

## **EHS Partnership Procedures & Characteristics**

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### **1. Introduction**

The partner organisations of EHS are grouped into three partnership categories:

- EHS Affiliated Chapter
- EHS Associated Chapter
- Other Collaborating Organisations

Different characteristics and benefits apply to each partner category. The widest-ranging level of collaboration exists with the EHS Chapters, through the annual EHS Chapter's Board meeting. (see list below). The close relationship between the EHS and the EHS Chapters is a key principle of vital importance to the EHS, allowing the flow of knowledge between the EHS and its Chapters, to the benefit of patients across Europe. It also entails the need for clear and comprehensive procedures to facilitate the integration of new Chapters into the EHS family.

The following section outlines the criteria and benefits of EHS partnerships. With the implementation of the procedures and structure of EHS Partnerships, all current EHS Chapters will be considered as EHS Affiliated Chapters. It is expected that all current EHS Chapters as a minimum fulfil the requirements described for EHS Affiliated Chapters in item 2.1. New organisations applying for EHS Chapter partnership will be initiated as an EHS Affiliated Chapter.

If an EHS Chapter aims to attain the status and benefits associated with an Associated Chapter, it must fulfil not only the requirements detailed in item 2.1 but also those specified in item 2.2.

If a current or potential chapter is unable to fulfil the minimum requirements described in item 2.1, it is anticipated that the Chapter will hold the status as an 'Other Collaboration Organisation', following the description outlined in item 2.3.

### **2. Criteria & Benefits**

#### **2.1. EHS Affiliated Chapters**

##### **Criteria of an EHS Affiliated Chapter**

- Official status as a non-profit organisation that focuses on abdominal wall surgery.
- The organisation represents healthcare professionals.

- The activities of the organisation are in principle limited to one country within Europe, although the integration of organisations representing more than one country or region is encouraged as applicable.
- The objectives, constitution and ethical guidelines of the organisation do not conflict with any of the rules or principles that govern the EHS.
- The organisation must have minimum 3 board members all of whom must be members of the EHS.
- Among the organisation's members there must be a minimum 5 members who are members of the EHS.
- The organisation regularly organises training activities for members, including courses, webinars, e-learning, workshops, etc.

### **Benefits of being an EHS Affiliated Chapter**

- Entitled to appoint one representative for the EHS Chapter Advisory Committee. (This representative is expected to attend the EHS representatives meeting held within the EHS Annual Congress. Financial support for the attendance of such representatives is available within the EHS travel rules.)
- The representative is entitled to free registration for the annual EHS congress.
- The right to an annual counselling meeting with a representative of the EHS Secretariat.
- Reduced EHS membership fee for all members of the chapter.
- Members of the EHS have access to all benefits described on the EHS website: <https://europeanherniasociety.eu/become-member/>
- Reciprocal links on websites and right to present the organisation on the EHS website: <https://europeanherniasociety.eu/chapters/>
- Updates of the Chapter in the EHS newsletter (maximum 250 words).
- Reciprocal free distribution of material at the societies' annual congresses or meetings\*.

## **2.2. EHS Associated Chapters**

### **Criteria of an EHS Associated Chapter**

EHS Associated Chapters benefit from extended privileges and opportunities within the EHS. This is attributed to their closer connection with the EHS, including an additional reduction in membership fees for these societies collecting the membership fee for the EHS through the EHS chapter.

- The organisation must have a website and an active presence on social media platforms.
- Translated into English (summary)
- Organise an annual or bi-annual conference/meeting.

- Offer reduced membership fees for residents to promote their involvement in the society.
- Have a transparent selection process for board members within the society.
- Annual report of the activities in the Chapter
- Bylaws or comparable reflecting a modern approach to the management of a society putting improved patient outcomes as the focus of its activities.

EHS encourages EHS Associated Chapters to emphasise diversity and to have clearly defined rules and objectives that articulate the society's values and regulations.

#### **Benefits of being a EHS Associated Chapters**

- Further reduced EHS member fee
- Yearly update in the EHS Newsletter (maximum 250 words)
- Extended opportunities for distribution of materials during the annual congress and meetings\*.

### **2.3. Other EHS Collaborating Organisations**

The category covers organisations that have agreed to collaborate with the EHS on specific activities but do not for different reasons fulfil the criteria or wish to become an EHS Chapter. Collaboration within this category is based on written agreements between the EHS and the respective organisation.

The EHS Secretariat maintains a list of all specific agreements made with other EHS Collaborating Organisations.

#### **Characteristics of an EHS Other Collaborating Organisation**

- Official status as a non-profit organisation working within health care.
  - Examples: Patient organisations within surgery or health care related to hernia, medical non-profit educational organisations, hernia surgery organisations outside Europe.
- The objectives, constitution and ethical guidelines of the organisation do not conflict with any of the rules that govern the EHS.

#### **Benefits of being an EHS other Collaboration Organisation**

- According to specific agreement

### **3. Recommended Organisational Principles of EHS Chapters**

The EHS encourages the Chapters to adhere to the following, basic principles:

- Multidisciplinary approach aiming at:

- Equal focus on opportunities for membership for surgeons, physicians, and other specialists working within abdominal wall surgery and hernia care.
- Openness towards membership of representatives from different healthcare professions.
- Openness towards cooperation including financial support from a broad spectrum of industry partners.
- Function and adhere to basic democratic organisational principles of:
  - Regular general assembly.
  - Regular transparent elections for the board.
  - Transparency in relation to the organisational and financial policies and actions.
  - Upholding the principles of diversity enshrined within the principles of the EHS.
- Collaboration between all abdominal wall associations in countries/regions with two or more associations with a hernia/abdominal wall interest exists.

