



State of Sandus  
Office of the Sôgmô  
Atlanta, GA, USA

Salvete dear colleagues, friends, partners, allies, comrade micronationalists,

In 2012, at the PoliNations conference in London, I presented on the nascent philosophy of my country, Sandus. I explained how Sandus was developing in that time a national philosophy based on the concepts of Buddhism and Socialism. In Sandus, we believe [rather humbly] that all people suffer, just as we do, and that our country, the State of Sandus, has the means—both in terms of our own education and good old self-help—to overcome suffering in a systematic way for the benefit of ourselves and others. This presentation was, for us, a formative part in the creation of Sandus’s identity and, over the years, our philosophy and our political theories in Sandus have become more comprehensive to our situation as a small micronation with an intellectual focus.

Today, I wish to speak on a similarly formative topic which we have started tackling in Sandus: the matter of our constitution. This is not a new problem, however, but our country is forming new perspectives in line with the social and political focus of the 2016 *Philia* Plan for the Major Societal Shift, which seeks to mediate many of our citizens’ transitions as they pursue even higher forms of education. Our philosophy believes, as I said just now, in the role both of the individual and of our country in overcoming suffering, but this comes with the belief that good government is key to overcoming social problems. Which form of government is the best is not our concern; each person and each country comes up with their own solution. But our solution in Sandus is unique and we have meditated many years on its historical and theoretical formation.

Our constitution in Sandus is educated by our understanding of ancient history and classical literature, such as Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Politics*, and Polybius's Book 6. Since this talk is not for classicists but is rather more micropatriological in nature, I won't belabour the point. Suffice to say, the political trend in the classical world was to prefer mixed or republican constitutions over the other three forms of government: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. These three forms, Greek political theorists thought, were likely to devolve behaviourally and morally from good to bad forms, such as from monarchy to tyranny, aristocracy to oligarchy, and from democracy to ochlocracy ("mob-rule"). The Greek historian Polybius thought that this cycle, or "*anakyklosis*," could only be **delayed** in its progressive devolution with the help of a mixed, or republican, constitution. Polybius considered the Roman Republic to be the best constitution of his time in the second century BCE at delaying this natural downfall of political regimes, because the Romans combined all three of those forms of political power and used only the *best* of those forms: namely monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy—not tyranny, oligarchy, or mob-rule. There is, of course, much more to this topic, and I would appreciate your questions later <if you're interested.>

This vision of a constitution was the basis upon which eighteenth century thinkers formulated their own constitutions. In the United States, for example, constitutional writers were not so much concerned with the division of political power based on its source, but rather with the division of the *function* of political power. Rather than having monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic powers, they split up political power *as a whole* into three different functions: we know them as the executive, legislative, and judicial powers. Many countries, though not all, have tended to follow this constitutional separation of powers based on the *function* of political power.

<But this is all ancient history, surely,> you might say. Absolutely not! Sandus now considers itself to be a "classical" republic, not just because we have these three forms of political

power derived from a monarch, from the “most active people” in the Citizens’ Party of Sandus, and from the whole people in the Council, but even more we think of ourselves as a “classical” republic because the State of Sandus has evolved over the past six years to develop a republican constitution. We have faced our own Polybian “*anakyklosis*” and have swung wildly back and forth from monarchy to democracy to monarchy to a communist one-party aristocracy to a monarchy, before we became a colony of a foreign micronation. Before February 2011, when Sandus became independent again, Sandus had had **six** different forms of government in less than two years. Since April 2011, when the Founding Law of the State of Sandus was ratified, **we have had only one.**

This change began, in many ways, because our provisional government took its time and was serious about its mission. In March 2011, it proposed that a socialist parliamentary republic should be established in Sandus, but the proposal failed when it was sent to a national referendum. The majority of Sandum citizens, it turned out, wanted a monarchy and, a month later, the Founding Law of the State of Sandus was ratified. This Founding Law gave the basis for Sandus’s current unwritten constitution. All power, it said, was “to the Sôgmô.” But it also gave citizens significant political, social, cultural, and even economic rights, and it laid down the basis of Sandus’s socialist economy, its foreign relations, and the very notion of Sandum society as a social alliance between workers, farmers, and intellectuals, wholly integrated as one.

Then a watershed moment came in September 2011, when the absolute monarchy was replaced voluntarily with an elected monarchy. I passed a law whereby Sandus would have annual referenda held on the Winter Solstice to determine whether or not my government was legitimate. If it were not, I would have to make new constitutional restrictions on the exercise of my powers; even though no elections has ever yet handed me a single “illegitimate” vote, Sandus has still developed a constitution which has stripped away the “absolutist” powers of that first form of our constitution.

