

Constitution  
Version Approved  
5<sup>th</sup> April 2013

## **EQuiP Constitution**

### **NAME AND SEAT**

#### **Article 1**

1. The name of the organisation is the European Society for Quality and Patient Safety in General Practice/Family Medicine, acronym EQuiP.
2. EQuiP is a WONCA Europe network of professionals and others interested in quality and patient safety in GP/FM.
3. EQuiP is a legal body (association) under Danish law and has registered office in Copenhagen, Denmark.
4. The official language of the organisation is English and all meetings, notes and minutes are held in English language.

### **COLLABORATION WITH AND REPRESENTATION IN WONCA EUROPE**

#### **Article 2**

1. EQuiP is a network organisation of WONCA Europe.
2. EQuiP actively seeks collaboration with the other WONCA Europe networks.
3. The EQuiP council nominates the delegate to act as the EQuiP representative in the executive board of WONCA Europe and as an observer to the council of WONCA Europe for a period of three years. This person function as a liaison officer reporting matters both in WONCA Europe and EQuiP.

### **AIMS**

#### **Article 3**

1. EQuiP aims to promote and exchange knowledge and innovations in quality development and patient safety in European GP/FM and support networking among professionals.
2. EQuiP aims to ensure that the quality development and patient safety agenda is at the core business of WONCA Europe.
3. EQuiP's mission is to promote and exchange good practice in education, training and research in quality development and patient safety in European primary health care.
4. EQuiP aims to influence and promote implementation of best practice in quality and patient safety in GP/FM.
5. EQuiP will seek to guide and set agendas for WONCA Europe in all matters of quality development and patient safety in primary health care.

## **FINANCIAL BASIS**

### **Article 4**

1. EQuiP is a non-profit organisation.
2. The financial means of EQuiP may consist of:
  - a. Annual allowance and special project funding from WONCA Europe.
  - b. Membership fees and surplus of events, e.g. summer schools and conferences.
  - c. Website generated income.
  - d. Any grants, sponsorships and subsidies may be accepted, however they must be non-directive and accepted by the EQuiP council. Sponsoring EQuiP projects and events from the pharmaceutical and/or mediotechological industries is not acceptable.
  - e. Participation in international, EU, national and other projects.
3. Donations: Sponsors wishing to support EQuiP may do so, if the EQuiP council finds it appropriate according to point 2d above.
  - a. Information on sponsorships must be published on the EQuiP website and declared in conjunction with all populations that were supported.
4. The national organisation is responsible for producing a transparent budget for meetings to be approved by the EQuiP council.

## **FINANCIAL CONDUCT**

### **Article 5**

1. The president and the honorary treasurer are both authorised to sign on behalf of EQuiP. The EQuiP executive board may authorize other persons to sign on behalf of EQuiP by letter of attorney.
2. Financial resources of running EQuiP will be placed in the EQuiP bank account that is administered by the national college of GP/FM of the national association of the honorary treasurer or another member of the EQuiP executive board.
3. Records of the financial affairs of EQuiP will be kept by the honorary treasurer and will be reported at every EQuiP council meeting.
4. The yearly budgets and accounts (including those for meetings and other events) must be approved by the EQuiP council. Budgets for the coming year must be decided on the autumn meeting and accounts for the previous year must be approved on the spring meeting.
5. If functioning of EQuiP ceases, any property left is given over to the WONCA Europe.
6. The financial year of EQuiP is the calendar year.

