

STATUTES OF THE BULGARIAN RED CROSS

The Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC) was founded on 25 October, 1878. The provisions of the present Statutes are based on the first Statutes of the Bulgarian Red Cross, on the Geneva Conventions to which Bulgaria is a party, and on the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement which are:

1. HUMANITY

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

2. IMPARTIALITY

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

3. NEUTRALITY

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

4. INDEPENDENCE

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their Governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

5. VOLUNTARY SERVICE

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

6. UNITY

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

7. UNIVERSALITY

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

CHAPTER I *GENERAL PROVISIONS*

Article 1

- (1) The Bulgarian Red Cross is officially recognized by the state, by means of a law, as a voluntary aid Society auxiliary to the public authorities, for rendering help to the needy, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions, and as the only National Red Cross Society which may carry out its activities throughout the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.
- (2) In relation to the public authorities, the Bulgarian Red Cross maintains an autonomy which allows it to act at all times in conformity with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and with the Law on the Bulgarian Red Cross.
- (3) The Bulgarian Red Cross was recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross on 20 October 1885 and is part of the International Red Cross. It is a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- (4) The Bulgarian Red Cross is established sine die.
- (5) The Bulgarian Red Cross is an association (corporate body with legal personality) in accordance with the Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities. It is an organization pursuing activities for public benefit.
- (6) The National Headquarters of the Bulgarian Red Cross is in Sofia, "Lozenets" Quarter, its address being 76 James Boucher Boul., 1407 Sofia.
- (7) The name of the legal entity is "Български Червен кръст" ("БЧК") and may be additionally inscribed in Latin letters as: "Bulgarian Red Cross".

Article 2

- (1) The Bulgarian Red Cross has a four-level structure with the following governing bodies:
1. National level
 - General Assembly
 - National Council
 2. Regional level, respectively metropolitan level
 - General Assembly
 - Regional Council, respectively Metropolitan Council
 3. Municipal level, respectively territorial level
 - General Assembly
 - Municipal Council, respectively Territorial Council
 4. Chapter level
 - Chapter Assembly
 - Chapter Council.
- (2) All eligible bodies within the Bulgarian Red Cross shall be elected for a four-year term.

(3) The representatives of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth, Mountain Rescue Service and Water Life Saving Service to the eligible governing bodies of the BRC shall be elected for a term corresponding to the mandate of the body that has elected them.

(4) To the eligible governing bodies can be elected only members of the BRC.

Article 3

(1) The emblem of the Bulgarian Red Cross is the heraldic sign of a red cross on a white ground, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and the Law on the Bulgarian Red Cross and for the purposes set forth in the Regulations on the Use of the Emblem of the Red Cross and Red Crescent by the National Societies.

(2) The flag of the Bulgarian Red Cross contains the sign of a red cross on a white ground as provided for by the Geneva Conventions.

(3) The seal of the Bulgarian Red Cross is round and red. Each seal bears the following inscription: above – “Bulgarian Red Cross”, below – “National Council”, and in the middle – the red cross sign. In the seals of the regional branches, respectively the metropolitan branch, and of the municipal organizations, respectively the territorial organizations, the text “National Council” is replaced by “Regional Council –...”, respectively “Metropolitan Council – Sofia”, or by “Municipal Council –...”, respectively “Territorial Council –...”. The seal of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth and the seals of the bases and centres of the Bulgarian Red Cross include their names and domiciles.

(4) The BRC’s distinctions are badges of honour and honorary titles, as specified by rules adopted by the National Council.

CHAPTER II *GENERAL OBJECTIVE*

Article 4

The general objective of the Bulgarian Red Cross is to prevent and alleviate human suffering with impartiality, making no discrimination as to nationality, race, sex, religious beliefs or political opinions.

METHODS FOR ACHIEVING THE GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Article 5

The methods for achieving the general objective shall be the following:

1. To recruit and train such volunteering and staff contributors and to form such organizational structures as are necessary for the discharge of its duties, and to carry out acts of advocacy in favour of the vulnerable.
2. To encourage and assist the participation of children and young people in the activities of the Red Cross, in congruence with the Statute of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth.

3. To interact with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and with the International Committee of the Red Cross in all matters related to the activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement within their mandates, to propagate the Movement's Fundamental Principles and the norms of international humanitarian law.
4. To interact with governmental and municipal authorities, trade unions, associations and foundations etc. with similar objectives and activities.
5. To cooperate with international governmental and non-governmental organizations with similar objectives and activities.
6. To study, apply and disseminate the Bulgarian and international expertise in the humanitarian field with a view to accomplishing the mission of the Red Cross.

SUBJECT OF ACTIVITIES

Article 6

The subject of activities of the Bulgarian Red Cross shall include the following:

1. In case of armed conflict to act, and in peace time prepare to act, for the protection of all victims of armed conflict, no matter if they are civilian or military, in conformity with the Geneva Conventions;
2. Jointly with governmental, municipal and non-governmental organizations, to carry out activities in maintaining preparedness and rendering assistance in case of disasters, technological accidents or other calamities (crises), in congruence with the tasks of the Bulgarian Red Cross, by:
 - a) establishing on a functional basis of a permanent National Operational Headquarters, respectively Regional Operational Headquarters, for action in case of disasters, technological accidents or other calamities (crises), headed by the Director General, respectively the Director of Secretariat at Regional/Metropolitan Council of the BRC;
 - b) forming teams and structures that carry out the following activities: needs assessment, assistance to the affected population, incl. direct humanitarian assistance, first psychological assistance and psychosocial support, first aid and other activities;
 - c) assisting needy victims through setting up warehouses with emergency reserve for providing immediate support to the affected population;
 - d) rendering help and acting independently or in cooperation with other formations and specialized agencies with a view to preventing or restricting the effects of disasters, technological accidents or other calamities, in conformity with its competencies;
 - e) preparing and rendering assistance, in accordance with its capacity, in response to appeals from other States and National Societies in times of disasters or conflicts;
3. To collect, receive, store and distribute humanitarian aid and donations granted by the country or delivered from abroad;
4. To set up, equip and maintain warehouse stocks with a view to servicing Red Cross activities, including the availability of an emergency reserve;
5. To render assistance to vulnerable and impoverished citizens, to social and medical establishments etc., and to provide social and health services;
6. To organize and maintain social institutions;

