

# Guidelines of the Association of Pentecostal Churches in Germany (BFP) [Bund Freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden KdÖR]



This is a non-legal translation of the guidelines of the Association of Pentecostal Churches in Germany with headquarters in Erzhausen near Darmstadt. This translation is for orientation purposes only. The version in the original language is binding in any case.

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# Introduction

- 1 In addition to the Constitution, the "BUND FREIKIRCHLICHER PFINGSTGEMEINDEN" (hereinafter referred to as BFP or Association) adopts the following guidelines, which are binding on its members in accordance with Article 4 of the Constitution.
- 2 Their compilation is based on previous resolutions and is supplemented by growth-related, necessary regulations.
- 3 The prerequisite for their right understanding and fruitful evaluation is a relationship of brotherly trust with each other. Only then is blessed cooperation as an Association possible.
- 4 These guidelines may be amended or supplemented by resolution of the BFP General Meeting.

## 1 We believe and teach

### 1.1 God

We believe in the one eternal God of the Bible, the Creator of heaven and earth, who reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### 1.2 God the Father

We believe in God the Father, the source of all fatherhood, who in mercy and care turns to mankind and wants all to come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, in His love that transcends all human imagination, He gave His Son for the salvation of a lost world.

### 1.3 Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. In Him, God has revealed Himself definitively to us humans for salvation.

The Bible, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments inspired by God's Spirit, bears witness to this as an infallible guide to our life, thought and action.

As the Word of God made flesh, Jesus Christ, through his substitutionary final sacrifice in his death on the cross, obtained salvation for all people once and for all, so that after the resurrection and ascension, seated at the right hand of God, he intercedes for us with the Father.

We believe that Jesus our Lord will come again in power and glory, to eternal glory for the saved and eternal judgment for the lost.

In him, God invites all people as lost sinners to receive His salvation through repentance and faith.

### 1.4 Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who, because of the redemption of Jesus Christ through the new birth, creates new life in us and brings it to completion in the resurrection from the dead. Through the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the exalted Lord wants to enable all believers to serve. Through his presence in those who are born again, he brings forth the fruit of the Spirit. In doing so, the Holy Spirit shares in divine sovereignty, the Church assigns various gifts, ministries and effects for the mutual edification of the faithful and for service to the world.

## 1.5 The church

We believe that the church is the community called out by God of those redeemed from sin, through whom he proclaims his salvation to the world. It is also, as the body of Jesus, the place of mutual service to which God calls and enables all members.

Through baptism (by immersion) based on personal confession of forgiveness of sins and faith in Jesus Christ, believers are added to the local church. In the Lord's Supper, it proclaims the Lord's death and the common sharing of Jesus Christ as the head of the church, his body, in anticipation of his return.

Sharing in Jesus their Lord especially includes sanctification and faith-filled expectation of healing and restoration of the whole person.

## 2 Self-conception and tasks

### 2.1 Self-conception

2.1.1 The Association of Pentecostal Churches in Germany (BFP) is an evangelical free church and belongs to the worldwide Pentecostal Movement. This is expressed in its affiliates to the Pentecostal World Conference, the Pentecostal European Fellowship (PEF) and the Forum of Free Churches of Pentecost (FFP) in Germany.

2.1.2 The BFP is a community of churches and their spiritual leaders. It sees itself as a community of faith or denomination and as a community of churches that want to fulfill their mission under Christ, the common head. The name "Association" here is intended to express the biblical principle of binding togetherness and cooperation. We want to deal with each other in encouragement, correction and in the case of different insights in such a way that we do not discriminate, slander or offend each other (Romans 15, verse 7).

2.1.3 The BFP seeks to strengthen genuine relationships of the churches to New Testament togetherness through fellowship in word and prayer. Furthermore, it has set itself the goal of obtaining biblical guidelines for vocation, ministry and church.

2.1.4 These should also become common property of all churches in practice and help the members to fulfill their God-given tasks in autonomy, in respect to the divine leadership, which organically integrates itself into the overall leadership of the Association through consultation and coordination.

2.1.5 The BFP strives for unity in and with the churches and rejects divisive tendencies. The churches of the BFP are autonomous, but not independent. Local autonomy and supra-congregational commitments complement and enrich each other. This also includes the promotion and recognition of the ministries to which all the churches of the BFP contribute (Ephesians 4, verse 11, etc.), which are seen as a gift of God to all churches.

### 2.2 Tasks

2.2.1 In addition to its bodies (BFP General Meeting, Leadership Board and Presidium), the BFP fulfills its tasks (see Constitution Article 3) through BFP institutions, regions, working groups, churches and its staff. In doing so, the BFP ministries fulfill tasks of the BFP community on behalf of all churches (see section 9). Priority is given to the promotion of the employees both through personal support and through training and continuing education.

