

Constitutional Charter of the Free City of Pugin-Ruskin

I. Fundamental Principles, Rights & Liberties

1. The Free City of Pugin-Ruskin is a sovereign, independent State. Its form of government is a democratic commonwealth based on Christian Social values and dedicated to the principles of solidarity, social justice, sustainability and the 'common good'.
2. All citizens are equal before the law, whatever may be their title or rank; there shall be no discrimination of race or origin.
3. All citizens are all equally admissible to civil and military employments, according to their merit.
4. Personal liberty is guaranteed; no one can be prosecuted nor arrested save in the cases provided by law and in the form which it prescribes.
5. No one shall be held in detention for more than twenty-four hours without being charged and brought to trial in accordance with the law.
6. Everyone who is charged with a criminal offense, or subject to a civil suit, has the right to a prompt, fair and public trial, before an impartial court or tribunal according to the law. The right to trial by jury shall be guaranteed for all serious criminal offences.
7. All forms of torture are prohibited. The penalty of death is abolished. There shall be no cruel or unusual punishments.
8. All forms of slavery, debt-bondage, and forced labour, are absolutely forbidden.
9. All citizens shall have freedom of speech, expression, printing, and publication, subject only to such reasonable restrictions as may be imposed by law on the grounds of obscenity, defamation or incitement to violence.

10. All citizens shall have personal privacy, including privacy of their home, personal and private life, and security of letters and personal communications.

11. All citizens shall have freedom of association for all lawful purposes, as well as freedom of peaceful assembly, subject only to such reasonable restrictions on outdoor public assemblies as may be imposed by law on grounds of public order and safety.

12. There shall be universal religious toleration. Religious communities shall have freedom to order their own affairs, including the free election of their clergy and bishops, the free holding of their convocations, synods and assemblies, and the free operation of their own seminaries and religious houses, so long as they do not disturb the public peace, and provided that they respect the equal rights of those who differ from their faith.

13. All property is inviolable. The state can require the sacrifice of private property only on account of a legally established public interest, and with a previous indemnity.

14. No taxes, charges, or duties, shall be levied except by law, and no public funds shall be expended except as allocated by law. No direct taxes may be imposed for longer than one year at a time.

15. All citizens shall enjoy freedom of movement within the City. Citizens, fugitives from justice excepted, may freely leave and re-enter the City, on payment of any tolls or duties imposed by law.

16. There shall be no conscription in peacetime. During war, it may be imposed only by a two-thirds majority in both Councils.

II. The Rector

17. The Rector is the supreme Head of State. He commands the armed forces, appoints and dismisses Ministers, declares war and peace, and conducts diplomatic relations with other States.

18. The Rector, in accordance with the law and with the advice and consent of his Ministers, possesses executive power, appoints to all places of public administration, and makes the necessary regulations and ordinances for the administration of the laws.

19. The Rector shall be elected by the General Assembly, consisting of all members of the Common Council and the Council of Aldermen. Whenever the office of Rector is vacant, the General Assembly shall immediately meet, with the President of the Council of Aldermen presiding, to conduct the election of a new Rector. The General Assembly shall not proceed to the election unless at least two-thirds of its members are present.

20. Any citizen who is serving or has served as an Alderman or Common Councillor and has been nominated by at least twelve members of the General Assembly may be elected as the Rector.

21. To be elected as the Rector, it is necessary to receive an absolute majority of votes cast in the General Assembly. If no candidate receives an absolute majority then the candidate who receives the least votes shall be eliminated and another round of voting shall take place. If there are only two candidates, the one who receives the greater number of votes shall be elected. All rounds of voting shall take place by means of a secret ballot.

22. The Rector, on assuming office, shall take an oath, in the presence of the General Assembly, to discharge his duties with diligence and integrity, for the common good of the Free City, and to protect, uphold and obey this Constitutional Charter.

