

# **The Articles of Association for the Establishment of the Germanic Society for Forensic Linguistics as a Non-profit Registered Society**

## **§ 1 The Name, official abbreviation, and headquarters**

- (1) The Society will be officially known with the name “The Germanic Society for Forensic Linguistics”.**
  - a. The term “Germanic” encompasses every nation, society, and/or community in which a Germanic language is currently or has historically been used as an official, national, symbolic, colonial language or as a lingua franca
  - b. Germanic languages include all languages, dialects, and varieties, that currently or historically have been spoken, written, or signed.
- (2) The official abbreviation of the Society is GSFL.**
- (3) The official headquarters of the Society is in Langballig, located outside of Flensburg, Germany.**
- (4) The Society is to be listed in the German Registry of Societies; and will thereafter retain the additional denotation “e.V.” (i.e. “eingetragener Verein”).**
- (5) The business year for the Society is the calendar year.**

## **§ 2 The Goals and Tasks of the Society**

- (1) The Goals of the GSFL are as follows:**
  - a. The task of the society is the support of science and research. This purpose is enacted in particular through the establishment of scientific events and research initiatives.
    - i.) The aforementioned events are to include offering an international, scientific forum for linguists and students of linguists who work with, research, publish, and/or study forensic linguistic topics. There included are regular meetings designed for the intellectual exchange and the development of Applied and Theoretical Forensic Linguistics
    - ii.) These possibilities for exchange may take place online as well as during scientific conferences, that will take place at least once every three years.

- b. The purpose of the Society is to support the use of the forensic linguistics, in order to further the ideals of social justice and equality, as well as professional integrity, charity, and responsibility.
  - i.) The ideals of social justice and equality relate to the organization's commitment to enhancing the knowledge, training, expertise, education, of the Society as a whole as well as adding to individual, national, communal, and societal betterment via the activities of the members and/or the Society. For the fulfilment of these goals, the GSFL dedicates itself to safeguard and respect the inalienable rights of each and every person to dignity and respect, without regard to the gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, ethnicity, race, age, socioeconomic status, citizenship, and/or language. The society's duties with respect to these ideals of betterment dictate that the GSFL as a Society as well as its members are to avoid and/or minimize any action, direct or indirect, that is immoral or illegal in and of itself or any action that may result in the immoral detriment or endangerment of people or animals.
  - ii.) The ideals of professional integrity, charity, and responsibility relate to the Society's commitment to support careful, objective, and honest professional activities taken under the auspices of the GSFL. With this goal in mind, all of the members and associates of the GSFL are thereby expected to demonstrate the highest levels of personal and professional ethics with respect to the investigation and application of linguistic research. In addition, the GSFL is also dedicated, both directly and indirectly, in each and every situation with reference to the Society's knowledge, power, influence, name, membership, association, and clientele to uphold the abovementioned integrity, charity, and responsibility as well as the ideals of the societal justice and equality.
  - iii.) A further task of the Society is to give the abovementioned categories of linguists and students of linguistics a possibility to engage in intellectual exchange with professional experts that are directly or indirectly involved in international and national criminal justice systems including the administrative and institutional entities such as law enforcement officials, military personnel, court authorities and employees

**(2) The Society accomplishes its goals in particular through the following services and duties:**

- a. The publication and a Society newsletter that is to be sent to all members and may be published via the Society website.
- b. The dissemination of information relating to the activities of the GSFL to the general public.
- c. The organization of a conference (i.e. a Roundtable) that will be held at least every three years.
- d. The organization of an "Emerging Scholars' Day" that will also be held every three years.
- e. The recognition of an individual, a group, and/or a society for their contributions to the area of forensic linguistics

- i.) These recognition is to take the form of an award that will be bestowed during the above-mentioned conference. The designated recipient of this award will be chosen from a list of nominees selected through the members of the GSFL.
- ii.) The directorate, either in its entirety or in part as designated by the directorate, may present no more than two awardees per conference.

