



## EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF NURSES ASSOCIATIONS (EFN) CONSTITUTION

### PREAMBLE

**Whereas in 1971**, the Standing Committee of Nurses in association with the EEC was established in Bern in accordance with the Constitution approved on the date of establishment;

**Whereas in 1975**, during a meeting which took place in Brussels, the Standing Committee of Nurses in association with the EEC adopted a new version of the Constitution;

**Whereas in 1981**, during a meeting which took place in Athens, the Standing Committee of Nurses in association with the EEC approved an amendment of the Constitution and a change in the name of the Committee; the Committee continued to exist under the name Standing Committee of Nurses of the EU;

**Whereas in 1997**, during a meeting which took place in Delphi, the Standing Committee of Nurses of the EU approved a change in the name of the Committee and a new version of its Constitution, in order to better define the role and the function of the Committee and to better promote its objects;

**Whereas in 2002**, during a meeting which took place in Stockholm, the Standing Committee of Nurses of the EU decided that, in order to be in conformity with the Belgian law, governing the Committee, a revised and corrected Constitution was adopted and published in the Belgian Government Gazette;

**Whereas in 2004**, during a meeting which took place in Amsterdam, the Standing Committee of Nurses of the EU decided that, in order to be in conformity with the new Belgian laws on non-profit organisations and with the process of expansion of the EU, the former Standing Committee of Nurses of the EU would continue to exist under the name 'European Federation of Nurses Associations', with the acronym 'EFN', under the conditions of the Constitution and of the Internal Regulation. A revised and corrected Constitution was adopted and published in the Belgian Government Gazette;

**Whereas in 2011**, during a meeting which took place in Warsaw, the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) decided to amend its Constitution, in order to face future challenges and to be more inclusive and effective at EU political level. A revised and corrected Constitution was adopted and published in the Belgian Government Gazette;

**Whereas in 2023**, during a meeting that took place in Croatia, the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) decided to amend its constitution in order to comply with the new Belgian Companies and Associations Code of 23 March 2019.

**Whereas in 2026**, during a meeting that took place Online, the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) decided to amend its constitution in order to comply with new governance developments.

**IT IS DECIDED that** the basis of the Constitution of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) is the desire of each National Nurses' Association/Organisation (NNA) and/or section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations to contribute to the influence of nurses in the EU & Europe and to recognise that our conditions for achieving results are reflected in our willingness to cooperate. The Constitution is an expression of mutual respect and sensitivity for each other's ideas and the ambition to defend everyone's desire for engagement and influence. The Constitution was adopted by sovereign National Nurses Associations/Organisations (NNAs) and/or section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations which, through targeted work, effectively will achieve results beneficial to all their members.

**Article 1 NAME**

European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN)

All other translations of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) in the official languages of the members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) are indicated in the Internal Regulation.

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) is governed by the Belgian law on international non-profit organisations (compagnies and associations code 23/03/2019).

**Article 2 LANGUAGE**

The working language of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) is English.

**Article 3 MISSION**

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) shall act to strengthen the status and practice of the profession of nursing for the benefit of the health of the citizens and the interests of nurses in the EU & Europe.

**Article 4 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) are the following:

- a. **Objective 1** - To ensure that patient safety, nurses and nursing are central to the development of Social and Health Policy and its implementation in the EU and Europe.
- b. **Objective 2** - To support and facilitate a qualitative and equitable health service in the EU and Europe by a strategic contribution to the development of a sufficient, effective, competent and motivated workforce of nurses.
- c. **Objective 3** - Strengthening the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) representation in the EU and Europe and develop its key role as a bridge between the National Nurses' Association/Organisation (NNA) and/or section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations and the decision-makers in the EU institutions.

**Article 5 HEADQUARTERS and OFFICIAL EMAIL ADDRESS & WEBSITE**

The head office of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) is established on the territory of a municipality of the Brussels Region. It is currently located at Clos du Parnasse 11A, 1050 Brussels. The head office can be transferred to any other place in the Brussels region by simple decision of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) published within one month after the decision was taken in the Annexes of the Belgian Government Gazette.

The official email address is [efn@efn.eu](mailto:efn@efn.eu). The address of the EFN website is [www.efn.eu](http://www.efn.eu)

**Article 6 MEMBERSHIP**

**A. Legal members**

1. The minimum number of members is 2. No maximum has been set.
2. Membership is granted following formal application to and in agreement by the General Assembly, to National Nurses Associations/Organisations (NNAs) and/or a section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations from countries in membership of the European Union and/or of the Council of Europe and in compliance with the following criteria:
  - a. The nurses in membership of the National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations are individuals who have completed a nursing education programme and are qualified and authorised in their country to practise as a nurse (*Ref. ICN Definition*);

- b. The National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations is a nationally based organisation, independent of government, and open to membership for all nurses in the country;
- c. The National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations has its own separate regulations that are not in conflict with the mission and objectives of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN);
- d. The National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations is controlled by nurses, gaining its authority from its members, and speaks on nursing matters;
- e. The National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations is an entity established in accordance with the laws of its country;
- f. The National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations has existed for a minimum of 3 years.

