

# Constitution of the European Rural and Isolated Practitioner's Association (EURIPA)

## 1 Mission Statement

EURIPA aims to address the health and wellbeing needs of rural and isolated populations and the professional needs of those serving them across Europe, irrespective of location, culture or resource.

## 2 Principles

EURIPA's Principles are:

- Partnership, sharing and understanding
- Research and development
- Education and information
- Technology and innovation
- Promotion of health and wellbeing
- Addressing health inequalities and improving the social capital of communities
- Development of cost effective, patient centred health care systems
- Dissemination of good practice

## 3 Objectives

EURIPA'S objectives are:

- To act as a voice for rural health issues
- To consider and set standards for good rural practice, primary/family health and social care throughout Europe
- To encourage and foster links with other professional organisations and provide a voice for rural practice
- To set up a mechanism for sharing information, skills and knowledge and encourage multidisciplinary activities and team work
- To develop the recruitment, retention and training of health care personnel for rural practice throughout Europe
- To facilitate and promote relevant and cost effective continuing professional development
- To act as a forum to share, encourage and develop rural research
- To build links with other non-health rural organisations in the realisation that rural services are an essential part of the rural community framework

## 4 Legal Status

EURIPA is a network of WONCA Europe but it is established in its own legal right through EURIPA France. Officers of EURIPA shall be represented on the Board of EURIPA France.

Processes and procedures to ensure the appropriate levels of governance shall be developed.

The constitution of EURIPA France is attached at Annex 1.

The relationship will be reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting.

## **5 Membership**

### **(a) Organisational membership**

Organisational membership shall be open to independent organisations representing rural health care practitioners in each of the countries of Europe and to institutes actively involved in rural health research. Delegates of the member organisations should be rural health care practitioners and active in practice or rural health academics.

### **(b) Individual membership**

Individual membership shall be open to any rural health care practitioner who is actively working in rural health care and rural academics (for example, medical, rural health special interest). Individuals interested in rural health, rural health care issues and EURIPA are welcome to become members of EURIPA.

Applications for admission to membership of EURIPA shall be made to the Secretariat, together with the appropriate fee. A recommendation will be made to the Executive Committee. Admission to the Membership requires a majority vote of members present and eligible to vote.

The details of the membership scheme are included in Annex 2.

## **6 Officials**

The official roles within EURIPA are the Presidency and Honorary Treasurer.

The President and Vice President shall be elected from membership of the Executive Committee by the members at an AGM

- The President of EURIPA will be elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting for a 3 year term. The Vice President will also be elected at an AGM for a 3 year term
- Presidents and Vice Presidents may be elected for a second 3 year term, if the membership supports it
- In the final year of a Presidency the Vice President will become the President Elect and a new vice President will be elected by the membership at the relevant AGM
- After a three year term the President will become the Immediate Past President for 2 years, to ensure continuity
- The Presidency of EURIPA shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the President Elect and Immediate Past President, when appropriate
- The Honorary Treasurer will have responsibility for the accounts, income and expenditure, applying for funding, etc and work closely with the Executive Secretary. EURIPA France, with the approval of the EURIPA Executive Committee, will appoint auditors to monitor the EURIPA accounts.
- Role descriptions will be established for the Presidency and the Executive Secretary.

- Except by special dispensation, all officers of EURIPA will be individual members of EURIPA (health care practitioners active in clinical practice or rural health academics or with a special interest in rural health).

## **7 Executive Committee**

An Executive Committee shall be established to take the work programme forward between Annual General Meetings. The Executive Committee shall also undertake decision making when not to do so could prejudice EURIPA's interests

- Membership will be a maximum of 13 members:
  - 4 officers: President, Immediate Past President, Vice President (President Elect) and Honorary Treasurer
  - 4 members who have responsibility to liaise with representatives from the 3 core WONCA networks and also the VDG,
  - 1 member who is Chair of the International Advisory Board
  - 1 member who is chair of the Scientific Board
  - 3 members
- Executive Committee Members will be members of EURIPA and will be elected at the Annual General Meeting for a 3 year term. Members can stand for re-election for one additional 3 year term
- Members of the Executive Committee, after a minimum of a 3 years, are allowed to stand for Vice President / President Elect and subsequently President

The Executive Committee has the power to establish other sub- committees to help take forward EURIPA's agenda and work programme.

The Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt EURIPA members on to the Executive Committee at any time during the year, if a vacancy becomes available, but the Co-opted member is required to stand for election at the next Annual General Meeting.

## **8 International Advisory Board**

An International Advisor Board (IAB) will be convened with the aim of informing and advising the Executive Committee. It will provide a wide and informed range of advice and input needed at national, regional, level and local levels across Europe.

Each country, through its national association membership of WONCA Europe, is entitled to nominate a rural representative to become their respective national delegate on the International Advisory Board (IAB). The Executive Committee is also entitled to nominate national and internationally recognised rural experts as additional delegates of the IAB. The Executive Committee has the responsibility to ensure that membership of the IAB achieves a balance between national representatives and "experts".

The delegates at the International Advisory Board will share the same electoral period as the Presidency (3 years). IAB members can be re-elected with the support of their national association/college or the Executive Committee for a further 3 years provided that the exclusion criteria (11) are not met.

The Chair of the IAB will be nominated by the EURIPA Executive Committee.

