

Statutes of the Finnish Red Cross

Adopted by the Finnish Red Cross General Assembly on 11 June 2017

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pursuant to section 5 of the Act on the Finnish Red Cross (238/2000)**

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Chapter 1

General provisions

Section 1

Domicile

The domicile of the Society (in Finnish) “Suomen Punainen Risti” – (in Swedish) “Finlands Röda Kors” is Helsinki.

Section 2

Purpose

In accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (*Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross*) the Society shall

- 1) protect life and health and ensure respect for human dignity and human rights in all circumstances;
- 2) promote co-operation and peace among all peoples;
- 3) save human lives within the country and abroad;
- 4) assist the most vulnerable in order to prevent and alleviate human suffering;
- 5) support and assist national authorities in times of both peace and war and during armed conflicts in order to promote human well-being;
- 6) promote solidarity and positive attitudes towards assistance work among citizens;
- 7) enable voluntary action to help people;
- 8) promote response preparedness; and
- 9) increase understanding for the work of the Red Cross and its humanitarian mandate.

Section 3

Activities

In order to attain its purpose the Society shall:

- 1) uphold and strengthen response preparedness and carry out humanitarian assistance work;
- 2) uphold positive attitudes towards assistance work;
- 3) uphold and strengthen the Society's preparedness;
- 4) recruit members and volunteers;
- 5) engage in and develop for its part voluntary action in the fields of health, well-being, safety and rescue services;
- 6) carry out tracing activities;
- 7) provide social welfare and health services, as appropriate;
- 8) engage in first aid activities and training;
- 9) pursue blood services in accordance with the Act on Blood Service Activities (197/2005);
- 10) carry out youth work and activities;
- 11) promote equality and carry out multicultural activities;
- 12) provide education for human rights and international understanding;
- 13) train members, volunteers and professional staff and organize their work;
- 14) pursue communication and publishing activities;
- 15) promote the Conventions mentioned in section 1(1) of the Act on the Finnish Red Cross (238/2000) and other international humanitarian law as well as for its part contribute to their implementation and adherence to them;
- 16) organize fundraising and campaigns;
- 17) engage in economic activities and other acquisition of funds to promote the purpose of the Society;
- 18) co-operate with the central organs of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and with other National Societies;
- 19) the Society may engage in co-operation with other entities, foundations and institutions having legal capacity; and
- 20) shall take other measures, as appropriate, to promote or support the purpose of the Society.

Section 4

Organs and organizational units

The Society's local organs are the Branch Assembly and the Branch Board.

The Society's regional organs are the District Assembly and the District Board.

The Society's national organs are the General Assembly, the Council, the Board of the Society and the Secretary General.

The Society's organizational units are its central administration and its Districts and Branches. The organizational units with their institutions form the Finnish Red Cross.

Central administration refers to the Board of the Society, the Secretary General, the headquarters and the institutions established by a decision of the Board of the Society under the central administration.

Section 5

Patron

The Board of the Society shall decide on inviting the President of the Republic as the Society's patron as provided in section 3(1) of the Act on the Finnish Red Cross.

Section 6

Emblem

The State is responsible for the protective and indicative use of the red cross emblem in accordance with the Conventions mentioned in the Act on the Use of Certain Internationally Protected Symbols (947/1979) and section 1(1) of the Act on the Finnish Red Cross.

As an internationally recognized National Red Cross Society, the Society has the right to make use of the emblem of the red cross to indicate its activities.

The Board of the Society nationally and the District Board regionally as well as the Branch Board locally shall supervise for their part the use of the emblem of the red cross and the name of the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Crystal.

The Board of the Society may issue graphic instructions for the use of the emblem of the red cross and provide other instructions, as appropriate.

Section 7

Languages

The languages of the Society are Finnish and Swedish. Within the native region of the Sami the Society safeguards the rights of the Sami to use their own language by observing, where appropriate, the Sámi Language Act (1086/2003).

Section 8

Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross

All members, organs and volunteers of the Society must in their activities adhere to the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross, which are humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, universality and unity.

Pursuant to the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and the Conventions mentioned in section 1(1) of the Act on the Finnish Red Cross, the Society with its members and organs has a legally as well as an operationally independent status in relation to governmental and municipal authorities as well as users of other official authority.

Governmental and municipal authorities as well as users of other official authority must respect the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross.

Section 9

Prohibition of discrimination

Nobody may be discriminated against on the basis of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, family relations, health, disability, gender, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics in the Society's activities, especially in connection with membership issues. Regardless of this, the Council may confirm a reduced membership fee for a specific membership group.

Chapter 2

Members

Section 10

Membership

The Society's membership consists of:

- 1) individual members;
- 2) honorary members; and
- 3) contributing members.

Section 11

Individual members

Anyone adhering to the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and promoting the implementation of the purpose of the Red Cross shall be admitted as member of the Society.

A person wishing to become a member of the Society shall inform the Society of his or her intention.

The Society's Board shall admit the individual member as member of the Society. The individual member shall be registered in the Branch the person wishes to join. If the member does not specify the Branch he or she wishes to join, the individual member shall be registered in the Branch closest to his or her residence as determined by the address given by the person.

Section 12

Honorary members

The Society's General Assembly may, at the proposal of the Board of the Society, invite those that have particularly distinguished themselves in the activities of the Society to become honorary members of the Society.

The District Assembly may, at the proposal of the District Board, invite those that have distinguished themselves in the regional or local activities of the Society to become honorary members of the District.

The Branch Assembly may, at the proposal of the Branch Board, invite those that have distinguished themselves in the local activities of the Society to become honorary members of the Branch.

An honorary member has the right to be present and speak at the General Assembly and in the Assembly of the organizational unit that has invited him or her to become honorary member. An honorary member has no other rights or obligations pertaining to an individual member.