2.2.2 The Association assists with arranging job changes in churches and works. It endeavors to prevent or resolve difficulties in churches and ministries and, if necessary, to initiate disciplinary measures (see section 3.3).

## **3 Membership**

### **3.1 Membership of churches and works**

3.1.1 As an association of churches, the BFP is a free church with the status of a corporation under public law.

3.1.2 Upon request, churches, church associations, and Christian ministries that accept the constitution and guidelines may become members of the BFP. Admission takes place after examination and recommendation by the respective region with the approval of the Presidium and the presentation at the BFP General Meeting.

Churches planted by member churches, staff or missionary activities of the BFP are BFP churches. Their membership as an independent church must be applied for and must be approved by the Presidium. These churches will be presented at the next BFP General Meeting (see section 4.5.1 ).

### **3.2 Membership of pastors and spiritual workers**

#### **3.2.1 Training**

The basis and prerequisite for a spiritual co-worker is an inner calling from God. This is confirmed by the local church. The diversity of God's callings of men and women from all walks of life have led to the design of different training paths, which are laid down in the "Guidelines for Training in the BFP".

The Presidium decides on admission to training status or vicariate. These persons are included in the list of trainees and vicars.

Mentoring is provided during the training and vicariate period and is regulated in the "Guidelines for Training in the BFP".

The training does not entitle the candidate to ordination.

#### **3.2.2 Ordination**

Ordination is a blessing for ministry - not the completion of training. With it, the called receive the recognition for spiritual service by the Association.

Employees in the BFP in full-time spiritual service can be ordained after completing their training (see section 3.2.1) upon request of the ministry (usually the local church) and only with the recommendation of the region or church association. The decision is made by the Presidium.

The ordination is performed by a member of the BFP council.

#### **3.2.3 Membership of individuals**

There are options for individual membership in the Association as listed below. Members represent the churches, ministries and missionary ministries and the interests of the entire Association in the conferences.

##### **3.2.3.1 Personal membership**

Admission as a personal member shall be granted:

1. For trainees beginning their vicariate in a BFP church with the following steps/requirements:
  - Recommendation of the church for the vicariate
  - Request of the trainee for personal membership
  - Reference of the training officer of the region
  - Recommendation of the Region
  - Resolution of the Presidium

These individuals will be introduced as personal members at the following BFP General Meeting.

2. For pastors and other spiritual leaders from outside the BFP with the following steps/requirements:
  - Application by the individual
  - Recommendation of the Region
  - Resolution of the Presidium
  - Presentation at the BFP General Meeting
3. Other persons in the special interest of the Association
  - of persons who are members of a BFP church:  
by resolution of the Presidium
  - of persons from outside the Association:  
by resolution of the Presidium

All personal members must be members of a recognized church and be integrated into their respective region. Loss of this congregational membership also means loss of personal membership in the Association.

The first three years of personal membership shall be considered a probationary period during which membership may be terminated by decision of the Presidium. The annual membership fee is due with/from the beginning of personal membership (see Financial regulations of the Association, § 2).

#### 3.2.3.2 Functional membership

Functional membership exists for leaders of churches and ministries in the BFP.

- They will receive a BFP identity card upon request to the BFP secretary's office.
- Their functional personal membership is terminated when they leave their leadership service.

#### 3.2.3.3 Dormant membership

Personal members who have not been in responsible leadership of a church, a work or in the Association for more than two years lose their passive voting rights in the BFP. Retired persons are not affected by this regulation. The dormant membership is understood as a temporary period for clarification and decision-making. During this time, the persons continue to participate in the life of their region and the Association with the other rights and obligations of a member. Those who have been in dormant membership for more than three years shall be dropped as a personal member unless a longer period has been agreed upon with the Executive Board.

#### 3.2.3.4 Termination of membership

If someone resigns from the BFP, is expelled, or is dropped from membership, he/she also loses all offices in the Association and in the region. The Executive Board decides on cases of doubt or special cases.

### 3.3 Disciplinary code

(See Constitution of the BFP, Article 5(3))

- 3.3.1 All Holders of the BFP identity card (see Section 3.4) are subject to the disciplinary regulations of the Association.
- 3.3.2 If, in connection with serious misconduct in doctrine and life, it is not possible to work through and settle the matter within the framework of either the church or the region, the Executive Board shall appoint a confidential committee and designate its leader (see also section 6.1.3 ).

