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## Statutes of the Association of Fire Brigades of the European Union

Draft status as of: 05 February 2025

### **Preamble**

Fire services and Civil Protection in the countries that have joined the European Union are essential components of European safety policy. Fire services are an indispensable pillar of the security and resilience architecture. The extraordinary commitment and unwavering solidarity of firefighters are an essential cornerstone in saving lives, protecting property and cultural heritage, protecting the environment and building a safer and more resilient society. The legitimate organisations of firefighters in the Member States of the European Union therefore agree below on a common, sustainable structure to represent their interests and to engage in an interactive dialogue with the institutions of the European Union.

The above statutes are translated into English and French. The original version is the German version. This version serves as a basis for legal questions and is given priority of interpretation.

### **Section 1**

#### **Name and seat of the Association, financial year**

(1) The Association shall bear the name 'Association of Fire Brigades of the European Union' (*'Verband der Feuerwehren Europas'*). It shall be entered into the register of associations and shall then bear the addition 'e.V.'

(2) The Association shall have its registered office in Berlin.

(3) The financial year shall be the calendar year.

### **Section 2**

#### **Purpose, non-profit nature of the association**

(1) The Association exclusively and directly pursues non-profit purposes within the meaning of the section 'tax-privileged purposes' of the German Tax Code.

(2) The Association pursues the promotion of the fire service at European and international level and the following charitable objectives

- a) the promotion of fire and civil protection, occupational safety as well as accident prevention,
- b) the promotion of rescue from life-threatening situations,
- c) the promotion of environmental protection,
- d) the promotion of youth welfare,
- e) the promotion of cultural purposes,
- f) the promotion of education,

in particular through cooperation with and membership of other bodies and corporations under public law, through the exchange of experience and the formation of opinions, also by using the specialist bodies of CTIF, and by representing the interests of the members vis-à-vis the bodies of the European Union and other third parties.

(3) The Association is a non-profit organisation; it does not primarily pursue its own economic purposes.

(4) The Association's funds shall be used only for purposes specified in the Statutes. Members shall not receive any benefits from the Association's funds.

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(5) No person may be favoured by expenses that are alien to the purpose of the Association or by disproportionately high remuneration.

(6) The Association may maintain or participate in foundations and other organisations to support its tasks and objectives.

(7) The Association is neutral on religious and party-political issues. However, the association is committed to the democratic coexistence of people and nations and is firmly opposed to racist, xenophobic and discriminatory endeavours of all kinds.

### **Section 3**

#### **Acquisition of Membership**

(1) Members of the Association may be national fire brigade associations or groupings as the overall representation of fire brigades in a nation state, as well as their representatives as natural persons, whereby the nation state represented must also be subject to the effects of the Treaty on European Union in its currently valid version. Only one member per nation state may be admitted.

(2) Application for admission to the Association shall be made in writing to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall decide on the application for admission at its own discretion. It is not obliged to give reasons to the applicant if it rejects the application.

(3) Following a proposal by the Executive Committee, the General Assembly of the Association may appoint natural persons who have rendered outstanding services to the Association as Honorary Members for life.

### **Section 4**

#### **Termination of membership**

(1) Membership in the Association shall terminate upon death - in the case of legal persons, upon their dissolution - resignation or expulsion. Membership shall also end, without the need for resignation or exclusion, at the end of the financial year in which the nation state represented by the member is no longer subject to the effects of the Treaty on European Union or a subsequent treaty.

(2) Resignation shall be notified in writing to the Bureau. Resignation may only be declared three months before the end of the financial year.

(3) A member may be excluded from the Association by resolution of the General Assembly if he

- a) culpably damages the reputation or interests of the Association in a serious manner, or
- b) is more than three months in arrears with the payment of its admission or membership fees and has not paid the arrears despite a written reminder threatening expulsion.

The member shall be given the opportunity to comment on the reasons for the expulsion at a meeting of the Association. The member shall be given at least four weeks' notice of the meeting.

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## **Section 5**

### **Rights and obligations of members**

(1) Members are entitled to use the Association's facilities and to participate in joint events. They also have the right to vote and to be elected to the Association Assembly in accordance with the provisions of these Articles of Association.

(2) Each member has the duty to promote the interests of the Association, in particular to regularly pay its membership fees and, to the greatest extent possible support the life of the Association through its cooperation.

