

Association Articles of Association

Hoffnungszeichen I Sign of Hope e.V.

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Preamble

“Hoffnungszeichen” calls for the implementation of Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “everyone is entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to manifest his religion or belief, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, in teaching, practice, worship and observance”. Hoffnungszeichen provides humanitarian, material aid on a Christian basis to people in danger or in need due to disasters – especially refugees, orphans and street children. Hoffnungszeichen rejects any support for the use of violence.

With this in mind, Hoffnungszeichen hereby adopts the following Articles of Association:

Section 1 Name, seat, financial year

- (1) The association bears the name “Hoffnungszeichen I Sign of Hope e.V.”
- (2) It has its seat in Constance, and is registered in the Register of Associations (Vereinsregister).
- (3) The financial year begins on 1 October of each year and ends after 12 months on 30 September of the following year.

Section 2 Purpose of the association

- (1) The purpose of the association involves
 1. the demand for (and implementation of) humanitarian aid, development aid, disaster aid and public health aid for people who are dependent on the help of others throughout the world as a result of their physical, mental or psychological condition or their economic situation, and for people who are in danger or in need as a result of disasters;
 2. the demand for (and implementation of) human rights work in the form of the demand for the implementation of the principles set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10. December 1948 through the
 - a) worldwide demand for (and implementation of) assistance efforts for those persecuted for political, racial or religious reasons, for refugees, displaced persons, war victims, war survivors, war victims and prisoners of war, victims of criminal offences and human rights violations and people at risk in this respect,
 - b) the worldwide demand for the idea of national reunification, the commemoration of the persecuted, victims of war and catastrophes,
 - c) the worldwide care for prisoners and ex-prisoners.
- (2) This purpose is realised, in particular, through

1. the worldwide support of people who are dependent on the help of others due to their physical, mental or emotional condition or their economic situation and of people who are in danger or in need due to disasters.

These include, in particular:

- a) Refugees,
 - b) Orphans and homeless children,
 - c) Victims of human rights violations,
 - d) People who are persecuted because of their faith or religion,
 - e) People at risk of particular poverty and inadequate health care;
2. Humanitarian aid projects in the areas of food, medical care, education and housing;
 3. Human rights work through education, legal assistance and public relations;
 4. Demanding the free exercise of faith as a special aspect of human rights work;
 5. Peace-building measures that serve to monitor armed conflicts, develop strategies for dealing with them and options for action, in order to call for peace processes and counteract the violent resolution of conflicts;
 6. Public relations work to demand humanitarian support, demand peace and spread the idea of human rights;
 7. To raise funds to support other tax-exempt corporations using the funds for the tax-exempt purposes set forth in these Articles of Association.

Section 3 Tax concession

(1) The association pursues exclusively and directly charitable and benevolent purposes within the meaning of the section “tax-advantaged purposes” of the German Tax Code (Abgabenordnung). The association is selflessly active; it does not primarily pursue its own economic purposes.

(2) The funds of the association may only be used for the purposes set out in the Articles of Association. Members shall not receive any benefits from the funds of the association in their capacity as members. They shall have no claim whatsoever on the association’s assets when they leave. No person may be favoured by expenses which are alien to the purposes of the association or by

a disproportionately high level of remuneration.

Section 4 Membership

- (1) Membership is open to all natural persons and tax-privileged corporations who support the aims of the association.
- (2) An application for admission to the association shall require the approval of the Executive Board and the Supervisory Board. If both refuse their consent, the application shall be deemed to have been rejected; if one of the two bodies refuses its consent, the next General Assembly shall take the final decision.
- (3) Resignation must be declared in writing to the association, and is possible at any time.
- (4) A member may be expelled by resolution of the Supervisory Board if it acts contrary to the objectives of the association or fails to fulfil its obligations towards the association. Prior to the adoption of a resolution, the member shall be given an opportunity to justify himself/herself in writing vis-a-vis the Supervisory Board within a reasonable period of time, stating the underlying reasons. The decision shall be accompanied by reasons and shall be notified to the member by registered letter. Within one month of notification, the member may request the Executive Board to have the next General Assembly of Members take a final decision on the exclusion. Membership ends either with the unused expiry of the one-month period or with the exclusion decision of the General Assembly.

Section 5 Membership fee

The General Assembly shall adopt Rules of Contribution (Beitragsordnung), which shall determine the amount of the annual subscription. The contribution may be regulated differently for natural and legal persons.

Section 6 Executive bodies of the association

The executive bodies of the association are the General Assembly, the Supervisory Board and the Executive Board.

Section 7 General Assembly

(1) As a rule, the General Assembly shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Supervisory Board.

