

Statutes of the Association

“Stephen Ministry Suisse Romande”

ARTICLE 1 Stephen Ministry Suisse Romande, hereafter “**Stephen Ministry**” is a non-profit association governed by the present statutes and, secondly, by Articles 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code.

ARTICLE 2 The Organization's headquarters is in the Canton of Vaud. The address is Stephen Ministry Suisse Romande, C/o Bernard Keating, Chemin D'Arzillier 18b, 1184 Luins.

AIMS

ARTICLE 3 The association does not aim to make a profit. Stephen Ministry is essentially a listening ministry that provides free, quality, one-to-one Christian care for those going through some of life's difficulties. Care receivers request help either by word of mouth to a Stephen Leader, email, online from <https://stephenministry.ch> or referral from a pastor. Stephen Ministry usually provides training on an annual basis to those wishing to become Stephen Ministers or who wish to use such training for their own personal development.

DURATION

ARTICLE 4 The Association shall be of unlimited duration.

MEMBERS

ARTICLE 5 To become a member of the Association members must be in good standing within the church of which they are a part. Any person who is a member of a church may become a member if they have completed Stephen Ministry training, have completed the Stephen Ministry application form, successfully been through the Stephen Ministry interview process and are commissioned. Requests to become a member must be addressed to the Committee, which admits new members and informs the General Assembly accordingly.

Only the Association's assets may be used for obligations/commitments contracted in its name. Members have no personal liability.

ORGANS

ARTICLE 6 The Association shall include the following organs:

- General Assembly
- Committee
- Secretariat
- The auditor(s)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ARTICLE 7 The General Assembly shall hold an ordinary meeting once each year. It may also hold an extraordinary session whenever necessary, at the request of the Committee or at least of one-fifth of its members.

- ARTICLE 8** The Committee shall inform the members in writing of the date of the General Assembly at least four weeks in advance. The notification, including the proposed agenda, shall be sent to each member at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting.
- ARTICLE 9** The General Assembly shall be considered valid regardless of the number of members present.
- ARTICLE 10** Decisions of the General Assembly shall be taken by a majority vote of the members present. In case of deadlock, the President shall have the casting vote. Votes are by a show of hands. Voting can also take place by secret ballot, if at least five members request it. If the General Assembly takes place online, then anonymous voting will be facilitated via an appropriate secure technology.
- ARTICLE 11** Except in case of emergency agreed by 3/5 of the members present, no decision will be taken that is not on the agenda.
- ARTICLE 12** The General Assembly:
- Appoints the members of the Committee and the auditor
 - Notes the contents of the reports and financial statements for the year and votes on their adoption
 - Approves the program of activities proposed by the committee
 - Approves the annual budget

COMMITTEE

- ARTICLE 13** The Committee is composed of the president, secretary and treasurer.
- ARTICLE 13.1** It is intended that, whenever possible, the roles of president, secretary and treasurer will be filled by Stephen Leaders from various churches affiliated with Stephen Ministry to promote co-operation and balance the responsibilities between the different churches. When this is not possible, the roles of president, secretary and/or treasurer may be filled by Stephen Leaders and/or Stephen Ministers from the same church.
- ARTICLE 14** Each member's term of office shall last for three years and is renewable twice.
- ARTICLE 15** The Committee members work on a volunteer basis and as such can only be reimbursed for their actual expenses and travel costs. For activities beyond the usual function, each Committee member is eligible for appropriate compensation.
- ARTICLE 16** The functions of the Committee are:
- to take the appropriate measures to achieve the goals of the Association.
 - to convene the ordinary and extraordinary General Assemblies.
 - to take decisions with regard to admission of new members as well as the resignation and possible expulsion of members.
 - to ensure that Statutes are applied, to draft rules of procedure, and to administer the assets of the Association.
 - to meet from time to time as a Committee to review strategy and direction for Stephen Ministry Suisse Romande.
 - to define, review and strengthen policies and ways of working for the Secretariat, Committee and Stephen Ministers to make it an effective organisation.

ARTICLE 17 Decisions shall be taken by a majority vote of the members present. In case of deadlock, the chair of the meeting shall have the casting vote.

SECRETARIAT

ARTICLE 18 The secretariat is composed of the Committee, Stephen Leaders and selected Stephen Ministers from affiliated churches. The functions of the Secretariat are:

- to support the Committee in order to take the appropriate measures to achieve the goals of the Association
- to make proposals with regard to admission of new members as well as the resignation and possible expulsion of members
- The Committee and Stephen Leaders may select Stephen Ministers who possess key skills and experience to join the Secretariat. The selected Stephen Ministers may also fulfill roles within Stephen Ministry, including but not limited to the safeguarding officer, data protection officer and continuous education coordinator. The Stephen Ministers in such situations will be part of the Secretariat for a period of one year, unless they are selected to a role on the Committee, whereby they will fulfil their remit for the period defined herein. Referral activities whereby Stephen Ministers are assigned to a care receive will remain the responsibility of the Stephen Leaders.

AUDITOR

ARTICLE 19 Each year the General Assembly appoints an auditor. It may also entrust this task to a fiduciary company. The auditors shall check the operating and annual accounts prepared by the committee and provide a written and detailed report to the annual ordinary general meeting.

DISSOLUTION

ARTICLE 19 The general assembly may dissolve the Association if approved by a two-third majority of the members present. The decision to dissolve the Association must be published in an official agenda at least 4 weeks in advance and cannot be added as an additional agenda item during a general assembly.

ARTICLE 20 Should the Association be dissolved, the available assets should be transferred to a non-profit organization pursuing public interest goals in-line with those of the Association.

STATUTES

ARTICLE 21 Decisions concerning the amendment of the Statutes must be approved by a two-third majority of the members present.

MISCELLANEOUS

ARTICLE 22 The Association's resources may be derived from:

- donations and legacies;
- sponsorship;
- public subsidies;
- membership fees (none contemplated initially);

- fundraising activities;
- any other resources authorized by the law.

The funds shall be used in accordance with the Association's aims.

The present Statutes have been approved by the constituent Annual General Assembly of 10 December 2024.

For the Association

President

Secretary