CONSTITUTION

§ 1: Name, Location and Sphere of Activity

(1) The name of the organisation is "Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women" (EFECW).
(2) The Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women is based in Vienna, Austria; its activities extend throughout Europe.
3) The Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women is a non-profit-making organisation co ordinating the "National Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women" (National Forum).

§ 2: Aims

The Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women, which is a non-profit-making organisation, has the following aims:

- to find and strengthen a common European identity;
- to strengthen the women's ecumenical network in order to develop a deeper ecumenical understanding for one another;
  to foster a culture of inclusivity and accessibility for all Christian women;
- to promote initiatives for peace, justice and reconciliation;
- to commit ourselves to action for the care of God's creation;
- to commit ourselves to action on behalf of women's rights, which are human rights.

§ 3: Areas of Activity

(1) General Activities

The Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women shall
a) decide on its common working guidelines;
b) co-ordinate and initiate programmes in the following areas:
- ecumenical learning;
- inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue;
- socio-political and economic education;
- ethical and ecological education;
- human rights;
- empowerment of women for leadership;
- and any other new concerns that may arise;

c) raise awareness of social and socio-political responsibilities through public statements or the implementation of programmes;
d) enable forums for dialogue;
e) promote the interests of women in Church and Society;
f) strengthen its European network through meetings of the National Co-ordinators;
g) support and promote the National Forums and encourage contacts between them;
h) promote co-operation with other church-related, ecumenical and European women's organisations;
i) provide publicity and information; j) publish books and materials;
k) employ staff as required.

(2) Raising the necessary financial resources

a) membership subscriptions from the National Forums;
b) grants;
c) donations;
d) contributions from the Ruth Epting Fund;
e) other contributions.

§ 4: **Membership**

Membership of the EFECW shall be in the categories: Ordinary Members, Individual Members, Extraordinary Members and Honorary Members.

a) Ordinary Members are the National Ecumenical Forums of Christian Women in Europe (National Forums);
b) Individual Members are women who support the work of EFECW from countries where there are no National Forums.
c) Extraordinary Members are individuals or groups who support the work of EFECW;
d) Honorary Members are individuals who have been appointed in recognition of their special services to the EFECW.

§ 5: Becoming a Member

(1) Ordinary Members

a) all National Forums which are located in a European State may become an Ordinary Member;
b) written applications for acceptance as an Ordinary Member shall be submitted to the Co-ordinating Committee of the EFECW;
c) the Co-ordinating Committee of the EFECW makes the final decision on the acceptance of Ordinary Members. Acceptance can be refused without reasons being given.

(2) Individual Members and Extraordinary Members

The Co-ordinating Committee makes the final decision on the acceptance of Individual Members and Extraordinary Members.

(3) Honorary Members

The appointment of Honorary Members shall be made by the General Assembly, following recommendation by the Co-ordinating Committee.

§ 6: Cessation of Membership

(1) Membership shall cease

a) for Ordinary Members through the dissolution of the National Forum, through their voluntary resignation or through their removal;
b) for Individual and Extraordinary Members through their voluntary resignation, death or removal;
c) for Honorary Members through resignation, death or revocation of the appointment.

(2) Voluntary Resignation

shall only be effective as at 31.12. of each year. It must be notified to the Co-ordinating Committee in writing at least four (4) months in advance. (Date according to postmark). If the notification arrives late, then it shall only be effective as from the following year.

(3) Removal of a member

a) The Co-ordinating Committee shall have the power to remove an Ordinary and Individual Member who has failed to pay the membership subscription for a period of six months following the receipt of two reminders giving a reasonable time for compliance. The obligation for payment of the due subscription remains unaffected by any such action.
b) The Co-ordinating Committee shall also have the power to remove an Ordinary, Individual or Extraordinary Member for reasons of gross infringement of the interests of the EFECW, provided that the member has the right to be heard by the Committee before a final decision is made.
c) The revocation of Honorary Membership shall be made by the General Assembly, on the

recommendation of the Co-ordinating Committee, in accordance with the grounds given in § 6.3.b.

(4) Members who have resigned or been removed shall have no claim on EFECW resources.

