

# Fimcap Canonical Statutes

## Preamble

After several years of cooperation between French, Belgian and Dutch youth movements, a plan for an international association appeared for the first time in Luzerne, Switzerland in 1959: *Association Jeunesses Paroissiales Générales* (General Parish Youth Association).

In 1960, on the sidelines of the Munich Eucharistic Congress, a first conference of the *Communautés Générales de la Jeunesse Paroissiale* (General Communities of Parochial Youth) took place, bringing together delegates from many different organisations and movements.

It was also in Munich in October 1961 that 11 organisations and movements from the four continents met to found the *Fédération Internationale des Mouvements Catholiques d'Action Paroissiale – FIMCAP* (International Federation of Catholic Parochial Youth Movements).

The birth of FIMCAP was announced during Easter celebrations, at a large pilgrimage that brought together over 1 000 participants in Rome in April 1962.

It was in 1976, after frequent contacts between FIMCAP and the Holy See between 1963 and 1975 that FIMCAP was officially recognised as an International Catholic Organisation by the Holy See.

It is in this capacity that FIMCAP is a member of the Conference of the International Catholic Organizations.

FIMCAP will continue its work with the youth ICOs and within the Conference of ICOs as well as with other international organisations of the faithful.

### Art. 1 Name

It is set up under the name of FIMCAP, an International Catholic Federation of Youth Organisations. The abbreviation FIMCAP comes from the original name: "Fédération Internationale des Mouvements Catholiques d'Action Paroissiale".

### Art. 2 Definition

FIMCAP is a private association of the faithful with legal status, according to canons 298-311 and 321-311 of the Code of Canon Law 1983.

From a lay point of view, FIMCAP is an AISBL (international non-profit association) and is regulated by Belgian law on international non-profit associations.

It groups together Catholic youth associations (federations, movements or organisations) which are not aimed at a specific professional group (such as specialised Catholic Action) but which focus on leading children and young people in integrated development activities in their spare time and in a parish-related context, as well as working with them to build a better world and a living Church.

1. FIMCAP recognises Human Rights and subscribes to their recognition, in particular United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
2. FIMCAP expects its members to subscribe to these rights.

### Art. 3 Headquarters

The association's headquarters are situated in Kipdorp 30, 2000 Antwerp.

The headquarters may be moved to any other location in Belgium upon the decision of the Board of Directors, to be published in the Annexes to the *Moniteur belge*. The

Pontifical Council for the Laity and the Belgian Federal Public Service for Justice must be informed of any move within the month following the decision.

#### **Art. 4 Relations with the Holy See**

FIMCAP will have regular contacts with the Pontifical Council for the Laity. It will also establish relations with other dicasteries according to the nature of its field of activities.

#### **Art. 5 Aims**

Inspired by the ecclesiastical criteria expressed in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* made by His Holiness John-Paul II, FIMCAP's aims are, in particular:

- a. To take part in the mission to evangelise the Church by promoting Catholic young people's communities, their missionary work and catechism.
- b. To unite the members of the organisation in a spirit of brotherhood and mutual aid in such a way that its members are aware of the fact that they belong to a world community of young people and to the Church.
- c. To help uncover and understand the specific problems and needs of children and young people all over the world; to track down the underlying causes and develop a strategy and actions to deal with them.
- d. To provide actual assistance to the lives of the member organisations, more specifically through learning and methodological visits and exchanges.
- e. To represent member organisations and defend their interests with international bodies and to support them on a national level.

#### **Art. 6 Means of action**

The association resolves to use the following means of action in order to achieve its objectives:

- a. the ongoing exchange of ideas, experiences and methods of action between all member organisations;
- b. mutual help and support;
- c. meetings and contacts at every level;
- d. the study of communal problems;
- e. community actions with member organisations and with other organisations for children and young people;
- f. strengthening bonds with local Churches and parishes;
- g. organisation of representations or contacts with international bodies.

#### **Art. 7 Members, Observers and Guests**

##### **Art. 7.1 Members**

Membership may be granted to organisations of children and young people structured at national or regional level that meet the following criteria:

- a. agree with FIMCAP's aims, as described in Article 5;
- b. encourage young people – through community life – to develop, take on responsibility, discover current cultural, social and political issues together, to experience openness, solidarity and commitment and to share responsibility;
- c. base their activities on the Gospel to generally promote the participation of young people in parish life and parish missions;
- d. make provisions for training staff and for regularly informing its members and leaders.

The admission or exclusion of members must be ratified by the General Assembly ([Article 9.1](#)). Applications for membership must contain an official letter of request, signed by the

head of the organisation, and a copy of its Statutes. They must be sent to FIMCAP's Secretary General six months before the General Assembly.

An organisation may terminate its affiliation in the form of an official letter, signed by the heads of the organisation and addressed to the Secretary General.

