

Establishing the GHI Charter

The **Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI)** was created in 2004 with a goal to ensure the global availability of safe and wholesome food products for all consumers. In 2005, GHI published its Charter (see next page). In 2007, GHI was officially registered in Austria as “GHI-Association,” and was recognized as an international non-profit organisation under Austrian law. Austria was chosen because it is perceived as one of the most politically neutral countries in the world. Both the official version in German (Vereinsstatuten) and the English translation (Constitution) can be found on the GHI website at www.globalharmonization.net.

Why a Supervisory Board?

GHI is a network of international scientists who volunteer their time to serve in a number of roles, including board members, officers and coordinators, ambassadors and working group teams. Industry (food manufacturing, engineering and technology companies) and governments the world over have expressed interest in GHI’s activities. GHI frequently is invited to join projects that are financed by governments and/or industry enterprises.

Therefore, in 2006—even before the official registration—it was decided to install a Supervisory Board, consisting of representatives of scientific organisations and stakeholders, to guard the impartiality and integrity of GHI’s consensus process. This primary task has been extended to include oversight of all GHI activities, so the broadened definition of the Supervisory Board’s primary task might be better stated as “guarding the impartiality of GHI” as a whole. In practice, this means keeping an eye on the activities of GHI and advising GHI officers when they are in doubt about any activity, cooperative venture with other organisations or participation in a project where impartiality may or may not be at stake.

SUPERVISORY BOARD

(Chair) **Michaela Pichler**, ICC, Vienna, Austria

Sian Astley, EuroFIR AISBL, Brussels, Belgium

Bala Balasubramaniam, The Ohio State University, Dept. of Food Science and Technology, USA

Jaap Hanekamp, Roosevelt Academy, The Netherlands

Pablo Juliano, CSIRO, Werribee, Australia

Kwang-Ok Kim, Ewha Womens University, Seoul, Korea

Ping-fan Rao, Funhou University, Institute of Biotechnology, Fujian, China

Hans Steinhart, EuCheMS Food Chemistry Division, Hamburg, Germany

Marisol Tapia, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Venezuela

Key Charter Provisions of Interest

Several points most relevant to the SB are taken from the English version of the GHI-Association Constitution and are presented below:

2.1 The Association will be a non-political, non-religious and non-profit-making organisation.

2.2 The purpose of the Association is to achieve consensus on the science underpinning food regulations and legislation to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food products for all consumers globally.

3.3.4 [The necessary means shall be provided by] donations, subsidies, collections, legacies, allowances, grants and other donations, provided they are not coming from persons or organisations, which are excluded from membership for reasons mentioned in 5.2. Permitted are donations from scientific and professional societies, their organisations, independent research organisations, institutes, universities and publishing houses.

5.2 Individuals or organisations, whose interests are in conflict with the purpose of the Association because of political, economic or other reasons, are excluded from membership. Regular or scientific members could be scientists or organisations, that are scientifically independent (e.g. universities, independent research institutions or associations, etc.).

12.2 The Board is required to decide on the rules of procedure that will govern its internal organisation.

In all cases in which the SB is called upon to perform its oversight duties, it is important that emphasis is placed on the last sentence of the GHI Charter: “All of these will be done in an open, transparent manner, to avoid bias or the appearance of bias, political or otherwise.”

GHI CHARTER

The goal of the initiative is to ensure the global availability of safe and wholesome food products for all consumers.

To achieve this, undue barriers to free trade that masquerade as food safety protections must be vanquished. Such barriers include differences in regulations and legislation between countries globally. The international scientific community must therefore work towards achieving global consensus on the science underpinning food regulations and legislation.

This will be achieved through attainment of the following objectives:

Identifying relevant scientific organisations.

Inviting and encouraging the participation of these scientific societies in the Global Harmonization Initiative and inviting their members to join in this activity in their fields of expertise.

Identifying relevant non-scientific stakeholders.

Establishing effective communication between non-scientific and scientific organisations.

Inviting all stakeholders (organisations and individuals) to identify and submit key issues requiring attention.

Prioritizing key issues with the subsequent formation of working groups to draft white papers or consensus statements regarding the scientific validity of these issues.

Steering working groups to assess the best available evidence and discuss their findings with the scientific community, working towards building consensus.

Publishing results on a per issue basis in journals, magazines and newspapers.

Publishing collections of resulting consensus statements in book form.

Presenting results and participating in appropriate conferences.

Making results available to all stakeholders, particularly those responsible for developing or amending regulations and legislation, global communicators, risk managers and assessors.

All activities undertaken by GHI to achieve these objectives will be done in an open, transparent manner, to avoid bias or the appearance of bias, political or otherwise.

Questions?

Please contact the Global Harmonization Initiative via email at:

info@globalharmonization.net