## **B. Observers**

1. Observer status is granted to international associations/organisations, European institutions and associations/organisations that are deemed suitable, as determined by the General Assembly.
2. Reference is also made to definitions provided in the Internal Regulation.
3. EFN has 2 Types of Observers: 'Non-EU Accessing Countries' & 'International Organisations'

Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, the General Assembly may, in exceptional circumstances and by reasoned decision, grant observer status to an organisation that does not fall within one of these two observers' categories. Any such decision shall be taken on a case-by-case basis.

## **Article 7 REPRESENTATION OF THE MEMBERS**

### **1. Member's Delegates and Substitutes**

Each member of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) appoints a delegate and a substitute delegate. These persons must be nurses and members of the National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations they represent.

The delegate has the right to vote on behalf of the National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation he/she represents. The substitute delegate has the right to attend meetings of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN). Should the appointed delegate be absent, its substitute will be vested with the same rights as the appointed delegate.

### **2. Observer representatives**

Each observer appoints one representative.

## **Article 8 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS**

### **I. RIGHTS**

#### **1. Legal Members**

The members are entitled to attend the meetings of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN). They have the right to deliberate and to vote on all issues.

Voting system:

- 1) National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation with less than 10.000 members will have 1 vote.
- 2) National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation with between 10.000 and 50.000 members will have 2 votes.

- 3) National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation with between 50.001 and 100.000 members will have 3 votes.
- 4) National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation with 100.001 or more members will have 4 votes.

## **2. Observers**

The observers are authorised to attend the General Assemblies of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN). They have the right to participate in the deliberations upon invitation of the EFN Executive Committee. They have no right to vote or to move proposals for decisions by the General Assembly.

## **II. OBLIGATIONS**

The members and observers pay annual fees, as determined by the General Assembly.

### **Article 9 GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The General Assembly is the governing body of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN).

#### **1. Composition**

The General Assembly consists of the members and observers, represented as described in article 7, with voting rights as described in article 8.

#### **2. Meetings**

The General Assembly will be convened upon decision by the Executive Committee at least twice a year for its ordinary meetings.

An extraordinary General Assembly shall be convened upon decision by the Executive Committee.

An extraordinary General Assembly shall also be convened upon the request of at least 30% of the members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN). The requests must be in writing, must indicate the reasons and must be sent to the Executive Committee.

#### **3. Quorum-majority**

The presence of minimum 50% of all members is required to make decisions.

If both the delegate and the substitute delegate of a member National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation cannot attend the General Assembly, it can be represented by another member National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation, by proxy. The system of proxy is regulated in the Internal Regulation.

Decisions are taken by a simple majority of the delegates or substitute delegates being present and voting, unless the constitution provides otherwise.

In case of a tie, the President has a casting vote.

#### **4. Powers**

Unless otherwise specified in the Constitution, all powers are with the General Assembly, including approving the accounts and the budget.

The General Assembly is also authorised to draw up internal regulations.

5. **The minutes** from the meetings are sent by e-mail to all the members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) entitled to attend the meetings no later than six weeks after the meeting. The minutes are part of the internal non-profit organisation file.

## **Article 10 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

1. The Executive Committee consist of the President, the Vice-President, the Treasurer, and four members elected by the members.
2. The Executive Committee meets once between each General Assembly. The Executive Committee is also allowed to meet remotely. Extraordinary meetings shall be convened upon decision by the President or any two other members of the Executive Committee. Minutes of the meetings will be sent to the members before the General Assembly following the meeting of the Executive Committee. The minutes are part of the internal non-profit organisation file.
3. The presence of four members of the Executive Committee is required to make decisions.
4. The decisions are taken by simple majority of the votes of Executive Committee members being present. In case of a tie, the President has a casting vote.
5. The powers of the Executive Committee are the following:
  - preparation of issues to be discussed in the General Assembly;
  - follow-up of decisions taken by the General Assembly;
  - representing the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) in meetings with the European Commission and other organisations;
  - representing the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) in legal proceedings;
  - preparation of the balance sheet of the previous year and the following year for approval by the General Assembly;
  - appointing the General Secretary and other staff, and define the job description for those positions.
6. Any nurse in membership with an EFN member National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation can run for election of the Executive Committee when put forward by the National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or the section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation.