- 3.3.3 The confidential committee shall consist of at least three persons, one of whom shall be from the Leadership Board. The other members of the confidential committee shall be appointed from the BFP council and the relevant regional leadership.
- 3.3.4 The confidential committee investigates the case and acts on behalf of the Association. In justified cases, it may provisionally prohibit the exercise of membership and official rights with immediate effect and confiscate the BFP identity card or other credentials of the BFP. In cases of penitence, the confidential committee shall determine the conditions of probation after considering all the circumstances.
- 3.3.5 If within four weeks after the announcement of the resolution of the confidential committee before the next BFP General Meeting the person concerned does not appeal to the Presidium and thus accepts the decision of the confidential committee, this decision becomes legally effective upon announcement. The details of the case shall then not be negotiated (see Constitution Article paragraph 53). The resolution shall be communicated to him/her in due time, at least one month before the deadline.
- If the person concerned appeals to the Presidium, the essential facts and the reasons for the decision of the confidential committee are submitted to the Presidium for review and decision. The person concerned shall make a statement in in the confidential committee and if necessary in the Presidium. In the case of an expulsion, the BFP General Meeting decides on the request of the Presidium.
- A record of the investigation and the result is kept, which is sent to the Presidium of the BFP and the person concerned.
- If repentant, the individual will be granted a reasonable period of probation with appropriate conditions until reinstatement.
- 3.3.6 The Presidium shall decide on the termination of a probation and a new integration into the service community of the Association upon the request of the church and the region/ association.

## 3.4 BFP Identity Cards

- 3.4.1 All personal members of the BFP receive an **Identity Card (Dienstausweis)**, which is also a membership card as defined in the Constitution (Art. 4.6). Persons who are functional members (see section 3.2.3.2) receive a **Staff Identity Card (Mitarbeiterausweis)** upon request.
- 3.4.2 The identity cards show to the voting authorization (personal or functional – see Section 3.2.3) and at the same time contains the service designation or the title conferred.
- 3.4.3 The cards are issued for a period of two years and are renewed thereafter. Anyone who leaves the Association as a personal member or ceases to be a functional member must immediately return their identity card to the BFP secretary's office. The identity card loses its validity on the date of resignation.
- 3.4.4 The issuance of ID cards for personal members of the BFP is independent of an existing employment relationship. Pastors who serve without employment are considered to be serving in an "honorary capacity" without this being noted on the identity card.

## 3.5 Directories of churches and employees

- 3.5.1 The Association Secretariat shall publish a "Directory of pastors and staff" of the Association, which shall be available to all voting members of the BFP. This directory is for internal use only. All persons who are personal members of the BFP shall be listed in the Directory. In addition, the following persons shall be in the "Directory of pastors and staff":
- church leaders
  - Senior staff of the Association, the BFP ministries and the institutions integrated into the BFP

- 3.5.2 Members who retire from service due to age remain in the directory (marked i. R. = retired).
- 3.5.3 The BFP Secretariat also publishes a "Directory for Churches and Ministries" which can be given to anyone interested.
- 3.5.4 The handling of data is regulated in the data protection regulations of the BFP.

## **4 Church membership**

### **4.1 Membership**

- 4.1.1 The membership of a church member must be clear. The local church carries out admission and, if necessary, expulsion of members.
- 4.1.2 Every member of a BFP church is thus immediately a member of the BFP as a free church.
- 4.1.3 Minor children of members are belongers of the church until they apply for their own membership.

### **4.2 Referral of members**

- 4.2.1 If a member of a church changes his or her place of residence, the church leader, after consultation with the member concerned, shall at the same time send a letter of referral to the BFP church in whose vicinity the member's new residence is located. This is necessary to ensure the continued biblical and healthy spiritual care of the member.
- 4.2.2 Church members who move to a residence where there is no BFP church in reasonable proximity should remain an out-of-town member of their current church until their membership in another church is resolved. In this case, the leader of the region in which the new residence is located should be contacted.
- 4.2.3 Admission of members from confessionally affiliated churches of the BFP should be by referral, if possible, and on the recommendation of the previous church. A transfer from a local nearby church should occur only after consultation with those responsible.

### **4.3 Church leadership**

- 4.3.1 Local churches are led by elders, with the pastor or one of the pastors usually being the leading elder. The leadership of the church pledges to strengthen the bond between the church and the BFP, to promote the Association, and to leave the church intact in the Association when they leave their responsibility.
- 4.3.2 The appointment of elders and the calling of pastors should be done with the approval of the church by the church leadership (or appropriate responsible persons from the Region/ Association). The regional leadership is available for consultation in this regard. The same applies to dismissal from such ministries.

### **4.4 Pastors/pastoral assistants**

- 4.4.1 Pastors/pastoral assistants in BFP churches are personal members of the Association (see Section 3.2.3). If a pastor/pastoral assistant is called from outside to a BFP church, personal membership is expected after a transition period of no more than three years.
- 4.4.2 The duties and ethical requirements of Pastors/Pastoral assistants are set out in service regulations.
- 4.4.3 If a pastor/pastoral assistant desires a change of ministry, he/she may submit a request to the BFP secretary's office for placement. The same applies if the church desires a change of pastor.

