

GENERAL RULES OF PROCEDURES OF THE EUROPEAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION (EPA)

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I. General introduction

- (1) Members of EPA undertake to respect EPA values, including the diversity of people, points of view and members elected to represent the EPA. Likewise, members of the EPA elected to positions are expected to do their utmost to fairly represent and bring honour to the EPA.

II. Individual Membership approval procedure

- (2) The Board delegates its responsibility to approve applications for Individual Membership to the Secretary General and the staff of the Administrative Office.
- (3) Under the supervision of the Secretary General, the staff of the Administrative Office shall check eligibility of all received applications and approve those for which the eligibility is obvious. In case of any doubt, the concerned application shall be sent to the Board for approval or rejection, with a recommendation from the Secretary General.
- (4) The Administrative Office shall send a monthly report to the Board on newly accepted members (providing relevant information on their current positions, countries of practice, dates of birth, Early Career Psychiatrists status, if applicable, and nationalities, as well as their CVs in attachment).
- (5) During the EPA annual Congress, the applications shall be approved by the Secretary General once a day. The newly accepted member may pay his/her Individual Membership fee directly at the EPA booth. In order for the newly accepted member to exercise all the usual membership privileges including voting for the year N, the fee must be collected before the GAs of the year N.

III. Organisation of General Assemblies

- (6) The voting procedure at the General Assemblies for the Council of National Society/Association Members and the Council of Individual Members is described below:
- The EPA Board will decide on the method used to register and count the votes. Members will be informed of the details of this method in the notice letter convening the General Assemblies.
 - Each paid-up National Society/Association Member will have one official representative at the General Assemblies. The name of this representative should be notified to the EPA Administrative Office at least one week before the General Assemblies. This candidate will receive the ballots (valid for one to three votes), according to the voting power of his/her

National Society/Association Member. If there are more than one National Society/Association Member per country, they should agree on the appointment of one representative who will receive the ballots allocated to the country. They should inform the EPA Administrative Office of the representative's name at least one week before the General Assemblies.

- The votes of each Council shall be counted separately, in order to determine the percentage of votes for each candidate in each of the two Councils. Then the sum of these percentages for each candidate shall be divided by two to obtain an average percentage for each candidate. This average percentage shall constitute the "global vote" of the General Assembly.
 - The same procedure shall apply for all formal votes.
- (7) In case of Board elections, only the "global vote" per candidate shall be communicated to the Ordinary General Assembly. The candidates who receive the highest "global vote" will be elected.
- (8) For any other type of decision, the "global vote" shall be equal to or higher than the minimum vote required by the Statutes to be approved, i.e. more than 50% in case of simple majority vote.

IV. Election of Board members

- (9) Elections to the Board shall be held every two years such that a proportion of the Board members are elected on each occasion in accordance with their four-year mandates. The number of Board members to be elected at an Ordinary General Assembly will be decided by the Executive Committee. This will be notified to all EPA members, at least two months before the elections, by the Secretary General in his/her letter convening the meeting.
- (10) Candidates for the available positions will have to send (electronically) an application letter including:
- a statement that they are willing to devote no less than two weeks per year to work related to the EPA (such as participation in the activities of at least one Section, recruitment of new members for the Association and of participants for its Congress, contacts with national psychiatric societies in their area, and contributions to the journal of the Association)
 - a note concerning their intentions in relation to their membership at the Board
 - a statement concerning possible conflicts of interests
- If the candidate has received support from a National Society/Association Member, this may be stated in the application letter.
- (11) They will have to attach the following documents to the letter:
- a one-page curriculum vitae, including information on academic degrees, current position and main professional achievements (in teaching, research, clinical practice and organization of scientific events), as well as on their previous work in the EPA or in other international associations
 - a list of papers and books published in the last five years
- In case any support is stated in the application letter, an official support letter from the National Society/Association Member must be attached.
- (12) Any candidate may provide the support letter from one National Society/Association Member only. A National Society/Association Member can support an unlimited number of candidates.
- (13) The list of the candidates will be checked by the Secretary General for eligibility and confirmed by the Executive Committee before the General Assembly. Candidates may be elected to the Board for a maximum of four terms.

