

EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC DIVING COMMITTEE (EDSC)

Interim Constitution

Draft 1 (October 2007)

1. INTRODUCTION

- (a) The European Scientific Diving Committee (EDSC) was created formally on the 15th October 2007 at the first International Symposium for Occupational Scientific Diving held at Bremerhaven.
- (b) At the founding meeting, nine European member states were represented: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
- (c) The founding meeting proposed that the Committee would exist in a transitional form for one year or less depending on the formal ratification a full constitution.
- (d) This document outlines the agreed operational structure and interim constitution of the ESDC during this transitional phase.
- (e) The EDSC formally replaces the European Scientific Diving Supervisory Committee (ESDSC) that last met in Banyuls-sur-Mer in 2000. The ESDSC was not constituted; no procedures have been conducted to formalise the dissolution of the ESDSC.

2. TITLE

- (a) The Committee shall be called the European Scientific Diving Committee hereafter referred to as the EDSC or the Committee.

3. OBJECTIVES

- (a) The ESDC exists to promote scientific diving as a valid and safe research tool that can be employed throughout Europe in support of scientific funding initiatives. Specific objectives are:
- (b) To encourage international mobility in the European scientific diving community through the implementation of a practical support framework by:
 - (i) promoting the widespread recognition of the existing European Scientific Diver (ESD) and Advanced European Scientific Diver (AESD) qualifications as minimum standards by assuring their reciprocal acceptance as baseline assessments of competence for occupational scientific diving in Europe;
 - (ii) becoming established as the recognised European body with responsibility to provide advice and guidance on the acceptance of the existing standards within national and international legislative processes;
 - (iii) facilitating, promoting and maintaining communication with and between represent national scientific diving organisations.
- (c) To promote safety in scientific diving across Europe through

- (i) facilitating a pan-European framework that exists to promote industry best practice in occupational scientific diving;
 - (ii) the promotion and support for the establishment of national scientific diving committees where they don't exist;
 - (iii) the development and maintenance of a European database of scientific diving activities.
- (d) To advance underwater scientific excellence in Europe through
- (i) the facilitation of conferences, workshops, courses and publications where scientific diving is promoted as a research tool;
 - (ii) encouragement and support for European funded research networks that employ scientific diving.
- (f) The EDSC should maintain a website that carries all information in support of the objectives of the Committee.

4. **MEMBERSHIP**

- (a) The overall aim of the ESDC during this transitional phase is to encourage the best possible representation from all European member states (to include all nations that are approved for EU scientific funding).
- (b) Membership is at the nation level but with an identified representative. At the earliest opportunity the national representative should be able to demonstrate recognition and support from a national scientific diving community or committee. Where possible, any national body or community should have, or be seeking, formal backing from a national authority that is one that has principal responsibility for occupational scientific diving; it may be a governmental, funding or insurance agency that may qualify the divers and/or support their employment.
- (c) Membership status during the transitional stage is gained by a simple voting majority of the current membership following a presentation of the structure supporting occupational scientific diving in the applicant's country.
- (d) Throughout the transitional phase potential members can be invited to attend meetings or can request to be in attendance. Until voted as a member, the applicant has non-voting status as a guest.
- (e) There are no restrictions to being able to speak at any meeting irrespective of status.

5. **STEERING COMMITTEE**

- (a) During the transitional stage, the ESDC will be co-ordinated by a Steering Committee that will consist of a Chairperson and two supporting Deputies.
- (b) The ESDC can add to or modify this Steering Committee through the standard voting procedure (section 7).
- (c) At present (15 October 2007) the Steering Committee consists of the representatives of France, Germany and the United Kingdom. The Chair is Jean-Pierre Feral (France; Chairperson), Philipp Fischer (Germany; Deputy Chairperson) and Martin Sayer (United Kingdom; Deputy Chairperson).

6. **MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

- (a) The Committee must hold meetings at a frequency that supports the aims and objectives of this transitional phase. It is anticipated that the intervals between meetings shall be no more than 6 months.
- (b) Membership will be notified of the dates and locations of the meetings no less than 28 days before the meeting is due to take place.
- (c) An agenda for the meeting and any relevant papers for that meeting, along with the minutes of the last meeting, must be made available to the membership no later than 14 days prior to the date of the meeting.
- (d) A record of every ESDC meeting must be approved by each following meeting and that approval recorded. All records of meetings must be maintained in a mode that is easily accessible to the membership and others, such as publication on the ESDC website.
- (e) Additional meetings of the Committee (excluding meetings of any sub-groups) may be called at the discretion of the Chairman of the Steering Committee.

7. **VOTING AND QUORUM**

- (a) During the transitional phase all votes are accepted with a simple majority of the established voting members except the adoption of the full constitution and the dissolution of the transitional phase which must be by a two-third majority of all the established voting members (not just the quorum) at the time of the vote;
- (b) Any meeting will be quorate when two-thirds or more of the voting membership are present and will never be less than five members;
- (c) Votes in writing (including e-mail) will be accepted where 28 days notice has been provided. When written votes are accepted, the identified voter can be counted toward the quorum.

8. **AMENDMENTS**

- (a) Proposed amendments to this interim constitution must be submitted to the Steering Committee no less than 28 days before the next Committee meeting.
- (b) Notice of any amendment must be circulated to all members of the Committee no less than 14 days prior to the next meeting of the Committee.
- (c) Changes to the constitution can only be carried by a vote of not less than two thirds of the present Committee membership. Written votes are accepted according to section 7(c) of this interim constitution.

9. **INTERPRETATION**

- (a) In the event of a dispute, the final interpretation of the constitution shall be by the Chairman of the Steering Committee.
- (b) The Chairman of the Steering Committee shall have the power to make rules for the conduct of the EDSC and its members providing that such rules are not in conflict with this constitution and are subsequently approved at the following meeting of the EDSC.

10. **DISSOLUTION**

- (a) The interim constitution of the ESDC will terminate at midnight on the 14 October 2008;
- (b) If there is not a full constitution in place following the termination date (10(a)) then the Chairman of the Steering Committee can propose an extension to the transitional phase of no more than 12 months. An extension vote can be carried with a simple majority of the quorum at the time of the vote following the voting structure outlined in section 7 of this interim constitution. After the full 12 months extension, if there remains no agreement then the ESDC must dissolve;
- (c) In the event of the dissolution of the EDSC for any reason any assets remaining, after payment of any debts, shall be returned to the Committee funding organisations in proportion to the original scale of input.
- (d) Following dissolution of the ESDC, the name “European Scientific Diving Committee” and the abbreviation “ESDC” can be used by any other credible group.