

Motion: English General Assembly (ALV)

The Utrechtse Historische Studentenkring (UHSK), for the past five consecutive years has seen a large increase in international, non-Dutch speaking members. This is due to the fact that Geschiedenis, the study the UHSK is linked to, has undergone an expansion. This is the result of the addition of the English track and later on an English BA degree. These members have proved to be an active part of the UHSK by joining and creating committees as well as going to events and joining bodies such as the board of the UHSK. They have the same rights as they do responsibilities, including their membership subscription. Although full members of the UHSK, non-Dutch speaking students find it impossible to participate in the governing bodies of the association, such as the General Assembly.

Keeping the General Assembly in Dutch is in no theoretical way an infringement of the relevant articles of the Statutes of the UHSK, mainly articles 18.1 and 18.3. In practice however it is a clear violation. Although article 18.1 entails 'all members of the Society and all patrons shall be admitted to the General Membership Meeting', unless one is aware of the content discussed and can actively partake in discussion, they are not *actually* admitted. It is also a partial yet practical violation of article 18.3 which states 'All members of the Society who have not been suspended have the right to cast one (1) vote'. A member who is unable to understand the discussion and eventual voting points, is deterred from partaking and voting during the proceedings, thus is not provided the right to cast an informed and conscious vote. These proceedings include budgetary changes and plans, new policy plans and a number of other points relevant to all members regardless of their language of communication.

Article 18.4 allows any member to provide another with their own right to vote, and an English agenda is provided in advance. And yet the actual presentation of points by the presenting parties and eventual discussion between members is conducted in Dutch. Even though article 18.4 and the English agenda provide non-Dutch speakers the chance to vote indirectly, it is still an infringement to expect them to only be able to vote in this manner. Article 18.4 does not in any way assure the rights guaranteed by articles 18.1 and 18.3 when it comes to keeping proceedings in a language not every member understands.

Whereas currently the proceedings of the General Assembly are only conducted in English if the matter at hand concerns international members and the International Committee, an English General Assembly will ensure the possibility of active participation of non-Dutch speaking members. It will also halt any further violation of the relevant articles of the Statutes of the UHSK. Implementing a system for those not comfortable with bringing points in English allows for a more inclusive assembly with regards to all parties.

The General Assembly of the Utrechtse Historische Studentenkring, convened on the 22nd of June 2022,

Having heard the deliberations,

Noting that there has been a large increase in the number of its non-Dutch speaking members;

Noting that non-Dutch speaking members feel excluded from the proceedings of the General Assembly as concluded in the evaluation session conducted by the International Committee on the 17th of January 2020;

Noting that ‘internationalisation’ of the UHSK has been a policy point for the three-year plan of the UHSK from 2017-2020;

Noting that internationalisation has been part of every policy plan since the 91st board of the UHSK;

Noting that according to article 18.1 of the Statutes of the UHSK, access to the General Assembly is open to every member;

Noting that according to article 18.3 of the Statutes of the UHSK, every member has the right to vote;

Considering that conducting its proceedings in a language not intelligible to every member is thus denying proper access and voting rights;

Whereas conducting the proceedings in English would include all members, since the number of non-English speakers is minimal;

Instructs that all parties presenting points, including the Board of the UHSK, at any future General Assembly do so in the English language;

Instructs that all further deliberations and discussions during any future General Assembly are conducted in the English language unless no non-Dutch speakers are present;

Instructs the chairing person of the General Assembly to provide a short English translation of any discussion points presented in Dutch by members not comfortable with handling the English language in such setting;

Instructs the board of the UHSK to provide a translation for voting questions in the English language,

And proceeds to the order of the day.

Dimitris Mitakos

Robin Schurink

Expressions of support for the tabling of this motion have been received from the Members:

Chiara Evans

Viktoriiia Sergeeva

Cynthia Chilaeva

Philippe Maillard

Matthew Racke

Maartje van Dieren

Jona van Vreedendaal

Dax Antheunisse

Hans Kobes

Anouk de Lussanet de la Sablonière

Isabel Makkinje

Folkert de Vries

Wessel Hendrikx

Boris Wesseldijk