



Newsletter from the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology

Constitution of the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology

Article 1

An international Society to be known AS the Association of European Paediatric Cardiologists was founded in Lyon on 30th June, 1963. The name of the Association was later changed to the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology. The Registered Office of the Association is: Secretariat, Section of Paediatric Cardiology, Gasthuisberg University Hospital, Herestraat 49, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium.

Article 2

Objectives

The objectives of the Association shall be:

1. To promote knowledge of the normal and abnormal heart and circulation during growth and development, from fetal to adult life.
2. To ensure a high standard of professional practice in paediatric cardiology in Europe.

These shall be achieved by:

- (a) Holding an Annual Meeting, which shall include:
 1. A business meeting
 2. A scientific meeting
- (b) Promoting and supporting collaboration among members for the specific purpose of scientific research and professional development;
- (c) Representing the interests of European Paediatric Cardiology;
- (d) Communicating and collaborating with other groups and organisations with similar interests in Europe and around the world;
- (e) Any other means that the Association may consider necessary.

Article 3

Language of the Association

At its meetings, the official languages of the Association shall be English and French, but English shall be the preferred language.

Article 4

Membership categories

The Association shall consist of Ordinary, Junior, Senior and Honorary members.

Ordinary membership shall be conferred upon those medical and other scientific graduates who are committed to the practice and advancement of Paediatric Cardiology and closely related fields.

Junior membership shall be conferred upon graduates, who are less than 38 years of age, and in addition, are officially in a training programme in paediatric cardiology or related fields in Europe or around the world.

Senior membership shall be conferred upon an Ordinary member, who informs the Association that he/she has retired from practice (institutional and private practice).

Honorary membership shall be conferred from time to time upon those members who have made important contributions to the development of Paediatric Cardiology and related fields. When a member becomes an Honorary Member, he/she retains the rights of his/her original membership.

Application for membership

Any two Ordinary or Senior members may propose candidates for Ordinary, Junior and Honorary membership.

For **Ordinary membership**, completed application forms, acknowledged and approved by the National

Delegate, must be submitted to the Secretary-General. In case of a disagreement between a National Delegate and the applicant, the National Delegate should forward the complete documents of the applicant and his/her opinion to the Secretary of the Professional Advisory Committee for adjudication.

Junior members may apply for membership in the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology at any time of the year. The applicant should provide the Secretary-General with the completed application form, which should have been approved by his/her National Delegate.

All membership applications will be discussed for approval by the Council of the Society at its meeting prior to the next Annual Meeting.

Article 5

Annual subscription

Members shall pay an annual subscription, the amount of which shall be determined at the Annual Business Meeting. Subscriptions shall be payable directly to the Treasurer or into the account of the Association on election and by the 31st of January in each succeeding year.

Members shall be obliged to pay a penalty (the amount to be determined in the Business Meeting) for late payment of the annual subscription after the 30th of April.

Annual subscriptions shall not be required from Honorary and Senior members. However, a full registration fee shall be paid by Senior members when they attend an Annual General Meeting.

Any member wishing to resign shall notify the Secretary-General in writing before the 1st of January.

Any member whose subscription is more than two years in arrears, and who has received two requests for payment, shall be considered to have resigned and his/her name shall be removed from the membership list.

Members leaving the Association forfeit all rights to its assets.

Article 6

The Council

The Association shall be governed by a Council, which shall consist of the President, the Chairman-elect, the Secretary-General, the Scientific Secretary, the Treasurer, four Councillors and a Junior member.

When applicable during the year preceding their tenure, the President-elect and the Secretary-General-elect shall be members of the Council. Upon relinquishing his/her post, the immediate past-President shall remain a member of the Council for a further year.

The Council shall normally have only one, and never more than two members from the same country at any one time.

Only Ordinary members are eligible for election to the Council, with the exception of the representative of the Junior members, who shall be elected by the Junior members. At the time of being elected to and whilst serving on the Council, the Council Officers should be working in a European country.

