

**CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION  
ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH – ICOH**

1990

Last update June 11, 2006

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OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION  
ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH - ICOH

(Formerly Permanent Commission and International  
Association on Occupational Health)  
Founded in Milan, June 13, 1906

**ARTICLE I - Name, Purpose, Methods, Office and Languages**

Section 1

The International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) is an international non-profitmaking, non-political, multidisciplinary scientific organisation whose sole purpose is to foster the scientific progress, knowledge and development of occupational health and related subjects on an international basis.

Section 2

ICOH provides a forum for scientific and professional communication. To achieve this purpose, the ICOH:

- (a) sponsors international congresses and meetings on occupational health;
- (b) establishes scientific committees in various fields of occupational health and related subjects;
- (c) disseminates information on occupational health activities;
- (d) issues guidelines and reports on occupational health and related subjects;
- (e) collaborates with appropriate international and national bodies on matters concerning occupational and environmental health;
- (f) takes any other appropriate action related to the field of occupational health;
- (g) solicits and administers such funds as may be required in furtherance of its objectives.

Section 3

The official address of the ICOH is Istituto di Medicina del Lavoro, Via San Barnaba 8, I-20122, Milan, Italy.

#### Section 4

The official languages of the ICOH are English and French. All official documents shall be written in one or both of these languages.

#### Section 5

The official languages of an International Congress on Occupational Health (Article 6, Section 1) are English and French. Depending on the location of the Congress, additional languages may be allowed under the conditions that the Board approves them.

### **ARTICLE 2 - Membership**

#### Section 1

Membership shall be either individual or collective. Individual membership is open to occupational health professionals, active in all disciplines related to occupational health and includes active, retires, emeritus and honorary members; collective membership includes sustaining and affiliate members as specified in the Bye-laws. Collective members may nominate one representative who will have the same rights and privileges as individual members.

#### Section 2

By joining the ICOH the members commit themselves to follow the principles of good membership that implies the promotion of ICOH purpose according to this Constitution and Bye-Laws and the ICOH Code of Ethics.

#### Section 3

A member in good standing means an active or retired individual member who has paid the membership fees, as defined in the Bye-laws, as well as honorary and emeritus members.

#### Section 4

Only members in good standing shall be entitled to vote, to sponsor applications for membership, and to serve on the Board or as Scientific Committee Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer.

#### Section 5

Corresponding fellows can be appointed as defined in the Bye-Laws. Corresponding fellows do not pay fees.

#### Section 6

An individual or collective member may resign from the ICOH by sending a letter of resignation to the Secretary-General. There will be no refund of fees. A member who is not in good standing at the end of the triennium shall cease to be a member.

#### Section 7

If a member has gained admission to ICOH by fraud, false statement or imposition, or is alleged to have acted in any respect in a dishonourable or unprofessional manner, he may be obliged to resign from the ICOH if at least five members of ICOH in good standing have made a request with supporting documents to the Board and the evidence is regarded sufficient by two-thirds of the Board. The President must inform the member concerned of the request no later than three months before the next Board meeting, and the member must have the right to a hearing.

### **ARTICLE 3 - Fees**

#### Section 1

The fiscal period of the ICOH shall be the triennial period from 1st January of the year of an International Congress to 31st December of the year preceding the subsequent International Congress.

#### Section 2

Individual and collective membership fees are decided by the General Assembly upon the proposal of the Board. A schedule related to the payment of fees is stipulated in the Bye-laws.

#### Section 3

Honorary and emeritus members do not pay membership fees.

### **ARTICLE 4 - General Assembly**

#### Section 1

The General Assembly is the supreme governing body of the ICOH. It approves the Constitution, elects honorary members, one Auditor and one Vice-auditor, and decides on the venue of triennial International Congresses. The General Assembly also sets fees, accepts and approves the financial accounts, accepts the Auditor's report taking such action on it as is necessary, and approves the report on the activities of the Scientific Committees. It consists of the individual members in good standing and one representative of each collective member.

#### Section 2

A valid session of the General Assembly may only take place whenever ten per cent or more of the individual members in good standing are present. If less than ten per cent are present at the General Assembly, the President must call on the members to participate at a second General Assembly during the Congress. Then the matters shall be decided by a simple majority of the members at the second General Assembly.

#### Section 3

At each International Congress, there shall be at least one session of the General Assembly.

