



ASSOCIATION OF GAMBIAN STUDENTS IN TURKEY (AGAST)

CONSTITUTION

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THE CONSTITUTION

(Last updated 27/03/2015)

ARTICLE (1): GENERAL INFORMATION

Section 1.1: Name of the Association

The name of the association is *The Association of Gambian Students in Turkey*. It shall be abbreviated as (AGAST).

Section 1.2: Motto and Logo

The motto of AGAST is: "Discipline, Hardwork and Service"

The logo is as shown in another document.

Section 1.3: Preamble

The Association of Gambian students in Turkey (AGAST) is a Gambian students association in Turkey that was formed at the end of the year, 2010. The founding of the association was born out of a genuine desire to strengthen brotherhood and support Gambian students pursuing higher education in the Republic of Turkey. Since its inception in 2010, the organisation has, in various ways, significantly contributed to the general welfare of Gambian students studying in various cities across Turkey.

The Association is also committed to portraying itself as an emblem of hope, unity, and brotherhood and bringing about serious commitment and actions towards promoting the general interest and welfare of all Gambian students across Turkey.

In trying to achieve its general mandate of promoting the welfare of Gambian students in Turkey, the association's key intervention areas shall include (but not limited) to the following:

1. Conduction of bi-yearly congress to celebrate success achieved and map out strategies to cope with the challenges that tend to hinder the progress of the association.
2. Helping Gambian students to formally register in their respective dormitories, universities, language course centres (TOMER) and in the acquisition of residential permits (IKAMET) upon their arrival in Turkey.
3. Receiving new students from airports all over the country upon their arrival in Turkey.
4. Providing financial assistance in the form of interest-free loans to members in need.

5. Provision of counselling services to all its members as and when necessary.
6. The association shall also collaborate with individuals, government agencies, NGO's and groups that seek to partner with AGAST for the mutual benefit of all parties.
7. Represent Gambia in all international student ceremonies and activities.

Section 4: Mission and Vision Statements:

The vision statement of AGAST is:

"...to promote, protect and adequately cater for the welfare needs of Gambian students in Turkey".

Mission:

The mission statement of the Association is as follows:

"Our aim is driven by a passionate belief that we Gambians have responsibility in shaping our lives and helping our fellow citizens as well. As a result, our collective efforts shall be oriented towards helping one another, towards our respective needs and to our beloved Gambia as a whole".

ARTICLE (2): PURPOSE OF THE CONSTITUTION

The purpose of the constitution shall be to:

1. Provide a legal basis for the governance of the Association of Gambian Students in Turkey.
2. Enhance transparency, equity, fairness and accountability within AGAST.
3. Balance the level of power and duty within the governance structure of the Association.
4. Enable members of the Association to monitor the operations and activities of the association to amke sure they are in line with the constitution.
5. Serve as a reference tool to all members of AGAST.

ARTICLE (3): AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION

1. Propagate the spirit of togetherness, unity and understanding among Gambian students in Turkey.
2. Support one another in times of difficulties and collectively address challenges that may arise in those times.
3. To partner with any individual, agencies or groups that seek to support or partner with AGAST for the benefit of all parties.

4. To protect the rights of its members and to do all things necessary or proper to advance and promote their welfare and interests.

ARTICLE (4): MEMBERSHIP

Section 4.1: General Overview

Being a Gambian and studying in the Republic of Turkey, entitles the individual to automatic membership of AGAST. However, all new applicants shall complete a Membership Application Form, the signing of which shall be an indication that the individual has accepted and agreed to all conditions stipulated within the constitution. The automatic membership is, therefore, confirmed and finalised upon returning the application form to the executive body.

Section 4.2: Rights of Members

All confirmed members have the right to:

1. participate in the activities of the association and to be part of the executive administration.
2. Be part of the decision-making process during the general assembly by using their votes
3. to terminate membership at their own will.

Section 4.3: Responsibilities of Members

All confirmed members have the following duties and responsibilities to fulfill:

1. Paying the specified annual contributions as specified in Section 5.2 of Article 4 within the specified time.
2. Conforming to the constitution of the association.
3. Desisting from actions that will lead to chaos in the association.
4. Doing work assigned to them within a time frame specified by the executive.

Section 4.4: Membership Termination

(1) No member will be forced to stay in the organization against his or her will. Every member will have the right to leave the organization anytime he or she wishes. Members who want to leave the organization will write a formal request to the executive body. After the request is received by the executive all necessary procedures will be followed.