23. The Rector takes the honorific title of "Excellency". His person is sacred and inviolable. He shall reside in the public palace, and he shall receive a civil list from the treasury, as determined by law, to provide for his official expenses.

24. The Rector serves for life, unless he chooses to resign, or else is removed from office, on grounds of gross misconduct, neglect of duty, or incapacity, by means of a vote of censure passed by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly.

III. The Legislative Councils

25. Legislative power is exercised collectively by the Rector and two Councils: the ‘Council of Aldermen’ and Common Council’.

26. The two Councils shall meet, deliberate and vote separately, as two distinct bodies, except when they are lawfully summoned together as a General Assembly in accordance with this Charter.

(a) The Common Council

27. The forty-eight members of the Common Council shall be freely elected, by secret ballot, by the citizens of Pugin-Ruskin who at least twenty-one years old and rate-paying householders.

28. Common Councillors shall be elected from single-member Wards, by a majority vote, with a run-off between the two leading candidates in the Ward if no candidate wins an overall majority.

29. Each Ward shall, as nearly as practicable, contain an equal number of registered electors, and the boundaries of the Wards shall be amended from time to time by law to ensure an equitable representation of the whole City.

30. To be elected as a Common Councillor it is necessary to be a rate-paying citizen of the Free City, at least twenty-one years of age, literate, and a resident for at least six months of the Ward by which elected. Provided, no person holding executive, judicial, military or diplomatic office under the Rector (other than a Ministerial office) may be elected as a Common Councillor.

31. Subject to Articles 32 and 33, the Common Council shall be elected for renewable terms of three years. A general election of all Common Councillors shall take place on the Glorious Twenty-Fifth of May of every third year. In the event of a vacancy arising from the death, resignation or expulsion of any Common Council member, the Speaker of the Common Council shall within thirty days issue writs for a by-election to be held in the relevant Ward.

32. The Common Council may, by an absolute majority vote, dissolve itself before the end of its term of office. A general election shall be held within sixty days of any such dissolution, and the Common Council thereby elected shall, subject to this Article, remain in office until the next triennial general election.

33. The Common Council may also, in time of war or other grave public emergency, by a two-thirds majority vote, delay a general election for up to one year. No further delay shall be permitted.

(b) The Council of Aldermen

34. The Council of Aldermen shall consist of twenty-four members: twelve elected and twelve co-opted members.

35. The elected members shall be chosen for renewable six-year terms by merchant, craft and artisan guilds, trade unions, and professional associations, in the manner prescribed by law.

36. The co-opted members shall be chosen by the incumbent members of the Council of Aldermen from amongst citizens of Pugin-Ruskin, being at least forty years of age, who have served with merit and distinction in high executive, judicial, military or diplomatic office, or have notably contributed to the religious, civic, cultural and scientific life of the city, and whose wisdom and counsel are deemed beneficial to the public. The co-opted members shall serve for life, or until their voluntary retirement, unless removed by a two-thirds majority of the Aldermen on the grounds of incapacity, neglect of duty, or gross misconduct.

(c) Passage and Enactment of Laws

37. Laws may be proposed by the Rector or by members of the Common Council or the Council of Aldermen, acting either on their own initiative or in response to a petition; provided, that laws concerning finances and taxes may only be proposed by a Minister, and must first be introduced in the Common Council.

38. Every proposed law shall be freely discussed by the Common Council and Council of Alderman, and shall be enacted only if approved by a majority vote of the members of both Councils.

39. If a proposed law is passed by one of the legislative Councils but is rejected by the other, or if the two Councils cannot agree on amendments to a proposed law, then the Rector may call a meeting of the General Assembly, consisting of the members of both Councils sitting jointly. The General Assembly shall debate the proposal: if it is then passed, with or without amendment, by a majority of those present and voting in the General Assembly, the bill shall be deemed to have been passed by both Councils.

