



# Constitution

## Preamble

The International Organisation of Youth with Rheumatism (IOYR), hereinafter referred to IOYR, is an association of national organisations of young people aged 18- 35 with rheumatism, initially, working in Europe. English is the official language of IOYR. Its Executive Officer is the chair for the time being. Its address is IOYR Bonn. It is listed there as a registered association and thus uses the suffix “e.V.” (eingetragene Verein).

## § 1 Aims

- (1) The overall aim of IOYR is to improve the situation of young people with rheumatism through information exchange, self-help and policy influence, initially in Eastern and Western Europe.
- (2) The association's aims are purely charitable in the sense of the section “tax-deductible activities” of the tax regulations. They are carried out under the following specific aims:
  - to exchange information and experiences and to learn from each other;
  - to encourage the development of self -help in each country;
  - to empower young people with rheumatism and enable them to get their voice heard;
  - to raise public and professional awareness of the situation of young people with rheumatism and change attitudes;
  - to exert policy influence, both internationally and nationally;
  - to develop links between medical professionals and young people with rheumatism and increase understanding;
  - to stimulate intensive research of the experiences of young people with rheumatism;
  - to co-operate with Arthritis and Rheumatism International, the European League against Rheumatism and other organisations with similar interests, as appropriate
- (3) The association functions as a charity; it does not seek financial gain. The association funds may only be used for the purposes laid out in the association's constitution. Members of the association receive no mollies from the association funds. No person may gain financial advantage through expenses not compatible with the associations aims or through excessively high fees.
- (4) All officers of the association act in a voluntary capacity. Every decision on changes to the constitution must be presented to the inland revenue before being officially registered.

## § 2 Powers

In order to pursue its aims, IOYR shall have powers to employ staff, organise conferences, run training courses, publish reports, issue publicity material, organise study visits, give grants and raise funds, including determining fees.

## § 3 Membership

- (1) Full membership of IOYR is only open to national organisations. Associate membership involves receipt of information only about IOYR ' s activities. Every young person with rheumatism aged between 18 and 35 years, who supports the aims of IOYR is entitled to associate membership.
- (2) One organisation of young people with rheumatism in each country may be accepted into membership of the IOYR General Assembly (article 6).
- (3) Any organisation or emerging organisation of young people with rheumatism, or involving young people with rheumatism is eligible to become a member organisation.

- (4) Since only one organisation in each country may be a member organisation, all organisations aspiring to membership in any one country are required either to choose one of their number to represent them jointly or to appoint a common accredited representative.
- (5) When such agreement is not achieved at a national level, the IOYR Board (article 7) reserves the right to determine which national organisation is accepted as a member organisation. In the event of the IOYR Board not exercising this right the national organisations would become associate members only.
- (6) The Board decides on written applications. The application must contain the data on the organisation and the persons named. If the Board refuses membership, giving reasons for the refusal, this can be appealed by the organisation applying for membership. The appeal must be received by the Board within one month of the refusal of application. A decision on the appeal is made at the next regular meeting of the Board.

(7) Ending Membership

Membership is ended:

- a) with the dissolution or death of the member organisation or member b) through voluntary resignation
- b) through cancellation of the membership list
- c) through expulsion from the organisation

Voluntary resignation must be sent in writing to the Board. It is only valid at the end of the calendar year giving three months notice.

A member can be expelled from the list of members by a decision of the Board when payment of dues has not been forthcoming after two reminders have been sent. The expulsion becomes valid when three months have expired after the second reminder has been sent out. The member is to be notified of the expulsion.

A member can be expelled from the organisation by the Board for serious violation of the interests of the organisation. Before expulsion, the member is to receive adequate opportunity to respond to the expulsion decision personally or in writing. Any written statement on the part of the member is to be read at a meeting of the Board. Reason for the expulsion must be given and sent to the member in writing. A member has the right to appeal an expulsion at a meeting of the General Assembly. The process of appeal has the effect of putting the expulsion on hold. The appeal must be received in writing by the Board within one month of the expulsion decision. If the appeal is received within the specified time, the Board must call a meeting of the General Assembly to decide on the expulsion. If this does not happen the expulsion is not considered valid. If the member does not exercise the right of appeal or does not do so within the time allocated, they are fully subject to the expulsion decision and membership is ended.

#### **§ 4 Representation**

- (1) The organs of the association are:
  - a) the Board
  - b) the General Assembly
- (2) Each member organisation has one vote at meetings of the General Assembly exercised by its accredited representative.
- (3) The chairperson of the Board chairs the General Assembly meetings; in case of his/her not being able to do so another member of the Board named by the chairperson takes the chair. During elections, the General Assembly is chaired by a returning officer chosen by those present.
- (4) Each accredited member organisation lodges with the chair of the General Assembly the name of its accredited representative, authorised to vote and speak on its behalf at the General Assembly.

- (5) All accredited representatives are understood to speak on behalf of the member organisations they represent and to be authorised to commit them to actions collectively agreed unless:
  - such collective action contravenes international law or domestic law of the member organisation's country or
  - an accredited representative explicitly records that approval of a policy requires ratification by the member organisation represented.
- (6) Accredited representatives may authorise another representative of the member organisation they represent or the accredited representative of any other member organisation to act for them by proxy. However, they must lodge a signed authority appointing the proxy-holder prior to the meeting at which the proxy may be exercised with the chair of the General Assembly at which it may be exercised.
- (7) Accredited representatives must be persons with rheumatism aged 18-35.

