

# Vasco da Gama Movement CONSTITUTION

## Article 1: Name, description and Address

- 1.1. The organization's name is 'Vasco da Gama Movement' (VdGM). The name originates from the constitutional meeting in Lisbon January, 2004. Vasco da Gama was a young Portuguese adventurer who discovered the seaway from Europe to the Orient (India). His homeport was Lisbon.
- 1.2. VdGM is the European Organization for Young and Future General Practitioners (GPs) under the aegis of WONCA Europe (European Region of World Organization of Family Doctors);
- 1.3. The official logo of the organization is a blue ship sailing under nine yellow stars and written below is the organization's name and its description



- 1.4. The electronic address of the organization is [info@vdgm.eu](mailto:info@vdgm.eu)  
The postal address is that of our secretary.

## Article 2: Official Languages

- 2.1 The official language of the Organization is English. The discussions at the meetings will be conducted in English.

## Article 3: Aims and Objectives

### 3.1 The Statement of Intent

- The main objective of VdGM is to represent young and future GPs ,promote the discipline of general practice/family medicine and to communicate the position of young and future GPs/FM through:
- 3.1.a. Providing a forum, support and information for trainees and young GPs through access to WONCA Europe regional conferences and pre-conferences.
    - 3.1.a.1. By means of co-organizing a pre-conference meeting during the WONCA Europe regional conferences;

- 3.1.b. Establishing a communication network between European trainees and young GPs and identifying their concerns, doubts and needs and helping to address them.
  - 3.1.b.1. By means of writing and publishing newsletters concerning the movement for national colleges and associations;
  - 3.1.b.2. By collaborating with national colleges and associations in general practice and stimulating the formation of national representation for young and future GPs;
  - 3.1.b.3. By collaborating with international organizations of general practice and representing the movement at international meetings.
- 3.1.c. Evaluate and encourage improvement of the quality of training programs for general practice.
  - 3.1.c.1. By gathering and providing information on training programs, research opportunities and other activities for young general practitioners/fm;
  - 3.1.c.2. By encouraging quality standards in General Practice

## **Article 4: Membership**

### **4.1 Eligibility and Application**

- 4.1.a. Ordinary membership: all trainees in the specialty of General Practice and Family Medicine and young doctors in the first 5 years after specialization in GP/FM in the WONCA Europe region are eligible to become members.
- 4.1.b. Honorary membership: may be awarded in recognition of outstanding contributions to the work of VdGM. Nominations for Honorary membership shall be forwarded, considered and approved by the VdGM Executive group.

### **4.2 Termination of membership**

- 4.2.a. Membership of the Organization shall terminate upon the occurrence of any of the following:
  - 4.2.a.1. Exceeding the first 5 years after specialization;
  - 4.2.a.2.
  - 4.2.a.3. Refusal of membership: the executive group reserves the right to refuse membership in certain circumstances an Executive Group decision, requires a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the members, subsequent to a behavior incompatible with the organization's constitution.

## **Article 5: Organizations in Collaborative Relations**

- 5.1. VdGM welcomes collaboration with organizations in the same field of interest. That collaboration is guided by a written document agreed by both parties, e.g the executive group shall represent the VDGM
- 5.2. All communication between VdGM members and Organizations in Collaboration, in the name of VdGM, has to be notified to the chairman in advance Executive Group .
- 5.3. WONCA Europe
- 5.3.a. WONCA Europe has expressed strong support for VdGM from the first step of this initiative and is aware of the specificity of the movement as an organization oriented towards specific problems of younger GP/ FM doctors.
- 5.3.b. Terms of collaboration between VdGM and WONCA Europe organizations are specified below, from the paper approved by WONCA Europe at the WONCA Europe Council meeting at the WONCA Europe Conference in Florence, Italy 2006:

### **5.3.b.1 WONCA Europe**

- Approves VdGM as an official organization in collaboration
- Invites a VdGM representative to the WONCA Europe Council annual meeting with observer status;
- Supports VdGM by requesting that WONCA Europe member organizations provide financial support for one preconference participant and one europe council member
- Ensures through the collaboration with Host Organizing Committees (HOC) of WONCA Europe annual conferences and through contracts between Wonca Europe and HOC, that adequate preparation for a VDGM pre-conference of 1.5 days duration as well as VdGM activities in the Conference program can take place.
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- Appoints the member of VdGM for collaboration with HOC of the WONCA Europe Conference, in preparing the pre-conference meeting of Vasco da Gama movement. THE national VdGM representative of the country organizing the annual conference should be appointed by HOC for preparation of the pre-conference meeting of VdGM.
- Negotiates with HOC about special participation fees for VdGM members;
- Allocates funds from the WONCA Europe budget as annual support for organizing VdGM activities.
- WONCA Europe supports the activities of EURACT in stimulating and contributing to VdGM activities;
- WONCA Europe keeps close contact with VdGM Executive Group through the nominated member of WONCA Europe Executive Board.