7. To provide social assistance and carry out health and care activities;
8. To provide socially-oriented legal and psychological consultations;
9. To promote and strengthen the non-remunerated blood donation;
10. To contribute to the protection and improvement of people's health, and to the prevention of diseases and traumas through educational programmes and activities in favour of the general public that are conformed to the national, regional, municipal and local needs, circumstances and capacities;
11. To organize and carry out the mountain rescuing activities through the Mountain Rescue Service which is part of the structure of the Bulgarian Red Cross and is guided by regulations approved by the National Council;
12. To participate in the water life saving activities in the country, organizing and conducting the training of the water life saving personnel, to carry out preventive and direct rescue activities for the reduction of water traumatism, through the Water Life Saving Service which is part of the structure of the Bulgarian Red Cross and is guided by Regulations, approved by the National Council;
13. To organize courses and other training events on rendering first pre-medical aid, first psychological aid and psychological social support, on drug addiction problems, HIV/AIDS, the promotion of non-remunerated blood donation, etc.;
14. To organize and conduct the necessary training, qualification and re-qualification courses for mountain rescuers, water life-saving personnel and for staff members, with a view to implementing its activities and to achieving its objectives, issuing the respective certificates;
15. To assist the social integration of refugees provided with the relevant status in conformity with the 1951 Refugee Convention, and of asylum-seekers with humanitarian status, through the Refugee and Migrant Service;
16. To provide assistance to persons seeking protection in the Republic of Bulgaria who are registered at the Council of Ministers' State Agency for Refugees; to persons with humanitarian status; persons with refugee status; persons under temporary protection; and to migrants;
17. To conduct tracing, on the country's territory and abroad, of members of families separated as a result of wars, other armed conflicts or natural disasters;
18. To organize and participate in meetings, seminars, courses, conferences, press conferences, competitions and reviews on the major activities of the BRC and of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
19. To organize and carry out activities with and for children and young people through the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth, which is an integral part of the Bulgarian Red Cross and is governed by the Statute of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth.

CHAPTER III *MEMBERSHIP, RIGHTS AND DUTIES*

Article 7

- (1) An individual member of the Bulgarian Red Cross can be any Bulgarian or foreign able-bodied physical person regardless of his/her race, sex, religion, social status or political opinions, who recognizes the present Statutes and acts in congruence with the Movement's Fundamental Principles, has been

admitted into membership by the governing body of the respective BRC' chapter, and pays the annual membership dues as specified by the General Assembly.

(2) A collective member of the Bulgarian Red Cross can be any Bulgarian or foreign legal entity which recognizes the present Statutes, acts in conformity with the Movement's Fundamental Principles, and pays the annual membership dues as specified by the National Council for each individual case. The collective member shall exercise its rights and duties through a proxy determined by the body representing the legal entity. Proxy of a collective member may only be a physical person who has been explicitly authorized. Each proxy may represent only one collective member, may not delegate his/her powers to a third person, and shall be entitled to one vote in the governing bodies at the respective level.

(3) The membership shall be voluntary.

Article 8

Each member of the Bulgarian Red Cross shall be entitled:

1. To participate in the sessions of the respective Chapter Assembly with the right to vote.
2. To elect and be elected to the governing bodies of the Bulgarian Red Cross at all levels.
3. To be informed about the activities of the National Society.
4. To receive assistance from the Bulgarian Red Cross, when carrying out Red Cross activities.
5. To nominate and be nominated for Bulgarian Red Cross' honours of distinction.

Article 9

Each member of the Bulgarian Red Cross shall be obliged:

1. To abide by the Statutes of the National Society.
2. To participate in the activities of the Bulgarian Red Cross.
3. To pay the membership dues as specified by the General Assembly.
4. In his/her behaviour, not to admit any acts contrary to the Red Cross principles.

Article 10

Honorary members shall be the persons and collectives who are approved as such by the General Assembly, upon proposal of the National Council, for recognized outstanding merits to the Bulgarian Red Cross.

Article 11

(1) A membership shall be terminated:

1. upon submission to the Chapter of a unilateral declaration of willingness to withdraw from membership;
2. upon decease or in the event of enforcement of full restraint – for individual members, respectively upon liquidation or insolvency of the legal entity – for collective members;
3. upon expulsion;

4. upon dissolution of the National Society;
5. upon dropping out because of membership dues default and/or systematic failure to participate in the activities.

(2) The governing body of the respective chapter of the Bulgarian Red Cross may expel an individual or collective member for acts incongruous with the principles of the Red Cross or with the present Statutes. Any member so expelled has the right to appeal against such a decision to the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly.

Article 12

(1) Volunteers are persons who occasionally or regularly carry out volunteering activities for the National Society.

(2) Volunteering is an activity that:

- a) is motivated by the person's free will and willingness, and not by a desire for material or financial gain or by external (social, economic or political) pressure;
- b) is intended to benefit vulnerable people and their communities in accordance with the Movement's Fundamental Principles; and
- c) is organized by recognized representatives of the BRC.

(3) A volunteer who suits the requirements of Article 7 of the present Statutes can be a member of the National Society.

Article 13

Affiliates are persons who promote or financially support BRC's activities.