## **4.5 Branch congregations/church planting/locations**

- 4.5.1 If a church ministry has grown to the point where it can and wants to become an autonomous church, it can be recognized as autonomous if its membership is at least 25 people, it has appropriate spiritual leadership and a solid financial foundation. This step must be taken in agreement with the body responsible for the work (e.g., mother church, region), with reference from the regional leadership, and by resolution of the Presidium.
- 4.5.2 If no other jurisdiction exists, a church planting ministry is under the regional leadership board until it is recognized as independent.
- 4.5.3 A location (CG) is part of a main church and does not need its own legal entity. It is not independent and is under the direct responsibility of the main or overall church.

## **4.6 Association of congregations**

Several churches can join together to form a church network, which is intended to serve coordination, better evangelism and care, and especially church planting. The church network adopts a set of rules to regulate the relationship and cooperation. The status of the local church in its relationship to the region and the Association is not affected.

## **4.7 Legal capacity and escheat**

### **4.7.1 The corporate-directed church (BFP churches).**

The local church has its own legal capacity directly through the corporation. A church constitution must be adopted by the members of the church for this purpose. These must be approved/counter-signed by the Leadership Board of the BFP.

If the church is the owner of real estate or the holder of a heritable building right when it joins the BFP, or if a church uses land that the BFP has acquired for the church as owner or heritable building right holder, the BFP issues a declaration of commitment to the church in the event that the church leaves the Association or becomes a registered association.

### **4.7.2 The registered association (e.V.-church)**

The local church acquires its own legal capacity by founding a non-profit association, which is to be entered in the register of associations as a registered association. The statutes required for this are to be drawn up or revised in accordance with the current BFP model statutes.

### **4.7.3 Escheat**

BFP churches and other works in the BFP enter the BFP as the beneficiary in the escheat paragraph. The following wording is used (in German): "In case of dissolution or in case of discontinuation of tax-privileged purposes, the assets of the church (work) go to the Association of Pentecostal Churches under public law with headquarters in Erzhausen, which must use them directly and exclusively for non-profit, charitable or church purposes."

## **4.8 Church fees**

The membership of a church in the Association entails with the payment of church fees to the Association in accordance with the applicable Financial regulations of the Association. There is an extra regulation with the associations.

## **5 The BFP General Meeting**

According to the Constitution Article 7, the BFP General Meeting is one of the three bodies of the BFP. BFP General Meetings are usually held at least once a year. They are quorate meetings of members and delegates, with voting rights as regulated in sec. 5.2.4.

All personal members and the delegates of the churches and ministries represent the concerns of the BFP churches and the Association as a whole in the BFP General Meeting. Through requests, proposals and votes they shall serve these concerns responsibly. No member is entitled to financial compensation for proposals, elaborations and expert opinions, unless this has been expressly decided by the Leadership Board and agreed upon in writing.

### **5.1 Requests to the BFP General Meeting**

Requests to the BFP General Meeting are addressed to the General Secretary of the BFP. Requests received within the last three months before the beginning of a BFP General Meeting can only be considered in the following General Meeting. The General Meeting shall decide on exceptions.

Requests are placed on the agenda when

1. the Presidium supports the Request by a majority,
2. 1/3 of the members and delegates entitled to vote at a BFP General Meeting supported the Request,
3. at least three regions support a request.

### **5.2 Participation and voting rights**

#### **5.2.1 Participants with voting rights**

1. Pastors, other spiritual employees in the BFP, leaders of churches and BFP works who have a BFP identity card or staff identity card. Their regular participation in the BFP General Meetings is part of their membership duties. If they are unable to attend, a written excuse should be given.
2. Representatives of churches and ministries as delegates. Delegates are invited and registered through their leader, who must co-sign their registration cards, otherwise they will not be eligible to vote. They are usually elders or leaders. They participate in the resolutions of the BFP General Meeting in free decision and spiritual responsibility.
3. Trainees in Vicariate.

#### **5.2.2 Participants without voting rights**

1. Additional elders and staff from BFP churches and ministries, as well as the spouses of General Meeting members.
2. Pastors or others person engaged in spiritual ministry or congregational representatives who desire to become acquainted with and possibly join the BFP.
3. People who are not members of the BFP, but who have a special interest in a point of their work or who are important to it as seen by the BFP.
4. International pastors and mission workers who work with us on German soil on a permanent and official basis.
5. The pastors or church representatives who are on friendly terms.
6. Trainees who are not yet in the Vicariate.
7. Other guests (by prior arrangement with the General Secretary of the BFP).

### 5.2.3 Participant cards

Each registered participant will receive a participant card at the registration desk. Voting members and delegates will also receive a voting card. Only those entitled to vote are admitted to specially announced meetings.