### **5.3.b.2. Vasco da Gama movement**

- Works closely with WONCA Europe and core networks (EURACT, EGPRN and EQUIP to promote the discipline of General Practice/ Family Medicine;
  - Will maintain contacts with current members and actively seek involvement of participants from other European countries that are not yet members;
  - Establishes and keep regular contacts with national organizations of Junior doctors
  - Stimulates the establishment and development of contacts with other organizations of Junior doctors outside WONCA Europe region;
  - Ensures continuity of activities of the VdGM having in mind regular changes in composition of their Executive Group membership;
  - Encourage that the balance between the members from the different parts of European region is kept throughout the whole structure of the organization,
- Contributes to annual WONCA Europe conferences by organizing and running VdGM pre-conference meetings, as well as activities within the conference program.
  - Contributes, where appropriate, to documents of WONCA Europe, three core networks, , and other network organizations, especially in regard to representing opinion of future and younger GPs/FPs;
  - Collaborates with network organizations on joint activities within the WONCA Europe Conferences Scientific program;
  - Reflects on activities of WE Conferences and provides proposals for improvement of future Conferences in accordance to the new WONCA Europe Conferences Strategy
  - Submits regular reports about the ongoing activities of VdGM, once a year, prior to WONCA Europe Council meetings and at request of the WONCA Europe Executive Board.

## **Article 6: Organizational Structure**

### **6.1 VdGM Europe Council**

- 6.1.a. The VdGM Europe Council is the governing body of the Vasco da Gama Movement;
- 6.1.b.1 Each WONCA Europe member country will appoint or elect one national delegate who is eligible for VdGM membership, as member of the Europe Council. .The standard term of office is four years. An europe council member may apply for a further 3 year term subject to simple majority approval the Europe council. The National Organization can replace a Europe Council Member by a written request approved by Executive Group;

**6.1.c. Europe Council meetings:**

6.1.c.1. Ordinary annual meetings - during the WONCA Europe Conference;

6.1.c.2. Extraordinary meetings: as a VdGM Executive Group or Europe Council initiative and after Executive Group approval.

6.1.d. Voting: the VdGM Europe Council members have to be present in person to be able to use their vote.

6.1.e. The Europe Council will elect the VdGM Executive Group members from within the Europe Council at the annual meeting.

Observers will be permitted to attend at discretion of executive group

**6.2 Executive Group**

6.2.a. The Executive Group will enact the decisions of the VdGM Europe Council, prepare the Europe Council meetings and the pre-conferences, and do what else is necessary for the functioning of the organization, working in close collaboration with the Europe Council, Theme Groups and collaborating organizations;

6.2.b. The Executive Group consists of the chairperson, the secretary, the treasurer and five other members;

6.2.c. Duties and terms of the office:

**6.2.c.1. The chairperson:**

- Acts as Chairperson of the Executive Group meetings and Europe Council meetings;
- Gives directions to the Executive Group;
- Checks up on progress;
- Represents the organization;
- Primary responsible for setting the agenda of the meetings;
- Delegates activities;
- Performs all other duties that the office may require.

**6.2.c.2. The secretary:**

- Responsible for the paperwork;
- Keeps the minutes of the meetings;
- Organizes the meetings;
- Archives and distributes accordingly any internal/ external mail;
- Have such other powers and duties as prescribed by Executive Group.

**6.2.c.3. The treasurer:**

- Acts under the direction of Executive Group;
- Keeps or cause to be kept adequate and proper accounts of the property and funds of the Organization;
- Deposits or cause to be deposited all money and other valuables in the name of, and to the credit of the Organization with such depositories as may be designated by Executive Group;

- Disburse or cause to be disbursed the funds of the Organization as may be ordered by Executive Group;
- Render to Executive Group and Europe Council whenever they so request, an account of all the transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Organization;
- Analyze possible sources of funding
- Submit annual financial report to WONCA Europe Executive Committee approved by VdGM Executive Group and submit quarterly financial reports to executive group
- Have such other powers and duties as prescribed by Executive Group.

**6.2.c.4. Other Executive Group members:**

- **The pre-conference manager:** Responsible for liaison with Host Organizing Committee of WONCA Europe annual conferences and co-organizing pre-conference.
- **Liaison person for each Theme Group (TG):** Responsible for the coordination between the VdGM Executive Group and the Theme Group that he/her liaisons; monitor the process within his/her TG.

6.2.d. The Executive Group may invite a senior adviser to join Executive Group.

6.2.e. The Executive Group will meet at least 2 times yearly, including 1 meeting at the WONCA Europe Conference.

**6.2.f. Elections:**

6.2.f.1. Executive group offices free for election will be notified to the Council members at least 3 months before the annual Council meeting. In order to promote continuity the elections for Executive Group offices will take place in succeeding years.

