



European Forum of  
National Nursing and  
Midwifery Associations  
and WHO



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## Operational Principles

### **PREAMBLE**

*The Forum, founded in November 1996, is a joint initiative of European national nursing and midwifery associations and the WHO Regional Office for Europe, recognising the value of dialogue between them and the potential strength of joint action to promote health and health care in Europe.*

*On occasion, issues of concern to member associations may be in conflict with WHO aims and objectives (i.e. a specific situation in an individual country; union-type issues). In view of the requirement for the WHO to adhere to UN regulations, each item which falls within this area of doubt must be judged on its merit and the best solution found outside of the Forum.*

## **1. AIMS**

- (a) contribute to and influence the debate on improving health and the quality of health care in Europe;
- (b) strengthen and promote the exchange of information, ideas and policies between national nursing/midwifery associations and WHO;
- (c) support the integration of appropriate policies in line with the Health For All philosophy into nursing and midwifery practice as well as into basic, postgraduate and continuing nursing and midwifery education;
- (d) formulate consensus/ policy statements and recommendations on health and nursing/midwifery and action them into national health policy strategies.
- (e) Initiate projects to implement evidence based practice into nursing and midwifery and undertake pilot projects subject to appropriate sources of funding.

## **2. STEERING COMMITTEE**

- (a) The purpose of the Steering Committee is to prepare the agenda for annual meetings in accordance with the Forum aims, to implement decisions taken by the Forum during these meetings. The Steering Committee will decide the supporting theme of the next annual meeting as well as ensuring the execution of all preparatory work for the same and create initiatives to complement the WHO agenda.
- (b) The Committee, elected biennially, will comprise no more than eight people, including: a Chairperson; Vice-Chairperson (to be chairperson designate); Treasurer; four further representatives of national nursing and midwifery associations and a WHO representative. There must be at least one seat reserved for a midwife on the steering committee. If there are no valid nominations for the reserved seat for a midwife, the Forum shall be entitled to accept nominations at its annual meeting, and only such nominations shall be eligible for election to the Steering Committee. In the event of a midwife being elected as a Chairperson, another midwife should be co-opted to replace her on the steering committee, in which case the number of members would increase to 9, in case there is not more than one midwife representative elected to the Steering Committee.
- (c) The Treasurer will be accountable for the monitoring of the use of membership fees. A financial report will be collated by the Secretariat and agreed by the Treasurer to be presented to the Forum during the Business meeting at Annual meetings.
- (d) There should be no fewer than two Steering Committee meetings per annum.
- (e) Participation costs in Steering Committee meetings will be borne by the respective members associations, with the exception of previously agreed supported participation which will be absorbed through membership fees.
- (f) The venue and dates for steering committee meetings will be the decision of its members. However, one meeting per annum should take place at the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

## **3. ANNUAL MEETINGS**

- (a) There will be one meeting of the Forum per annum.
- (b) Venue and timing of annual meetings will be decided by the Forum.
- (c) Annual meetings will, in the first instance, be held in the English language only.
- (d) Annual meetings will comprise two parts: a business meeting and a technical discussion.
- (e) Topics for technical discussions will reflect the aims of the Forum.

- (f) Participation costs in annual meetings will be borne by the respective members associations, with the exception of previously agreed supported participation which will be absorbed through membership fees.
- (g) Administrative costs for annual meetings will be absorbed through membership fees. Obtaining additional funding to support annual meetings will be undertaken by the Policy Advisor in consultation with the Steering Committee. A subcommittee nominated by the Steering Committee should be appointed to innovatively investigate sources of funds within the rules laid down by the WHO. The Steering Committee will decide of the use of this funds
- (h) A rapporteur will be appointed by the Steering Committee for each annual meeting. Costs will be absorbed through membership fees.

