

European Patients' Forum Code of Conduct

Approved by the EPF Board, 9 December 2008



The **European Patients' Forum** (EPF) is a European non-governmental organisation which was set up in 2003 to become the collective patients' voice at EU level, manifesting the solidarity, power and unity of an emerging EU patients' movement.

Through its 38 member organisations (which are chronic disease specific patients organizations operating at European level, and national coalitions of patients organizations), EPF reflects patients' and their carers' and families' unique and direct experience and expertise in healthcare.

VISION

EPF's vision for the future is high quality, patient-centred, equitable healthcare throughout the European Union.

MISSION

EPF's mission is to provide a strong and united patients' voice to put patients at the centre of EU healthcare policy and programmes.

1. EPF's core values and guiding principles

Patient – centred

EPF is driven by a rights-based, patient centred approach to healthcare in Europe.

Non- discrimination

We combat discrimination on the grounds of illness and address health inequalities from the perspective of patients.

Holistic

We advocate a holistic approach to healthcare issues, that includes the social, economic, cultural, environmental and mental health agenda for patients, carers and their families.

Empowering Patients

We foster the empowerment of patients, carers and their families by breaking down attitudinal barriers and prejudice regarding patients' place in society as equal citizens.

Consultative

EPF consults and builds consensus within its membership to be able to address, from a uniquely patients' perspective, the multitude of EU health policy issues that will directly and indirectly impact on patients across the Member States.

Independent, transparent

We are an independent organisation, transparent in all our operations (financial, policy, communications).

Inclusive

We are an open and inclusive organisation and strive to ensure that our work also reflects the opinion of potentially marginalised and underrepresented patients, carers and families.

2. EPF's core principles of conduct

Non profit

EPF is a non-for-profit organisation registered in Luxembourg and governed by the law of 21 April 1928, amended by the law of 4 March 1994. In 2008 EPF set up a subsidiary organisation AISBL in Belgium to comply with Belgian law.

Organised

EPF's Constitution defines the mission, objectives, governance structure, membership rights and obligations, rules and procedures.

EPF is an apolitical, representative advocacy organisation with governance bodies composed of elected non-paid representatives, supported by a small secretariat of paid staff.

EPF is administered by the Executive Committee (Board), consisting of at least four (4) and no more than nine (9) persons elected by the Annual General Assembly (Council) from among the members.

EPF has a 5 year Strategic Plan (2007-2012) and a Yearly Work Plan which sets its policy priorities, strategic objectives and performance indicators.

Independence and autonomy

EPF governs itself autonomously, according to the governance structure mission and vision. EPF does not align itself to any particular governmental body, political party or corporate entity, but focuses on its principles and policies as set in its Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plan.

Transparency and Accountability

EPF is transparent in all its dealings with its members and allies, partners, government and healthcare industry organisations. Clear and transparent information is provided on EPF's website and in EPF's communication tools about: governance structures, activities, financial resources.

The European Patients' Forum is accountable for its actions and decisions to its members and governing bodies.

Coherence

EPF recognises that its activities and conduct impact on the perceptions of patient organisations and that it is responsible for ensuring the public trust. EPF exhibits a coherent approach toward a patient-centred and equitable healthcare in all of its activities.

Cooperation

EPF carries out ethical, trust-based and constructive relationships with other organisations in the healthcare sector, civil society organisations, governmental and intergovernmental organisations that share EPF's values and that are beneficial in advancing the EPF's mission and strategic goals.

Key principles for acceptance of funding

EPF only accepts funding that is consistent with its overall mission and strategic goals. In accordance with the European Patients' Forum and Funding Partners Framework for Support, the following key principles underpin EPF's acceptance of funding: mutual respect, independence, unrestricted, sustainable, no single company/ public authority, transparency, proportionality, timeliness.

EPF will apply the EFPIA Code of Good Practice on relationships between the pharmaceutical industry and patients' organisations in relation to any funding received from the pharmaceutical industry whilst also building in the above principles.