

## AGENDA ITEM 3, ATTACHMENT 3:

**STRING Rules of Procedure Version 19****2<sup>nd</sup> Political Forum**

June 17th, 2025

09:45-13:00

Kiel City Hall, Fleethörn 9, 24103 Kiel, Germany

**Issue**

**For approval:** Second and final approval of the STRING Rules of Procedure version 19

**Background**

On November 24th, 2023, the Political Forum gave the mandate to the STRING Secretariat to proceed with efforts to establish STRING as an association. Since then, the Secretariat, together with the Legal Status Working Group (LSWG), comprising representatives from all four member countries, has been actively engaged in this process throughout late 2023 and the entirety of 2024. The Statutes and Rules of Procedure have undergone multiple revisions and approvals by legal experts from PwC and Poul Schmith/Kammeradvokaten, ensuring the legal quality of the documents. Moreover, the upcoming dissolution of Region Zealand as a result of the Danish Healthcare Reform has introduced uncertainty for STRING, which requires a smooth and accelerated process for a seamless transition.

**Solution**

On 4 February 2025, the Political Forum received an oral update on the progress of STRING's legal transformation—from being hosted under Region Zealand to becoming an independent, non-commercial association. At that meeting, it was agreed that members would submit written feedback, including track changes, to version 16 of the Statutes and Rules of Procedure by 1 March 2025, reflecting consolidated input from each member organisation.

Based on this input, the Secretariat prepared version 17, which was subsequently discussed at the Steering Group meeting on 11 April and again at an alignment meeting on 22 April. Following these consultations, version 18 was developed. A final legal review by Kammeradvokaten raised concerns about the proposed use of proxies, prompting further refinement. This resulted in version 19, which introduced a legally viable compromise and was circulated on 14 May 2025.

An extraordinary Political Forum was convened on 15 May 2025, during which members reached consensus and gave their first approval of version 19 of the STRING Statutes and Rules of Procedure.

**Recommendation**

The Political Forum is advised to give their second and final approval of STRING Rules of Procedure version 19.

**Procedure**

N/A

**Budget**

N/A

**Responsibility and  
Communication**

The STRING Secretariat.

## **STRING Rules of Procedure**

[Insert entry of force]

Adopted by the General Meeting.

### **§1 Governance**

STRING is governed by the General Meeting and the Political Forum, which is in charge of the overall strategic governance of STRING.

The Political Forum is chaired by a representative from one of its members on an annually rotating basis (hereafter referred to as either “the Chair” or “the Chairmanship”). On matters related to the order of the Chairmanship, reference is made to the STRING Chairmanship rotation in the STRING Statutes, § 7.

### **§2 Political Forum**

All members of STRING are represented in the Political Forum by one elected or appointed political representative per member. Each member nominates a member and one alternate representative to the Political Forum at the General Meeting. Another 1-2 political representatives from each member may participate in meetings. Each member has one vote. The Political Forum is quorate when at least 2/3 of the members are present, and all resolutions shall be adopted by consensus.

In case a member of the Political Forum is unable to attend a meeting in the Political Forum, the appointed alternate representative may exceptionally attend in their place, provided that the Chair of the Political Forum and the Managing Director are notified thereof in due time before the meeting. If neither the member nor the alternate member representative of the Political Forum is able to attend a meeting in the Political Forum, the member may either abstain or appoint another member of the Political Forum as proxy holder, provided that the Chair and the Managing Director are notified thereof in due time before the meeting.

The following principles shall apply to the operations of the Political Forum:

- The Political Forum makes decisions on the overall policies and strategies of STRING. The Political Forum also approves the overall goals of STRING.
- 3 meetings shall be held in the Political Forum every year. At least one of those meetings shall be held in the Chair’s corresponding region or city. One Political Forum meeting should, if possible, be held in conjunction with a larger event arranged by STRING. One of the Political Forum meetings will take place at the same day and the same place as the General Meeting.
- The agenda and attachments for meetings shall be forwarded to members of the Political Forum no later than 2 weeks in advance of the meeting.
- Proposals for agenda points for a given meeting in the Political Forum shall be forwarded to the Chair and the Secretariat no later than 3 weeks prior to the meeting.

- The Political Forum decides on general employment terms for the Managing Director of STRING based upon recommendations made by the Chairmanship Committee.
- Each individual member is responsible for assuring that their political and administrative organisation is continuously informed of the decisions made by the Political Forum, and that the member organisations are well prepared for the implementation of such decisions.

### **§3 The Chairmanship Committee**

The Chairmanship Committee carries a mandate from the Political Forum and has the responsibility of ensuring financial and operational oversight and transparent governance, as well as functioning as a sounding board to the Managing Director for urgent political and strategic matters. The Chairmanship Committee is the Chairing Committee of the Political Forum.

The Chairmanship Committee consists of 3 members of the Political Forum; the former Chair, the present Chair, and the future Chair. To ensure financial and operational oversight, the Chairmanship Committee may be advised by their individual members of the Steering Group when preparing meetings in the Chairmanship Committee. Notwithstanding the foregoing, members of the Steering Group shall not be regarded as members of the Chairmanship Committee.