6.2.f.2. National delegates from the VdGM Europe Council can apply for any position in the Executive Group that by written application to the Council, through the secretary, no later than four weeks before the annual Council meeting;

6.2.f.3. The Executive Group members will be elected by ballot from the VdGM Europe Council by simple majority at the annual Council meeting. If there are three or more candidates for office and no one receives simple majority in the first ballot, then a second ballot shall be taken between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot. If there is a tie for second place the candidate receiving the highest numbers and those tying for second place shall be included in the second ballot, and the balloting shall continue in a like manner until a majority is attained.

6.2.f.4. Every member in the Executive Group will be elected for a maximum of three years.

6.2.f.5. The officers of the Organization are eligible to stand for two terms of office.

In extremis, exclusion

- 6.2.g. **Resignation:** an Executive Group member can resign by expressing her/his wish in writing to the secretary, not less than 3 months before annual meeting of the Council, and will continue his/her work until the Council elects a replacement. The member who resigns or whose term is up will continue with their duties until the next eg meeting after the election to ensure continuity

### **6.3 Theme Groups and**

- 6.3.a. There are Theme Groups and a web-based Forum open to all eligible members.
- 6.3.b. Decisions concerning future Theme Groups will be taken at the Council meetings, by simple majority.
- 6.3.c. The Theme Groups are open to all eligible VdGM members. Registration to the Theme Groups is possible by addressing the liaison person of the Theme Group.
- 6.3.d. The liaison person will be appointed within the Executive Group
- 6.3.e. The Theme Groups are obliged to submit a written report twice yearly to the Executive Group, one month previously the meeting.
- 6.3.f. The Theme Group will present their work at the annual General meeting at the WONCA Europe Conferences.
- 6.3.g. The functioning Theme Groups are those described on VdGM Structural Model in the official website.

### **Open Webforum /website article new**

## **Article 7: Meeting Procedures**

### **7.a. Procedures – Europe Council meetings**

- 7.a.1. Council meetings will be arranged by Executive Group.
- 7.a.2. The meetings will be held at least once a year at the venue of the WONCA Europe meeting.
- 7.a.3. The secretary will keep minutes of each Council meeting in English.
- 7.a.4. At the beginning of each meeting, the minutes of the previous meeting should be approved as a true record of proceedings. The agenda of the present meeting should be approved; new items for inclusion in the agenda should be notified by the Council members to the secretary not less than 2 months before a meeting.
- 7.a.5. A quorum of half the total number define of appointed Council members is required for a meeting to proceed.
- 7.a.6. Decisions will be taken by the Council by simple majority.

- 7.a.7. The minutes of the meeting will be transmitted to each Europe Council member not later than thirty days following the meeting.
- 7.a.8. Observers will be allowed on invitation by the Chairman and prior approval by the Europe council to attend VdGM Europe Council meetings. Observers will have privilege to the floor but have no voting rights.

**7.b. Procedures – General meetings**

- 7.b.1. General meetings will be arranged annually by the Executive Group, at the venue of the WONCA Europe Conference.
- 7.b.2. The meeting will be open to all interested.
- 7.b.3. The chairman will present a give present a on activities and future plansreport of the present status and previous activities.
- 7.b.4. The Theme Groups will give present a on activities and future plans.

**Article 8: Financial Matters**

- 8.a. All financial affairs, records and accounts of the organization will be kept by the Treasurer and will be reported at the Council meetings.
- 8.b. Decisions regarding VdGM Financial affaires will be discussed and taken by the Executive Group.
- 8.c. Accepting or raising funds in the name of VdGM from or by third parties will not be allowed without prior approval of the Executive Group.

**Article 9: Publications**

- 9.a. Books, manuscripts, publications, letters and audiovisual material or computer material to be published and/or distributed in the name of VdGM in any manner whatever need prior approval of the VdGM Executive group.

**Article 10: Dissolution**

- 10.a. A decision to dissolve the Organization shall require a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Europe Council and shall be made at a meeting of Europe Council specifically called for that purpose.
- 10.b. A distribution of any surplus assets (after all liabilities have been discharged) should be made to WONCA Europe Executive Board. The return of the surplus assets will be made on the express provision that the surplus funds so returned will be used for GP/FM Young Doctors scientific and educational activities.

**Article 11: Adoption and Amendments of the Constitution**

- 11.a. The VdGM Constitution may be adopted or amended by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Europe Council members present and voting at the annual meeting of Europe Council.
- 11.b. Proposed amendments shall be given by one or more Europe Council members to the Secretary at least six (6) months calendar months prior to the Europe Council annual meeting. Notice of the proposed amendments shall be given by the Secretary to the members of the Europe Council by mail, at least three (3) months calendar months before the annual Council meeting.

Revised 17/10/2007