## **TASKS OF THE EQUIP COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ASSOCIATES**

### **Article 6**

1. EQuiP is governed by the EQuiP council consisting of a maximum of two members per WONCA Europe member country. One has to be EQuiP member to be elected or appointed for the EQuiP council.
2. The tasks of the EQuiP council are:
  - a. To elect the members of the EQuiP executive board.
  - b. To decide about strategy, activities and finances.
3. The tasks of the EQuiP executive board are:
  - a. To run EQuiP according to council decisions and to take responsibility for ensuring that the decisions of the council are carried out in harmony with the strategic goals and policies of EQuiP.
  - b. The EQuiP executive board reports all decisions to the EQuiP council for approval.
4. Until EQuiP has reached a certain number of individual and extraordinary members (e.g. 100) the EQuiP council will continue as described in the current EQuiP constitution:

**EQuiP constitution**  
**- adopted in Zagreb, November 2011**

### **5. Representation**

#### **5.1. Representation of the national organisations of general practitioners**

Each country from the region of WONCA Europe can nominate two persons to be the national delegates in EQuiP through the national society (-is) of general practitioners. All national societies and associations of general practitioners active in quality development and patient safety are eligible to be represented in EQuiP.

If more than two representative bodies of GPs are willing to participate the one with WONCA membership will be preferred. It is up to the organisations of that country to find a solution to the controversy. If no consensus can be reached If more than two representative bodies of GPs are willing to participate the one with WONCA membership will be preferred. It is up to the organisations of that country to find a solution to the controversy. If no consensus can be reached within the country, the EQuiP council will decide, which societies can represent the country.

5. When EQuiP has reached 100 individual and/or extraordinary members, the EQuiP council structure will be as follows:
  - One council member from each member country is appointed by the national society. If there is more than one society in a country, it is up to the societies of that country to find a common representative.
  - When a country has a minimum of five individual and/or extraordinary EQuiP members, the second council member from each country is elected nation-by-nation among and by the national individual and/or extraordinary EQuiP members. The EQuiP representative of the national society will organise the elections with assistance from the EQuiP secretariat.
  - If a country has less than five individual members, the national societies may send two council delegates.
6. If an EQuiP council member does not attend three consecutive EQuiP council meetings without an acceptable explanation, the EQuiP council may regard the society and/or the individual and/or extraordinary member as no longer represented in EQuiP. The EQuiP council will inform the national society in question and subsequently the national society must send a new application for representation.
7. The EQuiP council meets officially twice a year.

## **EQUIP MEMBERSHIPS: INDIVIDUAL AND EXTRAORDINARY MEMBERSHIP**

### **Article 7**

1. All EQuiP council members, both those appointed by WONCA Europe membership organisations and those chosen by national members must pay membership fees.
2. General practitioners (practicing or academic) may become individual EQuiP members.
3. Medical doctors and other health professionals (academics, staff members and patients) involved in quality development in general practice may be extraordinary members.
4. Individual and extraordinary EQuiP members must reside in one of the European WONCA membership countries. However, the EQuiP council may decide to grant membership to applicants residing in countries outside Europe and also to applicants residing in countries that are not WONCA Europe members.
5. The EQuiP executive must accept each individual and extraordinary membership.
6. Membership fees are defined by the EQuiP executive board and are annual.
7. All individual and extraordinary EQuiP members must pay the membership fees to become an EQuiP member.

## **EQUIP MEMBERSHIPS: INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP**

### **Article 8**

1. Institutional members can be scientific societies of GPs and other organisations and institutions involved in quality development and patient safety in GP/FM or primary care.
2. The EQUIP council must accept each institutional membership.
3. Institutional membership fees are defined by the EQUIP executive board and are tri-annual.
4. Institutional representatives have a seat in the EQUIP advisory board.
5. All institutional EQUIP members must pay the membership fees to become an EQUIP member.

## **THE EQUIP EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### **Article 9**

1. The EQUIP executive board comprises six members: the president, the honorary secretary, the honorary treasurer and three members at large.
2. The EQUIP executive board members are elected by the EQUIP council for a three-year period among the EQUIP council members.
3. The offices of the EQUIP executive board members may be renewed once for a further three-year period.
4. Membership in the EQUIP executive board will be for a maximum of twelve years.
5. If a member of the EQUIP executive board leaves the office before the three-year period is over, a new member is elected from the EQUIP council for a normal three-year period.
6. Any delegate can volunteer for a position in the EQUIP executive board.  
For a nomination the support of another present EQUIP delegate is required.
7. The EQUIP executive board will enact the decisions of the EQUIP council.
8. The EQUIP council can leave defined matters to be decided by the EQUIP executive board.
9. The EQUIP executive board will prepare, organise and call up the EQUIP council meetings and all other meetings in conjunction with it in collaboration with the EQUIP secretariat.

