

Statutes of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee

– As amended by Extraordinary Electronic Annual Meeting on 1 December 2020.

Values and Basic Principles

§ 1 The Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) bases its work on international human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organization on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), including the 1975 Helsinki Final Act.

§ 2 NHC activities are based on the principle, which was agreed upon in the Helsinki Final Act, that “respect for human rights is an essential factor for the peace, justice and well-being necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and co-operation ... among all states”.

§ 3 NHC views international human rights as legal obligations, as well as moral and political commitments for all states of the world.

Purpose

§ 4 NHC shall promote respect and protection of international human rights, and work in order to ensure that the ideal of the OSCE documents of free exchange of peoples, ideas and information crossing national borders shall be respected and implemented in practical actions. NHC shall document violations of human rights, influence authorities to respect human rights, run and promote human rights education and support human rights organizations.

§ 5 Based on its historic origin in the Helsinki Final Act, the NHC shall promote human rights in North America, Europe and Central Asia. When addressing issues of relevance to other regions of the world, the NHC may have activities related to these regions.

§ 6 NHC shall keep in contact with and co-operate with other organizations and groups which wholly or partly have the same purpose.

§ 7 NHC shall keep organizational and political independence.

Organization

§ 8 NHC decision bodies are the Annual Meeting, the Council, the Board and eventually a working body. The Annual Meeting is its highest body.

Membership

§ 9 NHC Support membership is open to individuals, companies, civil society organizations and others who support international human rights and the purpose of the NHC.

The Board

§ 10 The Board consists of a chairperson, a deputy chairperson and four to eight members, elected by the Annual Meeting for one year at a time. The Council President, or Deputy President, takes part in the meetings of the Board, exercising full Board member's rights. The NHC Secretary General takes part in Board meetings without voting rights. The Board may admit others to take part in its meetings without voting rights.

§ 11 The Board meets regularly and at least eight times a year. Items of principal and economic significance for NHC shall be presented to the Board.

§ 12 The Board shall each year before the end of November decide on a plan of actions for the subsequent year, and adopt an annual budget for the work of the NHC.

§ 13 The Board proposes new members for the NHC Council and changes of NHC Statutes.

§ 14 The Board describes NHC activities in an Annual Report, which is presented to the Annual Meeting.

§ 15 If one or several Board members withdraw during their elected period, the Board may, if it so wishes, appoint a Board member for the rest of that period until the next Annual Meeting. If more than one third of Board members withdraw, supplementing members should be appointed by an Extraordinary Annual Meeting.

§ 16 The Board may establish a working body which should be headed by the Chairperson of the Board.

The Council

§ 17 The NHC Council consists of 50 members, originally elected at the Constituent Meeting of the NHC, held in Oslo 16 August 1977. The members of the NHC Council are elected by the Annual Meeting for a period of three years. Consequently, one third of the Council members are elected each year.

§ 18 The NHC Council is headed by a President and a Deputy President, elected by the Annual Meeting among the members of the Council for one year at a time.

The Annual Meeting

§ 19 The NHC Annual Meeting is arranged annually within the end of April and at that date which the Board decides. Invitations should be distributed at minimum three weeks' notice. The Annual Meeting consists of NHC Council members and NHC Board members, and is chaired by the Council President, the Deputy President or the Board Chairperson. The Board or the Council may decide that all NHC support members may be admitted entrance at the Annual Meeting, however, without voting rights.

§ 20 The Annual Meeting shall:

1. Decide to approve or not on the Board Annual Report on NHC activities during the previous calendar year.
2. Decide to approve or not on the NHC Board proposal on annual account and the Audits report.
3. Decide on draft amendments to the NHC Statutes.
4. Conduct elections on Board Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and other Board members, based on a proposal from the Election Committee.
5. Conduct election of President, Deputy President and other Council Members, based on a proposal from the Board.
6. Appoint an Election Committee
7. Decide on draft NHC statements.

§ 21 In electing persons, ordinary rules of procedure are followed.

§ 22 The Board may invite to an Extraordinary Annual Meeting. An Extraordinary Annual Meeting should also be arranged if on third of NHC Council members ask for it.

Secretariat

§ 23 The Secretary General is directing the NHC Secretariat. The Secretary General is hired by the Board for a period of maximum five years, which can be renewed once.

§ 24 The Secretary General has a right and a duty to put forward proposals in all cases which does not pertain election of persons or where the right to put forward proposals specifically is granted to other bodies.

Amendments of the NHC Statute

§ 25 Proposals for amendments of the NHC Statute should be presented to the NHC Board with 1 January. The Board shall present draft amendments to the NHC Council at the same time as it invites to the Annual Meeting. In order to adopt amendments of the NHC Statutes, two thirds of those present should vote in favour.

Liquidation

§ 26 Liquidation of the NHC is preconditioned by decisions by two thirds by those present at two subsequent Annual Meetings, arranged with at least three months duration in between.

§ 27 By decisions based on the same majority at the Annual Meetings, NHC remaining assets may be re-disposed.

§ 28 In the case that the NHC is liquidated, assets will be transferred to another entity or entities for exclusively charitable purposes.