In November, the then-Citizens' Communist Party of Sandus held the first congress in its history and voted unanimously to become an official organ in the state structure of Sandus as a cooperative. This "enfranchisement" turned the Party into a sort-of national parliament and into an advocacy group for Sandum workers and our socialist constitution.

It was in 2012, around the time we were formulating our national philosophy, that we came up with a far-flung long-term goal: that Sandus should one day become a republic. At the time, we already were thinking of how Sandus should be structured theoretically. We already understood that our constitution had three separate branches—the Central People's Government under the Sôgmô, the Party, and the Sandum socialist economy under cooperatives. We knew that we would develop a system of ministries in the future, as we have started to do, and that we would have provinces in the future, where we now have three. But we did not expect that Sandus would face such an uphill battle. In 2013, we lost two-thirds of our active population and worked diligently but slowly to develop a system of *socii* states, where their citizens could become associated citizens of Sandus since we have a ban on dual micronational citizenship. Starting in 2014, we were increasingly embattled diplomatically, confronted by political opponents and adversaries. In late July 2014, the State of Sandus ratified the infamous Denton Protocol—bringing us to the brink of the diplomatic abyss.

But we quickly routed the opposing forces against us. It was in November 2014, at another Party Congress, that the Party changed its name to the Citizens' Party of Sandus and removed all references to communism. The Party decided to add new economic organs with new economic powers, such as the Commission for the Command Economy, which was formed later in the next year and has just recently met for the very first time. For many, it is surprising to think that these reforms and developments are "constitutional" at all, but indeed they've changed Sandus's

constitution and our composition profoundly. But the watershed moment for Sandus's republican movement came at the end of 2014.

The Party, now rebranded, voted unanimously in affirmation of the proposal to establish a direct democratic assembly in Sandus. On 21 December 2014, the State of Sandus **unanimously voted to establish the Council** in a national referendum. From that moment on, our constitution had accomplished its goal. Some three years after we set out on the course of developing our constitution, we had reached our goal of establishing a *real, working* republic. We have a monarchy under the Sôgmô, and a meritocracy under the Party, and we have a democracy under the Council. All three of these work together and in tandem, providing necessary checks on the others to develop our public policy to its greatest and fullest extent. And, that is, we have accomplished the political aspiration of Sandum Philosophy: we have established good government in Sandus, unlike many others, and, in turn, we hope to establish good policy in our mission to vanquish human suffering.

But the development of our constitution did not stop there, and it won't. In 2015, we established the Commission for the Command Economy, as I said, and we accomplished our long-term economic goal. In 2016, we worked diligently with our social partners in Kumano and Überstadt to form a new association, independent of Sandus, so that Sandum nationals could represent their interests independent of our social citizens and to equalise the diplomatic playing field between our three countries. In April of this year, we hired our first salaried worker, significantly reforming the economic system of Sandus, and we established a restricted system of nobility under the Sôgmô as *fons honorum*.

And we won't end there. My move to the peninsula of Michigan to attend a doctorate program in ancient history will further change our government and the very way in which we conceive of our constitution. But I am not alone. More than 90% of Sandum citizens are college

educated, and many of those are still yet pursuing higher degrees or are seeking personal professional development. Sandus's development is restrained by our time commitments, but we have developed thus far with similar amounts of time. We are achieving what many micronations at our age are unable to do: longevity and activity, but in large part because Sandus's national culture is intellectual and focused on education—we are about personal development, more so than we are about constitutional development (hah!). Already, we are battling the issue of future activity, and I am sure we will tackle it well—but we are also considering future ministries and even a future possible judicial system based on the present framework of our government.

We are certainly not alone in having good government or even in our goal in establishing good government in our micronation. But we are perhaps one of the very few to take this goal so seriously. To meet such future goals of good government and good public policy, we have joined a large intermicronational community of others like us, such as you all, and these especially include French-speaking micronations, et nous sommes heureux d'avoir rencontré nos amis francophones aux deux côtés de l'Atlantique. En Sandus, nous avons construit notre culture nationale ; nous avons trois langues officielles, plus de deux cents fêtes, beaucoup de traditions, des traits culturels variés, et plusieurs moments de culture. In Sande, cogito nos habere constitutionem spiritumque quae non corrumpi debent, et in philosophia nostra memoramus memorabimurque nos moriendi patiendi esse. In conclusion, it is perhaps with some pride that I consider Sandus a model of good government, but this needn't be the case. Our history is evidence of such good government—and I do not mean *my* good government, but ours. In a republic, moderation and compromise is key to survival and to the proper functioning of government. And, with the current state of the world around us, perhaps we all need to learn to show some moderation so that we can ensure our good government and so that we can continue our work in making the world a better place.