

## **Bylaws of the European Internet Forum (EIF)**

All terms used with capital herein, and not defined in these bylaws ('règlement intérieur'), shall have the meaning assigned to it in the statutes of the Association.

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### **I. Disinterested purpose and objectives**

Article 5 of the statutes provides for the disinterested purpose of the Association, as further explained hereinafter. It is the objective of the European Internet Forum to be an independent, non-partisan discussion forum with legislators, policymakers and interested parties on challenges and opportunities resulting for society from the application of information and communication technologies, notably the Internet, with the aim of improving transparency and mutual understanding, hence facilitating and accelerating the process of political decision making and putting this process on an objective basis.

In doing so, the EIF strives to promote and to strengthen social and economic progress and prosperity, the cohesion of European society notably through the inclusion of all its groups into the 'Digital Society', the competitiveness of European business, Europe's pluralistic cultural, educational, scientific and technological heritage and wealth, the participation of

citizens in democratic decision making processes, and the freedom of expression and human rights, while respecting the multilateral, competitive and open nature of the international trading system.

The EIF seeks to develop and maintain relations with other public and private institutions interested in these issues and in particular with policy-makers outside the EU in view of the global nature of the Internet.

The EIF does not itself take positions on specific policy issues.

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## **II. Membership**

### **II.1 EIF policies for specific types of companies and/or individuals**

#### II.1.1 EIF policy for law firms, consultancy companies and other professional services firms:

- Membership as Effective Member for its own account in principle is not possible.
- A staff member of a law firm, consultancy company or professional services firm may be designated by a client who is an EIF Business or Associate Member to represent it in EIF activities, but must participate under the name and on behalf of the EIF Member.
- Exceptions will be considered by the Steering Committee, notably in the case of professional ICT services firms, or more generally where the applicant brings something uniquely valuable to EIF in its own right, always provided that the criteria for membership of the statutes are met.

#### II.1.2 EIF policy for former Political Members:

- All former MEPs who have been Political Members of EIF are welcome, upon request, to participate in all EIF events, with the exception of internal meetings.
- Should a former Political Member repeatedly request to attend EIF events, the Steering Committee may ask greater clarity about the interests s/he represents.
- Should a former Political Member become associated with an organisation which could reasonably be expected to itself become an EIF Business or Associate member, s/he will make reasonable efforts to bring that organisation into the EIF membership.
- The Steering Committee may recognise a former Political Members or a former representative of an Effective Member (Business or Associate) or other personalities who have made an exceptional contribution to EIF with the designation "Honorary Member". Honorary Members will be invited to participate in all EIF events, excluding internal meetings. Such participation is strictly in a personal capacity.

#### II.1.3 EIF policy for former MEPs and former officials from public institutions:

- Former MEPs or officials acting as advisors to one or more organizations on a professional services basis fall under the EIF's policy concerning EIF membership of professional services firms.
- Former MEPs or officials may be invited on a case-by-case basis to an EIF event in light of the relevance of their previous responsibilities to the substance of the event.

#### II.1.4 EIF policy for representatives of EIF Associate members:

- Associate members can be represented at EIF by staff members and by Governing Board members; these would represent the EIF Associate member organisation and no other.

## II.2 Obligations and Rights of Members

All EIF Members and their representatives should make all reasonable efforts to attend the EIF meetings and to participate in EIF activities.

Member organisations must be registered on the European Parliament's Transparency Register and their representatives must be able to access the European Parliament premises on their own.

## II.3 Fees

In accordance with the provisions of article 31 of the statutes, the Governing Board has decided that the annual fee will be as follows, as may be updated by the Governing Board on an annual basis:

### Business Members:

Standard fee: Euros 11.000

Small & medium sized\* enterprises: Euros 2.200 (\*as per [EU recommendation 2003/361](#), companies with less than 250 employees on their payroll, an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euros and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euros, and no more than one third of their capital owned directly or indirectly by a larger company.)

