

EUROPEAN FORUM OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER CHRISTIAN GROUPS

CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

comprising **Statutes** and **Internal Regulations**

Note: the Statutes form the public and registered formation document of the Forum, and become effective by means of a Deed from a Dutch Notary Public. Any subsequent amendments to the Statutes require a further such Deed and only take effect when this Deed is executed. The Internal Regulations do not require public registration nor a Notary's Deed, and can be adopted and changed as the Forum wishes, the changes to take effect when the Forum wishes.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

(This page does not form part of the Statutes.)

- 1998 Adopted by the AGM in Frankfurt as complete new version of Statutes and Internal Regulations.
- 1999 Amendments approved by AGM in Vienna to Statutes Article 8 Clauses 3 and 4 (concerning Board members representing the Forum) following advice from Notary.
- 2000 Amendment approved by AGM in Edinburgh to Internal Regulation Article 6 Clause 1 to increase the annual membership fees.
- 2001 Amendment approved by AGM in Warsaw to Internal Regulation Article 4 to draw up accounts in Euros. Presentation of Membership Fees article updated.
- 2004 Amendment proposed at AGM in Stockholm to Internal Regulation Article 8 that groups must have paid their fee for the current year to vote at the AGM, and clarifying voting rights for new member groups.
- 2006 Amendment approved by AGM in Riga to Internal Regulation Article 6 about new subscription fees and numbers of votes.
- 2013 Amendment approved by the AGM in Zug to the Statutes about change of name to ...LGBT ... and about the appointment of the auditor(s) and to the Internal Regulations about number of Board members, about the name of Working Groups, and about the internal and external auditor.
- 2014 Amendment to the Internal Regulations concerning membership and voting rights of members of "Forum Friends"
- 2015 Amendment to the Statutes concerning e-mail correspondence.
- 2015 Amendment to the Internal Regulations concerning gender balance on the Board (Trans*- Inclusion)

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STATUTES

NAME AND REGISTERED OFFICE

Article 1

The Association, hereinafter known as “the Forum”, is an organisation incorporated under Dutch law and known as
The European Forum of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christian Groups./
Europees Forum van Lesbische, Homoseksuele, Biseksuele en Transgender
Christengroepen.

The Forum is a continuation of the “Europees Forum van Lesbische en Homo Christengroepen” and of the "Forum of Gay Christian Groups in Europe" which was formed in Strasbourg, France, on twelfth June nineteen hundred and eighty-three, under the aforementioned English name and the French title: "Forum des Groupes Chrétiens Gais d'Europe". The Forum's registered office is established in Utrecht (Netherlands).

AIMS

Article 2

The Forum, as an organisation of homosexual groups, pursues the following objectives:

2.1 - to witness within lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities to the good news in the Christian faith of God's love for all people, and to work for the emancipation and the freedom of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and to fight against negative actions, in particular if such actions emanate from churches or Christian organisations;

2.2 - to bring together groups concerned with faith in Jesus Christ, with churches, and with homosexuality; and whose aims include achieving acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender lifestyles as a valid expression of Christian living, and/or acceptance of the Christian religion;

and specifically to promote these objectives by:

2.2.1 - supporting the work of groups of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Christians through the provision of facilities for information exchange, mutual encouragement and supporting action in particular campaigns;

2.2.2 - encouraging the formation of such groups where they do not already exist;

2.2.3 - presenting a coordinated voice representing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Christian groups to international Christian organisations and churches and to international lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender organisations.

2.3. The Forum will attempt, in the composition of its Board, its working groups and its official statements, to take account of the specific concerns of all who consider themselves partially or wholly of a homosexual orientation, male, female or otherwise, embracing also an awareness of the concerns of physically disadvantaged people, and those of various cultural and ethnic origins.

