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## **Germany: Anna-Nicole Heinrich, 25, President of Evangelical Church Synod. Mgr. Bätzing (DBK), “good sign”**

25-year-old Anna-Nicole Heinrich, a researcher in philosophy and graduate from Regensburg, was elected new president of the Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) at the online meeting on 8 May. She is the youngest person in the history of the Evangelical Church to head the Synod. Heinrich, who is a member of the Bavarian regional Church, surprisingly prevailed over 41-year-old judge and member of the Green Party Nadine Bernshausen, from Marburg, Hesse, during the online constituent meeting of the ecclesiastical parliament on Saturday. 75 votes were for Heinrich and 39 for Bernshausen, with eleven abstentions. The President of the Synod is an expert in the digitization of the Church life. In the last synodal period, she has worked as a representative of young people in the so-called Z-Team, who created “Eleven guidelines for the future of the Church” published by the EKD in November. Before the Synod, in the run-up to the election, she called the reforms necessary for the Church an “optimistic perspective, which is accompanied by austerity measures, dismantling and reconstruction”. On Saturday, the president of the German Bishops’ Conference (DBK), Bishop Georg Bätzing of Limburg, said he was impressed that the 25-year-old woman was to take on the responsibility of being the youngest president in the history of the Synod: “I think it is a good sign, because it will give many young people the courage and the incentive to get involved in the Church”.

Massimo Lavena