

European Forum for Electroconvulsive Therapy Regulations

Article 1: Name

The name of the international non-profit association is the European Forum for Electroconvulsive Therapy (EFFECT), founded in February 2006. The association comes under the provision of title III of the Belgian law of 27 June 1921 regarding the non-profit associations, the international non-profit associations and the foundations (articles 46 up to including 57).

Article 2: Address of EFFECT

The association has its seat at the University Psychiatric Centre, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, campus Kortenberg, ECT Dept & Dept of Mood Disorders, Leuvensesteenweg 517, 3070 Kortenberg, Belgium.

Article 3: Societal object

The association aims to promote access to safe and effective ECT when appropriate for patients across Europe.

EFFECT aims to promote ECT research, to combat the stigma associated with ECT, to educate health professionals about ECT, to inform the general public about ECT, and to work towards a high standard of ECT practice across Europe.

EFFECT will operate independently from commercial, political, and other vested interests.

EFFECT will collaborate with other organizations which share these aims.

Article 4: Members

EFFECT is an association for clinicians, researchers and other professionals with a special interest in ECT. The association recognises general members, honorary members and associated members.

Article 5: Entry, removal and expulsion

Applications for membership will be dealt with by the executive board.

The association can appoint honorary members. Appointments are made by the executive board. A proposal for appointment of an honorary member can be made by the executive board or an individual member. Honorary members have the right to attend the general membership meetings and also the deliberations and decision making but not the executive board meetings.

The association also has associate members. A request for associate membership has to be supported by two ordinary members. The executive board decides on the admission of the associate member. Associate members are allowed to attend the scientific meetings, but not the general membership or executive board meetings.

Members can terminate membership at his/her request. Members who undermine the goals of the association can be struck off the membership roll by the executive board. The expulsion should be confirmed during a general membership meeting by a 2/3 majority. The executive board can suspend the person concerned until the decision by the general membership meeting.

Article 6: Contributions

The membership financial contribution will be fixed by the general membership meeting on the proposal of the executive board. Members will pay the contribution fixed by the association during the annual general membership meeting. Members who have not made their contribution then are no longer regarded as members. Honorary members are exempt from payment.

EFFECT can accept financial support from sponsors.

Article 7: the general membership meeting

7.1 Competences of the general membership meeting

The general members are competent to achieve the aims and activities of the association. The right of general members to participate in the management of joint matters concerning the association will be exercised at the general membership meeting.

The exclusive competences of the general members are as follows:

- a) Changing the regulations;
- b) Appointment and removal of members of the executive board;
- c) Approval of the budget and annual report;
- d) The discharge to the members of the executive board;
- e) Voluntary dissolution of the association;
- f) Exclusion of a member;
- g) Approval of the by-laws.

7.2 Composition

The general membership meeting consists of all members exclusive of the associate members.

Each member has one vote. An associate member has no vote.

7.3 Meeting and convocation

Annual general membership meetings will be convened. Additional membership meetings can be convened at other times. Time and place of general membership meetings will be determined by the executive board. Notification of the annual general membership meeting takes place at least four months prior to the date. Notification of an additional membership meeting takes place at least two weeks prior to the date. Members will be notified through the e-mail or paper mail by the secretary.

Negotiations about the annual general membership meeting will be carried out by the chairman and in his/her absence by the president. The protocol is determined by the members of the executive board.

Only members who have paid the entrance fees can attend the annual general membership meeting. The fees are fixed once every two years by the executive board.

An additional membership meeting is convened on the proposal of the chairman, the executive board or when at least 1/3 of members have made a written notification.

7.4 Decision-making

The general membership meeting can only validly deliberate if 1/3 of members are present or represented. Voting during the meetings is verbal unless a paper vote is requested. Decisions are taken by simple majority of votes unless stated otherwise in the regulations. When the votes are equally divided the president or his/her representative has casting vote.

Each member is allowed to authorize another member for representation. Each member can be authorized by more than one and a maximum of four absent member(s) for representation.

No decision-making can take place on subjects not included in the agenda.

The decisions taken will be announced to all members through the notes of the meeting. These notes will be distributed and kept by the secretary.

A member of the executive board cannot participate in a vote concerning his/her own exemption of liability.