Section 13

Contributing members

The Society may by decision of the Board of the Society, a District by decision of the District Board and a Branch by decision of the Branch Board admit contributing members, which can be legal persons by private or public law.

A contributing member has the right to be present at the General Assembly and in the Assembly of the District or Branch whose contributing member it is. The provisions for a contributing member's obligation to pay a membership fee are given in section 16.

A contributing member has no other rights or obligations pertaining to an individual member.

Section 14

Resignation of a member, expelling a member and considering resigned

A member of the Society may at any time resign from the Society by informing the Society thereof.

The Board of the Society may on its own initiative or at the proposal of the District Board or the Branch Board expel a member who by his or her conduct has damaged the Society, who by his or her action as member of the Society has violated the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross or the statutes of the Society or caused significant financial detriment. An expelled member shall be informed of the decision in writing.

A member whose expulsion has been put forward shall have the opportunity to be heard before the matter is considered.

A member so expelled may request a reconsideration of the expulsion by the Council. A written request must be filed with the Council within 30 days of receiving the communication of the expulsion.

A member with a duty to pay a membership fee who has not paid his or her membership fee is considered to have resigned from the Society at the end of the activity year.

Section 15

List of members

The Board of the Society shall keep a list of all its members by District and Branch including for each member name and date of birth, type of membership, adequate information on the address and distinctions awarded in accordance with chapter 11.

Provisions on the inspection and transfer of data in the list of members are otherwise laid down in the Personal Data Act (523/1999).

The Board of the Society or, with its authorization, the Secretary General shall decide whether the preconditions for the transfer of these data are fulfilled.

The list of members must be kept in a manner that allows the Society's member to announce one of the languages mentioned under section 7 as his or her language.

Section 16

Membership fees and support fees

Individual members shall pay an annual membership fee to the Society, the amount of which for the following calendar year is decided by the Council at its ordinary spring meeting. The Council may decide a lifetime membership fee for individual members, equalling at least ten annual fees. The Council may decide a reduced individual membership fee for a specific membership group, however, for a maximum of one year at a time.

Contributing members shall pay an annual support fee to the Society, the minimum amount of which for the following calendar year is decided by the Council at its ordinary spring meeting.

Honorary members shall not have an obligation to pay a membership fee.

The Board of the Society shall organize the collection of the membership fees nation-wide.

Section 17

Right of initiative

Each member and organ of the Society shall have the right to take initiatives concerning the Society's local, regional and national activities. Provisions on the treatment of initiatives are included in the Rules of Procedure of the Society.

Chapter 3

Elected officials, signing the name of the Society and service of a summons

Section 18

Nomination for elected positions

An individual member of the Society may nominate candidates for election as an official in the Branch where he or she is registered. An individual member of the Society and the Branch Board may nominate candidates for election as an official of their own District.

An individual member of the Society, the Branch Board and the District Board may nominate candidates for the election of officials and auditors held at the General Assembly to the election committee referred to in section 44 at the latest six weeks before the General Assembly by mail or by e-mail to an address given by the General Assembly election committee.

Section 19

Principles of nominating candidates for election as officials

In nominating candidates for election as officials, the candidates shall be required to be committed to the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and to be willing to promote the purpose of the Red Cross. In addition, the representation of regions, languages as well as of different sexes and different age groups must be taken into consideration in the composition of the organs as carefully as possible.

Section 20

Eligibility and term of office of elected officials

With the exception of the auditors, the operations inspectors and the state-appointed representatives to the Council, only individual members of the Society may be elected as officials. A person to be elected to a position of trust must be registered in the Branch in question, or in the case of a District, in a Branch operating in the area of the District. An employee of the Society may not serve in a position of trust of the Society.

A person to be elected to the Society's position of trust must be at least 15 years of age. A person declared bankrupt, a person subject to a prohibition to pursue a business or a person whose legal competence has been restricted may not serve as an official of the Society.

A person to be elected to the Society's position of trust must have adequate competence and experience considering the scope and responsibilities of the office.

An individual member must not be elected member of both the Council and the Board of the Society for the same term of office.

The term of office for the officials elected by the General Assembly begins as soon as the General Assembly has been closed and continues until the closing of the following General Assembly.

The provisions on the beginning and end of the terms of office of the elected District and Branch officials are given in the Rules and Regulations for the Districts and Branches.

Section 21

Signing the name of the Society

The name of the Society is signed by the President or Vice-Presidents of the Society, each separately together with the Secretary General or a member of the Board of the Society authorized by the Board of the Society.

The name of a District is signed by its President and Vice-President together or one of them separately together with the District Manager.

The name of a Branch is signed by its President and Vice-President together or one of them separately together with a member of the Branch Board authorized by the Branch Board, the Treasurer of the Branch or the Branch Manager. The Branch Board may authorize a maximum of two signatories at a time from among its members.

The person entitled to sign the name of the Society must be at least 18 years of age. A person declared bankrupt, a person subject to a prohibition to pursue a business or a person whose legal competence has been restricted may not sign the name of the Society, a District or a Branch.

Section 22

List of persons entitled to sign the name of the Society

The Board of the Society shall keep a list of those entitled to sign the name of the Society for the Society, the Districts and the Branches. This list shall be available at the Society's headquarters, and particulars and extracts from the list shall be given to those who so request.

The list of persons entitled to sign the name of the Society shall include the name, domicile, language and area of the Branches and the Districts. In addition, this list shall include the address or e-mail address given by the District and the Branch.

For the list of persons entitled to sign the name of the Society, the organizational units are obliged to submit the information of the entitled persons immediately after the elections, and the other information for the list as soon as possible to the Secretary General in a manner determined by him or her.

