



সার্বজনীন দুর্গাপূজা সুইজারল্যান্ড  
*SARBOJANIN DURGAPUJA SWITZERLAND*

**SWISSPUJA**  
**Sarbojanin Durga Puja in Switzerland**

**Statutes of the Association**



## P R E A M B L E

Durga-Puja is the foremost Hindu religious festival of West Bengal and Bangladesh as well as of Bengali societies in other parts of India and the world . At every autumn of the year Bengalis celebrate this festival of Goddess Durga with elaborate worship rituals along with various cultural events. Her Puja, as observed for five days in Bengal derives from a combination not only of the Vedic and Puranic prescriptions, but from tantric rites also.

This festival, open to the public, is reckoned as  
**“Sarbojanin Durga Puja”**.

In Switzerland, the celebration of this festival is also named as above or simply as  
**“Swisspuja”**.

A group of Bengali residents first celebrated this festival in Switzerland in 2004. Since then this festival is continued for last 6 years and is envisaged to be continued in the following years. The following statutory articles are made out of the last years’ experience and according to the legal formalities of Switzerland. They will guide the association in future.

### Statutory Articles.

#### ARTICLE 1 INTRODUCTION

The "**SWISSPUJA**" is a non profit Hindu socio-religious association, organised according to the articles 60 -79 of Swiss Civil Code (ZGB)<sup>1</sup>. In all the social, cultural and ritual activities of the association the present *Bengali Style of Durga Puja* is followed. Every individual is considered to be equal and may contribute towards any of the tasks for Durga Puja according to his or her capability irrespective of age, sex, status, class or caste.

#### ARTICLE 2 SEAT

The present seat of the association is at 5400 Baden, Kanton Aargau.

Its Postal account: SWISSPUJA Baden

A/C No. 60-154235-4

E-Mail: [mail@swisspuja.com](mailto:mail@swisspuja.com)

Internet: <http://www.swisspuja.com>

For any legal dispute, the relevant civil court is that of Baden.

Efforts shall be made to settle any dispute through arbitration and conciliation before taking a step to court.

#### ARTICLE 3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the SWISSPUJA are the following:

1. To organize and perform **“Sarbojanin Durga Puja”** in Switzerland, as per Bengali almanac (*Panjika*) and worship rituals open to every body irrespective of caste, creed, class, colour, status or gender affiliation.
2. To organize the **Bijaya Sammelan**, a forum for promoting and nurturing the cultural heritage of Bengal in Switzerland.

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<sup>1</sup>Schweizerische Zivilgesetzbuch vom 10. Dezember, 1907 (Stand 5. Dezember, 2008)  
Herausgegeben von der Bundeskanzlei 2009



## **ARTICLE 4 ORGANIZATION**

The organs of the SWISSPUJA are:

1. The **General Body Meetings**.
  - a) The **Annual General Body Meeting** (AGBM) and
  - b) The **Special General Body Meeting** (SGBM).
2. The **Executive Puja Committee** (EPC) of at least 5 members.
3. Two auditors.

## **ARTICLE 5 MEMBERSHIP**

### **5.1 Definition**

1. Any individual aged **18** years (as on the current year) and above and who is interested to participate in any manner in Durga Puja celebrations in Switzerland according to the Bengali customs may become a member of this association. It is understood that the members will actively take part in celebrating Durga Puja and willingly take up necessary tasks according to their capabilities, if individually requested or collectively called for by the EPC. A member may also offer to contribute his help on his own. It is expected that the members will take initiatives for improving the performance of the celebrations. A couple will be considered as two members. Each member will be registered with the required data. Registration of the new members for the current year will be completed four weeks prior to Durga Puja.
2. All persons enlisted till now as participants of previous Durga Pujas will be invited to the SBGM of June 12, 2010 and will thereafter be requested to register themselves by the present secretary for membership.