§ 7: Rights and Duties of Membership

(1) Members shall be entitled to participate in programmes of the EFECW and to use its facilities.
(2) Every member shall have the right to receive a copy of the Constitution and Bye-laws.
(3) Members must observe the Constitution and decisions of the organs of the EFECW.
(4) Ordinary and Individual Members shall have the right to vote at the General Assembly under the condition of having paid the minimum membership fee either through the National Forum or directly.
(5) Representatives of the Ordinary Members may stand for election under the condition of having paid the minimum membership fee through the National Forum.
   (a) Individual Members may stand for elections with the nomination of an Ordinary Member and under the condition of having paid the minimum membership fee.
(6) The calling of a General Assembly by the Co-ordinating Committee may be demanded by the agreement of at least one tenth of the Ordinary Members.
(7) At every General Assembly the members shall receive a report from the Co-ordinating Committee on the work and the financial activities of the organisation as well as the audited accounts.
(8) Members shall be required to uphold the interests of the EFECW to the best of their ability and to refrain from doing anything which could damage its reputation.
(9) All Members shall observe the obligation for punctual payment of the annual membership subscription. The minimum recommended membership shall be defined by the Co-ordinating Committee after General Assembly. Their right to vote shall be suspended if the membership subscription has not been paid in advance of the General Assembly or the Conference of the National Co-ordinators. The membership is determined based on a) National Forums b) Individual Members and c) age.

§ 8: Organs of the EFECW

The organs of the EFECW are
   a) General Assembly (§9 to §10),
   b) National Co-ordinators Conference (§11),
   c) Co-ordinating Committee (§12 to §13),
   d) Executive Group §14 to §15),
   e) Auditors (§16),
   f) Arbitration Tribunal (§17)

§ 9: General Assembly

(1) The General Assembly shall consist of the National Co-ordinators and additional delegates of the National Forums, together with Individual, Extraordinary Members and Honorary Members
(2) An ordinary General Assembly shall be held at least once every four (4) years.
(3) An extraordinary General Assembly shall be held within six (6) weeks of being called by
   a) a decision of the Co-ordinating Committee or of the ordinary General Assembly, or
   b) a written submission by at least one tenth of the members.
(4) Invitation to the General Assembly Notices of invitation to an ordinary or to an extraordinary General Assembly, together with the Agenda, shall be sent out in writing by post, fax or e-mail to all members at least six (6) weeks before the date. These will be sent only to the addresses which have been notified by members to the EFECW Secretary's office.
(5) Voting rights

a) The Ordinary Members shall each have two votes. If only one delegate of her National Forum is present, then she may also use the second vote allocated to her National Forum. Transfer of votes

shall be allowed between the National Co-ordinators and delegates from their respective National Forums

b) The Individual Members shall have one vote for every group of five Individual Members present at the General Assembly.

c) Ordinary Members, not present, have the right to delegate their vote to another Ordinary Member in writing until the start of the General Assembly.

d) Members of the Co-ordinating Committee and the Executive Group have no voting rights at the General Assembly.

(6) The General Assembly shall be considered as quorate 30 minutes after the officially announced opening time, regardless of the number of those present.

(7) Valid decisions can only be made in accordance with items on the agreed agenda, with the exception of those concerning a demand for the calling of an extraordinary General Assembly.

(8) Resolutions brought to the General Assembly shall normally be carried by a simple majority of the validly cast votes of those present and voting. Resolutions concerning an alteration to the Constitution, the removal from office of the Co-ordinating Committee, or dissolution of the organisation shall require a qualified majority of two-thirds of validly cast votes.

(9) The responsibility for the proper running of the General Assembly shall lie with the Co-Presidents together with the members of the Co-ordinating Committee. The Co-Presidents shall normally chair the Assembly.

§ 10: Responsibilities of the General Assembly

The General Assembly shall have the following responsibilities:

(1) Guidelines

It shall establish the guidelines for the work.

(2) Receiving and Approval of Reports

a) It shall approve the reports of the Co-Presidents and of the Co-ordinating Committee;

b) It shall approve the financial report of the Treasurer, together with reports on any special funds;

c) It shall approve the reports of the Fundraiser and the Project Co-ordinator;

d) It shall decide upon the discharge of the Co-Presidents, the Co-ordinating Committee and the Treasurer from their duties.