## **Section 6**

### **Admission Fee and Membership Fees**

(1) Each member shall pay an annual membership fee in advance.

(2) The amount of the admission fee and the membership fees shall be determined by the General Assembly.

(3) Honorary members shall be exempt from the obligation to pay admission and membership fees.

## **Section 7**

### **Bodies of the Association**

The bodies of the Association are the Executive Committee and the General Assembly.

## **Section 8**

### **Executive Committee**

(1) The Executive Committee shall consist of the President and four Vice-Presidents.

(2) The President and the Vice-Presidents are each authorised to represent the Association individually.

(3) The members of the Executive Committee may receive remuneration. The General Assembly shall decide on the amount of such remuneration.

(4) The President of the International Association of Fire and Rescue Services (CTIF), may attend the meetings of the Executive Committee in an advisory capacity.

(5) The Executive Committee may appoint a full-time Secretary General. This person shall attend the meetings of the Executive Committee and the other bodies of the Association in an advisory capacity. The Secretary General shall perform the duties of a Secretary and a Treasurer. The details of these and other duties of the Secretary General shall be governed by Rules of Procedure to be drawn up by the Executive Committee.

## **Section 9**

### **Duties of the Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee of the Association is responsible for representing the Association in accordance with § 26 BGB (German Civil Code) and for managing its business. In particular, it shall have the following duties

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- a) Convening and preparing the General Assembly, including drawing up the agenda,
- b) Implementing the decisions of the General Assembly,
- c) Management of the Association's assets and preparation of the annual report,
- d) The admission of new members
- e) The management of the day-to-day administration.

### **Section 10**

#### **Appointment of the Executive Committee**

(1) The members of the Executive Committee shall be elected individually by the General Assembly upon recommendation by the members for a term of five years. Any natural person who is active in the fire service or in corresponding associations may become a member of the Executive Committee. Re-election or early removal of a member by the General Assembly is permitted. A member remains in office after the expiry of the regular term of office until the election of his successor. One re-election is allowed. The term of office is limited to a maximum of two terms.

(2) If a member leaves the Executive Committee prematurely, the remaining members of the Executive Committee are authorised to elect a natural person to the Executive Committee until the election of a successor by the General Assembly.

### **Section 11**

#### **Consultation and decision-making by the Executive Committee**

(1) The Executive Committee shall meet as required. In principle, the Executive Committee shall not meet in public. However, the President may, at his discretion, admit guests to meetings of the Executive Committee.

(2) Meetings shall be convened by the President or, in his absence, by one of the Vice-Presidents. Two weeks' notice shall be given. The Executive Committee has a quorum if at least two members are present. Decisions shall be taken by a majority of the valid votes cast. With regard to the formalities for convening and conducting the meeting, the rules for the General Assembly of the Association shall apply mutatis mutandis.

(3) The decisions of the Executive Committee shall be recorded in minutes. The minutes shall be signed by the keeper of the minutes and by the President or, in his absence, by a Vice-President.

### **Section 12**

#### **Functions of the General Assembly**

The General Assembly is the supreme body of the Association. In particular, it is responsible for taking decisions on the following matters

- a) Amendments to the Statutes,
- b) the setting of the admission fee and the membership fee regulations,
- c) the appointment of honorary members and the exclusion of members from the Association,

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- d) Election and dismissal of members of the Executive Committee,
- e) The election of three Auditors for a period of three financial years. Direct re-election shall be permitted only once. Any natural person may be elected as Auditor.
- f) Acceptance of the annual report and discharge of the Executive Committee,
- g) Dissolution of the Association.

### **Section 13**

#### **Convening of the General Assembly**

(1) The Board shall convene an ordinary General Assembly at least once a year. The meeting shall be convened in writing with a notice period of eight weeks, stating the agenda. The requirement of a written invitation is also fulfilled if the invitation is sent in electronic form, but without a qualified electronic signature. The invitation shall be sent to a contact option specified by the members. Timely receipt is determined by receipt at this contact option. The member is responsible for forwarding the invitation to the delegate.

