

**Statute
of the Solidarity Initiative of German Catholics
with the People in Central and Eastern Europe –
Renovabis**

Preamble

The whole world has witnessed the revolutionary changes in Central and Eastern Europe. The collapse of the totalitarian communist regimes has raised the people's chances to live in freedom now. Hopelessness was replaced by hope. Yet, the disregard for the dignity of each and every human being which went on for decades has mostly destroyed the foundations of society. The wounds thus inflicted on the people, their families and the nations as such need healing. A new order based on justice shall be established, which guarantees peace between people and nations. To achieve this aim, solidarity is necessary as a means to overcome old and new barriers.

The churches witnessed the end of decades-long suppression. Many people have steadfastly given evidence of Jesus Christ. Despite all obstacles and restrictions, Christians in Central and Eastern Europe are today courageously venturing a new beginning. They expect the Lord of history to give them power and sustenance. God's spirit gives the world a future and new life – a new Pentecost: Renovabis – "and you renew the face of the earth" (Pentecost liturgy, from Psalm 104).

Trusting in the new beginning always granted by God, German Catholics wish to co-operate with their European neighbours in shaping the future mould of our continent in the spirit of the Gospel. They know that solidarity is indivisible in our one world and therefore it must be valid in East and West, in North and South likewise (compare *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 32). They want to participate in the "exchange of gifts" between local churches in Western and in Eastern Europe (special congregation of the Bishops' Synod for Europe, declaration, 6).

Therefore, upon the suggestion by the Central Committee of the German Catholics, the German Bishops' Conference founded the Renovabis initiative as an "Aktion partnerschaftlicher Solidarität der deutschen Katholiken mit den Menschen in Mittel- und Osteuropa" (initiative for solidarity in partnership of German Catholics with the people in Central and Eastern Europe) on March 3, 1993.

Art. 1 Aims and Mission

1. After the collapse of the totalitarian communist systems the Renovabis initiative shall support the Christians in Central and Eastern Europe (including the territory of the former Soviet Union) in their endeavours for preaching and disseminating the Gospel and for renewing society in justice and peace.

2. The initiative shall contribute to the exchange of gifts between the local churches in the individual parts of Europe. It shall support and continue the endeavours for encounters and reconciliation of Christians in Europe, which were done for decades by highly motivated groups in the church of our country. Especially the rich spiritual heritage of the church in Central and Eastern Europe and the experience of faith that has grown despite all restrictions shall benefit the renewal of Christian life in our own country.
3. The initiative shall serve the co-operation in partnership of the Catholics in Germany with the Christians and all people of good will in Central and Eastern Europe in striving for the renewal of the church and society. The initiative shall aim to co-operate with corresponding ecclesiastical institutions of other European and non-European countries. By striving for an enhancement of joint European co-operation it shall make the responsibility of the church for Central and Eastern Europe evident as an increasing pan-European task.
4. Within the framework of its aim and mission, the initiative shall draw the attention of the religious and the general public in Germany to the situation of the people and of the service of the church in Central and Eastern Europe. This shall above all be done within the annual campaign day (Pentecost Sunday) in connection with a general collection for this initiative in all German dioceses.
5. The initiative shall give tangible support in the fulfilment of the pastoral and the social services of the church in Central and Eastern Europe, especially services for people in need. The help offered by this initiative shall help those concerned to help themselves, and aim at a sustainable improvement of the situation of the church and of the people's living conditions. The promotion of stable structures of the partners therefore is worth for special attention. It is taken for granted that the partners will make an appropriate contribution of their own.

Art. 2 General Principles

The Renovabis initiative shall be guided in its entire initiatives by the conviction that Jesus Christ is present in every person we are facing. It shall render its services with confidence in the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, through which God's redeeming love will always gain expression.

1. The Renovabis initiative shall address the church and with it all men and women of good will in Central and Eastern Europe. "The primary and fundamental way for the church" is the human being (Redemptor hominis, 14). The initiative shall pursue together with its partners an integrated approach of Catholic sociology and the Apostolic Letter *Evangelii nuntiandi*, especially in the relief measures accomplished and supported by the initiative. This integrated approach shall include the pastoral and social services of the church, in particular also the initiatives to deal with spiritual and material need.

2. Being aware of the presence of Christian sister churches in Central and Eastern Europe, Renovabis shall endeavour to ecumenical co-operation.
3. In Germany, too, the initiative shall pursue an approach of partnership. The initiative shall be based on the encounter of and the exchange between partners in the East and in the West, who wish to contribute to achieve the objects of the initiative. The initiative shall accompany the activities of the partner groups within its potentials.
4. In its practical work, particularly in accomplishing relief measures, the Renovabis initiative shall pursue a co-operative approach by collaborating with already existing German and European ecclesiastical institutions which are in the world church's service.
5. The initiative shall pursue its activities in the partner countries in agreement with the local churches. In the cooperation with the Christian sister churches, the initiative shall take account of the relevant norms and guidelines passed by the Apostolic See.
6. The type, range and further development of the relief measures carried out shall be adjusted to the needs and the possibilities of the partners in Central and Eastern Europe. A constant dialogue shall be led between said partners and the initiative. In view of the special situation in Central and Eastern Europe, the training of people for service in the church and in society shall be given special attention according to given priorities by the partners.

Art. 3 Organs

1. The Renovabis initiative shall have the following organs for the fulfilment of its mission:
 - a) Governing body
 - b) Council of actions
 - c) Executive board
2. The non-profit association Renovabis e.V. shall be set up as a legal entity in charge of the initiative.

