

**To :** **The General Assembly of the EHF November 2020**

**From:** Human–Etisk Forbund, Norway  
Humanisk Samfund, Denmark  
Humanist Society Scotland  
Humanisterna , Sweden  
Humanistischer Verband Östereich  
Humanistisch Verbond, Netherlands  
Humanistische Vereinigung , Germany  
Humanists UK  
Polish Rationalists Association  
Prometheus Society, Slovakia  
Romanian Secular-Humanist Association  
Siðmennt ,Iceland  
Union of Freethinkers, Finland

**Subject:** **A new structure for the EHF**

**Date:** **October 5 2020**

## **PREAMBLE**

*Why we need a new structure for the European Humanist Federation :*

- Since 2005, Centre d 'Action Laïque (CAL) has taken on the responsibility for financing three part-time staff members, thus constituting the Secretariat of the EHF. This Brussels based Secretariat has given the EHF a good and stable basis for its activities and helped to develop the EHF into a professional network of 42 Full Member organisations and 17 Associate Member organisations in 22 different European countries. The position of the EHF as a representative of the European humanists within European institutions has through their excellent work become increasingly stronger. This we largely owe to the financial backing offered by CAL and CAL deserves acknowledgement for this support.
- However, this one-sided dependence of the EHF Secretariat on one Member Organisation has proven not to be recommendable. The member organizations are the highest authority of the EHF and as such, they have elected a board and given the Board full power and responsibility to carry out the objectives of the EHF. The Secretariat carries out the decisions of the board and is responsible for the day to day business. There is an inherent tension in a structure in which EHF staff is employed by an MO and is "lent" to the EHF. Over the years this structure has had the potential to cause tensions between the responsibility of the board and the Secretariat /CAL being the employer. This is not the fault of the board or the Secretariat/CAL, but is an inevitable consequence of the structure. Therefore an alternative organizational and financial basis needs to be developed for a Secretariat that falls directly under the authority of the EHF board.

- Ever since the creation of EHF, there have been discussions on the relationship between EHF and the IHEU (now HI), since both organisations are active in the European arena. More than once, it has been said that the humanist movement would gain strength by operating as one. Further, several MOs have at times questioned why there are two organisations and consequently the necessity for paying two memberships, in particular the MOs in European countries who are not a part of the EU, like Norway.
- In 2008, an IHEU-EHF Protocol was signed (the Protocol is attached to this motion), stating that EHF and IHEU agree to work towards a vision of a united organisation with EHF as a regional section of IHEU. The protocol provides in detail a list of issues for cooperation. As of 2020, some of these intentions have been realized (e.g. the more practical ones like coordinating the GA), but others have not. There has been no thorough ongoing discussion on uniting the two organisations. Other than having separate GAs at a jointly agreed time and place every two years, the cooperation between the two organisations has remained scarce and invisible to the MOs.
- Since EHF and HI are both working for the promotion of humanism in Europe and have the same general goals, we strongly favour uniting both organisations and reorganizing EHF into a part of the HI with its own Secretariat.

## **JOINED MOTION**

1. A new organizational and financial structure for the EHF is necessary.
2. The newly elected Board of Directors should work out and take appropriate measures to achieve a transition of the current goals, adopted Strategic Plans and political functions (eg consultative status Art 17 EU, Participatory Status Council of Europe) of the European Humanist Federation into a new part of Humanist International (HI) in accordance with the statutes of HI.
3. Members of this new part shall initially be the Member Organisations (MOs) of the current EHF. Many organisations are members of both EHF and HI. Therefore, the current membership criteria need to be evaluated.
4. The new board shall install a Commission to develop the new structure. This Commission may also include members that are not part of the Board.
5. In the negotiations for a new structure the Commission should aim that, in accordance with the statutes and procedures of HI, the new part:
  - has its own statutory rules and financial resources,
  - chooses its own Executive Committee,
  - is autonomous in its day to day functioning and decides on its own affairs,
  - is adequately represented in the Board of the HI by an appointed member of the Executive Commission,
  - has adequate human resources to perform its tasks.
6. The framework for this transitional process should be elaborated within one year's time, the whole process should be completed within two years.

7. The board of the EHF will call an extraordinary GA to present and vote on the new structure and to dissolve the current EHF association.
8. During this transitional process, the board will communicate every three months the results to the MOs.

On behalf of:

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Trond Enger

Lone Ree Milkær

Fraser Sutherland

David Rønnegard

Gerhard Engelmayer

Christa Compas

Michael Bauer

Richy Thomson

Kaja Bryx

Roman Hradecky

Raluca Laslo

Inga Auðbjörg Straumland

Antti Värri

## IHEU-EHF PROTOCOL

IHEU and EHF agree to work towards a vision of a united organisation with EHF as a regional section of IHEU.

Meanwhile, we have agreed on the following protocol agreement.

Both IHEU and EHF are working for humanism and trying to attain the same general goals. Both organisations see the need for co-operation so that our goals can be achieved. As a consequence of this, we agree to work together in a spirit of co-operation and non-competition, using this protocol agreement as the basis of our work for humanism.

Currently EHF is recognised as a partner for dialogue with the European Union, and IHEU has consultative status with the Council of Europe.

1. Major policy decisions on humanism will as a rule be made by IHEU. The work of EHF will be done based on such policy principles, adapted if necessary to European conditions.
2. EHF promotes humanism in Europe, and represents its members in the institutions of the European Union and the OSCE
3. The two organisations will, whenever possible, co-ordinate their strategy before taking action on European questions in general.
4. EHF and IHEU will regularly exchange their calendar of events
5. EHF and IHEU will work together on strategy and issues of common interest.
6. A co-ordinating meeting of several members of both IHEU EC and EHF Board will be organised at least once a year and as often as necessary, at which information will be shared, particularly on any planned fundraising from European institutions.
7. Try to co-ordinate GAs every other year.
8. Both organisations will present and promote a positive image of the other organisation to member organisations and the wider community.
9. Both organisations will do their best to promote to their member organisations that it is in the best interest of international humanism that all European organisations be members of both IHEU and EHF.
10. Both organisations will collaborate to help, support and develop new or emerging humanist organisations.
11. Both organisations will use the IHEU minimum statement as a membership criteria and, when evaluating new membership applications from European organisations, each will consult the other before membership is accepted.
12. Both organisations will establish links to each other on their websites.
13. IHEU and EHF will in their newsletters and in other media provide information on the work of the other organisation when it is natural to do so.
14. We will circulate directly to all members of the other Board/EC all minutes of meetings newsletters and mailing to member organisation.
15. Each organisation will designate the person to be responsible for regular contact with the other.

When agreed by the IHEU EC and EHF Board, this agreement will be implemented in good faith by both parties. Any breach of the agreement should be addressed in a common meeting as soon as possible.

The protocol agreement will be evaluated after two years.

Protocol agreed on 16 February 2003 in London

Agreed by Steinar Nilsen, Claude Wachetelaer and Georges Lienard on behalf of EHF and Robbi Robson, Rob Buitenweg and Roar Johnsen on behalf of the IHEU.

Protocol reviewed and amended on 26 October 2008 in Paris

Agreed by David Pollock, Suzy Mommaerts and Rob Buitenweg on behalf of EHF and Sonja Eggerickx, Roar Johnsen and Roger Lepeix on behalf of the IHEU.

To be presented to the EHF Board and the IHEU Executive Committee for final agreement.

