



AEPC

Association for European Paediatric
and Congenital Cardiology

AEPC POLICIES & PROCEDURES



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CONTACT FOR QUERIES

For any questions, please contact the AEPC Secretary General through the AEPC Office
office@aepc.org.



The AEPC policies & procedures describe the working of the AEPC Constitution and provide information on the day-to-day processes used in AEPC. The policies & procedures will be reviewed regularly, to ensure the processes described are still accurate.

GENERAL

The official language of the association shall be English.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership categories

Categories	Criteria
Ordinary member (OM)	Medical and other scientific graduates who are committed to the practice and advancement of paediatric and congenital cardiology and closely related fields.
Junior member (JM)	Graduates, who are less than 38 years of age and in addition, are officially in a training program in paediatric cardiology or related fields in Europe or around the world. Medical students are also accepted in this category.
Nurse & Allied Health Professional member (NM)	Nurses, technicians, and any professional, not classified as ordinary or junior member, who work in a paediatric and congenital cardiology unit (or closely related fields).
Senior member (SM)	An ordinary member who informs the association that he/she has retired from practice and/or >70 yrs. Confirm retirement before 31 January to adjust membership. Senior members maintain their initial membership benefits, apart from voting rights and subscription to the AEPC journal, <i>Cardiology in the Young</i> . They can pay a sum of money to maintain their journal subscription. Senior Members can attend the Annual Meeting, or any other meetings organized by AEPC at member rates.
Honorary member (HM)	An AEPC member who has made important contributions to the development of paediatric and congenital cardiology and related fields and/or to the development of the association. Honorary members retain the rights of the original membership. Annual subscription fee and Annual Meeting subscription fee are waived for Honorary members. Honorary membership doesn't have a time limit. Any AEPC member in good standing may propose nominations for Honorary membership to the council. The council shall decide who will be elected as Honorary member. More than one Honorary member may be chosen per year.

Membership benefits

Membership of the AEPC provides the member with the following benefits:



- Online subscription to the AEPC journal *Cardiology in the Young*, accessible through the AEPC members' area
- Reduced registration fees for the AEPC Annual Meeting and all meetings organised by the AEPC working groups
- Membership of an AEPC working group
- Possibility to actively participate in all activities of the association
- Participation in the AEPC Business Meeting with the right to vote (no voting rights for senior members)
- Possibility to apply for AEPC grants & prizes
- Serve as supporter for new members
- Active and passive electorate for all positions in the councils of AEPC, working groups and committees.
- Access to the members' area on the AEPC website, access to members-only materials (i.e. webinar recordings)

Membership application

New members

Applications for AEPC membership are made through the online application form on the AEPC website. Payment of membership is required at the time of application. Only paid applications will be reviewed for acceptance.

Candidates are requested to fill out the application form (in which there will be clear reference to the standard letter of support). Candidates are to provide **one signed letter of support** from an AEPC member in good standing or the head of the department & a **CV** with their application.

Application forms are sent to the AEPC Secretary General, who will send complete applications to the National Delegate (*for European countries*) for approval or review the application within the AEPC council (*for non-European countries or those without a National Delegate*).

Upon approval, the membership is activated and a **Welcome letter** is sent to the candidate.

Membership renewal

The AEPC membership year runs from 1 January-31 December.

Active members are invited by email (Mid December) to renew their membership for the coming year. Membership payments can be made by **credit card**, through a secured connection on the AEPC website, or by **bank transfer** to the AEPC bank account with ING in Belgium.

The deadline to pay the regular membership fee, excluding late payment fee is **31 January**. After this date, a late payment fee (*EUR 10*) is automatically added to the dues owed.

Access to membership benefits remains available until **31 March**. After this date, access to member benefits will be retained upon payment of outstanding dues. However, to obtain reduced registration fees for the Annual Meeting, the membership fee for the year of the meeting needs to be paid.

A member with unpaid dues will be de-activated at the end of the calendar year, **31 December**. To reactivate membership, see rules for *returning members*.

Membership renewal reminders are sent to active members on a monthly basis.

Membership termination



Any member that does not wish to continue their membership with the AEPC, can send a resignation notice for the next membership year until 31 December of the current year. Resignations should be provided in writing to the AEPC Office.

Returning members

Any previous AEPC member can return to active membership in good standing by performing payment for the current membership year, plus one additional year of dues.