The General Assembly ratifies the exclusion. An organisation which ceases to be a member of FIMCAP has no right over the joint assets.

### **Art. 7.2 Associate Members**

Drawing inspiration from the Catholic Church's intention to promote dialogue and the reconciliation of the Christian family, FIMCAP is open to non-Catholic Christian organisations. These organisations may request associate member status. Conditions for admission are the same as for full members. Associate members may take part in proceedings in an advisory capacity. However, their number may not exceed a quarter of the total number of members.

### **Art. 7.3 Observers**

Before official admission, organisations wishing to find out more about FIMCAP may ask the Intercontinental Bureau to participate in FIMCAP's activities as observers. These observers may not vote.

### **Art. 7.4 Guests**

The Intercontinental Bureau may invite non-member organisations or individuals to participate in activities which interest them. These organisations or persons will then be considered as guests and may not vote. The number of guests may not exceed a third of the total number of regular participants.

### **Art. 8 Duties of member organisations**

The member organisations of FIMCAP undertake to cooperate in order to achieve the aims defined in [Article 5](#), and consequently undertake, as far as possible, to:

- a. take part in the General Assembly and in the activities agreed upon together;
- b. implement the decisions taken by the General Assembly;
- c. keep in regular contact with the Secretary General, inform him/her of their programmes, activities and undertakings at national and international level and to send him/her their publications.
- d. lend their ideological and financial support to FIMCAP's work;
- e. pay annual membership fees fixed by the General Assembly and proposed by the Intercontinental Bureau;

These duties are applicable to all members, associate members and observers.

### **Art. 9 Bodies**

FIMCAP's bodies are:

- a. The General Assembly (General management body)
- b. The Board of Directors (Intercontinental Bureau)
- c. The Presidium
- d. The Continental Conferences.
- e. The Secretary General

**Art. 9.1 The General Assembly****a) Structure**

The General Assembly is made up of representatives from member organisations. If a member organisation cannot attend the General Assembly, it may be represented by another member organisation. Each member organisation present may only represent one other member organisation.

**b)**

The ordinary General Assembly meets every three years. The General Assembly may also meet in an extraordinary session. It is convened by the Intercontinental Bureau at its own initiative or based on a proposal from at least 10 member organisations from at least 2 continents.

**c) Tasks**

The General Assembly has full powers to carry out the aims of the association. It is the General Assembly in particular which:

- elects a chairperson for the elections;
- elects the President, the Ecclesiastic Assistant and the Secretary General;
- supervises the work of the Intercontinental Bureau and approves its annual report;
- supervises the financial situation, approves the accounts, discharges the Intercontinental Bureau and appoints an auditor;
- studies and determines the direction of FIMCAP's work;
- determines the programme of activities for the next term;
- makes decisions to admit or exclude member organisations as proposed by the Intercontinental Bureau;
- makes an authentic interpretation of the Statutes;
- defines the statutory membership fees;
- ratifies the constitution of the Continental Conferences;
- entrusts the Presidents of the Continental Conferences with the role of Vice-Presidents of FIMCAP.

**d) Votes**

Member organisations each have one vote. In order for the vote to be considered valid, at least one third of member organisations must be present or represented. Member organisations from the same continent may not exceed 2/3 of the total number of organisations present or represented.

1. A 2/3 majority is required for:
  - admission or exclusion of a member organisation;
  - acceptance and change to Statutes or Internal Rules;
  - any proposal considered important by the General Assembly.
2. Elections are carried out by secret ballot with a majority of 2/3 of the votes cast. If no candidate has obtained a 2/3 majority after the second ballot, a third round of voting will be held, with a simple majority sufficing.
3. All other decisions are taken by a simple majority vote.

**e) Resolutions**

The resolutions of the General Assembly are communicated to each of the member organisations and the different authorities concerned by post.

**Art. 9.2 The Board of Directors (Intercontinental Bureau)****a) Composition**

The Intercontinental Bureau acts as the FIMCAP's Board of Directors. It is composed of the Presidium and the Presidents of the Continental Conferences, of the Vice-President of the conference where the Intercontinental Bureau will take place and of delegates chosen by the continents where no conferences have been established. The Presidents of the Continental Conferences automatically become Vice-Presidents of FIMCAP. The Intercontinental Bureau may be enlarged by coopted members. These coopted or guest members only have an advisory role. The Board of Directors is composed of at least 5 members, from at least 2 different continents.

**b)**

The Presidium mandate is subject to the rules set out in point 9.3. The duration of the mandate for presidents and vice-presidents of continental conferences is 3 years, renewable once.

