

# Statutes of the Association GESS Who! – Students of Humanities, Social and Political Sciences (GW!) at ETH Zurich

A student association of the VSETH

Version dated 12.12.2018 (translated 28.6.2025)

## 1 Name and Seat

**Art. 1:** The association “GESS Who! Students of the Humanities, Social and Political Sciences (GW!) at ETH Zurich” is an autonomous student association in accordance with Art. 11ff of the statutes of the Association of Students at ETH (VSETH) and Art. 60ff of the Swiss Civil Code (ZGB). It is the student association of the students of the Department of Humanities, Social and Political Sciences (D-GESS). The seat of the association is Zurich.

## 2 Purpose

**Art. 2:** The association GESS Who! represents the interests of students in the following programs: MA in History and Philosophy of Knowledge, MA in Comparative and International Studies, MSc in Science, Technology and Policy, and BA in Public Policy at ETH Zurich. Other study programs of D-GESS are welcome to join the association. Its purpose is to promote communication and exchange within D-GESS, ETH, the University of Zurich, and with other universities. This purpose is particularly pursued through:

1. Representation of students in the committees of the D-GESS and the VSETH
2. Participation in university policy discussions
3. Organization of academic and social events
4. Dissemination of information by suitable means (notice boards, journals, website, etc.)
5. Networking of students after graduation

**Art. 3:** The association refrains from political or religious activity not directly related to the activities mentioned in para. 1, but reserves the right to take a position on university policy issues. Such statements are not binding for individual members.

## 3 Financial Year

**Art. 4:** The financial year lasts from January 1 to December 31. It covers one accounting period.

## 4 Membership

**Art. 5a:** regular members are all VSETH members who belong to the D-GESS of ETH Zurich. The association does not charge any additional membership fees from ordinary members.

**Art. 5b:**

1. Any natural person not eligible for ordinary membership can become an extraordinary member. These members fall under Art. 13 of the VSETH statutes.
2. The board decides on the admission of an extraordinary member by a two-thirds majority.
3. Extraordinary members who are not also VSETH members pay their membership fee directly to GESS Who!. The general assembly sets the amount. It remains unchanged unless a motion for change is submitted to the general assembly.
4. Extraordinary members who are also VSETH members do not pay any additional fees to GESS Who!.

### 4.1 Rights

**Art. 6:** Ordinary members have the active and passive voting rights, the right to vote, and the right to submit motions to the board or the general assembly.

**Art. 7:** Members also have the right to inspect the minutes of meetings of the board and other bodies of the association.

**Art. 8:** Members and non-members generally enjoy all the benefits of the association. The board decides to what extent non-members may be excluded from its activities.

### 4.2 Duties

**Art. 9:** Members are obligated to:

1. not act against the purpose of the association,
2. carry out the tasks they have undertaken precisely, and are encouraged to participate in general assemblies, elections, and votes.

### 4.3 Resignation

**Art. 10:** Membership ends automatically through:

1. resignation or expulsion from VSETH (for ordinary members),

2. non-payment of the semester fee or expulsion from GESS Who! (for extraordinary members),
3. written notification to the board (for extraordinary members),
4. death.

#### **4.4 Expulsion**

##### **Art. 11:**

1. Upon a substantiated request, the General Assembly may exclude an ordinary member from holding office, participating in events, and using the services of GESS Who! (with the exception of attending meetings of the General Assembly), and may submit a request to the competent bodies of the VSETH for the member's exclusion from the VSETH.
2. Upon justified request, an extraordinary member may be excluded from GESS Who! by the general assembly.
3. A justified reason includes, among others, intentional violations of the statutes or decisions of the association or intentional harm to the interests of GESS Who! or VSETH. Any member of GESS Who! may file such a request. The member must be informed of the expulsion request at least 10 days before the general assembly via registered letter.

### **5 Finances**

#### **5.1 Accounting**

**Art. 12a:** The association operates according to the principles of double-entry accounting.

#### **5.2 Funding**

##### **Art. 12b:**

GESS Who! is primarily funded by allocations from VSETH. It may raise additional funds, such as donations, surpluses from services or events, and sponsorships.

#### **5.3 Liability**

**Art. 13:** Only the association's assets are liable for obligations of GESS Who!.

### **6 Governing Bodies**

##### **Art. 14:**

The association's governing bodies are:

1. the General Assembly (GA)
2. the Board
3. the Auditors

## **6.1 General Assembly**

### **6.1.1 Convening**

Art 15: The Ordinary General Meeting (AGM) takes place once a year between September 1 and December 31 and is announced by the Board of Directors at least fourteen days in advance by email to all members. An Extraordinary General Meeting is organized by resolution of an ordinary General Meeting, the Board of Directors or at the request of one tenth of the members, provided that this request is submitted to the Board of Directors in writing, stating the items on the agenda. An extraordinary general meeting must be announced at least fourteen days in advance by the Board of Directors by email and can only pass resolutions on agenda items that have been listed in the invitation

### **6.1.2 Quorum**

#### **Art. 16:**

The GA has quorum if:

1. two-thirds of the Board are present (ordinary GA)
2. at least one-tenth of all voting members are present (extraordinary GA)

#### **Art. 17:**

Decisions are passed by majority vote of those present. Revisions to the statutes, dissolution of the association, or merger with another association require the presence of at least one-fifth of all members and approval by at least two-thirds of voting members

### **6.1.3 Chairing**

#### **Art. 18:**

The Board designates one of its members to chair the ordinary General Assembly and to take the minutes.