MEMBERS

Article 3

3.1. The members of the Forum are those foundations, associations, movements, confederations, formal or informal corporate bodies (hereinafter called "group" or "groups") which define themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender; which either define themselves as Christian organisations or which have a subgroup or section which defines itself as Christian; which organise in one or more European countries; and which apply to join the Forum and are accepted into membership by a simple majority at a General Meeting.

3.2. Applications for admission to membership must be made in writing, attended by the recommendations of two groups who have already been admitted as members to the Forum.

3.3. Pending the decision of the General Meeting on an application for membership, the Board may admit the group concerned in the capacity of an observer.

3.4. In the case of a generalist lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender group with a Christian subgroup or section being a Forum member, the Christian subgroup or section shall represent the member group at General Meetings.

Article 4

Membership ceases:

4.1. in the case of the dissolution of the member group;

4.2. by resignation of the group;

4.3. by expulsion, pronounced on behalf of the Forum. Expulsion can only be pronounced by the General Meeting. Pending this decision, the group concerned may be suspended by the Board.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Article 5

The members are required to pay the amount of the annual subscription fixed by the General Meeting. A member which has not paid a subscription for more than two years may be deemed to have resigned.

GENERAL MEETING

Article 6

6.1. The sovereign decision-making body of the Forum shall be the General Meeting.

6.2. The General Meeting shall be composed of one or more representatives from as many of the member groups as choose to be represented, provided that at least one-third of the member groups are so represented. Representatives of groups admitted to observer status and persons admitted as individual observers by the Board are also entitled to attend. The General Meeting may invite such other persons to be present as it sees fit.

6.3. Each member group shall be entitled to a number of votes in proportion to the number of members in the group. The ratio of votes to members shall be laid down in the Internal Regulations.

6.4. An Annual General Meeting (hereinafter called "AGM") shall be held once a year for the

following purposes:

- 6.4.1 to consider and if thought fit to approve the Board's report on its work since the previous AGM;
- 6.4.2 to set the Board's priorities for the coming year;
- 6.4.3 to consider and if thought fit to approve the accounts for the previous financial year;
- 6.4.4 to receive the auditor's report on the accounts for the previous financial year;
- 6.4.5 to set the budget for the next financial year and to review the accounts in comparison with the budget for the current year;
- 6.4.6 to elect the Board;
- 6.4.7 to appoint the auditor/s as laid down in the Internal Regulations
- 6.4.8 to determine the date and venue of future AGMs;
- 6.4.9 to consider and if thought fit to approve any propositions made by member groups;
- 6.4.10 to conduct Christian prayer and worship.

6.5. The AGM shall be held within six months of the end of the financial year, unless exceptionally this term shall have been extended by the General Meeting.

6.6. The Board shall convene the AGM and may convene a General Meeting at such time and place as it deems necessary. The Board must convene a General Meeting at such time as the law of the Netherlands or these Statutes may decree, or on receipt of a written request to do so from at least one-third of the member groups, such General Meeting to be held within two months of the receipt of such request. If the Board do not convene a General Meeting within a month of receiving such a request, the requesting groups may convene a General Meeting themselves.

6.7. A General Meeting shall be convened by written invitation sent to the registered office of each member group. Electronic communication to the address designated by the member group is considered a valid invitation. At least one calendar month's notice shall be given of the date and venue of a General Meeting.

BOARD

Article 7

7.1. The day to day administration of the Forum in between General Meetings shall be the responsibility of a Board of at least three members.

7.2. The Board members shall be elected at a General Meeting by the representatives of the member groups from amongst their own number. The consent of the member group is required for one of its representatives to be a Board member. The appointment of a Board member shall be for a period of two years. A retiring Board member shall be twice eligible for immediate re-election.

7.3. The Internal Regulations may lay down the number of Board members, the Board posts and the dates when each post is due for election.

7.4. In the event that there is only one candidate for a vacant Board position, a vote shall be required to appoint that candidate.

