

Dear fellow alumnae and alumni,

The time of a new General Assembly is coming closer again. That is the time where you have the chance to decide on the most fundamental issues concerning our association. This year, the Board would like to submit to your decision again the very important question of moving the legal seat of the Association to Brussels.

Last year, the very high quorum needed for the dissolution of the Association in Italy (75% of all active members) was missed by a handful of votes. This was mostly due to the fact that only 67% of the active members participated in the voting. That was the reason why the whole procedure was stopped. Of those voting on the establishment of the Association in Brussels, a clear majority, when not all of them were in favour of it. For these reasons, we believe that it is worth trying again. The advantages of moving to Brussels are many: a stronger legal status that allows the Association, among other things, to hire staff (which is vital for the position of the Secretary General), full legal personality and capacity to manage funds, immediate presence in one of Europe's most important human rights hubs and not least in the biggest alumni hub we have.

This statute was submitted to your comments and suggestions from 18th of April until 6th of May. The board received no comments. The spirit of this draft statute is not to change the substance of the existing one. Neither has the membership asked for a substantial revision of the statute, nor does the Board see the need to do so. For this reason, we want to limit the changes to those required by Belgian legislation. Apart from those we have included two novelties:

- A new category of associate members to allow people such as former teaching fellows or attendants to the Venice Human Rights Academy to join the Association with this status.

- Staggered elections: instead of electing the whole board every two years, the General Assembly would elect every year one half of the Board members.

Last year, the draft of the Board competed with an alternative draft by the membership which was based on the draft of the Board, but included some significant changes. This alternative was more successful than the Board's proposal. Having learnt from that and having had more time to consider the differences, this new Board draft includes features from that alternative draft. With this, the Board wants to show that we are not trying to overrule what the General Assembly decided last year to impose our opinion in a second go. We rather believe that the opposition to the project last year was extremely low and those aspects where the opinion of the Board and of the majority of the Assembly diverged have been reconsidered and accommodated to the latter.

If we ask you again for the effort of considering this question again and voting, it is because we sincerely believe that the Association has much advantage to draw from establishing in Brussels. We hope that you will be part of this project and will make it come true.

The E.MAlumni Board