### Associate Membership:

Associate Members representing commercial interests and who themselves have corporate members: Euros 2.200

Associate Members representing commercial interests and who themselves have corporate members, but where one or more of these is a Business Member of EIF: Euros 1.100

Associate Members representing non-commercial interests or having no corporate members: Euros 550

The annual fee is invoiced in the first quarter of the year to which the fee is related. For new Members fees will be applied pro rata from the date of notification of membership.

For the avoidance of doubt, it is not necessary for Members to renew their membership each year since the membership continues unless terminated in accordance with article 9 of the statutes. If a Business Member or Associate member wants to withdraw, it shall give written notice to the Governing Board, c/o Director General of the EIF with a notice period of at least 2 months (i.e. by 1st November).

#### **II.4 External participants ('EIF Friends')**

Representatives from the EU, international or national institutions, Permanent Representations and Missions to the EU, from regulatory authorities, think-tanks, the academia and other organisations that the Steering Committee may deem fit to valuably contribute to the EIF disinterested purpose but who are not eligible for membership, may be invited to attend EIF's activities as external participants on a regular basis. This list of regular invitees is referred to as 'EIF Friends'.

The External participants shall comply with the guidelines as established by the Steering Committee, Governing Board or Secretariat, and shall in any case respect confidentiality, if and when applicable.

Their participation can be terminated with immediate effect. They shall have no claim to the Association's assets.

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### **III. Governance**

The European Internet Forum has the following governing bodies:

#### **General Assembly ('Assemblée Générale')**

Political Members attend the meetings of the General Assembly in person or may give a power of attorney to another Political Member, as to be provided for a specific meeting to the CEO (Director General).

Each Business or Associate Member is represented in meetings of the General Assembly by one delegate ("Member Representative").

For the disinterested purpose of organising their representation in the meetings of the General Assembly, Business or Associate Members have the following options:

- The Business or Associate Member nominates for each separate meeting a Member Representative on the basis of a written power of attorney specifically provided for that meeting to the CEO (Director General).
- The Business or Associate Member, upon its admission as Member, nominates a permanent Member Representative by providing a written power of attorney to the

CEO (Director General). In addition, a Member can choose to nominate an alternate for its permanent Member Representative. Both the permanent Member Representative and the alternate, if any, can be changed by the Member at any time. For this purpose, Members shall communicate a new written power of attorney to the CEO (Director General), no later than one week prior to a meeting of the General Assembly in order to have the change of the permanent Member Representative and/or alternate be effective. When nominating a permanent Member Representative and an alternate, the Member shall also communicate to the CEO the address and the email address of such persons.

Voting shall be done by show of hands, or, in case of meetings via electronic means of communication, speech of voice or via electronic voting respectively. When the meeting has to decide on elections, appointments or nominations of persons or Members, the voting shall be done in a secret manner. Members shall be informed about the results of the voting, namely the total number of given valid votes and the distribution of such votes, however shall not be given access to the details of the voting.

### **Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee consists of

- Political Members, it being understood that in the Steering Committee an appropriate balance between the principal political groups represented in the European Parliament should be respected, as well as an appropriate balance between the representation of the Governing Board, taking into account its size, and the Political Members. In addition, the Steering Committee should strive for gender parity.
- The members of the Governing Board.
- External Personalities as the Political Members in the Steering Committee deem valuable and who are invited to become member of the Steering Committee by the Political Members. In case no consensus can be reached between the Political Members, they will decide by simple majority.

Criteria for the External Personalities in the Steering Committee as provided for in article 22.1 of the statutes:

Such personalities shall be able to significantly contribute to the EIF or to the objectives of the EIF. Membership of the Steering Committee is strictly on a personal basis. For the avoidance of doubt, external personalities can also be Honorary Members of the EIF. When considering whether or not to invite an External Personality to join the Steering Committee, the Steering Committee shall be careful to take account of any potential conflict of interest.

Meetings, agenda and decision takings:

The Steering Committee shall meet at least twice a year upon convocation of the Chair. The members of the Steering Committee shall be duly notified of a meeting by way of a written notice communicated via regular mail or via any other means of written communication

(including e-mail). The notice shall contain an agenda for the meeting and identify and specify with sufficient detail the matters for which a vote will be required. The notice shall be sent at least 7 days prior to the date of the meeting. Provided that all members of the Steering Committee agree, they can waive for a particular meeting compliance with the notice requirements.