- (14) If a country has two members in the Board whose mandate is not expiring, no candidates from that country will be eligible. This will be specified by the Secretary General in his/her letter convening the General Assembly meeting and/or the announcement of the elections.
- (15) If a country already has one member in the Board, no more than one candidate from that country can be elected. If two or more candidates from that country are among those receiving the highest number of votes, only the one with the highest number of votes can be elected. The other candidates from that country cannot be elected, which leaves one or more seats available for the next candidates on the ranking list. Any member who is on the Board ex-officio is not included towards the total country count of other EPA representatives on the Board.
- (16) The country of a member is the country where the member is currently working. In case he/she is working in multiple countries, the country where he/she resides most of the time will be deemed to be the country of the member.
- (17) In order to ensure that candidates elected to Board membership have the confidence of the association, there shall be a threshold such that a minimum of 25% of the final General Assembly global vote is required for election to the Board.
- (18) If in the election two or more candidates receive the same number of votes, the one who has been a member of the Association for a longer period of time has the priority. In case the date of joining the EPA is not known for one of the candidates, the candidate who meets the below criteria should be elected:
 - a) Gender underrepresented within the Board
 - b) If both candidates are of the same gender, then the country that is underrepresented will be favoured.
 - c) If both candidates are from the same country or their countries are represented in the same proportion, then flipping a coin will decide the winner.
- (19) In case of resignation or death of a member of the Board, he/she may be replaced.
- (20) The Past-President shall maintain his/her membership to the Board for the term of his/her mandate as Past-President.

V. Election of Office Bearers (OB)

- (21) Office Bearers, including the President Elect, the Secretary General and the Treasurer will be elected by and within the new Board in its first meeting. The date of this meeting should be announced on the Association's website no less than one month in advance.
- (22) Candidatures to the above-mentioned positions must be submitted electronically to the Secretary General no less than two weeks before the date of the election.
- (23) The application letter should include:
 - a statement that the candidate is willing to devote no less than four weeks per year to work related to the EPA
 - a note concerning the intentions of the candidate in case he/she is elected
 - a statement concerning possible conflicts of interests
- (24) The following document will have to be attached:
a one-page curriculum vitae, including information on academic degrees, current position and main professional achievements (in teaching, research, clinical practice and organization of scientific events), as well as on previous activities within the EPA (membership of the Executive Committee and/or the Board, participation in the activities of the Sections, in the educational programme, contributions to the Congress and to the journal of the Association, etc.).
- (25) The Board will then proceed to the election of the above-mentioned positions as follows:
 - a. The voting will be by secret ballot, whether in-person or virtually.

