**EAPN**

 **Draft 1**

 **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**1 Introduction**

* This Complaints Procedure stems from the principle that members and other individuals and organisations should have the right to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with any aspect of EAPN’s activities or the way they have been treated.
* The procedure is designed to give clear guidance to staff, members of the Executive Committee (EXCO) and representatives of the National Networks and European Organisations on the action that will be taken when a complaint is received.
* The objectives of the Complaints Procedure are to ensure that a consistent policy is followed and that complaints are taken seriously and dealt with promptly, in a courteous, thorough and sensitive manner.
* This procedure does not apply to EAPN’s staff who should pursue any concerns that they may have through the Staff Grievance Procedure.
* Any issue of EAPN policy arising out of this Procedure that requires immediate action will be resolved by the President and the Director. Otherwise it will be considered at the first available scheduled meeting of the EXCO.

 **2 What constitutes a Complaint?**

* A complaint can be said to exist whenever a member or other person having dealings with EAPN, is dissatisfied with a response given, or any action or decision taken in connection with their business with EAPN and wishes to take the matter further.
* In the event of matters being raised which cannot be reasonably regarded as the responsibility of EAPN, the complainant should be advised who they should pursue the matter with.

 **3 Related Appointments**

* Sigrid Dahmen, EAPN Office Manager will act as Complaints Receiving Officer (CRO) and maintain a Register of Complaints, recording basic details of the complaint, the person dealing with it and the outcome.
* At the EXCO meeting following each GA, 2 members of different gender will be appointed to act as Members Rights Officers (MRO’s). If more than 2 members wish to undertake this role the appointments, which will be renewable for a maximum of 3 years, will be subject to a vote by a show of hands.
* The MRO’s and a designated Bureau Member will collectively form a Complaints Appeal Committee (CAC). Other than where necessary during the GA or meetings of the EXCO, the CAC will not hold face to face meetings and will conduct their business by email and web conference.

**4 The Complaints Process**

* Staff and members of the EXCO are usually the first to be approached by people who are unhappy about some aspect of EAPN’s activities and in most instances can resolve the matter informally, to the satisfaction of the person concerned.
* EAPN members are encouraged to discuss any concerns that they have informally with one of the MRO’s or any other member of the EXCO or EAPN staff team and should be advised that if they remain dissatisfied, it is open to them to pursue the matter more formally in terms of this procedure.
* Formal complaints should be submitted in writing to the EAPN office marked for the attention of the CRO. Written complaints received by other staff or EXCO members should also be drawn to the attention of the CRO.
* The CRO will enter details of all written complaints on a Complaints Register and consult with the Director about which staff or EXCO member should be requested to respond to the complaint in writing, following any investigation or telephone conversation with the complainant deemed necessary.
* Where the complaint concerns the conduct of a staff member other than the Director, it should be dealt with by the Director. Where the complaint concerns the conduct of the Director it should be dealt with by the Bureau member responsible for staffing issues.
* In such circumstances the matter may merit consideration in terms of the EAPN staff Disciplinary Procedure. Where this proves necessary the complainant should be assured that appropriate action is being taken internally by EAPN but that it is policy not to divulge the details of this.
* In all cases, no later than 14 days from the written complaint being received, a letter will be sent to the complainant, either responding to the issues they have raised or assuring them that the matter is receiving attention and giving an indication of when a response to their complaint will be forthcoming.
* All responses to written complaints should advise the complainant that if they are unhappy with the response they have received, they may intimate their reasons for this in writing and request that the matter be reviewed by the Complaints Appeals Committee (CAC).
* A copy of the response will be passed to the CRO who will log the outcome on the Complaints Register.
* Where a complaint, that may have a material effect on the outcome of the item being discussed, arises during the GA or an EXCO meeting, the person chairing the proceedings may suspend discussion of the matter pending a decision about the complaint by the CAC.

**5 Appeals**

* The MRO’s and a designated member of the Bureau will constitute a Complaints Appeals Committee (CAC). The Committee will consider appeals against the initial decision about the complaint or any related matter.
* Other than in exceptional cases, the CAC will deal with the appeal by an exchange of emails and/or a webinar which the complainant may be invited to participate in.
* On receipt of a formal request from the complainant to appeal against the initial decision, the CRO will refer the matter to the designated Bureau member who will arrange for the matter to be considered by the CAC.
* The Director, or another member of staff delegated to undertake this duty, will assist the Bureau member with the CAC process in an ex-officio capacity and take responsibility for conveying the outcome of their appeal, which is final, to the Complainant and to the CRO, who will record this on the Complaints Register.
* This action should normally take place no later than 4 weeks after the written request to appeal against the initial decision is received from the complainant.

 **6 Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Complaints Procedure**

* In order to monitor the effectiveness of this procedure brief quarterly reports will be compiled by the Director and CRO on the number of complaints received, the nature of the issues complained about and whether the complainant was satisfied with the response they received.
* These reports will be made available to the CRO’s for comment before being submitted to the EXCO for information.

Signed: Leo Williams Carlos Susias

 Director President

Effective from: