



CONSTITUTION OF THE

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS (EARTS)

November 27, 2023

1. Name

The name of the association is "The European Association for Reformed Theological Schools," employing the acronym EARTS.

2. Doctrinal basis of unity

Confessing Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all life, we affirm that the doctrinal basis of EARTS is a total commitment to the Bible in its entirety as the written Word of God, without error in all its parts, and to its teaching as set forth in the Belgic Confession (1561), Heidelberg Catechism (1563), the Canons of Dort (1618/19), the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms (1647), or the Second London Baptist Confession (1689)¹

Affiliated schools must subscribe to at least one of the above-stated confessional statements.² They commit themselves to work and teach on the basis of and in the spirit of the above-mentioned confession(s). The following points are already addressed in principle by these creedal statements but deserve special mention because of theological (mis)developments since these confessions were written.

We confess:

- the truth, infallibility, and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures in all its parts, and specifically the complete historicity of the first eleven chapters of the Bible.
- that the office of pastor and elder is reserved only for qualified men.
- that marriage is exclusively between one man and one woman.

3. Purpose

EARTS is a voluntary association of schools upholding and disseminating Reformed theological education in Europe, seeking to collaborate on institutional recognition and accreditation, academic support, enhancement, and missionary extension of ministerial and theological education, as well as the production, translation, and editing of confessionally Reformed literature.

¹ This constitution was revised at the EARTS meeting on September 30, 2024.

² This means that at least one of the above-mentioned confessions is included in the constitution of the school and that all full-time lecturers subscribe to that confession(s). If guest lecturers teach at the school who do not fully subscribe to the confessional basis, the leadership must ensure that nothing is taught that contradicts this confessional basis.

4. Objectives

EARTS exists to:

- Facilitate communion, consultation, and the exchange of viewpoints among the member schools regarding the achievements and problems they face in their work of ministerial instruction.
- Direct the member schools to seek accreditation given by EARTS, resonating with the accreditation guidelines of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, in order to continuously improve each school's ministerial formation programs.
- Promote the appointment of committees to study matters of common interest and concern in order to support and improve each school's academic processes.
- Promote curricular coherence to the academic and ministerial formation programs of the various EARTS member schools to allow for an exchange of students and recognition of relevant credits (understanding that one school may have more courses and credits than another according to their contextual needs).
- Promote the production, translation, and transmission of Reformed confessional literature essential for ministerial, theological, and missionary formation aimed at the service of the church and the extension of the kingdom of Christ.

5. Nature and scope of authority

EARTS does not have jurisdictional authority over member schools, except as expressly stated in this membership constitution. Any further decisions made by EARTS are understood and considered to be matters of advice given to the member schools.

6. Membership

Membership within EARTS must account for the following:

- EARTS was established on November 27, 2023 with the following five founding schools as full members: Akademie für Reformatorische Theologie, Budapesti Presbiteriánus Teológia (Presbyterian Seminary Budapest), Minsk Reformed Seminary, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, and Seminário Martin Bucer Portugal.
- Schools eligible for membership are those that profess and maintain the basis of unity as established above (Constitution, 2).
- Membership has two levels: full membership and associate membership. Full membership is reserved for those schools that meet the following criteria: (1) have a bachelor's or master's program that has run for at least two academic years, (2) have at least three students or a minimum of seven graduates, and (3) have been an associate member for more than one year.
- Associate members are granted all the privileges shared by full members except the following: (1) voting privileges; (2) sponsoring an applicant school (see the following point); (3) presenting an agenda item for an EARTS meeting; and (4) having a school official elected to the board of directors.
- Any new membership application must be sponsored by two full-member schools and must include copies (either paper or digital) of the school's confessional standards, declaratory minutes (if applicable), and form of government, along with a brief outline of its history (including ecclesiastical and academic relationships).
- Admission, suspension, restoration (after suspension), and termination of a school's membership will be proposed after a two-thirds majority of the votes cast by full-member schools (each full-member school receiving one vote); this proposal must then be approved within one (1) year by two-thirds of the full-member schools. A motion to suspend or terminate the membership of another member school can only be initiated by a full-member school. A suspended school may send a delegate to the association meetings, but will not be able to vote or have a school representative serve on the board of directors or any other committee of EARTS.

7. Board of Directors

EARTS will have a Board of Directors made up of a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer; all officers will be derived from and elected by its full members to serve for three consecutive years, after which they may be reelected for another three-year term, be rotated in their positions via election, or be replaced due to the election of a new Board of Directors at an ordinary assembly. The Board of Directors will meet quarterly in an ordinary manner, and as many times as deemed necessary in an extraordinary manner.

8. Economic contributions

Once received as a member of EARTS, each school will contribute an annual minimum payment that is set at the yearly EARTS meeting.

9. Address

The domicile of EARTS will correspond to the domicile of the acting president's school.

10. Ordinary and extraordinary assemblies

Quarterly ordinary assemblies of EARTS will be summoned by its president; an ordinary meeting must have at least a 30-day advance notice, and these meetings can take place either in person or virtually. Extraordinary assemblies may be called as many times as necessary, for which the president will issue an invitation at least seven days in advance.

11. Amendments

Any amendment to this constitution must be approved by a two-thirds majority of votes cast by official delegates of full-member schools; this recommendation must then be adopted within the following year, again to be approved by at least two-thirds of the full-member schools. The approved amendment is not modifiable.