



Groningen, 16 October 2025

To the Board of the Comité International des Sciences Historiques – International Committee of Historical Sciences (CISH/ICHTH)
office@cish.org

Dear CISH Board,

Pursuant to the message sent by your Office inviting CISH members to send comments and questions on the 20 September 2025 Draft Constitution, I would like to ask you to send me a link to participate in the online consultation on 31 October 2025.

Meanwhile, I have the honor and pleasure to send to you 73 commentaries on the Draft on behalf of the ICHTH Board. They are inserted into the PDF which is attached to this letter. Please allow me to emphasize four points of special importance for the crucial Article 2.2 of the Draft:

Draft Art. 2.2b: The present Constitution, Article 1, stipulates: “It shall defend freedom of thought and expression in the field of historical research and teaching and is opposed to the misuse of history.” The Draft omits “and is opposed to the misuse of history.” The abuse clause was introduced into the CISH Constitution in 2005 after the massive abuse of history in India in 1998–2004. The abuse of history has been on the rise since. A constitutional clause about the abuse of history remains as urgent as ever and it is a strong signal from the world community of historians against the many hijackers of history. Here is a textual proposal (in italics: “to defend freedom of thought and expression in the field of historical research, communication and *education, and to oppose the abuse of history, understood as the use of history with intent to deceive.*”

Draft Art. 2.2c: Replace “discourses” with “*debates.*”

Draft Art. 2.2d: Replace “to defend – when necessary – universal humanistic values” with “*to defend the values embedded in international human rights.*” First and foremost, the internationally recognized standard is “human rights,” not “universal humanistic values.” In addition, the latter term can be misconstrued as anti-religious. Second, we suggest dropping the qualification “when necessary” for being too narrow as it excludes any preventive defense or proactive promotion of these values. Third, we suggest dropping the superfluous “as they evolve in the debate about theories and methods among academic historians from all parts of the World.”

Draft Art. 2.2e: The draft proposes to change the name of the International Congress of Historical Sciences into “World Congress of Historians.” Please note that (1) “World” is a higher standard than “International” and that (2) the symmetry between the body name (CISH/ICSH) and the congress name is lost. In addition, whereas frequencies of others meetings are mentioned in the Draft, no congress rhythm is determined: “At least each five years” seems to be a flexible standard.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antoon D. Baets', written over a horizontal line.

Antoon De Baets
ICHTH President, on behalf of the ICHTH Board

Attached: Detailed ICHTH comments on CISH draft Constitution

Comité International
des Sciences Historiques

1926–2026
100 ans



International Committee
of Historical Sciences

1926–2026
100 years

Constitution of the Comité international des sciences historiques (CISH)

DRAFT of 20 September 2025

Art. 1 Name, Seat, and Legal Form

¹ The Comité international des sciences historiques (CISH), founded on 14 May 1926 in Geneva, is a non-profit association in accordance with Articles 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code, with its seat in Switzerland.

Art. 2 Purpose

¹ CISH is the  world organization of historians and aims at facilitating communication between its member organizations and individual members as well as interdisciplinary communication with all disciplines contributing to the discussion about the relationship between past, present, and future.

² CISH pursues the following purposes:

- a. to promote and support historical scholarship throughout the World;
- b. to defend freedom of thought and expression in the field of historical research, communication and teaching; 
- c. to engage critically with the public use of historical narratives in political and societal discourses;
- d. to defend ~~—when necessary— universal humanistic values~~ and to develop professional standards for the historical sciences ~~as they evolve in the debate about theories and methods among academic historians from all parts of the World;~~
- e. to organize the World Congresses of Historical Sciences. 

Art. 3 Member Organizations

¹ Member Organizations of CISH are:

- a. National Committees;
- b. International Affiliated Organizations.

² Each member organization has one vote in the General Assembly.

³ Membership ends through resignation or expulsion.

⁴ Every member that has not paid its dues for three years loses its right to vote. After five years, the member is deemed to have withdrawn de facto. 

⁵ Any member that violates ~~the principles of international cooperation, contrary to Art. 2;~~ shall be liable for exclusion under Art. 6⁵.



Art. 4 Individual Members

¹ Qualified scholars of historical sciences can apply for the status of individual member.

² Individual members:

- a. Can propose a panel individually or jointly with other members of CISH for the World Congress of Historical Sciences.
- b. Can profit from other benefits determined by the Board.
- c. Pay a yearly fee determined by the Board.

³ The status of individual member ends through resignation, expulsion or ~~the non-payment of the~~ annual fee in two consecutive years.

