



State of Sandus

Office of the Sôgmô

Appartement du Sôgmô, Quercus Candida

Comrade Citizens,

Today, 13 April 2021, the Day of Foundation, marks the tenth anniversary of the day when our present constitution, the State of Sandus, was founded. Over the years, our constitution has evolved and matured into a complex and mixed political system, and this day commemorates this significant and joyous occasion in the life and history of our republic. For this day, let this dark year that we have all experienced be set aside with jubilation at this important occasion in the time of our lives. I wish to spend the next few moments reflecting on the joy I feel about our constitution, as uniquely Sandum as it is, since—though today marks the tenth anniversary of my reign—the occasion of my jubilee has been set for two months from now.

As you know, this constitution was not always meant to be, and it is—like all the things we have accomplished in our country—the product of years of labour, thorough deliberation, and the wide coöperation of all our citizens. As we like to say in our country, it was “built by our hands and minds.” For the month after our country’s secession from the St.Charlian Commonwealth, the political sphere of influence of the Federal Republic of St.Charlie whose colony we once briefly were, the provisional Sandum government under the State Caucus had drafted a long and thorough constitution that would have transformed Sandus into a socialist presidential parliamentary republic. As you know, this draft was rejected by the Sandum people at large (much to my surprise!): the draft sought a more complex form of government than we could have sustained, thus our first baby steps in Sandum *Realism* were the result of democracy.

The solution that most citizens preferred, as ironic as it may seem, was to establish a socialist monarchy in our country with enshrined rights and parameters for the political life of our state. This founding law would be a pared down version of the constitutional draft, one that summarised a socialist economic and social system as well as a leftist foreign policy, but this time with a monarchy. This would not be the last of constitutional apparatûs that, on their face, appeared to be contradictions but that, in practice and more thorough examination representative of our country, were not.

The Founding Law of the State of Sandus, a law ratified by the people, made me your Sôgmô, and since 2011 you, the Sovereign People, have elected me each year to serve you. I am honoured to have been able to perform the duty of my life as your Sôgmô without fail and with the keen and sage advice of the Sandum People—and especially that of my many advisors over the years.

From an early monarchy to the Party's enfranchisement in December 2011 and to the Council's promulgation in January 2015, the State of Sandus over our last decade has matured into a neoclassical republic with three branches of government—the monarchy, the Party, and the democratic Council—and a constitution more mixed than most. So, today, we can talk about the role of coöperatives as an “economic branch,” the planned and hoped for judiciary (a fifth branch), and other political reforms to our constitution (such as provincial reform) that would make the State of Sandus even more of a mixed constitution. All of these have, quite naturally, a role to play in the longevity and stability of our micronation. As Aristotle, Polybius, and Cicero have taught, this mixed constitution, so new and fresh, has taken from the best forms of government and made them better and more stable in the constitution of the State of Sandus. The key of our constitution's principles are, after all, flexibility, deference, and respectful accountability—allowing us to remain a nimble yet dedicated polity.

Our present efforts with regard to the Council remain in this laudable tradition of crafting our own proper, idiosyncratic constitution. For more than six years now, the Council has existed as the direct democratic assembly open to all our fellow citizens and, in those six years, the Council has drafted new laws that have changed our government and, indeed, our constitution. The Council has ratified laws that govern the procedure of my succession as Sôgmô, making a wholly democratic process to elect my heir, and also that governs the process by which we naturalise new citizens. To the Council belongs the achievement of citizens' affirmations and, with them, the inherent obligation of citizens to uphold the Sandum Philosophy—affirming that the present shade of fascism will not touch our micronation. It is also because of the Council that I was inspired to pass new decrees governing newly charged functionaries in our government and creating our own system of nobility, a merited task left open to me because of the development of democracy in our country.

Yet today we have somewhat outgrown the method by which we the Sovereign People govern the Council. In recent months, we have begun the process of reforming the Council, changing its leadership position from facilitator to speaker, and setting a new date for the speaker's election—the Spring Equinox. While much remains to be determined, the determination of the Sandum People is to see the Council run more professionally with clearer rules and set procedure. These changes will push us further down the road to our aim of establishing a dedicated micronation that reflects our own serious aims, goals, and intentions: at the very least, we can establish new procedure to better regulate the passage of laws in the State of Sandus, a constitutional development that will set the precedent for other branches to set their own

procedures and create a more thoroughly thought-out process for enacting policy. After all, while the Council passes only one form of law in the State of Sandus, that is, statutory acts and resolutions, the other branches—the Sôgmô and their decrees, the Party and its plans—look to one another in common deference to how they operate. This work remains for Speaker Baca to prepare, and it is a hefty labour indeed.

Similarly, the Party has also decided to set a new course this year with plans to restart talks surrounding the Common Economy, coöperative reform, and also to draft a new constitution that will see Party members taking a larger role to play in Sandum government and civil society generally. The Party has the opportunity to attract active and dedicated citizens to the ranks of its membership, to encourage members' and all citizens' activity, and to continue its laudable history of planning and policy in our socialist republic.

In other areas, such as in the strengthening of public administration in Sandus, we continue to see improvement. It remains my goal for this year that various ministries and new functionaries in the Central People's Government draft reports on possible areas of growth, that we discuss provincial reform, and that we plan a court system, and the summer will offer an apt opportunity to make these developments. All these mean that our constitution, as nimble as it has been thanks to the boon of our constitution's and our system of government's flexibility, will continue to develop in new and exciting ways for the decade to come. Ten years is an exciting occasion to reflect on our tenacity as a micronation, and—although many micronations younger than us are moribund—Sandus remains refreshed and renewed thanks to the vigour of its citizens.

Finally, this holiday gives a good moment of pause to consider what must happen and what must guide us in the years to come. Rather than thinking of ideas (since we already have many of those), we ought to focus on principles. We are, in many ways, a country of mutual aid. A small country like ours, with its lofty hopes, can realistically aspire to create mutual aid for citizens here at home and abroad, and in many ways we have done just that. We are a country of sociality, of finding friendship and community in things bigger than ourselves. Going forward, the principle that I am drawn to for our future is maximising these: sociality, friendship, community, but also—and especially—mutual aid. We ought to imagine what mutual aid we can do for one another. For many of us that is very direct, very personable, and very physical. For others, divided by geography and oceans, it is this sense of belonging that is our mutual aid. In the future, mutual aid should be one of the fundamental principles of our republic, much like the flexibility, deference, and respectful accountability I noted before. If the previous decade was our country finding and planting its roots, let us make this new decade one where those roots find a firm and stable trunk so that our State of Sandus may bear fruit now and for the rest of our lives.

the Honourable Sôgmô Gaius Soergel Publicola
State of Sandus