In order to re-activate the member account, the AEPC Office should be contacted (office@aepec.org). New support letters and CV are requested from any returning member, these will be reviewed by the Secretary General for re-acceptance.

Exceptions to the above rule are in place for returning Junior Members, and those under specific circumstances (i.e. maternity/paternity leave) – These cases would be reviewed on individual basis.

Any member that submitted their resignation in writing (*see membership termination*), will not be obligated to pay the outstanding year of dues.

In case that a former member is no longer found in the database or the gap in membership is 5 years or more, they may apply as a new member.



GOVERNANCE

Business Meeting *(General Assembly)*

AEPC Council

Annual Meeting Chair
Councillor
Councillor
Junior Councillor
ESC/ACHD representative
Surgical representative
Nurse & AHP representative

Officers

President Secretary General Scientific Secretary Treasurer President-Elect Past President

AEPC GOVERNING STRUCTURE

AEPC council

Composition

The AEPC council currently holds the following positions:

- **4 officers:**
 - President
 - Secretary General
 - Scientific Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - + President-Elect in the year preceding elections
 - + Past President in the year following elections.
- **6 councillors:**
 - 1 Junior Councillor (*elected*)
 - 2 general Councillors (*elected*)
 - 1 co-opted Surgical representative (Surgical WG)
 - 1 co-opted representative of the ESC ACHD WG
 - 1 co-opted representative of the Nurse/AHP WG
- **1 Chair of the Annual meeting of the upcoming year** (*ex-officio*)

The council can agree to co-opt additional members to the council and expand the number of councillors.

Each council member should preferably be from a different European country (apart from the junior councillor, Annual Meeting Chair and the co-opted councillors). Council officers (President, President-elect, Scientific Secretary, Treasurer and Secretary General) are required to come from different European countries.



Role & duties of the officers and council members

President

- Preside over the affairs of the association, the council, the Annual Business Meeting.
- Officially represent the association externally or delegate this representation if required.

Secretary General

- Responsible for the daily business of the association.
- Summon all meetings and circulate required documents to members as required by the Constitution.
- Maintain records of the proceedings and transactions of the association.
- Ensure that correspondence and general communications with all members are maintained regularly and periodically as established by the Constitution.
- Screen membership applications prior to presentation to the National Delegate and/or council for approval.
- Liaison with the Education Committee (EC).
- Liaison with the National Delegates & Chairperson of the Board of National Delegates.
- Share responsibilities with the President to represent the council in legal matters.

Treasurer

- Responsible for the financial affairs of the association.
- Collect membership subscriptions.
- Keep accounts and present a statement of the accounts each year at the Annual Business Meeting.
- Authorised to carry out the daily financial transactions on behalf of the AEPC.

Scientific Secretary

- Responsible for the scientific programme of the Annual Meeting, in collaboration with the Annual Meeting Chairperson and the working group boards.
- Chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC).
- Promote and coordinate scientific activities and publications, joint & partially overlapping task with Education Committee.
- Liaison with other associations for promoting common activities.

President-Elect

- Participate as part of the AEPC council
- Prepare for the role of President (automatic succession to President after 1 year).

Past President

- Participate as part of the AEPC council for a final year (automatic succession from President for 1 year).
- Warrant a certain degree of strategic continuity.

Junior councillor

- Represent the AEPC junior members in the council.
- Liaison between the junior members and the council.



- Represent the junior members on the EC.

General councillors

- Participate in the AEPC council and activities
- Allocation of various duties and/or projects that do not fall under the remit of other council members.

Surgical representative

- Represent the surgical community in the council.
- Liaison between the surgical community and the council.
- Actively promote AEPC within the surgical community.

ESC/ACHD representative

- Represent the ESC/ACHD in the council.
- Liaison between the ESC and the AEPC.
- Actively promote collaborative activities between AEPC and ESC/ACHD.

Nurse/Allied health representative

- Represent the nursing/AHP WG in the council.
- Liaison between the nursing/AHP community and the council.
- Actively promote AEPC within the nursing/AHP community.

Annual Meeting Chair

- Responsible for the programme of the Annual Meeting. For the scientific programme together with the Scientific Secretary
- Promote the AEPC Annual Meeting locally/regionally
- Actively seek sponsorship opportunities
- Actively inform the council on the proceedings and/or difficulties in the organisation of the Annual Meeting.

