

Letter to Human Genetics Journals

The International Federation of Human Genetics Societies was founded in 1996. This letter is to inform the international community of human geneticists of the history, purposes, and structure of the organization.

The Federation was founded to provide a transparent structure to facilitate communication throughout the international community of human geneticists. The Federation, still in its infancy, serves its constituent members, human genetics societies around the world, by providing a platform to share information about research, education, and clinical services in an interactive way. The bylaws of the Federation state that:

“The purpose of The International Federation of Human Genetics Societies (the Federation) is to provide a forum for organized groups dedicated to all aspects of human genetics, including research, clinical practice, and professional and lay education. The Federation will enable communication between its member groups and encourage interaction between workers in genetics fields and in related sciences and will make itself available to promote meetings and publications and other forums which support human genetics research and practice.”

The Federation presently has two levels of membership. The three founding multinational societies, are Full Members:

- The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG)
- The European Society of Human Genetics (ESHG)
- The Human Genetics Society of Australasia (HGSA)

As new multinational or regional societies are formed, they may apply to the Federation for Full Member status. Two regional societies are candidates for full membership: the Latin American Society and the East-Asian Society. Representatives of Full Member societies comprise the Executive Committee. The representatives' costs for participation in Federation activities are borne by the societies that they represent, and, as currently organized, the Federation does not require a budget or paid administrative staff. National human genetics societies are eligible to participate in the Federation as Corresponding Members. All participating individuals, whether from full or Corresponding Member Societies, are elected officers, or persons appointed by elected officers, of the constituent human genetics societies. Any geneticist in the world who is a member of an affiliated human genetics society is automatically connected to the Federation.

The following 34 national human genetics societies are presently Corresponding Members of the Federation:

Name of Society	Representative
American College of Medical Genetics	R. Rodney Howell
Argentina Society of Medical Genetics	Susana Turyk
Austrian Society for Human Genetics	Gerd Utermann
Brazilian Clinical Genetics Society	Joao Monteiro de Pina-Neto
British Society for Human Genetics	Andrew Read
Canadian College of Medical Genetics	Jane Evans
Czech Society of Medical Genetics	Jiri Santavy
Finnish Society of Medical Genetics	Minna Poyhonen
French Society of Human Genetics	Roland Berger
German society for Human Genetics	Jorg Schmidtke
Hellenic Society of Medical Genetics	Michael Petersen
Hungarian Society of Human Genetics	Gyorgy Kosztolanyi
Indian Society of Human Genetics	Kiran Kucheria
Irish Society of Human Genetics	Nollaig Parfrey
Israeli Society of Medical Geneticists	Zvi Borochowitz
Italian Society of Human Genetics	Bruno Dallapiccola
Japanese Society of Human Genetics	Keiya Tada
Korean Society of Human Genetics	Ho Suk Saw
Latvian Medical Genetics Society	Rita Lugojska
Lithuanian Society of Human Genetics	Vaidutis Kucinskas
Mexican Association of Human Genetics	Jose Maria Cantu
Netherlands Society of Human Genetics	Gert-Jan van Ommen
Norwegian Society of Medical Genetics	Trond Leren
Polish Society of Human Genetics	Jerzy Nowak
Portuguese Society of Human Genetics	Carolino Monteiro
Romanian Society of Human Genetics	Covic Mircea
Russian Society of Human Genetics	Evgeny Ginter
Serbian Society for Human Genetics	Miroslava Micic
South African Society for Human Genetics	Arnold Christianson
Spanish Association of Human Genetics	Alberto Valiente
Swedish Society of Human Genetics	Ulf Kristoffersson
Swiss Society of Medical Genetics	Daniel Schorderet
Turkish Association of Medical Genetics	Memnune Apak
Genetics Society of Vietnam	Le Dinh Luong

At the Ninth International Congress of Human Genetics in Brazil, representatives of the Federation met and decided to undertake the organization and support of future International Congresses. The Federation offered to subsume the annual meetings of multinational societies into these Congresses to guarantee high attendance by avoiding competition with other annual meetings. This idea was proposed to the leaders of the Permanent Committee of the International Congress of Human Genetics, which then selected the European Society of Human Genetics as the host of the Tenth International Congress, which is to be held in Vienna, Austria, May 16–19, 2001. Future International Congresses will be held at 5-year intervals, with sponsorship and

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organizational responsibilities rotating among the full member societies of the Federation. In this manner, the fiscal soundness of the International Congress is assured, as is their geographic distribution over time.

The Federation has established a web site at <http://www.infobiogen.fr/agera/ifhgs> that promises to be a unique and valuable service to the human genetics community. The Federation bylaws are posted there. All national societies are invited to link to this site and to post the dates and outcomes of elections of officers, dates, and locations of upcoming annual meetings; bylaws

and other governance documents; position statements developed by committees and any reports of interest to other national groups. In this manner important resources can be easily shared.

The current president of the Federation is Segolene Ayme. She will be succeeded in 2000 by Uta Francke, the current president of the ASHG whose term will be from January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2002.

Segolene Ayme, PhD

President, International Federation of Human Genetics Societies