In case a member of the Steering Committee is unable to participate in a meeting, such member of the Steering Committee can also nominate, and be represented by, another member of the Steering Committee.

A meeting of the Steering Committee shall be validly constituted even if all or some of the members of the Steering Committee are not physically present or represented, but participate in the deliberations via any modern means of telecommunication that allow members of the Steering Committee to directly hear each other and directly speak to each other, such as a telephone or video conference. A meeting of the Steering Committee shall also be validly constituted even if all or some of the members of the Steering Committee are not physically present or represented, but participate in the deliberations via any modern means of telecommunication that allow members of the Steering Committee to directly converse in writing, such as via Instant Messaging services. In such cases, the members of the Steering Committee will be deemed present.

The first priority is to reach decisions by consensus. When a vote is deemed necessary, only the Political Members present or represented shall vote, in which case a simple majority is required. In the event of a tie vote, that of the Chair is preponderant.

Should the Governing Board disagree with recommendations of the Steering Committee, the Chair of the Governing Board shall report to the Steering Committee with an explanation of the specific matters, to be re-evaluated at the Steering Committee.

Conflict of interest:

When a member of the Steering Committee has a conflict of interest in any decision taking by the Steering Committee, such member shall notify the Steering Committee of such conflict and shall abstain from taking part in that decision. Minutes of meetings of the Steering Committee shall be distributed to all the members of the Steering Committee.

### **Governing Board ('Organe d'Administration')**

The Governing Board (also called simply 'Board') consists of

- Maximum 8 persons elected by the General Assembly upon proposal by the group of Business Members. In case no consensus can be reached between the Business Members, they will decide by simple majority.
- Maximum 6 persons elected by the General Assembly upon proposal by the group of the Associate Members. In case no consensus can be reached between the Associate Members, they will decide by simple majority.

When a legal entity is a Member of the Governing Board, a natural person will be appointed as permanent representative to be charged with the performance of that mandate, under the name and on behalf of the legal entity.

Another member of the Governing Board from the same group, being a person proposed by the Business Members or the Associate Members respectively, may represent a member of the Governing Board prevented from attending Governing Board meetings in person.

The Members will use reasonable endeavors to respect an appropriate balance between various industry sectors and interests when presenting candidates for the Governing Board in accordance with article 15.2 of the statutes.

The Members recognise the importance of gender-balanced governance. When proposing and electing candidates, both constituencies shall strive for gender parity in the Governing Board as an aspirational goal.

The Members will also take into account the need for appropriate renewal in the Governing Board, therefore the mandates of the members of the Governing Board should only be renewed once.

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#### **IV. Chair and Vice-Chair(s) of the Steering Committee**

The Chair and of the Steering Committee shall be elected by simple majority of the Political Members of the Steering Committee.

The Chair of the Steering Committee will act as the liaison and the spokesperson for the EIF towards the outside community.

The Steering Committee may decide to appoint up to two Vice-Chair(s), who shall be elected by simple majority of the Political Members of the Steering Committee.

The Vice-Chair(s) may act as the liaison and the spokesperson for the EIF towards the outside community, on behalf of and in coordination with the Chair. They may be mandated by the Chair of specific tasks and may replace the Chair whenever impeded.

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#### **V. Programming Committee**

Meetings, agenda and decision takings:

The Programming Committee shall meet at least twice a year upon convocation of the Co-chairs. The members of the Programming Committee shall be duly notified of a meeting by way of a written notice communicated via regular mail or via any other means of written communication (including e-mail). The notice shall contain an agenda for the meeting and identify and specify with sufficient detail the matters for which a vote will be required. The

notice shall be sent at least 7 days prior to the date of the meeting. Provided that all members of the Programming Committee agree, they can waive for a particular meeting compliance with the notice requirements.