### **5.2 Membership fees**

Annual membership fee for an adult is Sfr. 100.-

Annual membership fee for a couple is Sfr.100.-

Annual membership fee for a student or trainee up to the age of 30 is Sfr. 50.-

The above fees will be reviewed each year by the AGBM.

It is expected that couples and parents with children will pay a higher amount of fee, if they can afford to do so.

It will be expected from the guests that each of them will pay a reasonable amount of subscription against a receipt at the welcome desk during the Puja days.

Membership fee shall become due at the beginning of each calendar year and is to be paid latest by four weeks prior to Durga Puja of the same year. In unavoidable circumstances membership fees for the current year will be accepted till Mahadashami. The EPC shall inform the members of their dues within the first half of each calendar year. Members are requested to contribute at an early date. Only the registered members who have paid their dues are eligible to attend the AGBM.

### **5.3 Voting rights**

Members of this organization are eligible to vote on decisions to be taken in an AGBM. This applies also to any other meetings where voting would be required. A couple or a family will be considered as a collective member with two votes. A simple majority of votes is required, if not mentioned otherwise, for a decision on various questions. A two third majority will be required to change a part or a whole of an article of these statutes.



**5.4 Termination** Any registered member can terminate her/his membership by written request to the secretary of EPC, at least 30 days ahead of the desired termination date. Membership fee already paid for the running year can not be refunded. A member of the EPC may resign within her/his term of office in writing, thereby stating the reason for demission. She/He will try to continue her/his work in the EPC till she/he can be replaced by somebody else. The EPC may call up a SGBM for the election of a new EPC member. Until the election of the new EPC member, one of the EPC members shall, upon mutual approval and agreement, resume the duties of the resigning EPC member.

**5.5 Expulsion** A member may be expelled from the association on charges of serious offence by a majority decision of two third of the members present at AGBM, provided all the members are notified two weeks ahead of the meeting.

## **ARTICLE 6 ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING (AGBM)**

**6.1 Definition** The main annual gathering of all bona fide members of SWISSPUJA is being defined as AGBM. It has three key functions:

1. It guides the entire Puja activities through resolutions in a meeting on any issue and the election of an Executive Puja Committee for the following year based on the majority decisions (vide § 5.3) of the attending members.
2. It celebrates the traditional Bijaya Sammelan, a Bengali cultural event on the same day after the AGBM is over.
3. The AGBM-day is the turn over day for the consecutive Puja-year.

**6.2 Procedures** AGBM shall be convened each year preferably within 30 days after the Bijaya Dashami (last day of the Durga Puja) to execute the administrative part as given below as well as the Bijaya Sammelan event.

1. Election of a day's chairperson, per nomination and vote, to guide through the administrative meeting's agenda without voting power. She or he has to take a neutral position in the decision making process. It is expected that she or he should be able to keep the order and discipline during the meeting.
2. Election of a person to write down only the minutes of the proceedings and they shall not contain any personal comments or remarks of the writer or anybody and they shall be handed over to the secretary of the incoming EPC for their guideline within 30 days of the AGBM for perusal and distribution to the members.
3. Approval of the minutes of previous AGBM.
4. Reports of the President and the secretary of the outgoing EPC and their approval.
5. Financial report of the treasurer of the outgoing EPC including the provisional recommendations for the next year (see § 8.2.3 k).
6. Auditor's report or certificate and the approval of the treasurer's report.
7. Report of the other members of the outgoing EPC.
8. Discussions and resolutions, if required, on any issues that are brought forward<sup>2</sup>. Time for each speaker shall be allocated by the chairperson.
9. Collective dismissal of the outgoing EPC and the volunteers with thanks.

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<sup>2</sup>

It is expected that the subjects to be discussed are forwarded to EPC at least two weeks before the AGBM, so that EPC can take a stand on the issues.



10. Election of the incoming EPC and auditors in the following order:
- Get nominations for the post of the president and elect per vote.
  - Get nominations for the post of the secretary and elect per vote.
  - Get nominations for the post of the treasurer and elect per vote.
  - Get nominations for the post of at least two executive members and elect per vote.
  - Get nominations for two auditors who are not members of EPC team and elect per vote.

