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The Structure and Objectives of the European Shiatsu Federation

(Chris McAlister, Eduard Tripp, 2022)

Objectives

The aim of the European Shiatsu Federation is to advance Shiatsu as a method for promoting self-healing throughout Europe, to establish the legal right to practise Shiatsu as an independent, self-regulating health-care method, available to the public throughout Europe as a first choice health care option, and to promote high standards of professional practice.

To achieve this, the ESF has four broad areas of policy and action: 1) Professional Development 2) Research 3) Political work 4) Promotion

Policies and actions are geared to be mutually supportive and to further the objectives of the ESF.

Organisation

The ESF, as it is commonly known, is a democratic and non-profit-making organisation. Its members are national professional Shiatsu associations. The ESF is a formal membership organisation registered in Sweden with membership rules, fees, and decision-making protocols. Their purpose is to facilitate agreement on and adherence to common policies and actions, and to empower the ESF to act on these policies.

The ESF developed more or less informally from a meeting between five national associations in 1994, namely the Shiatsu Society UK (SSUK, Great Britain), the Federazione Italiana Shiatsu (FIS, Italy), the Shiatsu Gesellschaft Schweiz (SGS, Switzerland), the Gesellschaft für Shiatsu in Deutschland (GSD, Germany) and the Österreichische Dachverband für Shiatsu (ÖDS, Austria).

In 1999, new statutes were developed in order to establish the ESF formally as a non-profit organization under Swedish law. This solution was chosen for reasons of convenience (simple bureaucracy) and cost (no charge, no taxes).

A key innovation of the late 1990's was the inauguration of an ambitious fee structure. Each national member organization was to pay 10€ for each of its own members. This was designed

to give the ESF financial autonomy. The amount was later raised to 15€ per individual. This fee structure was modified in 2004, with the intention of reducing the financial burden for the larger members associations.

It was recently adjusted once again to take account of the current economic situation facing the Shiatsu associations and their members. The fee structure was modified in 2022, in view of the debilitating effect two years of restrictions and lockdowns had on our profession, its practitioners and their associations. Information about the ESF membership fees structure is available on request from: secretary@europeanshiatsufederation.eu

The ESF is a founding member of EFCAM, the European Federation for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. EFCAM's purpose is to provide a unified voice for the CAM profession in Europe, since politicians cannot communicate with individual modalities and require a united voice for any constructive dialogue to take place.

ESF Member Associations

Following a long and eventful history, including assorted entries and exits, the ESF currently has ten national association members:

- Austria Österreichischer Dachverband für Shiatsu (ÖDS)
- Belgium Belgische Shiatsu Federatie (BSF)
- Czech Republic Česká Asociace Shiatsu (ČAS)
- Greece Ελληνική Εταιρεία Σιάτσου (HSS)
- Hungary Magyar Shiatsu Társaságot (MASHITE)
- Ireland Shiatsu Society Ireland (SSI)
- Italy Coordinamento Operatori Shiatsu (COS)
- Spain Asociación de Profesionales de Shiatsu de España (APSE)
- Sweden Kroppsterapeuternas Yrkesförbund (KrY)
- UK The UK Shiatsu Society (UKSS)

ESF Representatives

The role of the ESF representative is a pivotal one. Within it there are two distinct but complementary components: 1) the rep brings a mandate and a set of intentions from the national association to the ESF board; equally 2) the rep conveys the will and decisions of the ESF back to the national association.

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The communication skills required - above and beyond language competency - are considerable and can take some time to develop. That is because their task is to facilitate communication back and forth between the ESF as a European federation and the association tasked with representing the interests of its members at the national level.

Email is the most useful medium of communication between meetings. Virtual board meetings are also a regular occurrence. Additionally, it is common practice for virtual meetings to be held between two or more reps currently working on specific projects within working groups.

The Role and Status of ESF Representatives

- The ESF Representative has a dual role of National representative and ESF Ambassador.
- The National Association should give the ESF Representative a constitutional role and responsibility whose job is to give priority to the European dimension of the National Association's work
- National Associations should ideally have an ESF sub-group chaired by the ESF Representative.
- Representatives should always be mandated, but with a defined authority to change position when there is a notified deadline to make a decision.
- National Association Committees should give a minimum of 10% of their time to the European dimension and ESF work.
- Each National Association Annual General Meeting (AGM) must have an ESF report and make ESF policy decisions.
- Each National Association President should receive all ESF documents.
- Each National Association Newsletter should have an ESF report in every issue.
- The National Associations should adequately fund the internal work connected to the ESF.
- National Association Committees should adopt a Standing Order to meet the financial deadlines of ESF projects.

© 2022, Chris McAlister, Shiatsu and acupuncture practitioner, director of Isshin Gakkai school for energy studies, ESF President (till 2026); Dr Eduard Tripp, former Head of Shiatsu-Ausbildungen Austria (http://www.shiatsu-austria.at), psychotherapist and supervisor. ESF representative of the Austrian Shiatsu Association (ÖDS).