### **Conduct of the EQUIP executive board:**

1. The EQUIP executive board runs EQUIP and takes responsibility for ensuring that the decisions of the EQUIP council are carried out in harmony with the strategic goals and policies of EQUIP.
2. The EQUIP executive board reports all decisions to the EQUIP council for approval.

## **THE EQUIP PRESIDENT**

### **Article 10**

1. The president of EQuiP chairs the meetings of the EQuiP council and the executive board. The president also represents EQuiP in meetings and acts as a spokesman, if the executive board or council has not pointed another delegate to do that.
2. If the president is hindered to lead a meeting, the honorary secretary can replace him/her until the EQuiP council or the executive board can choose a temporary replacement.
3. The president of EQuiP is elected by the EQuiP council for a three-year period among the EQuiP council members, extension in three years' periods to a maximum of six years.

## **THE ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Article 11**

1. EQuiP has an advisory board. The advisory board is the medium of all institutional representatives and can give advice to the EQuiP council and executive board.

## **RESIGNITION OF EXECUTIVE BOARD AND NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS**

### **Article 12**

1. An EQuiP council member or national representative shall relinquish office without prejudice to the law:
  - a. By non-attendance in person or by approved deputy at three consecutive EQuiP executive board meetings.
  - b. By announcement of a change in status as general practitioners (practicing or academic).
  - c. By voluntary retirement.
  - d. If a majority of the other EQuiP executive board or council members discharge him/her unanimously.
  - e. If s/he is adjudged bankrupt, is placed under guardianship or loses in other ways the free disposal over his properties.
  - f. By death.
2. Before ordering the resignation of a nominated EQuiP executive board member or EQuiP council member, the EQuiP council will consult the respective national organization or national individual and/or extraordinary members.

## **THE EQUIP SECRETARIAT**

### **Article 13**

1. The EQUIP secretariat may be established in conjunction with another organisation or independently.
2. The EQUIP secretariat will be responsible for:
  - a. Functioning as the secretary of the EQUIP council and the executive board.
  - b. Administration of individual, extraordinary and organisational memberships of EQUIP and updating the EQUIP member database.
  - c. EQUIP website management and development.
  - d. Dissemination and promotion of EQUIP activities to national societies, EQUIP members and WONCA Europe.
  - e. Assisting individual EQUIP council members and their national colleges in the organisation of meetings, events and conferences.
  - f. Assisting in organising national elections for the EQUIP individual and/or extraordinary members to be their national representative.
3. The EQUIP secretary/manager must be present at the EQUIP council meetings and events and at the WONCA Europe conferences.

## **THE EQUIP MEMBERS, COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS**

### **Article 14**

#### Spring meetings:

1. EQUIP organises a members' meeting each spring open to all EQUIP members.
2. The members' meetings concentrate on content rather than organisational work.
3. Before and/or after the members' meeting, an EQUIP executive board and council meetings are held.
4. The EQUIP council may decide to arrange occasional open meetings in the autumn.

#### Autumn meetings:

5. EQUIP organises an EQUIP council meeting for the EQUIP council members and the advisory board only according to plan each autumn.
6. The EQUIP council meeting is organised by the national EQUIP council members of the host country in collaboration with the EQUIP secretariat.
7. The EQUIP council meetings are financed by local sponsoring and by EQUIP through membership and participation fees.
8. The EQUIP council should approve a financial proposal before organising the meeting.
9. The EQUIP council may decide to arrange council meetings in the spring.

