



GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ELECTION REGULATIONS

I. OUR MISSION AND COMMITMENT

The Kaiserswerth General Conference is an international union of diaconal agencies and diaconal communities/sisterhoods which have their origins in the deaconess movement of the Kaiserswerth tradition or are close to this tradition.

The members of the Kaiserswerth General Conference and their diaconal services are committed to the tradition of the Churches of the Reformation.

The members practice ecumenical openness and maintain contacts with other international diaconal communities, institutions and associations.

The Kaiserswerth General Conference reflects the diversity of gifts and missions, of cultures and faith traditions of its respective members.

The Kaiserswerth General Conference enables personal meetings as well as sharing about the diaconal practice. At the same time, the celebration of the faith, the common prayer and the intercession for each other constitute a strengthening bond.

The basis of all life and work in the communities and agencies of the members is the gospel of Jesus Christ with his mission to the service of love.

Our foundation is the Bible.

II. OUR HISTORY

Theodor and Friederike Fliedner responded to the social needs of their time - guided by the biblical commandment of love for one's neighbor. By an educational offer for nurses and kindergarten-teachers, they laid the foundation for the Motherhouse diakonia and deaconess tradition.

Over the following decades, numerous deaconess motherhouses were created all around the world which then joined together into the Kaiserswerth General Conference in 1861. At present, it is made up of deaconess motherhouses and diaconal works with their respective diaconal communities, sharing the essential concern of "Diakonia in Community".

III. OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Kaiserswerth General Conference is to strengthen the interaction and the communion of its members with each other, to support them in their diaconal service and spiritual life, as well as in processes of renewal.

The Kaiserswerth General Conference encourages its members and the Churches to which they belong, to keep alive the awareness of the diaconal dimension of the faith and, within their own institutions, the knowledge of the ecclesial character of diaconal action.

IV. TASKS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The Kaiserswerth General Conference

- focusses and reflects on the relevant topics on the basis of biblical foundation,
- is open to new forms of diakonia in communities and diaconal spirituality and encourages member organizations as they develop and implement them,
- usually organizes every three years a General Conference on relevant diaconal policy topics, on the basis of theological-diaconal insights,
- usually organizes educational offers such as symposiums and study trips and encourages its members to engage in an exchange of mutual know-how,
- encourages the member institutions to lead their personnel to both professionalism and identification of Christian values.

V. MEMBERS

Membership is open to any diaconal organization and community which subscribes to these foundational principles and gives concrete expression to them in their life and work.

Membership will be approved and discontinued by the General Assembly of the Kaiserswerth General Conference upon the recommendations of the presidium. Each member is assigned to a region by the General Assembly.

If a region has its own organization for members of Kaiserswerth tradition, it means that membership in this organization is a prerequisite for membership in the Kaiserswerth General Conference.

VI. ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES

The components of the Kaiserswerth General Conference are

- the General Assembly
- the Presidium
- the Regions

VI.a General Assembly

All members of the Kaiserswerth General Conference take part in the General Assembly.

Every member of the Kaiserswerth General Conference has one vote in the General Assembly.

The General Assembly usually meets every three years.

The General Assembly is conducted by the Presidium.

The General Secretary of the Kaiserswerther Verband deutscher Diakonissen-Mutterhäuser e.V. (Kaiserswerth Association of German Deaconess Motherhouses) participates in an advisory capacity. She/He is at the same time, confirmed by the presidium, as General Secretary of the General Conference.

The presidium is responsible for the minutes of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly makes decisions regarding:

- admission and exclusion of members and their assignment to a region
- the guiding principles
- the election regulations
- statements regarding the identity of the Kaiserswerth General Conference
- all matters of fundamental importance

The General Assembly confirms the members of the Presidium at the recommendation of the regions, in accordance with the election regulations of the Kaiserswerth General Conference.

VI.b The Presidium

The presidium consists of the members confirmed by the General Assembly in accordance with election regulations.

Members of the Presidium are elected for six years or until the next General Assembly thereafter. Reelection is possible. At the time of retirement membership may end at the discretion of the diaconal organization, but no later than reaching the age of 70.

As a rule, the presidium meets twice a year.

The General Secretary participates in the meetings of the presidium in an advisory capacity.

In particular, the General Secretary prepares the meetings at the direction of the president and ensures communication between the members of the presidium and the implementation of the decisions of the presidium.