The IAB will meet with the Executive Committee in their face to face meetings; delegates at these meetings will be free to speak but not vote. The chair of the IAB will attend and have a vote at all Executive Committee meetings.

The IAB may decide its own working procedures but these must be agreed by the Executive Committee. The Codex of the IAB is included in Annex 3.

## **9 The Secretariat**

The Executive Secretary will assist the Presidency, Honorary Treasurer, Executive Committee and other committees in carrying out their work. A Secretariat may be set up under the jurisdiction of the Executive Secretary.

The Executive Secretary and the Secretariat once appointed will remain at the same location to ensure continuity and work with the President and Vice President / President Elect, regardless of their location.

## **10 Succession**

In the event of the President relinquishing his/her post in the course of his term of office, the Vice President (or President Elect) shall take his/her place at the next Executive Committee meeting or Annual General Meeting (whichever comes first).

In order to guarantee continuity, it is desirable that the Vice President (or President Elect) is confirmed at the next AGM as the President.

If the Vice President does not wish to become President new candidates for President and Vice President should be elected from membership of the Executive Committee at the next AGM.

In the event of the Vice president resigning, a new Vice President will be elected from the membership of the Executive Committee to be ratified at the next AGM.

## **11 Exclusion**

If, in the opinion of a majority of all members of EURIPA, a national representative or member has been in serious breach of his/her duties as a member, especially if he/she has sought to act against EURIPA in a detrimental way or if he/she has failed to fulfil the qualifications governing representation, such member will be excluded from EURIPA. Members who do not pay their membership fee in full, without good reason for two consecutive years will also be excluded from EURIPA.

A motion to exclude a member from membership of EURIPA will be approved at an EURIPA Executive Committee meeting. The Executive Committee will make a recommendation to the Annual General Meeting for ratification. The decision to exclude a member will be taken by a 75% majority of all members of EURIPA present and eligible to vote (at the Annual General Meeting).

Membership at any of EURIPA's committees (Executive, International Advisory and others that be established from time to time) will be cancelled if the member does not participate at three consecutive meetings of his respective committee unless the President intervenes due to extenuating circumstances.

## **12 Meetings**

EURIPA will normally meet in plenary once a year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The AGM will be presided over by the President and organised by the EURIPA Secretariat.

The AGM will take place at the most appropriate opportunity each year where as many members as possible are able to attend. The Executive Committee shall approve the venue and timing of future meetings.

All members of the Executive Committee, International Advisory Board and members of EURIPA are invited to attend the AGM:

- A quorum shall consist of a minimum of nine (9) members
- Each member participating in the AGM has one vote. The President is not entitled to vote, except in the event of an equality of votes when he will in this case have a casting vote
- Voting procedures at an AGM may include the use of teleconferencing when appropriate (video and audio) and voting by proxy. These arrangements shall be adopted by the Annual General Meeting provided a majority of those present and eligible to vote shall be in favour
- Meetings must be announced and the agenda issued at least two weeks in advance. The meeting is empowered to make decisions only on those questions included in agenda except under special circumstances under the discretion of the President
- Notwithstanding the above, a matter not on the agenda will be dealt with by the meeting if such a matter is considered by at least 75% of those present and eligible to vote to be of such importance or urgency that it should be dealt with forthwith
- The annual report and financial statement will be adopted by the AGM each year; the forward work plan and associated budget will be approved by the membership
- The working language of EURIPA is English.

The Executive Committee will hold a minimum of 4 meetings per year: One meeting will be to face-to-face at the Annual Rural Health Forum and others by audio (or possibly video) conferencing.

Executive Committee meetings will be:

- planned at least 2 months ahead, as much as possible
- will be confirmed at least 2 weeks in advance and the agenda and papers circulated at least 1 week in advance.
- A quorum shall consist of a minimum of seven (7) members including up to a maximum of 2 proxy votes
- The President (or Vice President / President Elect in his/her absence) will chair the meetings.

When members wish to vote by proxy vote at either the Annual General Meeting or an Executive Committee meeting one member may only represent a maximum of two other voting members.

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be held during the year. The methods of organization of the Extraordinary General Meeting are the same as those for the statutory annual general meeting.

## **13 Decisions**

Decisions made at the AGM, which affect policy as a whole, will normally be by consensus. In the event of a vote, a decision will require a majority of those members present and entitled to vote. In the event of an equality of votes the President will be entitled in this case to a casting vote.

Modification of the Statutes shall require a unanimous decision. Changes in the statutes shall be notified to members at least one month prior to the AGM at which they are to be adopted.

Unless a special power or attorney has been obtained, any legal document affecting EURIPA must be signed by the President and one other member of the Executive Committee. They are not obliged to prove their authority to a third party. It is recognised that under Article 4 there may be occasions when a signatory may be required from EURIPA France with or without that of the EURIPA President.

Decisions made at the Executive Committee meetings are normally by majority and in the event of an equality of votes the President will be entitled in this case to a casting vote.

#### **14 Dissolution**

In the case of such decision, the AGM shall decide on the method of liquidating EURIPA and the manner in which its assets are to be disposed of. The Executive Committee can make recommendations to the nearest AGM or it can call an EGM.

Signed:

Dated:

Annex 1

EURIPA France Constitution

Annex 2

EURIPA Membership Scheme

Annex 3

IAB Codex