## **THE EQUIP COUNCIL MEETINGS**

### **Article 15**

1. The governing body is the EQUIP council and all decisions are made by it.
2. The EQUIP council will meet twice a year.
3. The meeting time and place is decided on at the previous EQUIP council meeting.
4. The meeting time and place can be changed only in force major situations by the EQUIP executive board and approved by two thirds majority of the EQUIP council meeting for the decisions to be valid.
5. If an EQUIP delegate or member wishes to bring a new item for decision in the EQUIP council, it must be announced to the EQUIP executive board not less than 30 days before the meeting.
6. Every member of the EQUIP council has the right to one vote.
7. No valid decisions can be taken unless at least ten of the EQUIP member countries are represented, council members having been duly notified of the meeting. Members of the EQUIP council may in writing delegate his/her voting right to another EQUIP member to represent him/her. *See article 20.*
8. The president chairs the EQUIP council meetings, and the honorary secretary keeps the minutes.
9. If the president or the honorary secretary is absent, the EQUIP council members shall nominate one of the members present at the meeting to chair the meeting or respectively to keep the minutes.
10. The EQUIP council decides by simple majority vote, unless the statutes require a different majority.
11. In the case of equality of votes at an EQUIP council meeting, the vote of the president (or honorary secretary, if absent) prevails.
12. If neither the president nor the honorary secretary is present, a tied vote is invalid.

## **EQUIP EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS**

### **Article 16**

1. The EQUIP executive board meets virtually every 2<sup>nd</sup> months and in person in conjunction with all EQUIP council meetings and at WONCA Europe conferences.
2. Minutes of executive board meetings are placed on the members-only part of the EQUIP website.

## **EQUIP MEMBERS' MEETING**

### **Article 17**

When EQUIP has reached 20 individual and/or extraordinary members, a meeting for the EQUIP members will be held in conjunction to the EQUIP open meetings (according to plan open meetings will be held in the spring). The purpose is to inform the members of EQUIP decisions and businesses.



1. The executive board will inform the members of important matters and organisational issues of EQuiP.
2. Minutes of EQuiP members' meetings are placed on the members-only part of the EQuiP website.

## **EQUIP COUNCIL MINUTES**

### **Article 18**

1. Minutes are kept of all the meetings of EQuiP. The honorary secretary will keep the minutes in the members' meetings, the council and the executive board meetings.
2. All the minutes are sent to the participants of the organ within two weeks for comments.
3. If there is no disagreement to the action points in the minutes within the next two weeks, they are considered to be approved and will be placed to the members-only part of the EQuiP website.
4. If there are disagreements, they will be published at the members-only part of the EQuiP website, and the minutes are to be approved at the following EQuiP council meeting.

## **PREPARATORY ORGANS**

### **Article 19**

1. The EQuiP council can set working groups, task forces or persons to report on preparatory tasks.
2. Working groups and task forces choose a chairperson for consolidation in the EQuiP council once a year. Maximum period for chairing a group is six years.
3. Each preparatory task when placed gets a time table and clear goals.

## **APPROVING AND CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION**

### **Article 20**

1. The EQuiP constitution becomes effective when the EQuiP council accepts it by simple majority. The EQuiP council has a quorum if ten countries are represented in the meeting.
1. All EQuiP council members can propose changes to the constitution.
2. Changes to the constitution are made effective in the same manner as changes to the minutes.
3. A decision to change or dissolve the foundation's statute can only be taken with a majority of at least two thirds of the recorded votes in an EQuiP council meeting in which at least two thirds of the members are present or represented.
4. Matters not specifically covered in the preceding paragraphs will be considered by the EQuiP council and appropriate by-laws enacted.

