towns and communities so that they can observe their duties as places of living democracy.
2. The following activities in particular should serve to shape and bring about these objectives:
   • Campaigns in the area of public relations that highlight the common features of the Hanseatic towns
   • Exchange of culture and tradition
   • Knowledge, social and information transfer
   • Strengthening of the economic and trade contacts
   • Inclusion of young people (Youth Hansa) in the development of the Hanse

§ 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 HANSE.
2. The application for acceptance into DIE HANSE should be done in writing through the relevant bodies of the town/community to the Commission. The Assembly of delegates decides on the authorisation on advice from the Commission.
3. Hanseatic towns that are now already operating in the HANSE affirm their membership through recognition of these Articles of Association with a legally binding signature of an official representative of the respective Hanseatic town/community.
4. Withdrawal from the HANSE should be given in writing to the Hanseatic Office in Lübeck by the Hanseatic town/community with a legally binding signature of the official representative of the respective Hanseatic town/community.

5. The expulsion of a member town/community – which should be justified – ensues through the decision of the Assembly of delegates with a 2/3 majority of the members of the HANSE. If fewer than 2/3 of the members of the HANSE are present in the Assembly which has to decide the expulsion of a member town then the expulsion can be decided within 3 months in an extraordinary Assembly of delegates without regard to the number of Hanseatic towns/communities present with a ¾ majority of the member towns/communities of the HANSE present.

In the invitation to this extraordinary Assembly of delegates this voting regulation should be particularly noted.

§ 4
Bodies and Institutions
1. DIE HANSE has the following bodies:
   - Assembly of delegates
   - Commission
   - Board

2. DIE HANSE has the following institutions:
   a) the Hanseatic Office
   b) the Hanseatic Convention
   c) the project groups
   d) the youth group – Youth Hansa
   e) the Hanseatic Guild
   f) the Hanseatic Association
   g) the Hanseatic Business Federation

§ 5
Assembly of delegates

1. The Assembly of delegates is composed of the delegates of the individual Hanseatic towns/communities. Each Hanseatic town/community has the opportunity to name delegates. These are given in writing or electronically by the dispatching member town/community of the HANSE to the Hanseatic Office. The members of the HANSEATIC Guild and the members of Youth Hansa have the right to advisory participation in the Assembly of delegates.

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

3. The management of the Assembly of delegates is undertaken by the Hanseatic Office, in close coordination with the Hanseatic town/community that is organising the Hanseatic Convention. Minutes shall be kept of the meeting of the Assembly of delegates and shall be signed by the President and by the minute keeper provided by the Hanseatic Office. All member towns of the HANSE receive copies of the minutes.

4. The Assembly of delegates has a quorum, disregarding the number of Hanseatic towns/communities present.
5. Each Hanseatic town/community has a 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 different is determined in the Articles of Association. Abstentions are taken as non-registered votes. With a tied vote the draft resolution is deemed as rejected.

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

   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 HANSE
   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) the allocation of the Hanseatic Conventions
   g) the licensing and conclusion of projects by the HANSE on advice from 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Seats</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Latvia          1
Lithuania         1
Belarus         1
France          1
Iceland         1
Scotland         1
Youth Hansa         1
Board          5

**Total**          26

The Commission automatically increases by one seat every time a hitherto unrepresented country joins. Furthermore the Hanseatic town/community that organised the last Hanseatic Convention and also the Hanseatic towns/communities that will organise the next three Hanseatic Conventions plus the chairpersons of possible established project groups should 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 an advisory capacity.**

2. The members of the Commission are elected for a term of three years. Before the expiry of this term the countries again 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 annually.

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 relevant Hanseatic Convention
   c) preparation of the Assembly of delegates
   d) work on concrete proposals regarding the policy and organisation of the Hanse for the Assembly of delegates
   e) supervision of the formation and further development of the HANSE
   f) timing and coordination of the project work of the HANSE after taking advice from the Board and decision over all proposals concerning subsidies, money from sponsors and funds for individual projects and all applications to subsidise projects.
   g) recommendation about the delivery and conclusion of projects to the Assembly of delegates
   h) recommendation about the allocation of the Hanseatic Conventions to the Assembly of delegates
   i) decision about the acceptance of individuals into the Hanseatic Guild
   j) recommendation to the Assembly of delegates to confirm quick and urgent decisions of the Board
6. The Commission has a 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 taken as non-registered votes. With a tied vote the vote of the President is decisive.

7. The Commission meets at the written invitation of the President. The agenda shall be given in the invitation; the notice period for the invitation shall be a minimum of one month.

8. The Hanseatic Office, in close coordination with the relevant inviting Hanseatic town/community, is responsible for the management of the Commission. Minutes are kept of the meetings of the Commission and are signed by the President and by the minute keeper provided by the Hanseatic Office. All member towns/communities of the HANSE receive 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 “foreman” and is the chairperson of the Board. The foreman 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 3 Board members bear the title of Vice President.

