

Internal Rules

As agreed upon by the Council of the European Patients' Forum per the 31st of January 2003

Article 1: Criteria for membership and procedure for application

Status

The membership of the European Patients' Forum (EPF) shall consist of pan European Patients groups.

Full membership of the European Patients' Forum shall require the following criteria to be observed:

- **Legitimacy:** EPF member organisations should have statutes registered in one of the member states of the European Union. If the applicant organisation is not registered in an EU Member State, additional information needs to be provided demonstrating EU focus and activities.
- **As regards representation:** EPF member organisations should have members of their own in more than half of the member states of the European Union.
- **Democracy:** EPF member organisations should have governing bodies, which are elected by their members, who shall be patients, their carers, or their elected representatives.
- **Accountability and Consultation:** Statements and opinions of EPF member organisations should reflect the views and opinions of their memberships and consultation procedures with those memberships should be put in place.
- **Transparency:** European patients' organisations should disclose their sources of funding and generally make available their audited financial accounts.

The Council may elect as Associate members organisations, which do not fulfil the requirements of above.

Associate members will be non-voting but enjoy the other benefits of membership by attending the Council meeting, participating in Seminars and workshops and receiving information on the activities of the EPF as may be from time to time distributed.

Constitution

Member and Associated Societies shall accept and abide by the Constitution and Internal Rules of governing the EPF. Copies of these are available from the Secretary General.

Application for Membership

Organisations wishing to apply for Full or Associate membership shall apply in writing to EPF giving the following information:

- A letter stating that the organisation wants to join the EPF
- A letter stating that the organisation accepts the constitution and the internal

rules of the EPF

- Legal status with a registered copy of the Constitution.
- Permanent address of the organisation with telephone, fax and e-mail and any other important contact details (e.g. foreign languages spoken, office hours)
- Estimated number of members or member organisations per EU member country registered in the organisation.
- Copy of the latest audited accounts

The Executive Committee will make decision about the membership of the applying organisation on a provisional basis subject to ratification by the next meeting of the Council.

After having been provisionally accepted as a full member the organisation is asked to send by letter a nomination of its representative as a voting member at the Council meeting.

A member may nominate a candidate for the Executive Committee. This must be done by a letter signed by the President of the member organisation and should include a CV of the person in question and letter of commitment and a statement of motivation by the candidate.

A candidate unable to appear in person may give a written proxy to another member of the same organisation.

Annual Fees

A member Society will pay the annual fee as set by the Council of the EPF.

Article 2: Termination of membership

Membership may be terminated by:

- (a) The Member Society in writing to the EPF.
- (b) By failure to pay the Annual Subscription for 1 year after due notice has been given. The breach will be reported to the Executive Committee of the EPF who after sufficient investigation will terminate membership, which will be ratified by the Council.
- (c) By breach of the Constitution, Internal Rules and bringing the EPF into disrepute.

After due warning the breach will be reported to the Executive Committee who after investigation will make a recommendation to the Council as to why the member should be expelled.

Article 3: Submission of resolutions

Member organisations may submit as many proposals for resolutions for consideration at meetings of the Council as they choose. This will be done in writing to the President, no later than six weeks before the Council meeting. The resolutions shall be considered by the Executive Committee and where duplication of issues occurs, the parties submitting the resolution will be advised accordingly and a composite resolution agreed with them. The resolutions shall be distributed to the members one month before the Council meeting.

Article 4 : Elections for all Executive Committee members

All elections shall be conducted by secret ballot. The number of positions to be filled shall be decided by the Council. Every council member shall have the same number of votes, as there are positions to be filled, but may vote only once for each candidate. The candidate with the most number of votes shall be elected. In case of a tie of a vote for any two candidates for the last place to be filled, there shall be a new ballot for the two candidates. In case of a new tie it shall be decided by a draw.

Article 5: Temporary substitution of Executive Committee members at meetings

In the event of the president being prevented the Vice president will substitute; in the event of the Treasurer being prevented another member of the Executive Committee will undertake day to day duties (with the exception of signing cheques above 1000 Euro).

In the event of permanent incapacity of one of its Officers the Executive Committee will exercise its discretion to wait to the next Council Meeting or seek nominations and organise a replacement by postal ballot.

Article 6: Revoking a member of the Executive Committee

Membership of the Executive Committee may be revoked for conduct considered unbecoming of the post, e.g. bankruptcy, criminal conviction, loss of legal capacity and absence without cause from meetings.

Article 7: Formation of committees and working groups

The Executive Committee may form committees or working groups to assist in the work of the EPF. Any such group will have clearly stated objectives, membership, and time frame for its work. The Executive Committee may ask it to submit regular reports should it choose.

Article 8: Duties, recruitment and dismissal of a Secretary General

A Secretary General may be appointed by the Executive Committee. The Secretary General will not be regarded as representing a member Society and will not be entitled to vote.

The Secretary's duties will be stated in a job description agreed by the Executive Committee. Termination of the position will be by written notice by either side, or according to the conditions of any contract of employment that may exist.

Article 9: Arbitration

In the event of a dispute between members arising out of the operation or interpretation of the Constitution, the disputing parties may agree to binding arbitration. The arbitration panel shall consist of the President of the EPF (unless he be party to the dispute, when he shall be replaced by the Vice-President), plus one to three other persons not parties to the dispute and appointed by the Executive Committee. The panel shall meet within 28 days of its appointment and its decisions will be final.