### **6.1.4 Competences**

#### **Art. 19:**

The ordinary GA decides in general on all matters concerning the association. The following regular matters also fall under the competence of the GA:

1. Approval of the minutes of the last GA
2. Election of the Board
3. Election of the auditors
4. Approval of the annual report of the Board, the annual financial statement, and the report of the auditors
5. Approval of the budget
6. Discharge of the Board
7. Definition of the basic orientation of the association's activities
8. Amendments to the statutes, dissolution of the association, or merger with another
9. To decide on all matters that the GA is allowed to vote on by the power of laws and statutes, or on matters passed to the GA by the board

## **6.2 Board**

### **6.2.1 Members**

#### **Art. 20:**

The Board members are:

1. The President
2. The Treasurer
3. One to a maximum of seven additional Board members

#### **Art. 21:**

It is intended that each study programme is represented by at least one member on the Board. Programmes without representation must appoint a contact person for GESS Who!. The members are elected by the ordinary GA. The Board has the right to provisionally appoint Board members between two ordinary GAs. However, these members do not have voting rights on the Board and must be elected at the latest at the next ordinary GA.

### **6.2.2 Duties of the Board Members**

#### **Art. 22:**

The members of the Board have the following duties:

1. The President is the official representative of the association. In all votes, they have the casting vote.
2. The Treasurer manages the association's finances and prepares the annual and interim financial statements as well as the budget for the GA.
3. The other Board members constitute themselves.
4. The Board members are required to attend the GA and report on their activities. If they are unable to attend, a written report must be submitted to the GA.

### **6.2.3 Responsibilities**

#### **Art. 23:**

The Board implements the decisions of the ordinary GA. It is generally responsible for all matters not reserved for other bodies, within the framework set by the GA, and takes care of administrative matters, the preparation of assemblies, and the concretization of the association's activities.

### **6.2.4 Term of Office**

#### **Art. 24:**

The term of office is one year; re-election is permitted. The term of office corresponds to the calendar year. All candidates must announce before the election whether a longer absence is planned during the next year, if known. Each Board member is encouraged, upon resignation, to assist in finding a successor.

### **6.2.5 Decision-Making**

#### **Art. 25:**

The Board meets regularly. A quorum requires the presence of at least half of the Board members, and decisions are made by majority vote. Minutes must be kept of the decisions.

### **6.2.6 Financial Authority**

#### **Art. 26:**

The Board may independently decide on expenditures outside the budget up to CHF 2,000 per semester. The Treasurer must be present for this. If the Treasurer is not present, the maximum amount is CHF 500 per meeting. In any case, an absolute majority of the Board is required to approve the expenditures. Members of the student association may request access to current expenses at any time.

## **6.3 Auditors**

### **6.3.1 Appointment**

#### **Art. 27:**

The ordinary GA elects at least two auditors from different study programmes for a term of one year. They must not be members of the Board. Re-election is permitted.

### **6.3.2 Responsibilities**

**Art. 28:**

The auditors examine the accounts and report to the GA.

## **7 Representation in University Policy Committees**

### **7.1 Representatives**

**Art. 29:**

The GA elects the representatives and their deputies to the following bodies by simple majority, in accordance with Art. 8 para. 1d and Art. 11 of the rules of procedure of D-GESS and Art. 18 and Art. 21 of the VSETH statutes:

1. Department Conference (DK) D-GESS
2. Council of Members (MR) VSETH

**Art. 30:**

The representation of GESS Who! in the Fachvereinsrat (FR, Council of Student Associations) is taken over by the President or a delegated representative.

**Art. 31:**

The election of representatives for the following committees takes place at the GA by the students of the respective study programmes present, by simple majority:

1. Teaching Committee for the MA in Comparative and International Studies (MA CIS)
2. Teaching Committee for the MA in History and Philosophy of Knowledge (MA GPW)
3. Teaching Committee for the BA in Public Policy

**Art. 32:**

Student representatives on the Teaching Committees are encouraged to engage in the association's Board in order to ensure information exchange and coherent representation.

**Art. 33:**

If too few representatives are available, the Board is entitled to fill the vacant positions at its own discretion. For representations not listed here, the Board is likewise entitled to appoint representatives.

### **7.2 Duties**

**Art. 34:**

1. The representatives on university policy committees of the department represent the interests of all students at D-GESS.

2. The representatives on committees of the VSETH represent the interests of GESS Who! and its members.

### **7.3 Organization**

**Art. 35:**

The Board of GESS Who! supervises the representatives. The representatives must report regularly to the Board.

### **8 Dissolution of the Association**

**Art. 36:**

The GA decides on the dissolution of the association. A two-thirds majority of all ordinary members is required. In the event of dissolution, the association's assets are transferred to VSETH.

### **9 Final Provisions**

**Art. 37:**

If GESS Who! seriously violates the statutes or the law, the VSETH Council of Student Associations (Fachvereinsrat) has the authority to convene an extraordinary GA of GESS Who! with a two-thirds majority and to appoint a chairperson for the meeting.

**Art. 38:**

Otherwise, the relevant articles of the VSETH statutes that concern departmental student associations shall apply. These apply mutatis mutandis in cases where the present statutes contain no specific provisions or contradict the VSETH statutes.

**Art. 39:**

These statutes were adopted at the GA on 28 May 2013.

Zurich, 28 May 2013

On behalf of the Board of GESS Who!

The President

*Isabelle Breuskin*