(3) Elections of the members to the Co-ordinating Committee and to the Co-Presidency

a) The General Assembly shall elect the members of the Co-ordinating Committee and the Co-Presidents giving due attention to the different regions, cultures, denominational confessions and Christian traditions in Europe.

b) Before the elections, it shall agree on the number of members of the Co-ordinating Committee and of the Co-Presidents.

c) The procedure for the elections shall be laid down in the Bye-laws for the elections.

(4) Filling of places on the Co-ordinating Committee

It shall be asked to confirm by vote any decision of the Co-ordinating Committee with regard to the filling of a vacancy caused by the resignation or death of a member during their period of office.

(5) Removal from office of the Co-ordinating Committee

It shall be able to remove the whole Co-ordinating Committee or any one or more of its members from office for reasons of gross infringement of the interests of the EFECW. This shall require a two-thirds majority of validly cast votes. (6) Appointment of Auditors It shall appoint two people to act as Auditors for the current operational period of the General Assembly.

(7) Europe Secretary

It shall authorise the Co-ordinating Committee to appoint a Europe Secretary.

(8) Alteration to the Constitution
It shall decide on alterations to the Constitution, requiring a two-thirds majority.

(9) Bye-laws
It shall issue or make changes to the Bye-laws.

(10) Honorary membership
Upon the recommendation of the Co-ordinating Committee, it shall confer Honorary membership.

(11) Other matters
It shall decide upon all other matters which fall within its competence according to the law and Constitution.

(12) Dissolution
A resolution for the dissolution of the EFECW shall require a two-thirds majority.

§ 11: National Ecumenical Forums of European Christian Women

(1) National Forums
a) Each National Forum shall organise the work in its country and carry out its own programmes.
b) Each National Forum may develop programmes in co-operation with other National Forums.
c) National Forums may send extra delegates to the General Assembly within the number of places available.

(2)..National Coordinators
a) Each National Forum shall choose at least two National Co-ordinators, if possible, from two different denominations/confessions who will promote the work of the EFECW in their country.
b) The National Co-ordinators shall maintain the link with the EFECW.
c) The National Co-ordinators are members of the General Assembly
d) A Conference of the National Co-ordinators shall take place at least every two years, in order to work on programmes and exchange information. Programmes shall be within the framework of the guidelines laid down by the General Assembly.

§ 12: Co-ordinating Committee

(1) The Co-ordinating Committee shall consist of

a) with voting rights:
- the Co-Presidents
- the elected members of the Co-ordinating Committee

b) as advisors:
other individuals who have been appointed on a contractual basis to carry out particular roles within the EFECW, for example:
- the Treasurer
- Europe Secretary,
- Fundraiser
- Project Co-ordinator

Voting members of the Co-ordinating Committee shall be entitled to one vote each. The Co-ordinating Committee shall make its decisions by a simple majority of those present and voting.

(2) The Co-ordinating Committee shall normally meet twice a year.

(3) The period of office of the Co-ordinating Committee and of the Co-Presidents shall be four (4)

years. Re-election for one further term shall be allowed. Service on the Co-ordinating Committee shall be carried out in person, i.e. members have no right to send an alternate to the meetings.

(4) Meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee shall be called by one of the Co-Presidents, or in the case of incapacity, by one of the members of the Co-ordinating Committee. The meetings shall normally be chaired by the Co-Presidents.

(5) The Co-ordinating Committee shall be quorate if at least half of the voting members are present.

(6) The General Assembly has the power to remove the whole Co-ordinating Committee from office for the reasons specified in §10.5. In this case, a committee of three people shall be elected from among the members of the General Assembly. This committee shall have the responsibility for the running of the EFECW until the election of a new Co-ordinating Committee, such an election to be arranged by the General Assembly within the period of one year.