**c) Jurisdiction**

- The Intercontinental Bureau has full powers to manage and administer the association, subject to the remit of the General Assembly. It can delegate day-to-day management to an appointee.
- In the event of an emergency, the Presidium can take decisions.
- In particular, the Intercontinental Bureau is authorised to:
  - organise the General Assembly and convene it;
  - carry out decisions in day-to-day business as well as in any urgent business occurring between two General Assemblies;
  - receive membership requests and submit them to the General Assembly;
  - prepare elections;
  - accept and recognise "observers" and "guests";
  - seek out financial means, approve financial accounts and the budget;
  - draw up the Internal Rules in accordance with the Statutes and submit them to the General Assembly for approval;
  - represent FIMCAP in international authorities (it may delegate this role of representation to an appointee);
  - publish the news bulletin;
  - maintain contact with the Continental Conferences through the Vice-Presidents.

**d)**

The Intercontinental Bureau meets at least twice a year. It is convened by the President one month before the meeting.

**e)**

It is possible to dismiss a councillor from office. This dismissal is pronounced by the General Assembly.

**f)**

All documents relating to the appointment, dismissal and termination of office of administrators, established in accordance with the law, must be sent to the Federal Public Service for Justice in order to be filed in the dossier stipulated by law for each association and must be published, at the association's expense, in the Annexes to the Moniteur belge.

**Art. 9.3 The Presidium**

The Presidium is the permanent management body of FIMCAP. It is made up of: the President, the Secretary General and the Ecclesiastic Assistant

**Art. 9.3.1 The President**

The President is elected by the General Assembly for a period of three years. The Pontifical Council for the Laity will be asked to approve the candidate.

The elected President must come from a member organisation. The President conducts meetings of the Intercontinental Bureau and the sessions of the General Assembly with the exception of the elections. He/she may be elected for a maximum of two mandates of three years.

If the post of President is vacant, the Intercontinental Bureau will appoint an interim Vice-President until the next General Assembly.

**Art. 9.3.2 Ecclesiastical Assistant**

The Ecclesiastical Assistant is elected by the General Assembly upon presentation of the candidates proposed by the Intercontinental Bureau. The duration of his mandate is three years and he must have obtained prior permission from his Ordinary.

The Pontifical Council for the Laity will be asked to approve the candidate.

He advises FIMCAP's Intercontinental Bureau and General Assembly on pastoral and theological questions. He oversees FIMCAP's links with episcopal conferences and with the Holy See, as well as the establishment of consistent links between Ecclesiastical Assistants of member organisations at world-wide level.

He may be elected for a maximum of three mandates of three years each.

**Art. 9.3.3 The Secretary General**

See Article 9.4

**Art. 9.3.4 Financial responsibility**

The Presidium is responsible for FIMCAP's finances. It draws up the annual financial report as well as the draft budget and it also executes the budget.

**Art. 9.4 The Secretary General**

The Secretary General is elected by the General Assembly for a period of three years.

The elected Secretary General must come from a member organisation.

He/she conducts the day-to-day affairs of FIMCAP in agreement with the other members of the Presidium and the Intercontinental Bureau. He/she informs each and every member organisation of the decisions taken by the General Assembly and by the Intercontinental Bureau.

If there is a vacancy for the post of Secretary General, the Intercontinental Bureau will appoint an interim Secretary General until the next General Assembly.

**Art. 9.5 The Continental Conferences**

The Continental Conferences are made up of all full members present on the respective continent. The Continental Conferences, the composition of which has been ratified by the General Assembly:

- will have the possibility of establishing their own internal regulations along the same lines as the Fimcap Statutes.
- will have the possibility of establishing a Continental Bureau with a president, vice-president, secretary and chaplain, elected in accordance with their own internal regulations. They will have a 3-year mandate that can be renewed once.

These conferences enable member organisations to group together by region in order to work together, to think about the specific challenges posed by working conditions in their region, to decide what sort of management should be implemented and to ensure the extension of FIMCAP.

When an organisation becomes a member of FIMCAP, this implies membership of the respective Continental Conference.

**Art. 10 Changes to Statutes**

These Statutes may only be altered - with the approval of the Pontifical Council for the Laity – after a General Assembly debate and with a majority of two thirds of votes cast.

**Art. 11 Dissolution**

Any proposal aimed at dissolving FIMCAP must come from the Intercontinental Bureau or a quorum of two-thirds of FIMCAP members coming from at least two continents.

Before convening the extraordinary dissolution General Assembly, the Intercontinental Bureau will inform the Pontifical Council for the Laity which must give prior approval.

After doing so, it will inform member organisations at least three months in advance of the date of the Extraordinary General Assembly. The dissolution and winding-up procedure of FIMCAP will be decided upon a two-thirds majority of votes cast.

**Art. 12 Reference text for Statutes**

The French language version is the reference document for these Statutes. The other versions in all other languages are to be considered as translations of the French version.