
STATUTES
GENERAL SYNDICATE GÖTTINGEN
FREE WORKERS' UNION



PUBLISHED BY:
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DATE: 02 JUNE 2020

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Disclaimer

This is a translation of the statutes of the *General Syndicate Göttingen* (*Allgemeines Syndikat Göttingen*). The original statutes are in German. In cases of confusion or disputes, the german version of the statutes is the authoritative version. This translation serves only to help comrades with little or without german language comprehension.

I Basics

1. The union bears the name *Allgemeines Syndikat Göttingen* (AS Göttingen, english: "General Syndicate Göttingen").
2. The regional and trans-regional cooperation in the Freie Arbeiter*innen-Union (FAU, english: "Free Workers' Union") is based on the statutes of the FAU in the spirit of solidarity and mutual aid.
3. Organizational area and areas of responsibility
 - (a) The organizational area of the AS Göttingen covers the city and district of Göttingen across companies. It also covers neighbouring municipalities, if external workers want to organize themselves in the AS Göttingen and if there are no local FAU structures.
 - (b) The areas of responsibility of the AS Göttingen are defined by all the companies, businesses, institutions and administrations in which the AS Göttingen has members, but only if there is no branch-specific FAU syndicate for them.
 - (c) The AS Göttingen explicitly makes no claim to represent the workers in companies, businesses, institutions and administrations in which it has no members.
4. The seat of the AS Göttingen is at Obere-Masch-Straße 10 in 37073 Göttingen.

II Purpose and aim

1. The purpose of the AS Göttingen is to maintain and promote the working and economic conditions in accordance with Article 9 (3) of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz) and the cultural and social interests of its members. For this purpose, the AS Göttingen is ready to conduct industrial action and to conclude the results as attachments to employment contracts, as a collective agreement or another agreement.
2. The purpose of the AS Göttingen is furthermore to deepen and expand the education and skills of its members.
3. Beyond its own membership the AS Göttingen tries to raise the awareness of all workers on their common situation and their common interests and to promote the spirit of solidarity and unity between them. In this spirit the AS Göttingen strives for a solidarity-based cooperation across organizational, branch and country borders among all workers.
4. The AS Göttingen is independent from all political, religious or other ideological organizations and groups and rejects any instrumentalization of the union in their sense.
5. The AS Göttingen is in the same way independent from employers, their organizations and all state institutions.
6. The FAU strives for a libertarian, classless society in which all people can live according to their needs and develop their skills freely. The aim of the AS Göttingen is to lay the foundations for this in the branches it represents in the economic region of Göttingen.

III Membership

1. Who can become a member?
 - (a) Anyone who is directly or indirectly dependent on wages (blue-collar worker, white-collar worker, civil servant, trainee, pensioner, unemployed person) or who works independently and who works or lives in the organizational area of the AS Göttingen can become a member.
 - (b) Membership is barred for employers and executives, who can hire or lay off other people, and for people whose professional activities conflict with the purpose and aim mentioned in II., in particular employees of the police and other state security forces.
 - (c) Membership is also barred for people whose efforts and activities contradict the purpose and aim mentioned in II.
 - (d) People who have been excluded from the AS Göttingen or another FAU syndicate can only become a member of the AS Göttingen if the reason for the exclusion no longer exists and the FAU syndicate that has excluded the member has no reservations about the admission.
 - (e) People who are already members of another syndicate can only join the AS Göttingen by transfer. Simultaneous membership in another FAU syndicate is not possible.
2. Admission procedure
 - (a) Admission can be applied for as follows:
 - immediately in a General Assembly (GA, german: "Vollversammlung") (see V.).
 - in writing to a member (see IV.), who forwards the application to the GA. Applications should be forwarded to the Secretariat before the GA.
 - (b) After admission by acclamation in the GA on which the application was made or which follows the written application and after payment of the first membership fee, the new member is entitled to full membership rights. The payment of strike money to members is regulated in the Industrial Action Guidelines of the AS Göttingen.
 - (c) The new member receives a current copy of these statutes including annexes and, if the GA has decided to introduce membership cards for the syndicate, a membership card of the AS Göttingen. They are also integrated into the internal communication structure of the AS Göttingen.

3. Union life and solidarity benefits

- (a) Every member is entitled and encouraged to actively participate in the work of the AS Göttingen, including the participation in GAs and other meetings, and contributing to the decisions of the union.
- (b) Every member is also called on not to act contrary to the resolutions of the AS Göttingen and to take on tasks and functions in the union.
- (c) In case it is needed each member can, after a decision in the GA, rely on:
 - active solidarity (VII.1),
 - legal protection (VII.2),
 - reprimand support (VII.3),
 - strike support (VII.4).

