

GUIDING PRINCIPLES for the EUROPEAN LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

(Adopted June 25, 1999 / 16. ELC; latest amendments on June 2, 2018 / 25. ELC)

Preamble

The European Lutheran Conference (ELC) is the **association of Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Europe** which have declared their adhesion.

Article 1: Confession

The member churches hold the **Holy Scriptures** of the Old and New Testaments to be the infallible word of God and recognise the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as contained in **The Book of Concord of 1580** as the correct and binding exposition of these Scriptures.

Article 2: Aims and Duties

The European Lutheran Conference **promotes unity, fellowship and co-operation** between the member churches. It does this through sharing in detailed studies in the areas of theology and evangelism.

It also **seeks church fellowship** between its members and the Churches with guest status.

Declaration of church fellowship is the responsibility of individual churches.

Article 3: Members and Guests

1. **Member Churches** are those

- who meet the conditions of Article 1,
- who have, in the past, participated in meetings of the ELC
- and who confirm their membership by a formal declaration.

2. Other Confessional Lutheran Churches may **request membership in the ELC**.

At the conference following their request for membership, the ELC studies it and makes a decision on the matter. The Churches making the request are invited to the conference with guest status.

3. Moreover, confessional Lutheran Churches who are not members of the ELC may participate in meetings as **guests**.

Article 4: Assemblies

1. Ordinarily the meetings of the *European Lutheran Conference* are held **every two or three years**.

A **coordination** of dates/meetings with the ILC Regional Meetings is desirable.

2. Each member church is represented by two **delegates** (one ordained minister and one lay member). *The Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (SELK)* has the right to be represented by up to three ordained delegates and three lay delegates.

3. **Languages** in which the papers are presented shall be decided by the Steering committee in consultation with the host church and shall be indicated in the invitation.

Written translations of the papers shall be prepared prior to the conference.

Simultaneous translations of contributions to the discussions shall be provided when necessary.

4. The steering committee of the *European Lutheran Conference* fixes, in consultation with the member churches, the **date and duration of the meeting** (as a general rule, three working days and, in addition, time to meet with the host church and experience its country).

5. One year before the conference the **invitations** and a **provisional agenda** shall be sent to the leadership of the churches.

Additions and **proposals to the agenda** should be sent to the Steering Committee at least six months before the conference.

The inclusion of **late proposals** is decided by the Steering Committee when it prepares the final agenda.

Article 5: Vote and consultative power

1. **Delegates of member churches** have the right to speak and vote.
2. Delegates from churches with **guest status** have the right to speak, but not to vote.
The same is true for individuals whom the steering committee has invited to the conference (e.g. as reader of a paper).
3. **Others present from member churches** have the right to speak only when the committee consents.

Article 6: Steering Committee

1. The Steering Committee of *the European Lutheran Conference* consists of a **chairperson, vice chair** and **secretary**. These three posts must be held by pastors from three different member churches.
2. The delegates present from the member churches **elect** the Steering Committee at the meetings of the ELC. Only the delegates present from member churches may be elected. This provision does not apply to the re-election of members on the Steering Committee, if they are not able to attend for personal reasons.
3. **Candidates** are nominated at the conference.
4. The **term of office** runs to the next conference.

Article 7: Finance

1. *The European Lutheran Conference* is creating a **fund** to finance its work :
 - a) **administrative costs**, especially travel costs for the meetings of the Steering Committee and other committees.
 - b) **costs for accommodation and board for delegates of member churches** at ELC conferences.
2. Member churches pay a **yearly contribution**.
The due costs and amount of payment are faced by the ELC leadership according to a formula worked out with the approval of the leadership of member churches taking into account their needs and their strengths.
3. For the administration of funds the leadership nominates a **treasurer**, who must be a member of a member church.
4. **Travel costs of delegates of member churches and guest speakers** are divided among the various member churches according to the number of delegates sent.
The least costly mode of transport is to be used.
All **guests** bear their own travel and accommodation costs.

Article 8: Committees and Initiatives

The European Lutheran Conference may appoint **committees** and in agreement with member churches take **initiatives** in the areas of **theology, mission** and **church fellowship**.

The Churches and the participants to the Conference will receive a report on the results of this work.

Article 9: Adoption and Amendments

Proposals for amendments to the *Guiding Principles* must be submitted to the chairman by individual or several member churches **in writing at least one year before** the next ELC conference.

The text of proposed amendments is to be sent out by the chairman of the ELC directly to member churches and in good time to delegates of the next ELC conference.

Suggested alterations to amendments may be sent up to three months before the ELC conference.

The inclusion of **late proposals** is at the discretion of the committee.

A decision concerning proposed amendments is taken at the following ELC conference.

These guidelines were adopted by the meeting of *the European Lutheran Conference* on the Day of the Augsburg Confession, June 25, 1999 at La Petite Pierre, France.

Rev. Dr. Horst Neumann, ELC Chairman

The latest amendments were made at the 25. ELC conference on June 2, 2018 in Hoddesdon (England).

Rev. Klaus Pahlen, ELC Chairman