Art. 4 Competencies

1. The general assembly of the German Bishops' Conference shall decide on the statute of the Renovabis initiative, amendments and changes of said statute as well as on the appointment of the members of the Council of actions and of the managing committee after deliberations in the joint conference of the German Bishops' Conference and the Central Committee of German Catholics.

2. The German Bishops' Conference shall decide on
 - a) the consent to the charter of Renovabis e.V. and any amendments thereto;
 - b) the appointment and the dismissal of the chief managing director.
3. The "Kommission Weltkirche" (World-Church Commission) of the German Bishops' Conference shall decide on guidelines for the work of the Renovabis initiative.
4. The sub-commission for Central and Eastern Europe (especially Renovabis) of the World-Church Commission of the German Bishops' Conference – hereinafter called Renovabis sub-commission – shall form the governing body together with the members of the council of actions. The chairman of the sub-commission shall be the chairman of the governing body.

Art. 5 Governing body

1. The Governing body shall be composed by the members of the sub-commission Renovabis and the members of the Council of action of the Renovabis initiative.
2. The chairman of the Governing body shall be the chairman of the sub-commission Renovabis. The vice chairman or chairwoman of the Governing body shall be the proxy appointed by the Central Committee of the German Catholics in accordance with Art. 6, item I a).
3. In accordance with this statute, the Governing body shall be responsible for managing the Renovabis initiative and for granting funds. Within the scope of this responsibility, it shall in particular decide on
 - a) the planning of the annual collection campaign;
 - b) the granting of projects of the Renovabis initiative from donation and collection funds of the initiative in accordance with the rules on the allocation of funds;
 - c) suggestions to the Association of German dioceses for granting projects of the Renovabis initiative derived from the church's budget funds;
 - d) suggestions on granting projects of the Renovabis initiative from public funds;
 - e) a set of rules on the allocation of funds in which the grant as well as the suggestions under letters b), c) and d) can be delegated up to certain financial values;
 - f) the suggestion to the German Bishops' Conference to approve the charter of Renovabis e.V., any amendments thereto, and the rescission of Renovabis e.V.;

- g) the suggestion to the German Bishop's Conference on the appointment and dismissal of the chief managing director,
- h) the approval of appointments and of dismissals of the chief managing directors;
- i) the set of rules of internal procedure and any amendments thereto;
- j) the approval of the budget plan and of the year-end balance as well as the passing of the accounts of its managing committee and its administrative council granted by the assembly of members of Renovabis e.V.;
- k) the approval of the appointment of the auditing company and of imparting to the company the audit assignment by the assembly of members of Renovabis e.V.;
- l) the approval of the staffing schedule of Renovabis e.V.;
- m) the approval of employment contracts with employees of the higher administrative service.

The governing body may not take any decisions against a vote by the Renovabis sub-commission.

- 4. The chairman of the governing body shall be entitled to suggest individuals for membership of Renovabis e.V.
- 5. The executive board of Renovabis shall manage the governing body. In view of the sub-commission Renovabis, the division for world-church activities and migration in the secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference shall act as co-manager of the circle of supporters.

Art. 6 Council of Actions

- 1. The Council of Actions shall consist of eight members.
 - a) By virtue of their office, a representative of the Central Committee of the German Catholics appointed by the latter for a term of five years and the chairman of the division for world-church activities and migration in the secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference shall be members of the activities committee.
 - b) Six members shall be appointed for terms of five years after deliberation of the joint conference of the German Bishops' Conference and the Central Committee of German Catholics.

- c) The German Bishops' Conference shall appoint the chairman/chairwoman and the vice chairman/chairwoman. They shall represent the German Bishops' Conference and the Central Committee of the German Catholics adequately. They shall form the directing committee of the Council of Actions together with the chief managing director of the initiative.
2. According to this statute, the activities committee shall be in charge of preparing
 - a) guidelines for the promotion of projects,
 - b) the concept with a view to dialogue and partnership,
 - c) guidelines for the initiative for pastoral, educational and public relations work.
 3. In certain matters and for certain tasks experts and representatives of dioceses, religious orders, relief organisations, partnership groups, associations and other initiatives may be asked to participate. Corresponding working groups may be set up.
 4. Church representatives from Eastern and Western European countries shall be invited for collaboration.
 5. The meetings of the Council of Actions shall be prepared by its directing committee. The chief managing director of the initiative shall manage the activities of the Council of Actions.

Art. 7 Executive Board

1. The executive board shall manage the office. The former shall consist of the chief managing director and two managing directors.
2. The chief managing director shall be appointed for a term of five years by the German Bishops' Conference.
3. The two managing directors shall be appointed and dismissed by the Administrative Council of Renovabis e.V. The latter shall ask the Governing body of the Renovabis initiative for their approval of the appointment and of the dismissal of the managing directors. The managing directors shall as a rule also perform for five years. The board of administration of Renovabis e.V. may appoint one of the two managing directors to act as a proxy of the chief managing director by approval of the Governing body.
4. In matters which the chief managing director has declared fundamental, no decisions may be taken against the vote of the chief managing director.
5. Details shall be conducted by the rules of internal procedure.

Art. 8 Renovabis e.V.

1. Renovabis e.V. shall be the legal and financial entity of the Renovabis initiative.
2. The charter of Renovabis e.V. as well as any amendments thereto are subject to the approval of the German Bishops' Conference.

Art. 9 Entry into Force

This statute was decided on by the Plenary Assembly of the German Bishops's Conference on February 22, 1994 and came into force on March 1, 1994. The revised statute was decided on by the German Bishops' Conference on November 25/26, 2002. It shall come into force on February 2, 2003.