- b. Where there is one candidate a simple majority of the participating Board members is required for election (i.e. 8 votes for the successful candidate would be required if 15 members are participating).
 - c. Where there are two candidates for one position, the candidate having received relative majority of votes not taking into account abstentions is elected.
 - d. Where there are three or more candidates for one position, then a second round of voting will take place with the top two candidates from the first round, if none of the candidates have received more than 50% of votes.
 - e. The number of abstentions must be less than 50 % of the members participating for an election vote to be valid.
 - f. If the final candidates for a position are equal first, or if there are 50% or more abstentions, there should be one further round.
 - g. If there is a single candidate and if there are 50% or more abstentions, then a new election should be organised, according to the above rules for OB elections, during the following meeting of the Board.
- (26) Where an ex-officio Board member is unable to participate, and his or her official body is not otherwise represented in the Board, they may be replaced for that meeting by a deputy authorised to participate and vote in their place.
- (27) No proxy voting is allowed - all voting, whether by paper or electronic, must be done by Board members participating normally in the Board meeting.
- (28) The mandate of the President shall start at the end of the EPA General Assembly, i.e. several weeks before the elections of new Office Bearers. The EC will include the two most recent Past-Presidents in the absence of the President Elect during this period only.
- (29) Where an Office Bearer elected by the Board ceases to be a member of the Board due to expiry of their Board mandate then they shall continue with their Office Bearer role in order to oversee existing activities until the Board elects a new Office Bearer to that position.
- (30) In case of resignation or death of an Executive Committee member (except the President and the Past-President), the Executive Committee can appoint an interim officer until the next meeting of the Board, when a new member will be elected for that position. The mandate of the new member will start immediately and last up to the end of the mandate of the Committee. Appointment as interim officer does not prevent the incumbent's candidature for election to the Committee.
- (31) If the President Elect resigns immediately before the Board meeting that he/she was expected to chair as the new President, that meeting will be chaired by the Past-President and the Board will elect the new President. The Board will be informed immediately of the resignation.

VI. Council of National Psychiatric Associations (NPAs)

Mission and Vision

- (32) The Mission of the Council of NPAs is to support the general mission of the EPA and promote the highest possible quality of professionals, training and services for psychiatric patient care throughout Europe.
- (33) The Vision for Psychiatry, as a Medical Specialty, is:
- Psychiatry is about preventing, assessing, treating and researching mental disorder.
 - Psychiatrists work collaboratively with patients, carers and others in the context of a multidisciplinary team
 - Training should be of high quality throughout Europe. Harmonizing quality throughout Europe will be an important step towards eventual European Board examinations.
 - Within Europe psychiatry should be practiced according to Practice Guidelines (to be developed and coordinated throughout Europe) and common Ethical Codes of Professional Behaviour.

- Promoting increased homogeneity in the national norms on psychiatric care in order to guarantee the same rights to patients across Europe.

Membership of the EPA Council of National Psychiatric Associations

- (34) The Council of National Associations will include all the National Psychiatric Associations functioning within Europe (according to WHO definition) that have fulfilled their financial obligations towards the EPA by contributing per member a fee as determined by the Ordinary General Assembly of the EPA according to their World Bank classification of regions.
- (35) Each NPA will be represented by the president (or if unable to participate, by an active and unique member of the current board of the national society). Member Associations should endeavour for purposes of continuity to keep the same representative for two years to coincide with the term of office of the Council Steering Committee. The name of the representative will preferably be communicated to the EPA Administrative Office well in advance and be posted on the EPA Website in order to establish the list of those entitled to vote.
- (36) Each NPA will have only one representative on the Council. The sole exception is where that NPA has an outgoing Steering Committee member at that meeting who is not re-applying. In this case, the incoming NPA representative may attend and will exercise the voting rights for their NPA.
- (37) Every two years the Council of NPAs elects a Vice-Chair and a Secretary for a term of two years. After two years the Vice-Chair shall automatically become the Chair. These three people elected form the Steering Committee of the Council.
- (38) An individual may be re-elected once as Secretary, but is limited to a single term of office as Vice-Chair then Chair. An individual may remain a member of the Steering committee for a maximum of six years.
- (39) To ensure continuity within the Council of National Associations, the candidates for the positions within the Steering Committee may be current presidents or past-presidents or representatives officially appointed by their associations, as long as they have previously served in the Council of NPAs. The reason is to ensure continuity within the Council where presidents may have only short mandates from their NPA. This implies that members of the Steering Committee are only entitled to vote if they are currently president or the authorised representative of their NPA board. If that is not the case, the NPA of their country will have voting right through its current president or his representative (an active and unique member of the current board of the national society).
- (40) The notice for election of the Steering Committee shall be sent two months before the date of the election. The deadline for receipt of applications shall be one month before the date of the election.
- (41) In order to determine the number of votes per country at the EPA General Assemblies, the number of members of the paid-up EPA member associations from that country shall be added together to determine the total individuals represented from that country. Each country has one vote for up to the first 1000 members represented, two votes if up to 2000 members, and three votes if more than 2000 members are represented. Outside the General Assemblies, the Council voting procedure for elections and any other decision should be one vote per country.
- (42) If a country is represented by more than one society/association, the different representatives will have to agree to appoint only one person who will vote with the complete number of ballots granted to the country.
- (43) In order to ensure an optimal situation in which all involved in psychiatry throughout Europe are represented and can be heard at the meetings, non-voting representatives of other organisations will be invited according to the agenda points.

