

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OF HISTORY ASSOCIATION



A guide to take an active part in the politics of ISHA and answer frequently asked questions about the GA

CONTENT



CONTENT:

- General:
 - What is the General Assembly?
 - What is a delegate? And what a proxy vote?
 - What is a quorum?
- Preparation:
 - Who prepares the GA?
 - What do sections have to prepare?
 - Do I have to prepare something?
- Proceedings
 - What do I do at a GA?
 - How does the voting work?
- Aftermath
 - What happens after a GA?
 - What do I do after a GA?



WHAT IS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY?

A General Assembly (GA) is a meeting of the International Board (IB), the Council and delegates of the sections of ISHA, that takes place during the international seminars. Preferably, other active and passive members and other Officials take part as well, as they are an important part of ISHA and valuable for the discussion. The GA elects Officials, votes on amendments to the Statutes and Standing Orders and generally decides important matters. For a list of things that only the GA can decide, please have a look at Art. 16.2, Statutes. There is a GA at every Annual Conference (AC), so at least once a year. However, additional sessions help to keep the progress of the IB and Council flowing, as they do not have to wait for GA approval to carry on with a project.

Statutes, Art. 16 and Standing Orders, Section 3

WHAT IS A DELEGATE? AND WHAT A PROXY VOTE?

The GA consist of all the delegates send by the sections. Each delegate has one vote. Prior to the GA, at least two weeks, the active members of each section vote among themselves and thereby appoint a delegate. Of course it makes sense to vote for someone who is participating in the seminar where the GA takes place. If no one from a section is participating, the delegate can give a proxy vote. There is no limit on how often a person can be elected as a delegate. A delegate must obtain a minimum of 50 % of the vote of the active members of their section to be recognized by the International Board.

Proxy vote means, that a section's delegate (eg. from ISHA London) can give his or her vote to a delegate from another section (eg. to ISHA Kent, it does not have to be a section from the same country, but this is often the case). The delegate from ISHA Kent has now two votes (his/hers and ISHA London's delegate's). A delegate can not hold more than two proxy votes. The IB must be informed in writing (e-mail is fine) about this at least one week before the convening of the GA by the section handing its vote to another.

Statutes, Art. 10 and Standing Orders, Art. 16

WHAT IS A QUORUM?

The GA can only take place, when it has quorum. A quorum means that at least half of all sections with active members are represented either by a present delegate OR a proxy vote. Each section or delegate has one vote. The IB does not have a vote. Sections without any active members/with only passive members do not have a vote, but they are welcome to take part in the discussion in the GA.

If there is less than half of the Sections with active members represented, the GA can not convene. Instead there will be a State of Affairs Meeting (SAM). The SAM is a meeting of Officials (member of the IB, the Council, the Editor, etc.) and all Sections, that takes place at international seminars BUT there is no voting during a SAM and no fixed decisions are made. During a SAM, all sections and Officials report about the state of affairs in their sections and the progress of their current projects. Common practice is to integrate a SAM in every GA, however, this does not have to happen. Sometimes a SAM is part of the GA but on another day.

Standing Orders, Art. 2.8

WHO PREPARES THE GA?



The IB prepares the GA. That means that they set the Agenda, make sure that a copy of the current Statutes and Standing Orders is present at a GA, inform all the sections about the agenda and the upcoming proposals for amendments early enough for them to prepare, make sure that participants at the specific international seminar know that a GA will take place, communicate with the organizing section what infrastructure is needed for GA and generally prepare so that GA goes smoothly and valuable time for discussion is not lost due to poor preparation.

Standing Orders, Art.14

WHO CAN PROPOSE SOMETHING?



Every active member has the right to bring any relevant business before the GA. The GA can vote to accept the proposal.

Statutes, Art.16.5

Active Members and Officials are allowed to propose amendments to the Statutes and the Standing Orders, they must communicate this to the IB in due time.

A majority of two thirds is needed to alter the Statutes. A simple majority of votes is enough to change the Standing Orders.

Statutes, Art.29

WHAT DO SECTIONS HAVE TO PREPARE?

Sections organize a local meeting to discuss the agenda and proposals (if there are any) before the seminar at which a GA or SAM takes place. The delegates of the section needs to know what is happening on local level (as there are around 50 sections, please refrain from preparing a half an hour report, a couple of sentences about the overall actions and problems, if there are any, of the section are enough for a SAM), and more importantly, needs to be informed about their section's opinion about upcoming votes and/or elections.





DO I HAVE TO PREPARE SOMETHING?

First of all, check if you are the only one from your section/hometown going to the event. If you are the only one and part of a section, please take part in the sections' preparations for the GA. If you are from a city which is not yet part of ISHA you do not have to take part in the GA. However, this is the one meeting that could give you insight into what is also called "ISHA politics" and it might be of service for you if you are planning on setting up a section at your university.





WHAT DO I DO AT A GA?

If well prepared, the GA itself is pretty self-explanatory. Sign your name on the list of Attendance and as the IB proceeds with the agenda, listen and take notes if you think something is specifically important for your local section. As there is an officially assigned minute taker there is no need to write down everything. But as it can take a couple of months before minutes are published, it makes sense to note down some things. If you have questions, ask. No need to be shy, everyone is happy to answer everything you want to know. Take part in the discussion, voice your opinion and your section's or lean back and watch if there is nothing from your section to add.

As we live in a time where communication is not depending on letters and ink anymore, you can always ask for a break before voting if you are your section's delegate and wish to consult other people of your section at home. As the organizing section organized a program for the seminar and the GA schedule is a bit tight most of the time, and there will be breaks anyway, this should not evolve into a long discussion over the phone or become a constant habit, which is why we ask you to discuss the agenda with your section before the event.

If you are an passive member, an active member who is not an appointed delegate or a "we might become part of ISHA and wanted to see how things work"-guest at the GA, you cannot vote but voice your opinion during the discussion.

HOW DOES THE VOTING WORK?



Each delegate has one vote. The IB does not have a vote. Other members, active or passive, do not have a vote, but they are welcomed to take part in the discussion in the GA.

Votes are cast by show of hands unless a secret ballot takes place, which is the case when Officials are elected.

Standing Orders, Art. 16

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE GA?

There are no regulations specified in Statutes and Standing Orders about how to proceed after a GA, except that all decisions made are binding to the whole organisation (Statutes, Art.30) and that minutes need to be approved by the following GA.

Normally the minute taker revises the minutes and they are approved or not at the following GA. As soon as the minute taker and the Officials have revised the minutes, they will be sent to the sections and participants of the GA. They will be published through ISHA's homepage and spread via the Newsletter and Social Networks.

All decisions made are active with the closing of GA or at a specific date the GA sets, so logically all Organs of ISHA act in favor of those decisions after the GA or the specific date.

WHAT DO I DO AFTER THE GA?

When you are back home after the event you should find a way to summarise what happened during GA for your local section. This is especially important if there were votings and new things that need to be done or changed immediately. If so, the sections will be informed through the IB anyway, but as you were there and represented the section, maybe even voted as delegate, you should be able to tell them about it.



We are
looking
forward to
see you at
the next GA!

If you ever have any questions,
complaints, comments or
feelings, do not hesitate to
contact the International Board
and Council via:
isha.inter@gmail.com