



# **Constitution**

## **(approved 22 May 2003)**

### **Article 1. Foundation and name**

This organisation was founded in London, UK, in October 1998, following a decision of several National Autonomic Societies in Europe (hereinafter called NAS). It shall be known as the European Federation of Autonomic Societies (EFAS).

### **Article 2. A non-profit organisation**

The Federation is not organised for profit and no part of the net earnings of the Federation shall inure to the benefit of any private individual or member. The Federation shall remain independent.

### **Article 3. Address of the Federation**

The address of the EFAS is Neurovascular Medicine Unit, Imperial College School of Medicine at St Mary's, Praed Street, London W2 1NY. FAX : +44 171 886 1540.

### **Article 4. Objectives and purpose**

Section 1. The activities of the Federation shall be open to all scientists interested in the field of the autonomic nervous system.

Section 2. It shall be the purpose of the EFAS :

1. To advance development of research and clinical aspects within the field of the autonomic nervous system.
2. To stimulate, encourage and help develop European programmes of clinical and experimental autonomic research and pre and post graduate teaching.

3. To promote and cooperate in international exchange arrangements for all scientists involved in basic or clinical research on Autonomic Nervous System especially those in training.

Section 3. The primary means for achieving these shall be through :

1. The stimulation and support of the organisation of congresses in conjunction with national Autonomic societies.
2. The organisation of postgraduate teaching courses in the Autonomic Nervous System during such congresses or during international symposia supported or sponsored by the EFAS.
3. The preparation of guidelines for diagnostic, therapeutic, rehabilitation, preventive and social programmes in Autonomic Nervous System.
4. The organisation and promulgation of international collaborative research projects, especially those of an epidemiological nature and multicentre trials.
5. The establishment of registers and other databases of centres for research and teaching in the Autonomic Nervous System.
6. The official journal of EFAS is 'Clinical Autonomic Research'.

Section 4. The Federation may engage in other activities which contribute to the advancement of clinical and basic sciences in relation to the Autonomic Nervous System within Europe.

## **Article 5. Membership**

Section 1. There shall be five categories of members: Ordinary Members (NAS members); individual members (from nations without NAS); honorary members of distinction; group members (groups of scientific societies other than NAS with specific interest in the Autonomic Nervous System – non-NAS groups) and corporate members.

Section 2. On payment of the annual dues, all members of the European NAS nominated by the NAS secretary shall become Ordinary Members of EFAS ; all members of groups other than NAS nominated by the Group secretary shall become affiliated members of EFAS.

Qualified individuals with a declared interest in basic or clinical aspects within the field of Autonomic Nervous System who belong to nations without NAS are entitled to apply for individual membership of EFAS pending institution of a NAS in their own nation. Applications must be submitted together with a curriculum vitae and acceptance will be decided by the Council.

Section 3. Honorary members may be elected from among those who, in the opinion of the EFAS, have made an exceptional contribution to the field of autonomic nervous system. Honorary members shall be proposed by at least two members of the Council. They shall be elected by a majority vote of the Council.

Section 4. Any organisation, company or foundation which has an interest in promoting basic and clinical aspects within the field of Autonomic Nervous System or is interested in the application of such subjects to other disciplines, shall be eligible for corporate membership of EFAS at the discretion of the Council.

Section 5. Membership terminates on death, resignation or expulsion.

## **Article 6. Council**

Section 1. The EFAS will be governed by a Council (see Article 7) constituted by one representative elected by each NAS. In addition, the Council shall be entitled to co-opt up to four individual or honorary members whose experience, scientific expertise and influence are felt to be useful to the Council in this early stage of the development of EFAS. Appointment of such co-opted members shall be decided by unanimous vote of the Council and subject to annual review. Group members of societies other than NAS shall elect one representative who shall be entitled to attend Council meetings and have the right to speak but not to vote.

Each NAS is entitled to nominate a substitute if the national delegate is unable to attend. The President of the EFAS shall chair the Council.

Section 2. The Council shall normally meet once a year during a congress organised or sponsored by the EFAS. However, for urgent issues, decisions can be made either by e-mail or fax.

Section 3. All major decisions of the EFAS shall be made by a simple majority in Council unless a two-thirds majority is required according to the Constitution.

## **Article 7. Officers**

Section 1. The officers of the EFAS shall be a President, a Past President, a General Secretary, a Treasurer and a Deputy Treasurer. The officers shall be elected by the Council.

Section 2. The officers shall each serve for two years and are reelectable twice, the maximum being six years of service in the same office. Elections take place in the year preceding the end of term to allow the candidates time to prepare plans of action.

Section 3. Any vacancy occurring among the officers during a term of office shall be filled by an Ordinary Member of EFAS nominated by the President to complete the unexpired term. If the office of President becomes vacant, the Secretary shall act as President to complete the unexpired term.

## **Article 8. Management**

The Council shall delegate the day-to-day management of the EFAS to a Management Committee consisting of the officers. The Management Committee will be chaired by the President and is empowered to decide on all matters of the

Federation when such decisions, in the best interest of the EFAS, cannot be delayed to the next Council meeting. The Management Committee shall be entitled to reach decisions following consultation by e-mail or fax. Decisions made by the Management Committee must subsequently be ratified by Council.