The first priority is to reach programme recommendations by consensus for consideration of the Steering Committee. In case there is no consensus among Programming Committee members present, the Programming Committee co-chairs will advise the Steering Committee of the alternatives discussed.

Minutes of meetings of the Programming Committee shall be distributed to all EIF members of the Programming Committee.

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## **VI. Director General and Secretariat**

### **Director General**

The CEO is referred to as 'Director General' of the EIF and is appointed by the Governing Board. S/he is responsible for the day-to-day management of the EIF, for all administrative and organisational tasks that follow from decisions of the Governing Board and if appropriate, other EIF bodies, and for managing the EIF premises. In general, the daily management includes both the acts and decisions that do not go beyond the needs of the association's daily life, as well as the acts and decisions that, either because of their lesser importance or because of their urgency, do not justify the intervention of the Governing Board.

The Director General leads the development and implementation of the overall EIF strategy and mission, and may be requested to provide ad hoc advice to the Steering Committee and Governing Board. The Director General develops and implements specific strategic plans for EIF, with special regard to membership outreach, communication and planning of activities. The Director General reports to the Governing Board and solicits their advice and guidance whenever necessary.

The Director General leads the Secretariat, oversees the work of other staff members and manages the financial resources. The Director General recommends a budget to the Governing Board annually. For the management of financial matters, the services of an outside accountant may be used.

The Director General will act as secretary for the Steering Committee, the Governing Board, the General Assembly and the Programming Committee.

The following categories describe the representation powers to be delegated to the members of the Governing Board and the Director General. A distinction is made between Type A Powers and Type B Powers.

### **Type 'A' Powers**

All powers, except for the powers and the actions listed in the type B powers.

These powers comprise amongst others:

- the signing of the daily correspondence related to the Association's activity;
- the accepting of endorsed or registered mail addressed to the Association, as well as the receiving of postal or electronic mandates, be they international or not, addressed to the Association in the same conditions; for this purpose granting all discharges, signing all registers and all documents;
- the signing of receipts for amounts paid to the Association;
- issuing of invoices for Membership fees and contributions from the Associate Members and the collecting of the corresponding amounts;
- the signing and terminating of all purchase contracts and license agreements for software;
- the leasing and renting of all movable and immovable property for less than 9 years;
- the signing and terminating of labour contracts and of all documents pertaining to the personnel administration;
- the signing and terminating of contracts relating to consultancy services or other services provided by third parties;
- the signing and cancelling of insurance contracts and the signing of all correspondence related to the insurances of the Association;
- the granting of powers of attorney to third parties within the limits of this proxy to bind the Association;
- to this end, the passing and signing of all documents, and in general doing everything that is useful and/or necessary to manage the assets of the Association.

#### **Type 'B' Powers – Financial powers**

- with regard to current accounts of all types (regardless of the currency): a right of disposition over the assets in the account; in particular, the right to make deposits, to give payment or transfer instructions, to make withdrawals, to authorize and withdraw authorization for standing payment orders and direct debit transactions, to request and write out cheques, to hand over for collection or collect financial and/or trade documents (whether subject to effective collection, or otherwise), to close the account; to request a bank card for oneself, etc.;

- with regard to saving accounts of all types (regardless of the currency): a right of disposition over the assets in the account; in particular the right to make deposits, the right to make withdrawals, the right to close the account;
- with regard to term investments of all types (regardless of the currency): the right to give instructions to reinvest, to effect settlement, to collect interest due, to make full or partial early repayment.

### **Attribution of Powers**

The Type A Powers are delegated to the Chair of the Governing Board and to the CEO.

As far as the amount of the transaction does not exceed 20,000 Euros the powers can be exercised with the signature of the CEO, acting alone. Where the transaction in question exceeds a value of 20,000 Euros, the powers can be exercised with the signature of the Chair and the signature of the CEO, acting jointly, or when the Chair is not available, the signature of another member of the Governing Board designated by the Chair.