CHAPTER IV GOVERNING BODIES GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 14

(1) The General Assembly is the supreme body of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

(2) The General Assembly shall be composed of 90 members who are to include:

1. 87 – elected on a quota principle as specified by the National Council on the basis of the average number of regional branch members within the preceding four-year mandate, for each calendar year as of 31 December, and on the basis of the number of members reported;
2. 3 elected representatives, respectively of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth, the Mountain Rescue Service and the Water Life Saving Service.

(3) The sessions of the General Assembly are to be also attended by:

1. the Director General and the directors of the Secretariats of the Bulgarian Red Cross – with the right to a advisory vote;
2. invited representatives of the Republic of Bulgaria's National Assembly, the Presidency, the Council of Ministers, and of other governmental and public institutions – with the right to a advisory vote;

3. invited representatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and of national Red Cross /Red Crescent societies – with the right to a advisory vote;
4. invited representatives of international organizations.

Article 15

- (1) The General Assembly shall have the following powers:
1. To adopt, amend and supplement the Statutes of the National Society.
 2. To adopt other by-laws.
 3. To approve the Statute of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth and its amendments.
 4. To elect, from among the delegates to the General Assembly, the President of the Bulgarian Red Cross on a public service basis, and to discharge him/her.
 5. To determine the number of and elect, from among the delegates to the General Assembly, deputy president/s on a public service basis, and to discharge him/her/them.
 6. To determine the number of and elect, from among the delegates to the General Assembly, members of the National Council on a public service basis, and to discharge them.
 7. To determine the number of and elect, from among the delegates to the General Assembly, members of the National Control Commission on a public service basis, and to discharge them.
 8. To determine the amount of the membership dues.
 9. To approve the budget of the National Society and the report on its implementation.
 10. To adopt the general guidelines and plan of action of the National Society.
 11. To approve the annual report of the National Council, the annual financial report, the annual report of the National Control Commission, and the annual report of the Ethics Commission.
 12. To take decisions for the establishment and closing of branches.
 13. To take decisions regarding the disposal with the National Society's real estate.
 14. To take decisions for the transformation or dissolution of the National Society.
 15. To repeal decisions of other bodies of the National Society, such as may be contrary to the law, to the Statutes, to previous decisions of the General Assembly or to other by-laws governing the activities of the Bulgarian Red Cross.
 16. To take decisions on other important issues related to the work of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

(2) The decisions of the General Assembly shall be binding upon the other bodies of the National Society.

Article 16

- (1) Sessions of the General Assembly shall be convened by the National Council upon the latter's initiative at least once a year or upon the request of one third of the members of the General Assembly of the Bulgarian Red Cross. In the latter case, if the National Council fails to forward within two

weeks invitations in writing for the convening of a General Assembly session, such a session shall be convoked by the circuit court by domicile of the National Society upon receiving a written request from at least one third of the members of the Bulgarian Red Cross' General Assembly or from a person entrusted by them with this duty.

(2) The invitation must include the agenda, date, time and venue for the holding of the General Assembly session as well as information about on whose initiative it is being convened.

(3) The invitation must be promulgated in the State Gazette and shall be displayed on the announcement board in the building where the National Society's Headquarters is located, at least one month prior to the appointed date.

(4) A session of the General Assembly shall be considered legitimate if it is attended by more than half of the General Assembly's members. In the absence of a quorum the session shall be postponed by one hour, to be held at the same place and with the same agenda, and can take place in case of attendance of at least 40% of all members of the General Assembly. If no quorum is attained, a new session shall be convened in conformity with the provisions of the preceding paragraphs.

Article 17

(1) Each member of the General Assembly shall be entitled to one vote.

(2) No member of the General Assembly shall be entitled to vote on issues referring to:

1. him/her self, own spouse, or relatives of direct descent – without limits, collateral relatives – to the fourth branch, or relatives-in-law – to the second branch inclusive;
2. legal entities of which he/she is manager or where he/she could impose or impede decision-making.

Article 18

(1) The decisions of the General Assembly under subparagraph 1 of Article 15 shall be taken by open ballot voting and by a two-thirds majority of the members present, under subparagraph 13 of Article 15 – by open ballot voting and by a two-thirds majority of all members of the General Assembly, and under subparagraph 14 of the same article – by open ballot voting and by a three-fourths majority of all members of the General Assembly.

(2) The elections under subparagraphs 4 and 5 of Article 15 shall be carried out by secret ballot voting and by a two-thirds majority of the members present. If, during the first voting, no nominee has gained the number of votes required, a second secret ballot voting shall be carried out with the participation of the two contestants who have received the most votes in the first round. As elected shall be considered the nominee who has polled more votes, but not less than half plus one of the members present. If none of the

two contestants has gained such a majority, a new voting procedure with nominations shall be launched.

(3) All other decisions shall be taken by the General Assembly by open ballot voting and by a majority of the members present.

(4) If, during the voting for members of the National Council, the contestants who have polled the majority required under paragraph 3 of this Article turn out to exceed the previously determined number, as elected shall be considered those who have polled the most votes.

NATIONAL COUNCIL

Article 19

Between the sessions of the General Assembly, the Bulgarian Red Cross shall be governed by a National Council which is its main executive and decision-making body.

Article 20

(1) The National Council shall be composed of:

1. The President and Vice-President/s of the Bulgarian Red Cross, elected by the General Assembly.
2. Members elected by the General Assembly.

(2) The National Council shall consist of at least five persons – members of the National Society.

