

GENERAL REVISION OF THE ESA STATUTES AND BY-LAWS

REVISIONS PROCESS TIMELINE

The final version of the amendments to the ESA Statutes and By-Laws – to be put to a democratic vote during the General Assembly at the ESA Conference in Porto on August 30th, 2024 – is the result of a lengthy, but deeply inclusive consultation process initiated in 2021.

At the General Assembly held online on **September 3, 2021**, a proposal was put forward for a comprehensive review of the ESA Statutes over the course of the 2021–2023 term. This was supported by an affirmative vote (vote count: 131 responses with 82 approving, 40 not approving, and 8 abstaining).

At the ESA Executive Committee meeting held on **October 14–15, 2021** in Paris, the President and the Executive Committee expressed their willingness to conduct broad and open consultations with the membership on the revision of the Statutes and By-Laws. The responsibility for an overall review of both regulations was entrusted to the Policy Committee.

The Policy Committee began working on an overall revision of the ESA Statutes and By-Laws immediately after the General Assembly held online on **April 7, 2022**, during which partial statutory changes necessitating immediate action were introduced, allowing for the postponement of the conference and the extension of the mandate of the Executive Committee by one year due to exceptional circumstances.

Following a round of consultations among members of the Policy Committee in **late April and early May, 2022**, a preliminary list of statutory issues requiring special attention was developed and submitted for discussion at the meeting of the Executive Committee on **May 19–20, 2022** in Porto.

Upon collecting feedback from the Executive Committee members, the Policy Committee formulated several proposals for amendments to the ESA Statutes in certain specific areas (e.g. organization of the ESA office, appointment of the General Secretary, vacancies in the Presidency, elections, conferences, establishing an Ethics Committee, etc.), which were subsequently discussed at the Executive Committee meeting held online on **September 30, 2022**.

Following the September 2022 meeting, the Policy Committee, on behalf of the President and the Executive Committee, launched collegial consultations on the revision of the ESA Statutes, inviting and including the ESA Research Networks and National Associations.

The first online meeting of the President and the Policy Committee with members of the Council of Research Networks (CRN) was held on

October 13, 2022, and with the members of the Council of National Associations (CNA) on **October 14, 2022**. The meetings were led by – respectively – the Chairs of both Councils, Bernadette Brereton and Maria Carmela Agodi.

The primary objective of the consultation process was to collectively find ways by which ESA's governance and operations could better respond to the needs of the Association's membership in the present – but also flexibly adapt to fluctuations in the future. Other foci were improved functionality of the Association to meet 21st century demands, and increased in-kind contributions by ESA members to amplify collegiality.

To maximise the representativeness of the consultation process, the members of both Councils were strongly encouraged to organise meetings beforehand with members of the Boards of their Research Network or of their National Association to discuss directions that might be taken regarding changes in the Statutes and to identify issues believed to require particular attention. Some RN Co-ordinators and NA delegates managed to collect feedback from both their Board and members in advance; those who were unable to attend the meetings submitted their feedback to the Chair on the Council electronically. During both meetings, the inquiries, comments, and suggestions from the membership were discussed in detail. The consultations allowed for the identification of statutory areas requiring clarification, modification or additional regulation (e.g. regulations regarding the objectives of the Association, the process for launching a new RN, filling vacancies on RN Boards, extending the mandate of RN Boards in the event of conference postponement, extension of the Executive Committee's term of office due to exceptional circumstances, the frequency of holding a General Assembly, conflicts of interest in cases whereby an Executive Committee member is also an RN Coordinator, the status of Subnational and Supranational Associations, as well as suspension of collaboration with members of the Council of National Associations and affiliated collective members).

Based on the outcome of the first round of consultations with CRN and CNA members, the Policy Committee formulated a draft proposal of modifications to specific provisions in the ESA Statutes and By-Laws. That proposal was then put forward for further collective discussion at the Executive Committee meeting on **November 3–4, 2022** in Paris, and then at the Executive Committee meeting held online on **January 26, 2023**.

Upon collecting comments and suggestions, and developing a common position, the conclusions reached by the Executive Committee members regarding the recommended changes to the ESA Statutes were translated by the Chair of the Policy Committee into a written proposal of specific statutory provisions. The proposed amendments to the ESA Statutes and By-Laws were thoroughly discussed at the Policy Committee meeting held online on **May 22, 2023**. Upon acceptance of the draft provisions by the

Policy Committee, the proposal was submitted for further deliberation at the Executive Committee meeting on **June 1–2, 2023** in Porto.

