

# RCSL NEW STATUTES

As announced in the last Newsletter, we are reprinting the new version of the RCSL Statutes, as amended by the vote of its members in June 2000.

## **INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON SOCIOLOGY OF LAW** An International Association of Legal Sociologists

### STATUTES

(with changes approved by the RCSL Board in July 1999 and ratified by a two-thirds majority of the members' votes in June 2000).

#### Preamble

The Research Committee on Sociology of Law (RCSL) was established by the International Sociological Association in 1962 with a view to opening up a broader range of opportunities for the participation of individual members in the activities of the Association in the field of sociology of law.

#### **Part 1. Aims and Objectives**

- 1.1. The RCSL shall act, principally in the framework of the International Sociological Association, as a free association of scholars active in the sociology of law or socio-legal studies all around the world, whatever their nationality, opinion and scientific or methodological tendency.
- 1.2. In order to achieve its institutional ends, the RCSL shall undertake measures:
  - a. to secure and develop personal and associational contacts between scholars active in sociology of law or socio-legal studies throughout the world;
  - b. to encourage the international dissemination and exchange of information on significant developments in the sociology of law or socio-legal studies;
  - c. to promote the development of scientific activities in the field of sociology of law or socio-legal studies;
  - d. to facilitate and promote meetings and research, on both the international and local level, in the field of sociology of law or socio-legal studies;
  - e. to encourage the official recognition and the development of sociology of law or law and society as a teaching subject, at all levels, in universities, academies and similar institutions;
  - f. to cooperate with these institutions and associations which seek similar ends in the field of sociology of law, socio-legal studies or in neighbouring fields;
  - g. to establish links with governmental and non-governmental agencies which might be interested in facilitating the development of research in law and society;
  - h. actively to help scholars from non-represented or less favoured countries to use its own structures and facilities.

#### **Part 2. Membership**

- 2.1. Full members of the RCSL may be individuals active in research, publication or teaching in the field of sociology of law, socio-legal studies or neighbouring fields. Associations which support the development of socio-legal studies may also be full members of the RCSL. Scholars or associations not showing these qualifications may be admitted as observer members.
- 2.2. Individual members shall be admitted upon application to the RCSL Secretary, whose decision shall have immediate executive effect subject to ratification by the Board in its first subsequent meeting.
- 2.3. Associations shall be admitted by the Board, whose decision shall have immediate executive effect, subject to ratification by the first subsequent Member Business Meeting.
- 2.4. Individual members and associations shall have the same rights and duties. Associations shall have one vote, as shall individual members, and shall exercise their rights through their representative or spokesperson.
- 2.5. The members of the RCSL are expected to pay a membership fee, the amount of which shall be decided by the Board.

#### **Part 3. Members' Business Meeting**

- 3.1. The members of the RCSL shall be convened every year during the Committee's annual conference.
- 3.2. Besides the powers described under part 2.3. and 4.3., the Members' Business Meeting shall put forward proposals for future activities and shall express its opinion about the initiatives proposed by the Board.
- 3.3. All individual members and associations shall take part in the meeting, but full members in good standing shall have the right to vote. Proxies shall not be admitted.

#### **Part 4. Working Groups**

- 4.1. The RCSL shall facilitate the establishment of working groups aimed at developing projects of scientific and intercultural cooperation in the diverse sub-fields of the sociology of law and society. Such working groups, once recognised, shall act as subcommittees and shall enjoy total autonomy, both organisational and financial, in seeking their own ends. They shall elect their own chairperson, who shall represent them within the RCSL.
- 4.2. The RCSL working groups shall consist of no less than ten individual RCSL members, representing at least five different countries.
- 4.3. The formation of working groups shall be acknowledged by the RCSL Board, with a majority vote of its members, on the basis of evidence given of the activity that members of the putative group shall have performed already. The Board's decision shall have immediate executive effect and shall be submitted to the first subsequent Member Business Meeting for ratification.

- 4.4. The RCSL Working Groups shall hold their mandates for the duration of the Board's period of office. After that deadline, they shall renew their application for acknowledgment and may be acknowledged with the same procedure as described in part 4.3.
- 4.5. The Working Groups chairpersons shall not hold office after two terms.