Article 21

The National Council shall have the following powers:

1. to ensure the implementation of the decisions taken by the General Assembly;
2. to prepare and submit to the General Assembly a draft budget and a report on its implementation;
3. to control the implementation of the budget approved by the General Assembly;
4. to prepare and submit to the General Assembly a report on the activities of the National Society and an annual financial report;
5. to determine the order and organize the accomplishment of the activities of the National Society, and to bear the responsibility thereof;
6. to prepare the report provided for in Article 36 (2) of the present Statutes;
7. to draw up and approve Regulations on its work;
8. to take decisions on the participation of the Bulgarian Red Cross in other organizations, and on the termination of such participation;
9. to take decisions on the letting of National Society's real estate for a period exceeding three years;
10. to take decisions regarding the disposal with the movable property including National Society's funds, and to grant rights for such a disposal within specified limits to the President and to the Director General;
11. to carry out liquidation or take a decision for the appointment of a liquidator;

12. to appoint the address of the National Society;
13. to select a licensed auditor with a view to conducting an independent audit and certification of the annual financial report of the Bulgarian Red Cross on the basis of Article 39 (3) of the Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities;
14. to take decisions on all issues which, by law or under the present Statutes, are not within the authority of any other body.

Article 22

(1) The National Council shall meet in ordinary session at least 9 (nine) times a year. The sessions of the National Council shall be convened and presided over by the President. The President shall be bound to convene an extraordinary session of the National Council upon the written request of the Vice-President/s or of one third of the National Council's members, in case such a request has been officially received and duly certified by him/her. If the President does not convene a session within one week, it can be convened by any one of the National Council's members concerned. The Director General may submit proposals to the President for convening the National Council. In the absence of the President, the session shall be chaired by the Vice-President/s or by any other member of the National Council, designated by the President.

(2) A session of the National Council shall be considered legitimate if it is attended by more than half of the members.

(3) An attendee shall also be considered a person with whom during the session there is a two-way telephone or other communication guaranteeing his/her identification and enabling his/her participation in the discussion and decision-making. This member's voting shall be attested in the minutes of the session by the chairing person.

(4) The National Council may also take decisions without holding a session, provided the minutes attesting the respective decision are signed without remarks or objections by all the members of the National Council.

(5) The sessions of the National Council shall be attended by the Director General, with the right to a advisory vote. The persons invited to attend a session shall also be entitled to this right.

(6) The decisions of the National Council shall be taken by a majority of the members present, while the decisions under subparagraphs 5, 10 and 11 of Article 21 and under paragraph 2 of Article 51 – by a majority of all members.

Article 23

- (1) The President shall represent the Bulgarian Red Cross.
- (2) The President shall carry out control on the implementation of the decisions taken by the General Assembly and the National Council.
- (3) The President shall carry out a general control over the administration of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

(4) If the President is unable, for objective reasons, to perform his/her duties, the latter shall be exercised by a Vice-President upon a decision of the National Council. Such a decision must be taken by a majority of two-thirds of the National Council' members present at the session.

(5) If the Vice-President is unable, for objective reasons, to perform the President's duties, the National Council shall elect another of its members to perform them. Such a decision must be taken by a majority of two-thirds of the National Council' members present at the session.

(6) Should as President of the Bulgarian Red Cross be elected a person who is President of a Regional (respectively Metropolitan) or Municipal (respectively Territorial) Council, this Regional (respectively Metropolitan) or Municipal (respectively Territorial) Council shall be entitled to convene, within one month after the date of the election, an extraordinary General Assembly session for discharging the person from office and for electing a new President who will be acting as such until the expiry of his/her predecessor's mandate.

CHAPTER V *ADMINISTRATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BODY – SECRETARIAT*

Article 24

(1) The Secretariat at the National Council is an administrative and executive body. It implements the decisions of the General Assembly and of the National Council and shall be composed of:

1. Director General;
2. Deputy (Deputies) Director General;
3. Chief Secretary;
4. Directors of Directorates;
5. Other staff members and employees;
6. National training centres and bases of the Bulgarian Red Cross with separate structures, scales of staff positions, and budgets.

(2) The structure, the scale of staff positions and the unified classification roster of administrative positions /scale of wages shall be subject to approval by the National Council.

Article 25

(1) The Director General shall manage the administration of the Bulgarian Red Cross and shall be in charge of the implementation of the decisions taken by the General Assembly and the National Council.

(2) The Director General shall operatively administer the budget and shall report to the National Council.

(3) The President shall conclude, amend and terminate the labour contract with the Director General and shall approve his/her job description. The

Director General shall also be vested with other powers entrusted to him/her by the President.

(4) Except where otherwise provided for in the present Statutes, the Director General shall carry out the functions of employer within the Bulgarian Red Cross. He/She shall conclude and terminate the labour contracts with:

1. the directors of secretariats at the BRC' regional/metropolitan councils, after receiving the standpoint of the President of the respective Regional/Metropolitan Branch and in coordination with the President of the BRC;
2. the directors in the Secretariat at the BRC National Council, in coordination with the President of the BRC;
3. the directors of national training centres and heads of bases, in coordination with the President of the BRC;
4. the staff members and employees in the Secretariat at the National Council.

The Director General shall also exercise all other rights and duties granted to the employer by the Labour Code.

(5) The director of a national training centre, respectively the head of base, of the Bulgarian Red Cross shall carry out the functions of employer in relation to the staff members and employees in the respective centre or base. The head of a BRC' base shall conclude, amend and terminate the labour contracts with the staff members and employees in the base upon the consent of the Director of Directorate "Mountain Rescue Service".

CHAPTER VI *REGIONAL, RESPECTIVELY METROPOLITAN, BRANCHES*

Article 26

The regional (respectively metropolitan) branches are established on the territories that follow the regional administrative and territorial division of the country, where they carry out the overall Red Cross activity.

Article 27

(1) The Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly is the high governing body within its territory.