- (44) The members of the Executive Committee will be welcome to join the meetings of the Council of NPAs and will be invited to the Council meeting at the EPA European Congress.
- (45) The Presidents of the two leading European organisations representing respectively patients and families/carers will be welcome to join the meetings of the Council of NPAs and will be invited to the Council meeting at the EPA European Congress of Psychiatry.
- (46) The Council will meet at least once a year, during the Congress of the EPA in April or March. Additional Council meetings may also be organised during the year, and hosted by any interested NPA, as long as the hosting NPA can offer some hospitality equally to all Council member societies. A call for proposals from NPAs wishing to host a Council meeting or event will be sent out annually.
- (47) All Council elections and official decisions will be made by the Council at the EPA Congress meeting.
- (48) Invitations and agendas shall be sent by the EPA Administrative Office and the minutes should be taken by the EPA Administrative Office and approved by the Council Chair and the EPA President to be official. The EPA President shall be invited to co-chair the Council meetings.
- (49) The quorum of the Council meeting shall be 50% of the paid-up National Society/Association Members. If the quorum is not reached, the meeting may take place but no official decision can be made.
- (50) In order to be able to vote at the General Assemblies and the Council meetings in a particular year, the annual membership fees of the National Society/Association Members for the current year must be received by the EPA before the General Assemblies of the EPA in that same year's Congress (e.g. fees for 2025 received before the 2025 EPA European Congress of Psychiatry)
- (51) The Council of NPAs will give advice to the EPA Board to work on common goals. All the activities of the Council of NPAs shall be part of the official programme of activities of the EPA. The Council of NPAs should be kept informed on the ongoing activities of the EPA Operational Committees, when relevant, and vice versa, to promote mutual cooperation.

Working Schedule

- (52) As stated (cf.46), the Council of NPAs will meet at least once a year, either in-person or virtually.
- (53) The Steering Committee of the Council will (virtually) meet as required and will keep the members of the Council informed on on-going business within EPA. There will normally be three such meetings or phone calls a year.
- (54) A complete annual programme of Council activities with a potential budget request should be submitted by the Council Chair to the Board for approval at the first Board meeting of the year.
- (55) The Steering Committee of the Council will prepare the agenda for the scheduled meetings in accordance with the EPA President and the presidents of the hosting associations/societies.

VII. Committees

- (56) The Board decides, upon proposal of the President, on creation and dissolution of Committees of the EPA and determines their roles, duration and operating procedures. The Board approves the compositions of the Committees, upon proposal of the respective Committee Chairs. In exceptional circumstances, the Board may revoke the mandate of a member of a Committee by three/fourths majority vote.
- (57) With the exception of the Local Organising Committee:

- a. Only paid-up Individual Members and official representatives of the National Society/Association members may compose the Committees.
- b. There shall be no more than two members from any one country per Committee.

- (58) No member of a Committee may undertake an action on behalf of the Committee (sending of letters, representation at any event, etc.) without prior approval of the respective Committee or its Chair. Only the letters and communications signed or co-signed by the Chair of a Committee shall be considered as official, and only these letters may be put on official EPA letterhead.
- (59) The Committees are divided into two groups: congress-related Committees (e.g. Scientific Programme Committee, Advisory Scientific Programme Committee, if any, and Local Organising Committee) and Operational Committees.