#### **Part 5. Board**

- 5.1. The Board shall be responsible for the institutional and administrative activities of the RCSL. It shall hold office for a three year term.
- 5.2. The Board shall consist of the RCSL president, 7 to 10 elected members, the coordinators of the recognised working groups and past RCSL presidents. In its first meeting, it shall elect two vice-presidents, one secretary and the RCSL representatives within the ISA. In due course, it shall also designate the RCSL representatives within the Board of Directors of the International Institute for the Sociology of Law of Oñati and within any other pertinent body.
- 5.3. The president of the RCSL shall not be immediately reelected. The elected members of the Board shall not be elected more than twice consecutively.
- 5.4. The Board may coopt up to four observer members, with no voting rights, in order to extend RCSL activities. The scientific director of the International Institute for the Sociology of Law shall be an additional observer member of the RCSL, provided he/she is not already an elected member or ex officio member. Should they not be Board Members, the founders of the RCSL shall be invited to attend the Board's sessions.
- 5.5. The RCSL president shall represent the Committee towards its members as well as towards third parties. Should he/she resign or die, or should his/her activities be seriously hindered, his/her powers shall be exercised by the vice-president oldest in age, who shall be the acting president until the first statutory vote is taken.
- 5.6. The secretary shall execute the initiatives decided upon by the Board, admit new individual members, update the membership list and send a newsletter to the RCSL members at least every six months in order to inform them about activities undertaken and planned. The secretary shall also act as treasurer and in this capacity he/she shall collect the membership fees and submit to the Board an annual budget of the Committee every year.
- 5.7. A quorum of half the Board's voting members shall be necessary for the Board to take decisions. The Board shall take its decisions by the majority of those present and voting, unless a qualified majority is required by the Bylaws. The president shall have the casting vote. In case of need or lack of quorum, votes can be taken by postal ballot or by e-mail ballot, on president's proposal.
- 5.8. The Board may establish an Executive Committee composed of the president, the vice-presidents, the secretary and two members, whose task shall be that of dealing with the current business between Board meetings.

- 5.9. Reports on the funds of the RCSL shall be made every year and sent to all RCSL members. Decisions on the use of funds shall be made by the Board annually.

#### **Part 6. Elections**

- 6.1. All individual and collective full members in good standing shall be entitled to vote for the Board. All individual full members in good standing shall be eligible for election as president or as Board members.
- 6.2. Election shall take place in the year before the end of the Board's mandate, on the Board's initiative. A specific decision shall be taken by the Board concerning the number of members to be elected to the next Board and including all the provisions which may appear necessary for the voting procedure. A nominating committee shall be established by the Board for the voting procedure.
- 6.3. The secretary shall invite the nominating committee to identify candidates for both the president and the Board members and check whether the candidates for president accept nomination. Subsequently, he/she shall send the members a newsletter enclosing two envelopes, one blank and one indicating his/her own current address, as well as a ballot paper where the vote shall be expressed separately for the president and the Board members. The ballot papers shall then be returned through the enclosed envelopes to the secretary and must reach him/her within two months. Votes received after that deadline shall be considered invalid. The entire procedure shall be completed in due time for the new Board to meet during the first subsequent annual conference.
- 6.4. All members may express one vote for the president. If there is an election for seven or eight Board members, they may express four votes. If there is an election for nine or ten Board members, they may express five votes. If there is a tied vote, the candidate oldest in age shall prevail.

#### **Part 7. Meetings**

- 7.1. The Board shall do everything within its power to arrange a general meeting of the RCSL at least once a year. The meetings shall preferably be devoted to specific theoretical and methodological themes, although general sessions may be held in addition. The selection of the themes and the call for papers shall be the responsibility of the Board, in cooperation with the local organising committee. The Board shall encourage countries not represented to participate and to send suggestions and contributions.

#### **Part 8. Statutes Amendment**

- 8.1. Proposals for amendment to the statutes shall be collected by the secretary, then submitted first to the Board for discussion and subsequent to the members for a vote through a postal ballot, preferably in the election year and together with the voting procedure.
- 8.2. Amendments to the Statutes shall be deemed to be adopted if they are approved by a 2/3 majority of those voting.

#### **Transitory Rule**

The new version of these by-laws takes effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001.