### **§ 3 Benefit to the General Public**

- (1) The goals and purposes of the society are purely and exclusively non-for-profit as defined by the German taxation systems code for tax deductibles. The Society is entirely charitable in its purpose and does not follow goals that have serve the goal of garnering financial profit.**
- (2) The finances of the Society are only for the purpose of supporting the organization's goals and activities. The members may not obtain financial gain from the Society.**
- (3) Members whose membership with the Society has been terminated have absolutely no right to or claim to the organization's properties and/or assets.**
- (4) No person may use financial supports provided by the Society for purposes that are either outside or in violation of the tasks and goals of the Society; nor may any person receive disproportionately high recompense for their activities undertaken on behalf of the Society.**

### **§ 4 The Duties, Rights, and Rules of Comportment for Members**

#### **(1) Duties of Members**

**Members are required to do the following:**

- a. to respect and adhere to the regulations of the Society's Articles of Association
- b. to pay the membership dues in a timely fashion as stipulated in §6
- c. to protect the welfare and well-being of the Society
- d. to support the goals and tasks of the Society to the best of the member's ability

- e. to uphold the Society's regulations and rules of comportment
- f. to uphold the decisions made by the directorate and the general assembly

## **(2) Rights of Members**

### **The Members have the following rights:**

- a. to cast a vote either directly or by-proxy during the members' general assembly. No later than two months after the members' general assembly, an election for the general members of the Executive Council will be held electronically via the internet;
- b. to send proposes and suggestions to the directorate;
- c. to participate in the Society's conference (i.e. the Roundtable) as well as the "Emerging Scholars' Day" under the following conditions:
  - i. none of the stipulated required deadlines and appointments are missed;
  - ii. the required payments for the desired activities are paid in totality within the stipulated deadlines,
  - iii. sufficient space is available for participation.
- d. To receive specially reduced fees for the Society's conference and Emerging Scholars' Day
- e. To run as a candidate for an office in the Society's Executive Council
- f. To be named an auditor by the Members' general assembly
- g. Organization of a conference (The GSFL Roundtable) which will take place at least once every three years
- h. Organization of The Emerging Scholars' Day which will take place at least once every three years.

## **(3) Codes of Compartment for Members**

- a. Members are to treat one another with mutual respect. The Society, its events, its website, and any organs directly related to the Society may not be used to threaten, harass, or injury any member of the Society or third person.
- b. No member of the Society may deceive or injury any other member of the Society.
- c. The Society, be it in whole, part, name, or association, may not be used to violate the laws of Germany.
- d. Members are forbidden from taking actions that may sabotage or undermine the work of the Society. Included within this prohibition are any actions that may influence the physical or logistical structures of the Society's network.

- e. With regard to the Society's website and any associated internet presence in social networks, no material may be published, transmitted, or uploaded that violate the laws of Germany. This prohibition encompasses contents that may be accessed via member-related links. With regard to the sensitive nature of forensic issues and data which the Society and its members regularly address, the members are required to treat such materials with the necessary professionalism and respect.

## **§ 5 Membership**

- (1) Membership in the GSFL is open to all individuals who uphold the goals, purposes, and regulations of the Society's Articles of Association as well as the Codes of Compartment stipulated in §§ 2 and 4.**
- (2) Neither membership nor the rights of membership are transferable or inheritable.**
- (3) General membership in the Society may be obtained through formal application via the website and payment of the membership dues by the stipulated deadlines.**

## **§ 6 Membership Dues**

- (1) The members are to pay a yearly membership fee to be set by the Directorate.**
- (2) The dues for the fiscal year are to be set by the 31st of March of each year.**
  - a. Gainfully employed academics and professional experts are to paid a yearly membership fee
  - b. Students and emerging scholars are to pay a reduced yearly membership fee
  - c. Unemployed and underemployed academics and students who are able to demonstrate financial hardship, may also apply for reduced yearly membership fees by doing the following:
    - i. Sending the Directorate a formal letter demonstrating financial hardship
    - ii. This letter must be accompanied by the completed application for membership to be filed online
    - iii. After obtaining the aforementioned documents, the Directorate will deliberate over the application and determine whether fee reduction may be granted.

