

Wonca Europe Guidelines on External Sponsorship
Accepted by the Council of Wonca Europe in Paris October 2007

Sponsoring Guidelines in general

The aim of these Sponsoring Guidelines is to regulate the relationship between all external bodies including: insurance companies, banks, NGO and governmental organisations, industrial companies and Wonca Europe to safeguard the integrity, credibility and independence of the Wonca family doctors and their professional bodies. They assure the public that the professional advice given by family doctors and their organizations is led only by their professional skills and knowledge based on clinical evidence and not by any pecuniary, beliefs or faithful relations with organizations with other goals.

The Wonca Europe Sponsoring guidelines take into consideration that the family doctors of most European countries have worked out and follow national sponsoring guidelines, according to national ethic committees. Considering the wide range of viewpoints on the use of external sponsors throughout Europe these guidelines are confined to important principal rules. After a study carried out throughout member organisations, we realise that there are common principles inspiring the national guidelines; these common principles are subscribed and stated by Wonca Europe as follows,

The principles of the guidelines, are:

- Independence
- transparency
- equity

The Wonca Europe Sponsoring guidelines apply to all member and network organizations organizing national and international conferences, meetings, events and publications including web pages on behalf of Wonca Europe and/or using the name and logo of Wonca. They are valid for the cooperation with all Sponsoring organizations like e.g. pharmaceutical companies, publishers, financial institutions and the wide range of other enterprises. They apply to all forms of Sponsoring from the provision of finance to the provision of conference facilities and speakers. Member organizations remain free to ban all sponsorship from meetings, events and publications that they themselves organise.

Principles on external sponsorship

1. Financial rewards or incentives must always be through the organizer, who will ensure an equitable use of the sponsorship according to these guidelines.

2. Any sponsorship must not be conditional upon an obligation to prescribe, recommend or promote any pharmaceutical , non-pharmaceutical product or behaviour without evidence.

3. Sponsors must not be permitted to determine the scientific content of meetings that they support.
4. Sponsors are not allowed to make a promotional presentation as part of the scientific programme.
5. Speakers, publications and posters must have a declaration stating the financial support for the concerned study and possible conflicts of interest.
6. Satellite symposia should be limited to an appropriate number. They must be held outside of the ordinary scientific program to avoid interference with the scientific content of the conference. The abstracts and speakers must be accepted by the scientific committee of the conference.
7. Sponsorship from some organizations may not be acceptable if the organization promotes products which are incompatible with health e.g. tobacco or firearms. No material will be acceptable if it conveys ethnic, religious, gender or age bias, prejudice or slurs.
8. The Executive Board of Wonca Europe can produce a list of companies which are in conflict with medical ethics and the aims of Wonca Europe and from which it is not willing to accept sponsorship.
9. The Executive Board of Wonca Europe can control Sponsoring organisations, products and product areas and can enter its concerns to the organizing committee, when it finds violation of the rules of these Sponsoring guidelines.
10. The Executive Board of Wonca Europe can control the content of publicity material and can intervene to reject it, if it is against these guidelines.
11. The Executive Board of Wonca Europe will discuss each decision with the organizers in order to not jeopardize the organizing national society's financial stability.
12. Contracts with sponsors should be open for anyone who wants to look into it.
13. the website of a conference, must provide at least:
 - The bylaw of the event
 - The sponsorship policy
 - The composition of the scientific committee
 - The composition of the organising committee
 - Conflict of interest of all organising ,scientific members
 - A program with a clear distinction between scientific and symposiums
 - An open feedback from the attendees is possible on the website.

If these 13 items are in contradiction with a national sponsorship policy, the Executive board of WONCA Europe will have to consider the participation of the country in organising conferences case by case.