Duration of the mandate

The terms of mandate are as follows:

- Officers: **5** years
 - President: **3** years as acting President + **1** year as President-Elect + **1** year as Past President
- Councillors: **3** years
- Annual Meeting Chairperson: 1 year

Any officer that is stepping down at the end of their mandate will provide the necessary support and a handover of tasks & duties to the new officer.

Elections

The announcement of the elections process (call for nominations) will take place at the start of the new year. The terms of the current council can be viewed on the AEPC website.

Nominations can be submitted in writing (email message) until **6 weeks** before the annual meeting to the Secretary General.

For a nomination the following rules apply:

- Any candidate should provide a CV and a letter of motivation.



- For **President-Elect**, a nomination is to be supported by **10** active members from **3** different European countries.
- For other council members the nomination is to be supported by **5** active members from **2** European countries.

The council may also propose candidates for vacant positions. Members will be informed timely about the nominations from the council.

When there is more than one candidate for a position, the Secretariat will organise a voting poll within one week after the deadline for nominations, with up to 4 weeks for voting.

Voting for the junior councillor position will only be done by junior members. Junior members may vote for all open voting positions.

The announcement of the new council composition will be made during the Business Meeting, which generally takes place at the Annual Meeting.

Business Meeting (BM)

Composition

The Business Meeting (BM) consists of the assembled AEPC active members in good standing (general assembly). All active members in good standing have one vote, except for Senior members.

The Business Meeting shall be presided over by the AEPC President.

Role & duties

Strategic decisions of the association are discussed during the Business Meeting, including:

- Approving changes to the Constitution
- Approving the financial statements of the previous year
- Approving the budget of the current year
- Confirming the auditor
- Approving the actions of the officers
- Confirming the elected members for the council
- Selecting future destinations of the Annual Meeting
- Confirming the new members
- Removing officers who do not meet the standards of their offices
- Dissolving the association.

The BM is held at least once every year, usually during the Annual Meeting.

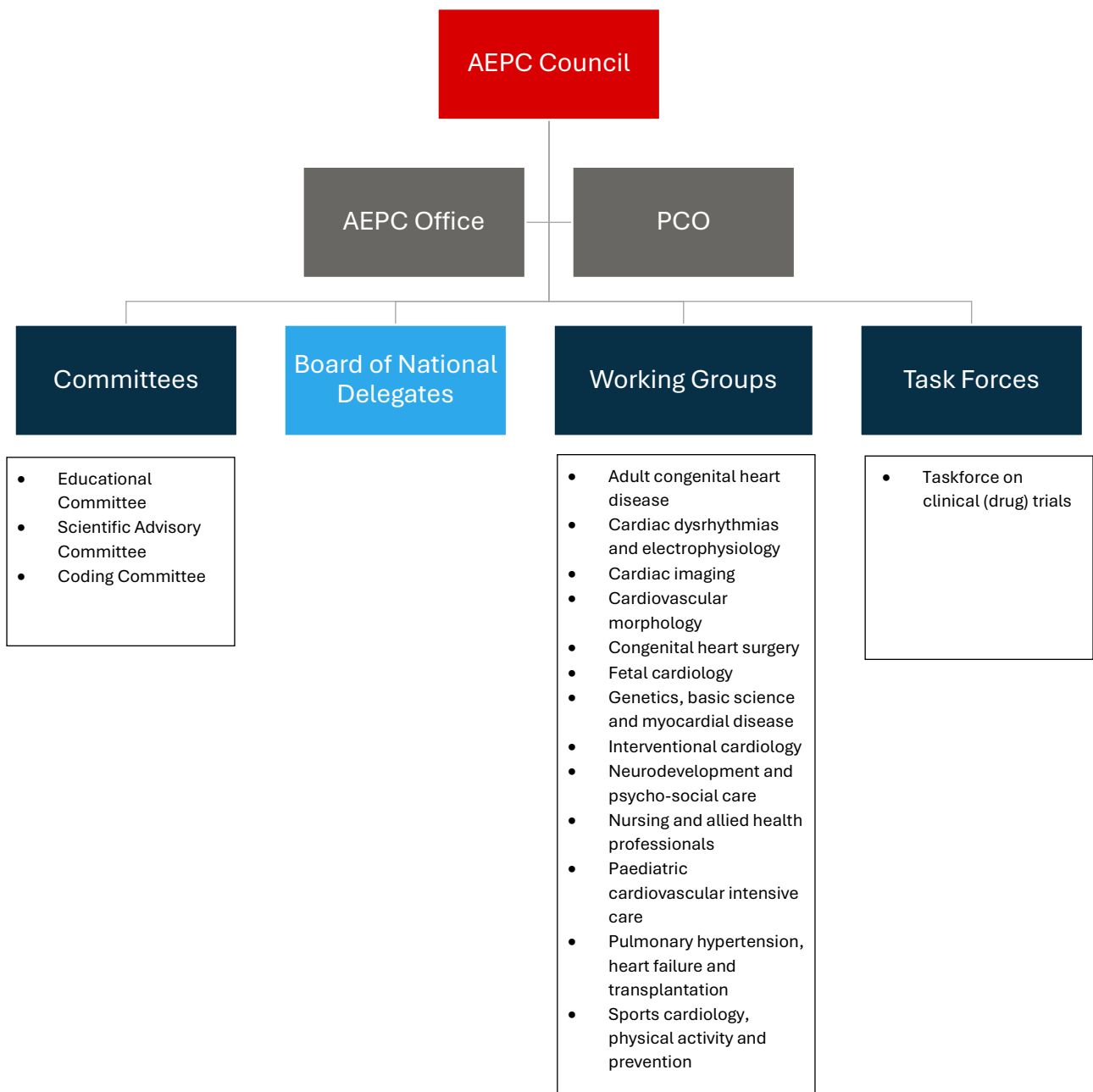
The BM is always held in the **first six months of the calendar year**. The date is announced to the membership as soon as possible and the agenda is distributed at the latest **30 days before the BM**.