In case a member of the Chairmanship Committee is unable to attend a meeting, the appointed alternate representative may exceptionally attend in their place, provided that the Chair of the Political Forum and the Managing Director are notified thereof in due time before the meeting. If neither the member nor the alternate member representative of the Chairmanship Committee is able to attend a meeting, the member may either abstain or appoint another member of the Chairmanship Committee as proxy holder, provided that the Chair and the Managing Director are notified thereof in due time before the meeting.

The Chair of the Political Forum automatically assumes the Chairmanship of the Chairmanship Committee. The Chairmanship Committee may be given specific mandates by the Political Forum to make decisions on behalf of the Political Forum.

The Chairmanship Committee meets 3 times a year in between the Political Forum meetings to ensure efficient operation and coordination of the Association; however, special meetings can be organised if deemed necessary by the Chair of the Chairmanship Committee or by the Managing Director. One or several meetings can be held virtually.

The following principles shall apply to the operations of the Chairmanship Committee:

- In collaboration with the Managing Director, the Chairmanship Committee identifies and proposes an external accountant to the General Meeting, to compile financial statements and ensure that the association meets its financial reporting and tax obligations.
- The Chairmanship Committee receives bi-annually budgetary updates and oversees an annual review of financial statements from the Secretariat, before presenting key findings to the General Meeting, ensuring financial transparency and integrity.

- The Chairmanship Committee shall ensure that the Association adheres to sound guidelines regarding ethical organizational practices and the judicious management of staff.
- The members of the Chairmanship Committee should maintain close contact between itself and the Managing Director, also in between meetings. The Chair of the Chairmanship Committee will serve as the main point of contact for the Managing Director and shall be available for dialogue in between meetings.
- In the event that this becomes relevant, the Political Forum shall mandate the Chairmanship Committee to conduct a recruitment process for a new Managing Director and propose recommendations for suitable candidates for a final decision to be made by the Political Forum.
- The Chairmanship Committee is mandated to negotiate and decide on remunerative matters and KPIs pertaining to the Managing Director.

#### **§4 The Steering Group**

The Steering Group represents members of STRING at a senior civil servant level, and, in collaboration with the Secretariat, suggests policies and, strategies for adoption by the Political Forum.

The Steering Group has one representative from each member. In addition to this, another Steering Group representative from each member may participate.

In the event that a Steering Group member is unable to participate in the Steering Group meeting, the right to participate may be transferred to an appointed civil servant. This must be communicated in writing beforehand to the Chair of the Steering Group and the Managing Director. Such alternate representative shall attend the meeting equipped with a full mandate to participate in the decision-making process.

The Steering Group shall conduct 3 meetings per year, which should, among other things, serve as preparation for the Political Forum meetings.

The Steering Group is chaired by the member currently holding the Chairmanship of the Chairmanship Committee of STRING.

The Steering Group is quorate when at least 2/3 of the members are present, and all resolutions shall be adopted by consensus.

The following principles shall apply to the operations of the Steering Group:

- The Steering Group shall continuously introduce and foster relevant ideas for new STRING activities and actions and shall present such ideas for discussion at Steering Group meetings.
- Each Steering Group member carries the responsibility for ensuring that this particular member contributes to STRING's work.
- The Steering Group has the mandate to propose working and expert groups as aid to the STRING Secretariat in the execution of decided tasks.
- The Steering Group members, or alternate representatives from the member organisation, shall

actively contribute to the respective working groups, and thereby contribute to STRING's overall strategic initiatives.

- The Steering Group can invite observers to participate in Steering Group meetings.

## **§5 The Contact Group**

The Contact Group and the STRING Secretariat collaborate closely, in supporting with tasks in STRING.

The Contact Group has one representative from each member of STRING.

The following principles shall apply to the operations of the Contact Group:

- The Contact Group is responsible for relaying information to the Secretariat on issues including, but not limited to, the planning of meetings, meeting content, thematic knowledge, support around the planning of events, communication and the general opinion of the represented member towards certain political stances.
- The representatives of the Contact Group are responsible for assuring that their political and administrative organisation are informed of the work conducted by Contact Group and information received from the Secretariat.

## **§6 The Managing Director and the STRING Secretariat**

The Managing Director is in charge of the day-to-day operations of STRING.

A Secretariat has been established to support the Political Forum and the Chairmanship and to work closely with the Steering Group and other working groups.

As the Association's contracting entity, the Secretariat also serves as the operational hub for the Association's employees and shall ensure compliance with any laws, regulations, and agreements applying to the Association as a non-commercial association in Denmark.

The Secretariat reports to the Managing Director who reports to the Political Forum.

Any decision regarding the overall operational conditions and location of the STRING Secretariat shall be made by the Political Forum and in accordance with the STRING Statutes § 1.