4. Termination of membership

- (a) Membership ends after six months of missed membership fees, by transferring to another FAU syndicate, declaration of withdrawal, exclusion or death of the member.
- (b) Withdrawal is possible at any time and membership ends immediately.
- (c) If membership fees are overdue, the membership status expires gradually. After the third month of missed membership fees, the member's claims expire (dormant membership). After the sixth months of missed membership fees, membership ends. A deferral can be agreed in writing at any time.
- (d) Members should be expelled if they commit acts that significantly damage the interests of the AS Göttingen or repeatedly contradict its principles and resolutions or if the prerequisites for membership listed in III.1. no longer exist.
- (e) Excluded members can appeal an arbitration board according to V.5.. Membership is suspended until the final decision.
- (f) With the end of membership, all claims of the member to assets (money and goods) of the union expire.

IV Organizational structure

1. General Assembly

- (a) The General Assembly (GA, german: "Vollversammlung") of the members is the decision-making body of the AS Göttingen.
- (b) The GA decides on all matters of the AS Göttingen, in particular on the activities and measures with which the AS Göttingen acts publicly and/or in which funds from the AS Göttingen are to be used.
- (c) Individual members can submit proposals and motions to the GA if they are of interest to the AS Göttingen or require trade union action and if no other division of the AS Göttingen is responsible. (See V.)
- (d) Officials and divisions of the AS Göttingen must report to the GA about their work and are accountable to the GA if they act based on a mandate, even if this is not explicitly mentioned in the mandate.
- (e) The GA is entitled to convene extraordinary GAs.

2. Secretariat

- (a) In the period between the GAs, the Secretariat (german: "Sekretariat") is responsible for protecting the organizational interests of the AS Göttingen and for officially representing it to the outside world. It should furthermore prepare the GAs and call extraordinary GAs, if needed.
- (b) The Secretariat consists of at least two secretaries of organisation and two secretaries of finance. A GA can expand the Secretariat by further secretary positions with specific fields of duties. Duties and mandates are set in the Organisational Guidelines of the AS Göttingen.
- (c) The Secretariat works with individual jurisdiction, but in collective responsibility, which means that all divisive questions are to be discussed collectively. In case of absence of a secretary the remaining syndicate is to cover their field of duty.
- (d) Secretaries can delegate individual tasks to other members of the AS Göttingen, but stay responsible.
- (e) Every member which is part of the AS Göttingen for at least half a year and is not connected to an ongoing arbitration procedure can become a secretary. Each member can occupy only one secretary position. An exception of these rules is possible if decided with a three-fourths majority by the GA.

3. Sections

- (a) Sections (german: "Sektionen") are subdivisions of the AS Göttingen, which can form on the basis of a specific sector situation. They must consist of at least ten members and have to be backed by all affected member. Sections serve to prepare for the formation of independent branch syndicates (see VIII.). They must have a supra-company nature and host their own meetings.
- (b) Sections can act autonomously for their domain, provided they do not contradict any super-ordinate decisions. In case of industrial action the procedure in V.4. becomes effective.
- (c) The forming of a section has to be approved in a GA. The section must report on their workings regularly to the AS Göttingen and must designate a contact person for the syndicate.
- (d) The motion to form a new section has to have attached at least a short concept, which explains the practical workings of the future section and its benefit to the AS Göttingen.
- (e) For a simultaneous membership in sections of multiple branches, a member has to make a reasoned request in the GA.
- (f) The GA has always the option to dissolve a section. This is to happen when they do not fulfill their duties towards the syndicate or when they cannot develop any apparent activities appropriate to their concept.

4. Site groups

- (a) Site groups (german: "Betriebsgruppen") are subdivisions of the AS Göttingen on a company level. They can form when regularly at least three members of the AS Göttingen work in the same company. The GA of the AS Göttingen decides on exceptions.
- (b) Site groups can act autonomously in the aspects of their company, provided they do not contradict any superordinate decisions. In case of industrial action the procedure in V.4. becomes effective.
- (c) The forming of a site group has to be approved in a GA. The site group must report on their workings regularly to the AS Göttingen and must designate a contact person for the syndicate.

5. Work groups

- (a) Work groups (german: "Arbeitsgruppen") are subdivisions of the AS Göttingen, which can be formed for thematic fields. They can serve for exchange, positioning or executing tasks which lie in the responsibility of the AS Göttingen.

