

The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe (CECE)

Council of Advice – Rules of Order

0. Introduction

According to the CECE Canons (3.6) “The Council of Advice shall have authority to make Rules of Order for the conduct of its own business.”

These Rules of Order are intended to serve two purposes:

1. To serve as a functional handbook, providing clarity about all the – dispersed -canonical roles of the Council of Advice (in the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and in the CECE Constitution and Canons) and its legal role as the *Conseil* of the French 1901 *Association* based on the *Statuts* adopted October 26, 2002.
2. To establish and record additional rules and duties as defined and agreed by Council on the basis of CECE Canon 3.6

1. Organisation

1.1. Membership:

The composition of the Council of Advice (hereinafter ‘Council’) is regulated both in the Constitution and the Canons:

“The Council of Advice shall consist of four Clergy canonically resident in the Convocation, and four Laity, resident in the Convocation. ... Any member who may have been elected for two consecutive terms shall be ineligible for re-election at the Annual Convention at which that term expires. The Council shall have authority to fill vacancies in its own membership. Members shall serve until their successors are elected and accept election.” (CECE Art. VII)

“The Council of Advice will be elected at the Annual Convention of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. It shall consist of four clerical members and four lay members...” (CECE Canon 3.5).

The Council of Advice and the Bishop together form the *Conseil* (Council) of the Association (governed by the law of 1901) that establishes the Convocation as a legal entity in France (*Status* Article 9).

1.2. Officers:

1.2.1. “The Council of Advice shall choose a President and a Secretary from among the members The Secretary shall record its proceedings in a book¹ provided for the purpose, which book and all papers in its possession relative to the Convocation, shall be subject to the examination of the Bishop and of the Convention; and a full report of its acts shall be made at each Annual Meeting of the Convention.” (CECE Canon 3.2).

1.2.2. The Council shall also choose annually at its first meeting a Deputy to the President from among the members, who shall belong to a different order to the President. The

¹ The term “book” includes files stored by electronic means in a format that is authorized by Convocation policy.

Deputy, titled Vice-President, can call and preside at meetings in the absence of or incapacity of the President.

In accordance with Article 12.2 of the *Statuts*, the President of Council is also *the Vice-Président du Conseil*.

The *Statuts* (Article 12.3) also require the *Conseil* to appoint a *secrétaire*. This role (Article 13.5) overlaps with the role of the Secretary of Convention. For this reason, the Secretary of Convention has a standing invitation to participate in the June and pre-Convention October meetings of Council and may attend other regular Council meetings as appropriate.

The *Statuts* (Article 12.3) further require the *Conseil* to appoint a *trésorier* for a one-year, renewable term. This role will be assumed by the Convocation treasurer, who will be officially appointed by Council, acting as the *Conseil*, at its first meeting after Convention. The Convocation treasurer has a standing invitation to participate in the June and pre-Convention October meetings of Council and may attend other regular Council meetings as appropriate, particular those in which it acts as Diocesan Council.

2. Functions and Duties

2.1. “The Council of Advice shall function as a **Standing Committee** in all respects as permitted by the Canons of The Episcopal Church” (CECE Canon 3.1). TEC Title I Canon 15 (Of Congregations in Foreign Lands) establishes the Council of Advice in this role, which encompasses.

2.1.1. In the case of a Vacancy in the Episcopate

“If there be no Bishop or Bishop Coadjutor or Suffragan Bishop canonically authorized to act, the Standing Committee shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese for all purposes declared by the General Convention.” (Article IV TEC Constitution).

“In case of a vacancy in the Episcopate, the Council of Advice shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Convocation in all cases except such as are otherwise provided for by the General or Convocational Canons.” (CECE Canon 3.3).

Inviting a Bishop ... “where there is no Bishop” to “visit and exercise episcopal offices” (TEC III.13.2).

2.1.2. In Ordination Processes

“The Council of Advice of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe shall, for the purpose of this and other Canons of Title III have the same powers as the Standing Committee of a Diocese.” (TEC III.5.1.b).

Approving the candidacy and ordination of deacons (TEC III.6) and priests (TEC III.8).

Endorsing candidates for reception as members of clergy of this church (TEC III.10.3.d and g).

2.1.3. In the Election of Bishops

Calling a special meeting of Convention, certifying the election (TEC III.11.2 and

III.11.3) and consenting to the election of bishops (TEC III.11.3).

2.1.4. To Exceptional Employment Conditions

Consenting to a bishop not maintaining a residence in the Convocation or to an absence of more than 6 months or declaring a vacancy in the episcopate (TEC III.12.4).

2.1.5. Permitting the employment of priests in other settings (TEC III.9.3.f).

2.1.6. In Disciplinary Processes

Consenting to the release and removal of deacons and priests from, as well as accepting the return, to the ordained ministry (TEC III.7.8, III.7.11, III.9.9, III.9.13).

Helping settle differences in the context of the reconciliation of disagreements affecting the pastoral relation (TEC III.9.15).

Determining whether a deacon or priest has “abandoned” the Episcopal Church (TEC IV.16.3), consenting to their release and removal from ordained ministry (TEC IV.16.4).

Declaring the impairment (TEC III.12.10) or imperilment of the pastoral relationship (TEC III.12.11) of the bishop or requesting the dissolution of such relationship (TEC III.12.12).

