

CODE OF PRACTICE BETWEEN EULAR AND THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

International Congresses and Symposia are both important and highly visible scientific meetings. They have developed from relatively small meetings into, in some cases, large international events with thousands of participants. They are important events for the presentation and exchange of up-to-date scientific data and bring together specialists from many countries for the exchange of information and experience that could not be achieved by correspondence. They also create the opportunity for the commercial companies involved in health care to interrelate face-to-face with doctors.

Without the co-operation of the pharmaceutical and medical equipment industry these congresses and symposia would often be scientifically less successful and also difficult to manage financially. The contribution of these companies is therefore welcomed by those involved in the management of scientific meetings.

Because health care is mostly provided by the public hand and also is in the public eye, it is essential that the inter-relationship between science and commerce at these events is sensibly balanced and professionally managed. It is recognised that responsibility for this lies equally with both individual delegates and professional and commercial organisations.

For these reasons, the **European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR)** has developed a "**Code of Practice**" which governs the relationship between the organisers of the congress and the involved industry representatives in the preparation of, during and after the **Annual European Congress of Rheumatology**.

It is important that the pharmaceutical companies participating in international congresses and any other scientific meeting under the jurisdiction of EULAR understand that the objective of such manifestations is to advance and enhance science in the field of musculoskeletal diseases. As a consequence, commercial activities must not exceed what is deemed acceptable.

The following guidelines should therefore be adopted:

1. Organisation

The overall responsibility for the Annual European Congress of Rheumatology (congress) lies with the European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR). Part of the organisational work may be delegated to a third party company (PCO), such as registration and accommodation, abstract handling, sponsoring activities, exhibition, etc. The third party company acts in the name and on behalf of EULAR for all delegated activities. At this time, EULAR has mandated MCI Group Geneva with these activities.

2. Participating Companies

The exhibitor/sponsor company shall inform all subsidiaries, affiliates, third party companies etc. involved on its behalf of the rules and regulations of the "Code of Practice". It is the exhibitor's/sponsor's responsibility – being the official contract partner to EULAR – that its subcontractors adhere to all rules and regulations.

MCI as well as EULAR will communicate exclusively with clearly identified third party companies officially mandated by participating exhibitors and sponsors. Queries received from third party companies (i.e. communication and press agencies) which do not clearly indicate which company they are representing will not be answered.

3. Exhibition

It is widely recognised that the exhibition stand is a major forum for the pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies to create the opportunities where they may talk to doctors about their company and their products. Exhibition stands should therefore create the opportunity for the company to show and display information relevant to both the company and their products as well as other scientific information they may choose. Activities not related to the practice of medicine are deemed inappropriate under this Code of Practice.

- **Assignment of Space**

Exhibition space will first be allocated to Corporate Members and subsequently to other companies on a first come, first served basis. Further details of the attribution process are outlined in the Points System document for Corporate Members.

- **Use of Rented Space & Height Limitation**

The use and branding of rented space may not exceed the rented surface. The height limitation as communicated in the Exhibition Technical Manual must be respected both for physical and visual devices (e.g. lasers, gobos, etc.)

- **Noise**

Exhibitors may not produce noise and/or use amplification of music and/or voice which may be heard outside the space assigned to the exhibitors, or which may interfere with or be felt objectionable to attendees or other exhibitors. The volume level must not exceed 70dB (A) at the boundaries of the stand. The organisers reserve the right to require exhibitors to discontinue any such activity. Live presentations at the stand are not permitted without prior approval from the organisers.

- **Stand Activities**

“Meet the expert” sessions or press briefings at the stand are not allowed during the official scientific programme. For a maximum of 8 participants during coffee breaks is accepted. A request to hold such sessions must be submitted to the organisers (MCI) for approval. Stand activities such as quizzes, contests, etc. can take place throughout the exhibition opening hours with a limitation of 8 simultaneous participants.

- **Recording**

Taking of pictures, filming and audio-recording in the exhibition halls are not allowed. Exhibitors may take pictures of their own stands but not of the stands of other exhibitors.

- **Give-aways and Printed Material**

Give-aways and printed material may only be distributed in the space rented by the exhibitor in the exhibition hall, in hospitality suites, or at Satellite Symposia. No such material may be distributed in any hotel used by EULAR.

