



*The*

*Federation of Evangelical  
Lutheran Churches in  
Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein regards itself as a Lutheran church,  
based on the mission entrusted to it by its member churches.*

*The Federation recognises the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the  
sole source and guideline for its teachings, its life and its service. It regards the three  
ecumenical creeds and the confessions of the Lutheran Church, especially the  
unaltered Augsburg Confession and Martin Luther's Small Catechism, as true  
testimonies to the Word of God.*

*Through the Leuenberg Agreement among Protestant Churches in Europe, the  
Federation is in communion with all churches that have signed this Agreement.*

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## **Statutes 2016 edition**

Accepted by the General Assembly  
in Bern on 12 March 2016

*In the text below, the male form is used for both genders to improve readability.*

### **Art. 1        Name, registered office**

An association in terms of Art. 60 and following of the ZGB (Swiss Civil Code), with its registered office in Zurich, shall be formed under the name of the Federation of Lutheran Churches in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein (hereinafter: "**BELK**" or "**Federation**") – Bund Evangelisch-Lutherischer Kirchen in der Schweiz und im Fürstentum Liechtenstein, Fédération d'Eglises Luthériennes en Suisse et dans la Principauté de Liechtenstein.

### **Art. 2        Association**

2.1 The BELK shall consist of the following churches (hereinafter referred to as the **Member Churches**):

- (1) The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Basel and North-West Switzerland
- (2) The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bern
- (3) The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva
- (4) The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Zurich, North-East and Central Switzerland
- (5) The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

2.2 Membership of the BELK shall be open to all Lutheran churches registered in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein that recognise these Statutes, the Bylaws, the Regulations of the Mediation Panel and the other regulations, as well as any currently valid resolutions. The General Assembly shall decide on the incorporation of new member churches with a two thirds majority of the votes present (Art. 6.5).

2.3 Other Lutheran churches or other Lutheran associations interested in cooperation with the BELK that are active in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein and do not wish to become ordinary members may be given guest status in an advisory capacity by resolution of the Executive Committee. The mutual rights and obligations shall be the subject of a written agreement between the guest member and the BELK on commencement of such cooperation. To be deemed valid, this agreement shall be approved by the General Assembly with a simple majority of votes present (Art. 6.5). In as far as the nature and content of the relevant agenda does not exclude this (e.g. confidentiality reasons), guest members may be represented at the General Assembly and on the Executive Committee, without voting rights, but with appropriate speaking rights.

2.4 The Martin Luther Federation in Switzerland and in the Principality of Liechtenstein is the diaspora and relief organisation of the BELK.

### **Art. 3        Purpose**

The key tasks of the BELK particularly include the following:

- a) strengthening the association between the member churches by contemplating spiritual matters and promoting theological work as well as by planning and carrying out activities of mutual interest and furthering the communion of all parishioners of member churches;

b) externally representing the member churches in terms of Art. 4.3, especially by appointing joint representatives to represent the BELK and to act on behalf of the BELK on ecumenical committees;

c) the appointment of members of a Mediation Panel in situations of conflict in accordance with Art. 10;

d) the performance of visitations, the compilation of Regulations for Readers and Deacons and the organisation of the Pastors' Council in accordance with Art. 8.

e) Further tasks may be assigned by the General Assembly.

#### **Art. 4      *Relationship between the BELK and its member churches***

4.1 Each member church shall retain its full decision-making powers about matters in its own interests, in as far as it has not agreed explicitly to transfer its decision-making authority to the BELK.

4.2 Each member church shall be associated with the other member churches as fellow members of the BELK and is encouraged to pursue the joint goals of the Federation.

4.3 The Federation shall represent Lutherans resident in Switzerland and Liechtenstein who belong to the Federation via their church or parish in their dealings with national and international organisations and ecclesiastical organisations and in all matters related to Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

#### **Art. 5      *Organisation***

The bodies of the BELK are

- the General Assembly (the assembly of delegates of the member churches),
- the Executive Committee,
- the Pastors' Council,
- the Auditors

and, as a non-permanent body

- the Mediation Panel.

#### **Art. 6      *General Assembly***

6.1 The General Assembly forms the most senior body of the Federation.

6.2 Each member church will generally be represented by three delegates, up to a maximum of six delegates. One of the three delegates of each member church shall be its pastor.

6.3 The Chairperson of the Martin Luther Federation, or a representative appointed by him, shall be a non-voting delegate of the General Assembly with a right to speak.

6.4 Guest members shall appoint one non-voting delegate with the right to speak on non-confidential agenda items (see Art. 2.3).

6.5 Meeting frequency:

The General Assembly shall meet at least once a year, as well as whenever this is requested by a member church or by the Executive Committee.

