



# The Holy See

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POPE FRANCIS

## STATUTES OF THE SECRETARIAT FOR COMMUNICATION

### Preamble

The Secretariat for Communication has been created in order to respond to the current context of communication, characterized by the presence and evolution of digital media and by factors of convergence and interactivity. This new situation requires a reorganization that takes into account the historic development of the Apostolic See's structure of communication and moves towards a unified integration and management.

### Chapter 1

#### Nature and Responsibilities

##### Art. 1

§1. The Secretariat for Communication is a Dicastery of the Roman Curia to which the Holy Father has entrusted the Apostolic See's system of communication, in conformity with his Motu Proprio of 27 June 2015 on the current context of communication.

§2. The Secretariat for Communication, unified in its structure and with respect for relevant operational characteristics, unifies all the Holy See's entities involved in communication, so that the entire system may respond effectively to the needs of the Church's mission of evangelization.

§3. The Secretariat for Communication will consider new models, technical innovations and forms of communication in order to integrate them into this system, which is at the service of the Holy

See's mission.

## **Art. 2**

§1. In carrying out its own functions, the Secretariat for Communication will collaborate with other competent Dicasteries, in particular with the Secretariat of State.

§2. The Secretariat for Communication assists the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the institutions associated with the Holy See, the Governorate of Vatican City State, and other offices with headquarters in Vatican City State, or which depend on the Apostolic See for their work in communication.

## **Chapter II**

### **Structure of the Dicastery**

## **Art. 3**

Following the current provisions regarding the composition of Dicasteries:

§1. The Prefect, appointed by the Roman Pontiff for a five-year term, manages, directs and oversees the work of the Dicastery and represents the Secretariat for Communication with entities external to the Holy See.

§2. The Secretary, appointed by the Roman Pontiff for a five year term, assists and works alongside the Prefect in handling the affairs of the Secretariat for Communication and in directing personnel and activities assigned by the Prefect, while ensuring coordination among the various Offices mentioned below.

§3. The Members of the Dicastery are appointed by the Roman Pontiff for a five-year term and chosen according to current norms.

§4. Among the Consultors of the Dicastery, appointed by the Roman Pontiff for a five-year term, are clerics and other faithful of different backgrounds with expertise in the particular activities carried out by the Secretariat for Communication, chosen in accordance with current norms.

## **Art. 4**

§1. The Members are convened for questions relating to general principles or for other matters the

Prefect believes should be dealt with in this way. All Members must be convened promptly for plenary meetings to be held at least every two years. For ordinary meetings, the convening of only those Members present in the City is sufficient.

§2. The Secretary participates in all meetings, with the right to vote.

## **Art. 5**

§1. The Secretariat for Communication is composed of several Offices.

§2. Each Office comes under the direction of the Prefect and the Secretary. Each, on the basis of its competence, is in on equal terms in the carrying out of its duties. These Offices maintain an intrinsic unity, ensuring collaboration and interaction in common areas and activities.

§3. Each Office will have its own Director proposed by the Prefect through the Secretariat of State and appointed by the Roman Pontiff for a five-year term.

§4. The Offices are as follows: General Affairs Office, Editorial Office, Holy See Press Office, Technology Office, Theological-Pastoral Office.

§5. When necessary, other Offices can be established by the Prefect, after consultation with the Dicastery's collegial bodies and after receiving approval from the Secretariat of State.

## **Art. 6**

§1. The Committee of the Secretariat for Communication has the responsibility of developing the general guidelines of the Dicastery's activities, with the direction, coordination and approval of the Prefect and Secretary.

§2. The Committee is composed of the Prefect, the Secretary, and the Directors and Deputy Directors of the various Offices.

§3. The Committee is presided over by the Prefect, who is assisted by the Secretary.

§4. It is the Secretary's duty, following art. 3 §2, to supervise the effective implementation of the general guidelines issued by the Committee of the Secretariat for Communication.

## **Art. 7**

§1. The Prefect can propose to the Supreme Pontiff, through the Secretariat of State, the creation of other entities associated with the Holy See, to be linked to the Secretariat for Communication,

for the purpose of safeguarding juridical, editorial, or economic requirements which may arise from individual activities of the Secretariat for Communication in the regular fulfilment of its functions.

§2. In a similar way, taking into consideration each particular circumstance, the Prefect will provide for each Office to have an appropriate internal organization, enabling it to carry out its tasks, by establishing, if needed, autonomous services and designating managers according to current norms.

## Chapter III

### Offices

#### Art. 8

The *General Affairs Office*, under the direction of the Secretary, oversees:

1. the handling and managing of common (administrative) matters concerning all the Offices;
2. the management, organization and training of human resources;
3. the management, oversight and development of internal procedures;
4. the handling of legal matters regarding contracts, litigation, intellectual property rights, and in general, protection of copyright for writing, audio, photography and video, as well as the protection of juridical positions and all else necessary in the activities of the Secretariat for Communication, with respect for current law on copyright protection, and with due regard for the current responsibilities of the Secretariat of State, whose authorization is necessary when proceeding with issues involving litigation;
5. the management of technical production activities of the Secretariat for Communication, logistics concerning its own materials, procuring supplies of materials and services, while respecting the prerogatives of the Dicastery competent in this area;
6. the coordination of international initiatives and participation in them on the part of the Offices and entities associated with the Secretariat for Communication.