(2) The General Assembly sets the guidelines for the work of the association and decides on questions of fundamental importance. The tasks of the General Assembly shall include, in particular:

1. Election and dismissal of the members of the Supervisory Board by simple majority;
2. Appointment and dismissal of the members of the Executive Board upon proposal of the Supervisory Board with a majority of two thirds;
3. If necessary, reappointment of Executive Board members dismissed by the Supervisory Board with a simple majority;
4. Decision on the admission and exclusion of members, as well as the deletion from the list of members in the special cases according to Section 4 (2) and Section 4 (4).
5. Awarding of the Honorary Chairmanship and Honorary Membership
6. Consultation on the status and planning of the work of the association aimed at fulfilling the purpose of the Articles of Association;
7. Selection and engagement of the auditor to audit the annual accounts; the audit engagement may be extended; if the turnover is less than EUR 500,000, an audit may be carried out by other competent persons;
8. Resolution on the annual financial statements;
9. Acceptance of the annual report of the Executive Board and the Supervisory Board; 10. Resolution on the discharge of the Executive Board

and the Supervisory Board;

11. Approval of rules of procedure for the Supervisory Board;
12. Decisions on the assumption of new tasks or the withdrawal from tasks on the part of the association;
13. Resolutions on amendments to the Articles of Association and the dissolution of the association.

(3)The Chairperson of the Supervisory Board shall issue a written invitation to the General Assembly, stating the agenda, at least four weeks in advance. The deadline shall be deemed to have been met if the invitation is sent four weeks in advance to the last postal or e-mail address made known to the association. The documents required for the understanding of the agenda shall be sent to the members at least three weeks before the meeting.

(4)The General Assembly shall meet as often as necessary, usually once a year.

(5)An Extraordinary General Assembly shall be held when at least one third of the members or the Executive Board or the Supervisory Board request it, stating the reasons, to the Chairperson of the Supervisory Board or, if he/she is prevented from doing so, to his/her Deputy. It must meet no later than five weeks after receipt of the request for convocation. If the meeting is not convened by the Supervisory Board in due time, it may alternatively be convened by the applicant, stating the facts of the case. In this case, an invitation to the members must be sent at least two weeks before the date.

(6)The General Assembly shall constitute a quorum when at least five members are present; its decisions shall be taken by majority vote. In the event of an inability to pass a resolution, the Chairperson of the Supervisory Board shall immediately convene a second Members' Meeting. This meeting is quorate irrespective of the number of members present, provided the agenda is identical and this fact was pointed out in the invitation. In this case, too, resolutions shall be adopted by simple majority.

(7)Minutes shall be taken of the resolutions and, insofar as is necessary for an understanding of how they came about, also of the essential course of the

proceedings. It shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting and the keeper of the minutes. It shall be communicated to the members within one month; objections may only be raised within one month.

Section 8 Supervisory Board

(1) The Supervisory Board is responsible for the strategic management of the association and the supervision of the management activities by the Executive Board. Each member of the Supervisory Board has an unlimited right to information, which he or she may also exercise through an authorised representative.

(2) The Supervisory Board consists of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson and one to three other members. The members of the Supervisory Board may not, at the same time, be employed by the association, hold a position on the Executive Board or be related to, married with or widowed from an Executive Board member of the first or second degree.

(3) The term of office of the Supervisory Board members elected by the General Assembly shall be three years. They remain in office until the appointment of the new Supervisory Board. Members of the Supervisory Board may, however, resign from office for important personal reasons.

(4) The duties of the Supervisory Board include, in particular, the following:

1. To submit proposals to the General Assembly for the appointment and dismissal of the Executive Board;
2. The approval of the appointment and dismissal of executive heads;
3. Representation of the association vis-à-vis the Executive Board in all legal matters;
4. Receipt of the management reports of the Executive Board and, in principle, of the annual accounts;
5. Decision on deviations from the business plan with a deterioration of the result of more than 2% of the planned annual turnover per market or of more than 5% of the planned annual turnover by all deviations together;

6. Development of work priorities and principles within the framework of the resolutions of the General Assembly and in cooperation with the Executive Board;
7. Discussion and approval of the business plan presented by the Executive Board;
8. Discussion of the annual accounts and acceptance of the auditor's report, including personal discussion with the auditor;
9. Approval of rules of procedure for the Executive Board.

(5) The Supervisory Board shall be entitled, after passing a resolution, to dismiss members of the Executive Board with immediate effect for good cause. The Chairperson of the Supervisory Board shall be obliged to convene a General Assembly without delay, which may, by simple majority, reappoint the member of the Supervisory Board who has been dismissed.

(6) The association shall be represented vis-à-vis the Executive Board by the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Supervisory Board in all contractual and other legal matters. Each shall have sole power of representation. The internal rules of procedure shall stipulate that the Deputy Chairperson of the Supervisory Board may only represent if the Chairperson of the Supervisory Board is prevented from doing so.

(7) Meetings of the Supervisory Board shall be convened by the Chairperson of the Supervisory Board in writing at least two weeks in advance, stating the agenda in advance. The deadline shall be deemed to have been met if the invitation is sent two weeks in advance to the last postal or e-mail address made known to the association. The Supervisory Board meets as often as necessary, usually four times a year.