Section 23

Service of a summons

A summons or other notice of service is considered to have reached the Society or its District or Branch when one of those entitled to sign the name of the organizational unit has received the summons or the service.

Chapter 4

Branches

Section 24

Founding and dissolution of a Branch

With the consent of the District Board, a Branch can be founded by a minimum of 20 individual members of the Society who expressly wish to join the Branch so founded. The District Board in whose area the Branch is intended to be founded admits the Branch to the Society and determines the name, domicile, language and area of the Branch.

In determining the area of a Branch it must be considered that the regional distribution of the Branches must cover the entire area of the District. More than one Branch may operate in the same area. In a bilingual area, Finnish-speaking, Swedish-speaking or bilingual Branches may be founded. They may fully or partly cover the same areas and they may belong to different Districts.

The decision to dissolve a Branch must be made by the Branch Assembly with a majority of at least three quarters of the votes cast. The District Board shall then determine how the property and liabilities of the Branch shall be divided. A member registered in the Branch so dissolved shall be transferred to the Branch into which the area of the dissolved Branch is merged or to another Branch determined by the District Board, unless the member expressly wishes to be transferred to some other Branch.

Section 25

Excluding a Branch

A Branch failing to meet the obligations arising from the Society's membership or intentionally violating the Fundamental Principles the Society may by decision of the Board of the Society be excluded from the Society.

The Branch so excluded may request for a reconsideration of the exclusion by the Council. A written request must be filed with the Council within 30 days of receiving the communication of the exclusion.

The Branch so excluded shall lose the right to use the name and emblem of the Red Cross. The property of the Branch shall be transferred to the custody of the District Board. The property must be used for activities that serve the purpose of the Society within the area of the Branch.

A member registered in the Branch so excluded shall be transferred to the Branch into which the area of the dissolved Branch is merged or to another Branch determined by the District Board, unless he or she expressly wishes to be transferred to some other Branch.

Section 26

Merger or division of Branches

Two or more Branches may merge either by founding a new Branch or by joining one existing Branch. A Branch may be divided into two or more Branches.

The Branches shall decide on a merger or division in each of the Branch Assemblies with a majority of at least two thirds of the votes cast.

The final decision on a merger or division of Branches shall be made by the District Board after the Branches have decided on a merger or division in their own Assemblies. The District Board shall decide on the name and boundaries of the Branch founded as a result of a merger or the Branches founded as a result of a division, as well as on the transfer of property and liabilities of the Branches merging or dividing.

Provisions for the election of officials of merging Branches are given in the Rules and Regulations for Branches.

A member registered in the dividing Branch shall on the basis of his or her announced address be transferred to the nearest Branch, unless he or she expressly wishes to be transferred to some other Branch.

A member registered in a merging Branch shall on the basis of his or her announced address be transferred to the nearest Branch, unless he or she expressly wishes to be transferred to some other Branch.

Section 27

Branch Assemblies

The Branch Assemblies are its ordinary annual Assemblies, which are the spring Assembly to be held at the latest in March and the autumn Assembly to be held at the latest in November, as well as its extraordinary Assembly.

An extraordinary Assembly shall be held when the Branch Assembly so decides, the Branch Board deems it necessary or when at least one tenth of the members registered in the Branch or when one or more of the Branch auditors or the operations inspector so require. The extraordinary Branch Assembly shall consider the matters for which it was convened and which the Branch Board has presented to it.

The Branch Assembly must be held at the time laid down in subsection 1. If it has not been convened, each member registered in the Branch has the right to demand that it be held.

The demand to hold a Branch Assembly must be submitted to the Branch Board in writing. The Branch Board must immediately on receipt of the demand convene the Branch Assembly. If a Branch Assembly has not been convened or it has not been possible to submit the demand to the Branch Board, the District Board must at the request of at least two members registered in the Branch who demanded that an Assembly be held oblige the District Manager to convene the Branch Assembly at the cost of the Branch.

The Branch Assembly is valid if it has been convened in accordance with section 28, and constitutes a quorum when at least three individual members registered in the Branch are present.

With the exception of the secretary, only individual members registered in the Branch may be elected as officials to conduct the Assembly.

Section 28

Convening the Branch Assembly

The Branch Board shall convene the Branch Assembly. The notice of meeting must be delivered to the members of the Branch either as a personal message, which may be a letter or an electronic message, or by publishing the notice in a newspaper circulated in the area of the Branch at least a week prior to the meeting.

The notice referred to in subsection 1 may be delivered electronically to each member registered in the Branch who has expressly informed the Branch Board of the wish to have the notices of the Branch Assemblies delivered in this manner.

The notice of meeting must include the matters to be considered by the Assembly. The Branch Assembly may not take decisions in the following matters unless stated in the notice:

- 1) selling, other assignment or mortgaging of the Branch's real estate or assignment of other property of significance to the activities of the Branch;
- 2) election or expulsion of the Branch Board or a member of the Branch Board or the Auditor;
- 3) dissolution of the Branch, merger with one or more Branches or division into several Branches;
- 4) adoption of the annual financial statement and discharge of the Branch Board and other accountable parties from liability;
- 5) changing the name, domicile, language or area of the Branch.

Section 29

Right to vote, speak and be present at the Branch Assembly

An individual member has the right to be present, speak and vote at the Assembly of the Branch in which he or she is registered. In addition, an honorary member of the Branch, volunteers regularly participating in the Branch activities, the Branch Auditors and operations inspectors as well as those whom

the Branch Assembly has granted the right to speak have the right to be present and speak at the Branch Assembly. A contributing member of the Branch has the right to be present at the Branch Assembly.

Section 30

Branch Board and Treasurer

The Branch Board consists of the President and Vice-President of the Branch and a minimum of four and a maximum of ten other members, as decided by the Branch Assembly. Each year a minimum of two and a maximum of five of the other members are in turn to resign.