- (b) Work groups act in close connection to the syndicate and can only take action within the limits of their mandate. This mandate can be temporary or indefinite.
- (c) Each work group must report on their workings regularly to the AS Göttingen and must designate a contact person for the syndicate.
- (d) The motion to form a new work group has to have a description of the tasks and mandate according to IV.5.b. attached.
- (e) The regular work of non-members in a work group is only possible in reasonable exceptions and must be approved in a GA.
- (f) The formation and dissolution of work groups must be approved in a GA.

6. Officials

- (a) Secretaries are the executive bodies of the AS Göttingen. The officials are elected by the GA for one year, but they are recallable at any point. A reelection is in principle not possible, but a resolution of the GA can allow it for a second year in a row.
- (b) Furthermore the GA can at every point delegate tasks to members. They are mandated as executive bodies too.
- (c) Officials have a imperative mandate and are individually responsible to the GA.
- (d) The discharge of officials happens after their final report in the GA via acclamation.
- (e) Officials are neither personally nor jointly liable if their mandate is properly exercised. The liability of the AS Göttingen is limited to the assets of the AS Göttingen.
- (f) The acceptance of a mandate by a member of the AS Göttingen at the local, regional, national or international level within the FAU requires a resolution of the GA.

7. Electronic networking

- (a) Every member has the right to access the FAU's internal electronic network.
- (b) The internal electronic communication structure of the AS Göttingen serves only for information and coordination of union activities. Discussions and decisions may not be held or made here unless a GA decides otherwise.

- (c) The Organisational Guidelines regulate further details.

8. Organisational Guidelines

- (a) The Organisational Guidelines specifies precise procedures and regulations for implementing the structures, goals and principles set out in the statutes.
- (b) The current version of the Organisational Guidelines must be made available to all members at any time.

9. FAU-Federations

- (a) Where possible, the AS Göttingen participates in the statutory meetings of the federations in which it is organized (Regional Federation North/german: "Regionalföderation Nord" and FAU) by sending delegates (see V.3).
- (b) The members of the AS Göttingen are encouraged to support activities of these and other federations in the FAU at their own discretion.
- (c) The formation of committees in the relevant federations is mandatory in the event of industrial action that takes on a trans-regional or trans-sectoral dimension.

V General Assembly and decision making

1. The GA is quorate if the invitation is valid (at least three days in advance).
2. The GA should take place regularly. The GA itself decides on the frequency with a simple resolution. The Organisational Guidelines regulate the invitation, procedure and structure of the GA.
3. Submitting motions
 - (a) Any member can submit motions.
 - (b) Motions should be available no later than three days before the GA, be precisely worded and contain all relevant information. The Secretariat will put them on the provisional agenda.
 - (c) Motions that have not been submitted on time will only be dealt with in the GA in exceptional cases and insofar as they do not affect the statutes and their annexes. A majority of three-quarters of the members entitled to vote at the GA are required to include motions that have not been submitted on time in the agenda.
 - (d) Motions that affect the statutes or their annexes, that aim to dismiss officials or to exclude members, must be dealt with in at least two GAs. When dismissing officials or excluding members, the first GA votes on the suspension of office or membership between the two GAs.
 - (e) Motions for the dissolution of the AS Göttingen must be available at least 14 days before the resolution is passed and must be dealt with in at least two GAs.
4. Decision making
 - (a) Decisions in the GA are generally made with a three-quarter majority. The greatest possible consent should be sought. Decisions that reach a simple majority, but not a three-quarter majority, must be confirmed by a simple majority in a second GA.
 - (b) Resolutions affecting these statutes can only be passed by a three-quarters majority.
 - (c) The decision on whether or not to take industrial action that effects and/or is carried out on behalf of the AS Göttingen lies with the section or site group, but needs to be confirmed by the GA.
 - (d) If circumstances require the immediate commencement of industrial action, an extraordinary GA must be called immediately. This assembly

decides on the commencement (or takeover) of the industrial action. The Industrial Action Guidelines of the AS Göttingen regulate further details.

- (e) The affected members decide in the strike assembly (german: "Strikeversammlung") about the continuation or termination of the industrial action.
- (f) All natural members of the AS Göttingen present at the GA are entitled to vote. Votes can also be cast by delegates determined in a GA. In justified exceptional cases, the GA decides in advance whether individual members may cast their vote in writing (IV.7.b). These exceptions are limited in time.

5. Arbitration board

- (a) If resolutions are challenged, an arbitration board must be called while maintaining proportionality.
- (b) The GA of the AS Göttingen acts as the arbitration board regarding the decisions of the Secretariat. The Organisational Guidelines regulate further details.
- (c) Regarding resolutions of the GA the GA initially acts itself as the arbitration board. If an agreement in this context seems futile, members of another syndicate or an external professional arbitration board will be consulted.
- (d) The arbitration must be carried out as soon as possible with the hearing of all parties involved.
- (e) The contested resolutions are provisional until the final decision.