Companies may only offer gifts (maximum value of EUR 20) preferably of educational or scientific value. Gifts with a value of not more than EUR 120 will be allowed for professional or patient education purpose. Textbooks and CDs will be allowed at this value. Product identification is permitted on give-aways. It is the company’s responsibility to also adhere to any restrictions and/or limitations which may be applicable according to the legislation of the host country of the congress.

Contests, lotteries, raffles are subject to the approval by the organisers (MCI).

- **Space Integrity / Promotional Activities**

Exhibitors are prohibited from publicising, distributing, and canvassing, and/or maintaining any activities, inducements, demonstrations, materials, or displays outside the space assigned to them.

- ***Product Disclaimer***

The acceptance of a product or service for exhibition does not in any manner constitute an endorsement by EULAR.

- ***Exhibitor's Participation in Sessions***

Participants registered as exhibitors will not be permitted to attend scientific sessions at the EULAR congress. Exhibitors interested in attending any scientific session must register as regular congress participants.

Exhibitors will receive complimentary exhibitor registrations. The number of complimentary registrations depends on the size of the exhibit.

EULAR reserves the right to refuse applications of companies not meeting or not having met in previous occasions the standard requirements or expectations. EULAR reserves the right to curtail or to close exhibits (wholly or partially) that reflect unfavourably on the character and the purpose of the congress.

4. Satellite Symposia Guidelines

Satellite symposia held by the pharmaceutical industry will have, as their main objective, the communication of scientific material, which will enhance the knowledge of attending doctors. There will be no material inducement or publication of a reward to attend the symposium. Delegates may of course be sent special invitations but no reward to participants is allowed for attending a symposium.

Satellite symposia slots will first be allocated to Corporate Member companies and then to other companies on a first come, first served basis. Further details of the attribution process are outlined in the Points System document for Corporate Members.

At least 60% of the programme of a satellite symposium must be of general scientific content, and not more than 40% may be related to any specific drug or form of treatment or similar. The satellite symposium programme must be submitted to the EULAR Scientific Programme Committee (EULAR Secretariat) 14 weeks prior to the congress and will need to be approved by the EULAR Steering Committee and the chairman of the Scientific Programme Committee (no response within 21 days implies assent).

The chairperson of the satellite symposium has a responsibility to oversee that the messages and conclusions presented during the symposium are based on available scientific data. The sponsor should inform the chairperson(s) of this responsibility. In addition, the holder of a satellite symposium and the chairperson are jointly responsible for adhering to the assigned time slot of the symposium.

Satellite symposium holders will receive a number of free full delegate registrations. The number of free registrations depends on the size of the symposium (size of auditorium). Satellite symposium holders are also entitled to receive the list of pre-registered participants 5 weeks before the congress (MS Excel format) to promote their satellite. This list may be used for one mailing only, and it must not be used for any other purpose.

All satellite symposia must be held at the congress centre during the official time slots offered by the organisers (see Exhibitor & Sponsor Manual). Companies holding a satellite symposium outside the congress centre and/or outside the official satellite symposia slots will be fined with EUR 80,000, and they will not be invited to participate at the two following congresses. EULAR also reserves the right to close their booth if the company is exhibiting at the congress.

- ***Advertising & Promotion of Satellite Symposia during the Congress***

Satellite symposia programmes and invitations may only be distributed in the space rented by the exhibitor in the exhibition hall (if applicable), in hospitality suites, and at the entrance to the auditorium used for the satellite symposium no more than 30 minutes before the start of the satellite symposium.

Designated areas in high-traffic locations at the congress venue will be made available to companies for displaying posters advertising their satellite symposia. The display of posters and visuals advertising satellite symposia during the congress is limited to such designated areas, rented exhibition space, hospitality suites as well as staffed hospitality desks.

- Stand-alone signs advertising satellite symposia and/or any other corporate branding in congress hotels are not authorised unless these are located next to and part of a permanently staffed company hospitality desk.
- **Photos, Filming and Audio Recording of Satellite Symposia**
A company holding a satellite symposium (or symposia) has the exclusive right to organise photos, filming and audio-recording of their satellite symposium. Any such recording requires prior approval by the organisers (MCI).
- **Live Broadcasting**
Live and/or simultaneous broadcasting of satellite symposia in any way is prohibited.
- **Delayed Broadcasting**
For sound and image recording of satellite symposia (or parts thereof by any type of media) that are dedicated for presentation to a public or closed audience outside the congress, the company holding the satellite symposium is required to obtain formal acceptance from all speakers in writing and send it to the organisers (MCI) at the latest 2 weeks before the congress. Satellite symposia must not be broadcast in any way until the first Monday following the end of the EULAR congress at which the satellite is scheduled.