2.1.7. Around Property Issues

Consenting to encumbrance, alienation of real property of any parish, mission or congregation (TEC I.7.3) and to the encumbrance, alienation, or deconsecrating of churches or chapels (TEC II.6) and in accordance with the Convocation Policy for Encumbrances and Alienation dated Jan 21, 2020.

2.1.8. Approving Congregational Articles of Association etc

Approve any changes in the Articles of Association or Charter, or its Constitution, or By-Laws of a Congregation (Art X.2).

2.1.9. Establishing New Congregations

“The Bishop and the Council of Advice shall establish a Committee on Mission Congregations ... The Committee shall report regularly to the Council of Advice.” (CECE Canon 3.7).

“If there is a Congregation within the limits of any city in this Convocation, no new Congregation shall be established in that city, except with the consent of the Bishop in charge and the Council of Advice.” (CECE Canon 13).

Council approval is required before establishing or recognising or dissolving any form of mission church or organizing (them) as a parish (CECE Canon 23).

2.2. Council acts as the Bishop’s canonical **Council of Advice** in the following roles:

2.2.1. Advising and supporting the Bishop on all important matters of policy.

2.2.2. Caring for the Bishop and holding accountable for his or her total health.

2.2.3. Facilitating and supporting the Mutual Ministry Review as required by the Letter of Agreement with the Bishop.

2.3. Council functions as “**Diocesan Council**” for the following:

2.3.1. At or around Convention:

Calling special meetings of Convention (CECE Art. IV).

2.3.2. Filling Vacant Positions:

“The Council of Advice shall have authority to fill all vacancies that may occur during the recess of the Convention, in offices held by election, such appointments to remain in force until the next Annual Convention.” (CECE Canon 3.4).

Council is to be consulted by the Bishop when appointing replacement Disciplinary Board members (CECE Canon 11.2.5).

2.3.3. Concerning the Convocation Finances:

“Council of Advice shall propose to the Convention a budget for adoption for the succeeding year. The Convocation Fund shall be administered by the Bishop and Council of Advice. To assist the Bishop and Council of Advice in carrying out these responsibilities, there shall be a Finance Committee whose members shall include but not be limited to the Bishop, the Treasurer, and at least one member of the Council of Advice to be appointed by the Council.” (CECE Canon 10.3).

2.4. Council operating with the Bishop functions as the **Conseil** of the Association 1901. (*Status* Article 9).

3. Meetings

3.1. “Five members of the Council shall be a quorum...” (CECE Canon 3.2) A majority of the quorum convened is necessary for an action to be approved.

3.1.1. The Council meets monthly in person or online. At least three times a year the meeting shall be in person: in January, at the time of a wider gathering of Convocation leaders encompassing the Bishop, Council, Heads of Ministry, and Convocation officers and staff as agreed by the Bishop and President; in June, with a focus on financial matters; and in October immediately before Convention as final preparation and again as soon as it is practicable after Convention as the new Council. Council may meet on other occasions at the request of the Bishop or as called by the President. The President will chair the meeting when Council is functioning as the Standing Committee and as the Bishop’s canonical Council of Advice (see sections 2.1 and 2.2) The Bishop will chair the meeting when Council is functioning as a “Diocesan Council” and/or as the Conseil of the Association (see section 2.4). In accordance with Article 12.1 of the *Statuts*, the Bishop is the *Président du Conseil*.

3.1.2. “Robert’s Rules of Order” shall prevail for the conduct of business except as otherwise provided.

3.1.3. Meetings take place at various locations within the Convocation and also via telephone or video conference. If unable to be physically present at an “in-person” meeting, a member may participate by telephone or video conferencing with the consent of the President.

3.1.4. In order to expedite matters, voting on issues may be carried out using electronic means.

3.1.5. The Secretary and/or the President will solicit from the Bishop and the Council members any suggested agenda items no later than two weeks prior to each regular meeting. In any case, the agenda of each regular meeting will include the reading of the norms of the Council. Written reports from the Bishop and the Finance Committee will be made available, as a minimum, in advance of in person meetings, excepting the post-Convention retreat. In advance of the May meeting the Finance Committee will provide a report containing recommendations in respect of grant applications. Further reports will be provided for other meetings as deemed appropriate. The President or the Secretary will send electronically a copy of the final agenda to everyone attending the meeting.

3.1.6. The Council agrees to the following norms of behavior:

- We respect and care for each other
- We make Council meetings welcoming and open, accepting all points of view as valid
- We listen actively before responding, keeping our voices down
- We will be honest and be ourselves, sharing our vulnerabilities
- We maintain discretion and ensure confidentiality, declaring what is confidential and what is not
- We reflect the Convocation at large
- We act collegially and will be accountable to each other

3.1.7. The Bishop attends all regular Council meetings and can bring members of Convocation staff or other persons the Bishop feels have information useful to Council.

4. Precedence and Revisions

4.1. The provisions of the Constitutions and Canons of TEC² and the Convocation³ shall take

² Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church as Adopted and Revised in General Conventions 1789–2018.

³ Constitution and Canons of The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe 2020.

precedence in any conflict that may appear between these Rules of Order and the provisions of such Constitutions and Canons.

- 4.2. Except for the specific portions of the Constitutions and Canons of TEC and the Convocation to which reference is made, these Rules can be amended by a majority vote of the Council of Advice members.

Adopted by the Council of Advice on March 9, 2022.