### **Article 9. Task Forces and Special Interest Groups**

The President, following advice from the EFAS Council, may nominate Task Forces (TFs) to accomplish certain tasks on behalf of the Federation. The Council may also accept the establishment of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to provide a forum discussion in selected areas of autonomic nervous system and related areas. Requests for the establishment of a TF or SIG must be submitted to the Council for approval. The officers of such TFs and SIGs shall be appointed by the Council. The by-laws governing a TF or SIG must also be approved by the Council. The finances of any TF or SIG are independent from the finances of the EFAS, and the EFAS cannot be made liable for any expenses or debts of a TF or SIG.

### **Article 10 . Groups of scientific societies other than NAS.**

Section 1. Non-NAS Groups are groups of scientific societies other than NAS , dedicated to research, teaching and development within a subfield of the Autonomic Nervous System. Other organisations cannot become associated but may join the EFAS through corporate membership.

Section 2. Status of a non-NAS Group is obtained by application to the Council. Non-NAS Group members shall elect one representative who shall be entitled to attend Council meetings and have the right to speak but not to vote.

Section 3. The EFAS cannot be made liable for any expenses or debts of an associated non-NAS Group.

Section 4. The Council will propose rules, where appropriate, for the optimal collaboration between the EFAS and non-NAS Groups.

### **Article 11 . Nominations and elections**

Section 1. The Council shall propose candidates for office in the EFAS, but shall not influence the nomination of Council members by NAS.

Section 2. Elections of officers shall take place at a meeting of the Council held approximately one year before the end of term of the officers. Terms of office shall be staggered so that no more than half of the officers have terms ending in the same year.

Section 3. Election of Council members takes place in each NAS during the year before the end of their term.

Section 4. Council members are elected by their NAS for a four-year term and may be re-elected once to serve for a maximum of eight years.

**Article 12 . Congresses**

Section 1. The EFAS shall hold European congresses of the Autonomic Nervous System in concert with the NAS.

Section 2. Applications by NAS to hold future European congresses should be sent to the General Secretary at least two years prior to such congresses, and should be formally endorsed by the NAS.

Section 3. The selection of countries to host future congresses shall be made by Council.

**Article 13 . General membership meetings**

The EFAS shall hold a general meeting of all members during each European congress. At such meetings the President, General Secretary and Treasurer shall each present reports of the activities of the Federation and future plans.

**Article 14 . Office**

The Federation has established a secretariat in London: Neurovascular Medicine Unit, Imperial College School of Medicine at St Mary's, Praed Street, London W2 1NY. FAX : +44 171 886 1540. The location of the office of the Federation may only be changed by Council decision.

**Article 15 . Disciplinary action**

If Ordinary Members are expelled from their NAS, they shall also cease to be members of the EFAS. Council shall have the duty to consider disciplinary action for any professional misconduct on the part of any member of the EFAS for whom similar disciplinary action has been taken by a national Board of Medical Examiners, Board of Professional Examiners, Board of Professional Medical Responsibility or like body. Such disciplinary action shall be in the form of censure, suspension or expulsion from the Federation; and if the member be an officer of the Federation, that member shall be removed from office whether censured, suspended or expelled. The word "censured" means that the individual shall be advised in writing that his or her professional conduct is not consistent with the objectives of the Federation and that it should be changed; the word "suspended" means that the individual shall be advised in writing that his or her privileges as a member of the EFAS have been temporarily suspended until the professional misconduct has been corrected to the satisfaction of the EFAS; "expulsion" means that the member shall be advised that membership of the Federation is automatically terminated. No formal disciplinary action can be taken against a national autonomic society.

However, the EFAS insists on its right to communicate its views on matters of a general nature, such as lack of democracy in a national autonomic society, discrimination against minorities and other similar matters.

### **Article 16 . Finance**

Section 1. The fiscal year of the EFAS shall begin on 1st January and end on 31st December of each year.

Section 2. Each NAS or non-NAS Group shall pay the annual EFAS membership dues fixed from time to time by the Council on a per capita basis for each of its members. Individual Members shall pay the same annual per capita dues. All annual membership dues shall be paid no later than 30<sup>th</sup> April of each year. The amount of annual membership dues shall be fixed by the EFAS Council by simple majority vote. Corporate members shall also be required to pay annual dues to be determined by negotiation with the Council.

Section 3. The EFAS shall as far as possible be financed from the surplus income derived from sponsors, corporate members and donations from private persons and industry and from its publications.

### **Article 17 . Amendments**

Amendments to the Constitution and By-laws may be proposed by any member of the Council. They must be submitted to the General Secretary at least three months prior to the meeting of the Council at which these shall be voted upon. The agenda for the meeting shall include the proposed amendments. Any amendment shall require a two-thirds majority affirmative vote of Council members present in order to be adopted.

### **Article 18 . Dissolution**

Voluntary dissolution can only be decided by a two-thirds majority vote of the Council at an extraordinary meeting called solely for this purpose. Any assets of the organisation shall, in the event of its dissolution, be donated to non-profit organisations supporting neurological research in Europe. These organisations will be decided by majority vote in Council.

### **Article 19 . Ratification**

The present Constitution has been ratified by members of the Founding Council present at the Foundation Meeting of the EFAS in London in October 1998.