

The VENRO Position Regarding “Structural Key Elements of the New European NGDO Co-ordination“

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1 Members

The members of the new structure can form National Platforms and networks. “Pure” families may not become members themselves but can only join via a National Platform and/or a network.

2 Criteria for the membership of networks

In analogy to the criteria for the membership of National Platforms, clear criteria have to be in place for the membership of networks. One important criterion is that a network’s membership includes members and activities from/in at least five EU Member States.

3 Distribution of voting rights

Structurally, the majority of votes has to be at the level of the National Platforms. The following weighting of voting rights, which is also practised by the Belgian Platform, seems to be a sensible arrangement:

a) National Platforms

Large EU Member States (France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Spain): 3 votes for each country

Medium-sized EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden): 2 votes for each country

Smaller EU Member States (Greece, Eire, Luxembourg): 1 vote for each country

b) Networks

1 vote per network

Generally, voting rights should be distributed between the National Platforms and networks at a ratio of 2/3 to 1/3.

This system of distributing the voting rights could also be applied to the EU accession states.

4 Organs of the new structure

The future structure is to have two decision-making levels: the General Assembly and the Board. The LiCo level, which is currently still in place, will be discontinued. Additional intermediate bodies (e.g. policy group) are not necessary.

4.1 General Assembly

In order to integrate all National Platforms as well as the networks into the decision-making processes and the fundamental debates, the General Assembly is to meet every six months. The General Assembly elects the Board and the Working Groups, gives them a mandate and defines the working programme, budget, etc.

4.2 Board

The Board's structure ought to take the weighting between the representatives of the National Platform and the networks into consideration.

The Board could comprise nine members:

5 representatives of National Platforms

3 representatives of the networks

1 President (directly nominated by the General Assembly)

The representatives of the National Platforms and the networks nominate one vice-president each from their ranks for the Board.

4.3 Working Groups

The new structure is to contain two types of Working Group:

a) Permanent Working Groups, the number of which is to be strongly limited

- Development Finance Group

- Policy Group

These Working Groups are to be financed via the new structure's core budget.

b) ad hoc Working Groups

The ad hoc Working Groups are only active for a limited period. Financing has to be identified case by case, and in advance.

5 Secretariat

The chief tasks of the Secretariat are:

- networking and information exchange among the various organs and the members,
- implementing resolutions and individual projects,
- representing the association in relevant committees,
- drawing up concepts and proposals in the framework of strategic planning,
- administration of the association,
- the staff, which is financed on a permanent basis via the core budget, ought to be limited to 3-4 persons.

6 Financing

Generally, the number of voting rights ought to be related to financing with a view to ownership.

To this end, three contribution classes are being established:

1st contribution class: 6,000 EUR

2nd contribution class: 12,000 EUR

3rd contribution class: 18,000 EUR

Allocation is performed according to the number of voting rights and with consideration of the number of member organisations of the respective platforms and networks. All in all, the National Platforms ought to raise about 2/3 of financing and the networks 1/3.

With a view to a maximum of independence of the European Commission (EC), the co-financing share of the core budget is to be reduced to 50 % in the medium term. However, the association's range of services for the EC ought to be reflected in corresponding co-financing.

7 Transition from the old to the new structure

In order that the new structure can enter into force, the financial situation of the LiCo has to be settled. This applies in particular to binding agreements regarding the outstanding payments of Voice. In addition, there has to be a contractual definition of the sale of the EUROCODE firm. The new structure cannot adopt any open commitments of the LiCo towards the European Commission, National Platforms, etc. (supply agreements that are in force, e.g. copiers, are omitted from this). Any assets and property resulting from the dissolution of the LiCo devolve upon the new association.

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