



Graduates of Democracy Constitution

1 Foundations

1.1 Name

The name of the organisation shall be the Graduates of Democracy (henceforth referred to as 'the organisation'). The Graduates of Democracy are a member-led, left-orientated youth organisation whose interests and beliefs are sympathetic to European social democratic, centre-left and left-wing movements and parties, including the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (henceforth referred to as the 'S&D Group').

1.2 Political Position

The organisation shall have no other collective policy beyond those contained in the joint annual School of Democracy declarations. No resolution of a political character expressing an opinion or calling for action shall be put forward in the name of the organisation.

The organisation shall remain a broad church and shall not prioritise nor discriminate against any person or strand of thought within the broad social democratic movement.

The organisation reserves the right to express criticisms of allied social democratic, centre-left and left movements.

1.3 Activities

The Graduates of Democracy are a member-led organisation. The activities of the organisation are conducted by its members.

The activities of the organisation shall include the publication of the Graduates of Democracy blog, assisting the organisation of S&D Group events, assisting with the organisation of the pan-European social democratic youth movement and the promotion of research and other policies consistent with Article 1.2 of the charter.

The organisation may enlist the support of members for activities of other organisations within the social democratic movement, including the FEPS, Solidar, national think-tanks and social democratic youth wings.

No article, pamphlet or tract submitted to the organisation shall be published unless approved as of suitable standard and subject matter according to the rules made by the Executive Board and the Steering Committee.



All publications sponsored by the Graduates of Democracy shall bear a clear indication that they do not represent the views of the organisation, but only those responsible for preparing them.

All physical and virtual spaces administered by the organisation for the benefit of its members shall be subject to the safe space policy of the organisation, as defined in Appendix 1.

2 Membership

Full membership of the Graduates of Democracy shall be open to all who attended the annual, S&D Group-organised School of Democracy events.

All participants, regardless of the year in which they attended the school, are equal members of the organisation and equally entitled to participate in all internal debates, discussions and to author publications.

3 Executive Board

3.1 Elected Members

Each summer (June, July or August), the organisation shall elect an Executive Board of seven (7) members to hold office for one year or until the next elections can take place.

All full members of the organisation, who have nominated themselves or have been nominated, with their consent, by full members of the organisation, are eligible to stand for election to the Executive Board.

Election shall be by ballot of full members. Elections may be held using secure electronic methods. All votes must be cast within a period to be determined by the Executive Board, which shall be not less than 14 days and not more than 28 days after the day the ballot opens.

Scrutineers shall be appointed by the Executive Board, whose duty it shall be to oversee the accuracy of the vote, and to certify to the Executive Board and Steering Committee.

The seven (7) candidates with the greatest number of votes shall be elected to the Executive Board, subject to the rules on gender parity in clause 3.2. In the event of a tie the outgoing President of the organisation retains a casting vote.

The newly elected Executive Board shall take office after the division of roles on the Executive Board has been approved by the Steering Committee as per clause 3.5.

Elected members may only be removed by a vote of no confidence initiated by the Steering Committee, subject to an electronic ballot, with the approval of 2/3 of voting members.



The Executive Board shall make such other rules for the conduct of elections of the Executive Board as are compatible with the provisions of the Constitution.

3.2 Gender Parity in the Executive Committee

The Executive Board of the Graduates of Democracy should have a minimum one-to-two gender parity ratio, or at least three (3) members of the Executive Board are reserved for the underrepresented gender in the Executive Board after votes are counted.

The candidate with the highest vote in the elections shall be the first elected the executive committee.

The candidate with the second highest votes shall be second, likewise with all following positions unless:

- a) After four positions on the Executive Board have been filled, all of these belong to the same gender. In this case, the final three positions are reserved for the candidates of the opposite gender to those already elected who received the highest number of votes.
- b) After five positions on the Executive Board have been filled, four (4) are of one gender and one (1) is of the opposite gender. In this case, the final two (2) positions on the Executive Board are reserved for the next candidate of the opposite gender to the majority of the newly elected board with the highest number of votes.
- c) After six positions on the Executive Board have been filled, four (4) are of one gender and two (2) are of the opposite gender. In this case, the final position on the Executive Board is reserved for the next candidate of the opposite gender to the majority of the newly elected board with the highest number of votes.

No ballots shall go out to the membership until a minimum of three (3) candidates of each gender have been nominated.

Should a member of the Executive Board resign or be removed by the membership, they shall be replaced by the candidate with the next highest votes tally of the same gender.

The Executive Board must also ensure gender representation among the senior roles on the Board: President, Vice-President for Internal Communication, Vice-President for External Communication and Editor.

3.5 Executive Board



The Executive Board shall elect a President, Vice-President for Internal Co-ordination, Vice-President for External Communication, Editor, Director of Communications, Treasurer and Campaigns Officer.

The candidates for the Executive Board must indicate during their election campaign their preferred role on the Board, though this does not bind the Board in its discussions post-elections.

The other two roles may be assigned according to the wishes of the candidates.

No person shall be eligible for election as President twice.

Once the roles on the Executive Board have been decided, they should be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval in accordance with article 4.3.

Elected officers may only be removed by an extraordinary ballot, called for by the Steering Committee, with the approval of 2/3 of voting members.

The Board as a whole may only be removed by an extraordinary ballot, called for by the Steering Committee, with the approval of 2/3 of all members.

3.6 Duties

The Executive Board shall be the Graduates of Democracy's secretariat and leaders who facilitate and oversee the activities of the membership and run day-to-day operations of the Group. The Executive Board shall be required to encourage and support member activity and not privilege activities led by themselves over that of the members.