### 5.2.4 Voting rights

In addition to those entitled to vote in person with a BFP identity card, delegates from churches and ministries are entitled to vote.

1. Number of delegates from churches:

up to	50 church members	= 1 delegate
from 51 to	100 church members	= 2 delegates
from 101 to	200 church members	= 3 delegates
from 201 to	300 church members	= 4 delegates
from 301 to	400 church members	= 5 delegates
from 401 to	500 church members	= 6 delegates
from 501 to	700 church members	= 7 delegates
from 701 to	1000 church members	= 8 delegates

Furthermore, one additional delegate for every 500 members or part thereof.

The same key also applies to voting rights at regional meetings (see section 6.1.2).

2. Number of delegates from works:

A delegate key is established by the Leadership Board for BFP works and other works in the Association (see section 9.1).

Church associations in the BFP are themselves responsible for ensuring that all pastors, other spiritual workers and churches belonging to them are represented at the BFP General Meetings in accordance with the above points.

### 5.2.5 Resolutions of the BFP General Meeting

They shall be passed in accordance with the Constitution (Article 7, 6).

## 6 Regions and church associations

### 6.1 Regions

The churches and works of the Association form regions, which generally correspond geographically to the federal states. Each church and each plant, as well as each personal member, is incorporated into a region.

The regions shall adopt guidelines in accordance with these BFP guidelines in order to fulfill their tasks. The regional guidelines are approved by the Executive Board and confirmed by the Presidium.

The establishment of new regions as well as the division of regions requires the approval of the Presidium.

#### 6.1.1 Tasks

Life, cooperation and fellowship in the Association take place with the significant participation of the regions. This happens especially in the participation and co-responsibility in:

1. BFP ministries (e.g. TSB Board of Trustees, missionary ministries, integration)
2. Training (regional training officers and mentoring)
3. Membership
4. Admission as a personal member of the BFP requires integration in the respective region and its recommendation. The Presidium decides on exceptions.
5. Church consulting ministry (support with regard to development and crises of churches)

6. Church planting (regional work/regional networking).
7. International Churches (AIG Representative)
8. Training (national youth ministry, trainees, pastors retreat/training).
9. Actions (days of faith and prayer, etc.)
10. Preliminary work on topics, guidelines, etc.

### **6.1.2 Regional meeting**

The regional meeting is the actual decision-maker of the region. It elects a regional leadership board.

Regional meeting shall be held at least twice a year. The invitation is issued in writing by the regional leadership board.

The regional meeting can decide on the establishment of districts. It elects the training officers of its region, the representatives in the BFP works and may nominate a candidate for election to the Leadership Board.

The minutes of the regional meetings are sent to the Praeses of the BFP and to the General Secretary of the BFP and the BFP secretary's office.

### **6.1.3 Regional leadership board**

The regional leadership board is elected by the regional meeting with an absolute majority and consists of at least three persons. The election takes place in the first six months after the BFP election meeting. Its duties include the following:

1. Management of the regional meetings,
2. Pastoral care of the staff (pastors, elders and responsible employees),
3. Mentoring of trainees along with the ABR,
4. Settlement of church and pastor issues.

Disciplinary and problem cases that cannot be resolved at the regional level will be referred by the regional leadership board to the Leadership Board of the BFP for decision (see section 3.3.2). If a church is no longer capable of acting (lack of members, lack of leadership, insolvency, etc.), the regional leadership board is both obligated and authorized to initiate appropriate measures immediately in consultation with the Leadership Board.

### **6.1.4 The regional director**

As a representative of his region, the regional director is a member of the Presidium (constitution, article 9, paragraph 2). He is also the representative of the Presidium in his region. If a regional director steps down prematurely or is no longer a candidate, he or she shall inform the Executive Board or the Presidium in good time in order to facilitate a harmonious transition.

As a representative of the Presidium in the region, he represents the Association on special occasions (anniversaries, induction of pastors, etc.).

Anyone who has been a voting member of the BFP for seven years and has served in the region for two years is eligible to be elected as a regional leader. Nominations for election as regional director shall be made at a regional meeting prior to the BFP General Meeting during which the election is held. Following the nomination, the Executive Board will receive the list of candidates available for election as regional leaders in order to provide feedback on a case-by-case basis, if necessary.

A regional leader cannot be nominated to serve as a member of the Leadership Board in a dual capacity; likewise, a member of the Leadership Board cannot be nominated to serve as a regional leader in a dual capacity.

The regional director has the right to participate in church meetings (general meetings). The churches as well as the church leaderships have the right to invite representatives

of the regional leadership, in difficult cases to delegate the leadership of the meeting to them; and if necessary, to appoint the regional leadership to the emergency board. Newly elected regional director (as a group) receive an introduction to their role.