The Type B Powers are delegated to the Chair of the Governing Board and the CEO, in accordance with the following provisions:

As far as the amount of the transaction does not exceed 20,000 Euros, the powers may be exercised with the signature of the CEO, acting alone. Where the transaction in question exceeds a value of 20,000 Euros, the powers can be exercised with the signature of the Chair and the signature of the CEO, acting jointly, or when the Chair is not available, the signature of another member of the Governing Board designated by the Chair.

### **Secretariat**

The EIF Secretariat is composed of the CEO (Director General) and one or more staff members, as the Governing Board deems fit. EIF may appoint advisors for the execution of specific tasks.

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## **VII. Final provisions**

The Governing Board may, upon a recommendation from the Steering Committee, take the necessary steps for the EIF to join or collaborate with other associations when this is in conformity with the stated purpose and objectives of EIF.

The EIF financial year is identical to the calendar year.

## **Annex 1 - Governing Board Election Process**

### **I. Nomination of candidates**

I.1. At least 10 weeks before the annual General Assembly meeting, the Chair of the Governing Board shall launch a nomination call.

The Business Members and Associate Members shall put forward candidates representing their organisation.

The constituency of the Business Members and the constituency of the Associate Members shall list all nominations for candidates within their constituency.

I.2. If the number of nominees is less than 8 for the constituency of Business Members or less than 6 for the constituency of Associate Members, a new nomination call shall be made and the nomination process will be repeated.

I.3. Nominations for candidates shall be made by e-mail to the secretariat of EIF. Each nomination for a candidate shall contain a short biography of the nominated candidate.

I.4. Each constituency shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that the list of nominated candidates aspires for gender parity. If the submitted nominations do not meet the threshold of gender parity, the Secretariat shall invite the relevant constituency to submit additional nominations (or replace submitted nominations) to meet the aspirational threshold.

This does not prevent the election process from proceeding if, after a renewed call, the threshold is still not met. The shortfall shall be highlighted at the next General Assembly meeting.

### **II. Vote by constituency**

II.1. Each Associate Member can select up to 6 candidates from the list of nominations within the constituency of Associate Members. Each Business Member can select up to 8 candidates from the list of nominations within the constituency of Business Members.

II.2. In case of a tie between candidates within a constituency, all candidates shall be elected, provided that the maximum number of available positions, respectively 6 for the constituency of Associate Members and 8 for the constituency of Business Members, is not exceeded.

In the event that the maximum number of available positions for a constituency would be exceeded by electing all candidates in a tie vote:

- if the tie-vote persists, the candidate contributing to better gender balance shall be preferred;
- the secretariat will invite the Members who did not yet cast a vote to do so within an extended deadline;
- if the tie-vote persists, the Chair of the Steering Committee shall vote to break the tie-vote.

II.3. Voting shall be secret, and by e-mail to the secretariat of EIF.

II.4. The secretariat shall compile a list of the elected candidates by number of votes received (hereafter “Ranked List”) and shall compile an alphabetical list of the elected candidates (hereafter “Shortlist”), for each constituency. The Shortlist for the constituency of Business Members shall include the top 8 candidates in said constituency. The Shortlist for the constituency of Associate Members shall include the top 6 candidates in said constituency.

### **III. General Assembly vote**

III.1. The Shortlist for each constituency shall be submitted to the General Assembly.

III.2. The members of the Governing Board shall be elected by the General Assembly from the lists of candidates submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with articles 13 and 14.5 of the statutes, through written procedure.

III.3. Each vote shall be secret, and shall be cast by e-mail.

III.4. The decision of the General Assembly shall include the term for which the Governing Board members are elected.

III.5. If a quorum for valid decision making in accordance with the statutes is not reached, a new vote of the General Assembly shall be organised.

III.6. If a quorum for valid decision making in accordance with the statutes is reached but no majority is reached for the candidates of one or both lists, the Chair of the Governing Board shall consult members of the relevant constituency and a new constituency vote and General Assembly vote shall be organised in accordance with sections II and III of this Annex 1.

### **IV. Early termination of a Governing Board Member's mandate**

IV.1. In the event of an early termination of a Governing Board members’ mandate, the members of the Governing Board have the right to co-opt a new member of the Governing Board, who shall be confirmed by the General Assembly, conform article 15.4 of the statutes.