Minutes of the meetings of the presidium will be kept.

The Presidium:

- elects from its membership the president, and two vice-presidents for a term of 6 years
- conducts and is responsible for the affairs of the Kaiserswerth General Conference
- represents the Kaiserswerth General Conference internally and externally
- prepares and conducts the General Assembly and other meetings
- proposes to the General Assembly the admission and exclusion of members and the assignment of members to a region
- ensures the implementation and observance of the guiding principles and election regulations of the Kaiserswerth General Conference and the decisions of the General Assembly.

VI.c Regions

The member organizations of the Kaiserswerth General Conference will be assigned to specific regions by the General Assembly:

I Northern Europe

II Western Europe

III Central and Eastern Europe

IV Germany

V non-European members

The organization of regional conferences and the implementation of the electoral process are the responsibility of the member organizations assigned to the region.

VII. FINANCES

The work of the Kaiserswerth General Conference is financed by contributions of the member organizations. Ability-to-pay is a foundational principle.

The members of the Presidium usually pay their own costs to participate in the Presidium meetings and other meetings. Upon request, and with the approval of the Presidium, the costs may be reimbursed in whole or in part.

The costs pertaining to the General Assemblies of the Kaiserswerth General Conference are to be borne entirely by the participants, with the possibility of grants and donations.

The Kaiserswerther Verband (Kaiserswerth Association) takes on the administration of the Kaiserswerth General Conference. Thus, the German member organizations share appropriately in funding the work of the Kaiserswerth General Conference.

Member institutions outside Germany contribute financially with a reasonable yearly amount.

Payments shall be made by mid-year at the latest.

ELECTION REGULATIONS FOR THE PRESIDIUM OF THE KAISERSWERTH GENERAL CONFERENCE

In order to give expression to the international character of the Kaiserswerth General Conference, the regions should be adequately represented in the Presidium.

The Regions

The member organizations of the Kaiserswerth General Conference will be assigned to specific regions by the General Assembly.

Region Seats

Northern Europe (DK, FI, NO) 3

II. Western Europe (FR, CH) 2

III. Central and Eastern Europe (HU, PL, AT) 2

IV. Germany (DE) 6

V. Non-European organizations (BR, KR, IN, TZ, US) 1

Between the General Assemblies, the member organizations may meet within the framework of regional conferences.

The implementation of the electoral process is the responsibility of the member organizations assigned to the region.

The elected and confirmed Presidium members are also responsible for communication between the presidium and the respective region.

As a fundamental principle, every defined region receives a fixed number of seats in the presidium. The regions and the number of assigned seats are set by the General Assembly. It is possible to reduce the number of seats allocated to a region at the request of the member organizations of a region to the presidium – particularly during a term of office of the presidium. The presidium can temporarily assign the vacated seat to another region.

The members of the Presidium are elected in their respective regions for a period of 6 years. Reelection is allowed. Their term of office begins with the confirmation by the General Assembly of the General Conference and ends at the end of the General Assembly of the General Conference taking place in the 6th year after the election.

Half of the elected members should be members of communities.

The General Assembly of the General Conference confirms the members elected by the regions. For retired members of the presidium, a new member is elected by the respective region. This advancing member of the presidium must be confirmed by the next General Assembly.

Membership in the presidium is terminated by resignation and automatically upon leaving the office of the sending member organization.

The incumbent presidium will usually open the election process 1 year prior to the General Assembly when an election occurs. Notification of those elected as representatives of the regions must be submitted in writing to the presidium no later than 1 month before the next General Assembly.

Election Regulations for the Offices and Functions in the Presidium

Immediately after confirmation by the General Assembly, the presidium shall elect from its members the president and both vice-presidents.

A simple majority is required for this.

The constituting election is conducted by the General Secretary of the Kaiserswerth General Conference.

The term of office of the president and her / his representatives shall end, at the latest, at the end of the term of office of the presidium.

Should the president or one of the vice-presidents resign from the presidium during a term of office, the vacant offices will be newly elected at the next meeting of the presidium.

Entry into force

The Guiding Principles and Election Regulations of the Kaiserswerth General Conference were adopted by the General Assembly in Bergen, Norway, on June 10, 2022, and shall enter into force on the date of the resolution, June 10, 2022.

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