## **6.2 Church associations**

Church associations become members of the Association according to criteria that have been previously clarified and agreed upon in writing and approved by the BFP General Meeting.

The church associations in the Association regulate their affairs and areas of work on their own responsibility in accordance with the requirements of the constitution and guidelines of the BFP.

## **7 Presidium**

The Presidium shall exercise spiritual responsibility and business management for the Association as a whole.

### **7.1 Composition, competences and tasks of the Presidium**

#### **7.1.1 Composition**

The Presidium is composed of the Leadership Board (see Section 7.2.1), the Regional Directors elected by the regional meeting, the respective representatives of church associations, if agreed (see Section 6.2), and individuals proposed by the Leadership Board and confirmed by the Presidium (if necessary, for a fixed term or for the current election period).

The election shall be held in accordance with separately prepared election regulations.

If the current Presidium wishes to change the number of members of the Leadership Board for the next election period, the Presidium may resolve to do so no later than one year before the election.

Only members who have been voting members of the BFP for at least seven years can be members of the Presidium. In case of deviations, e.g. new church associations or individuals, the Presidium decides.

#### **7.1.2 Competences and tasks**

The Presidium has the task of seeking and discerning God's will for the Association through prayer and Bible study, and of finding common direction in pending doctrinal issues.

The work of the Presidium is to ensure unity, coordination and cooperation among the Leadership Board, regional leaders and leadership of the church associations and BFP ministries.

The Presidium is responsible in particular for the following areas:

1. It discusses topics and current issues and, if necessary, makes recommendations on these to the General Meeting.
2. It prepares the BFP General Meetings and makes the necessary decisions for them.
3. It advises and makes recommendations in essential matters, in particular in financial matters of the Association, and must be involved in fundamental decisions.

It decides on investment plans insofar as these do not fall within the competence of the Leadership Board (see section 7.2.2 item 4) and on disposals of BFP real estate for submission to the BFP General Meeting.

It decides on the admission of loans for the Association (including those for BFP works) as well as on the encumbrance in rem of BFP real estate, insofar as these do not concern corporate-directed churches and their real estate (see also section 7.2.2 item 8).

4. It appoints the auditors for the financial and cash reports of the Association for confirmation by the BFP General Meeting. The auditors for the BFP works shall be appointed by their own bodies which have responsibility for this.  
It decides on membership applications as a reference for the BFP General Meeting and decides on ordinations.
5. It decides on the admission to the status of a trainee; likewise, it decides on the admission to the status of a vicar after completion of training.
6. It decides on amendments to the Constitution and guidelines of the Association after preliminary work and presentation by the Leadership Board for presentation and decision in the BFP General Meeting.  
It approves the statutes and guidelines of regions and BFP ministries.
7. It is responsible for representing the Association internally and externally.
8. It appoints working groups and committees for specific areas of responsibility.
9. It sends delegates from among its members as representatives of the Association to committees and ministries. It decides on the delegation for inter-church tasks (e.g. VEF, Alliance), as far as these do not fall under the responsibility of the Leadership Board. In the case of delegation to working meetings, conferences, etc., a written report with the results should be sent to the Presidium.

The Presidium may delegate tasks to the Leadership Board.

## **7.2 Leadership Board**

### **7.2.1 Composition and election**

The Leadership Board consists of at least seven members elected by the BFP General Meeting and representatives of church associations, if so agreed (see Section 6.2). From these, the BFP General Meeting elects the Praeses, Vice-Praeses, General Secretary and Treasurer of the BFP, who represent the Association in and out of court and thus form the Executive Board. The other members elected by the BFP General Meeting are also entitled to vote as assessors.

Election as a member of the Executive Leadership shall not be based on group, ministry, or regional interests, but solely on the basis of responsibility for the overall work of the BFP. In the person to be elected, in addition to the appropriate charisma, the suitability of character for the required service on the Leadership Board should be evident.

Nominations for the election of the Leadership Board shall be made by the incumbent Presidium and may be supplemented by the regions (see election regulations for the Leadership Board of the BFP). The BFP General Meeting elects the Leadership Board from the nominated candidates and from those the persons for the legal offices of the Executive Board.

An absolute majority is required for the election of Leadership Board Members. If this is not achieved in the first ballot, a run-off election is held between the candidates with the most votes.

The Leadership Board elected by the BFP General Meeting as well as the regional leaderships are elected for five years (see section 6.1.3 ). Re-election is permissible.

### **7.2.2 Mode of operation and tasks**

The Leadership Board meets at regular intervals. The meetings are convened by the General Secretary of the BFP after joint agreement on dates.

The Praeses, Deputy Praeses, Treasurer of the BFP and General Secretary are each authorized to represent the BFP alone. However, legal transactions concerning real estate and other rights in rem require the signatures of the Treasurer of the Association or his deputy in conjunction with another member of the Leadership Board. For savings books and accounts, the Treasurer of the BFP or his deputy is also authorized to sign alone.