Election procedure shall be continued till all the above EPC positions are occupied. If the EPC-Team can not be formed, the outgoing EPC-Team or a part of it will be requested and empowered to remain in office up to another three months with the obligation to finish and settle its own unfinished tasks, if any, and hold fresh election within that time to form an eligible team.

**6.3 Quorum** At least 20% of bona fide SWISSPUJA members shall be present at any general body meeting, annual or special, to pass a resolution on any business.

## **Article 7 SPECIAL GENERAL BODY MEETING (SGBM)**

**7.1 Definition** Apart from the annual general body meeting, the EPC may convene, depending on necessity and requirement and within the year, Special General Body Meetings on its own or at the request of at least 20% of the *bona fide* voting members for discussing and deciding on special issues.

**7.2 Procedures** Same as 6.2.

**7.3 Quorum** Same as 6.3

## **Article 8 EXECUTIVE PUJA COMMITTEE (EPC)**

**8.1 Definition** The EPC is a team of at least 5 bona fide SWISSPUJA members holding the following posts:

- The President
- The Secretary
- The Treasurer
- Two or more executive members.

The EPC for a particular year shall remain engaged for one full Puja-Year **following the AGBM day, i.e. the day after their election, up to and including the day of next AGBM.**

- 8.2 Functions**
- This team conducts democratically and on honorary basis the entire planning, administration and execution of Puja performances following the statutes and fulfilling the resolutions.
  - It chooses an appropriate venue of Durga Puja having options for easy access of transport and enough rooms for rituals, attending visitors, cultural performances, provision for lunch and dinner, etc. It is to be considered here that neighbours are not affected through Puja celebrations.



3. It engages a knowledgeable and competent (institutionally trained with mastery in Sanskrit language and full command in proper sequences of Durga Puja worship rituals, previous references and reputation) Purohit (priest) to perform the traditional worship rituals for the total period of Puja . The EPC makes a contract with him for his travel expenses and personal remuneration and cares for Purohit's personal and social well-being for the period of his engagement. It organises the ritual performances in cooperation with him and delegates assisting persons to him to help him in performing the rituals and serve the public according to his request. The current EPC evaluates the performance of the priest, notes his complaints and recommendations and gives a written report to the next EPC for necessary actions.
4. With the help of volunteers it organises and performs various tasks, such as installation and removal of deities, decoration; supply of flowers, garlands and Puja essentials for rituals; any special help required by the priest for performing the rituals; ritual diet (Bhog), Prasad, daily lunch and dinner; organisation of cultural programmes, publication of Puja-Brochure with advertisements, setting up of an information and welcome desk. The EPC and its delegates perform all the tasks in compliance with the words and spirit of Article 1.
5. It takes the responsibility of good maintenance of the Puja premises so that they can be handed back to the owner in the same condition as was taken over at the beginning of the festival. Alcohol consumption will be prohibited in the Puja premises, as also smoking inside the halls and rooms.
6. Individual team members may in general be elected on nomination for three consequent years for the same posts. They are not eligible for election after this period, provided other members are available for the same. In the absence of either the president or the secretary one of them shall reciprocally take over the responsibility of the other. In case of absence of any other office bearer, the remaining members of the team shall mutually find out a solution either by temporarily appointing a new member or holding double office.
7. The team is responsible for the safety and security of the SWISSPUJA property.
8. Outgoing EPC hands over all documents, movable goods, financial objects (account books, bank statements, etc.) along with the authorised signature transfer (post or bank account), cheque books or pay slips, etc. to the incoming EPC within two months from the AGBM date.
9. All the members who assist the EPC in the celebrations, work on a voluntary basis. In case of a commercial supply of goods or services, a member may be considered along with other suppliers for a contract.
10. The EPC organises and conducts the AGBM and the Bijoya Sammelan of Swisspuja.
11. Upon finishing the Bijoya Sammelan, the outgoing EPC organises, by engaging volunteers, cleaning and re-arranging of the furnitures of the venue and designate an EPC member to properly handover the same to the owner representative