The President and Vice-President of the Branch and the other members of the Branch Board are elected by the Branch Assembly for a term of two calendar years. The Treasurer of the Branch is elected by the Branch Board.

The President, Vice-President and Treasurer of the Branch must be different persons.

If the District Board for a justified reason considers that a person elected to a position of trust of the Branch does not meet the requirements laid down for a member and an elected official in sections 8 and 20 of this Decree, it must immediately oblige the District Manager to convene a new Branch Assembly at the cost of the Branch.

The same person may be elected as President or Vice-President of the Branch Board for a maximum of three consecutive terms.

The Branch Board constitutes a quorum when at least half the Board members, including the Branch President or Vice-President, are present.

Section 31

Resignation and expulsion of a member of the Branch Board

A member of the Branch Board may resign from his or her office before the completion of the term of office. A premature resignation must be communicated to the Branch Board in question.

The Branch Assembly may expel a member of the Branch Board prior to the end of the term of office if the member of the Board:

- 1) is permanently disqualified;
- 2) has violated the statutes of the Society; or
- 3) has violated the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross or otherwise essentially acted against the purpose of the Society.

If a vacancy occurs at any time during the term of office in the Branch Board or if a member of the Branch Board becomes ineligible for the office, the Branch Board shall ensure that a new Board member is elected by the Branch Assembly for the remaining term of office.

An expelled member of the Branch Board shall be informed of the decision in writing. An expelled member of the Branch Board may request a reconsideration of the expulsion referred to in this section by filing a written request with the Board of the Society within 30 days of receiving the communication of the expulsion.

Chapter 5

Districts

Section 32

Founding and dissolution of a District

For regional activities the country is divided into districts. The Council shall determine the number, domicile, languages, boundaries and names of the Districts. In a bilingual area, Finnish-speaking, Swedish-speaking or bilingual Districts may be founded. The Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking Districts may fully or partly cover the same areas.

If the area of a District is enlarged or reduced or if a new District is formed by division or merger of Districts or parts of them, or if a District is dissolved, the Board of the Society shall decide on the distribution of the property and liabilities of the Districts. In distributing the property and liabilities, the number of members of the Districts or parts of Districts, area, population or another reasonable criterion as well as other principles shall be considered as laid down in the Rules and Regulations for Districts.

Section 33

District Assemblies

The District Assemblies are its ordinary Assembly and extraordinary Assembly. The ordinary Assembly is the annual meeting of the District, which must be held annually in April.

An extraordinary District Assembly shall be held when the District Board deems it necessary or when at least one tenth of the Branches of the District or one or more of the District auditors so require. The extraordinary District Assembly shall consider the matters for which it was convened and which the District Board has presented to it.

The ordinary District Assembly must be held at the time laid down in subsection 1. If it has not been convened, each Branch has the right to demand that it be held.

The demand to hold a District Assembly must be submitted to the District Board in writing. The District Board must immediately on receipt of the demand convene the District Assembly. If the District Assembly has not been convened or it has not been possible to submit the demand to the District Board, the Board of the Society must at the request of at least two Branches that demanded that an Assembly be held oblige the Secretary General to convene the District Assembly at the cost of the District.

The District Assembly is valid if it has been convened in accordance with section 34, and constitutes a quorum when at least one fifth of the Branches of the district are represented.

With the exception of one or more secretaries, the officials to conduct the Assembly may only be elected among the Branch representatives with the right to vote.

Section 34

Convening the District Assembly

The District Board shall convene the District Assembly. The notice of meeting must be delivered to the Branches of the District either as a message to each Branch, which may be a letter or an electronic message at least two weeks prior to the meeting to the address given by the Branch.

The notice referred to in subsection 1 may be delivered electronically to each Branch that has expressly informed the District Board of the wish to have notices of the District Assemblies delivered in this manner.

The notice of meeting must include the matters to be considered by the Assembly. The District Assembly may not take decisions in the following matters unless stated in the invitation:

- 1) assignment of property of significance to the activities of the District;
- 2) election or expulsion of the District Board or a member of the District Board or the auditor;
- 3) dissolution of the District, merger with another District or division of the District; and

- 4) changing the name, domicile, language or area of the District.

Section 35

Right to vote and use of the right to vote at the District Assembly

At the District Assembly the Branch has one voting representative for each commenced one hundred members. The number of representatives entitled to vote is calculated on the number of individual members of the Branch who have paid the membership fee for the previous year. The Branch Board shall appoint the representatives of the Branch to the District Assembly from among the members registered in the Branch.

Section 36

Right to be present and speak at the District Assembly

An individual member has the right to be present and speak at the District Assembly of the District to which his or her Branch belongs. In addition to the representatives with the right to vote, the members of the District Board, an honorary member of the District, the District auditors as well as those whom the District Assembly has granted the right have the right to speak at the District Assembly. A contributing member of the District has the right to be present at the District Assembly.

Section 37

District Board

The District Board consists of the District President and Vice-President and a minimum of six and a maximum of sixteen other members, as decided by the District Assembly. Each year a minimum of three and a maximum of eight of the other members are in turn to resign.

The District President, Vice-President and the other members of the District Board are elected by the District Assembly for a term of two years.

If the Board of the Society for a justified reason considers that a person elected to a position of trust of the District does not meet the requirements laid down for a member and an elected official in sections 8 and 20 of this Decree, it must oblige the Secretary General to convene a new District Assembly at the cost of the District.

The same person may be elected as member of the District Board in the same position for a maximum of three consecutive terms.

The District Board constitutes a quorum when at least half the Board members, including the District President or the Vice-President, are present.

The District Board shall engage and dismiss a District Manager, who is responsible for preparing the matters to be considered by the District Board and for implementing the decisions of the District Board.

