

**EUHPF
EU
HEALTH POLICY
FORUM**

**EUHPF GUIDING PRINCIPLES WITH
REGARD TO TRANSPARENCY**

Brussels
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Introduction

This paper aims to define a set of minimum criteria for transparency that will be applied by current and future members of the EU Health Policy Forum, without discriminating against the nature of the stakeholder. It provides a basis to revise the membership of the EU Health Policy Forum.

Enhanced transparency of the EU Health Policy Forum has to be envisaged within the framework of the wider debate on the European Union governance, including EU institutions' consultation practices in order to develop a more open and accountable Union.

Consultation procedure on the guiding principles with regard to transparency

The guiding principles with regard to transparency were discussed during a EU Health Policy Forum workshop on Transparency on the 05 April 2006.

All workshop participants brainstormed on a set of transparency criteria, taking as the starting point a background document put together by the coordinator of the transparency workshop (EPHA).

The coordinator of the workshop incorporated suggestions made during the workshop and a revised version of the document together with the minutes of the workshop was circulated to ALL EU Health Policy Forum members for more input, with a deadline for comments on the 26 October 2006.

A revised version of the document taking into account comments sent by EUHPF members was circulated on the 13 November 2006 with an initial deadline for final comments on 31 December 2006.

This was extended until the 15 February 2007 to ensure a genuine consultation procedure.

Suggestions for improvements and comments were incorporated into the final document, submitted for approval to the EU Health Policy Forum scheduled on the 01 June 2007.

Definitions

The below mentioned term 'organisation' refers to current member organisations of the EU Health Policy Forum as well as applicant organisations.

'Membership' is defined as "the state of belonging to an organisation".

'Members' refers to organisations or individuals who belong to the organisation.

'Secretariat' refers to the office or people responsible for the management of an organisation.

'Governance' is defined as follows: the group of people who are responsible for controlling and organising a company or organization.

Data Protection

Exchange of information and disclosure of information shall comply with the provisions of the Directive 95/46/EC on the protections of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data. The below-mentioned criteria have to comply with the provisions of the Directive 95/46/EC.

Conflict of Interest

The organisation shall democratically endorse its own rules applying to partnerships, sponsorships and scientific expertise. The rules shall also detail how conflicts of interest are handled. A statement setting out the rules shall be available for whoever asks for it. It shall comply with the objectives and mission of the organisation and shall comprise transparency criteria.

Objectives/Mission

The organisation should have its mission/objectives clearly defined and should make it/them publicly available. Its mission/objectives shall have been democratically endorsed by the body representing the membership of the organisation (e.g. General Assembly).

Legal personality

The organisation shall have a legal personality registered or existing as an “association de fait” in one of the Member States of the European Union (EU).

This provision needs to take into account the statutory diversity of organisations, in particular those of umbrella networks. If it is an international organisation not registered in a EU Member State, additional information needs to be provided demonstrating an EU focus.

The documents establishing the legal personality shall precise the objectives, criteria for membership, and organisational structure. They shall be made publicly available.

Membership

The full list of members should be accurate, publicly available and updated regularly.

Governance

The organisation shall have a board or similar body which is representative of membership. The role of this body shall be clearly defined and endorsed by the General

Assembly. Names and activities of its members shall be made public. Their relationship with public or private stakeholders must also be clearly stated.

In the case of “association de fait”, equivalent democratic structures and processes must be demonstrated.

Accountability and consultation modalities

Statements and opinions of the organisation should reflect the views and opinions of its members. Democratic, clear, regular and transparent consultation procedures with members should be in place and defined by internal rules endorsed democratically by the General Assembly or the members themselves.

These consultation procedures shall ensure that an effective dialogue takes place between the membership, executive governing bodies and secretariat. They shall ensure that the membership supports the views brought forward by the organisation.

Financial Information

Information about finances, sources, and accounts shall be made public for whoever wants to consult it.

Accounts - The organisation shall publish its annual account at least six months after the review by the General Assembly.

Sources of funding - The organisation should disclose its sources of funding both private and public by providing the name of the public and private funders, as well as the purpose of the funding.

Financial contribution in terms of sums received and percentage of the organisation budget shall also be precise. However, very small sums (eg 0.01% of the total organisation's revenue) do not need to be detailed.

Activities

The organisation shall publish an annual report on the activities undertaken, as well as the general lines of activities. As a general rule, information on the activities of the organisation shall be publicly available, accurate and updated on a regular basis. This information shall specify the main institutional targets of the activities and any relationships with public and private partners.

Procedures

Applications to the EU Health Policy Forum

Decisions to accept or reject membership shall be justified by the European Commission. Criteria to assess membership shall be established in advance and endorsed by the EU Health Policy Forum members. They shall include the above mentioned criteria. Candidates for membership that are rejected will be fully informed on the reasons of the rejection.

Monitoring process

The European Commission shall monitor on a regular basis (eg every two years) if members of the EU Health Policy Forum (present and future member) comply with the guiding principles as well as criteria for applications. They shall then report progress to the EU Health Policy Forum members.

Online provision of background information – online registry

In order to further increase transparency, membership (and applicant organisations) of the EU Health Policy Forum shall be publicly available through a public registry held by the European Commission. Documents submitted to indicate compliance with the above mentioned criteria shall also be made available. The registry should address the difference between profit making organisations, public authority and non-profit organisations.

Revision clause

The EUHPF guiding principles with regard to Transparency will be revised periodically by members of the EUHPF in coordination with the European Commission.