(2) The executive can decide to terminate the membership of a member under the following conditions

- Non-compliance to the constitution of the organization.
- Failure to function or work in accordance with his or her responsibilities as stipulated by Section 4.3 of Article 4 or by the constitution in general.
- Not conforming to the decisions taken by the organization.
- Consistent and/or repeated failure to make yearly contributions past the given deadline.
- No other foreigner under any circumstances will be allowed to be a member of AGAST.

ARTICLE (5): CONTRIBUTIONS, SOURCE OF FUNDING & LOANS

Funds are a sine qua non for the existence of any group or organisation. For this reason, the major sources of funding for the group will be from member contributions, third-party sponsorship and fund-raising activities undertaken by the association.

The funds gathered by the Association shall be used to finance its official activities, give out loans to members and any services that is executed on behalf of AGAST.

Section 5.1: Association's Account

A savings account shall be officially opened to the name of the Association in a local bank where the association's funds shall be saved and member contributions be deposited to.

Three members of the executive body, one of which is the treasurer, shall serve as signatories to this account and the treasurer shall be the overseer of the account (including the internet-accessed account). In case of any cash withdrawal from the account, all three signatories shall have knowledge of the amount, purpose and recipient of the cash amount withdrawn. However, only one signatory shall be sufficient to withdraw cash according to the above provision.

Section 5.2: Contributions

Each group member shall make **an annual** contribution of a total sum of **60.00TL**. This annual contribution will be split into two **30 TL** payments, each of which shall be made prior to each congress, on or before May 31 for the summer congress and December 31 for the

winter congress. These two payments of **30TL** each may not be split and, as such, **MUST** be in the form of a one-off payment. However, non-scholarship students shall pay a contribution of **50TL** for the year.

Section 5.3: Loans

5.3.1: Conditions for Loan Application

A member may apply for financial help when they are in dire straits that genuinely needs be attended to.

The three signatories shall be notified by the member seeking loans for consideration of their request at least 3 workings days prior to disbursement of the requested amount. At least two of the three signatories must approve of the loan before the amount is disbursed.

The sum to be disbursed as loan is stipulated at a maximum of **300** or **500TL** depending on the balance in the Association's account. Based on this, a member may only be able to borrow up to **300TL** if the balance is low and up to **500TL** if the balance is sufficient.

A member who received a loan from the Association may not apply for a second loan within a period of six months after their application for the loan even if they have settled that loan within this time frame.

A member may not receive any loan benefit from the Association if they are found to have consistently failed to comply with the contributions mentioned above.

Any member who wish to apply for a loan **must** give prior notice to the executive and must inturn be patient as his or her application is under processing.

5.3.2: Re-payment of Loans

The provided loan shall be repaid by the member in question in monthly installments of **not less than**

- 50TL per month for loans up to 100.00TL
- 100TL per month for loans ranging from 100.01TL to 300.00TL.
- 125TL for loans ranging from 300.01 to 500.00TL.

Loans shall be repaid to the group's official account and the treasurer shall be notified of this payment.

In case of non-compliance with loan re-payment, the member in question will be cautioned to comply with the mode of payment stipulated in the constitution. If, after the duration within which a member must re-pay a loan has elapsed and he/she fails to complete the whole repayment, then a warning period of one month is given to the individual to complete the payment. By default, the person may not benefit from future loans for a period ranging from 6 to 12 months.

ARTICLE (6): GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Governance structure (Executive) of AGAST shall comprise of the following:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary General
- Assistant Secretary General
- Treasurer
- Regional Welfare Coordinators

- Media Team
- Public Relation Team

Section 6.1: Functions of the Executive

President:

1. Shall be the leader of the Association
2. Shall summon meetings of both the Executive and Congress (End of semester gatherings)
3. Shall preside over all such meetings, or otherwise may choose to delegate responsibility to an executive member to carry out this function
4. Shall assist in coordinating the activities of the Association
5. Shall be responsible for presenting and conducting of relations with other organisations/associations, governmental or non-governmental
6. Shall be responsible for the negotiation of, and subject to the ratification with other executive members, the conclusion of agreements.

Vice President:

1. Shall be responsible for the internal matters of the organisation.
2. Shall assume office in the absence of the president.
3. Shall be the principal assistant of the president in the discharge of his/her executive functions as may be conferred on him/her by this constitution.

Secretary General:

1. Shall be responsible for communicating meetings to other members
2. Shall take down minutes of the meeting and brief members on minutes of the previous meeting before the start of a new meeting.
3. Shall carry out other duties assigned to him/her by other members of the executive
4. Shall work intimately with other members of the executive to safeguard the constitution.

Assistant Secretary General:

1. Shall assume the office of the Secretary General in the absence of the Secretary General.
2. Shall be the principal assistant of the Secretary General in the discharge of his/her executive functions as may be conferred on him/her by this constitution or assigned by the President or the Secretary General.