The tasks of the Managing Director and the Secretariat shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Servicing the Political Forum, the Chairmanship Committee and the Steering Group.
- Deliver on STRING's strategy and decisions made by the Political Forum in collaboration with members and other stakeholders. This is done through a variety of activities such as, dialogues and discussions, facilitating, planning and executing cross-border activities and specific projects, joint analysis, meetings, seminars in line with budget.
- Planning and handling STRING meetings such as General Meeting and meetings in the Political Forum, the Chairmanship Committee and the Steering Group. Meetings are planned in close

cooperation with the Chairmanship.

- Assisting the STRING members to coordinate and execute development projects and the development of new cooperation areas within the framework of STRING's overall strategy.
- Proposing, initiating and managing specific projects within the framework of STRING's priorities.
- Proactively promoting the STRING agenda through advocacy and communication about the STRING cooperation, its activities and political ambitions.
- Submitting, in cooperation with the Chairing Committee, a written yearly account to the General Meeting. The yearly account must show the income and expenditure for the previous year.
- Ensure sound management of finances and operations in accordance with Danish laws.
- Presenting draft accounts and draft budgets for upcoming years to the General Meeting.
- Preparing a yearly workplan for the following year, in collaboration with the Steering Group, to be presented to the Political Forum for adoption no later than at the 2nd meeting of the Political Forum. The Managing Director will give information to the Political Forum on a continuous basis on the STRING activities and results. The Managing Director is obliged to inform the Political Forum if there are substantial divergence in activities compared to the approved plans.
- The Managing Director of STRING is responsible for the management of tasks in the yearly workplan.
- The Managing Director is responsible for overseeing the organisation's human resources functions, such as recruitment of staff, performance management and working environment.
- Cooperating with central stakeholders in business life, universities, labor organisations, employers' associations and NGO's in order to represent STRING and establish cooperation, networks and projects that support the overall vision and objectives of STRING.
- Continuous dialogue and coordination with other relevant parties.
- The Secretariat's operations must reflect the ethical standards and norms held by the members as public authorities, while recognizing that STRING operate as a non-commercial association.

## **§7 Open Access**

STRING shall apply to transparency and the highest possible level of open access in its operations.

Information held in public documents may not be provided if the dissemination of the information could adversely affect:

1. The security of a member's state or its autonomous territory, or its relations with another state or autonomous territory, or with an international organization
2. The central fiscal, monetary or currency policy of a member's state
3. The inspection, control or other supervisory activities of a public authority
4. The interest of preventing or prosecuting crime
5. The economic interests of the public institutions
6. The protection of the personal or economic circumstances of private subjects
7. The preservation of animal or plant species

## **§8 Accountancy and auditing**

- Annually, following the close of the fiscal year, the external accountant shall present the audited financial statements for that year to the Managing Director and the Chairmanship Committee

certifying their accuracy. After adoption by the Chairmanship Committee the audited financial statements shall be presented to the General Meeting for approval.

- The accountancy and auditing of STRING is conducted by an external accountant who is identified by the Chairmanship Committee and the Managing Director and approved yearly by the General Meeting.

### **§9 Meeting expenses**

- STRING members are responsible for their own travel expenses in connection with meetings.
- The member hosting a meeting is responsible for covering the overall meeting expenses. The hosting of meetings should fairly and evenly rotate between the members of STRING.

In accordance with the above and for the avoidance of doubts, the Chairmanship is expected, but is not obliged to cover the costs for larger events initiated by the Chairmanship during its presidency.

### **§10 Funding**

Unless otherwise stipulated in § 8 above, the costs for running STRING including the Secretariat shall be shared equally by the members of STRING and covered by the annual STRING membership fee payable by each member (which at the time of the establishment of STRING is 74,000 EUR per year per member.)

The STRING membership fee shall be disbursed to the STRING's bank account once a year on January 1<sup>st</sup> by transfer to the account stated in the invoice.

### **§11 Entry into Force**

These Rules of Procedure shall be valid as of the date of the establishment of STRING as a non-commercial association.

### **§12 Final Provisions**

To become effective, any amendments and additions to these Rules of Procedure must be in writing and approved by the Political Forum.

In the event that any part of these Rules of Procedure should be partly or wholly invalid or should any part prove to be or become infeasible, the validity of Rules of Procedure as a whole shall not be affected. Thus, in such a case the members are obliged to adhere to the remaining clauses of the Rules of Procedure in good faith.

In case of any discrepancy between the STRING Statutes and these Rules of Procedure, the STRING Statutes shall prevail.

### **§13 Changes to the Rules of Procedure**

Proposed changes to the Rules of Procedure must be presented in writing and shall be decided by consensus by the Political Forum.

**Signed by the members of STRING:**

**For the City of Oslo:**

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**For Akerhus Fylkeskommune:**

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**For Østfold Fylkeskommune:**

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**For Västra Götalandsregionen:**

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**For the City of Gothenburg:**

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**For Region Halland:**

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**For Region Skåne:**

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**For the City of Helsingborg:**

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**For the City of Malmö:**

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**For the City of Copenhagen:**

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**For the Capital Region of Denmark:**

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**For Region Zealand:**

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**For the Region of Southern Denmark:**

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**For Schleswig-Holstein:**

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**For the City of Kiel:**

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**For the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg:**

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