(2) The Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly shall be composed of delegates elected by the relevant municipal (respectively territorial) general assemblies on the basis of quotas specified by the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council of the Bulgarian Red Cross, and shall also include one elected representative of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth. The Director of the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Secretariat shall attend the sessions with the right to a advisory vote. The persons invited to attend a session shall also be entitled to this right.

(3) The Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly shall meet in ordinary session at least once a year, and in extraordinary session – upon the proposal of the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council or of one third of

the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly's members. Any session shall be considered legitimate if it is attended by more than half of the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly's members. In the absence of a quorum the session shall be postponed by one hour, to be held at the same place and with the same agenda, and can take place in case of attendance of at least 40% of all members of the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly. If no quorum is attained, a new session shall be convened in conformity with the provisions of this paragraph.

(4) The Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly shall have the following powers:

1. To elect, from among the delegates to the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly, a President on a public service basis, and to discharge him/her.
2. To determine the number of and elect, from among the delegates to the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly, deputy president/s on a public service basis, and to discharge him/her/them.
3. To determine the number of and elect, from among the delegates to the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly, members of the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council on a public service basis, and to discharge them.
4. To determine the number of and elect, from among the delegates to the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly, members of the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Control Commission on a public service basis, and to discharge them.
5. To elect, from among the delegates to the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly, delegates and one runner-up to the General Assembly of the Bulgarian Red Cross on a public service basis.
6. To approve the reports of the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council and the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Control Commission, as well as guidelines for the activities of the regional (respectively metropolitan) branch during the next period.
7. To approve the draft budget of the regional (respectively metropolitan) branch and the report on its implementation.

(5) The President and the Deputy President/s shall be elected by secret ballot voting and by a two-thirds majority of the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly's members present at the session. If, during the first voting, no nominee has gained the number of votes required, a second secret ballot voting shall be carried out with the participation of the two contestants who have received the most votes in the first round. As elected shall be considered the nominee who has polled more votes, but not less than half plus one of the members present. If none of the two contestants has gained such a majority, a new voting procedure with nominations shall be launched. All other decisions shall be taken by open ballot voting and by a majority of the members present.

(6) Between the sessions of the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly, the activities of the branch shall be governed by the Regional

(respectively Metropolitan) Council which is the main executive and decision-making body of the regional (respectively metropolitan) branch.

(7) The Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council shall have the following powers:

1. to ensure the implementation of the decisions taken by the General Assembly, the National Council and the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly;
2. to prepare and submit to the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly a draft budget of the regional (respectively metropolitan) branch;
3. to draw up and approve Regulations on its work;
4. to prepare and submit to the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly a report on the activities of the regional (respectively metropolitan) branch.

(8) The Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council is to determine the number of its sessions, but it shall meet at least six times a year.

(9) The President of the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council shall convene and preside over the sessions of the Council. He shall be in charge of the enforcement of the general policy in the region and of the implementation of the decisions taken by the General Assembly, the National Council, the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly and the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council, and shall carry out a general control over the administration of the regional (respectively metropolitan) branch, bearing the responsibility thereof.

(10) If the President is unable, for objective reasons, to perform his/her duties, the latter shall be exercised by a/the Vice-President upon a decision of the Regional/Metropolitan Council. Such a decision must be taken by a majority of two-thirds of the Regional/Metropolitan Council' members present at the session. If the Vice-President is unable, for objective reasons, to perform the President's duties, the Regional/Metropolitan Council shall elect another of its members to perform them. Such a decision must be taken by a majority of two-thirds of the Regional/Metropolitan Council' members present at the session.

(11) Should as President of a Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council be elected a person who is President of a Municipal (respectively Territorial) Council, this Municipal (respectively Territorial) Council shall be entitled to convene, within one month after the date of the election, an extraordinary Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly session for discharging the person from office and for electing a new President.

(12) The President of a Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council shall be entitled, upon a decision of the Regional/Metropolitan Council, to submit a well-grounded written proposal to the Director General with a view to dismissing the Director of the Secretariat at this Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council. The Director General shall take a decision on each specific case, and shall inform the National Council thereof.

***ADMINISTRATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BODY AT REGIONAL,
RESPECTIVELY METROPOLITAN, LEVEL – SECRETARIAT***

Article 28

The Director of the Secretariat at the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) Council shall manage the administration of the Bulgarian Red Cross in the region and shall administer the budget upon a respective decision of the Regional/Metropolitan Council. The Director shall report to the Regional/Metropolitan Council. He/She shall carry out the functions of employer in relation to the staff members and employees in the Secretariat at the Regional/Metropolitan Council. The structure, the scale of staff positions and the unified classification roster of administrative positions /scale of wages shall be subject to approval by the Regional/Metropolitan Council.

***MUNICIPAL, RESPECTIVELY TERRITORIAL, ORGANIZATIONS, AND
CHAPTERS***

Article 29

- (1) The municipal (respectively territorial) organization is the major structural unit on the territory of a municipality. It carries out the overall Red Cross activity on this territory and is a component of the respective regional/metropolitan) branch.
- (2) The municipal (respectively territorial) organization shall be governed by a Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly.
- (3) The Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly shall meet in ordinary session once a year, and in extraordinary session – upon the proposal of the Municipal (respectively Territorial) Council or of one third of the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly's members. Any session shall be considered legitimate if it is attended by more than half of the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly's members. In the absence of a quorum the session shall be postponed by one hour, to be held at the same place and with the same agenda, and can take place in case of attendance of at least 40% of all members of the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly. If no quorum is attained, a new session shall be convened in conformity with the provisions of this paragraph.
- (4) The Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly shall be composed of delegates elected by the respective chapters of the Bulgarian Red Cross on the basis of quotas specified by the Municipal/Territorial Council.
- (5) The Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly shall have the following powers:
 1. To elect, from among the delegates to the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly, a President on a public service basis, and to discharge him/her.