Section 38

Resignation and expulsion of a member of the District Board

A member of the District Board may resign from his or her office before the completion of the term of office. A premature resignation must be communicated to the District Board in question.

The District Assembly may expel a member of the District Board prior to the end of the term of office if the member of the Board:

- 1) is permanently disqualified;
- 2) has violated the statutes of the Society; or

- 3) has violated the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross or otherwise essentially acted against the purpose of the Society.

If a vacancy occurs at any time during the term of office in the District Board or if a member of the District Board becomes ineligible for the office, the District Board shall ensure that a new Board member is elected by the District Assembly for the remaining term of office.

An expelled member of the District Board shall be informed of the decision in writing. An expelled District Board member may request a reconsideration of the expulsion referred to in this section by filing a written request with the Board of the Society within 30 days of receiving the communication of the expulsion.

Chapter 6

General Assembly

Section 39

Ordinary and extraordinary General Assembly

The ordinary General Assembly of the Society shall be held every third year by 20 June.
An extraordinary General Assembly shall be held when the Board of the Society deems it necessary, or when the Council or at least one tenth of the Branches so require. The extraordinary General Assembly shall consider the matters for which it was convened and which the Board of the Society has presented to it.

Section 40

Right to vote and use of the right to vote at the General Assembly

At the Society's General Assembly each Branch has one voting representative for each commenced 200 members. The number of representatives with the right to vote is calculated on the number of individual members registered in the Branch who have paid the membership fee for the previous year. The Branch Board shall appoint the representatives of the Branch to the General Assembly. The representatives of the Branch must be registered in the Branch they represent.

At the General Assembly each District has one voting representative appointed by the District Board.

With the exception of the secretaries, the officials to conduct the General Assembly may only be elected among the representatives with the right to vote.

Section 41

Right to be present and right to speak at the General Assembly

All members of the Society and all of those with the right to speak are entitled to be present at the General Assembly.

In addition to the voting representatives, entitled to speak at the General Assembly are the Auditors, the Council members, the members of the Board of the Society, the members of the Audit Committee and the Arbitration Committee, the Secretary General and those whom the General Assembly has granted the right to speak.

Section 42

Convening the General Assembly and its validity and quorum

The Board of the Society must give notice of the time and venue of the ordinary General Assembly at the latest four months in advance.

The notice of meeting, issued by the Board of the Society, must be sent to the Branches and Districts by mail at the latest four weeks prior to the General Assembly. The matters to be considered by the General Assembly must be mentioned in the notice.

The notice of meeting referred to in subsection 2 may be delivered electronically if the Branch or District Board has expressly wished that the notice of meeting of the General Assembly be delivered in this manner.

The General Assembly is valid if it has been convened in accordance with this section, and constitutes a quorum when at least one fifth of the Branches are represented.

Section 43

Matters to be considered at the ordinary General Assembly

The procedure at the ordinary General Assembly is the following:

- 1) the General Assembly is opened by the President of the Society or one of the Vice-Presidents, or if they are prevented from attending, by the age-wise most senior member of the Board of the Society present;
- 2) a chairperson and three vice-chairpersons and the necessary number of secretaries are elected for the General Assembly;
- 3) for the verification of the minutes of the General Assembly at least two scrutineers are elected;
- 4) one senior and at least six other tellers are elected for the General Assembly;
- 5) the presence of participants is established and their powers of authority are confirmed;
- 6) the validity and quorum of the General Assembly are confirmed;
- 7) the agenda for the General Assembly is confirmed;
- 8) the annual reports of the Council and the Board of the Society for the previous three years are considered;
- 9) the Society's strategic programme that includes the guidelines for the activities and economy for the following three calendar years is adopted, and a decision to adopt the resolutions moved during the proceedings as recommendations supporting the strategic programme is taken;
- 10) the President and three Vice-Presidents are elected for the Society for the following three-year term;
- 11) six other members of the Board of the Society are elected for the following three-year term;
- 12) an Auditor as provided in the Auditing Act (1141/2015) is elected to audit the Society's accounts during the following three accounting periods;
- 13) the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the Council as well as 23 Council members and their deputies are elected for the following three-year term;
- 14) other matters presented by the Board of the Society and matters that the General Assembly decides to take into consideration with a majority of three quarters of the votes cast are considered;
- 15) any initiatives submitted to the General Assembly, which must be delivered to the Board of the Society at least two months in advance, are considered;
- 16) the General Assembly is closed.

Section 44

General Assembly election committee

The elections to be held at the General Assembly shall be prepared by an election committee appointed by the Board of the Society consisting of District representatives elected in accordance with section 40(2). The Board of the Society shall convene the election committee for an organization meeting by the last day of February in the year of the General Assembly.

The election committee shall appoint a chairperson and a vice-chairperson from among its members and engage a secretary, if necessary.

The election committee may not propose its members for the positions of trust filled at the General Assembly.

The election committee shall state the officials to be elected at the General Assembly and submit its reasoned proposals of the candidates to be elected to the General Assembly.

Chapter 7 Council

Section 45 Composition of the Council

In addition to the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, the Council consists of those 23 other members elected by the General Assembly, every one of whom has a personal deputy. Each District must be represented in the Council.

The same person may be elected an ordinary Council member for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

In addition to the members referred to in subsection 1 above, the Council has seven members with their personal deputies appointed by the State authorities. Of these members one represents the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, one the Ministry of the Interior, one the Ministry of Defence, one the Ministry of Justice, one the Ministry of Education and Culture, one the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and one the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour.