40. The Rector must sanction and promulgate all laws passed by the Councils according to Arts. 38 or 39 within ninety days of their passage. Provided, that if the Rector deems any such bill to be contrary to this Charter, or harmful to the good of the City, he may at his sole discretion withhold assent; the law shall then be returned to the legislative Councils further consideration. If the same law is then re-approved by both Councils, with or without amendment, by a two-thirds majority of the members of each Council, the Rector may not withhold assent a second time.

(d) Provisions Common to Both Councils

41. No person may simultaneously hold office as a member of both the Common Council and the Council of Aldermen.

42. The Common Council shall freely elect its Speaker, and the Council of Aldermen its President; these officers shall be elected by secret ballot from among members of the respective Councils.

43. Each of the Councils shall adopt its own internal regulations and shall determine its own sessions, adjournments and order of business; provided, however, that: (i) each of the Councils must hold an ordinary session at least once a year; and (ii) the Rector may summon either Council, or both, into an extraordinary session for the consideration of urgent business at any time.

44. Ordinary sessions of the Councils shall commence with an address from the Rector, during which he may announce the policies and priorities of the Ministers and may recommend to the two Councils such legislative bills as he deems necessary.

45. The sittings of the two Councils are public; but either Council may, by a two-thirds majority, resolve itself into a closed session for the discussion of matters of military or diplomatic secrecy.

46. The two Councils may appoint committees from amongst their members, with the authority to prepare business, conduct investigations into matters of policy or administration, and public hearings, and scrutinise the Ministers and other public officials.

47. The members of the two Councils shall enjoy freedom of speech and of voting, and shall be immune from all suit or prosecution arising from speeches made or votes cast in the Councils or committees. No bodily constraint can be exercised against a member of either Council. No Common Councillor or Alderman can be prosecuted or arrested on a criminal charge, except with the consent of the Council to which they belong. No member shall be expelled from either Council, except by a two-thirds majority vote of the Council on grounds of misconduct.

V. The Ministers

48. The Ministers shall be responsible for the management and direction of the administrative departments according to law. No act of the Rector (except for those appointing and dismissing Ministers, promulgating or withholding assent to legislative acts, or granting pardons) shall be valid unless it is countersigned by a Minister, who thereby assumes legal responsibility for the same.

49. No-one may be appointed as a Minister, nor retain office as a Minister, unless he or she is a Common Councillor or Alderman.

50. The Ministers, under the direction of a Prime Minister chosen by the Rector, shall constitute a 'Ministerial Cabinet', to co-ordinate their activities and to advise the Rector as required.

51. The Ministers are responsible to the Councils for their official acts and personal conduct. Ministers may be impeached by the Common Council on grounds of treason, bribery, negligence, or other high crimes and misdemeanours as prescribed by law. The Council of Aldermen shall try impeachments. A former Minister who has been impeached may not be pardoned, nor appointed to any public office, except with the consent the Common Council.

VI. Judiciary

52. Justice shall be administered in the name of the City of Pugin Ruskin by the Supreme Court and by other inferior courts and tribunals, the organization of which shall be prescribed by law.

53. The judges of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the Rector from a triple list of nominees proposed by the Common Council. All other judges shall be appointed by the Rector from a triple list of nominees proposed by the Supreme Court.

54. All judges must be citizens, at least thirty years old, of good character, and learned in the laws. Judicial office is incompatible with all other public offices. Judicial salaries shall be specified by law, but shall not be reduced during their continuance in office.

55. Judges serve for life, or until retirement at the age of seventy. They may not be removed, except by a resolution of the Common Council, passed by a two-thirds majority, on the proposal of an investigatory panel appointed by either Council, on grounds of incapacity, gross misconduct, negligence, or other due cause.

56. The Supreme Court shall have jurisdiction over all cases concerning the validity of any law or treaty under the terms of this Charter or concerning the interpretation of this Charter. It shall also have final appellate jurisdiction over all cases, civil and criminal, concerning a point of law of general public interest.

57. The Rector has the prerogative of mercy, including the right to pardon offenders, to commute penalties and to grant parole.

