

ESAF - European Science Advisors Forum

Statute

I Definition

1. The European Science Advisors Forum, hereafter referred to as ESAF, is an independent informal network of scientific advisors of the European Union member states.
2. Scientific advisors of the European Union candidate states and those representing scientific advisory bodies of the European Union institutions and of specific strategic countries can be invited to join ESAF as Associate Members following the proposal of the Chair or of one of the full members.

II Mandate

1. ESAF was established in 2014 upon the initiative of the European Commission as the European Union-level forum and network for promoting the uptake of scientific evidence into policy-making, for the exchange of information and practice, and for the strategic reflection on scientific advice to political and non-political subjects. ESAF also aims to spread awareness about scientific advice among citizens and actors from civil society and industry.
2. ESAF is a self-governed body without legal personality. Its secretariat may use *pro tempore* the legal personality of its host institution in accordance with applicable laws and regulations of the host state and of the European Union.

III Mission

1. ESAF's mission is to foster cooperation, knowledge exchange and mutual learning between its Members and Associate Members, and to enhance the uptake of scientific advice into legislative, executive and judicial processes by pursuing, inter alia, the following aims:
 - a. To facilitate networking and collaboration on common challenges and opportunities related to the practice of requesting, providing and taking up scientific advice.
 - b. To participate the process of bringing together researchers and policy-makers, and possibly present evidence-informed policy options to support policy development.
 - c. To pursue synergies between the national and European Union level and facilitate the exchange of information, expertise, practices and results of scientific advice activities.
 - d. To interact with relevant third parties and develop joint positions on topics related to scientific advice.
 - e. To foster capacity building and the enhancement of skills for providing effective scientific advice to governments and communicate it to society and citizens.
 - f. To support public engagement and outreach activities of Members and Associate Members to improve public understanding of the role of science and scientific evidence in policy-making and decision-taking.
2. ESAF is guided collectively by the adherence to universal and European values and principles of science, by the commitment to affirm evidence-informed policy-making and decision-taking, by the ambition to provide best-quality, independent scientific advice produced in a transparent manner and by the appreciation for the European diversity of national science-based advisory models.

IV Membership

1. ESAF consists of experts who formally provide scientific advice or advice on the scientific advisory process to the government that nominates them *ad personam*:
 - a. Members are one individual for each of the European Union member states, nominated by the respective government. Members do not represent the official position of their nominating states.
 - b. Associate Members are one individual for each of the states listed under I.2. and nominated by the respective government; additional individuals from European Union member states with functions as per IV.1.a, nominated by the ESAF member from that member state. The European Union Institutions, notably the European Commission and the European Parliament, can be invited to nominate one Associate Member each.

2. The following principles apply hereto:
 - a. Members and Associate Members are nominated through official notification from the nominating authority to the ESAF Chair.
 - b. Members and Associate Members can withdraw from ESAF through written notification of their nominating authority addressed to the ESAF Chair. Members and Associate Members can withdraw upon their own initiative through written notification to the ESAF Chair.
 - c. Members and Associate Members are recommended to appoint one Permanent Representative to represent them in the day-to-day business of ESAF and can delegate their voting right only to their Permanent Representative.
 - d. The ESAF Chair, in agreement with the Committee, may invite additional individuals from the states represented in ESAF to attend meetings of ESAF if this is in the strategic interest of ESAF. The same applies to individuals from other institutions and countries. The invitation may be permanent, as an Associate Member, or on a case-by-case basis.
3. The following rights and commitments derive from membership:
 - a. Members and Associate Members are committed to ensure an inclusive exchange with other relevant actors that provide scientific advice within their respective countries; this includes, inter alia, mirroring the communication and fostering the connectivity between relevant actors on national and European level.
 - b. Members and Associate Members are committed to engage in the ongoing discussions within ESAF and to contribute in good faith to the general advancement of the science-based advisory process in Europe, particularly in situations of crisis. Associate Members representing scientific advisory bodies of the European Union institutions are committed to ensure connectivity between scientific advisory processes in their institutions and ESAF.
 - c. Membership implies active and passive suffrage, and rights deriving hereof according to the provisions of this statute.

V. Structure

1. The following principles apply hereto:
 - a. ESAF is an independent and informal network with ownership of its Members.
 - b. ESAF cannot enter into legal liability that contradicts the individual legal liability of its Members or Associate Members.
 - c. Financial contributions to ESAF, such as those from the European Union institutions, can be requested by the Chair with the agreement of the Assembly.
2. ESAF is structured as follows:
 - a. The **Assembly** is composed of all Members and Associate Members and represents the highest governance authority of ESAF.
 - b. The **Chair** is elected by a majority of the Members from among their number for a term of three years, renewable for one year. The Chair has representative responsibilities as *primus inter pares*, as spokesperson of ESAF, and as chair of the Assembly and the Committee. The Chair cannot delegate the chairmanship to its Permanent Representative.
 - c. The **Deputy Chair** is held *pro tempore* by the Member from the state holding the incumbent Presidency of the European Council; if such Member is not available, the Member representing the state of the subsequent European Council Presidency takes over this function until the end of the latter semestrial Presidency of the European Council.
 - d. The **Committee** is composed of: three Members or their Permanent Representatives from the European Union member states designated by the Assembly, one representative designated by the European Commission, the Chair, the Deputy Chair and the Executive Secretary. The Committee is responsible for steering ESAF's day-to-day business and preparing proposals and decisions for the Assembly. The Committee seeks consensus.
 - e. The **Secretariat** is composed of the staff supporting the Chair and the Committee. In principle, the Secretariat is hosted by the host institution of the Chair. The Chair appoints an Executive Secretary to run the Secretariat.
 - f. A limited number of **Task Forces** can be established by the Members with a precise mandate and for a specific period, and with two Co-Chairs designated by and from within the Assembly. The Committee

oversees the work of the Task Forces. The Task Forces can invite external experts to join *pro bono*.

VI Rules of procedure

1. As a principle and while seeking consensus in the Assembly, decisions are taken by simple majority.
2. Only Members can cast their vote. The majority is calculated only on casted votes. The vote cannot be delegated to another Member. At least half of the Members should be present or be represented to cast a valid vote by the deadline set by the Chair. Specific decisions can be taken by tacit consent. The voting modality, by remote or in presence, is defined case-by-case by the Chair.
3. The Assembly convenes physically at least once a year in one of the states represented in ESAF; the host provides the venue for the meeting; participants pay for their own travel and accommodation; the rotating succession of the hosting states is decided by consensual arrangement. In addition, the Assembly convenes in hybrid form at least once a year.
4. The meetings of the Assembly are prepared by the Committee together with other relevant actors; meetings can include a limited number of external invitees.
5. The Committee convenes whenever needed, and at least once per semester; the meetings of the Committee may include a limited number of relevant external invitees.
6. The Chair formally invites to the meetings by electronic correspondence and sends the draft agenda prior to the meeting. It disseminates concise proceedings within a month after the meeting has taken place.
7. The Chair and the Secretariat are responsible for managing the ESAF website *www.esaforum.eu*. They are also responsible for ESAF related internal and external communication.

VII Final provisions

1. The Members take ultimate decisions in contentious or/and contingency situations not covered by this Statute, in good faith and in the spirit of the Statute by simple majority.
2. The Statute is valid starting from the date of its adoption. The same applies to subsequent amendments. The Statute is amended by two-third majority of the members participating in the voting procedure.