**(3) The refund of paid membership fees after the either termination, deletion, expulsion, or death of a member or the disbandment of the Society.**

## **§7 Organizational Composition**

### **(1) The GSFL is composed of the Directorate, the Officers' Council, the General Membership, and the Executive Council**

#### **a. The Directorate**

- i.) In accordance with §26BGB the Directorate is composed of the following persons and positions with the corresponding rights and duties**
  - (a) The President: responsible for the activities of the Society, as well as the organization and coordination of the activities of the Society officers. The President is the public and official representative head of the Society**
  - (b) The Treasurer: responsible for advising the Society and the Society President in financial concerns; maintains the financial records of the Society; executes the financial transactions of the Society; draws up official reports on the finances of the Society; prepares the Society's tax declaration; maintains the financial records of income and expenditures; in charge of the Society book-keeping.**
  - (c) The President and the Treasurer are independent.**
- ii.) The Directorate is exempt from the conditions of § 3181 BGB. They may receive yearly recompensation for services rendered as allowed by the Executive Council**
- iii.) The entirety of the Directorate may in accordance with §26 BGB is responsible for all of activities of the Society and has thereby the following tasks:**
  - (a) To administer the Society's financial holdings and goods;**
  - (b) To maintain and enforce all of the decisions made by and regulations enlisted by the General Assembly**
  - (c) To prepare a written report on the Society's financial actions, plans, and audits for the General Assembly**
  - (d) To adopt resolutions about rentals, purchases, and sales within the context of the decisions rendered by the General Assembly for the purpose of conducting the GSFL business**
  - (e) To make single financial transactions not to exceed the amount of 10,000 Euros. Financial transactions over the amount of 10,000 Euros must be collectively approved by the majority of the Executive Council. A majority constitutes at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the entirety of the Executive Council. Votes may be cast in person, per letter, or in electronic form.**

- iv.) To perform the tasks and responsibilities of the individual members of the Directorate can be dispensed of via internal communal governance
- v.) The Directorate will serve for a period of five years and may either singularly or conjointly be selected to serve again in perpetuity. If a member of the Directorate resigns during a term of service, the remaining member of the Directorate may remain in office and continue to execute his/her duties on behalf of the Society. If both members of the Directorate resign during a term of service, a new election will be called before the regular meeting of the General Assembly.

b. The Officers' Council

- i.) The Officers' Council is composed of the officers who serve the Society. The officers are to be selected by the membership of the Society via an electronic election. The election is to take place via the Internet and is to be held, at the very latest, two months after the General Assembly. A candidate is official elected for a position once he/she has obtained a simple majority of the votes cast and has been given the approval of the Directorate.
- ii.) The Officers' Council will determine the yearly recompense and emoluments of the Directorate in accordance with §26 BGB
- iii.) Each member of the Officers' Council is required to file an official yearly report on his/her activities conducted on behalf of the Society. This report is to be given to the Directorate. During the General Assembly, each member of the Officers' Council is to provide an oral or written report on his/her activities performed on behalf of the Society.
- iv.) The offices of the Officers' Council consist of the following positions with the corresponding duties:
  - (a) **Student liaison:** responsible for the organization of the special events for junior academics and professional members of the GSFL
  - (b) **Secretary:** responsible for taking the protocol during the General Assembly; prepares a written report on the actions of the General Assembly for the Directorate and the general members to be submitted to the Directorate with 30 days of the General Assembly.
  - (c) **PR Manager:** serves as the contact person for communications between the GSFL, the media, and sister organizations
  - (d) **Roundtable Manager:** responsible for the organization of the academic and non-academic activities during the Roundtable
  - (e) **Information Manager:** responsible for the acquisition of information, events, trainings, etc., that belong to the area of Forensic Linguistics or an associated field
  - (f) **Membership Manager:** responsible for processing the membership applications; issuing a quarterly report on persons joining, extending, or terminating their membership in the Society.
  - (g) **Media Manager:** responsible for regularly sharing important information regarding GSFL activities.
  - (h) **Events Calendar Manager:** responsible for monthly publications regarding scientific conferences, workshops, trainings, courses, funding, and/or employment within the Forensic Linguistics or related fields.