## **NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCEDURES: ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT**

### **Article 21**

1. The new president is nominated and elected at an EQuiP council meeting (according to plan in the autumn). At the same meeting the honorary treasurer and one member at large is nominated and elected.
2. All EQuiP members (referred to the year in which the elections take place) are eligible for office.
3. Only members of the EQuiP council have the right to vote.
4. Six months in advance of the election, all the members are invited to express their nominations. There is no automatic progression from the position of the EQuiP executive board member to the post of president.
5. The honorary secretary in conjunction with the EQuiP secretariat lays down a list of nominees (including the number of expressed preferences) and checks the availability of each person to stand for election.
6. The final list of nominees is mailed to the EQuiP council and executive board members before the meeting during which elections take place.
7. The elections shall take place at an EQuiP council meeting.
8. At the meeting, members of the EQuiP council and executive board can vote for one candidate. Voting shall be by secret ballot.
9. The members of the EQuiP council and the executive board can delegate in writing another member from their country to vote on their behalf if they cannot be present at the meeting.
10. That candidate receiving the greatest number of votes shall be the president elect until the next meeting of the EQuiP council. The president elect co-operates with the outgoing president (under the latter's leadership) to ease and guarantee the process of continuity.
11. At the next meeting of the EQuiP council, the president elect becomes the new president and assumes all the tasks and responsibilities associated with that office from the outgoing president. The former president continues to stay in the executive board until the next EQuiP council meeting as past president (under the leadership of the new president).
12. The period of office for the president is three years, and the president shall normally be eligible for up to two terms of office.

## **ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### **Article 22**

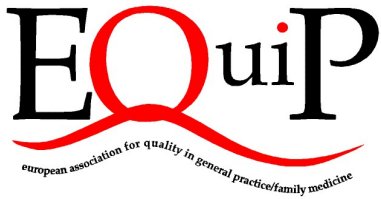
1. All EQuiP council members (referred to the year in which the elections take place) are eligible for office.
2. The honorary secretary in conjunction with the EQuiP secretariat notifies the membership of the election at least six months in advance and invites nominations from the EQuiP members.
3. The EQuiP secretariat will check availability to stand for election of nominees as well as the eligible members of the current executive board and collate a list of seconded nominees.

4. The final list of nominees will be mailed to members of the EQuiP council at least one month before the meeting during which the election takes place.
5. The executive board has the right to make a recommendation about the new executive board, but cannot decide on it.
6. The EQuiP council members may officially delegate another member to vote on their behalf if they cannot be present at the meeting.
7. The election shall take place at an EQuiP council meeting.
8. At the meeting, EQuiP council members can vote for one candidate per executive board position. Voting shall be by secret ballot.
9. Those executive board candidates receiving the greatest number of votes will be elected to the EQuiP executive board.
10. The newly appointed executive board will then designate the elected officials to the posts of honorary secretary and honorary treasurer.
11. There is no automatic progression from the positions in the executive board.
12. In making their designations, the new executive board will be expected to take account of any previous executive board post held and the number of votes received by each candidate. Additional factors to be taken into account could include years of previous membership and involvement, and the number of years in office.
13. The period of office for the members of the executive board is three years and each member shall normally be eligible for up to three terms of office.

**SELECTION OF NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES (N.B. This comes into power at the first meeting after EQuiP has reached 100 individual and/or extraordinary members)**

**Article 23**

1. All countries that have a minimum of five individual and extraordinary members must elect a national council representative.
2. All EQuiP members from the specified country (referred to the year in which the elections take place) are eligible for the EQuiP council, though normally persons to be nominated for office will be full time general practitioners or part time general practitioners and/or working in an academic organisation relevant for quality development and patient safety in general practice.
3. In the case of retirement, at least six months in advance of retirement, the existing national representative of the country shall obtain a list of all the country's current EQuiP members and notify them of the need to select a new representative.
4. In the case of demission, or if the national representative is unable or unwilling to carry out this task, it shall be undertaken by the organizational secretariat or a member designated by the EQuiP executive board.
5. Nominations for the office of national representative shall be from the country's EQuiP members. The nomination process shall take due consideration of the views of the relevant national colleges, scientific societies of general practitioners and other relevant national organizations. A list of seconded nominees shall be collated.



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6. The term of office for the elected national representative of the EQuiP individual and/or extraordinary members is three years.