In order to do so, they shall ask the member organisation to put forward a replacement for their consideration. If no suitable candidate is put forward by the same organisation, the Board shall appoint the highest-ranking candidate from the Ranked List, taking into account the preference expressed by the votes of the Members during the Governing Board election.

IV.2. If the replacement proposed by the organisation is not deemed suitable or is not confirmed by the General Assembly, and if no candidates from the Ranked List are available or if the General Assembly does not confirm the candidate from the Ranked List, the Chair of the Governing Board shall consult the constituency, respectively the constituency of the Associate Members or the constituency of the Business Members, depending on the constituency of the member of the Governing Board whose mandate was terminated, to propose a new replacement.

IV.3. The vote of the General Assembly shall take place in accordance with articles 13 and 14.5 of the statutes.

## Annex 2 - Organising Committees (OCs) Guidelines

The **Organising Committee** (OC) is an ad-hoc taskforce composed by members who volunteer to help shape the agenda of an event approved by the Steering Committee and added to the EIF programme.

All members can join OCs for scheduled events and follow ongoing OC works at any time in the Member Area of [www.internetforum.eu](http://www.internetforum.eu).

Each OC has one (or two) leading MEP(s) and one (or two) coordinator(s).

The **leading MEP** is a Political member who volunteers to host the approved event. Political members inform the Steering Committee or the Secretariat of their availability and the role is assigned on a first-come-first-served basis.

While the event **topic, format and the time of the year** are decided by the Steering Committee, the leading MEP is responsible for the event and makes final decisions on the **focus, speakers, agenda and final date**. The leading MEP liaises with the OC coordinator who takes into consideration the input of all OC members.

The **coordinator** is a Business or Associate member who volunteers to help ensure the smooth running of the OC and that the event details are finalised within the necessary deadline. Business/Associate members inform the Steering Committee or the Secretariat of their availability and the role is assigned on a first-come-first-served basis.

As soon as an OC is created and possibly no later than 4 weeks before the event date, the leading MEP and the coordinator plan a **kick-off call** with all OC members in order to host a preliminary discussion on the possible **focus, agenda and speakers** of the event.

OC members are invited to work together to **pool knowledge and expertise** and to contribute **speaker proposals** in order to create the most complete, balanced and informative programme possible within the limited time available.

When proposing speakers for an event panel, the OC shall strive for gender parity, regardless to the gender of the hosting MEP(s) and/or moderator. The secretariat shall verify the composition of the list of suggested speakers before it is submitted to the chairing MEP for final selection and approval and bring any issue of gender balance to the attention of the OC coordinator and the chairing MEP. The OC shall be invited to propose alternative or additional candidates accordingly.

Departure from this gender balance principle should be allowed only in unforeseen, extraordinary circumstances and, whenever it occurs, should be noted by the Secretariat.

The programme should be ready 2 weeks before the event at the latest, and ideally 4 weeks before the event.

As a reference, for a debate of 1h 30', a maximum of 3 guest speakers is strongly advised (besides the hosting MEP and moderator) in order to allow sufficient time for an exchange of views with participants.

The coordinator is also tasked with drafting a short **introduction** for the event, which is shared with the OC for review and with the leading MEP for final review and approval.

All OC communications happen via the OC online forum in the Member Area of [www.internetforum.eu](http://www.internetforum.eu) to ensure transparency and efficiency. Any OC member can post a comment and is notified by email when a new comment is posted.

The Secretariat supervises the work of the OC, provides all necessary information and advice and is in charge of inviting selected speakers, as well as of all the organisational aspects of the event.

The leading MEP, the coordinator and all OC members can seek support or guidance from the Secretariat whenever needed.

Shortly after the event takes place, the OC ceases to exist.