## **Article 11 THE PRESIDENT**

The President is elected by the members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN).

His/her term of office is two years and can be renewed for two consecutive terms. Therefore, the total term of office of the President cannot exceed six years.

Elections will be held during the last meeting of years with odd numbers. The President chairs meetings of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) and ensures its representation within the framework of the Constitution, the Internal Regulation and any other regulations.

The President is authorised to sign documents and contracts on behalf of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN). The President represents the EFN legally and vis-à-vis third parties.

## **Article 12 THE VICE-PRESIDENT**

The Vice-President is elected by the members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN).

His/her term of office is two years and can be renewed for two consecutive terms. Therefore, the total term of office of the Vice-President cannot exceed six years.

Elections will be held during the last meeting of years with even numbers.

The Vice-President acts on behalf of the President during his/her absence, on account of illness or any other reason.

### **Article 13 THE TREASURER**

The Treasurer is elected by the members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN).

His/her is two years and can be renewed for two consecutive terms. Therefore, the total term of office of the Treasurer cannot exceed six years.

Elections will be held during the last meeting of years with odd numbers.

### **Article 14 MEMBERS ELECTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Four members are elected by the members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN).

Their term of office is two years and can be renewed for two consecutive terms. Therefore, the total term of office of the members cannot exceed six years.

Two members to the Executive Committee will be elected during the years with odd numbers and the two others will be elected during the years with even numbers.

### **Article 15 VACANCIES**

In the event that any member of the Executive Committee is unable to complete her/his term of office, another member will be elected by the members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN). This member will complete the term of office of his/her predecessor.

This term of office can be renewed under the conditions applicable to the specific position. The completion of a term of office by a member, who is elected to fill a vacancy, will not be taken into consideration as far as total term of office is concerned.

### **Article 16 ELECTIONS**

The conditions for election of the Executive Committee are detailed in the Internal Regulation.

### **Article 17 FUNDING**

The funding of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) shall be provided by payment of annual fees by the members, as well as by any other funding sources, such as subsidies and donations.

All funds are to be used exclusively to promote the objectives of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN).

The General Assembly will determine the amount of fees to be paid by the members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN).

### **Article 18 EXCLUSION AND WITHDRAWAL FROM MEMBERSHIP**

#### **1. Exclusion**

Membership will be automatically discontinued in the event that a member of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) does not fulfil anymore the criteria for membership. The President will notify the member of its exclusion in writing.

The non-payment of annual fees or non-compliance with the Constitution may lead to the exclusion of a member, as detailed in the Internal Regulation.

The National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation that faces possible exclusion will have the possibility to submit its defence in writing or during the ordinary or extraordinary meeting where the issue will be discussed.

During the deliberations, the General Assembly will take into consideration the justification put forward by the member National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation. If the General Assembly does not accept the justification, the member

National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation concerned immediately loses its membership. The President notifies the member National Nurses Association/Organisation (NNA) or section of National Healthcare Workers Association/Organisation of its exclusion in writing.

A decision on exclusion has to be made by two third majority of the votes cast. A quorum of two third is required.

## **2. Withdrawal**

Each member can notify its withdrawal from the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN), by means of a letter sent to the President. The withdrawal takes effect by the end of the year, provided that the notification was sent no later than 30 June the same year.

### **Article 19 AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION**

A proposal to amend the Constitution of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) may be made by the Executive Committee or at the formal request of five members.

All requests for amendments of the Constitution must be received by the Executive Committee no later than three months before the date of the ordinary meeting during which the requests will be discussed. The Executive Committee notifies the members of the request no later than two months prior to the date of the meeting.

Decisions relating to the Constitution of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) require a two third majority of votes cast. If the amendment relates to the object or disinterested purpose of the association, a majority of four fifths is required. The presence of two thirds of all members is required to constitute a quorum.

### **Article 20 INTERPRETATION**

Any disputes relating to the interpretation of the Constitution or the Internal Regulation will be settled by the members by a simple majority of votes, providing a minimum of 50% of all the members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) are present.

All decisions regarding interpretations shall be attached as an appendix to the internal regulations.

### **Article 21 DISSOLUTION**

At least ten members can propose the dissolution of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN). The proposal must be put forward in writing to the Executive Committee. The proposal as well as an explanatory note will be sent to all members of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) no later than three months prior to the date of the meeting during which the proposal will be discussed. Each member will at the same time receive a voting paper.

The voting paper must be signed by the delegate and the President of the member association/organisation and must be received by the Executive Committee at the latest four weeks after the General Assembly where the discussion on the dissolution took place. The decision to dissolve the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) must be taken by at least four fifths of votes cast.

In case of dissolution of the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN), the General Assembly decides on the use of the available capital.