#### **4. SECRETARIAT AND POLICY ADVISER**

- (a) The Secretariat will be an administrative function to ensure the organization and coordination of Forum activities.
- (b) To allow better coordination with multidisciplinary networks, and maintenance of international standards, the Secretariat will be located in the Nursing and Midwifery Unit at the WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen.
- (c) There will be secretarial service to support the Secretariat function including access to telefax, telephone, photocopier, email, printing and mailing services.
- (d) Tasks of the Forum Secretary can be delegated to the Secretariat function of the Forum, as appropriate.
- (e) The Secretary of the Forum will be the WHO/EURO Policy Adviser for Nursing and Midwifery, who will be responsible for the proper maintenance of the minutes and records of both Steering Committee and Annual meetings of the Forum. This will include preparation of the agenda for these meetings (in consultation with the Chairperson) and recording of decisions taken at the meetings (as agreed by the Steering Committee in consultation with the Chairperson and in accordance with decisions taken at meetings).
- (f) Any correspondence received for the Forum will be brought to the attention of the Steering Committee. The Secretary will deal with any correspondence, as instructed by the Chairperson, the Steering Committee or the full Forum
- (g) Costs for the Secretariat function will be absorbed through membership fees.

#### **5. MEMBERSHIP AND FEES**

- a) There will be a single European Forum for national nursing and midwifery associations and WHO to reflect the extended European context.
- b) Membership is open to associations belonging to or in the process of affiliation with the International Council of Nurses or the International Confederation of Midwives. There will be two representatives per association and representatives are to be Presidents/ board members and/or General Secretaries (or equivalent), from not more than one nursing and one midwifery organisation per country.
- c) There will be one vote per member association.
- d) One representative from each of the following bodies will be given observer status (speak, but not vote) in the Forum: ICN, ICM, EFN, EMA  
Observer status to Network of Government Chief Nurses and Midwives (all of them to the meeting)
- e) Membership fees will be divided into seven categories. The table of rates for annual fees is suggested below.

Category	Criteria	US \$
1	Associations with less than 500 members	105
2	Associations with 500 and more, but less than 1 000 members	210
3	Country GNP per capita, less than US \$ 755	210
4	Country GNP per capita – US \$756 - 2 995	525
5	Country GNP per capita - US \$2 996 – 9 265	840
6	Country GNP per capita – US \$9 266 – 19 999	1 050
7	Country GNP per capita – US \$20 000 and over	1 260

**Notes:** Payment of membership fees will be due on the 15 January of each year directly to the WHO office.

Every year an inflation correction compared with international figures is added to the fees.

## **6. ELECTION PROCEDURE FOR HONORARY OFFICERS AND STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- (a) The election procedure should have a three month lead in period. The procedure is as follows: a call for Steering Committee members is made through member associations. Within 6 weeks associations forward the names of nominee, CV, and motivations and a paper which shows why they are equipped for the post. All information and relevant papers are sent to the secretariat at least 6 weeks in advance of the annual meeting.
- (b) Voting will take place during the annual meeting of the Forum.
- (c) No postal votes will be accepted but rather the task of voting can be delegated to a representative of another Association attending the election. Polling Officers must be made aware of this arrangement prior to the election procedure. A written and signed agreement to be given to the Polling Officer.
- (d) Only associations in full membership to the Forum can nominate/vote and, within this frame, associations can nominate from within their own or another Nursing or Midwifery member association.
- (e) Associations can submit one vote per Honorary Officer/Steering Committee member seat during the election.
- (f) The President/General Secretary of an association must approve nominations from within her/his constituency should these nominations not be the Secretary General, General Secretary or President.
- (g) Each Association has the right to submit nominations for seven out of eight seats on the Steering Committee.  
The last seat is held permanently by the Forum Secretary (WHO representative).
- (h) The Forum Secretariat will supply candidates with the role specification and details regarding responsibilities of Honorary Officers and conditions under which they will fulfill their tasks (e.g. time commitments, financing) to all nominees.

Nominees must confirm their willingness to stand for election in writing to their CV.  
A curriculum vitae/ bibliography of nominees must be made available for circulation to the Forum membership one month prior to election.