7.5. No group or nationality shall hold a majority on the Board.

7.6. The General Meeting may at any time dismiss any Board member from his or her post.

7.7. A Board member shall cease to hold office:

7.7.1 on resignation by the Board member;

7.7.2 if the Board member ceases to belong to the member group of which he or she was a representative at the time of election, or if that group ceases to be a member of the Forum;

7.7.3 if the member group of which he or she was a representative at the time of election withdraws its permission for that person to be a Board member.
in the case that the Board member is in a state of bankruptcy or *surcéance* of payment. She/he is put into the position of losing the power of her/his money.

7.8. If the number of Board members shall have been reduced to fewer than three, the Board nevertheless remains competent. However, in such case the Board shall convene a General Meeting as soon as possible, to conduct elections for the vacant Board posts. The elections may also be held in the form of a poll by letter or electronic communication, under the supervision of a Notary Public.

Article 8

8.1. In international matters, the Board may speak and act on behalf of the Forum.

8.2.

8.2.1 In matters on the national level, the Board may speak and act on behalf of the Forum only if at least half of the member groups in that country have pronounced themselves in favour of this. Moreover, all the member groups should previously have been given an opportunity to express their opinion to the Board on the matters under discussion.

8.2.2 The text of the statements referred to in Articles 8.1. and 8.2.1 shall be sent as soon as possible to all the groups concerned.

8.2.3 Any of the groups involved may be allowed to dissociate themselves from the statements by the Board.

8.3. The Board represents the Forum. The authority to act on behalf of the Forum rests also with two members of the Board, acting jointly.

8.4. Authority to act in the name of the Forum is only accorded by a unanimous decision of the Board with specification of the limits of this authority to one or more Board members or other persons.

Article 9

Subject to the consent given by the General Meeting, the Board will be authorised to conclude contracts intended to purchase, sell or mortgage buildings and registered goods, to conclude contracts whereby the Forum undertakes to assume the liabilities of a guarantor or of a joint debtor who is considered severally liable, allows warrants to a third party or a security for the debts of a third party.

AMENDMENT OF THE STATUTES

Article 10

10.1. These Statutes may be amended by a decision approved by a two-thirds majority at any General Meeting.

10.2. No proposal to amend these Statutes may be discussed at any General Meeting unless all member groups have been advised at least a month in advance of the General Meeting that a proposal to amend these Statutes will be made at that General Meeting, and the notice convening the General Meeting contains the full text of the proposal or the place whence this may be obtained.

10.3. An amendment to these Statutes, once agreed, only comes into force after a Deed to that effect has been drawn up by a Notary Public.

DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

Article 11

11.1. The Forum may be dissolved by a decision approved by a two-thirds majority at any General Meeting.

11.2. No proposal for dissolution of the Forum may be discussed at any General Meeting unless all member groups have been advised at least a month in advance of the General Meeting that a proposal to dissolve will be made at that General Meeting.

11.3. In the event of the dissolution of the Forum, the Board will be entrusted with the winding-up procedures. During the winding-up procedures, the regulations of the present statutes shall as far as possible remain in force.

11.4. The remaining assets, if any, will be assigned as far as possible to purposes that conform to the aims pursued by the Forum.

INTERNAL REGULATIONS

Article 12

12.1. The General Meeting may decide that Internal Regulations should be drawn up.

12.2. The Internal Regulations should not be contrary to any existing legal provisions or to the present statutes.

12.3. Decisions in connection with the drawing up or the amendment of the Internal Regulations, can be taken only at a General Meeting and require a two-thirds majority to be approved.

12.4. No proposal to draw up or to amend the Internal Regulations may be discussed at any General Meeting unless all member groups have been advised at least a month in advance of the General Meeting that a proposal to draw up or amend Internal Regulations will be made at that General Meeting, and the notice convening the General Meeting contains the full text of the proposal or the place whence this may be obtained.