#### Art. 9

The *Editorial Office* oversees:

1. the guidance and coordination of all editorial policies that are the responsibility of the Secretariat for Communication;
2. the strategic development of new forms of communication;
3. the effective integration of traditional media with the digital world, paying constant attention to the universal dimension of the Holy See's communication.

#### **Art. 10**

The *Holy See Press Office* oversees:

1. the publication and distribution of official communications regarding the acts of the Roman Pontiff and the Holy See, following the indications of the Secretariat of State.
2. the hosting and moderation of press conferences and briefings; giving official responses to questions of journalists on the activities of the Roman Pontiff, the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia and other Holy See or Vatican entities, after having consulted the Secretariat of State.

#### **Art. 11**

The *Technology Office* oversees:

1. the integrated management of platforms and technological services necessary for the communication activity of the Secretariat for Communication and their development in support of the evolution of the Holy See's means of communication;
2. the research and development of innovative solutions in order to keep up to date with global technology developments;
3. the planning of new services and the development of existing ones, with constant attention to the technological compatibility of the Holy See's overall communication with regard to the varying states of development of local Churches;
4. the definition and application of processes that respect current Vatican and international norms in the field of information communication technology, as well as best practices in the field.

#### **Art. 12**

The *Theological-Pastoral Office* oversees:

1. the development of a theological vision of communication to which material communicated must

conform;

2. the promotion of the pastoral activities of the Roman Pontiff through words and images and the provision of suitable theological background and contextualization;

3. the promotion of theological-pastoral formation, through the creation of a network with local churches and Catholic associations working in the field of communication;

4. educating Christians to become better aware, especially during the celebration of World Communications Day, of the importance of the means of communication in promoting the Christian message and the common good.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Personnel and Offices**

#### **Art. 13**

§.1. The Secretariat for Communication is equipped with adequate human and material resources, in proportion to its institutional functions and within the limits established by its organizational structure.

§.2. The personnel and external consultants of the Secretariat for Communication are chosen among candidates with a proven reputation, free of any conflict of interest, and possessing an adequate level of professional formation and experience in the fields in which the Dicastery is involved. Any conflict of interest which may arise during their mandate must be reported and appropriate measures be taken to resolve the issue in agreement with the Superiors of the Dicastery.

§3. Concerning the appointment, hiring and employment of personnel, given the specific nature of the work carried out by the Secretariat for Communication, the General Regulations of the Roman Curia and the Secretariat's own Regulations will be observed, as well as other provisions issued by the Apostolic See in this area.

#### **Art. 14**

All documents, data and information in the possession of the Secretariat for Communication are:

§1. used exclusively for purposes provided for by law;

§2. protected in order to guarantee their security, integrity and confidentiality;

§3. covered by official confidentiality.

#### **Art. 15**

§1. The Secretariat for Communication has an archivist responsible for the maintenance of the Secretariat's own archives, which must be stored in a secure place within Vatican City State or a Vatican extraterritorial zone.

§2. The Prefect establishes rules and procedures in order to guarantee optimal storage and conservation of documents (also in audiovisual formats, analogue or digital) that have a particular legal and historic importance, in consultation with the Central Commission for the Archives of the Holy See and in accord with current norms on these matters.

#### **Art. 16**

The working language used by the Secretariat for Communication is Italian.

#### **Art. 17**

The Secretariat for Communication bases its own Regulations on the norms of the General Regulations of the Roman Curia.

#### **Art. 18**

In areas not covered by these Statutes, the rules of Canon Law are applied, in particular, norms defining the structure of the Roman Curia and its Regulations.

### **Chapter V**

#### **Temporary Norms**

#### **Art. 19**

§1. With reference to art. 1 of the *Motu Proprio on the current context of communications*, the Secretariat for Communication, in accordance with the timetable and procedures presently or yet to be defined, will unite under its management the following entities indicated in the aforementioned papal document, that is: the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, the Holy See Press Office, the Vatican Internet Service, Vatican Radio, the Vatican Television Center,

*L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican Publishing House, the Photographic Service, and the Vatican Publishing House. The Secretariat for Communication will also manage the institutional website of the Holy See and the Roman Pontiff's presence in social media networks.

§2. The aforementioned entities will continue with their respective activities, observing their own norms currently in place, while complying with directions given by the Prefect until they are fully merged into the Secretariat for Communication, at which time their norms will cease to exist.

§3. Having consulted the Secretariat of State, the Prefect will establish those timetables and procedures by which, on the basis of art. 1 of the *Motu Proprio on the current context of communications*, each entity will be merged with the Secretariat for Communication.

§4. During the process of integration of the various entities, the Regulations, Directives or other provisions issued over time by the Secretariat for Communication will be observed, in the context of the general norms concerning the Holy See and with respect for the acquired rights of employees.

The present Statutes have been approved *ad experimentum* for three years.

I order that they be promulgated by publication in the *L'Osservatore Romano* and enter into effect on 1 October 2016, and thereafter also be published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.

*Given at the Vatican, in the Apostolic Palace, on 6 September 2016, the fourth of my pontificate.*

**FRANCIS**