- (i) All Steering Committee members are elected by the Forum.
- (j) Election of the Forum Chairperson and Vice-Chair will be open to the Forum.
- (k) The Forum Treasurer will be appointed from within the Forum's Steering Committee by the Committee.
- (l) There is a 6 year ceiling on consequent terms of office for Honorary Officers in the Steering Committee.
- (m) The Ballot form must contain the list of names of persons standing for office and free spaces must appear on the form to allow for any changes.
- (n) Coloured cards to show eligibility for voting will be given out to Forum members attending the election, at the beginning of the annual meeting.
- (o) A minimum of two Polling Officers will be appointed from outside of the Forum constituency. In addition, a Returning Officer will be appointed who will announce the results of the election process.
- (p) The person standing for office who receives the largest number of votes will be elected. If only one nomination is received, the Polling Officers will ask for a show of hands as a record of unanimous agreement by the Forum.
- (q) In the event of a midwife being elected as a Chairperson, another midwife should be co-opted to replace her on the steering committee, in which case the number of members would increase to 9, in case there is not more than one midwife representative elected to the Steering Committee.

## **7. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FORUM OFFICERS**

### **1. Election of Forum Officers**

All Forum Officers should be elected by the full Forum during an Annual Meeting and their terms of office will be 2 years. Should any officer wish to resign from the position notice must be given 3 months in advance. The Steering Committee will allocate a member of the group as temporary position till the next election will take place.

### **2. Chairperson**

The Official Delegate of a member Association is eligible for election as Chairperson.

The Chairperson will be elected by the Forum to Chair the annual meetings and the Steering Committee for the duration of the term of office.

The Chairperson will be responsible for approving agendas for meetings, minutes, and implementation of decisions taken by the Forum at annual meetings. She/he will work closely with the EURO Regional Adviser for Nursing and Midwifery on these actions.

The Chairperson will clarify issues and resolve conflicts and document outcomes and actions as agreed by the Steering Committee and take any necessary action.

The Chairperson or in absence a nominated person will represent the Forum at WHO meetings and at meetings of other Forums as required.

As the nominal elected Forum leader, the Chairperson will act on behalf of the Forum outside of annual and Steering Committee meetings in urgent cases when neither the Forum in total nor the Steering Committee can be consulted. In these cases, the Chairperson will consult the WHO/EURO Regional Adviser for Nursing and Midwifery-prior to taking any action and will consider any precedents, policies or guidelines. Se/he will be required to report back to either the Steering Committee or full Forum on any actions taken.

The Chairperson will ensure that there is a clear understanding or distinction between what is WHO Policy and what is Forum Policy.

### **3. Vice-Chairperson**

Official Delegate of a member Association is eligible for election as Vice-Chairperson.

The Vice-chairperson deputizes for the Chairperson in all specified duties, for the duration of the term of office.

### **4. Treasurer**

The Treasurer will be responsible for keeping all financial records of the Forum. He/she will be responsible for presenting the accounts at the Annual meetings of the Forum and, as required, at any Steering Committee meetings.

He/she will advise the Steering Committee in cases of financial implications arising out of Forum decisions/activities and for presenting the accounts, as required by the Committee.

The Treasurer and the Professional Secretary will be the signatories for any funds to be released from the Forum bank account.

The finances of the Forum are to be held in a WHO/EURO account and will be administered by the WHO/EURO Finance Department. WHO/EURO will be responsible for keeping the treasurer fully informed of the account status, through regular financial statements.

## **8. INTERACTING WITH OTHER EUROPEAN NETWORKS**

- (a) The Forum should formulize close collaboration with Government Chief Nurses and Midwives of each member country as well as with WHO Collaborating Centers in Nursing and Midwifery to ensure commonality of purpose and outcome.
- (b) Joint activities, with relevant organisations within Europe, including those networks which are observers in the Forum, will be encouraged where possible.

## **9. REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE FORUM**

The Operational Principles document will be reviewed every three years by the Steering Committee of the Forum and consequently approved by the Forum membership at the annual general meeting.

Revised and approved: Copenhagen, October 2007

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