



World Organization of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale du Mouvement Scout

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CIRCULAR N° 29/2004

To: International Commissioners

November 2004

Russia

Dear Colleagues,

1. You will recall that, by Circular n° 17/2004, you were informed that the World Scout Committee has transferred the membership of Russia within WOSM from the All-Russia National Scout Organization (ARNSO) to a new entity, the Russian Association of Scouts/Navigators (RAS/N). The facts, and the rationale for the change, were explained in the circular (an extra copy of which is attached).
2. On 21 September, the World Scout Bureau received a letter from the German Scout Federation saying that it "is astonished about the 'membership transfer', a procedure which is not covered by the WOSM Constitution..." and therefore "regards Circular 17/2004 as a call for a postal vote according to the WOSM Constitution" and is "against the recognition of RAS/N for formal reasons at the time being". The letter concludes by requesting "to bring the case to the next World Scout Conference and wishes to give all parts concerned the opportunity to present their situation at the Conference".

This letter was then followed by letters from the Scout Organizations of Poland (24 September), Switzerland (27 September), Liechtenstein (28 September) and Austria (29 September). The wording of these letters is very similar to the one from the German Scout Federation and they are all clearly the result of a co-ordinated action.

3. The World Committee is aware that this appeal to question the validity of its decision concerning Russia has had a very wide circulation, and is therefore responding through a circular addressed to all NSOs. Had the World Committee's decision relating to the transfer of recognition in Russia been a call for a postal vote, which it was not, it would have required the opposition, within three months, of at least 5% of NSOs, i.e. at least 8 NSOs, to take the matter to the next World Conference (WOSM Constitution, Article VI, 2). It is significant that, within three months, only 5 NSOs in all had objected to the World Committee's decision, the validity of which is therefore unquestioned. The Committee nonetheless still wishes to provide further information on this question to avoid misunderstanding and confusion.
4. The letters objecting to the World Committee's action say that "membership transfer" is not covered by the WOSM Constitution. It is true that "membership transfer", as many other aspects of the Committee's work, is not explicitly mentioned in the WOSM Constitution; but it is part of the first function of the Committee, which is "To act on behalf of the World Conference between its meetings and to give effect to its decisions, recommendations and policies". Decisions to transfer membership in a country from one legal entity to another, without prior consultation with the World Conference or a postal vote, have often been made in the past; the most recent case being the transfer of recognition of Scouting in Ireland from a federation of two associations to a new single organization. The facts regarding the transfer

obviously differ from case to case and may be more controversial in some cases than in others, but their legal nature is the same in all cases. This approach has never been challenged and has depended on the confidence of NSOs in the judgement of the World Committee, as the executive organ of WOSM, to take action for the good of Scouting in unusual or emergency situations.

5. In the specific case of Russia, the facts were indeed very complicated. The chaotic situation of ARNSO had been before the World Committee since 2002. The basis on which ARNSO was recognised by the World Conference was that it would be one entity consisting of three essential components in order to cater for the unique situation in Russia. As a result of ARNSO's actions and by its own admission, the main elements of two of these components left ARNSO and the third was never established. Already in 2002, it thus became apparent that ARNSO had ceased to exist as an effective NSO in the form originally recognised by WOSM, or, indeed, as an NSO in any form. This information was provided to the World Committee by the Eurasia Scout Committee and was confirmed by the World Committee and Bureau's own experience with ARNSO. In addition to being fully suspended for non-payment of fees, ARNSO had never sent the annual census form since 2000 and nothing was known about what happened in ARNSO since its recognition; the only information received were confusing accusations and counter-accusations about mismanagement and irregular financial and auditing procedures.

In April 2004, the Eurasia Regional Scout Committee urgently requested the World Committee to take action to avoid further damage to Scouting in Russia. By then, the RAS/N had emerged as a valid Scout organization operating throughout Russia and fulfilling WOSM's constitutional requirements. The leaders of RAS/N were well known to WOSM and already included several leaders who had left ARNSO.

When, in response to the urgent request of its Eurasia Regional Committee, the World Scout Committee decided the transfer of recognition in Russia in April 2004, it was not a question of the expulsion of a valid NSO for some breach of requirements and the admission of another instead; this would have required a postal vote. The decision was taken because of the void which resulted from the disintegration of ARNSO as a valid entity and the providential emergence of another entity, RAS/N, which entirely fulfilled all of WOSM's requirements, and is in the process of bringing together the disaffected elements which had left ARNSO.