In order to take a decision, the majority vote of the participants is required, provided that at least **25%** of those entitled to participate to the assembly (quorum) is present. For changes in the Constitution a majority of at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the votes is required to make the amendments.

Historical records relating to the BM are archived by the association (Secretary General) and accessible at request. Any relevant documentation dating back 5 years is available in the members' area on the AEPC website.



AEPC ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



AEPC ORGANISATIONAL CHART

Within the AEPC there are various bodies with different responsibilities: committees, working groups (WG) and task forces (TF). Committees and WGs are permanent constitutional entities, in contrast to the temporary duration of the TFs. Committee members are appointed by the council.

Educational Committee (EC)

Composition

The EC consists of a minimum of **5** members, including a Chairperson, with the Secretary General as representative of the AEPC council and the Junior Councillor representing the junior members.

Roles & duties

- Defining & updating European training recommendations for paediatric and congenital cardiology.



- Approving the scientific content of the teaching courses and other educational activities of the association and its WGs.
- Evaluating and approving the scientific content of meetings and other scientific activities for which an AEPC endorsement has been requested.
- Evaluating and approving guidelines and position papers in which the AEPC is involved.
- Organizing the European examination and accreditation for paediatric and congenital cardiology.
- Providing continuous education and re-accreditation.

Term & Elections

EC members are appointed by the AEPC council. They are appointed for an initial period of 3 years, and the appointment can be prolonged for a maximum of 2 further terms. Selection of members is based on their expertise in educational matters and commitment.

From time to time, working groups are asked to delegate a WG member to represent their subspecialty in developing and updating training requirements, guidelines and accreditation examination.

Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

Composition

The SAC consists of a Chairperson and members. The Chairperson shall be ex-officio the Scientific Secretary of the association.

The members consist of:

- The Chair of each WG/TF
- The AEPC junior councillor
- A representative of the Educational Committee
- Any other member for a specific matter upon invitation by the SAC or by the AEPC Council.

Roles & duties

The SAC will meet at least once every year, normally during the Annual Meeting. It shall:

- Assist the council in arranging the scientific meetings by suggesting scientific topics, Mannheimer Lecturer, State of the Art lectures, teaching sessions, etc.
- Propose abstract reviewers and grading system of submitted abstracts, propose judges for prizes
- Help coordinate scientific and/or teaching activities of the different working groups.