### **§ 5 General Assembly**

A full General Assembly comprising one accredited representative of each member organisation shall:

- act as the supreme decision making body for IOYR;
- determine the overall policies and priorities of IOYR;
- elect a Board and chair (§6)
- hold the Board to account every three years.

### **§ 6 Board**

- (1) A Board comprising accredited representatives from seven countries is elected by the full General Assembly for a period of three years to:
  - develop and implement policies between meetings of the General Assembly;
  - manage IOYR's affairs and finances;
  - represent IOYR externally
  - keep General Assembly members and associate members informed of progress
- (2) The chair and then each member of the Board is elected individually.
- (3) If possible, the composition of the Board should reflect the diversity of the member organisations.
- (4) A country may change its accredited representative during the three year period of office. The member is co-opted by the Board for the remaining period of the office.
- (5) All representatives standing for election to the Board must be supported by their country's organisation and must be nominated by their organisation at least two months before the date of the General Assembly.
- (6) The Board meets at least once a year.
- (7) The Board has the power to establish working parties from time to time as required.
- (8) The Board elects its own treasurer, who acts as treasurer for the General Assembly as a whole. The treasurer must be a different person to the chair
- (9) The Board has delegated to it by the General Assembly the power to employ suitable people of any age, on a paid or voluntary basis, to assist in its work.

### **§ 7 International Youth Congress**

- (1) The Board is responsible for organising an International Youth Congress (IYC) every three years.
- (2) The IYC provides a *forum* for discussion about IOYR plans and activities between young people with rheumatism from different countries, including those who are not members of the General Assembly.

- (3) Any young person with rheumatism aged 18- 35 can attend the IYC subject only to constraints on space and resources.

### **§ 8 Finance**

- (1) Membership fees are collected from members.
- (2) The level of membership fees is determined by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Board. Organisations, which are unable to pay, can apply for assistance.
- (3) Funds are also to be raised from companies, trusts, governments and other fund-raising sources.
- (4) IOYR's financial year for accounting purposes is January to December
- (5) IOYR 's funds are managed by the chair and the treasurer reports IOYR 's financial position to each meeting of the Board and General Assembly.
- (6) The full meeting of the General Assembly appoints independent accountants to audit the accounts annually and report to the Board and the General Assembly.

### **§ 9 Administration**

- (1) As its executive officer, the chair provides for the preparation and maintenance of IOYR 's records including:
  - the minutes of all meetings of the Board and General Assembly;
  - the roll of member organisations and their accredited representatives;
  - the roll of all associate members;
  - all other such records as the Board or General Assembly requires to be kept.
- (2) The chair and, if the chair is not available, the treasurer and one other member of the Board are the official spokespersons for IOYR both legally and publicly.

### **§ 10 Constitutional Rules**

- (1) The General Assembly meets every three years. The meeting is called by the Board giving three months written notice including an agenda. All decisions are voted on by simple majority.
- (2) Where possible, the meetings of the General Assembly will take place at the International Youth Congress
- (3) A quorum for the Board is at least 50% + 1 of its membership being present including either the chair or the treasurer
- (4) A quorum of the General Assembly is at least 50% + 1 of its membership being present or represented by proxy or postal vote, including either the chair or the treasurer.
- (5) An emergency meeting of the Board or General Assembly may only be called provided advance notice is circulated in writing at least three months prior to the meeting and provided at least two thirds of the members of the Board or General Assembly agree
- (6) The chair has a casting vote whenever voting is equal.
- (7) The constitution can be altered by resolution of the General Assembly upon adoption of a motion circulated in writing at least three months prior to the meeting, provided at least two thirds of the General Assembly agree. Alterations to the constitution made necessary because of changes in charity or tax laws are decided upon by the Board.
- (8) In the event that a resolution to dissolve IOYR is successful at a meeting of the General Assembly, its liabilities shall be in equal shares liabilities of all its member organisations at the time of the dissolution and assets shall be transferred, if that organisation will accept them, to Arthritis and Rheumatism International to be used for the benefit of young people with rheumatism.
- (9) In the event of there being insufficient member organisations to elect a Board, an emergency meeting of the General Assembly shall be called to consider a resolution to dissolve IOYR.

(10) The General Assembly chooses a member of the Board to record the minutes of the meetings. These are to be signed by the chairperson of each meeting as well as by the member recording them. The following details are to be recorded: place and time of the General Assembly meeting, members present, agenda, individual voting results and the type of vote taken. In the case of alterations to the constitution, the exact words are to be recorded.

### **§ 11 Inauguration**

- (1) The first meeting of the General Assembly shall be called and chaired by the chair of the IOYR Working party and host of the 1996 IYC, and shall be held in Berlin on Saturday 2 December 1995. The next General Assembly meeting will be held at the 1998 IYC and thereafter meetings will be held at three year intervals.
- (2) Postal voting will not be permitted at the first meeting
- (3) The role of participating organisations entitled to vote at the first meeting of the General Assembly shall be prepared by the chair of the IOYR Working Party.

### **§ 12**

In case of dissolution of the organisation or loss of tax privileges the funds of the organisation shall be transferred automatically to Deutsche Rheuma-Liga Bundesverband e.v. in Bonn, who shall use the funds exclusively for the benefit of the public or for charitable or church purposes.