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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elements of ARNSO were ever actually established; those parts that had been set up had either disintegrated or withdrawn from ARNSO.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.

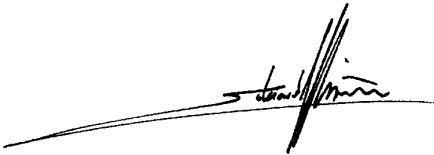
At the end of February 2004, five key leaders of RAS/N visited the World Scout Bureau at our request. My colleagues in the Bureau were very impressed by the quality of the leaders. Their analysis of the needs of young people in Russia today and their vision, strategy and plans for the growth of Scouting 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