Coding Committee (CC)

The CC is a special Committee with a fixed board, highly specialized in the area of development and promotion of the International Paediatric and Congenital Cardiac Code (IPCCC), in conjunction with the International Society for Nomenclature of Paediatric and Congenital Heart Disease (ISNPCHD).

The principle goal of the CC and the ISNPCHD is to provide a global coding and nomenclature system for paediatric and congenital heart disease, inclusive of definitions and images, so as to be able to code scientifically accurate phenotypes and associated procedures in registries and databases using the IPCCC and related Short Lists, to help ensure high standards are maintained across the spectrum of healthcare for the benefit of patients and their families, irrespective of the language or related discipline involved.

The CC consists of a Chair, a Secretary, and other co-opted members, invited for their specific expertise and relationship to the AEPC WGs.



Roles & duties

- To develop and promote the AEPC derived versions of the IPCCC long and short list (also known as the European Paediatric Cardiac Code), for use in registries and databases globally and specifically in Europe, linking them to the WHO administered International Classifications of Diseases coding system currently in its eleventh iteration (ICD-11) and International Classification of Health Interventions, as well as to SNOMED Clinical Terms.
- To collaborate, in the name of AEPC, with the WHO ICD-11 Medical and Scientific Advisory Committee in matters related to paediatric and congenital cardiology (currently as a member of the MSAC).
- To co-organize the Multi-societal Database Committee for Paediatric and Congenital Heart Disease meetings, promoting such meetings when held in Europe
- To represent the AEPC as a member of the American College of Cardiology Foundation/American Heart Association (ACCF/AHA) Task Force on Clinical Data Standards, with respect to those related to paediatric and congenital cardiology.
- To organize the annual meeting of the Coding Committee members, during the AEPC Annual Meeting
- To report annually to the Council and AEPC members the advancements and activities of the Committee and ISNPCHD

Term & Elections

Due to the need of highly specialised and expert board, the members of the Coding Committee are fixed, although membership and retirements are agreed by Council and CC members with annual review, as well as members co-opted by the chair and-or secretary for their specific expertise.

Board of National Delegates (NDs)

Composition

The Board of National Delegates shall consist of a Chairperson and members.

The Chairperson shall be ex-officio the AEPC Secretary General. Each European country (as recognised by the European Union) may be represented by one member in this board.

Role & Duties

The role of the ND is to:

- Promote the AEPC in their country and increase the membership in their country by bringing in new members and encouraging renewal of existing members.
- Actively participate in the activities of the association, i.e., to organise educational activities in the name of AEPC, and in agreement with WG councils, propose speakers for the Annual Meeting and/or other educational activities
- Encourage mutual exchange of information between the ND and the Secretary General, in a way that AEPC can be a network that is present in the life of paediatric and congenital cardiologists all over Europe.
- Distribute AEPC guidelines on a national level.

The Board of NDs meets at least once every year, usually during the Annual Meeting.

Term & Elections

All NDs should be AEPC members in good standing. A delegate is appointed for **3** years; with the possibility to be re-appointed once.



Elections can take place in two ways, either:

- a. The ND is a representative proposed by the National Society/WG, or
- b. Active AEPC members can propose a representative from the members of their country.

In case a ND is unable to fulfil its task, they can be asked to be replaced.

Working groups (WGs), Committees & Task Forces (TFs)

For the study of particular topics, WGs and committees (permanent) and TFs (temporary) may be proposed by members interested in the field, and shall be considered for approval at the Annual Business Meeting.

The council may also co-opt a task force for specific tasks/projects that are temporary in its purpose. Task forces should report the progress of their activities to the council. In case a task force has reached its initial goal, but an on-going role remains for this group, the task force can be converted into a WG/committee.

The AEPC currently has 13 WGs and 1 TF:

- Adult congenital heart disease
- Cardiac dysrhythmias and electrophysiology
- Cardiac imaging
- Cardiovascular morphology
- Congenital heart surgery
- Fetal cardiology
- Genetics, basic science and myocardial disease
- Interventional cardiology
- Neurodevelopment and psycho-social care
- Nursing and allied health professionals
- Paediatric cardiovascular intensive care
- Pulmonary hypertension, heart failure and transplantation
- Sports cardiology, physical activity and prevention
- Task force on clinical (drug) trials

Composition

Each WG (and TF) is governed by a council of a minimum of **5** Ordinary Members: a Chairperson, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Councillor and a Junior Member. Up to two more Councillors may be elected.