- v.) Regular members who are interested in holding an office may run for election by the general membership by taking the followings steps:
  - (a.) Regular members who are interested in running for office must be in good standing in accordance with the guidelines listed in §§ 2-4
  - (b.) Individuals who wish to serve as a candidate must first be confirmed by the Directorate.
  - (c.) Once confirmation has been obtained by the Directorate, the candidates must complete the online applications process for an office
  - (d.) All members in good-standing may cast their vote for a candidate of his/her choice. The candidate who wins the election is the person who obtains the majority of votes. The votes of abstaining members are not to be counted as negative votes.
  - (e.) Candidates who obtain a simple majority of votes may serve in office for a period of no more than three years. Term extensions for a limited period of time may only be granted by the Directorate.
  - (f.) Office-holders may serve as a candidate for another office, after a hiatus in their term, unless they have obtained special permission from the Directorate to extend their term for the purpose of maintaining the stability of the Society and/or to support the Society during unforeseen emergencies. Terms may also be prematurely ended in unforeseen emergencies such as health issues, death, the suspension or termination of membership.
  - (g.) Officers may be removed from office in instances when the Directorate determine that the officer in question has either violated or is no longer in the position to uphold the rules and regulations, goals and purposes of the Articles of Association
- c. The General Assembly is composed of the collective of all Society members who uphold the rules, regulations, goals and aims listed in the §2, 4, 5.
- d. The Directorate and the Officers' Council together form the Executive Council of the Society

## **§8 The General Assembly**

- (1) The General Assembly is to take place during the Society conference. The time and place of the Assembly are to be determined by the Directorate. Meetings outside of the Society conference can also be called by the Directorate.**
- (2) Members in good-standing with the right to cast votes are to be informed about the meeting and the proposed agenda in written no less than four weeks before the General Assembly. Invitations to the General Assembly are to be issued by Email and are to be confirmed via Email.**



- (3) Requests to add topics to the agenda of the General Assembly must be sent to the Directorate in writing with a brief explication of the reason for the addition. These requests may be made via Email. The agenda may only be expanded to include those points that do not require the adoption of a formal resolution to the Articles of the Association.**
- (4) The General Assembly is to be led by a member of the Directorate.**
- (5) The General Assembly has the following tasks:**
  - a. Casting votes related to alterations to the Articles of the Association
  - b. The determination of reimbursements, emoluments, and recompense for active members
  - c. The election and/or dismissal of members of the Directorate or individual members of the Officers' Council
  - d. The election and/or dismissal of the Treasurer
  - e. The approval of accountability for the Society
  - f. The approval of the Society's budgetary plans
  - g. The dismissal of the Directorate
  - h. The establishment of the member fees
  - i. The expulsion of a member
  - j. The adoption of a resolution to dissolve the Society
- (6) No later than two months after the General Assembly, the members will be notified about the election of the members to the Executive Council**
- (7) The General Assembly will exercise its legislative power with a simple majority of votes casts, as long as there is no prohibition against the Articles or one of its regulations. The abstinence of votes is not to be counted as a negative vote. In cases where a numerical tie has been reached, motions will be ruled not carried. Votes may be cast in person or by proxy via another Society member who is eligible to vote. Each and every member in good-standing has the right to view the ballot/election record.**
- (8) The decisions of the General Assembly will be recorded by the Secretary and must be electronically sent to the membership no longer than two months after the Assembly takes place.**

## **§ 9 GSFL Roundtable Conference**

- (1) Every person or group that have been granted permission to present a scientific paper at the GSFL**

Conference (Roundtable) must be an official member of the GSFL and remit payment for membership in the year of their conference participation.

- (2) Alterations in the above-mentioned membership dues can be made via the majority of the Executive Council.
- (3) The only exceptions to §9 (1) and (2) are guests of the Officers' Council.

## **§10 Recompense and Reimbursement**

- (1) The Directorate in accordance with § 326 has the right to receive appropriate recompense in an amount to be determined by the Officers' Council.
- (2) The members of the Officers' Council can decide upon an appropriate recompense and/or reimbursement, in cases warranted by nature and/or expenditures involved in actions taken on behalf of the Society. No person may receive recompense or reimbursement for expenditures that are beyond the scope of the Society or are disproportionately high.
- (3) In cases where members of the Officers' Council or the Directorate perform services for and in the interest of the Society, these services may be subject to recompense or reimbursement as allowed by the non-profit goals, aims, and tasks of the Society.
- (4) The agreements outlined in §10 (1-3) require a written request for recompense or reimbursement and must be reported during the General Assembly.
- (5) Expenditures of the Officers' Council and the Directorate may be reimbursed when documented via official receipts and it is demonstrated that the expenditures were necessary and/or officially requested.