### **8.2.1 President** She/he

- a) presides the EPC meeting, personally takes a few tasks, draws the guidelines and coordinates the team work, for a successful celebration and completion of Puja performance, conforming to the majority decisions in the EPC.
- b) cares for good reputation of SWISSPUJA and represents the same outside of the association.
- c) signs jointly with the treasurer documents with regard to financial transactions with third parties.



- d) signs jointly with the secretary all other legal documents and agreements with third parties.
- e) reports at AGBM on current year's work, on growth trends of membership, public response and advertisement as well as recommends improvements of EPC work.

### 8.2.2 Secretary

She/he

- a) is responsible for general administrative tasks and assists other members of EPC for formal running of Puja celebrations.
- b) organises EPC meetings in cooperation with other members of EPC.
- c) is in general the official interface between EPC and the members i.e. communicates on behalf of the EPC with association members and outside parties as well as keeps the membership list updated, especially before a GBM.
- d) keeps the committee's activities and Puja News updated in web site.
- e) signs jointly with the president or treasurer as and when necessary.
- f) organises the AGBM and sends copies of the minutes of previous year's AGBM along with the current year's draft reports for discussing at the AGBM to members with the invitation for the meeting.
- g) is responsible for the documentary archives of SWISSPUJA.
- h) organises the SGBM and sends the relevant documents and agenda of the meeting for discussing at the SGBM to members along with the invitation for the meeting.

### 8.2.3 Treasurer

She/he

- a) is the custodian of Swisspuja property and organises the safe storing of movable assets for the current office-year and beyond till the next treasurer can take over the charge.
- b) manages the accounts of Puja fund which includes all the incomes and expenditures.
- c) conducts financial transactions with post and bank.
- d) sends reminders to default payees.
- e) calls for quotations for buying goods and services from outside and recommends to the EPC for acceptance or rejection.
- f) signs jointly with the president or the secretary all financial agreements with third parties.
- g) clears payments of bills of third parties and bills of any expenses of active members for Puja purpose when authorised by EPC.
- h) reports in writing the financial situation of the association every two months to the EPC.
- i) prepares a provisional budget for her/his year in office based on last year's financial record and experience, and expected changes in income or expenditure. The budgeted expenditure should not exceed the income of last year in general.
- j) keeps accounts and prepares annual report in cooperation with the EPC and submits the same to the auditors for audit and control.
- k) prepares the annual financial report and jointly signs the same with the president and the secretary. Income and expenditure accounts should consist of the following data among others to help the AGBM in taking financial decisions:

Last year's Budget	Last year's Actuals	Last Treasurer's Recommendations for the current year as approved by the last AGBM	Current year's Budget	Current year's Actuals	Current Treasurer's Recommendations for the next year to be approved by the current AGBM
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- l) recommends next year's membership fees as well as maximum percentage use of reserve funds for specific capital goods (a new deity, utensils, etc.) to the AGBM. The next EPC is bound by the maximum expenditure as a percentage limit from the reserve fund put by the AGBM above the current income.
- m) presents the annual financial report to the AGBM and answers queries from the members.

**8.2.4 Executive members** They contribute to EPC activities sharing equal voting rights with other members of EPC. Their functions and duties are defined and agreed mutually within EPC.

#### **ARTICLE 9 AUDITORS**

The two auditors are responsible for verification, audit and control of accounts and certifies the correctness of book keeping and treasurer's annual financial report. This certificate will be reported to the members in an AGBM.

#### **ARTICLE 10 LANGUAGES**

The primary language of the association is Bengali. English and German languages may also be used for communications and administrative purposes as necessary. Language of the rituals is Sanskrit.