WG council members should not be a part of more than one WG council at a time.

As a rule the WG/TF council should not have more than one member from the same country.

Roles & duties

WGs (and TFs) are to:

- Promote the knowledge in the specific field and to exchange information within the WG and with other groups.
- Establish appropriate recommendations, training requirements and guidelines for AEPC (in conjunction with the EC).
- Contribute to the scientific programme of the Annual Meeting (in conjunction with the Scientific Secretary).



- Organise teaching courses (in conjunction with the EC).
- Establish registries.
- Organise research and international collaboration.

Each WG and TF should organise an annual Business Meeting, normally during the Annual Meeting. A report of the activities should be given prior to/during the AEPC Business Meeting.

Term & elections

Councillors shall serve a period of **3** years. At least one councillor should retire each year. Re-election shall be possible once, but not for the same office.

Elections follow the same mechanism as for the AEPC council elections.



EVENTS

Annual Meeting

The AEPC Annual Meeting is usually held on an annual basis, with a preferred timing of May-June.

The Call for Bids process to host the Annual Meeting is announced **3 to 5 years prior** to the projected date of the meeting. Only active members in good standing are eligible to submit a bid, starting with an expression of their interest through a letter of intent.

The application must comply with the requirements contained in the Bidding Guidelines. The application(s) will be reviewed first by the Council and then presented to the BM for review and decision.

Should there be more than one candidate to host the meeting, a voting poll will be set following the BM, where the members in good standing can cast their vote.

From 2021 AEPC has contracted a central Professional Conference Organizer (PCO). The PCO will be responsible for the logistical organization of each meeting with the support of the Local Organising Committee and under the direction and supervision of the Council/Scientific Secretary.

The PCO shall periodically report to the Council with the ongoing planning, budgets and arrangements of the meeting for review, advice and guidance.

The Annual Meeting Chairperson will become part of the Council as ex-officio member in the year preceding their meeting.

AEPC Educational courses

2-3 Day educational/teaching courses for the junior members of the AEPC are organised, hosted and financed by the WGs. The EC supervises and approves the programs of the teaching courses and verifies that the proposed dates do not overlap with other educational activities proposed.

Other events

The AEPC can opt to (co-)organise or endorse (see below) physical and online events, i.e., webinars.

Endorsement of events

The rules for endorsement of non-AEPC events, can be found [here >](#)



PUBLICATIONS

Journal

Cardiology in the Young (CTY) is designated as the official journal of the AEPC. AEPC members in good standing receive online access to the journal through the members' area of the AEPC website.

<https://www.aepc.org/cardiology-in-the-young>

Guidelines & training recommendations

One of the main goals of the AEPC is to harmonize training in paediatric and congenital cardiology in Europe. Therefore, the association has published several recommendations for training in paediatric and congenital cardiology and its subspecialties.

<https://www.aepc.org/training>

Development & endorsement of non-AEPC recommendations, guidelines & consensus papers

In addition, AEPC also supports and endorses the development of other recommendations, guidelines & consensus statements.

In order to request AEPC endorsement or to propose a topic for a guideline, see the guideline [here >](#)

Website

The AEPC website serves as the main communication channel of the AEPC and contains relevant details about the history of the AEPC, its governing structure and activities. AEPC-related news will be published on the AEPC website: www.aepc.org

Social media

Besides the website, the AEPC uses Facebook, X & LinkedIn as additional ways of communication.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AEPCcongenitalheart

X: www.x.com/AEPCcongenital #AEPCcongenital

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/aepccongenitalheart/>

Finally, AEPC also has its own YouTube-channel, where AEPC educational materials may be openly posted and shared: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi_ZF1TrLf9UQHhTQjRiuQ

Newsletters

Newsletters are sent to the membership via email to inform the members on the activities of the AEPC, and important matters relating to the association.



RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ENTITIES

The AEPC seeks to maintain relationships with related scientific societies and relevant entities. Any relationship with an external entity is to be approved by the AEPC Council.

These relationships can be in different forms:

- a. Joint sessions by invitation (i.e., ESC)
- b. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between scientific societies (i.e., JSPCCS, EACTS)
- c. Other agreements (i.e., Cambridge University Press (Cardiology in the Young), ECHSA)