## **§11 The Auditor**

- (1) The General Assembly will elect an auditor either from the body of regular members or from the Executive Council.

- (2) The task of the Auditor is to ensure that the administration of the Society finances and holdings is in good order.**
- (3) The auditor will prepare a written report detailing the financial review and this report is to be sent to the Directorate and the Officers' Council.**
- (4) The auditor may not be a member of the Directorate.**
- (5) The auditor may request to see the financial records of the Society at any time.**

## **§12 The Termination of Membership**

### **(1) Membership can be officially terminated in the following manner:**

#### **a. Cancellation by a member**

- i.) Members of the Society who wish to end their membership must send a signed written letter in which they declare their temporary suspension or complete termination of their Society.**
- ii.) The letter to cancel membership must be sent directly to the President of the GSFL or a member of the Officers' Council who has been given permission to process this letter.**
- iii.) Membership will be officially ended, as soon as the above-mentioned letter reaches the President of the GSFL and receipt of the letter has been officially confirmed**
- iv.) Bills for membership dues for the next budgetary year will no longer be issued in cases where the member is temporarily suspended or is completely terminated.**
- v.) Membership dues and conference fees that have already been paid during the fiscal year of the terminated membership shall not be refunded.**

#### **b. Expulsion by the Executive Council**

- i.) In cases in which the behavior of a member, be it inside or outside of the Society, is determined to have violated the purposes, aims, tasks, regulations, and/or reputation of the GSFL, the Directorate and Officers' Council will deliberate over the temporarily suspending or terminating the membership of said member.
- ii.) After careful, internal consultation, the members of the Officers' Council may decide over the current and/or future membership of an individual. The decision will be made on the basis of a simple majority of votes cast.
- iii.) If the majority of the votes are for the termination or suspension of membership, the member must be informed by the President about the decision in a formal letter or an official email, in which all of the members of the Directorate and the Officers' Council are notified via cc.
- iv.) If the majority of the votes are against the termination or suspension of membership, the Directorate may decide to place the member upon a probationary period which may not exceed six months.
- v.) Individuals who have had their membership terminated or suspended, their participation in each and every official activities of the GSFL as well as their financial association with the GSFL via such events as conferences or internet activities via the website are prohibited until such time that their membership suspension or termination has come to an end.
- vi.) Individuals who have had their membership terminated or suspended will automatically and completely forfeit all fees and dues for the fiscal year involved.
- vii.) Individuals who have been expelled from the Society by virtue of a decision made by the Directorate may apply to the Directorate to re-enter the Society. This application may not be made before an entire term has passed since the member's expulsion.
- viii.) Membership fees and conference dues that were paid by the expelled member making an application for reinstatement may not have those monies reimbursed.

c. Cancellation by the Directorate

- i.) This action may be taken in cases where a member fails to provide notification regarding a change of address within three months' time and the member is no longer accessible
- ii.) In situations where payment of yearly membership dues are more than two months in default and after the member has been issued warnings that his/her membership may be cancelled if payment is not remitted within two weeks' time, the Directorate may decide to cancel membership. During the period in which payment has not been received, the rights of the member shall be suspended.

d. Membership ends automatically with the death of members

- e. The dissolution of the Society
- (2) **With the termination of membership, all Society rights and duties are also ended. No reimbursement of dues, assets, or donations is possible.**

### **§ 13 Alterations in the Articles of Association**

- (1) **Decisions the concern the extension, limitation, and/or the alteration of the formulation of the meaning of the Articles of Association of the GSFL must be passed by a three-fourths majority of the members present and eligible to vote.**
- (2) **Suggestions for alterations to the Articles of Association made by individual members or sub-committees of members must be officially proposed via a written application sent to the members of the Directorate. Upon receipt of this petition the Directorate must take the following steps:**
  - a. Within two months of receipt of the petition, the Directorate must determine whether the suggested alteration conform with the conditions outlined in §§ 1-3
  - b. In cases, in which the Directorate determines that the alteration proposed conforms with §§ 1-3, the Directorate must present the Society's members with the petition and the election must be held either in which votes are cast traditionally in person or online.
  - c. If the majority of votes cast are for the proposed alteration, the Directorate has one year to implement the necessary changes to the Articles of the Association.
  - d. If the majority of votes cast are against the proposed alteration, the petition denied.

