



Constitution

**(As adopted at the General Meeting of March 13, 1984
and amended at the General Meeting of May 9, 2001)**

ARTICLE I - NAME:

The organization shall be known as the "Canada-Italy Friendship Group".

ARTICLE II - STATUS:

It shall function within the mandate of the Speakers of the Senate and House of Commons and with the support of the Parliamentary Relations Secretariat and in affiliation from time to time with selected groups of Italian parliamentarians.

ARTICLE III - AIM:

Its aim is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and to promote the expansion of relations between the two countries.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP:

Canadian membership in the Group is open to all members of the Canadian Senate and House of Commons on application and payment of the membership fee.

ARTICLE V - FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND OPERATIVE YEAR:

1. The operating year of the Group is the federal fiscal year commencing on the first day of April and ending on the thirty-first day of March.
2. a) The Group shall maintain a comprehensive financial reporting and auditing system of accounts as approved from time to time by the Speakers of the Senate and House of Commons.
b) The Secretary-Treasurer shall be the custodian of the records of the Group including the financial accounts and shall report regularly thereon to the Executive.

ARTICLE VI - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

An Annual General Meeting of the membership shall be held at least once in each fiscal year when Parliament is in session, at the call of the Chairman or any ten (10) members of the Group.

It shall:

- a. elect the Chairman, two (2) Vice-Chairmen and six (6) other Members of the Executive for a two-year term of office;

- b. receive and act on an Annual Financial Statement audited as necessary under Article V;
- c. receive and act on an annual budget and program of activities for the ensuing year;
- d. receive and act on any proposals for amendment of the Constitution;
- e. transact any other business which may be properly placed before the Meeting.

ARTICLE VII - SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING:

A Special General Meeting of the membership may be called at any time by the Chairman or any ten (10) members of the Group. It shall transact only such business as was designated in the notice of the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII - QUORUM:

- a. Ten (10) members shall constitute a Quorum at an Annual General or Special General Meeting.
- b. Four (4) members shall constitute a Quorum at a Meeting of the Executive.

ARTICLE IX - NOTICES:

- a. Annual General Meeting: Notice shall be given in writing mailed at least two (2) weeks in advance of the proposed date to the parliamentary office of each member. Such notice shall include any proposed changes in the Constitution.
- b. Special General Meeting: Notice shall ordinarily be given as for an Annual General Meeting and the notice shall contain a statement of the business proposed to be transacted at such meeting. No other business shall be transacted.
- c. In an exceptional or emergency situation, the Executive may call a membership meeting by telephone calls to the Ottawa office of every member at least two (2) days before the proposed date and such a meeting shall be in order unless ten (10) or more members object.
- d. Lack of quorum shall not prevent a discussion of any matter brought before a meeting but no decisions shall be taken.

ARTICLE X - THE EXECUTIVE:

- 1. The Executive shall have the responsibility for the general management of the affairs of the Group and shall report thereon at each Annual General or Special General Meeting.
- 2. The Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons are Honorary Chairmen.

3. Ex-officio members: the outgoing Chairman shall be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee. The Leaders of the recognized political parties in the House of Commons shall be Honorary Vice-Chairmen.
4. The Executive shall consist of nine (9) selected members as follows:
 - (i) a Chairman
 - (ii) two Vice-Chairmen
 - (iii) six (6) additional members one (1) of whom shall be designated Parliamentary Treasurer of the Group by the Executive.
5. Following a general election, the Executive Committee duly elected during the previous Parliament shall be required to call an Annual General Meeting in order to elect a new Executive Committee.
6. The Executive shall meet at the call of the Chairman or any four (4) members.
7. The Chairman shall assume the duties normally associated with that office including that of presiding officer at meetings of the Executive and general membership.
8. In the absence of the Chairman, the senior Vice-Chairman shall act on his behalf.
9. If the Chairman is a Senator, both Vice-Chairmen must be members of the House of Commons but not vice versa.
10. The Executive shall meet at least twice in each fiscal year. Its responsibilities include preparation and presentation of the annual budget, financial statement and program activities for the ensuing year.
11. If for any reason a position on the Executive becomes vacant, the Executive shall have the prerogative to fill the position from the membership for the balance of the term.

ARTICLE XI - NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:

1. There shall be a Nominations Committee for the election of the Executive constituted as follows:
 - a) The Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Parliamentary Treasurer;
 - b) Three (3) members chosen by the Executive Committee and who are on the Executive Committee and representing the recognized political parties in Parliament. Their names shall be notified to the party Whips in each Chamber.
2. The Committee shall meet at the call of the Chairman and shall report to the Annual General Meeting as follows:
 - a) the names of all members who may have been proposed to it;
 - b) its recommendations to the membership.

3. Other nominations may be received from or on behalf of any member of the Group. They shall be in writing to the Executive Secretary who shall put them at once before the Nominations Committee. Such nominations shall include a statement by the nominee of his willingness to serve. The Executive Secretary shall be advised in writing at least forty-eight (48) hours before the date of the Annual General Meeting.
4. Nominations under XI, 3 which are not recommended for election by the Nominations Committee may be moved from the floor at the Annual General Meeting.

ARTICLE XII - REPRESENTATION OF THE GROUP:

1. Members shall be notified in writing of every opportunity as it arises to represent the Group at any conference, convention, parliamentary or other meeting in Canada or Italy.
2. Every member shall have the right to apply on an approved form for inclusion in any such representation and such requests shall be considered by the Selection Committee.

ARTICLE XIII - SELECTION COMMITTEE:

1. There shall be a Selection Committee which shall name the members who will represent the Group under Article XII.
2. It shall consist of:
 - a) The Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Parliamentary Treasurer;
 - b) Three (3) active members representative of the major political parties in Parliament, chosen by the Executive Committee.
3. The names of the members of each Selection Committee shall be notified to the membership when possible but in any event to the Whips of the recognized political parties in Parliament. There shall be a newly constituted Selection Committee for each representation opportunity.
4. 4. In making its selections, the Committee shall, as far as practical, achieve equitable representation of:
 - a) the recognized political parties in Parliament in each Chamber;
 - b) the contribution which each selected member may be expected to make to the success of a meeting and, particularly, to the undertaking to attend briefing sessions in advance at home or abroad, and all plenary, committee, seminar and other meetings;
 - c) an adequate balance between reasonable continuity of some members of each selected group and equitable opportunity for new qualified members to be chosen.

ARTICLE XIV - SUPPORT STAFF:

In accordance with Article II, the Group may request the Parliamentary Relations Secretariat to designate an experienced person to act as Executive Secretary of the Group to coordinate its activities with those of the Secretariat and other Canadian Parliamentary Associations.

ARTICLE XV - RULES OF PROCEDURE:

Meetings of the Group shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures and practices of the Canadian Parliament as generally applicable to public meetings in Canada.

ARTICLE XVI - AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION:

The Constitution may be amended only as follows:

- a. at an Annual General Meeting of the Group;
- b. at a Special General Meeting of the membership called for that purpose;
- c. on notice as specified in Articles VI and IX;
- d. by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present and entitled to vote at the meeting.

ARTICLE XVII- VOTING :

Voting at Membership meetings shall be by show of hands unless a written ballot is demanded by at least five (5) members present (two (2) in the case of an Executive Committee meeting).