Scientific Programme Committee (SPC)

- (60) The main mission of the SPC is to prepare the scientific programme of the European Congress of Psychiatry (later called "Congress").
- (61) The SPC is composed of 12 members, 50% of which are Board members and the other 50% are external persons, and one ex officio member, the LOC Chair. The SPC composition shall be as follows:
- 6 members from the Board
 - President and President Elect
 - 4 Board members, rotating
 - 6 members non-EPA Board members
 - 6 European invitees
 - 1 LOC Chair ex officio

The online review for the accepted programme of the Congress is done jointly by the SPC and the Advisory Scientific Programme Committee (ASPC), if any. The SPC is chaired by the President. It may be chaired by the President Elect the year preceding his/her presidency. In this case, the SPC is co-chaired by the President.

- (62) The Board may create an ASPC to provide input on the Congress scientific programme with members proposed by the President or the President elect. The ASPC will include all Board members who are not in the SPC. The mandate would be for the organisation of a particular Congress but may be renewed by the Board. The number of ASPC members is limited to 20. The members of the ASPC will not be invited to the SPC meetings but will be consulted by e-mail and participate in the online review of proposals.
- (63) The SPC shall meet at least two times per year, either in-person or virtually. The SPC Chair prepares the agenda of the SPC meetings.
- (64) The President or the President Elect shall report to the Board on the SPC activities.

Local Organising Committees (LOC)

- (65) The main mission of the LOC is to provide advice and guidance to the SPC and the Executive Committee on the scientific programme of the Congress.
- (66) The LOC Chair is appointed by the President or the President Elect for a period of one year. In his/her turn, the LOC Chair appoints the LOC members among the experts in Psychiatry from the country where the concerned Congress takes place, for a period of one year. The list of LOC members is to be proposed by the LOC Chair and approved by the EC.
- (67) The LOC should be encouraged to use online and other forms of electronic meeting as far as possible.
- (68) The LOC Chair shall report to the SPC on the LOC activities.

Operational Committees

- (69) Operational Committees are renewed every two years by the EPA Board. The Committee members are appointed for a period of two years and may have their mandates renewed for another two consecutive terms (6 years in total). This applies to all Operational Committees.
- (70) The size of each Committee is limited to 10 members, including the Chair. The size of the ECPC is limited to 5 members including the Chair.
- (71) The Committees are chaired by Office Bearers (if an Office Bearer position in this field of activity already exists) or by a Board member appointed by the Board for a period of two years, upon proposal by the President. The mandates of the Committees' Chairs start immediately after election/appointment. The Chairs may be re-elected/re-appointed, subject to the membership to the Board.
- (72) Where a Committee Chair appointed by the Board ceases to be a member of the Board due to expiry of their Board mandate then they shall continue with their Committee Chair role in order to oversee existing activities until the Board appoints a new Committee Chair.
- (73) The Early Career Psychiatrists Committee (ECPC), may be chaired by an EPA Individual Member who is not necessarily a Board member. The future ECPC Chair is proposed by the outgoing ECPC, in consultation with the President. The Chair of the ECPC may not be re-appointed.
- (74) At least 50% of the Operational Committee members should be present at the meeting for the decisions to be valid. The decisions shall be made by a simple majority of votes.
- (75) Each specific Operational Committee shall submit a proposal of its annual programme of activities (including an estimation of required budget) to the Board for approval on an annual basis. The Operational Committees' Chairs shall report on the activities of their respective Committees to the Board. The minutes of the Operational Committees' meetings shall be sent to the Board for information.
- (76) In addition to the common rules (69-75) each Committee may have its own specific functioning rules, if needed, specified in its internal documents. These rules should not come into conflict with the EPA Statutes and/or the present Rules of Procedures.
- (77) Any specific Operational Committee may be terminated by the Board for any of the following reasons, e.g.:
 - a) Completion of the Committee's mission
 - b) Insufficient EPA interest in the Committee's field of activity as decided by the Board
 - c) Failure of the Committee to fulfil its objectives
 - d) Financial difficulties to maintain the Committee's functioning and activities