### **§ 14 The Recording of Decisions**

**All information about the official meetings, deliberations, and decisions of the Society are to be recorded in protocols that are to be kept by a secretary and signed by at least one member of the Directorate, as long as no other regulation in the Articles of Association specifically prohibit this action.**

## **§15 Liability**

- (1) For the accounts payable by the Society, the Society provides financial guarantee with its assets. No personal, individual liable is carried by the members of the Society.**
- (2) In cases where a member of the Society is found to have behaved in a manner which is in violation of the Articles of Association, that member alone is liable for his/her actions and any financial damages resultant of these actions. The Society itself is not to be held liable for these actions, even in cases where the damages of said actions occurred in the past.**
- (3) Voluntary, honorary members who take on an office in the Society and who are either in unpaid positions or whose recompense and/or reimbursement may not exceed 720 Euros in accordance with § 31a BGB, are themselves liable for any damages suffered by members of the Society, the Society itself, and/or a third party, when those damages are incurred during the fulfilment of tasks performed on behalf of the Society and said member behaved with intention, resolution, negligence, and/or carelessness.**
- (4) The Society is not liable for members whose negligent actions result in damages that the members suffer during actions performed within the Society and/or during the use of properties, facilities, or grounds used by or owned by the Society; and/or who suffer damages during Society activities and events, to the extent that such damages are not covered by insurances held by the Society.**
- (5) §31a BGB applies analog for the liability, accountability, and responsibility of the extended Society Directorate and the Offices stipulated in §7 of the Articles of the Association.**

## **§16 The Protection of Data Privacy**

- (1) In the fulfilment of the tasks and purposes of the Society are to be saved, transferred, and altered in compliance with the “Bundesdatenschutzgesetzes” (BDSG) regarding personal, individual level data on personal and material relationships of the members of the Society.**

**(2) Every member of the Society has the right to the following:**

- a. Information data saved about him/herself;
  - b. Information about data saved about him/herself, if it is invalid or incorrect;
  - c. The suspension of saved data about him/herself, in cases when neither the correctness or mistakenness of reported errors can be established;
  - d. The deletion of data saved about him/herself, if the saving of said data is impermissible.
- (3) It is not permissible for the administrative bodies of the Society (or agents acting on behalf of the Society) to make individual level personal data available to others during the fulfilment of their tasks; nor may said data be made available for other, third parties to use. This prohibition remains in place even in instances when said members leaves the Society.**
- (4) Members who voluntarily publicize their personal data or a portion of their data on the Society website once they take on membership can revoke or correct or have corrected their consent at any time.**

## **§17 The Administration and Management of the Society's Holdings**

- (1) All fees, dues, donations, income, and holdings of the Society are to be exclusively used for attaining the Societies goals and tasks.**
- (2) No person may be financially recompensed or receive reimbursement either through expenditures outside of the purpose of Society or through disproportionately high emoluments or compensations.**
- (3) The Society's holdings (membership fees, dues, donations, income from the Society's activities) are to be maintained and administered by the Directorate. The monetary management of the Society is to be reviewed by an independent auditor.**
- (4) The report of the Auditor must be presented during the General Assembly.**

## **§18 The Dissolution of the Society**

- (1) The dissolution of the Society can only be enacted by a three-fourths majority vote taken during the General Assembly**
- (2) With the dissolution of the Society or the loss of the non-profit purposes of the Society, the holdings of the Society are to be remitted to a public authority or another non-profit organization to be used for the support of science and research.**
- (3) Resolutions about the future use of the Society's holdings may only be dispensed after the assent of the Society's Directorate.**

## **§19 Transitional Provisions**

**Until the registry of the Society, the Directorate may only take actions necessary for the procurement of the legal status.**

## **§20 Ratification and Effective Date**

**The Articles of Association were agreed upon by the Directorate and the Officers' Council on the following date: \_\_\_\_\_; and will become effective at the time that the Society officially registered.**



