

Principles and Values of EASL during The International Liver Congress™

EASL is committed to furthering research in the field of hepatology to improve the lives of everyone affected by liver disease. The combined efforts of all stakeholders in the public and private sectors, and civil society are essential to halting and reversing liver disease. As such, EASL acknowledges that every voice is valued.

EASL embraces freedom of expression during The International Liver Congress™ (ILC) as an essential principle in the response to progressing liver disease and in promoting full participation during the Congress. However, EASL is responsible for maintaining the safety of all attendees and as such, must balance the need of allowing all participants to be heard while ensuring the Congress is not disrupted.

The right to participate at an EASL-supported Congress is fundamental to ensuring open dialogue between all stakeholders. EASL actively encourages debate and dialogue as key elements of participation, among all Congress participants including delegates, speakers and presenters, researchers and scientists, community representatives, sponsors, and the media.

Peaceful protest is permitted. However, EASL opposes the destruction of property or the use or threat of physical force by any individual or group of individuals during the Congress. The ability for dialogue and debate to take place is of utmost importance to EASL and any disruption of Congress sessions or satellite meetings that contravene this will not be accepted.

To ensure the safety of all attendees, destructive or violent actions will be dealt with immediately in accordance with the laws of the ILC host country. Further, security personnel may deem it necessary to escort participants from the venue or revoke their access to the remainder of the Congress.

Should any party or individual wish to make a peaceful protest, they are asked to contact EASL in advance of the Congress so that appropriate security measures can be put in place to ensure the safety of all attendees.

General Principles

- **Responsibility:** All participants attending a Congress are subject to the laws applicable in the country of the location. By attending the ILC, participants also agree to adhere to these Principles and Values of Congress Participation.
- **Support:** The Congress will provide support and space for meaningful participation, including community involvement, to enable a broad spectrum of viewpoints.
- **Peaceful protest** is a form of participation supported at the Congress. Safety of all attendees is of utmost importance to EASL. Any action that involves the use or threat of

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physical force or the destruction of property will not be tolerated and may contravene the laws of the country of location, resulting in the immediate removal from the Congress.

- **Prior Resolution:** These Principles are intended to guide the Congress organisers' response to actual disruptions that prevent participation. EASL encourages dialogue among and with participants prior to action that may result in disruption of participation. Advice and assistance in facilitating dialogue and resolution, and in preventing or de-escalating a disruption will be available.
- **Accreditation:** The Congress reserves the right to withdraw the name badge, and therefore deny access, to participants who do not adhere to these Principles. Additional information and the full statement will be available at the on-site registration counter.

Procedures involving Disruptions within Sessions and Satellite Meetings, the Exhibition Hall and Congress Centre

Session Slide: In session halls, a slide will be available which reads "Please respect the right of the speaker to be heard and of other participants to hear the speaker." In the event of verbal disruption, the Chair of the session may signal the audio visual technician to display the slide. The slide may remain displayed until the disruption has died down. If there are further disruptions, the slide may be displayed again.

- a. Any individual or group of individuals wishing to make a peaceful protest are asked to contact EASL or the appointed Community Liaison Consultant (see below) in advance. Failure to do so may result in removal of the person or persons involved from the venue and/or revocation of their conference accreditation for the remainder of the ILC. It is recommended that all exhibitors designate an Engagement Representative for engaging in dialogue with peaceful protestors prior to any situation arising.
- b. Application of the Law: The Congress participants are subject to the laws applicable in the host country. Physical force or threats of physical force or destruction of property by Congress participants will be dealt with in accordance with the laws of the country. In addition, the response may include the escorting of participants from the Congress venue.
- c. Withdrawal of Accreditation: In the event of disruption or action that does not respect these Principles, EASL reserves the right to withdraw a participant's accreditation and name badge and suspend or cancel the participant's access to the Congress.
- d. Accreditation Appeal: If an ILC participant feels that he or she has been wrongfully deprived of his or her accreditation, the participant will have 24 hours to appeal to the Congress organisers for reinstatement of the accreditation. Appeals will be considered on a case-by-case basis by a panel of 3 members drawn from the EASL Board and staff, as appropriate. All complaints must be made in writing to the Director of EASL and state fully the reasons for the appeal. The decision of the panel will be final.
- e. Public statement: In the event that property is destroyed or physical force is used or threatened by a participant, the Congress organisers may issue a statement concerning the action within the framework of the Principles and Values of Congress Participation.

Other Procedures and Measures for Supporting Participation

Should a party or individual wish to raise a point, the Congress will offer or provide other measures to support or facilitate meaningful participation.

Session Participation: The Congress programme will include features in Congress sessions and activities to provide opportunities for various viewpoints to be expressed and for dissenting voices to be heard, as key elements of the conference organisers' commitment to enhance participation and dialogue. Chairs and speakers will be briefed in advance on this point.

Prior Dialogue and Consultation: EASL encourages dialogue among and with participants prior to the Congress and prior to any action that is contemplated and that might result in disruption of participation. EASL will consult with activist and advocacy organisations, sponsors and local partners, and other participants on policies and measures to increase and facilitate participation.

Networking and Meeting Space: All accredited participants to the ILC are encouraged to meet on the congress premises to facilitate and support dialogue, discussion and networking. Requests for a specific meeting space, if needed, will be considered subject to availability of rooms at the venue.

Community Liaison Consultant: EASL will provide support for dialogue and participation during the ILC with the help of a Community Liaison Consultant. The Community Liaison Consultant will provide advice and assistance in advance of, and during, the Congress. He/she will consult with activist organisations and individuals, as well as community co-organisers and programme committee members, to identify those Congress sessions that are most likely to generate or attract peaceful protest and dissent to ensure appropriate plans are in place to minimise disruption while enabling all voices/perspectives to be heard. Full contact details of this Consultant will be made available on the EASL website alongside this policy.

Responding to a peaceful protest: Any individuals, parties or companies who wish to give a response to a peaceful protest should contact EASL to arrange an appropriate time for this to take place.

Security Advisory Committee: EASL will also convene a Security Advisory Committee which will serve as a forum for Congress sponsors, exhibitors, co-organisers and activists to share information and views and provide advice on the Congress security policy and related matters, in advance of, and during, the Congress.