(7) The term of office of a member of the Co-ordinating Committee ceases upon resignation or death, removal.

a) In the case of resignation or death the Co-ordinating Committee may fill the vacancy by appointing another member for the remaining period of office. The National Forums must be informed about the appointment, and it must be confirmed by the next General Assembly.
b) In the case of removal by the General Assembly (§10.5) a by-election must be held by the General Assembly to cover the remaining period of office.

§ 13: Responsibilities of the Co-ordinating Committee

The Co-ordinating Committee shall

(1) be responsible for the continuity and furtherance of the work of the EFECW, each member being responsible for a particular area of work;

(2) represent the EFECW:

(3) a) make the arrangements for the General Assembly and decide upon the number of delegates for the National Forums;

b) ensure the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly;
c) ensure that the minutes of the General Assembly and of the National Co-ordinating's meeting are sent out within 6 months to all the National Forums.

(4) make the arrangements for the meeting of the National Co-ordinators;

(5) establish Task Groups for practice projects;

(6) draw up Bye-laws;

(7) administer the finances of the EFECW and have the right to appoint a trustee of the Ruth Epting-Fund;

(8) have the power to appoint individual persons to particular roles as specified in §12.1. b and to set out their responsibilities;

(9) have the power to appoint the Finance Committee, which shall act in an advisory capacity to both the Treasurer and the Co-ordinating Committee. The appointment shall be for the current period of office of the Co-ordinating Committee. Individual Members may serve for more than one term;

(10) have the power to co-opt up to two further advisors for the current period of office;

11) decide who are the authorised signatories, and within which limits they act on behalf of EFECW;

(12) in the case of dissolution, decide which organisation - a successor organisation or an European non-profit-making organisation with similar aims (§2) - should be approached as the recipient of any remaining financial assets;

(13) ensure that official minutes are taken at every meeting and sent out as soon as afterwards to all members of the Co-ordinating Committee.

§ 14: Executive Group

(1) The Executive Group shall consist of

a) the Co-Presidents and

b) individual persons appointed to particular roles as specified in §12.1. b; i.e. the Treasurer, the Europe Secretary, the Fundraiser and the Project Co-ordinator.

2) The Executive Group is responsible for the ongoing administration of the EFECW and in consultation with the Co-ordinating Committee (e.g. by e-mail) shall carry out important business which arises between their meetings.

(3) The Executive Group shall determine the areas of work for its Individual Members.

(4) There shall be official minutes taken at every meeting of the Executive group and these shall be presented to the Co-ordinating Committee.

§ 15: Responsibilities of Individual Members of the Executive group

(1) Co-Presidents

a) The Co-Presidents shall individually represent the EFECW to those both inside and outside the organisation, except for legal transactions.

b) They shall convene the General Assembly, as well as the Conferences of the National Co-ordinators and the meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee.

c) Together with the Co-ordinating Committee, they shall be responsible for the management of the General Assembly.

d) In order to avert any immediate threat of serious risk the Co-Presidents shall be authorised jointly to take independent action, on their own joint responsibility, even matters which would normally fall within the competence of the General on Assembly or the Co-ordinating Committee. This shall, however, require the subsequent approval of the Co-ordinating Committee.

(2) Treasurer

a) The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that the financial conduct of the EFECW is in accordance with the regulations.

b) If there is an immediate threat of serious risk she shall inform the Co-Presidents and the Co-ordinating Committee of this and if necessary, take independent measures within her own sphere of responsibility. This shall, however, require the subsequent approval of the Co-ordinating Committee.

c) In case of her unavoidable absence, one of the Co-Presidents shall act on her behalf.

(3) Europe Secretary

a) The Europe Secretary shall manage the EFECW office and represent the EFECW, if required.

b) She shall maintain contact with the National Co-ordinators and ensure that the minutes and notices of EFECW meetings are forwarded to them.

c) She shall support the Co-Presidents and the Treasurer in their work.

d) She shall be responsible for the EFECW archive.
e) She shall undertake other responsibilities agreed between her and the Co-ordinating Committee.

(4) Fundraiser

a) She shall have joint responsibility for fundraising, together with one of the Co-Presidents and the Treasurer.
b) In case of her unavoidable absence, one of the Co-Presidents or the Treasurer shall act on her behalf.

