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## **Germany: Beate Gilles elected new secretary general of Bishops' Conference. "Challenging and exciting times for the Church"**

Beate Gilles was appointed as the new Secretary General of the German Bishops' Conference (DBK) at the plenary assembly that began online today. Gilles is the first woman to take up this position. She succeeds Jesuit Hans Langendörfer who resigned after 24 years of service. Gilles was elected by the Assembly with the required majority having previously served as the head of the Department for Children, Youth and the Family of the Episcopal Ordinariate of Limburg. Like her predecessor, she also takes over the direction of the Association of German Dioceses. At the opening press conference of the online assembly, the President of the DBK and Bishop of Limburg, Mgr. Georg Bätzing, paid homage to Gilles, saying "she is a profound theologian, strongly integrated into the various structures of the Catholic Church and endowed with the best organizational skills". For Mgr. Bätzing, Gilles' election is a "strong sign that the Bishops are delivering on their promise to promote women into leadership positions". Beate Gilles introduced herself at the press conference, saying she was ready for her new mission: "I look forward to start working. After more than ten years in Limburg, and earlier in Stuttgart, I hope that I will be able to fully meet the needs of this role. I appreciate the success of my predecessor, Father Hans Langendörfer, who has contributed to the establishment of the Secretariat and the Association for more than two decades". "These are challenging but also exciting times for the Catholic Church in Germany. Something new began with the Synodal journey". An expert in religious television communication and in social and labour issues, Gilles will take up her new position on 1 July.

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