(2) Notwithstanding § 32, paragraph 1, sentence 1 of the German Civil Code (BGB), the Executive Committee may at its discretion

- a) decide and state in the invitation that participants may or must participate in the General Assembly without being present at the venue and exercise their membership rights by means of electronic communication (Online General Assembly);
- b) decide on suitable and organisational measures for holding such a general meeting, in particular to ensure that only members can participate in the general meeting and exercise their rights (e.g. by assigning an individual login).

(3) Notwithstanding § 32 (2) BGB, a resolution shall also be valid without a meeting of the Association if

- a) all members have participated in writing,
- b) half of the members have cast their votes in text form within the time limit set by the Executive Committee, and
- c) the resolution is passed with the required majority.

(4) The Executive Committee shall set the agenda for the General Assembly. Any member may submit a written request to the Executive Committee for an item to be added to the agenda no later than four weeks before the Association meeting. The Executive Committee shall decide on the request. The General Assembly shall decide by a majority of the votes of the members present on motions on the agenda which have not been included by the Executive Committee or which are submitted for the first time at the General Assembly; this shall not apply to motions which relate to an amendment to the Statutes, a change in membership fees or the dissolution of the Association.

(5) The Board shall convene an extraordinary General Assembly if the interests of the Association so require or if at least one quarter of the members request this in writing, stating the purpose and reasons.

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#### **Section 14**

##### **Composition and Resolutions of the General Assembly**

- (1) The General Assembly shall consist of the following persons entitled to vote
  - a) the Board and
  - b) the delegation of the members, whereby each member may send up to three delegates to the General Assembly. The above shall apply subject to the following proviso: Each member shall nominate a voting leader for the delegation to the President by the beginning of the General Assembly. If no proxies are nominated, the delegation shall not be entitled to vote.
- (2) If a Secretary General has been appointed by the Executive Committee, he shall attend the General Assembly in an advisory capacity.
- (3) The President and the Secretary General of the International Association of Fire and Rescue Services (CTIF) shall attend the General Assembly in an advisory capacity.
- (4) In principle, the General Assembly shall not meet in public. However, the Executive Committee may, at its discretion, admit guests to the Association Assembly.
- (5) The Association Assembly shall be chaired by the President or a chairperson appointed by the President.
- (6) The General Assembly shall constitute a quorum if one third of those entitled to vote in accordance with § 14 (1) of these Statutes are present. In calculating the quorum, those entitled to vote in accordance with § 14 (1) b) of these Statutes shall be counted as a delegation with a factor of one, irrespective of the number of delegates present, if at least one delegate is present.
- (7) If less than one third of the delegates entitled to vote in accordance with § 14 (1) of these Statutes are present, a new General Assembly shall be convened in accordance with the provisions of § 13 (1) of these Statutes.
- (8) The General Assembly shall pass resolutions by a majority of the votes of those present and entitled to vote in accordance with Article 14 (1) of these Statutes. The vote of the delegation shall be cast by the designated proxy of the delegation. Elections to be carried out by the General Assembly (personnel decisions) shall normally be by show of hands. However, if a motion for a secret ballot is supported by a simple majority of the Association Assembly, the election shall be held by secret ballot. Voting on such a motion shall be by show of hands. If no candidate in an election receives a majority of the votes of the members present, the candidate receiving the majority of the valid votes cast shall be elected; if more than one candidate receives the same number of votes, a second ballot shall be held. Voting (decisions on the merits) shall be by show of hands. Decisions to amend the Statutes, to change the purpose or to dissolve the Association, shall require a majority of three quarters of the members present.
- (9) The following shall apply to voting: the vote cast by the delegation shall be multiplied by the ratio of the membership fee paid by that respective member relative to the total contributions paid by all members in the calendar year preceding the vote.

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(10) Minutes shall be kept of the proceedings of the General Meeting and the resolutions passed, and shall be signed by the Secretary and the Chairman of the meeting.

#### **Section 15**

##### **Dissolution of the Association, termination for other reasons, cessation of tax-privileged purposes**

(1) In the event of the dissolution of the Association, the General Assembly shall appoint two liquidators who shall be jointly authorised to represent the Association.

(2) In the event of the dissolution of the Association or the discontinuation of tax-privileged purposes, the assets of the Association shall be transferred to the International Association of Fire and Rescue Services (CTIF).

(3) The above provisions shall apply mutatis mutandis if the Association has been deprived of its legal capacity.

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