VI Financing

1. The AS Göttingen is financed by the contributions of the members. The treasury is managed by two elected secretaries. The Organisational Guidelines of the AS regulate further details.
2. Amount of the membership fee
 - (a) The monthly membership fee is 1% of the net wage. The minimum contribution is 4.00 euros per month.
 - (b) Additional payment is possible at any time. A reduction can be applied for at the Secretariat. Imprisoned members are exempt from the membership fee.
3. Usage
 - (a) Part of the membership fees from the treasury of the AS Göttingen is to be forwarded to the Regional Federation North. The amount of this share will be determined at the corresponding delegate meeting (Regional Federation meeting).
 - (b) The rest of the membership fees remain in the assets of AS Göttingen. The resolutions of the GA specify how and to what extent the funds are to be used for the following purposes:
 - Infrastructure (office, inventory)
 - Ongoing activities (PR, education/training, legal fees, ...)
 - Strike fund (VII.4)
 - Solidarity fund (VII.4)
4. The bookkeeping of the treasury is checked once a year by a specially formed members committee (at least 2 people). An extraordinary treasury check can be carried out at any time by resolution of the GA.

VII Solidarity

1. The strength and assertiveness of the AS Göttingen in its struggle for better living and working conditions is based on the commitment and solidarity of its members. At the latest when the AS Göttingen enters into industrial action (V.4), it is necessary that the members show commitment to the common cause and show a sense of responsibility.
2. Legal protection
 - (a) In legal disputes arising from the employment relationship and trade union activity, the AS Göttingen grants legal protection to the individual member as far as possible. The type of support is determined by the Secretariat or the GA.
 - (b) If the intellectual and financial requirements go beyond the powers of the AS Göttingen, the Secretariat contacts the Regional Federation North.
3. If a member falls victim to penalties of an entrepreneur or a company, legal protection is also granted (reprimand support).
4. Strike support
 - (a) The financial support of the members involved in industrial action comes primarily from the Strike Fund of the AS Göttingen. The strike fund must be set up in such a way that a strike could be fought for at least 14 days using your own resources.
 - (b) Before an industrial action by the AS Göttingen has to be stopped, the Secretariat first calls on the Regional Federation North for solidarity.
 - (c) The AS Göttingen, for its part, is obliged, following calls for solidarity by FAU syndicates, to provide practical and financial solidarity within its means. The Solidarity Fund of the AS Göttingen is to be used for these cases so that funds for mutual aid are immediately available.

VIII Formation of independent syndicates

1. The AS Göttingen supports the establishment of specific branch syndicates and of general syndicates in neighboring municipalities.
2. If a general syndicate is founded in an adjacent municipality, the procedure laid down in the FAU statutes comes into force.
3. If a specific branch syndicate is founded, this must be done in agreement with the AS Göttingen.
4. The criteria for setting up up a specific branch syndicate are:
 - (a) a minimum of 35 branch syndicate members;
 - (b) a supra-company nature of the membership;
 - (c) sufficient branch-specific, organizational and labor law knowledge;
 - (d) Guarantee that all offices in the syndicate and beyond can be filled;
 - (e) Guarantee that all syndicate obligations (regular meetings, records, responsiveness) are met;
 - (f) a concept that explains what the syndicate's practical work should look like and how it's connection to it's branch should be guaranteed;
 - (g) guaranteeing the continued ability of the AS Göttingen to work.

IX Publications

1. The AS Göttingen supports the publication of the FAU newspaper "Direct Action" (german: "Direkte Aktion") and the ongoing updating of the FAU website *www.fau.org* within it's means.
2. The GA decides on publications from the AS Göttingen.

X Final provisions

1. These statutes were adopted on 02 June 2020 at the constituent General Assembly of the General Syndicate Göttingen and come into force immediately.
2. The statutes can be changed in accordance with Section V.4.b. As far as they are within the autonomy of the AS Göttingen, the appendices can also be changed in accordance with Section V.4.a.
3. Dissolution
 - (a) The AS Göttingen is dissolved if it no longer meets the criteria for a syndicate set out in the FAU statutes.
 - (b) In addition, the AS Göttingen can resolve its dissolution in accordance with the procedure set out in V.
 - (c) In the event of dissolution, the assets of the AS Göttingen fall to the higher-level federation of the FAU.
4. Annexes(internal)
 - (a) Organisational Guidelines of the AS Göttingen
 - (b) Industrial Action Guidelines of the AS Göttingen
 - (c) Statutes of the Regional Federation North of the FAU
 - (d) Statutes, Financial Guidelines and Industrial Action Guidelines of the FAU