12.5. Newly drawn-up Internal Regulations and amendments to Internal Regulations shall take effect immediately they are approved, or at such later time as the proposal to draw up or amend shall specify.

DEFINITIONS

Article 13

The following definitions shall apply in these Statutes and in the Internal Regulations made under them:

13.1. a simple majority shall have been obtained when more votes are cast in favour of a proposal than are cast against it;

13.2. a two-thirds majority shall have been obtained when at least twice as many votes are cast in favour of a proposal as are cast against it;

13.3. a representative is an individual person who is a member of a member group of the Forum and who attends a general meeting representing that member group;

13.4. a member or member group of the Forum is a group which has been admitted to membership of the Forum under Article 3.1 above.

13.5. an observer is a group which is not yet a member of the Forum, who has been admitted as an observer to a General Meeting by the Board under Article 3.3 above.

13.6. an individual observer is an individual person from a country where groups have not yet formed, who has been admitted to a General Meeting as an observer by the Board.

13.7. a guest is a person or group invited by the organising committee to attend a general meeting in some official capacity, including as invited speakers, or representatives of the host institution, the local civic authorities, or the local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

13.8. a visitor is any other individual person attending a general meeting who does not fit into any of the above categories. This may include individuals who are members of one or more member groups of the Forum but who are not representing any group.

13.9. a host group is a member of the Forum which has invited the Forum to hold its AGM in the member's country and which is responsible for organising that AGM.

13.10. AGM stands for Annual General Meeting.

13.11. EUR stands for the Euro, the new European currency.

END

INTERNAL REGULATIONS

NAME

Article I.

The name of the Forum can be used in English, French and other languages if the translated name has been authorised by the Board and the use of it is not contrary to the law.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Article II.

The Forum will draw its revenue from the following sources:

1. the annual subscriptions from the members of the Forum;
2. a collection to be made during the annual meeting;
3. special contributions made by donors supporting the Association;
4. gifts, donations, subventions, legacies and appointments of heir, it being understood however that the Forum may never accept such appointments otherwise than without liability beyond the assets descended;
5. any other profits and revenues.

Article III.

The financial year coincides with the calendar year, thus starting on the first of January and ending on the thirty-first of December.

Article IV.

The Forum shall maintain its funds and draw up its accounts in euros (hereinafter referred to as EUR).

Article V.

1. The Board shall keep records of the financial position of the Forum, thus allowing the Forum's assets and liabilities to be determined at any moment.
2. The Board shall produce annual accounts for each financial year in a format that complies with any requirements of the law of the Netherlands, and which in any case shall include a balance sheet, profit and loss statement, and comparison of the actual outcome with the budget for the year agreed by the General Meeting.
3. The Board shall keep all annual accounts for at least ten years.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND VOTES

Article VI.

1. Each member group shall pay an annual subscription based on the number of members it has, and shall have a number of votes at a General Meeting based on its number of members, as follows:

<u>Members</u>	<u>Subscription</u>	<u>Number of votes</u>
1 – 25 members	EUR 95 -	1 vote
26 – 100 members	EUR 130 -	2 votes
101 – 200 members	EUR 190 –	3 votes
201 – 300 members	EUR 285 –	4 votes
More than 300 members	EUR 380 –	5 votes

2. A member group without a concrete number of members shall pay the subscription rate corresponding to a group with 1-25 members.

3. The group “Forum Friends” does not pay its membership fees as a group, each individual member of “Forum Friends” pays € 25.- directly into the Forum account. As long as at least one “Forum Friends” member pays the fee, the group is considered an active member of the Forum. The number of votes for this group is based on the number of active members

4. Unless a group's membership has ceased under Article 4 of the Statutes, a group that has failed to pay one or more year's subscription regains full membership rights from the time it pays a subscription again.

5. In exceptional circumstances, where a member group is facing financial hardship, the Board may charge that member a reduced subscription for the year, or accept payment in kind for the subscription, in goods or in labour.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Article VII.