A Chairman-elect shall be appointed each year by the Council to preside as the local Chairman at the Scientific Sessions of the Annual Meeting the following year. He/she shall be responsible to the Council for the organization of this meeting. The Chairman-elect shall become an ex-officio member of the Council and take over from his/her predecessor at the beginning of the Scientific Sessions of the Annual Meeting.

Role of the Council

The Council shall be assisted by a Scientific Advisory Committee, which shall include the Scientific Secretary (who will chair this committee) and one delegate from each of the Working Groups and a Professional Advisory Committee, which shall include the Secretary-General (who shall chair this committee) and 6 National Delegates to be elected from the Board of National Delegates.

The creation of Working Groups may be proposed by members interested in particular subjects and shall be considered for approval at an Annual Business Meeting.

Each country shall nominate a member of the Association to be its representative at the Board of National Delegates.

The Committees, the Board of National Delegates and the Working Groups shall be governed by the by-laws approved at a Business Meeting.

Article 7

Elections

Only Ordinary members may vote at the elections.

Election of the President

The Council will begin the process of election of the President-elect by inviting nominations from the Ordinary members. The proposals for nominations must be signed by ten Ordinary members from three or more countries. The Council will also announce its own nomination at least 4 months before the Annual Meeting of the year preceding the Annual Meeting at which the President-elect is due to take office. The proposed candidates should be working in a European country.

The process of election will follow the procedures set out below and observe the minimum deadlines as follows:

- 3 months before the Annual Meeting, nominations must be received in writing by the Secretary-General.
- 2 months before the Annual Meeting, ballot papers will be mailed to all Ordinary members.
- The deadline for receipt of the ballot papers by the Secretary-General is two weeks before the Annual Meeting.

Votes received will be counted at the Council Meeting immediately before the Annual Meeting and the result will be announced at the Business Meeting. The President-elect will then become a Council member, until he/she takes office as President at the Annual Meeting the following year.

A minimum of 50 per cent of the votes must be obtained by the President-elect. When there are more than two candidates, the method of a single transferable vote shall be used. The ballot papers shall contain the names of all candidates, each followed by a box for the voters to place numbers in order of preference. If no candidate receives 50 per cent of the votes marked with preference 1, the election will be decided between the two candidates with the highest number of votes marked with this preference. Votes for these candidates marked with preference 1 will then be added to the remaining votes naming them with preference 2. If the total still does not reach 50 per cent, subsequent preferences will be similarly counted. Each vote can only be counted once.

If there is only one candidate he/she will be considered elected unopposed.

Election of other Officers

The Council will begin the process of election of the **Secretary-General-elect**, **Scientific Secretary**, **Treasurer** and **Councillors** by inviting nominations from the Ordinary members. The Council will also announce its own nominations at least 4 months before the Annual Meeting. The proposed candidates should be working in a European country.

Nominations for these officers must be signed by five Ordinary members from two or more countries and received by the Secretary-General at least four months before the next Annual Meeting.

The process of election of these officers is the same as that for the President-elect.

Article 8

Terms of Office

The elected officers shall become members of the Council after the Annual Meeting.

The **President** shall normally serve a term of office for a period of three years. The President will not be eligible for re-election for the same office. However, he/she shall remain a member of the Council for a period of one year as the past-President.

The **Secretary-General**, **Scientific Secretary** and **Treasurer** shall each serve a term of office for a period of five years and will not be eligible for re-election for the same office. In exceptional circumstances, the Council, with the subsequent approval of the Members, may extend the term of office of a Council Officer by no more than one year.

The **Councillors** shall normally serve for a period of three years. Their term should be completed such that, where possible, at least one Councillor shall retire each year. Councillors shall not be eligible for re-election for the same office. The proposed candidates should be working in a European country.

The **Junior member** in the Council shall be elected during an Annual Meeting by the Junior members for a period of 3 years; only Junior members may vote for this election.