#### **ARTICLE 11 MODE OF COMMUNICATION**

E-mail is the standard mode. In the absence of an e-mail address, the member sends the necessary data to the secretary for postal communication.

#### **ARTICLE 12 LIABILITIES**

- a) The liability of the individual members is limited to the extent of their annual contribution.
- b) The total liability of the SWISSPUJA is limited to the extent of liquidated value of its assets
- c) SWISSPUJA can not be made liable for any obligation entered into by an individual member with a third party without the written authorisation of EPC.

#### **ARTICLE 13 HANDLING OF ASSETS**

Current EPC is responsible for all SWISSPUJA assets and administers them for their sole use towards the event of the Durga Puja celebrations. Depending on the recommendation of the past treasurer and the financial reports it can buy capital goods. It cannot donate, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any asset without specific authorisation of the General Body. On unavoidable situation like dissolution of SWISSPUJA, assets may be liquidated after prior consent of at least 2/3 of the members present at a General Body Meeting. The surplus liquidated value of the assets, after meeting the liabilities, if any, shall be donated to a charity organisation working for a Bengali community with the consent of the dissolving General Body. Legal action will be taken against any misuse of the assets of the SWISSPUJA.

#### **ARTICLE 14 AMENDMENTS**

Amendment proposals for any part of the statutes shall be submitted in writing to the EPC latest by Bijoya Dashami so that they can be circulated with the invitation for AGBM and similarly before a SGBM. Decision on amendments will then be taken at AGBM or SGBM respectively by a two third majority vote.





**SWISSPUJA**  
Sarbojanin Durga Puja in Switzerland

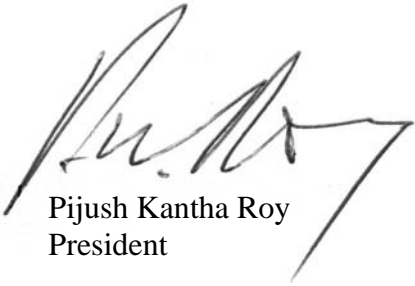
## **Statutes of the Association**

### **ENFORCEMENT**

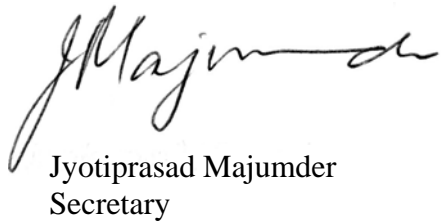
The articles of the statutes are approved and accepted by 69 per cent of the participants present at the SGBM held on the 12<sup>th</sup> June at the Reformierte Kirchgemeindehaus of Wettingen and are valid with immediate effect.

Baden, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2010

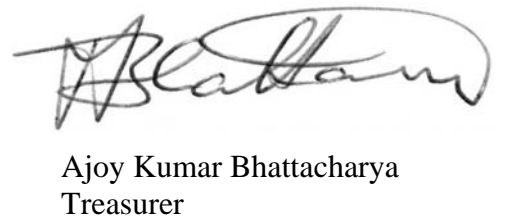
Executive Puja Committee, 2010



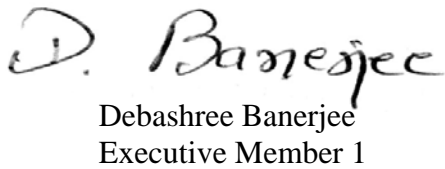
Pijush Kantha Roy  
President



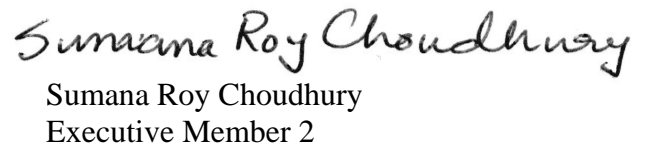
Jyotiprasad Majumder  
Secretary



Ajoy Kumar Bhattacharya  
Treasurer



Debashree Banerjee  
Executive Member 1



Sumana Roy Choudhury  
Executive Member 2