Treasurer:

1. Shall give an account of the associations financial status at any time found necessary.
2. Shall collaborate with any member of the association that requires his/her involvement.
3. Shall be a signatory to the organisation's account.
4. Shall keep the financial records of the organisation.
5. Shall submit financial report to the executive and members during gatherings.

Regional Welfare Coordinators:

The three AGAST regions are Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir and other cities. These three regional coordinators shall be assigned to the following:

1. The regional welfare coordinators shall represent AGAST in their various designated regions.
2. They shall be responsible for Gambian students affairs in their regions
3. The regional welfare coordinators shall be responsible/or can assign other Gambian students to receive new incoming students and helping them to carry out all necessary procedures at their first arrival to Turkey
4. They shall be responsible to mobilise other students in their regions to participate in international student activities such as football tournaments, seminars, cultural expos etc.
5. Carry out any other activity assign to them.
6. Representatives of the various cities to feed the Secretary & media team in forms of pictures and videos about what they've done in their various cities, for it to be updated on the various platforms whenever necessary.

Media Team

1. Creation of a PUBLIC RELATION OFFICIAL TEAM (To be the voice of AGAST)
2. Should the history session be conducted by the MEDIA TEAM?
3. Should the MEDIA TEAM and PUBLIC RELATION OFFICIAL (PRO) TEAM be integrated.
4. Buying of a camera to facilitate the work of MEDIA TEAM
5. Representatives of the various cities to feed the Secretary & media team in forms of pictures and videos about what they've done in their various cities, for it to be updated on the various platforms whenever necessary.

Public Relation Official (PRO) Team

1. Yet to be defined

Section 6.2: Term of Office of the Executive Committee

The term for an elected executive is a duration of 12 months from the date of taking office. However, an executive member may serve multiple terms provided the Membership body voted him into office.

ARTICLE (7): ACTIVITIES:

AGAST shall undertake and participate in diverse cultural, social, recreational and fund-raising activities that may be organised by government institutions (like YTB), NGO's (like İHH and Bab-ı Alem), The Gambian Embassy and other organisers, group or individual. The Association shall also organise end-of-semester gatherings (congress) in different cities based a general consensus.

Section 7.1: Congress

At the end of each semester, the members shall convene in one city to discuss various issues concerning the Association and the way forward. The gathering (congress) shall be held in 2 different cities based on a general consensus from the membership of the Association.

A new executive will be elected when the term of office of the existing one ends. The quorum for an executive post shall be a simple majority of votes.

Logistic and organisational expenditures for this gathering shall be incurred from the Association's account. A one-way fare will be refunded by the Association for participants coming from outside the host city of the Congress. This however, will depend mainly on the availability of adequate funds in the AGAST account.

Members of AGAST are allowed to invite friends during gatherings but their participation will be limited in certain activities and it shall be purely based on first come first serve basis.

A new executive will be voted into office after one year of service is complete (which coincides with the summer meetings).

Section 7.2: Cultural Activities and Exhibitions

AGAST shall be represented in all International students cultural gatherings by its members residing in the city the event is taking place.

Section 7.3: Miscellaneous Activities

ARTICLE (8): EXECUTIVE & GENERAL MEETINGS

The quorum for the general meeting shall be at least half of the general members at the General Meetings and at least two thirds of the executive body at the Executive Meetings. Any agreement or action taken by a meeting held without a quorum shall not be accepted. The

minutes of meeting shall be prepared and circulated one week after the meeting to all members by the Secretary General .

Section 8.1: Executive meeting

- The Executive Committee will convene four times a year, at specified intervals i.e. once every 3 months.
- The EC can have an extra-ordinary session any time deemed necessary by the president or any other EC member.
- The EC can also convene when a substantial number of group members request for an extra-ordinary session or in case of an urgency, crisis or similar events.

Section 8.2: General Assembly

- The General Assembly will be held twice every year at the bi-yearly Congresses. Any decision that cannot be taken at the General Assembly will have to be voted at the Executive meeting.
- If deemed necessary by the EC, a General Assembly can be called, the details of which will be communicated to the group at least one week prior to the Assembly.

ARTICLE (9): AMMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

- (1) The notice for amendment shall be submitted to the entire membership at least 3 weeks before it takes place.
- (2) Amendment shall come into effect after discussions had been made by the entire membership and a general consensus reached.
- (3) The amendment shall be communicated to all members and concern parties by the executive.

ARTICLE (10): DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE (10): ENFORCEMENT

This constitution shall be deemed to have come into effect as of 12/10/2020