#### Section 4

At the discretion of the Board, or on written request signed by fifty or more members in good standing, an extraordinary session of the General Assembly may be held. The items that can be considered and decided on are 1) changes of the Constitution, 2) financial rules, and 3) decision of the dissolution of ICOH. Written notice of such a special session shall be given to all members in good standing at least three months in advance of the session and the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is to be held shall be stated in that notice. For the extraordinary General Assembly to be valid, ten per cent of the members must be present, except for when the dissolution of ICOH is at issue, which requires 20 per cent of the members to be present.

#### Section 5

Each individual member in good standing and one representative of each collective member shall have the right to exercise one vote either when attending the General Assembly or when voting in a postal ballot.

#### Section 6

At sessions of the General Assembly, all questions shall be determined by a simple majority of votes, unless otherwise specially provided. If the votes are even, the President shall have the casting vote.

#### Section 7

In case a postal ballot is combined with voting at a session of the General Assembly, the voting is valid when the total number of votes cast for and against, together with abstentions, at the Assembly added to the votes received by post is equal to twenty per cent or more of the total individual membership.

#### Section 8

A postal ballot can be held on matters pertaining to the regular General Assembly when authorised by the Board or on written request signed by fifty or more members in good standing. It is valid when the number of votes cast for and against, with abstentions, is equal to twenty per cent or more of the total membership.

### **ARTICLE 5 - Management**

#### Section 1

The Officers of the ICOH shall be elected by postal ballot and shall consist of the President, two Vice-Presidents and the Secretary-General. The officers shall each be citizens of different countries.

#### Section 2

The Officers shall be elected as set forth in the Bye-Laws for the triennial period separating sessions of the General Assembly. They may be re-elected to the same office for no more than one additional term, with the exception of the Secretary-General, who may be elected for more than one additional term. The newly elected Officers take office at the General Assembly convened immediately after the Triennial Congress. In the case of emergency or in extraordinary situations preventing the normal election procedures, the Officers remain in office until regular elections can be held.

#### Section 3

The President shall be in charge of the management of ICOH. To this effect he shall:

- (a) represent the ICOH;
- (b) preside at meetings of the Board and the General Assembly;
- (c) authorise expenditures in consultations with the Secretary-General and accept donations to the ICOH;
- (d) appoint active members, emeritus members, sustaining members, affiliate members and corresponding fellows;
- (e) decide on Scientific Committees, appoint the Chairmen and approve the Secretaries thereof (Article 7, section 3);
- (f) approve the agenda of the General Assembly;
- (g) appoint the Editor of the Quarterly Newsletter or any publication succeeding it;
- (h) appoint working groups to assist in administration;
- (i) propose to the Board the co-option of additional Board Members (Article 5, Section 6);

- (j) present recommendations from the Board to the General Assembly for its approval;
- (k) make interim appointments in emergencies when an Officer of the ICOH is unable to continue in office, till such time as elections are possible.

#### Section 4

The Vice-President shall carry out the tasks defined in the Bye-Laws and delegated by the President and the Board. These tasks shall be shared between the Vice-Presidents as decided at the Board meeting following the elections.

#### Section 5

The Secretary-General shall have charge of the office and the accounts of the ICOH as defined in the Bye-Laws and delegated by the President and the Board. Audited accounts must be presented to the Board meeting immediately preceding the General Assembly, and to the General Assembly. The signatories for the ICOH bank account shall be either the President or the Secretary-General. Investments shall be decided upon and signed for jointly by the President and the Secretary-General.

#### Section 6

The Board of the ICOH shall be elected by postal ballot and shall consist of the Officers, the immediate Past President and 16 other members in good standing so as to represent as far as possible the different disciplines and a balanced geographical distribution. No more than two of these 16 members may be citizens of the same country. If necessary, no more than two further members of the Board chosen for their ability, or to represent a geographical region or a discipline, may be proposed by the President and co-opted by the Board. The Editor of the Quarterly Newsletter shall be an *ex officio* member of the Board.

#### Section 7

The Board is empowered to implement the purposes of the ICOH as defined in this Constitution, and shall to this effect:

- (a) review the programme of work of the ICOH and its Scientific Committees;
- (b) assist the Officers, in particular by means of administrative working groups or committees;
- (c) amend the Bye-laws whenever necessary;
- (d) recommend the venue of future International Congresses on Occupational Health to the General Assembly;
- (e) recommend the election of honorary members;
- (f) expel members under the circumstances of Article 2, section 6;
- (g) make recommendations to the President for submission to the General Assembly for its approval;

- (h) if necessary, co-opt up to two additional Board members as proposed by the President
- (i) approve any additional language used at an International Congress;
- (j) review the accounts.

The Board shall meet at least once in each triennium and at any other time which the President may consider necessary. A special meeting of the Board can also be convened at the request of a majority of its members. A Board meeting is valid when out of its 21 members (section 6), the President or another Officer representing him and ten other Board members are present.