Drawing on the results of an extensive discussion concerning particular provisions upheld at the June 2023 meeting, the Chair of the Policy Committee synthesized the received feedback into concrete legislative proposals which were submitted for the next round of consultation and approval at the Executive Committee meeting on **October 5–6, 2023** in Krakow.

Following several rounds of consultation and approval of the proposed amendments to the ESA Statutes and By-Laws by the Executive Committee at the October 2023 meeting, a follow-up meeting of the ESA President and the Policy Committee with the Council of Research Networks and the Council of National Associations was organized online on **December 5, 2023**. To facilitate participant preparation for the discussion, drafts of the ESA Statutes and By-Laws were circulated in advance. At the meeting, the Chair of the Policy Committee discussed each of the proposed entries and provided the reasoning behind the selected solutions. During the discussion that followed, the President, the Chair of the Policy Committee, the Chair of the Council of National Associations, Chair of the Council of Research Networks and other Executive Committee members explored the issues raised by participants. Special consideration was given to solutions fostering collaboration and inclusivity among sociological associations across Europe and beyond. This included a focus on forms of collective membership, the prerogatives of the Council of National Associations, ethics, as well as environmental sustainability issues with regard to events organized by the ESA. Valuable input was received from various stakeholders.

The outcomes were addressed at the Executive Committee meeting held online on **December 14, 2024** at which it was agreed to implement solutions that took into account the postulates put forward at the CNA and CRN meeting. Additionally, a decision was made to consult a French Law firm on the compliance of the amendments to the Statutes and By-Laws with the French Law on Associations of July 1, 1901.

Following the formal approval of amendments to ESA Statutes and By-Laws by the Executive Committee, another joint consultation meeting with the Council of Research Networks and the Council of National Associations was organized online on **February 1, 2023** during which the final versions of draft documents were presented to the participants. All proposed changes in form of both revised and new provisions were briefly summarized and justified.

On **February 14, 2024** a video-conference with the ESA President, the Chair of the Policy Committee, and a French lawyer was organized at which new and changed provisions of the ESA Statutes and By-Laws were discussed.

The results of the consultation meeting with CRN and CAN, followed by a meeting with a French lawyer, were briefly addressed at the Executive Committee meeting held online on **February 15, 2024**. All relevant ESA regulations of lower level, including Research Network Guidelines, were subsequently reviewed by the French lawyer to assure their consistency with the Statutes and By-Laws, as well as accuracy of wording to prevent confusion.

Upon completion of the tasks assigned to the French law firm, a second video-conference with the Chair of the Policy Committee and the specialist on French Law on Associations was held on **March 15, 2024**. The work was summarized and the final version of the amendments to the ESA Statutes and By-Laws – in compliance with the French legal framework – was approved.

The final version of the amendments to the ESA Statutes and By-Laws was approved by the Executive Committee at the meeting held online on **April 24, 2024**.

The documents were presented to the members of the Council of Research Networks and the Council of National Associations during the joint online meeting on **May 6, 2024**. This was the final meeting before proposed changes to the Statutes and By-Laws are announced to the membership.

Per article 5 of the ESA Statutes currently in force, changes to the Statutes and By-Laws shall be announced twelve weeks in advance to allow for sufficient discussion before being put to a democratic vote at the General Assembly.

The General Assembly will be held at the ESA Conference in Porto on **August 30, 2024**. Therefore, the proposed changes to both regulations under revision shall be published on the ESA website no later than on **June 7, 2024**.

The Executive Committee highly values and appreciates the membership's active participation in the ESA Statutes and By-Laws revision process; the Committee also expresses its gratitude for the insights, comments, and suggestions made by the CRN and CNA members. We highly appreciate your continuous assistance in this complex undertaking. Without your active engagement this accomplishment would be impossible.

Kaja Gadowska, Chair of the ESA Policy Committee

on behalf of

Lígia Ferro, ESA President

Maria Carmela Agodi, Chair of the ESA Council of National Associations

Bernadette Brereton, Chair of the ESA Council of Research Networks
and the Executive Committee