Task Forces and Working Groups

- (78) The President may decide, upon proposal to the Board, to create Task Forces and Working Groups to work on specific missions.
- (79) The composition of the Task Forces and Working Groups, the nature of their functions and the scope of their powers are decided by the Board. Only Individual Members and official representatives of the National Society/Association members may compose the Task Forces and Working Groups. If an appointed member of a Task Force or Working Group is not yet a paid-up Individual Member, he/she should be encouraged to do so.
- (80) The Task Forces and Working Groups are created on a temporary basis and are dissolved upon decision of the Board or once their mission is accomplished.

VIII. Sections

Role and activities of Sections within EPA

- (81) The role of Sections is as defined in the EPA Statutes and this purpose is carried out through the organisation of the activities described below.

- (82) The Section activities shall consist of, but not be limited to:
- Organisation of international scientific meetings and sessions at congresses, including at EPA (seminars, workshops and symposia)
 - Enhance visibility of the EPA Sections and their activities through the collection and dissemination of information
 - Contribution to the *European Psychiatry Journal*, EPA Website, social media, Newsletters
 - Presentation of information and activities pertinent to its mission within the EPA's organisational bodies and meetings
 - Networking and collaboration
 - Collaboration with other EPA Sections and EPA Committees
 - Collaboration with NPAs, particularly their Sections
 - Developing links across Europe and participating in international, national and local meetings on the specific psychiatric field
 - Cooperate with other organisations with similar concerns such as WPA and UEMS
 - Expert opinion / statements
 - Provide an official Section reply to any requests that are addressed to EPA within 2 months
 - Prepare guidance papers / position statements with NPAs and other bodies, under the coordination of the EPA Publication Committee Chair
 - Recruitment of new members
 - Actively work on the membership of the Sections to recruit well-known experts representing all population of Europe (WHO area) in terms of gender, ethnicity and geographical areas
 - Convert non-EPA Section members to paid-up EPA individual members
 - Annual Section business meeting
 - At least one meeting should be held per year, either in-person or virtually.
 - The meetings should be announced in advance and are open to paid-up Section members and to other persons interested in the Section (as observers).
 - Other activities
 - Support of young clinicians and researchers (e.g. promote careers of young psychiatrists and use experience of senior experts)
 - EPA CME courses
 - Collaborative research
 - Improve the organisational system of mental health services
 - Help the national organisations to be present in all activities in the field for better mental health
 - Contribute to the preparation of a training curriculum consisting of different modules

Organisation of Section symposia, workshops and CME Courses at the EPA Congress

- (83) The Sections are required to submit one official symposium, workshop or CME Course proposal to the EPA Congress. The SPC may reject it if it is not of sufficient quality.

Criteria and procedures for establishment of new Sections

- (84) Any paid-up EPA Member may propose creation of a new Section. Proposals must be sent to the EPA President 2 months in advance of the EPA Board meeting. Each proposal must include the Section title, its objectives, a list of the activities to be conducted in the two years following establishment, the list of members and the composition of the Section's Committee.
- (85) The proposal must be pre-approved by the EPA Board upon the following criteria:
- Section has at least 10 paid-up EPA Individual Members, Fellows, Associate, Student or Honorary Members
 - Majority of Section's members are eligible to become EPA Members
 - The proposed Section Committee includes experts in the field
 - Proposed field is relevant to the EPA and is not already covered by an existing Section and could not be covered by an extension

- (86) After pre-approval by the EPA Board, the Section may start to function on an ad-hoc basis. The establishment of the Section has then to be approved by the General Assembly.