6.6 Powers:

The General Assembly shall be particularly responsible for:

- the election of vote counters;
- approving the minutes of the last meeting;
- receiving the annual report of the Executive Committee, the Pastors' Council and the Martin Luther Federation;
- receiving the annual income and expenditure statement (balance sheet) and the auditors' report;
- reviewing and approving the financial reports provided by the Executive Committee and the Treasurer;
- approving the budget for the current year;
- defining the factor F for the member contributions (see Art.11.1);
- election of the Executive Committee;
- election of up to two auditors for a period of two years;
- receiving proposals and formulating the respective resolutions;
- incorporation of new members;
- approval of agreements regarding cooperation with guest members (Art. 2.3);
- approval of the Bylaws, the Regulations of the Mediation Panel, the Regulations for Visitations and the Regulations for Deacons and Readers (Art. 7.3 and Art. 12.2);
- amendment of the Statutes subject to a two thirds majority of the votes present;
- selecting the place and date of the next General Assembly;
- determining the period for appeals against the binding nature of the resolutions for member churches within the framework of the Bylaws.

## **Art. 7        *Executive Committee***

7.1 Composition:

a) The Executive Committee shall be comprised of up to 12 members from the member churches, elected by a simple majority in the General Assembly, and the chairman of the Pastors' Council.

b) Each member church shall have the right to appropriate representation on the Executive Committee by at least one candidate.

c) The President, Vice-President and Chairperson of the Pastors' Council shall comprise the minimum composition of the Executive Committee. Among the remaining members, there should be an equal number of clergy and lay members. In the event of a tie of votes, the President shall have a casting vote.

d) The Presidency, President and Vice-President should be comprised of one lay person and one clergy.

7.2 Powers:

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for:

- contact with other churches and ecumenical partners;
- visitations of the member churches of the Federation;
- involvement in the installation and departure of the pastors of the member churches;
- external representation of the Federation;
- acceptance of proposals to the General Assembly;
- compilation of the agenda for the General Assembly within the framework of the statutory and legal specifications (Art. 6.5);
- compilation of the budget of the Federation and supervision of its adherence; the budget approved by the General Assembly may be exceeded by at most 10%;
- the appointment and management of the persons employed within the budget;
- the appointment of committees and the use of consultants.

7.3 Furthermore, the Executive Committee shall constitute itself. It shall also be responsible for the appointment of committees within the framework of the Statutes, as well as the use of consultants to contribute to meetings of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall draw up Bylaws for the regulation of details, which shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval.

## **Art. 8        *Pastors' Council***

### 8.1 Composition:

The Pastors' Council shall be comprised of the pastors officiating in the member churches. Pastors from other Lutheran parishes may be invited as guests.

### 8.2 Meeting frequency:

The Pastors' Council shall meet at least twice a year.

### 8.3 Powers:

The Pastors' Council is the advisory body of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee. It is responsible for the theological work of the BELK and undertakes all inter-church activities within the BELK.

8.4 The Pastors' Council shall constitute itself and define its own regulations. These shall be submitted to the Executive Committee.

## **Art. 9        *Auditing***

Up to two Auditors shall be elected by the General Assembly for a period of two years. They may be re-elected.

The Auditors shall supervise due adherence to financial accounting procedures.

## **Art.10       *Mediation Panel***

In the event of a conflict or serious difference of opinion within a congregation (e.g. between the church council and the pastor), the Mediation Panel may be called upon by this member church, unless such a conflict can be internally resolved within an appropriate period. The latest version of the BELK Regulations for the Mediation Panel shall apply.

## **Art.11      *Financial matters***

11.1 The financial resources of the Federation (association funds) shall be derived from contributions made by the member churches and guest members. The annual contributions of the member churches shall be calculated on the basis of a factor F, multiplied by the total number of parishioners of a member church. The factor F is to be determined by the General Assembly. The annual contributions of the guest members shall be contractually regulated.

11.2 The liability of the BELK shall only extend to the amount of its association funds.

## **Art.12      *Amendment of statutes and rules of procedure***

12.1 These Statutes may only be amended or supplemented by resolution of the General Assembly with a two thirds majority of the votes present.

12.2 The Bylaws laid down by the Executive Committee, the Regulations of the Mediation Panel, the Regulations for Visitations and the Regulations for Deacons and Readers, as well as all amendments of the aforementioned, shall be subject to approval by the General Assembly by a simple majority of the votes present.

The regulations listed below, with the exception of the Regulations for the Pastors' Council, form an integral component of the Statutes:

- The Bylaws
- The Regulations for the Pastors' Council
- The Regulations for Readers and Deacons
- The Regulations for Visitations
- The Regulations for the Mediation Panel

Signatories: - Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Basel and North-West Switzerland  
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bern  
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva  
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Zurich, North-East and Central Switzerland  
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Principality of Liechtenstein  
- Martin-Luther-Federation of Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein

Approved in Bern  
on 12 March 2016