(5) Project Co-ordinator

a) She shall have joint responsibility together with one of the Co-Presidents, for the co-ordination and development of EFECW projects.
b) In case of her unavoidable absence, one of the Co-Presidents shall act on her behalf.

§ 16: Authorised signatories

(1) Authorised signatories for the EFECW shall be selected from the following, in accordance:

- the Co-Presidents
- the Treasurer
- the Europe Secretary
- any other authorised members of the Co-ordinating Committee (§13.11).

Two signatures from among those selected shall be required as a general rule.

(2) In the case of day-to-day legal transactions or for financial transactions up to a specified amount a single signature may be permitted. The details shall be specified by the Co-ordinating Committee in accordance with §13.11.

§ 17: Auditors

The auditors shall be given responsibility for the ongoing examination of the financial conduct of the EFECW in accordance with the regulations regarding the keeping of accounts and with the constitutional requirements concerning the use of assets. The Treasurer shall make all the required documents available for inspection by the auditors and shall provide all the requested information. The auditors shall provide the Co-ordinating Committee with a written report.

§ 18: Arbitration Tribunal

(1) An Arbitration Tribunal shall be established for the purpose of mediation in the case of any dispute affecting relationships within the organisation.

(2) It shall consist of three National Co-ordinators. The members of the Arbitration Tribunal may not be members of any Committee whose activity is the subject of the dispute – with the exception of the General Assembly.

(3) The Arbitration Tribunal shall be constituted as follows:

One of the parties in the dispute shall notify in writing to the Co-ordinating Committee the name of a National Co-ordinator to act as an arbitrator.

The Co-ordinating Committee shall then immediately instruct the other party in the dispute to nominate within three weeks a National Co-ordinator to act as an arbitrator on their behalf.

The Co-ordinating Committee shall immediately notify the two arbitrators of their nomination. Within three weeks they shall elect a third National Co-ordinator to act as Chair of the Arbitration Tribunal. In the case of a tied vote, it shall be decided by casting lots among those who have been proposed.

(4) The Arbitration Tribunal shall make its decision after hearing both sides and in the presence of all its members. The decision shall be according to a simple majority. The decision shall be made to the best of their knowledge and belief. Abstention from voting is not permitted.

(5) The decision of the Arbitration Tribunal shall be binding within the Association.

§ 19: Liability
The EFECW is liable for its own debts only to the extent of its own funds. It is not liable for the debts of its members. Its members are not liable for the debts of EFECW.

§ 20: Relations with other Organisations
The Co-ordinating Committee may invite other individuals and organisations to the General Assembly and to other EFECW events.

§ 21: Languages of the EFECW
(1) English is the official language and shall be binding for all EFECW documents.

(2) The Co-ordinating Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the minutes of the National Co-ordinators meetings and of the General Assembly, as well as other official documents, are made available in English and if possible, also in French and German.

§ 22: Alterations to the EFECW Constitution
(1) Any alteration to the Constitution may only be decided at a General Assembly with the agreement of a two-thirds majority of validly cast votes from Ordinary and Individual Members present and voting.

(2) Any resolution proposing alterations to the Constitution must be made available in English, French and German.

§ 23: EFECW- Bye-laws (1) The General Assembly (§10.9) may adopt or alter any of the Bye-laws. The Bye-Laws shall not contradict the Constitution of the EFECW.

(2) The Bye-laws shall be an obligatory appendix to the Constitution.

§ 24: Voluntary Dissolution of the EFECW
(1) The voluntary dissolution of the EFECW may only be decided at a General Assembly and only with a two-thirds majority of validly cast votes from Ordinary and Individual Members present and voting.

(2) Upon dissolution any remaining financial assets shall be offered to a successor organisation or to an European non-profit-making organisation with similar aims, as stated in § 2. The final decision shall be made by the Co-ordinating Committee.

§ 25: Transitional provision
This organisation is the successor of the Swiss organisation of the same name. The existing members, the finances, the organs and the employees are transferred to the new organisation. This Constitution shall come into force when adopted by the General Assembly.

Adopted by the Extra General Assembly, Digital Zoom,2026 May 21st

The German Version of this constitution is the authoritative text