Section 46 Functions of the Council

The Council shall:

- 1) supervise the realization of the strategic programme adopted by the General Assembly and its other decisions;
- 2) supervise the activities, economy and administration of the Society nation-wide;
- 3) adopt the Rules of Procedure and the Finance Rules for the Society and the Rules and Regulations for the Districts and Branches;
- 4) confirm the Society's activity report and the financial statement of the central administration and discharge the members of the Board of the Society, the Secretary General and other parties accountable within the central administration from liability;
- 5) confirm, on the proposal of the Society's Board, the Society's membership fees;
- 6) expel a member of the Board of the Society as provided in this Decree;
- 7) elect a new member of the Board of the Society for the remaining term of office if a vacancy occurs in the Board of the Society at any time during the term of office;
- 8) take a stand on topical humanitarian issues;

- 9) discuss matters of principle related to the Society's policies on activities and economy and consider key questions concerning the future of the Society;
- 10) participate in maintaining the relations of the Red Cross with society at large;
- 11) develop the Society's activities in other comparable ways; and
- 12) attend to other functions laid down in this Decree.

Section 47

Meetings of the Council

The Council shall convene for its ordinary meeting twice a year. The ordinary spring meeting must be held between 1 March and 31 May, and the ordinary autumn meeting between 1 October and 15 December. An extraordinary Council meeting shall be held when the Chairperson of the Council deems it necessary or when at least one third of the Council members so require. The extraordinary Council meeting shall consider the matters for which it was convened and which the Board of the Society has presented to it.

The Chairperson of the Council shall convene the Council meetings. The notice of meeting shall be sent by mail to the Council members and, as appropriate, to the deputies at least four weeks prior to the meeting. The matters to be considered at the meeting shall be mentioned in the notice of meeting and shall be prepared by the Board of the Society.

As an alternative to the method provided in subsection 2, the notice of meeting may be delivered electronically if the Council member has expressly wished to receive the notices of meeting of the Council electronically.

Section 48

Quorum, right to be present and right to speak at Council meetings

The Council constitutes a quorum when the chairperson of the meeting and at least 15 other members are present.

The right to be present and speak at the Council meetings is held by the members of the Board of the Society, the Secretary General, members of the Audit Committee, the Auditors and by those whom the Council has granted the right to speak.

Section 49

Ordinary Council spring meeting

The ordinary Council spring meeting shall:

- 1) consider the activity report of the Board of the Society and the financial statement of the central administration for the previous accounting period;
- 2) hear a summary of the financial statements of the Districts and institutions for the previous accounting period;
- 3) hear the Auditors' report of the Society's accounts;
- 4) confirm the financial statement of the central administration and discharge the members of the Board of the Society, the Secretary General and other parties accountable within the central administration from liability;

5) confirm, on the proposal of the Board of the Society, the Society's membership fees and the minimum contributing membership fee as well as their use for the following calendar year; and

6) hear a status report of the Secretary General on the Society's activities and economy.

Section 50

Ordinary Council autumn meeting

The ordinary Council autumn meeting shall consider the matters within its competence as provided in section 46(8–11) and hear a status report of the Secretary General on the Society's activities and economy.

Chapter 8

Board, President and Secretary General of the Society

Section 51

Board of the Society

The Board of the Society consists of the President and three Vice-Presidents of the Society and six other members elected by the General Assembly.

The same person may be elected to the Board of the Society for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

The Board of the Society constitutes a quorum when at least half the members of the Board of the Society, including the President or the Vice-President of the Board of the Society, are present.

The Chairperson of the Council has the right to be present and speak in the meetings of the Board.

Section 52

Functions of the Board of the Society

The Board of the Society shall:

- 1) admit and expel the Society's individual members and keep a list of members;
- 2) convene and prepare the General Assembly and prepare the Council meeting;
- 3) supervise the implementation of decisions made by the General Assembly, the Council and the Board of the Society;
- 4) prepare and adopt the Society's annual plan of action, the joint financial plan of the central administration and the Districts and the budget of the central administration, and supervise their realization;
- 5) ensure that the Society's action has been appropriately organized and issue instructions on it as appropriate;
- 6) attend to the Society's overall economy and assets and ensure compliance with the law in the Society's accounting and a reliable organization of financial management;
- 7) decide on significant and far-reaching matters affecting the entire Society within the framework of decisions made by the General Assembly and the Council;
- 8) ensure that risk management, internal control and audit are appropriately organized in the entire Society;
- 9) confirm the guidelines for the Society's personnel policy and the principles of employees' representation in administration;
- 10) decide on the acquisition and transfer of real estate of the central administration;
- 11) engage and dismiss the Secretary General of the Society, senior managers within the central administration and the Directors of institutions and decide on the principles of their remuneration and on reward;
- 12) decide on organizing the Society's activities in an appropriate legal form;
- 13) decide on the ownership steering of the companies owned by the Society;
- 14) appoint, as appropriate, the Boards of Directors for institutions subordinate to the Board of the Society and issue Rules and Regulations for their activities;
- 15) supervise for its part that the name and emblem of the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Crystal are not used contrary to provisions;
- 16) decide on matters submitted to it by the Arbitration Committee in accordance with the statutes of the Society;
- 17) confirm the number of representatives from the Branches with the right to vote at the General Assembly;
- 18) attend to other matters prescribed in this Decree; and
- 19) consider other matters presented by the Secretary General.

The Board may appoint for specific tasks committees, commissions or working groups with a fixed-term membership.

The Boards of Directors are responsible for the action of their institutions in accordance with the plan of action and budget approved by the Board of the Society as provided in their Rules and Regulations and in the Rules of Procedure of the Society.

The Board of the Society may delegate matters within its competence to a committee, commission, Board of Directors, the Secretary General or staff member as provided in the Rules of Procedure of the Society.

Section 53

Resignation and expulsion of members of the Board of the Society

A member of the Board of the Society may resign from his or her office before the completion of the term of office. A premature resignation must be communicated to the Board of the Society.