1. The Annual General Meeting will be held in the country to which it is invited by one or more groups (the "host group" or "host groups"), with the approval of the General Meeting. The place and organisation of the meeting will - subject to approval by the Board - be arranged at the initiative of the host group or groups. The Board shall see to it that adequate advice and support will be given to the host group or groups.

2. One representative of the host group for the next AGM shall be entitled to attend Board meetings in the year between the previous AGM and the one that group is hosting, and to claim reasonable travelling expenses from the Forum for attending that Board meeting.

3. The General Meeting shall decide in which language or languages it will work.

4. The host group shall find one or more persons who are not Board members who, with the agreement of the AGM, will chair the AGM plenary sessions.

5. To accompany the business required to be transacted at the AGM under article 6.4 of the Statutes, the host group may, subject to the approval of the Board, arrange for such conferences, lectures, workshops, discussions and networking, social, cultural or devotional activities as it sees fit.

6. A member or observer group may send as many representatives to a General Meeting as it wishes, subject to the availability of space at the venue and providing that no member group is

prevented from sending at least one representative by lack of space.

7. As many visitors may attend, and as many guests may be invited to, a General Meeting and associated activities as space permits in the venue, provided that no member group is prevented from sending at least one representative by lack of space.

8. A representative may represent as many member groups as wish to appoint him or her to represent them.

VOTING AT GENERAL MEETINGS

Article VIII.

1. A member group may only vote at a General Meeting if it has paid its membership fee for the current calendar year. No group shall be entitled to vote if its representative(s) cannot prove its fee has been paid. Except that a group voted into membership during a General Meeting may vote for the rest of that meeting and its first membership fee will become due of the following 1st January.

1.1. The group "Forum Friends" may only be represented by members who have paid their individual membership fees.

2. Elections shall be conducted by secret ballot. Ballot papers shall be distributed to each member group present according to the number of votes to which each member is entitled.

3. Votes in matters other than elections shall be conducted by show of voting cards. Cards shall be distributed to member groups according to the number of votes to which each member is entitled.

4. A representative may hold and vote with more than one voting card and ballot paper; more than one representative may hold and use one voting card and ballot paper between them. The same voting card may be held by different representatives at different times.

5. Each member group may decide for itself the manner of determining how any member group's votes shall be cast. Valid methods shall include but not be limited to:

- A. all the representatives of the group decide amongst themselves, by consensus or by vote, how the group shall vote, and all the group's votes shall be cast that way;
- B. the group mandates in advance how its votes shall be cast and the votes are cast in accordance with this mandate;
- C. the group appoints one of its representatives to cast all the votes as (s)he sees fit; this representative may consult any other representatives in arriving at her/his decision;
- D. the group allocates one or more votes each to certain representatives, to cast as each sees fit.

6. In the event that the representatives of a group are in dispute about the method of determining how the group's votes shall be cast, this arbitration procedure may be used: the group's votes shall be lodged with the Chairperson of the meeting, a vote shall be conducted amongst the group's representatives and the Chairperson shall cast all the group's votes in accordance with the result. If there is no result or the result is evenly divided, the group's votes shall abstain.

7. Unless otherwise stated in the law of the Netherlands or in the Statutes or these Internal Regulations, all decisions shall be taken by simple majority. All elections shall be counted on the "first past the post" system.

8. When an election result is tied, a second ballot shall be held between the top two candidates. If this second ballot is tied, lots shall be cast to determine which candidate is elected. If a vote on any matter requiring a simple majority is tied, the proposal in question shall be considered as rejected.

BOARD

Article IX.