Art. 5 Organs

¹ The organs of CISH are:

- a. the General Assembly;
- b. the Board;
- c. the Presidium;
- d. the Office;
- e. the Nominating Committee.

Art. 6 General Assembly

¹ The General Assembly is the highest body of CISH. It consists of all member organizations.

² The General Assembly is convened by the Board with a notice period of at least eight weeks.

³ Six ~~members~~ may request the inclusion of items on the agenda until four weeks before the General Assembly.

⁴ Unless otherwise specified, the General Assembly decides by a simple majority of those entitled to vote. In the event of a tie, the President has the casting vote.



⁵ Votes on the admission of new members, on the exclusion of members of the CISH, and on constitutional amendments require a two-thirds majority of those ~~entitled to~~ vote.

⁶ Each member organization is represented at the General Assembly by a delegate, who may be accompanied by a substitute but is allowed only one vote. All members have equal standing in all votes.

⁷ The General Assembly takes place:

- a. ~~regularly~~ once a year;
- b. extraordinarily upon decision of the Board or at the request of ~~twelve~~ member organizations;
- c. a preparatory meeting is held at least eight weeks before the General Assembly that includes the election of a new ~~board~~ or a new ~~president~~.

⁸ The General Assembly:

- a. establishes the Constitution;
- b. elects the President, the members of the Board and ~~of the~~ Nominating Committee;
- c. decides on the admission or exclusion of member organizations;
- d. approves the annual report, balance sheet, and income statement;
- e. approves the budget of the upcoming year;
- f. determines membership fees;
- g. chooses the candidates ~~for~~ hosting the World Congress.



Art. 7 Board

¹ The Board is the political body of CISH.

² It consists of the President and up to fourteen other members as well the Executive Director and the most recent Honorary President, the latter two with an advisory voice. It normally meets four times a year.

³ National Committees must be represented by at least eight members in the Board.

⁴ The Board constitutes itself.

⁵ ~~The Board issues organizational regulations.~~

⁶ The Board:

- a. leads CISH in areas not within the competence of the Presidium;
- b. determines the strategic goals of CISH;
- f. submits proposals to the General Assembly;
- g. issues by-laws;
- h. prepares the budget;
- i. establishes committees, defines their mandates, and selects their members;
- j. decides on the venue and organization of the World Congress;
- k. elects two Vice Presidents from its members;
- l. elects a Treasurer from its members, which regularly reports to the Board on the CISH's finances;
- m. delegates one of its members in the Presidium;
- n. appoints the Executive Director upon the President's proposal;
- o. decides on the admission and exclusion of individual members.

Art. 8 Presidium

¹ The Presidium is the executive body of CISH.

² It consists of the President, the Treasurer, one delegate of the Board as well the Executive Director, who has a consultative voice.

² The Presidium:

- a. decides in urgent questions going beyond the Office's competence;
- b. conducts the negotiations for hosting the World Congress;
- c. determines salaries and compensations.

Art. 9 Office

¹ The Office is the operational body of CISH.

² It consists of the President and the Executive Director.

³ It takes care of all questions not assigned to another body, particularly the organisation of all meetings, the membership administration and all financial operations.

Art. 10 Nominating Committee

¹ The Nominating Committee prepares a proposal for the election of the Board and the President for the General Assembly.

² It consists of the members of the Presidium and four other scholars.

Art. 11 Additional Provisions

¹ The CISH is represented by the President or a delegated representative. In binding matters, the President signs jointly with the Executive Director.

² CISH's liabilities are limited to its assets. Members bear no personal liability.

³ Terms of office are limited, depending on the rhythm of the congress:

- a. for Board members to a minimum of three and a maximum of five years. Board members can be re-elected twice;
- b. for the President to a minimum of three and a maximum of five years. The President can be re-elected once. The President must have served in the CISH Board previously. ~~After retirement, the President is awarded with the title of Honorary President.~~

⁴ Members of the Board, the Nominating Committee and the President must not be older than 70 years at the time of their election. If the President is unable to serve the term to the end, the Board designs a Vice-President to become President and completes the term.

⁵ ~~Organizations wishing to join CISH must submit an application to the Board at least 6 months before the General Assembly.~~

⁶ Proposals for amendments to the Constitution must be included in the invitation to the General Assembly.

⁷ The dissolution of the CISH or its merger with another association requires a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly. A merger is only possible with another non-profit legal entity based in Switzerland. Within six months, an extraordinary General Assembly must confirm the dissolution or merger with a two-thirds majority. In the event of dissolution, CISH's assets must be transferred to a non-profit legal entity based in Switzerland.