The Leadership Board may call in competent, interested persons as advisors on specific topics.

Tasks:

1. It is responsible for all areas of the Association. Its members have access and the right to speak in governing bodies and General Assemblies in regions and associations, churches and ministries. In justified cases, it can demand the convening of meetings and General Assemblies.
2. Administrative matters involving ministries and authorities.
3. Staff recruitment at the BFP headquarters.
4. Decisions regarding investments and acquisitions as well as the implementation of structural measures in BFP institutions. If the measure exceeds EUR 250 000, the Presidium must give its approval (see also Section 7.2.2 item8 ).
5. Decisions on the admission of churches to the legal status of corporation and approval of their statutes.
6. Decisions on the granting of support payments from BFP aid (BBH) funds. Decisions on granting financial support from BFP assets are to be made by the Presidium.
7. Decisions on taking out loans and guarantees for churches and works according to table presentation of the Treasurer of the BFP.
8. Decisions on taking out loans for the Association (including those for BFP works) as well as on encumbrances on Federation property, insofar as these do not concern corporate-directed churches and their real estate, require the approval of the Presidium on the basis of a table presentation by the Treasurer of the BFP (see Section 7.1.2 item3 ).

If decisions cannot be reached by consensus within the Leadership Board, they must be submitted to the Presidium.

## **7.3 Competencies/Duties of the Praeses of the BFP**

### **7.3.1 Praeses of the BFP**

1. The Praeses of the BFP, in addition to performing legal and administrative duties, represents in a special way the spiritual principles of the Fraternity and promotes the spiritual development and visionary direction of the BFP.
2. He chairs the BFP General Meeting. He shall chair the Leadership Board Meeting unless another member of the Presidium is designated to do so, and shall chair the Presidium meeting unless another member of the Presidium is designated to do so.
3. He responsibly directs the work of the BFP in accordance with the guidelines and directives of the BFP General Meeting, shall work for the implementation of the decisions taken and shall give suggestions for new initiatives and activities.
4. He maintains contact with the staff, churches and regions and promotes their cooperation.
5. By virtue of his office, he has access to all committees (ministries, committees, etc.) of the BFP. As a representative of the Presidium and the BFP General Meeting, he should be the link between the individual ministries and the entire fraternity.

### **7.3.2 Competencies/Duties of the Vice-Praeses of the BFP**

The Vice-Praeses assume areas of responsibility and work within the framework of the Presidium/Leadership Board (see Sections 7.1.2 and 7.2.2) and represent the Praeses of the BFP in case of incapacity. They are legal representatives of the Association and have all rights and duties of the Praeses in case of representation.

If, in addition to the Vice-Praeses elected by the BFP General Meeting, a second (and further) Vice-Praeses of the BFP from a church association has been agreed upon by special arrangement, this Vice-Praeses shall be confirmed by acclamation by the BFP General Meeting.

### **7.3.3 Competencies/Duties of the General Secretary of the BFP**

1. The General Secretary of the BFP assumes areas of responsibility and work within the framework of the Presidium/Leadership Board (see Sections 7.1.2 and 7.2.2). These include in particular the areas of "Members", "Training", "Administration" and "Public Relations".
2. He maintains contact with the staff, churches and regions and promotes their cooperation.
3. By virtue of his office, he has access to all Regions, Associations, Committees and Ministries of the BFP and is informed of their activities through their minutes.

### **7.3.4 Competencies/Duties of the Treasurer of the BFP**

1. He/she shall responsibly manage, in accordance with the directives of the Executive Leadership, the Presidium and the BFP General Meeting, the income and expenditures of collections and donations, as well as loans taken out, etc.  
He is obliged to raise his objection to all financial decisions of the BFP General Meeting or the Presidium which are irresponsible in terms of the cash situation.
2. He/she shall be authorized to sign for checks and referrals in accordance with instructions and authority given to him/her by the Executive Leadership or the BFP General Meeting. Further details shall be regulated by the Financial/Cash Regulations.
3. In matters of property law, he shall sign jointly with another member of the Executive Leadership in accordance with Article 8 (3) of the Constitution, unless the Financial/Cash Regulations provide otherwise.
4. He/she shall submit a written financial and cash report of the Association including BFP ministries to the Presidium and the BFP General Meeting at regular intervals – at least annually.  
He/she shall ensure that book and cash audits are carried out once a year by the auditors to be appointed by the BFP General Meeting. Their report is to be submitted to the BFP General Meeting (see section 7.1.2 item 4).
5. He/she is responsible for the for the movable and immovable property of the Association, unless otherwise regulated.
6. He/she shall seek equitable support for underpaid pastors from BFP aid – as directed by the Executive Leadership (see Section 7.2.2 item6 ).
7. He/she is responsible for issuing salary guidelines as directed by the Executive Leadership or the BFP General Meeting and recommends classifications for employees of the Assembly to the Executive Leadership and maintains their salary records.
8. To the extent necessary to comply with the law, he shall receive the cash reports of the Ministries of the BFP.
9. He/she shall ensure that the audits of the books and cash of the corporation-direct churches are carried out at reasonable intervals in accordance with the statutory provisions. In the event of discrepancies, he shall report them to the Executive Leadership. The Treasurer of the BFP may delegate the audit.
10. The BFP ministries are required to submit a budget to the Treasurer of the BFP and to coordinate all significant expenditures, salary changes, and capital expenditures with the Treasurer in advance.
11. The Treasurer of the BFP is authorized to appoint a Finance Committee. This is appointed by the Presidium on the Executive Leadership's reference.

