

## **The Wonca Europe guidelines on External Sponsorship**

The aim of these rules is to safeguard the integrity and the independence of doctors and their professional bodies, to see that there shall be no doubt in the public that the professional advice given by doctors and their organisations is led only by their professional skills and knowledge and not by any pecuniary relations with organisations with other goals.

1. The Wonca Europe guidelines on sponsorship will apply to meetings, events and publications or web pages carried out on its behalf.
2. Member organisations remain free to ban all sponsorship from meetings, events and publications that they themselves organise.
3. The Wonca Europe guidelines on sponsorship will apply to all types of support
4. Financial rewards or incentives should not be offered to individual participants.
5. Sponsors should be restricted in their input into any event they support.
6. Sponsors must not be permitted to determine any aspect of the content of meetings that they support.
7. The Wonca Europe EB will scrutinize organizations and products or product areas and can reject sponsors which are in conflict with medical ethics and the aims of the Society and from which it is not willing to accept sponsorship.
8. The Wonca Europe EB will scrutinise the content of any publicity material and can reject it.
9. Contracts with sponsors should be on paper, and open for anyone who want to look into it.

There is a wide range of viewpoints on the use of external sponsors throughout Europe. Given this disparity in view, it is important that the European Society guidelines are flexible enough to accommodate such varied views, but attract broad support. The following will apply to any meeting, event, or publication (including electronic publication) which is being organized with or on behalf of the Wonca Europe for which external sponsorship is being sought.

The organizers of such meetings, events, or publications should submit to the secretariat of the European Society of General Practice/Family Medicine their proposals when external sponsorship is being sought. Member organizations remain free to ban all sponsorship from meetings, events and publications that they themselves organize.

Sponsorship may be sought for any of the following - meetings, events and publications (including web pages). The Wonca Europe guidelines will apply to any of these. Wonca Europe recommends that its guidelines on sponsorship are applied by all member and network organizations.

Sponsorship may be offered or sought from a variety of organizations - pharmaceutical companies, publishers, financial institutions and a wide range of other enterprises.

The guidance should apply to all of these. Sponsorship may also be in a number of forms which range from the provision of finance to the provision of conference facilities and speakers. The Wonca Europe guidelines on sponsorship will apply to all types of support. Financial rewards or incentives should not be offered to individual participants but always through the organizers of events, who will ensure an equitable use of such sponsorship, and that these guidelines are observed.

Sponsors should be permitted a limited input into any event they support. Publicity should be limited to an acknowledgement of the name of the company in event printed material, and a similar verbal acknowledgement by the organizers. Specific products should not be mentioned. They should be able to mount and man a display which participants may visit if they wish. Sponsors should not make a promotional presentation as part of the programme. The European Society will scrutinize the content of any publicity material and can reject it, or demand its modification.

Sponsors must not be permitted to determine any aspect of the content of the conference. The course organizers must have total freedom to organize the content, to invite speakers, and to determine the audience, without interference from the sponsor.

Guidelines for WE conference sponsorship:

1. Exclusive sponsoring of the conference for one sponsor is not allowed.
2. Satellite symposia should be limited in number. They should be linked to the conference but outside the ordinary program to avoid interference with the scientific content of the conference. The abstracts and speakers should be accepted by the scientific committee of the conference.
3. Speakers and posters should have a declaration attached, stating the financial support for the study and the speakers possible conflict of interest.

Sponsorship from some organizations may not be acceptable if the organization promotes products which are incompatible with health, - examples being sponsorship from the producers of tobacco, alcohol or firearms. No material will be acceptable if it conveys ethnic, religious, gender or age bias, prejudice or slurs.

Applications for the approval of sponsorship should be made to the secretariat of the European Society and will be considered by three members of the Executive Board. Appeals against their decision cannot be made by the sponsoring company or organization, but can be made by the organizers of the meeting, event or publication to the President of WONCA World whose decision will be final.