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### **Annex 3 - Guidelines on membership**

- The Governing Board has the right, in accordance with the Statutes of the EIF, to decide on all applications for membership, upon proposal of the Steering Committee.
- Since both Governing Board and Steering Committee are involved, both governance bodies should follow the same approach, it being understood that the Governing Board is the ultimate decision-taking body. The members of the Governing Board also bear the so-called director's liability under Belgian law in this respect.
- The Governing Board/Steering Committee, respectively, always must follow the provisions of the EIF statutes.
- The Governing Board/Steering Committee should act in a transparent and non-discriminatory way.
- The Governing Board/Steering Committee should always work with the aim to fulfil the non-for-profit purpose of the Association. This is obviously also applicable in the context of accepting/refusing applications for Business Membership. The diversity of its membership will endorse the fulfilment of its purpose.
- The Statutes provide that the EIF may accept as a Business Member, being a commercial or industrial company widely represented in Europe, who is ready to subscribe to the EIF purpose. The statutes provide further that the Governing Board/Steering Committee shall have the right to exclude the Business Member for which this condition for membership is no longer fulfilled.
- This means that the Governing Board/Steering Committee should apply the same approach for new applicant Business Members as for existing Business Members. The Governing Board/Steering Committee should check and evaluate whether the (applicant) Business Member (1) is widely represented in Europe and (2) is and remains ready to subscribe to the EIF purpose.
- Condition (1) being widely represented in Europe: the Governing Board/ Steering Committee should consider an (applicant) Business Member to be widely represented in Europe, if it has economical activities in at least three EU Member States.
- Condition (2) ready to subscribe to the EIF purpose:

a) The EIF purpose is in the Statutes and further worked out in the By-laws:

*Statutes: The disinterested purpose of the European Internet Forum is to stimulate public discussions with stakeholders and to contribute to the development of appropriate public policies on the European and global levels, seeking to promote the development and use of information and communication technologies, notably those relating to the Internet. The European Internet Forum puts its priority on problems and actions fitting within the framework of the European Union.*

*By-Laws: Article 5 of the statutes provides for the disinterested purpose of the Association, as further explained hereinafter. It is the objective of the European Internet Forum to be an independent, non-partisan discussion forum with legislators, policymakers and interested parties on challenges and opportunities resulting for society from the application of information and communication technologies, notably the Internet, with the aim of improving transparency and mutual understanding, hence facilitating and accelerating the process of political decision making and putting this process on an objective basis.*

*In doing so, the EIF strives to promote and to strengthen social and economic progress and prosperity, the cohesion of European society notably through the inclusion of all its groups into the 'Digital Society', the competitiveness of European business, Europe's pluralistic cultural, educational, scientific and technological heritage and wealth, the participation of citizens in democratic decision making processes, and the freedom of expression and human rights, while respecting the multilateral, competitive and open nature of the international trading system.*

*The EIF seeks to develop and maintain relations with other public and private institutions interested in these issues and in particular with policy-makers outside the EU in view of the global nature of the Internet.*

*The EIF does not itself take positions on specific policy issues.*

- b) There is a clear reference to **values** in the Statutes and By-Laws. We quote some key relevant values: *“improving transparency and mutual understanding, inclusion, competitiveness of European business, pluralistic heritage, democratic decision-making processes, and the freedom of expression and human rights, open nature...”*
- c) The **set up and management structure** of the (applicant) Business Member should be evaluated against the EIF purpose, and in particular the values that are referred to under a) and b).
- ⇒ Could not become/stay a Business Member a company whose **corporate purpose** would be contrary to the above values (note: in communication and information sector, it will be harder to demonstrate that a company has *prima facie* a corporate purpose that is contrary to the values. In other sectors it may be more obvious, for example, for environmental sectors, but as such also in communication and information sector, the issue cannot be excluded. The element of unfair competition against European companies may be an important element to take into consideration).
  - ⇒ Could not become/stay a Business Member a company whose **ultimate owners, board, or top executives** would not endorse the above values or who would not apply these (example: companies whose ultimate owners are acting against democracy, human rights; companies whose management behaves in such a manner that the endorsement of the EIF values can be seriously

questioned)

- d) The **actions (operations, other actions)** of the (applicant) Business Member should also be evaluated against the values that are referred to under a) and b).
- ⇒ Could not become/stay a Business Member a company whose **business operations** would violate the values (for example, in terms of inclusion, human rights, but also in terms of unfair competition against the European companies. The element of unfair competition is important)
  - ⇒ Could not become/stay a Business Member a company whose **other actions** would go against the EIF purpose and values, for example in terms of collusion with political regimes, corruption, tax evasion. A company that could become involved in a military action against the NATO could hardly stay in the membership)

In order to be complete, some of the topics that are described above will also fall under a more generic exclusion ground in the statutes of acting contrary to the laws or general rules of honour or propriety governing the profession.