The Council may expel a member of the Board of the Society prior to the end of the term of office if the member of the Board of the Society:

- 1) is permanently disqualified;
- 2) has violated the statutes of the Society; or
- 3) has violated the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross or otherwise essentially acted against the purpose the Society.

If a vacancy occurs during the term of office in the Board of the Society or if a member of the Board of the Society becomes ineligible for the office, the Council shall elect a new Board member for the remaining term of office.

An expelled member of the Board shall be informed of the decision in writing. An expelled Board member may request a reconsideration of the expulsion referred to in this section by filing a written request with the Council within 30 days of receiving the communication of the expulsion.

Section 54

President of the Society

The President of the Society shall

- 1) direct the work of the Board of the Society;
- 2) act as the supervisor of the Secretary General and together with the other Board members supervise his or her action; and
- 3) be responsible for the functions assigned to him or her elsewhere in this Decree, the Rules of Procedure and the Finance Rules.

Section 55

Secretary General

The Secretary General shall

- 1) direct and develop the work of the entire Society and be responsible for the appropriateness and effectiveness of the action;
- 2) report to the Board of the Society and the Council on the activities of the Society;
- 3) be responsible for the preparation and presentation of the matters to be considered by the Board of the Society;

- 4) be responsible for the implementation of the decisions made by the General Assembly, the Council and the Board of the Society;
- 5) instruct and supervise the activities of the Society's employees;
- 6) instruct the Society's financial management and monitor that the property and assets of the Society are managed and used in an appropriate manner; and
- 7) be responsible for the communication of information between society, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the members and volunteers of the Society as required by the action.

The Secretary General may delegate the handling and deciding of individual matters within his or her competence to staff members as provided in the Rules of Procedure of the Society.

The Secretary General may take over the decision or presentation of a matter handled by a staff member within the central administration or refer the decision of a matter to the Board of the Society.

Chapter 9

Arbitration Committee

Section 56

Composition of the Arbitration Committee

In the year of the General Assembly the Council shall in its autumn meeting appoint an Arbitration Committee comprised of the President of the Society as its chair, the Secretary General and a minimum of three and a maximum of seven other members elected by the Council for the term of the following three calendar years.

The members of the Arbitration Committee must have the competence required by the scope of the committee.

The committee shall appoint a vice-chairperson from among its members and engage a secretary, if necessary.

Section 57

Functions of the Arbitration Committee

The Arbitration Committee shall:

- 1) settle and solve such internal disagreements and other disputes in the Society that cannot have been agreed on, resolved or settled within the Society's regular administration;
- 2) consider cases in which a claim has been made that a member, organ, Branch or volunteer of the Society has acted against the principles, statutes, Rules of Procedure or Rules and Regulations of the Society;
- 3) give recommendations to the Board of the Society on action to be taken in matters referred to in sections 1 and 2; and
- 4) settle and solve disagreements originating from an interpretation of the statutes.

The Committee shall decide itself whether it takes a matter into its consideration.

Provisions on the parties entitled to submit a matter to be considered by the Committee and the procedure used in the Arbitration Committee shall be given in the Rules of Procedure.

Chapter 10

Blood Service

Section 58

Functions of the Blood Service

The Finnish Red Cross Blood Service (Blood Service) shall carry the responsibility for providing blood service activities in Finland under normal and exceptional circumstances. It shall also engage in service provision as well as research and development activities within its field of competence and participate in international development work.

Chapter 11

Distinctions

Section 59

Badges of merit of the Finnish Red Cross

The badges of merit of the Society are the cross of merit of the Finnish Red Cross, the gold medal of merit of the Finnish Red Cross, the silver medal of merit of the Finnish Red Cross and the bronze medal of merit of the Finnish Red Cross.

A badge of merit can be awarded to a Finnish or foreign national who has worked meritoriously and unselfishly for the Society and its purposes.

Section 60

Description of the badges of merit of the Finnish Red Cross

The cross of merit of the Finnish Red Cross is a red enamelled cross, in the centre of which there is a circle surrounded by a green oak leaf crown, inside which there is an emblem on a white surface symbolizing the Red Cross. Both the cross itself and the emblem symbolizing the Red Cross have a gold-coloured edging. On the reverse the cross of merit bears the letters SPR as an abbreviation of the Society's name and underneath them the letters FRK.

On the obverse of the medal of merit of the Finnish Red Cross there is an emblem symbolizing the Red Cross surrounded by an oak leaf crown and the words *Inter arma caritas*, and on the reverse the name of the Society.

The medal of merit of the Finnish Red Cross is attached by a red ribbon with white stripes, the width of which is 30 millimetres.

Section 61

Grant of the badges of merit of the Finnish Red Cross

The President of the Republic shall decide on grant of the badges of merit of the Finnish Red Cross as provided in the Act on the Finnish Red Cross. The Board of the Society submits a proposal on granting the badges of merit to the Ministry of the Interior.

The badge of merit is accompanied by a diploma officially signed by the Society. The badge of merit and the diploma are issued free of charge.

Section 62

Other distinctions

The Board of the Society may also decide on the introduction of other distinctions than the badges of merit and issue more detailed instructions on them.

Chapter 12

Financial administration and internal control

Section 63

Activity and accounting period

The activity and accounting period of the Society as well as the Districts and the Branches equals the calendar year.

Section 64

Total assets of the Society

The total assets of the Society, which are divided into the assets under the control and ownership of the central administration, the Districts and the Branches, must be managed with care, and according to set plans to ensure the Society's preconditions for fulfilling the purpose of the Society as provided in section 2.

Donations that are in contradiction with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross or that otherwise do not correspond with the purpose of the Society, must not be accepted in the Disaster Relief Fund or for use elsewhere in the Society.