2. The Board is elected by the Assembly of delegates with the exception of the foreman. 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 3 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 HANSE, 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 “HANSE”
   f) urgent decisions

   Quick and urgent decisions need the subsequent confirmation through the Commission the Assembly of delegates.

4. The Board meets at the invitation of the President or at the joint invitation of the first Vice 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 with a majority of the members, with a tied vote the vote of the President is decisive.
7. Minutes are kept of the meetings of the Board. The minutes are signed by the President and the minute keeper provided by the Hanseatic Office. All those Hanseatic towns/communities represented in the Commission receive copies of the minutes.

§ 8
Hanseatic Office

1. A Hanseatic Office is set up for the complete management of the HANSE.

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

§ 9
The Hanseatic Convention

1. An essential task of the HANSE is the carrying out of the Hanseatic Conventions at set time periods. Members of the HANSE can apply to hold the Hanseatic Convention. Applications should be made in writing to the Hanseatic Office. The applications are collected and put to the vote in the Assembly of delegates 15 years before the hosting date. 1 year before the voting date the towns are reminded to confirm in writing whether their application still holds.

2. The Hanseatic Convention should give the hosting Hanseatic town/community the opportunity to present, in an appropriate form, their tradition, history and their cultural and economic significance to a wide public.

3. The Assembly of delegates, on recommendation from the Commission decides on the allocation of the Hanseatic Convention.

4. The Hanseatic Convention is financed through the relevant hosting Hanseatic town/community.

5. All Hanseatic towns/communities should be invited to the Hanseatic Convention by the hosting Hanseatic town/community. Furthermore the relevant hosting Hanseatic town/community is responsible itself for preparing, organising and carrying out the Convention.

When carrying out the Hanseatic Convention the hosting Hanseatic towns/communities must observe strict criteria so that also from a financial perspective all member towns of the HANSE can take part in these events. The hosting Hanseatic towns/communities are bound by utmost cost effectiveness – especially regarding the participating Hanseatic towns/communities.

§ 10
Project groups

1. The carrying out and achievement of the tasks and aims of the HANSE should be achieved with concrete projects.

2. Each member town/community of the HANSE has the right to submit a project proposal either alone or together with other towns/communities (non Hanseatic
towns too) 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 HANSE. The project group elects a chairperson, a manager and a treasurer from its midst. 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, money from sponsors and funds for individual projects as well as applications for project subsidies to the Commission for the final decision.

6. During the carrying out of the projects and after consulting the Commission the chairpersons of the project groups report in the Assemblies of delegates.

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

§ 11
Honorary Membership

1. The work and commitment of an individual for the town federation should be honoured with honorary membership in the HANSE town federation. The awarding of honorary membership should represent something truly remarkable for outstanding commitment and for extraordinary services to the town federation in accordance with § 2 of the Articles of Association.

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

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

4. The foreman of the HANSE bestows the tribute in the course of the Assembly of delegates.

5. The individual receiving the honour is presented with an honorary certificate that is signed by the foreman of the HANSE and its first representative.

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 Conventions and can be accepted into the Hanseatic Guild if they wish.
§ 12  
Youth Hansa (Jugendhanse) and Hanseatic Guild

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

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

§ 13  
Membership fees, administrative costs, project costs

1. The HANSE does not levy a membership fee.

2. For the Hanseatic Office, the Hanseatic town of Lübeck bears the administrative costs arising.

3. The general administrative costs and expenses that arise in the Hanseatic towns/communities through their cooperation in projects, in the Commission, on the Board, in Youth Hansa, in the Hanseatic Guild, in the Assembly of delegates or through their participation in the Hanseatic Convention are to be borne by the relevant Hanseatic towns/communities themselves.

4. Administrative costs or other expenses can under no circumstances be financed by sharing them with the member towns/communities of the HANSE.

5. The financing of projects is borne by the Hanseatic towns/communities that support the project and carry it out. These Hanseatic towns/communities divide the costs proportionately among themselves, unless they have come to other arrangements between themselves. The contributions of the Hanseatic towns/communities taking part in the projects are included in the cost recovery plan, including costs of personnel employed and administrative costs.

6. Hanseatic towns/communities that are not involved in carrying out a project and also do not support this project cannot be placed under any obligation to help finance it.

§ 14  
Change to the Articles of Association and dissolution of the International Hanseatic Federation

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 HANSE needs the agreement of 2/3 of the members of the HANSE.

2. If, in the Assembly of delegates deciding the dissolution of the HANSE, fewer than 2/3 of the members of the HANSE are present then within half a year, in an extraordinary Assembly of delegates, a decision to dissolve the HANSE can be made without regard to the number of member towns/communities present. It needs a ¾ majority of the member towns of HANSE present. In the invitation to this extraordinary Assembly of delegates this voting regulation should be particularly noted.

3. On dissolving the HANSE it should be thereby decided what use should be made of
possibly available assets of the HANSE.

§ 15
Effective date of this document

The Articles of Association are effective in the course of the Hanseatic Convention 2014. All previous versions are no longer valid.

Articles of Association of the International Hanseatic Federation,
May 2014 version (Hanseatic Convention in Lübeck)