#### Section 8

The members of the Board shall be elected as set forth in the Bye-laws for the triennial period separating sessions of the General Assembly. The members of the Board may be re-elected for no more than one additional term. In the case of emergency or in extraordinary situations preventing the normal election procedures, the Board continues to function until regular elections can be held.

#### Section 9

The Editor of the Quarterly Newsletter shall be appointed by the President as defined in the Bye-laws.

#### Section 10

A member of the ICOH can be a candidate for one post only at a time.

#### Section 11

Auditors shall be appointed by the General Assembly as stated in Article 4, Section 1.

### **ARTICLE 6 - International Congresses**

#### Section 1

Regular meetings of the ICOH shall be held every three years and shall be called "International Congress on Occupational Health". They shall be held at a time and place to be determined by the vote of the General Assembly upon written invitation of members in good standing belonging to the same country. The Board shall recommend to the General Assembly one of the proposed venues as its preference. The decision of the venue shall take place six years in advance. The choice shall be confirmed in writing by the host country at latest 6 months after the election.

## Section 2

The International Congress shall be organised by the members of that country whose invitation has been accepted by the General Assembly. An Organising Committee must be set up within six months after the decision. Notice must be given in all announcements that the International Congress is sponsored by ICOH.

## Section 3

The Board shall approve the themes and any additional language of the International Congress and the Officers shall review the work of the Organising Committee and make recommendations concerning the date and other activities of the Congress.

## Section 4

Finances for the organisation and conduct of the International Congress shall be the sole responsibility of the organising Committee of the Congress, which is entitled to ask the participants to pay a fee established after consultation with the Secretary-General. The consultation shall include the amount and the concession to special categories of participants and the effects of possible additional languages on the fee. Attendees who are not members of ICOH shall pay an additional fee which is subsequently payable to ICOH by the Organising Committee.

## Section 5

In addition, other international or regional, general or specific conferences can be held under the auspices of the ICOH after approval by the President. Notice must be given in the first announcement of the conference, as to whether it is sponsored by the ICOH alone, or in cooperation with others.

### **ARTICLE 7 - Scientific Committees**

#### Section 1

In order to facilitate the purpose of the ICOH, Scientific Committees operate to provide a forum for ICOH members and associated experts to meet in order to promote, share and discuss progress relating to the speciality of the Committee, and to publish documentation relating to the Committee's speciality.

A Scientific Committee can only be established with the approval of the President.

ICOH members and associated experts may join a Scientific Committee in which they have

an active interest.

## Section 2

Each Scientific Committee shall be managed by a Chairperson and a Secretary, and, if required by the members of a Scientific Committee, a Treasurer and other officers, in accordance with the Bye-laws.

## Section 3

The president decides on the terms of reference of Scientific Committees, appoints the Chairmen and approves the Secretaries thereof (Article 5, Section 3). The functions of the Scientific Committees are defined in the Bye-laws.

## Section 4

The activities and progress of each Scientific Committee shall be subject to periodic review by the Board. One of the Vice-presidents shall be responsible for that review. The President may dissolve a Scientific Committee after consultation with the appropriate Vice-president and the Board.

### **ARTICLE 8 – Bye-laws**

The Board shall make such Bye-laws as may be essential for the efficient application of the Constitution.

### **ARTICLE 9 - Amendments to the Constitution**

Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by the Board or by a group of at least ten individual members in good standing of the ICOH and after consultation with the Board. Any such proposed amendment shall be submitted for approval to the General Assembly. In any vote to change the Constitution, at least two thirds of the votes cast, with abstentions, must be in favour of the proposed change.

### **ARTICLE 10 - Emergency Powers**

In the event of an International Congress not being held at the end of a fiscal period, the Officers and the Board shall be empowered to make such financial and other arrangements as may be necessary for the continuation of the ICOH.

In the case of inability of the President, the Vice-President who received more votes at the last election takes office. The procedures for handling sudden inability of the Vice-presidents, the Secretary-General and the Editor are stipulated in the Bye-laws.

#### **ARTICLE 11 - Dissolution of ICOH**

In the event of circumstances rendering the continuing existence of ICOH impracticable, the decision about reallocation of its resources shall be made by the General Assembly. If the General Assembly cannot be convened, the decision shall be made by the Board. If the Board cannot be convened within ten years of the last General Assembly, the capital fund shall be handed over to the International Red Cross.

#### **ARTICLE 12 - Validity**

This Constitution dated the 23.09.1990, supersedes all existing Constitutions of the International Commission on Occupational Health.

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