1. The Board shall be composed of six members: two Co-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer, a fifth and a sixth Board member. Each shall be elected directly to their particular post. The specific tasks of the fifth and the sixth Board member shall be defined by the Annual general Meeting and are valid for the period of their election.
2. The Co-Presidents must be of two different gender identities and no one gender identity can hold more than 50% of the posts.
3. Every effort must be made to ensure fair representation on the Board of all gender identities recognised within the Forum.
4. For the purpose of these Internal Regulations we recognise different gender identities, which include but are not limited to male, female and trans*.
5. One Co-President, the Treasurer and the fifth Board member shall be elected in even-numbered years and the other Co-President, the Secretary and the sixth Board member in odd-numbered years.
6. If there is no candidate of an appropriate gender identity for one of the Co-Presidents posts, the post shall be left vacant.

Article X.

1. The Board shall choose its own method of working.
2. The members of the Board exercise their function voluntarily. They may obtain from the Forum reimbursement of justified and reasonable expenses incurred during their work for the Forum. The decision as to whether an expense is justified shall take into account the requirements placed on the Board by the law of the Netherlands, the Statutes and these Internal Regulations; and upon the priorities for the year and the budget decided by the AGM.
3. The Board shall:
 - A. gather information and pass this information on to the members, by means of a Newsletter or otherwise;
 - B. co-operate with the host group or groups of the next AGM, to preserve continuity whilst protecting its own responsibilities;
 - C. jointly and severally support any member who might apply to the Board for assistance;
 - D. convene a Board meeting at least twice a year, and inform the members of the Forum at least a month before each meeting of when and where it will be held.
4. A representative of a Forum member group may attend any Board meeting, but apart from the representative of the next AGM host group may not be reimbursed their expenses for so doing by the Forum. The member group shall give suitable advance notice of the attendance of its representative and shall indemnify the Forum against any extra costs caused by the presence of the representative.
5. Subject to the agreement of all the Board members and the host group of the next AGM, a Board meeting may be convened electronically, using such synchronous or asynchronous electronic communications media and over such duration as the Board shall deem fit. Upon advance application by a member group, its representative shall be given read access to the electronic meeting.

WORKING PARTIES

Article XI.

1. The Board may invite members or their representatives to form working parties to assist the Board in its work.
2. A General Meeting may set up Working Parties to carry out particular activities on behalf of the Forum and appoint members or their representatives to these Working Parties.
3. The members of these working parties exercise their function voluntarily. They may obtain from the Forum reimbursement of justified and reasonable expenses incurred during their work for the Forum. The decision as to whether an expense is justified shall take into account the priorities for the year and the budget, and any proposal concerning the Working Party in question, approved by the AGM.

VACANCIES ON THE BOARD

Article XII.

1. Where a Board member resigns or otherwise ceases to hold office other than by normal retirement at an AGM, then provided the Board retains at least three members the Board may continue with a vacancy until the next AGM, when the vacancy shall be filled by election, the elected candidate to hold office until the normal date for election to the post in question.
2. If the number of Board members shall be reduced to fewer than three members, the remaining Board members shall decide within a month whether to convene a General Meeting or to conduct a postal ballot.
3. If the Board chooses a General Meeting, it shall convene this meeting according to Article 6 of the Statutes. This General Meeting must be held within two months of the Board being reduced to fewer than three members.
4. If the Board chooses a postal ballot, it shall without delay contact a Notary Public in the Netherlands. The remaining Board members, or a committee of two or more members appointed by the Board from amongst the members of the member groups who are not candidates for election to the Board, shall conduct the postal ballot under the instructions of the Notary Public. The postal ballot shall be held within two months of the Board being reduced to fewer than three members.
5. Subject to the provisions of the law of the Netherlands, and under the guidance of the Notary Public, the postal ballot may include circulation of ballot papers and return of votes by facsimile transmission and electronic mail.

ARCHIVES

Article XIII.

The Board will ensure that the annual accounts are kept for at least ten years, and that other documents of lasting significance to the Forum will be kept for ten years or such longer period as shall be deemed necessary or be required by law. The Board will in good time seek contact with historical libraries or archives for permanent preservation of documents.

END