Article 8. Changes of regulations and dissolution of the international association

Changes in these regulations can only be made during a general membership meeting. A written proposal for change must be delivered to the executive board at least four months prior to the meeting. A proposal for change of the regulations will be sent by the executive board to the members at least one month prior to the annual general membership meeting. The general membership meeting can only validly deliberate on the proposition if 2/3 of members are present or represented. A decision to change the regulations is valid only if at least 2/3 of the voting members support the change.

If less than 2/3 of the members are present or represented a second meeting will be convened. During this second general membership meeting the proposed change is accepted if at least 2/3 of the members present or represented supports the change irrespective of the number of members present or represented.

Changes of the regulations are only valid after approval by the competent authority according to article 50 § 3 of the law and after publication in the Bijlagen of the Belgisch Staatsblad according to article 51 § 3 of the law in question.

If circumstances arise which require the dissolution of the association, then this will be decided on two consecutive membership meetings, one of which is the annual membership meeting.

A proposal to dissolve the association or a proposal to change the foundation (for example joining an association, which endorses the goals of EFFECT) will be sent by the executive board to the members at least one month prior to the meeting.

A decision of dissolution must be taken by a majority of at least 2/3.

The money left after dissolution will be donated to another International VZW with a similar aim as EFFECT.

Article 9. Board

9.1 Competences of the general board

The activities of EFFECT as described in article 3 will be carried out by working groups. The general board leads the working groups.

The competences, composition, meeting and convocation and decision making of the working groups will be defined in a by-law. The general board has competences on matters concerning the management of the working groups except those belonging to the general membership meeting or the executive board.

The by-law will be laid down in a future annual general membership meeting.

9.2 Composition of the general board

Each European country is represented by one to five members in the general board. Each representative is elected for a maximum term of three years and can be re-elected once immediately.

Each European country appoints its election committee, which organizes the election of one to five representatives of this country for the general board.

9.3 Competences of the executive board

The executive board deals with all matters concerning the association except those belonging to the general membership meeting. It serves the interests of the association, and decides on matters not included in the regulations. Decisions of principal or precedential nature will be put to the general membership meeting first.

9.4 Composition of the executive board

The association is governed by the executive board consisting of four members. The executive board, consisting of a president, chairman, secretary and treasurer, is chosen from the general board and elected by the general membership meeting. The executive board members will be elected for a maximum term of three years. An executive board member can be re-elected once immediately.

The executive board members must be familiar with the clinical application of ECT. It is an advantage if some executive board members have a PhD title.

The election committee consists of at least three persons and will be appointed during the annual general membership meeting. Decisions are taken by simple majority. When the votes are equally divided the president or his/her representative has casting vote.

The general membership meeting appoints the president and the chairman of the executive board; other executive board tasks will be distributed by the executive board itself.

All members of the executive board will be elected for a three year term. If the secretary or the treasurer resigns, the executive board will appoint a substitute.

The functioning of the executive board members will end due to death, dismissal, civil incompetence, removal or expiration of the term of mandate.

Member of the executive board can be removed by the general membership meeting with a 2/3 majority of the members present or represented.

9.5 Meetings of the executive board

The executive board convenes at least once yearly on the proposal of one of the executive board members.

9.6 Decision-making

The board members exercise their competences together. The executive board is authorized to take decisions if at least three members, including the president or the chairman, are present. Voting takes place verbally. Decisions are made with a simple majority of votes. When the votes are equally divided the president has casting vote or by a draw. A member of the executive board can be represented by another member.

9.7 Registration of decisions taken by the executive board

Notes of the executive board meetings are taken by the secretary and adopted by the chairman.

Article 10. Representation of the association

The president, chairman, treasurer and secretary are authorized to sign on behalf of the association. At least two members of the executive board should sign.

The executive board represents the association as plaintiff or defendant in lawsuits and will be represented by two members of the executive board or by an appointed representative. The association will be represented in the proceedings by two executive board members or a representative appointed by the executive board.

Article 11. Budget and annual report

The treasurer is responsible for the finances of the association and for the annual financial report. In accordance with article 53 of the law the annual financial report has to be finished in time so that it can be presented to the executive board at the latest two weeks prior to the annual general membership meeting. The accounts and the annual financial report of the association have to be verified annually by an accountant.

Article 12. General provisions

All matters not foreseen in the regulations and in particular the publications in the Bijlagen van het Belgische Staatsblad, will be handled in accordance with the provisions of title III of the law of 27 June 1921 regarding the non-profit associations, the international non-profit associations and the foundations.

The above regulations have been unanimously accepted during the general membership meeting in September 2006.

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