Section Committee & Elections

- (87) Each Section shall elect a Section Committee. Mandatory positions are: chairperson, co-chairperson and a secretary. The Section may elect up to 3 additional Section Committee members as Councillors.
- (88) Any paid-up EPA Individual, Fellow or Honorary member who is a member of the Section is eligible to be elected to the Section Committee. Section Committee members are required to be experts in the field and be working in Europe. The mandates of the Section Committee members start immediately after the election. The Section Committee members shall be paid-up EPA members during their terms of office.
- (89) The Section Chair shall be elected for no more than 3 mandates of 2 years each (total of 6 years). Section committee members shall be elected for no more than 3 consecutive mandates in the same position (total of 6 years). Section Committee members can change positions.
- (90) In the case of a Section chair's resignation, the outgoing chair should assure the administration of the Section's activities until the election of a new chair. During this time, the outgoing chair should either remain the 'acting' chair of the Section until the next elections, or designate the co-chair as temporary chair for the Section. Upon resignation of the chair, the Section Committee members should assure the organisation of elections in the near future according to the established rules.
- (91) Elections for all positions take place every two years by a secret ballot. Any member can ask for an open election. Elections must be announced by the Section 2 months in advance of the election date. This can be done with the EPA Administrative Office's support. Names of candidates for the Section Committee should be put forth one month before the election.
- (92) Elections can take place either in-person or virtually. Paid-up EPA Members who are members of the Section shall have voting rights. The quorum shall be 10% of Section members with a minimum of at least five paid-up EPA Members. If the quorum is not met, a second vote should be organised and should be coordinated entirely by the Section. The candidates who received the highest percentage of votes are elected. No proxy votes are allowed.
- (93) If the election procedure is not respected, any member of the section can inform the Secretary for Sections. The Secretary for Sections and the EPA Administrative Office must be kept informed about the composition of the Section Committee within 1 month after the elections.

Membership

- (94) The Section members shall be paid-up EPA members. Sections can recruit new members who are not members of the EPA, but those eligible to become EPA Members, must apply for EPA membership within one year after recruitment. Those not eligible to become EPA Members may become Section Associate Members.
- (95) The Committee of each Section must keep a complete list of the Section members, which must be placed at the disposal of the Sections Secretary and the EPA Administrative Office.

Finances

- (96) Each Section is self-administrating. The EPA will not be responsible for any expenses the Sections may issue.
- (97) Sections act under the name of the EPA and thus shall maintain and provide, in their annual reports, accounts of their annual income and expenditure, as well as their sources of funding.

Quality control

- (98) Every year the Section chairperson should provide the Secretary for Sections with a detailed report in the prescribed format required by the EPA including: the composition of the Section Committee, the list of members, the activities of the Section for the past year, the work programme of activities for future years and a brief statement about the Section and its activities to be placed on the EPA website.
- (99) The annual reports should be submitted two months in advance of the annual EPA Congress. These reports will be submitted by the Secretary for Sections with his/her comments to the Board.

Renewal & termination

- (100) Sections are renewed based upon satisfactory evidence that the Section is active including the following criteria:
- At least one Section business meeting per year
 - At least one Session (symposium, workshop, CME) proposal to EPA's Annual Congress
 - Board approval of a satisfactory annual report of activities (submitted by deadline)
 - Elections carried out as required
- (101) The Board will consider recommending the termination of a Section to the Ordinary General Assembly:
- if a Section does not comply with the above rules in any given year
 - or where serious concerns regarding the Section are reported to the Board
- (102) A Section may close itself following the procedure as described below:
- The voluntary discontinuation of the Section shall be decided if voted by at least 10 paid-up Section members, which shall also comprise a simple majority of the Section Committee members.
 - The voting by the Section members can be organised at a physical meeting or electronically.
 - The Chairperson of the Section shall inform the EPA Secretary for Sections and the EPA President of such decision and shall provide a report on how the voting was organised.
 - The EPA Board will evaluate whether all necessary conditions for a lawful decision were respected, and if deemed so, will propose discontinuation of the Section to the Ordinary General Assembly.
 - In case the Board is not satisfied with the decision-making process in the Section, it may request the Section Committee to organise a second vote.