2. To determine the number of and elect, from among the delegates to the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly, deputy president/s on a public service basis, and to discharge him/her/them.
3. To determine the number of and elect, from among the delegates to the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly, members of the Municipal (respectively Territorial) Council on a public service basis, and to discharge them.
4. To determine the number of and elect, from among the delegates to the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly, members of the Municipal (respectively Territorial) Control Commission on a public service basis, and to discharge them.
5. To elect, from among the delegates to the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly, delegates and runners-up to the Regional (respectively Metropolitan) General Assembly on a public service basis.
6. To approve the annual reports of the Municipal (respectively Territorial) Council and the Municipal (respectively Territorial) Control Commission, as well as guidelines for the activities during the next period.

(6) The President and the Deputy President/s shall be elected by open ballot voting and by a two-thirds majority of the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly's members present at the session. If, during the first voting, no nominee has gained the number of votes required, a second, secret ballot voting shall be carried out with the participation of the two contestants who have received the most votes during the first round. As elected shall be considered the nominee who has polled more votes, but not less than half plus one of the members present. If none of the two contestants has gained such a majority, a new voting procedure with nominations shall be launched. All other decisions shall be taken by open ballot voting and by a majority of the members present.

(7) Between the sessions of the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly, the activities shall be governed by the Municipal (respectively Territorial) Council which is the main executive and decision-making body of the municipal organization. The Council is to determine the number of its sessions, but it shall meet at least four times a year, taking decisions by a majority of the members present.

Article 30

- (1) The Chapter is the basic organizational unit of the Bulgarian Red Cross. It is set up on a territorial and employment-related principle and shall consist of not less than five members.
- (2) The Chapter Assembly is the highest governing body of the Chapter.
- (3) The Chapter Assembly shall meet at least once a year. A Chapter Assembly session shall be considered legitimate if it is attended by more than half of the members.

(4) The members of the Chapter Assembly are to discuss issues related to the activities of the Bulgarian Red Cross and to the report of the Chapter Council.

(5) The Chapter Assembly shall once in four years elect a President, a Chapter Council, and delegates and a runner-up to the Municipal (respectively Territorial) General Assembly. The election and decision-making procedures shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Article 29 (6) of the present Statutes.

CHAPTER VII *BULGARIAN RED CROSS YOUTH*

Article 31

(1) The Bulgarian Red Cross Youth (BRCY) is a voluntary youth organization that constitutes an integral part of the Bulgarian Red Cross and belongs to the International Red Cross Youth Movement.

(2) The Bulgarian Red Cross Youth develops and executes educational programmes, activities and services through which it supports the assimilation of humanitarian values by the children and young people under 35 years of age, works to decrease their social and health-related vulnerability, carries on advocacy with a view to improving their well-being and conducts campaigns on maintaining preparedness and rendering assistance to children and adolescents in case of disasters, technological accidents or other calamities.

(3) The Bulgarian Red Cross Youth organizes and performs its activities and tasks in congruence with its Statute approved by the General Assembly of the Bulgarian Red Cross, after its approval by the National Council and in pursuance with the Development Strategy of the Bulgarian Red Cross

(4) The President of the Bulgarian Red Cross, the members of the National Council of the Bulgarian Red Cross, the Director General, the directors in the Secretariat at the BRC National Headquarters and the staff members of Directorate "BRCY" may participate, with the right to a advisory vote, in the sessions of the Operative Board and the National Convention of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth.

CHAPTER VIII *MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE*

Article 32

(1) The Mountain Rescue Service (MRS) is part of the structure of the Bulgarian Red Cross. The discharge of its duties constitutes a part of the overall humanitarian activities of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

(2) The Mountain Rescue Service organizes and carries out its work in accordance with the Rules for the Activities and Composition of MRS at the BRC and with internal organizational regulations approved by the National Council of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

(3) The MRS Assembly of Delegates is the representative forum of the Mountain Rescue Service.

(4) The MRS Board is a consultative body which may draw up and submit to the National Council documents relating to the MRS's specialized activities. Its composition and powers are regulated by the Rules provided for in paragraph 2 of this Article.

Article 33

The Mountain Rescue Service has a developed structure which includes: Directorate "Mountain Rescue Service" in the Secretariat at the National Council of the Bulgarian Red Cross, and rescue teams, bases and posts in the mountains that carry out the operational activities.

Article 34

The financing of the activities is reflected in the MRS's budget which is a constituent part of the BRC's budget approved by the General Assembly upon a proposal of the National Council.

Article 35

(1) MRS organizes and carries out mountain rescuing by rendering assistance and care to victims of accidents in the mountains and by performing prophylactic activities for the prevention of unfortunate accidents in the mountains.

(2) MRS organizes courses and conducts training on mountain rescue operations for mountain rescuers, patrollers at ski trails and for other specialists, and issues and authenticates qualification certificates for the trained persons. After being registered, the latter periodically receive extended training and undergo qualification double-checks. The training is conducted by licensed instructors from the Training Centre at the Directorate "Mountain Rescue Service" in the Secretariat at the National Council of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

CHAPTER IX BOOK-KEEPING

Article 36

(1) The Bulgarian Red Cross shall keep books with minutes of the sessions of its collective bodies. The chairperson of the session and the person who has prepared the minutes shall attest and be liable for the authenticity of their content.

(2) The Bulgarian Red Cross shall prepare once per year a report on its activities, which must contain information about:

1. the major activities, the funds spent thereon, their relevance to the objectives and programmes of the National Society, and the results achieved;
2. the amount of gratuitously obtained property and of revenues from other income-generating activities;

3. the type, amount, value and purpose of the donations received and granted out, together with data about the donors;
4. the financial results.