VIII. Social, Economic and Miscellaneous Provisions

58. Economic activities and the distribution of resources may be limited and regulated by law in order to prevent the exploitation of people and to promote social justice and the common good, so that citizens may enjoy a dignified life in an ethical community.

59. The Free City shall promote personal ownership of the means of production, distribution, finance and exchange, through self-employment, partnerships, mutual societies and co-operatives.

60. Public or corporate ownership of the means of production, distribution, finance and exchange shall also be recognized by law, in as far as is expedient for the common good.

61. The Free City shall regulate banking and finance in the interests of justice and solidarity, and shall suppress usury.

62. Public utilities and essential services, including water supply, sewage and power generation, shall be kept in public hands and run on a non-profit basis for the people.

63. It shall be incumbent upon all the legislative Councils and all other public authorities to give practical effect, by appropriate legislative or administrative action, to the following rights:

(i) The right to an appropriate and worthwhile economic occupation, and to a living wage sufficient to maintain dignity of life.

(ii) The right to join a trade union, guild or professional association, and to participate in workplace decisions.

(iii) The right safe, healthy and humane working conditions.

(iv) The right to adequate opportunities for rest, leisure, and family and civic life, including a maximum working week of forty-eight hours.

(v) The right to decent housing and to a secure and comfortable home.

(vi) The right to universal public healthcare.

(vii) The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment, by means of a universal public social insurance system.

64. The Free City shall protect and honour the family and the institution of marriage as the foundations of society. Family members have a right to mutual care, counsel, assistance and protection, and a duty to provide these.

65. The Free City recognises its duty of stewardship for future generations; it shall promote the beautification of public spaces and shall protect the natural environment from exploitation, depletion of resources, pollution and other forms of damage.

66. Subject to the law, chartered merchant, craft and artisan guilds, and professional associations, shall have the authority to regulate their respective crafts, trades, arts or professions, may supervise the training of apprentices and the accreditation of journeymen, and provide for the well-being of their members and of the whole city. They shall enjoy the freedom to conduct their own internal affairs, to elect their own office-bearers, and to maintain their common funds and guild houses. Guild charters shall be granted or revoked only by a resolution of both Councils.

67. An educated and virtuous citizenry being necessary for our happiness and prosperity, and for the preservation of liberty, the Free City shall be responsible for ensuring free universal public education, extending from pre-school to university-level tuition.

68. There shall be no standing army in time of peace. The defence of the Free City shall be vested in a Citizens' Militia, which shall consist of the able-bodied citizens trained and summoned to arms in the manner determined by a law.

69. The Rector may grant civic honours, in accordance with the law, in recognition of public service. Such honours shall not be hereditary; they shall not confer any special privileges, nor grant any exemption from the burdens and duties of fellow-citizens.

70. Provision may be made by law for the direct consultation of the people on a matter of law or policy proposed by one or both legislative Councils, in the form of a public referendum. Such referendums shall, unless otherwise stated by law, be advisory.

IX. Boards of Wardens

71. For the purposes of local administration, each Ward shall have a Board of Wardens, the four members of which shall be biennially elected at-large by the rate-paying householders of the Ward, in the manner prescribed by law. The Common Councillor representing the Ward shall be ex-officio President of the Board.

72. The Boards of Wardens shall have such powers and duties, relating to local or municipal affairs, as are vested in them by law.

X. Enactment and Amendment of Charter

73. This Constitutional Charter is the supreme and fundamental law of the Free City. Any other law, treaty, or other instrument, which is incompatible with this Charter, shall be null and void.

74. All existing laws, which are not in conflict with the present Constitutional Charter, remain in force until legally abrogated.

75. Amendments or additions to this Charter may be proposed only by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority vote in both Councils. Following a general election to the Common Council, the proposed amendment shall then be submitted to a special meeting of the General Assembly: if the proposal is approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of the General Assembly, the Rector shall promulgate the amendment to the Charter.