See item 6 for additional guidelines for Internet publication.

5. **Company Meetings, Press, Media and Publication**

Press conferences, briefings of any kind or similar group events organised directly or indirectly by the pharmaceutical industry may not be held in the congress centre and not be organised during the official scientific programme hours (see Glossary). All such events with groups larger than 8 participants need the prior approval of the organisers (MCI).

[Not affected from this regulation are meetings with investors \(Investor Relation Meetings\) and company internal meetings with entirely sales and/or marketing personnel. They may be held outside of the congress centre at any time during the congress.](#)

Press releases of pharmaceutical companies are bound to the “EULAR Abstract Embargo Policy”

Corporate press material and product information may not be distributed in the Congress Media Centre. A dedicated area will be made available close to the EULAR Media Centre for this.

The use of the EULAR name and congress logo in any fashion, by any commercial entity, for any purpose is expressly prohibited before, during and after a congress without prior written consent of EULAR. The official congress logo may be used on invitations for officially approved satellite symposia (see item 4). It can be requested from the EULAR Secretariat.

Picture taking, filming and recording of the Scientific Programme or any part of it is not allowed. Press and media interviews can be arranged on demand through the officially appointed EULAR media agency.

6. Internet Publication of Material

The guidelines for press, media and publications are likewise applicable for the publication of material and information on the Internet.

Given that all material presented at the congress is of public interest and not confidential anymore, EULAR expects such publications to be accessible without prior registration to a site, even if the registration is free.

7. Social Events

The social programme of a congress is an important part of the event itself. It creates the opportunity for participants from different countries to get together outside the busy scientific programme of the congress. However, exhibitors/sponsors are reminded that social events must not be arranged during the official scientific programme hours (see Glossary). Transportation to social events must not depart during the official scientific programme hours.

Social events organised by the pharmaceutical industry according to the "EULAR Code of Practice" may contain a "Welcome Introduction" not exceeding 15 minutes in total by maximum two speakers. This introduction may be referred to in the invitation to the social event as "Introduction to...(subject)" and should contain not more than 40 percent product placement.

8. Legal Issues

Each exhibitor/sponsor is responsible for the material and information they make available at the congress. Exhibitors/sponsors should only present material and information which has been approved by their legal departments and which is in compliance with the legislation of the host country of the congress.

To summarise, exhibitors/sponsors should address these issues and any conflicts arising from such matters directly among themselves as the organisers will never intervene or arbitrate in any way in legal issues.

9. Code of Practice Enforcement

All companies must comply with the EULAR Code of Practice and general congress guidelines. Penalties will be applied when violations occur.

The procedure for policing and enforcing the violation system is as follows:

- Alleged violations will be reported to MCI and/or the EULAR Executive Secretariat.
- Once the alleged violation has been duly considered by the EULAR Executive Secretariat, a representative of the relevant company will be invited to present the company's view. The final decision on the applicable penalty will be taken by the EULAR Executive Secretariat jointly with the EULAR Executive Committee.

10. Other Relevant Documents

Further to this code of practice, the following documents may be of assistance. They are available from the organisers (MCI) (* available on the EULAR web site for download)

- * EULAR Exhibition and Sponsor Manual
- * EULAR Abstract Embargo Policy
- The International Pharmaceutical Congress Advisory Association's (IPCAA) Code of Conduct and Medical Congress Guidelines and Housing Guidelines
- Code of Practice of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industry Association

EULAR Secretariat
MCI Group
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GLOSSARY

Exhibitor

A company with a contract to exhibit at a EULAR congress.

Sponsor

A company buying services at a EULAR congress

Official Scientific Programme hours

Those published by EULAR. Relevant is the printed Final Programme of the congress.

Included are

- all scientific sessions and workshops
- all abstract sessions
- the poster viewing time
- the coffee breaks and lunch breaks in-between
- the satellite symposia
- the official opening ceremony
- the official welcome reception

Organisers

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