(3) The report provided for in paragraph 2 shall be made public. The notification about its elaboration as well as on the place, time and procedure for access thereto, shall be published in the bulletin and on the web page of the central registry of the Ministry of Justice.

CHAPTER X COMMISSIONS

Article 37

(1) The governing bodies may set up commissions within the various sectors of Bulgarian Red Cross' activities.

(2) Such commissions shall be established on a public or institutional basis and shall have auxiliary and consultative role. They may also include staff members of the BRC.

(3) The regulations on their work shall be subject to approval by the respective council at national, regional (respectively metropolitan) or municipal (respectively territorial) level.

CHAPTER XI PROPERTY

Article 38

The Bulgarian Red Cross may acquire movable and immovable property through:

(1) Voluntary contributions, donations, testaments, sale-trade, and offerings in any form from physical persons and legal entities.

(2) Subsidies and relief funds from the state.

(3) Revenues from income-generating activities of the Bulgarian Red Cross, in conformity with the national legislation.

(4) Membership dues.

(5) Funds provided for in Article 6, paragraph 2, of the Law on the Bulgarian Red Cross.

(6) Other sources not contrary to the national legislation and to the Bulgarian Red Cross' Statutes.

Article 39

The financial strategy of the National Society shall be laid down by the General Assembly.

Article 40

- (1) The Bulgarian Red Cross shall draw up a budget for each financial year.
- (2) The entire financial activity of the Bulgarian Red Cross shall be carried out in accordance with the operative national legislation and internal normative documents.
- (3) The budget of the Bulgarian Red Cross, the report on its implementation, and the Annual Financial Report shall be subject to approval by the General Assembly after their submission by the National Council.

Article 41

The control on the implementation of the budget of the Bulgarian Red Cross shall be carried out by the National Council, the National Control Commission and the General Assembly of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

Article 42

- (1) The Bulgarian Red Cross may, with a view to pursuing activities for public benefit, use property without valuable consideration and undertake initiatives aimed at achieving its objectives.
- (2) The selection of beneficiaries and of ways to provide assistance to them shall be effected by taking into account the specific goal pursued and the availability of financial resources, in accordance with the by-laws of the National Society and the relevant procedural order. The information about the selection procedure must be made available to the general public and shall be entered into the central register.
- (3) In order for a property of the National Society to be used without valuable consideration, a well-grounded decision shall be required, due to be taken by the Bulgarian Red Cross' General Assembly by a two-thirds majority of all its members, if such a use would be of benefit to:
 1. persons who are members of its other bodies and their spouses, or their relatives of direct descent – without limits, collateral relatives – to the fourth branch, or relatives-in-law – to the second branch inclusive;
 2. persons who have been members of its governing or managing bodies until two years before the date of the decision;
 3. legal entities that have financed the National Society until three years before the date of the decision;
 4. legal entities of which any one of the persons referred to in subparagraphs 1 and 2 is manager or where he/she could impose or impede decision-making.
- (4) The Bulgarian Red Cross may not enter into transactions with any of the persons referred to in paragraph 3.1 above, as well as with legal entities of which such person is manager or where he/she could impose or impede decision-making, unless such transactions would be of obvious benefit to the National Society or are concluded on common terms that have been made public.

CHAPTER XII *ADDITIONAL INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES*

Article 43

- (1) The Bulgarian Red Cross may carry out additional income-generating activities related to the subject of its main activities, using the respective revenues for pursuing the objectives set forth in the present Statutes, and not distributing any surplus funds.
- (2) The subject of such additional income-generating activities could include: publishing, advertising and information activities; the organizing and holding of congresses, symposia, conferences, seminars, training courses and other similar regional, national and international events; the sale of new and second hand clothes; the production and sale of goods; hotel/restaurant-keeping; travel agency operational and agential activities; the letting of property; transportation services; motor-car repair and service activities; and other undertakings and services which are not prohibited by law and are in conformity with the provisions of Article 3, paragraph 3 of the Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities.
- (3) The implementation of the income-generating activities shall be in compliance with the terms and procedures stipulated by the laws governing the respective types of economic activities.
- (4) The National Council shall take decisions on the procedural order, terms, modes of management and rules for the implementation of the respective income-generating activities.

CHAPTER XIII *CONTROL BODIES*

Article 44

Control commissions shall be elected at national, regional (respectively metropolitan) and municipal (respectively territorial) level.

Article 45

- (1) The National Control Commission shall be elected by the General Assembly of the Bulgarian Red Cross for a four-year term.
- (2) The members of the National Control Commission may not be staff members of the Bulgarian Red Cross and may not receive contractual remunerations or any other form of material benefit from the Bulgarian Red Cross.
- (3) The National Control Commission shall have the following powers:
 1. To exercise control over the funds and the movable and immovable property of the Bulgarian Red Cross.
 2. To control the overall activities of the National Society and of the economic units established by the Bulgarian Red Cross.

3. To control the decisions of the National Council and of the Bulgarian Red Cross Youth' governing bodies in relation to their conformity with the present Statutes, with the decisions of the General Assembly and with the operative normative acts.

4. To draw up and approve Regulations on its work.

(4) The National Control Commission shall issue instructions for improvement of the work of the regional (respectively metropolitan) and municipal (respectively territorial) control commissions.

(5) The number of members of the National Control Commission shall be determined by the General Assembly of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

(6) The National Control Commission shall elect, from among its members, a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman. The Chairman or the Vice-Chairman of the National Control Commission may participate in the sessions of the National Council with the right to an advisory vote.

(7) When solving specific problems, the National Control Commission shall have the right to draw in and consult external experts.

Article 46

(1) The regional (respectively metropolitan) and municipal (respectively territorial) general assemblies shall elect regional (respectively metropolitan) and municipal (respectively territorial) control commissions for a four-year term.