With the exception of humanitarian assistance, the Society and its organs may donate funds or property to a person or an entity only in accordance with a decision of the Board of the Society.

Before a District or a Branch engages in activities that may lead into substantial financial responsibilities or that may essentially affect the amount and status of the assets of a District or a Branch as part of the total assets of the Society, the District must seek permission from the Board of the Society and the Branch from the District Board.

Section 65

Economic management, accounting and auditing

The Accounting Act (1336/1997) and Accounting Decree (1339/1997) shall be applied to the economic management and accounting of the Society, and the Auditing Act (1141/2015) to the auditing. The Society's central administration, the Districts and the Branches are obliged to organize the audit or operations inspection as provided in the Associations Act (503/1989).

Further regulations concerning the economic management, accounting, audit and operations inspection of the central administration, the Districts and the Branches shall be issued in the Finance Rules adopted by the Council.

Section 66

Terms of office of the Auditor

The total duration of the terms of an auditor or audit firm elected as Auditor of the Society, a District or a Branch may not exceed nine years.

Section 68

Audit Committee

The Board of the Society shall appoint an Audit Committee comprised of a chairperson and a minimum of three and a maximum of seven other members for the General Assembly period. The committee shall appoint a vice-chairperson from among its members.

The members of the Audit Committee must have the competence required by the scope of the committee and at least one of the members must have expertise especially in accounting, bookkeeping and audit.

The Committee constitutes a quorum when at least half its members including the chairperson or the vice-chairperson are present.

Section 69

Functions of the Audit Committee

The Audit committee shall

- 1) assist in assessing the appropriateness of the Society's corporate governance;
- 2) assist in ensuring the correctness of reporting in the financial statement and other financial reporting;
- 3) assess the effectiveness of the Society's internal control, risk management mechanisms and auditing;
- 4) consider the audit plans of the Society's internal and external audit and consider the audit reports of internal and external audit;
- 5) assess the independence of the statutory auditor or audit firm and monitor the auditor's provision of other services to the Society;
- 6) prepare a proposal for the election of the Auditor to the election committee;
- 7) assess compliance with the law and regulations in the Society;
- 8) ensure that making complaints concerning accounting, internal control or internal audit is possible, including anonymous and confidential complaints from those employed by the Society.

The action of the Audit Committee shall apply to all units of the central administration, the Districts and the Branches and their institutions. The Audit Committee shall have the right to receive the data necessary for the performance of its functions. The Audit Committee shall report to the Board of the Society of the matters it has considered and its observations.

Chapter 13

Miscellaneous provisions

Section 70

Decision-making

In the national, regional and local organs and in other organizational units of the Society each voting member who has turned 12 before the voting or election day shall have one vote. The right of vote cannot be transferred to another person by proxy or in any other manner.

Both matters of substance and matters of procedure shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast, with the exceptions provided in section 24, section 26, section 43(14), and section 75. If the votes are equal, the chairperson's vote is decisive.

No such decision must be made in the Society's organs that causes unjustified benefit to a member or another person at the expense of another member, the Society, a District or a Branch.

In preparing the decisions, the volunteers regularly participating in the Society's activities must be heard, if possible.

The provisions of sections 32–34 of the Associations Act (503/1989) shall, where applicable, be applied to the voidability, invalidity and prohibition of enforcement of a decision.

Section 71

Elections

In the Society's organs each member with the right to vote shall have one vote.

In an election each member with the right to vote may at the most vote for the number of candidates as there are positions.

In an election the persons having received the majority of votes are elected. However, if only one person is to be elected, more than half of the votes cast is required. If the votes are equal, elections shall be decided by lot.

Elections are conducted by secret ballot or, if data connection or some other technical means is used, by some other corresponding technical method.

Section 72

Remote participation

The General Assembly, the Council, the District Assembly and the Branch Assembly may decide that participation in the Assembly in question may also take place through data connection or with the help of some other technical means. Such opportunity of participation must be mentioned in the notice of meeting.

Section 73

Disqualification

A person elected in the Society's position of trust must in matters pertaining to the Society act in the interest of the Society.

No-one must participate in the handling of a matter in which their private interest may be in conflict with that of the Society in the manner referred to in sections 26 and 37 of the Associations Act.

Section 74

Liability for damages

Provisions regarding liability for damages are laid down in the Associations Act.

Section 75

Amendment of the Decree and use of assets if the Society is dissolved

Amendments to this Decree containing the statutes of the Society shall be provided by Presidential Decree when the General Assembly of the Society has decided on the matter with a majority of at least three quarters of the votes cast.

A decision by the General Assembly to the effect that the Society shall discontinue its activities shall be made in the manner provided in subsection 1.

If the Society is dissolved, its funds shall be used for the purpose mentioned in section 2, with due consideration of the special provisions in deeds of donations and wills.

Chapter 14

Entry into force and transitional provisions

Section 76

Entry into force

This Decree enters into force on 1 January 2018.

This Decree repeals the Presidential Decree on the Finnish Red Cross issued on 14 October 2005 (811/2005), with subsequent amendments.

Section 77

Transitional provisions

The Rules of Procedure of the Society and the Finance Rules as well as the Rules and Regulations of the Districts and Branches adopted by the Council under the Decree repealed by this Decree may be changed in the Council meeting to comply with this Decree before this Decree enters into force, however, they may enter into force on 1 January 2018 at the earliest. Until then the Rules of Procedure and the Finance Rules as well as the Rules and Regulations of the Districts and the Branches adopted under the Decree repealed by this Decree remain in force.

The Board of the Society shall request the Ministry of Justice to appoint its representative and a deputy representative to the Council and inform the Board of the Society of this appointment by 15 December 2017 at the latest.

In counting the number of consecutive terms of officials, the first term to be considered is the one commencing or ongoing on 1 January 2018.