#### **4. Procedure for EHS Chapter Partner Requests**

The establishment of a partnership with a new EHS Chapter must take place according to the following procedure approved by the *EHS Board of Directors in January 2024*.

1. Any applicant organisation based in a country already represented in EHS by one or more EHS Chapters must have been formally registered in their home country and have carried out activities for a minimum of 2 years before an EHS Chapter partnership will be considered by the EHS.

During these 2 years, collaboration concerning selected activities may take place but will be subject to prior approval by the EHS Board of Directors.

The Chapter(s) already representing the same country in the EHS will be invited to present a written opinion and recommendation regarding the applicant to the EHS.

2. Any applicant organisation based in a 'European' country/region not already represented in the EHS as a Chapter can become approved as an EHS Chapter as soon as the organisation is officially registered in its home country. Until the association is officially registered, the EHS Board of Directors may decide to grant it status as an interim Chapter.

This specific procedure for new organisations from countries with no abdominal wall surgery organisation is adopted to support the establishment of abdominal wall surgery organisations in all European countries.

3. No matter the above differentiation, any organisation that wishes to become an EHS Chapter must elaborate a short, written application to the EHS Secretariat describing the policies and characteristics of the society and including information about:

- Year of establishment
- Statutes
- List of current Board including name and profession of all board members
- Policy regarding member eligibility
- Policy regarding collaboration with industry partners
- Major achievements during the lifetime of the society and current main activities.
- Minimum 3 board members all of whom must be members of the EHS.
- Minimum 5 members who are all members of the EHS.

Before or after receiving the written application, a meeting between representatives of the society applying for partnership, the Secretary for the EHS Chapters and the EHS Secretariat must take place. The objective of the meeting is to establish personal contact between the applicant and EHS and to discuss the perspectives of the partnership and the procedures for its establishment.

4. Based on the written application, meeting and supporting documents listed above, the EHS Secretariat will elaborate a report for the EHS Board of Directors to decide on the application.

The EHS Secretariat will communicate the decision made by the EHS Board of Directors to the applicant society. The EHS Board of Directors reserves the right not to communicate any specific reason for the decision made.

5. All new Chapters approved by the EHS Board of Directors after 1 May 2024 will be considered observers during the initial 1 year of their partnership with EHS.

## **5. EHS Associated Chapters description and application process**

EHS Affiliated Chapters applying to become an EHS Associated Chapter must submit an application to the EHS Secretariat. The application must demonstrate that the applying society meets the criteria described in section 4.

Based on the written application and supporting documents listed in section 4, the EHS Secretariat will elaborate a report for the EHS Board of Directors to decide on the application. The EHS Secretariat will inform the applicant society whether the decision made by the EHS Board of Directors raises the opportunity for ratification by the General Assembly in the following year. The EHS Board of Directors retains the right not to provide any specific reasons for the decision.

The General Assembly must ratify the decision regarding whether the Chapter can increase to the status of an Associated Chapter or remain an Affiliated Chapter. In case the Chapter receives a

refusal from the EHS Board of Directors or if the General Assembly does not ratify the decision made, the applying Chapter is encouraged to reapply for Associated Chapter status if it wishes to do so.

## 6. EHS Chapter membership handling

### SELF REGISTRATION (Membership not paid via a chapter)

European Hernia Society members register themselves via the EHS website.

- Payment: Credit card or bank transfer
- Valid for 1 year
- When payment is approved immediate access to the EHS website and all EHS member benefits
- Full rate – no chapter reduction even though the member is also a member of a chapter
- Due to GDPR rules, the EHS Secretariat is not allowed to share individual members' data with the EHS Chapters without consent from the members.
- EHS Individual members can give EHS permission to share the information via their account on the website. Lists will be shared with the chapters every 6 months.

**REGISTRATION VIA EHS Associated/Affiliated CHAPTER, the EHS receives a list of names, email addresses and job titles, birth year, and gender from the Chapter.**

- Payment: Only accepted through invoice.
- Membership validity: One year from enrolment in the EHS member system
- Renewal and new member subscriptions will only be processed **once a month**
- Deadline for sending the list of members for renewal: 15th of every month
- Invoice payment timeframe: 2 weeks
- Member data upload in the system: By the 1st day of the following month.
- Access to the EHS members' benefits: Granted no later than the first working day of the month after invoice payment.
- Lists for renewal and new subscriptions: Chapters can only submit new members and renewal requests **once a month**. The first list received regardless of received before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month will be handled and perceived as the renewal list of the month.
- The provided template for members must be used and must be completed by the chapter, not the EHS Secretariat.

- Resident memberships: Resident verification must be uploaded by the member in the EHS member system after the account is activated. Please don't forward the information by email!
- The EHS cannot receive lists with data from members besides the data indicated in the template. Lists with addresses, personal information, notes about the specific member etc. will be rejected.
- The EHS disclaims responsibility for errors in member emails, names, etc., if such errors arise from inaccuracies in data received from the chapter and/or if the chapter has not completed the list correctly.
- Compliance with renewal deadline: The responsibility for meeting renewal deadlines rests with individual members. The EHS bears no responsibility for agreements entered between members and their respective chapters.
- Urgent access: For immediate access, individuals must sign up on the website and make payment via credit card. Urgent access cannot be met through chapter memberships.