6. In the circumstances, the World Scout Committee does not see the need to bring this matter to the World Scout Conference. This is not only because the facts do not justify it, but also because such a move would inevitably lead to some very unpleasant facts about ARNSO being publicly aired, which would have a damaging effect on Scouting in Russia and the image of our Movement in general. However, should the five NSOs who opposed the World Committee's decision on the transfer of Scouting in Russia still wish to put the issue before the World Scout Conference, they are free to do so.

In conclusion and whether or not the question is brought to the Conference, the WOSM Member Organization in Russia today is RAS/N.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Marie-Louise Correa
Chairman, World Scout Committee



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CIRCULAR N° 17/2004

To: International Commissioners

June 2004

Russia

Dear Colleagues,

I write to inform you that the World Scout Committee has transferred the membership of Russia within WOSM from the All-Russia National Scout Organization (ARNSO) to a new entity, the Russian Association of Scouts/Navigators (RAS/N).

Briefly stated, the facts, and the rationale for the change, are the following:

1. ARNSO, as recognized by WOSM in 2000, was never actually set up as originally designed. This was certainly partly due to the extremely complex, multicephalous nature of the ARNSO structure, which was tailor-made to the Russian State system. But it is also due to the inability of the leadership of ARNSO to meet the many challenges involved in setting up and operating the complex system.

Only a few of the constituent elements of ARNSO were ever actually established; those parts that had been set up had either disintegrated or withdrawn from ARNSO. Membership of ARNSO declined from 14,000 in 2000 to 3,400 in 2004. ARNSO did not fulfill its constitutional obligations to WOSM and was therefore suspended from WOSM membership, with full application of the sanctions, in April 2003.

2. The situation of Scouting in Russia was again raised during the meeting of the World Scout Committee in October 2003. At its meeting in April 2004, following a report from the Eurasia Regional Chairman, the Committee considered that a decision needed to be taken. Basically, there were two possible courses of action:
 - a. To maintain the full suspension of Russia up to the next World Conference in Tunisia in 2005 and recommend to the Conference that Russia be expelled.
 - b. To transfer the WOSM recognition from ARNSO to another entity. In the course of the months preceding the World Committee meeting, another entity, the Russian Association of Scouts/Navigators (RAS/N) had manifested itself. That entity was formally created on 30 January 2004. The leaders of RAS/N are well known to WOSM and were active in the process of recognition of Russia, but had subsequently distanced themselves from ARNSO for a variety of reasons.

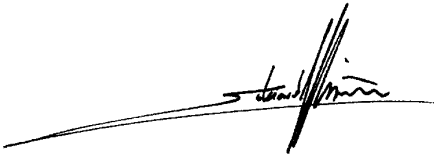
At the end of February 2004, five key leaders of RAS/N visited the World Scout Bureau at our request. My colleagues in the Bureau were very impressed by the quality of the leaders. Their analysis of the needs of young people in Russia today and their vision, strategy and plans for the growth of Scouting in Russia, which they believe should be able to attract hundreds of thousands of young people in the not too distant future, were presented with great precision and were clearly the result of an in-depth analysis. Furthermore, contrary to ARNSO, RAS/N is set up as a single organization, which should be much simpler to manage and to operate.

3. Upon the recommendation of the Eurasia Regional Chairman, supported by the Chairman of the Constitutions Committee (who was closely involved in the process), the World Scout Committee agreed to transfer the recognition from ARNSO to RAS/N, subject to approval of the new organization's constitution by the Constitutions Committee. The World Committee also agreed that a circular, explaining the facts and the rationale for the change, would be issued to all NSOs to inform them of this change once the process was complete - which it now is, effective 28 June 2004.

In conclusion, the World Committee's decision to transfer the WOSM recognition was taken in the best interests of young people in Russia. Taking this decision now avoids these young people losing out on the benefits of the Scout Movement for a number of years, which would have been the consequence of expelling ARNSO and then recognizing RAS/N at a later stage. I should add that on the occasion of a recent visit to Ukraine which I made in June, I met the leadership of RAS/N and was fully convinced of the wisdom of the World Scout Committee's decision.

We welcome RAS/N as the new WOSM Member Organization representing Russia.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eduardo Missoni', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat abstract.

Eduardo Missoni
Secretary General