If an office becomes vacant prematurely, the Council shall fill the vacancy until the next Annual Meeting.

Article 9

Duties of the Officers

Each officer should receive a job description on election.

The **President** shall preside over the affairs of the Association, the Council and the Annual Business Meeting, and shall represent the Association or delegate this representation.

The **Secretary-General** shall be responsible for the day-to-day business of the Association, summon all the meetings, circulate programmes to members at least one month before meetings, keep records of the proceedings and transactions of the Association and share responsibilities with the President to represent the Council in legal matters.

The **Treasurer** shall be responsible for the financial affairs of the Association, collect subscriptions, keep accounts and present a statement of accounts each year at the Annual Business Meeting. He/she will be authorised to carry out the daily financial transactions on behalf of the Council. The annual account shall be controlled by two independent auditors who are members of the Association.

The **Scientific Secretary** shall be responsible for the scientific part of the annual meeting. He/she will

organize the abstract collection and selection for the annual meeting. He/she should promote scientific publications and Continuous Medical Education accreditation.

Article 10

Council Business affairs

A quorum for the Council meetings shall consist of 5 members.

Voting in the Council shall be by a simple majority of the members present. In case of a tied vote, the President shall have a casting vote. In the absence of the President, the Council shall elect a Chairman.

The Council shall be responsible for the administration and management of the affairs of the Association. The President and the Secretary-General or two Council members and the Secretary-General shall sign legal documents.

The Treasurer together with the President and the Secretary-General shall sign those documents relating to the treasury, such as contracts with banks, professional congress organisers, publishers and credit card companies.

Under exceptional circumstances, the Council may need to proceed to remove an Officer from the Council, in which case, it may need to appoint a temporary replacement for that Officer. This decision will need to be ratified by the Members at the subsequent Annual Business Meeting.

Article 11

Annual Business Meeting

Thirty Ordinary Members shall constitute a quorum.

The **Annual Business Meeting** of the Association shall be held each year. All members may attend and participate in the discussions but only Ordinary members are eligible to vote.

The Annual Business Meeting shall decide upon:

- (a) Election or removal of Ordinary, Junior and Honorary members
- (b) Election or removal of the Officers
- (c) Amendments to the constitution
- (d) Financial matters

An **extraordinary meeting** may be convened at the request of the Council or of at least 30 Ordinary members from three or more countries. Six weeks notice of such a meeting shall be given to all members together with a complete agenda to be discussed.

Article 12

Voting at the Business Meeting

Thirty Ordinary Members shall constitute a quorum.

1. Decisions will be based on a simple majority of Ordinary Members present for:
 - (a) The ratification of new Ordinary, Junior and Honorary Members
 - (b) All items other than those specified in the Constitution
2. A two-thirds majority of a quorum is required when voting on:
 - (a) Amendments to the Constitution, on the condition that the amendment has been proposed by the Council or by five voting members from two or more countries, and that the amendment has been circulated at least one month before the Business Meeting
 - (b) Removal of a member or an Officer
 - (c) Dissolution of the Association

Voting shall be by a show of hands. If appropriate, a secret ballot shall be arranged at the Business Meeting.

The Council may arrange a postal vote between Annual Business Meetings for exceptional and urgent matters.

Article 13

Minutes of the meetings

A written record of the minutes of the Council and Annual Business Meetings shall be maintained by the Secretary-General and shall be signed by at least two members of the Council. The minutes shall be available at the registered office of the Association.

Article 14

Dissolution of the Association

In the event of dissolution of the Association, two liquidators shall be appointed to terminate its affairs, settle all debts and distribute any remaining funds in a manner that is in keeping with the objectives of the Association.

By-laws

Journal of the Association

Following a postal questionnaire prior to and a vote at the Annual Business Meeting of the Association held in Munich in 2004, "Cardiology in the Young" was accepted as the official Journal of the Association with effect from 2005.

Updated: Copenhagen, May 2005.