## **7.4 Work regulations**

1. Within the first six months after an election in the BFP General Meeting, the Executive Leadership shall establish working rules for itself and agree on the distribution of work areas, insofar as these are not specified in the constitution and guidelines, and presents the results to the Presidium.
2. Once the regional leaders have been reappointed by the regional meetings, the Presidium shall immediately adopt rules of procedure. The reappointment of the regional leaders must take place within six months after the BFP electoral meeting.  
The church associations elect their representatives according to their own rotation.

### **7.4.1 Working groups and committees**

The Presidium appoints working groups and committees for corresponding areas of responsibility.

Working groups are formed exclusively by members of the Presidium. Committees consist of members of the Presidium and other persons. The heads of the committees are confirmed by the Presidium.

Standing committees operate for the duration of the corresponding Executive Leadership election period; ad hoc committees are limited to the project/assignment at hand.

## **7.5 Representation**

The BFP strives for contact and cooperation in national, inter-church and international relations in the Body of Christ. The Presidium decides on the respective representatives.

Attendance and results at given events should be reported to the Presidium and, if necessary, to the BFP General Meeting.

## **8 BFP council and honorary members**

### **8.1 BFP Council**

The BFP council is composed of the Presidium, the leaders of the BFP ministries, the leaders of the church associations, the honorary members and members appointed by the Presidium for the respective election period. It meets at least every two years to exchange ideas. The tasks of the BFP council are the integration and the unity in the Association, as well as the cultivation of relations of incumbent and former responsible persons. Its members serve on confidential committees and other bodies, as well as the ordained members in ordinations.

The leadership of the BFP council is determined by the Executive Leadership at the beginning of an election period.

### **8.2 Honorary members**

After at least 16 years of uninterrupted membership in the Presidium, members of the Presidium may be appointed honorary members by the BFP General Meeting at the request of the Executive Leadership.

Other persons who have earned special trust through their commitment to the Association may be appointed honorary members by the BFP General Meeting at the request of the Executive Leadership.

Honorary membership means access to the BFP council and is valid for life if it is not revoked by the Presidium.

## **9 BFP works, other works and institutions in the Association**

### **9.1 BFP works**

The BFP has works to carry out common tasks. They are part of the body and are constituted by resolution of the BFP General Meeting and have a constitution and working structure approved by the Presidium. The leaders of the BFP works need the confirmation of the Presidium for their legitimacy. They are introduced at the following BFP General Meeting. The annual budget of the BFP works is subject to the control of the Treasurer of the BFP and their accountability report is presented to the BFP General Meeting.

### **9.2 BFP institutions**

BFP institutions are established by resolution of the Presidium. The General Meeting will be informed about this. They have a working mandate for the BFP, which is set out in protocol framework agreements. The BFP institution works without regional structures and gives its report to the Presidium on request. It is dissolved by resolution of the Presidium.

### **9.3 Working group (AG)**

By resolution of the Presidium, working groups (AG) are set up in the Association to bring together BFP works, institutions and other works in the Association. The aim of the collection is binding cooperation and lasting integration. This applies in particular to institutions and works to be newly admitted to the Association or to be created in the Association. If these cannot yet be assigned to a specific WG, they are integrated into a related WG until they can be better assigned, if possible.

The working guidelines of a WG require the approval of the Presidium for their validity, which must also confirm their leadership.

### **9.4 Other works (works in the Association)**

Works with their own legal structure can be members of the BFP if the following points are fulfilled:

1. more than half of its Executive Leadership belongs to the BFP,
2. the work is incorporated into an AG (see section 9.3 ),
3. the membership in the BFP and the escheat in favor of the BFP is included in the statutes.

In case of omission of one (or more) of the points, the Presidium shall decide whether or not the work shall be removed as a member of the BFP.

Voting rights for works are regulated under section 5.2.4 point 2.