

Mission Statement of the FSPC Women's Conference

Preliminary Note:

The Women's Conference Mission Statement elaborates on the goals and duties of the Conference as defined in the FSPC Conference Rules. This mission statement is governed by these rules and regulations. The mission statement provides guidance for the work of the Women's Conference and information for external interested parties, particularly new and prospective members. It also provides the framework for defining focus activities and annual topics.

1. Identity of the Women's Conference

The Women's Conference (*Frauenkonferenz, FK*) is a conference of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches. It is a place of cooperation with regard to women's and gender issues¹ between the FSPC, its member churches and affiliated associations and organizations. It is deliberately situated between the poles of demanding equality – the advancement of women and women's church movements – on the one hand and the strategy of gender mainstreaming² and cooperation between women and men on the other.

Members of the Women's Conference include: Delegates of the FSPC member churches (experts and executive representatives); delegates of Protestant or ecumenical associations and organizations; and experts from the women's and gender affairs offices of the cantonal churches.

Guests from sympathetic organizations and sister churches are welcome to the Women's Conference.

2. Women's Conference Goals and Functions

The Women's Conference is guided by the goals and strategies of the FSPC Council, and is adding a gender perspective to them. It supports the Council regarding gender issues and gender-competent public appearances. It works to make sure that the Council's processes and endeavors are informed by the gender perspective and an awareness of women's life realities.

The Women's Conference is the FSPC's competence and knowledge network for feminist theology, gender democracy³ and gender equality politics. It contributes

¹ **Gender:** 'Gender' is different from biological 'sex.' Gender refers to the idea of socially, culturally and religiously determined tasks, functions and roles assigned to men and women in society in public and private life.

² **Gender mainstreaming:** Inclusion of the gender issue (pertaining to the specific life situations and interests of men and women) in the entirety of all processes and decisions within an organization or a project. Strategy of implementing gender equality.

³ **Gender democracy:** Defined as both a vision and a principle of organization geared towards establishing democratic conditions between men and women (equal participation in political decision-

feminist insights from theology, liberal arts, the humanities and science.

It is guided by the common priorities of its members. It supports members' efforts by providing networking opportunities and productive impulses. It is a place where women's networks and their activities come into view. It has a strategic responsibility to bring women and gender issues to the attention of the relevant agencies and commissions of the FSPC, such as the Council, the main office and the Assembly of Delegates, the Diaconal Conference and the member churches and make them put those issues on their agendas.

Representing the Protestant voice in public with conventions, consultations and publications, the Women's Conference promotes gender democracy in church affairs with a long-term perspective and with ecumenical openness.

Adopted by the Women's Conference on November 14, 2005

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