The Executive Board are required to sanction and oversee all the organisation's activities, including network activity, newsletters, appoint sub-committees, and groups, sanction publications, meetings, conferences, and research, speaking and media engagements and fundraising.

The Executive Board shall preserve the integrity and promote the history of the organisation and all its publications.

Four (4) voting members shall be a quorum of the Executive Board. Decisions of the Executive Board are made by a simple majority vote of elected members unless otherwise required by the Constitution. In the event of a tie, the President shall have a casting vote.

3.7 Resignations

An elected member of the Executive committee may resign voluntarily by giving formal notice to the President and Director of Internal Communication in writing.



Should the President resign, this he is succeeded by the VP for Internal Communication, subject to approval by the Steering Committee, who then becomes Acting President. The Acting President and the Board should seek to conduct fresh elections at the earliest convenience.

Casual vacancies caused by the resignation of elected members of the Executive Board shall be filled by the next eligible runners up in the election of the current Executive Committee in order of the number of votes they received, subject to the gender parity clause of this Constitution.

3.9 Standing Orders and Procedures

The Executive Board may set Standing Orders and procedures for the organisation that are compatible with the Constitution. All members, including the Executive Committee shall be bound by the standing orders. A document with the latest standing orders shall be published by the Executive Committee. The President shall be responsible for the implementation of Standing Orders. Changes to standing orders require the consent of the elected executive board, or simple majority through a general meeting.

4 Steering Committee

4.1 Definition

The Steering Committee is the second organ of the Graduates of Democracy. The Steering Committee's role is to review the actions of the Board, propose actions to the Board and administer the day-to-day affairs of the Graduates of Democracy in the case of a vote of no confidence or resignation of the Board.

4.2 Membership

Membership of the Steering Committee is open to all heads of Working Groups (as defined by clause 5), who will be invited to join the Steering Committee by the Director of Internal Communication.

Membership of the Steering Committee is also open to all authors of articles on the Graduates of Democracy blog and all attendees of Graduates of Democracy events outside of the regular School of Democracy. These will be invited to join the Steering Committee by the Director of Internal Communication.

4.3 Powers

The Steering Committee shall have the right of access to all official Executive Board discussions and debates, including those relating to finance.

The Steering Committee shall have the right to a response to any question asked of any member of the Executive Board.



The Steering Committee shall have the right to propose any initiative to the Board, which must then be debated and voted on by the Executive Board.

The Steering Committee has the right to call a vote of no-confidence in the entire Board, subject to a ballot of the membership. 2/3 of all members must approve the no-confidence vote of the Board.

The Steering Committee has the right to call a vote of no-confidence in a member of the Board, subject to a ballot of the membership. 50% of all members must approve the no-confidence vote of the Board.

The Steering Committee assumes the functions of the Executive Board and administers all Graduates of Democracy proceedings in the event when no Executive Board is in place due to resignations or during elections.

5 Working Groups

5.1 Definition

Working Groups are sub-sections of the group devoted to and responsible for a specified policy area. The creation of or winding up of a Working Group must be proposed to the Executive Board, which shall then vote on the matter.

5.2 Membership

Membership of Working Groups shall be open to any member of the Graduates of Democracy who notifies the head of the Working Group that they wish to be a member of the Working Group.

5.3 Working Group structure

Each Working Group shall elect a head and a deputy to co-ordinate publications, pamphlets, group activities and events and, in the case of the head, participate in Steering Committee activities.

5.4 Responsibilities

Working Groups shall be responsible for the running of events, publications, discussions, delegations and other member-led activities within the policy area to which they are devoted.

6 Interpretation

6.1 Interpretation of this constitution.

Any questions as to the interpretation of this Constitution shall be normally settled by the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall submit all questions and answers it has interpreted to the Steering Committee to ratify.



The Executive Board shall notify the membership should the Constitution be at any time breached.

Appendix 1: Safe Space Policy

This is a safe space:

The Graduates of Democracy Consultation exists to provide an inclusive and open place for us to discuss, develop and debate ideas. The following rules apply to all of our online and physical activities:

- 1) The Graduates of Democracy are a tolerant community. All efforts must be made to maintain a culture of civil and comradely discussion.
- 2) Derogatory or discriminatory comments relating to an individual's gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, culture, or disability will not be tolerated. The Graduates of Democracy has a zero tolerance policy with regard to physical, verbal and/or online harassment of any form, including personal insults and any and all forms of derogatory language.
- 3) The Executive Board has a responsibility to ensure individuals do not block a member's contribution to discussion or debate in any way, including through online harassment.
- 4) Members of the community who have found themselves subject to physical, verbal and/or online harassment of any form, including personal insults and any and all forms of derogatory language, have the right to issue a complaint.
- 5) The complaints procedure will consist of an appeal to the Executive Board as moderator of our community, who will have an obligation to discuss and enforce each complaint on a case-by-case basis.
- 6) As part of the complaints procedure, if an offending party is found to have physically, verbally or online harassed another member of our community in any form, the Executive Board reserves the right to:
 - a) Issue a private warning to the offending party, outlining the need for civil and comradely discourse.
 - b) Issuing a temporary suspension of the right to publish or comment in any of the physical and online communities that constitute the Graduates of Democracy.
 - c) In extreme cases, where the violation of this policy is repeated and the offending party demonstrates an unwillingness to conduct themselves in accordance with this charter, to permanently exclude the offending party from the consultation.



7) Members will be made fully aware of the complaints procedure and the safe space charter in the interests of transparency. This includes the safe space policy being highlighted at the top of the page.