

**Additional
Report of Deputy
Stated Clerk
and Archive
to FRCSA Synod 2017,
Soshanguve**

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1. Reason for Additional Report

During the preparation process for Synod 2017, several problems were encountered, which in your deputies' opinion needs clarification by Synod. For that reason your deputy decided to write this additional report for consideration by Synod 2017.

1.1 Relevant Mandate as decided by Synod Bethal, 2014 (Art. 39 point 5, Acts of Synod 2014).

c. To conduct upon instruction from the synod or the convening church the administration of the synod.

g. To report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 11 of the Rules of Synod.

2. Additional Recommendations

Your deputy recommends that

Synod decides:

2.3 That decisions on the meeting dates of following synods, in relation to dates of classis meetings, should as much as possible be taken in such a way that sufficient time is allowed to adhere to the required time schedules, as prescribed in the Rules of Synod of the FRCSA, by all parties involved.

2.4 To instruct the relevant person(s)/deputies/convening churches to include the following phrase: "*Decision on cut-off date for admissibility of documents received after due date*", as a standard agenda-item in proposed synod agenda's and to actually decide on a cut-off date which allows the minimum required time for a proper preparation by delegates for each synod.

2.5 To instruct the relevant person(s)/deputies to add the following sentence in Article .. (with the heading "Members of Synod") of the adopted Rules of Synod: "Classes and deputies are entitled to propose certain ministers to the convening church to serve as synod advisors".

3. Reporting

3.1. Execution of mandate

3.1.3. **To conduct upon instruction from the synod or the convening church the administration of the synod.**

Your deputy assisted the church council of the FRC Soshanguve for their preparation of Synod 2017 by handling the required correspondence with classes, church councils and deputships on behalf of the convening church.

During the process of preparation of Synod 2017, a few irregularities occurred and your deputy is of the opinion that some of those irregularities arose as a result of a lack of sufficient knowledge, or misunderstanding of the existing rules and regulations.

Some other irregularities however, were most probably caused by confusing regulations and if that is indeed the case, your deputy suggests that Synod should consider to address such issues.

Problematic issues.

3.1.3.1 Appointment date of Classis delegates.

Classis South appointed delegates in a classis meeting on 22nd April 2017, while Classis North appointed their delegates in a meeting on 19th May 2017. In view of the decision by Synod 2014 (Article 39): “*That the minimum period for submitting deputies reports should at least be four months before a synod commences*” on the ground that: “*Delegates to synod should be given enough time to study the reports*”, the indicated dates on which delegates were appointed meant that your deputy was somewhat limited in acting according to the decision as adopted by Synod 2014, as the appointment date of the delegates from Classis South was 15 days less than the required four months, while the delegates from Classis North were only appointed 42 days after the four prescribed months period commenced. Your deputy therefore suggests that for the future a certain relation in terms of timing should be established between the dates of classis meetings and synod meetings in order to allow compliance with regulations.

3.1.3.2 Appointment of delegates.

The convening church and your deputy were informed by Classis South that they had appointed two (2) ministers and four (4) elders, which is not exactly in line with Article 2 of our Rules of Synod which states that: “*Each classis shall be represented by three ministers and three elders. In case three ministers cannot be delegated because of vacancies or legitimate hindrances, more elders can be delegated*”.

The reason for this deviation of the rules is not clear as Classis South seem to have enough ministers to be appointed as delegates and no information regarding legitimate hindrances was provided.

3.1.3.3 Submission of deputies' reports.

With reference to the decision by Synod 2014 as indicated above under point 3.1.3.1, your deputy wishes to report that most deputies' reports were not submitted in time. Only 2 reports were received before the due date of 7th April 2017. Four deputyships sent notice that their reports were to be submitted late due to unfinished issues. Three more reports were received within one month after the due date and another three reports during the second month after the due date. At the time of this additional report's compilation date, 42 days before Synod 2017 DV commences, five deputies' reports are still not submitted. It should be noted that one of the still outstanding reports is dependent on the completion of another report, but the general conclusion must be that quite a large number of deputies did not appear to try their best to submit their reports in time. Some of them had probably good reasons for late submissions of their reports, but other deputies did not provide reasons for late submissions at all. Your deputy therefore suggests that Synod should address this issue and try to find ways to prevent such a poor performance by deputies in the future.

3.1.3.4 Appointment of Advisors

Classis South informed us that they had appointed three ministers to act as advisors for Synod 2017. The reason why this is listed as a problematic issue, is that Synod 2008 already decided: “That all ministers not delegated to synod, may be present at synod, where they can act as advisors only upon invitation”. Furthermore that Article 4, point 4 of our Rules of Synod rules that: “the convening church Shall, in accordance with article 3, request possible advisors to attend synod.”

Your deputy interpreted that decision in such a way that advisors could only be appointed during synod meeting sessions and that classis meetings could for that reason not appoint advisors.

But after trying to analyse the consequences of that interpretation, your deputy concluded that such an interpretation could not be correct as it would mean that no advisors could be appointed in advance of the synod meetings.

Classes and deputyships however, may have good reasons for the presence of advisors during synod meetings and your deputy therefore suggests that they should have an option to appoint advisors or to request the convening church to invite certain persons with the aim to act as advisors.

Your deputy therefore suggests that the above indicated decision by Synod 2008 and/or the above cited synod rule should be rephrased in order to prevent misinterpretations.

3.1.7. To report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 11 of the Rules of Synod.

The report of Deputy SC&A was already submitted to Synod Soshanguve 2017, but for this additional report a few additional recommendations are proposed below and summarised under point “2. Additional Recommendations” above.

4. Additional Recommendations to Synod

Your deputy suggests that:

Synod decides:

regarding 3.1.3.1:

2.3 That decisions on the meeting dates of following synods, in relation to dates of classis meetings, should as much as possible be taken in such a way that sufficient time is allowed to adhere to the required time schedules, as prescribed in the Rules of Synod of the FRCSA, by all parties involved.

Grounds:

- Thorough preparation by delegates is necessary for a good functioning synod.
- Thorough preparation requires sufficient preparation time.
- Synchronising dates of classes – and synod meetings could serve to utilise available time more effectively.

regarding 3.1.3.2:

Your deputy suggests that no corrective actions are required here, except perhaps for a reminder that Rules of Synod are there for the purpose of promoting optimally functioning synods and that those rules therefore should be adhered to.

regarding 3.1.3.3:

2.4 To instruct the relevant person(s)/deputies/convening churches to include the following phrase: “*Decision on cut-off date for admissibility of documents received after due date*”, as a standard agenda-item in proposed synod agenda’s and to actually decide on a cut-off date which allows the minimum required time for a proper preparation by delegates for each synod.

Grounds:

- insufficient preparation leads to a waist of meeting time and may result in poor decisions.
- Poor decision have a way of re-appearing in following synod meetings and cause even more waist of meeting time.

regarding 3.1.3.4:

2.5 To instruct the relevant person(s)/deputies to add the following sentence in Article .. (with the heading “Members of Synod”)* of the adopted Rules of Synod: “Classes and deputies are entitled to propose certain ministers to the convening church to serve as synod advisors”.

Grounds:

- Changing the Rules of Synod seems to be the simplest way of solving the issue as it does not require any revisions of synod decisions.
- By changing the Rules of Synod in this way, synods can use advisors in a more effective way.
- The convening church will have a better understanding of how to implement their duty of inviting advisors.

**To be completed after decision on Revision of Rules of Synod*

Report compiled on 19th june 2017.



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C. Roose