The Governing Board/ Steering Committee should monitor the membership on a regular basis. It is recommended that each year, a meeting of the Governing Board/Steering Committee is dedicated (partially) to the review of the membership status of the Business Members of the EIF.

- The Governing Board/Steering Committee shall also take into account the geo-political situation prevailing at that moment. The relationship with specific countries can evolve in such a manner that continued or new membership for Business Members from a certain country is not acceptable any longer, since it would negatively impact the EIF.
- The diversity of the membership, in terms of fulfilling the EIF purpose, should also be considered. In the event that a group of Business Members of non-EU Associated Countries membership would become too dominant, the Governing Board/Steering Committee could decide to set certain limits. In any case the ultimate limit is 1/3 of the Members, since this constitutes a blocking minority for changes of the Statutes (see Article 35 of the Statutes).

For clarification:

- EU-Associated countries include the EU Member States, associated countries and other countries endorsing the EU values;
- the qualification of Business Members from non-EU Associated countries would apply to those companies with their Headquarters in these non-EU Associated countries.

#### **Annex 4 - Transparency guidelines**

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who are EIF Political members are expected to abide to the rules of the *Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament with respect to financial interests and conflicts of interest*. The Code of Conduct puts an obligation on Members to submit a detailed declaration of their financial interests. Members are also obliged to declare their attendance at events organised by third parties, where the

reimbursement (or direct payment) of their travel, accommodation or subsistence expenses is covered by a third party.

On the occasion of MEP visits or events organized by EIF or in partnership with EIF, EIF does not cover nor reimburse individual travelling or accommodation costs for attending MEPs, nor for assistants who may accompany them. Any exception to this rule must be specifically approved by the EIF Board.

Participating MEPs are invited to cover their own travelling, accommodation, and related expenses from the European Parliament's budget for Additional Travel, as governed by article 22 of the *Implementing measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament (IMSM)*.

EIF may cover costs for meals, collective transport, entrance tickets or similar benefits, and shall inform MEPs in a timely manner should the monetary value exceed the threshold laid down in Article 5(1) of the Code of Conduct (i.e. EUR 150), for which the obligation of disclosure shall apply.

MEPs can be accompanied by maximum one assistant. MEP's family members cannot in principle participate in visits or events organized by EIF or in partnership with EIF.

#### **Annex 5 – Guidelines on MEP visits**

- MEP visits can be put forward by EIF members for Steering Committee's approval.
- It is essential to find a **volunteering MEP** to act as lead of the visit for the proposal to go forward.
- The visit should be either in connection to a **major conference** and/or allow for an **inclusive programme** and collaboration with more than just one EIF member.
- It is recommended to consider the **geopolitical climate** at the destination, as MEPs travel in their individual capacity with EIF and not as part of an official parliamentary delegation.
- A call for expression of interest should be circulated to MEPs in advance: preparations would go ahead if **minimum 8 MEPs** express interest.
- An ad-hoc **Organising Committee** with volunteering members and a coordinator is set up to help the Secretariat shape the programme for the visit.
- **MEP staffers** are welcome to participate if their MEP is joining the visit.
- The visit is not open to **Business and Associate members** except for the hosts or unless otherwise agreed by the Steering Committee.
- See Annex 4 - 'Transparency Guidelines' for limitations in EIF's financial contribution towards participants' expenses.

References:

[\*MEP Code of Conduct with respect to financial interests and conflicts of interest\*](#)

[\*Implementing Measures for the MEP Code of Conduct with respect to financial interests and conflicts of interest\*](#)

[\*Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament\*](#)