(8) The Executive Board participates in the meetings without voting rights, unless the Supervisory Board decides otherwise in individual cases.

(9) A meeting shall also be held if at least two members of the Supervisory Board or the Executive Board request it, stating their reasons. It must meet no later than three weeks after receipt of the request for a written appeal. If the meeting is not convened in due time, the applicant may issue the invitation

himself/herself, stating the facts.

(10) The Supervisory Board shall adopt its resolutions by majority vote and shall have the power to pass resolutions irrespective of the number of Supervisory Board members present. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson of the Supervisory Board or his/her Deputy shall have the casting vote, but the Deputy shall only have the casting vote if the Chairperson is prevented from attending. The Chairperson shall only be deemed to be prevented from attending if he/she informs his/her Deputy or the First Chairperson or if this is inevitable due to the circumstances of the individual case.

(11) The decisions and, to the extent necessary to understand how they were reached, also the essential course of the proceedings, minutes shall be drawn up. It shall be signed by the Chairman of *the* meeting and the keeper of the minutes. It shall be communicated to the members of the Supervisory Board within one month; objections may only be raised within one month.

(12) In exceptional cases, a written resolution may be passed by circulation, provided that all members of the Supervisory Board agree to it. Minutes shall be taken of the result and forwarded to the members of the Supervisory Board without delay.

(13) The Supervisory Board may adopt rules of procedure.

(14) The Supervisory Board may call in independent experts at the expense of the association.

(15) The members of the Supervisory Board act in an honorary capacity. Their liability is limited to intent and gross negligence.

Section 9 Executive Board

(1) The Executive Board according to Section 26 German Civil Code (BGB) consists of the First Executive Board and the Second Executive Board. The members of the Executive Board are full-time employees. The Executive Board

shall manage the affairs of the association within the framework of the Articles of Association and the resolutions of the other executive bodies of the association.

(2) Each member of the Executive Board shall represent the association alone.

(3) Resolutions shall be adopted by simple majority. In the event of a tie, the First Executive Director shall have the casting vote.

(4) The members of the Executive Board shall remain in office until they are dismissed. Furthermore, a member of the Executive Board may declare his resignation in writing to the Supervisory Board.

(5) As a rule, the Executive Board shall meet monthly.

(6) The resolutions shall be recorded in writing and signed by the First Executive Committee. The minutes shall be made available to the Chairperson of the Supervisory Board within one month.

(7) The Executive Committee may adopt rules of procedure.

Section 10 Honorary membership, honorary Chairmanship

(1) Honorary membership may be conferred upon proposal by the Supervisory Board or by the Executive Board on members of the association who have rendered outstanding services to the association.

(2) Honorary members shall be elected and dismissed by the General Assembly by a simple majority. The office is not limited in time.

(3) Honorary members shall be members of the General Assembly with the right to vote.

(4) The honorary Chairmanship may be conferred upon proposal by the Supervisory Board or by the Executive Board on former members of the

Executive Board who have rendered outstanding services to the association through their dedication and commitment. The honorary title of Honorary Chairperson may be awarded to more than one person at the same time.

(5) The Honorary Chairperson shall be appointed and dismissed by the General Assembly on the proposal of the Executive Board and the Supervisory Board by a simple majority. The office is not limited in time.

(6) The Honorary Chairperson shall attend the General Assemblies without voting rights. Services rendered by the Honorary Chairperson for the association may be remunerated. The Honorary Chairperson has no right to issue instructions.

Section 11 Amendments to the Articles of Association and dissolution

(1) The General Assembly shall decide on amendments to the Articles of Association, the change of the purpose of the association and dissolution with a majority of two thirds of the voting members present. Proposals for amendments to the Articles of Association, changes of purpose and dissolution shall be submitted to the voting members at least one month before the meeting of the General Assembly.

(2) Amendments or additions to the Articles of Association which are prescribed by the tax office for the purpose of obtaining tax relief or by the competent registration authority may be adopted by the Executive Board unanimously and do not require a resolution by the General Assembly, but only with the approval of the Supervisory Board. They shall be communicated to the members at the latest with the next invitation to the General Assembly.

(3) In the event of dissolution, withdrawal of the legal capacity of the association or cessation of the purposes for which tax relief is granted, the entire assets shall be transferred to the tax relief organisation Hoffnungszeichen I Sign of Hope Foundation, Constance. The latter shall then

become the sole beneficiary of the seizure, subject to the condition that the assets be used exclusively and directly in accordance with their previous objectives and tasks pursuant to Section 2.

The Articles of Association were established on 21 December 1983 and were in force until revised on several occasions on 14 March 2008, most recently on 28 October 2004.

The Articles of Association were revised on 14 March 2008.

The Articles of Association were revised on 13 March 2009 in Section 5, Section 7 and Section 8.

The Articles of Association were revised on 16 March 2012 in Section 1.

The Articles of Association were revised on 10 March 2023 in several sections.