(2) The number of members of such commissions shall be determined by the respective regional (respectively metropolitan) and municipal (respectively territorial) general assemblies. Each commission shall elect, from among its members, a chairman entitled to participate in the sessions of the respective Regional (respectively Metropolitan) or Municipal (respectively Territorial) Council with the right to an advisory vote.

(3) The regional (respectively metropolitan) and municipal (respectively territorial) control commissions shall carry out the functions provided for in paragraph 3 of the preceding Article, for their regions (respectively the city of Sofia) or municipalities (respectively territories). The provisions of Article 45 (2) apply to them as well.

CHAPTER XIV *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

Article 47

The Bulgarian Red Cross shares in the fellowship which unites the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and shall maintain permanent relations with them.

Article 48

Within its current available resources, the Bulgarian Red Cross shall participate in the international campaigns of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Article 49

The Bulgarian Red Cross shall have the rights and duties ensuing from its membership of the Movement in accordance with the present Statutes, the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the Constitution of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

CHAPTER XV *DISSOLUTION, LIQUIDATION*

Article 50

- (1) The Bulgarian Red Cross may be dissolved:
 1. by a decision of the General Assembly;
 2. by a decree of the circuit court by domicile of the National Society, if:
 - a) it has not been established in compliance with the legal procedure;
 - b) it pursues activities contrary to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria or the law or the good morals;
 - c) it has been adjudicated insolvent.
- (2) The court decree under paragraph 1.2 of this Article may be issued on the grounds of claim by any party concerned or by a public prosecutor.
- (3) The court may grant a term of up to six months for removal of the grounds for dissolution and the consequences thereof.
- (4) Under the circumstances of paragraph 2 of this Article, the dissolution shall be registered ex officio and the court shall appoint a liquidator.

Article 51

- (1) In the event of dissolution of the Bulgarian Red Cross, a liquidation shall be carried out.
- (2) The liquidation shall be effected by the National Council or by a person designated by this Council.
- (3) If no liquidator has been designated as provided for in paragraph 2 of this Article, as well as under the circumstances of paragraph 1.1 of Article 50, such a liquidator shall be appointed by the circuit court by domicile of the non-profit legal entity.
- (4) The liquidator shall be bound, if possible, to satisfy the creditors through the available cash funds, and should that be impossible – by cashing firstly the movable, and then the immovable property.
- (5) No property whatsoever may be assigned in any manner to:
 1. the founders or present or former members;

2. persons who have been members of the National Society's bodies or staff;
3. the liquidators, except for their due remuneration;
4. spouses of persons referred to in subparagraphs 1-3;
5. relatives of direct descent of persons referred to in subparagraphs 1-3 – without limits, collateral relatives – to the fourth branch, or relatives-in-law – to the second branch inclusive;
6. legal entities of which any one of the persons referred to in subparagraphs 1-5 is manager or where he/she could impose or impede decision-making.

(6) In relation to insolvency, respectively bankruptcy, the liquidation procedure and the powers of the liquidator, the relevant provisions of the Commerce Law shall apply, accordingly.

Article 52

(1) The property that has remained after the satisfaction of the creditors shall be granted by decision of the court to a non-profit legal entity defined as an organization pursuing public benefit activities with the same or similar not-for-profit objectives.

(2) If the property has not been granted as provided for in paragraph 1 of this Article, it shall be delivered into possession of the municipality by domicile of the National Society. The municipality shall be bound to provide this property for the implementation of public benefit activities with purposes approximating to the highest possible extent the objectives of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

Article 53

After the distribution of the property, the liquidator shall be bound to request deletion of the registration of the National Society by the Registry Agency.

CHAPTER XVI *PROCEDURE*

Article 54

The mandate of each general assembly (national, regional, metropolitan, municipal, territorial) commences after a checking of the credentials of its delegates by the antecedent general assembly, and ends upon approval of the report on the activities of the organization and the report of the respective control commission followed by a checking of the credentials of the newly elected delegates to the next general assembly.

Article 55

(1) Upon electing a person, who works by being employed under a labour contract with the BRC, as member of a statutory eligible body of the National Society, he/she will have to submit, within one month after being elected, an application for termination of his/her labour contract.

(2) Should he/she fail to do so, the respective chapter governing body or council shall be entitled to convene, within another one month's period, an extraordinary General Assembly session for discharging the person referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article and for electing a new member thereof.

(3) Should a member of a statutory eligible body of the National Society conclude a labour contract with the BRC, he/she shall be bound to submit to the respective council, within one month after the date of the conclusion of the contract, an application for his/her discharging which shall become effective from the day of lodgement of the application. The respective council shall inform the General Assembly thereon at its next session.

Article 56

The General Assembly and the National Council shall adopt and amend such by-laws as may be necessary for the implementation of the present Statutes.

Article 57

All matters unsettled by the present Statutes shall be governed by the relevant provisions of the applicable laws.

Article 58

The Statutes of the Bulgarian Red Cross were adopted by the 58th Congress of the Bulgarian Red Cross at its session on 28-29 April 1992 and came into force on the date of their adoption. The Statutes were amended and supplemented at the ordinary sessions of the 59th General Assembly on 6 March 1993 and 18 March 1994, the 60th General Assembly on 13 May 1995, 30 March 1996 and 29 March 1997, the 61st General Assembly on 25 April 1998 and 22 April 2000, the 62nd General Assembly on 28 April 2001, 27 April 2002, 16-17 May 2003 and 23-24 April 2004, the 63rd General Assembly on 12-13 May 2006 and 11-12 May 2007, and the 64th General Assembly on 14-15 May 2010, 13-14 May 2011 and 11-12 May 2012, 65th General Assembly on 15-16 May 2015 and 13-14 May 2016.