Name change

- (103) If a Section wishes to change its name/title then it should follow the below procedure. A Sections' name change request should include an official letter signed by the chair of the Section including the following:
- Explaining the reasons for the name change
 - Indicating that there is no intention of changing the aim nor the objectives of the Section
 - Confirming that the approval of the majority of Section members was obtained
- The request will be submitted to the Secretary for Sections, who will then present the request to the EC and Board for approval.

VIII. EPA accounts

- (104) The EPA Treasurer supervises the bookkeeping and annual accounts of the Association in accordance with the current laws and tax regulations of the country where the Association has its seat.
- (105) The Treasurer shall submit the annual accounts of the closed fiscal year to the EC and the Board and the Internal Auditors at least 2 weeks before the EPA Ordinary General Assembly. The Internal Auditors shall examine the annual accounts and shall report to the Board in writing regarding their integrity within 1 week after receiving the report. If the EC and the Board accept the report from the Internal Auditors, its results shall be announced by the Treasurer during the Ordinary General Assembly.

- (106) If any anomalies are reported by the Internal Auditors, the Board should take measures. Should the Internal Auditors not be satisfied with the measures taken by the Board, the Internal Auditors should then report on their findings directly to the Ordinary General Assembly.
- (107) If there is a contradiction between the report of the Treasurer and of the Internal Auditors at the Ordinary General Assembly, the matter at issue shall be submitted to an external auditor for examination.
- (108) Internal Auditors are not entitled to any benefits on behalf of the EPA, in order to ensure their impartiality. However, the Internal Auditors can ask for and be reimbursed for their revision of accounts at the EPA Administrative Office in Strasbourg and attendance of the Ordinary General Assembly, if their presence is required.

IX. European Psychiatry and the Editors

- (109) *European Psychiatry* shall publish, if submitted, a minimum of five official EPA full-length papers annually, such as Guidance papers, subject to Editorial approval.
- (110) In addition, *European Psychiatry* will publish EPA Editorials and other short papers of a pre-defined format, relevant to EPA statutory goals and policies.
- (111) In the event of an Editorial vacancy the Board shall advertise and invite potential applicants who meet the Statutory criteria.
 - a. Candidatures shall be submitted to the Secretary General at least one month before the Board vote including a curriculum vitae, a statement regarding potential competing interests, a list of publications, and a motivating letter of up to 1000 words setting out their proposed plans if appointed as Editor.
 - b. All applications received will be checked by the Secretary General for eligibility in collaboration with the Administrative Office.
 - c. The Executive Committee will then be informed of all applications, and the reasons (if any) for ineligibility of any application.
 - d. The applications will also be reviewed by the current Editors.
 - e. All eligible applications and Editors' comments will be discussed by the Executive Committee with a recommendation to the Board.
 - f. The Board will discuss the applications and decide on the preferred candidate to appoint. This should be done by secret ballot. Any Board member who is a candidate for the Editor position would not attend the voting procedure.
- (112) The appointment, role, terms and conditions of Editors' work shall be decided by the Board, subject to the EPA Statutes, and formalised in a contract between the EPA and each Editor. The contract will be signed by the EPA President, or if required by the Executive Committee, it should be signed by the Secretary General or Treasurer.

X. Rules of reimbursement

- (113) Board members and Operational Committee members are invited to their respective meetings, and their expenses are covered by the EPA according to the Rules of Reimbursement, approved by the EPA Board.
- (114) The reimbursement rules of the Congress are approved by the EPA Executive Committee on an annual basis.

XI. Disclosure of interests

- (115) All official EPA Board, Council and Committee meetings should have an agenda item "Declaration of Interests" considered for the declaration of potential competing interests.