

MDEON NEWS

Ethical Health Platform



New Rules as of January 1st, 2023

With the new year approaching, we would like to inform you through this newsletter that from January 1st, 2023, a number of novelties will take effect.

First, the Code of Ethics will be adapted to the new reality of virtual and hybrid scientific meetings (see below under 1).

Next, the amounts of hospitality offered will change (see below under 2).

In addition, we have good news for those submitting visa applications: fees are dropping! (see below under 3).

Finally, we would like to give you some tips on submitting a visa application (see below under 4).

WHAT'S NEW

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1. Code of Ethics

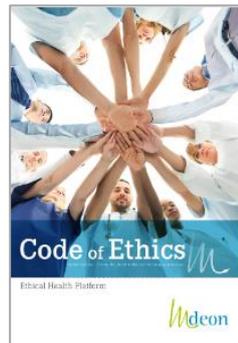
The Corona crisis has given rise to a new kind of meetings: the virtual ones. Whereas virtual meetings were quasi-unthinkable three years ago, today they are indispensable. Hybrid meetings are also often held, where individuals are given the option of participating physically or virtually. Also with virtual or hybrid meetings, a number of ethical and deontological rules must be taken into account.

On the right, we provide an overview of the rules that will apply as of January 1, 2023 to virtual and hybrid scientific meetings.

The full text of the modified articles, can be found in the Code of Ethics: click [here](#) to consult it.



Changes to the Mdeon Code of Ethics



The following articles of the Code of Ethics will be amended as of January 1st, 2023:

- **Art. 1.4, 2°:** Clarification that the term scientific meeting can refer to physical, virtual and hybrid meetings.
- **Art. 3.2:** Definition of physical, virtual, hybrid scientific event. The practical guidelines concerning Article 3 clarify that as regards specifically hybrid scientific events, the same rules apply as to a physical and/or virtual scientific event according to the choice: if a physical participation is chosen, then the rules of a physical scientific event apply; if a virtual participation is chosen, then the rules of a virtual scientific event apply.
- **Practical guidelines concerning Art. 4:** For purely virtual scientific meetings, there is no minimum number of hours of scientific activity. Indeed, participating professionals cannot be expected to be seated before their computer screens for at least 6 hours a day spread over normal business hours. For example, a virtual scientific program of 4 hours might be spread over 2 hours on day X (from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.) and another 2 hours on day X+1 (from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.).
- **Art. 5.1, 2nd section:** In the case of purely virtual participation, the hospitality offered is limited to the registration fee (meals or other hospitality may not be offered under any circumstances).

- Practical guidelines concerning Art. 16:

- A scientific event that is purely virtual is subject to the visa obligation if it takes place over several consecutive calendar days of which the registration fee is paid.
- Scientific modules that are merely available virtually at any time and therefore not at a specific time (e.g. e-learning) are not subject to the visa obligation. Indeed, sponsoring the registration fee to access such modules virtually is considered a gift (premium/benefit) and must therefore respect the conditions of art. 10 of the Law on Medicinal Products and art. 2 of the Code of Ethics. Click [here](#) for more info on this.

Three types of scientific meetings:

- **Physical** scientific meeting: this is a scientific event in which the healthcare professional physically participates.
- **Virtual** scientific meeting: this is a scientific event in which the healthcare professional participates individually and virtually, from anywhere, by logging in via a PC, laptop or any other medium.
- **Hybrid** scientific event: this is a scientific event in which the health professional can choose between physical or virtual participation.

Summary

Purely virtual scientific meetings are subject to the visa obligation if they take place over several consecutive calendar days of which the registration fee is offered (supportive document required!). No other hospitality may be offered. For purely virtual scientific events, there is no minimum number of hours of scientific activity.

E-learning are not subject to the visa obligation because sponsoring the registration fee to access such modules virtually is considered a **gift** (only possible if professionally related and maximum 50€).



2. Hospitality amounts

Covid-19 has also led to life becoming more expensive. That translates also into higher costs for meals. So it's high time for an indexation.

Together with the FAMHP, Mdeon has **indexed** the costs for meals.

Moreover, as from January 1, 2023 a **maximum amount of 135€ per day** must be respected for meals and drinks (including the eve if there is no scientific program that day). Also this maximum amount of 135€ only applies on condition that there are at least 6 hours of scientific program. A pro rata maximum of 23€ per full hour of scientific activity will therefore apply from now on.



As of January 1, 2023, the following amounts and rules for hospitality will apply:

Meals

- **Lunch:** maximum 45 €
- **Dinner:** maximum 90 €

! NEW:

- **In total maximum 135 € per day with at least 6h of scientific program**
- **In total maximum 23 € per full hour of scientific activity if the total scientific program lasts less than 6 hours**
 - This maximum fee includes a dinner on the eve if there is no scientific program
 - This amount is all inclusive (drinks, coffee breaks, VAT, hall rental, etc.).

Here are two examples.

Example 1

- Investigator meeting in Paris on Friday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Arrival on Friday morning, departure on Saturday evening
- Hospitality that can be offered:
 - o *Friday:* 5 hours of scientific activity, so $5 \times 23\text{€} = \text{max. } 115\text{€}$ to spend, e.g., as follows:
 - Lunch 25 €
 - Dinner 90 € (followed by an overnight stay up to 250€)
 - o *Saturday:* 6 hours of scientific activity, so the maximum amount of 135€ should be spread over the whole day, e.g., as follows:
 - Coffee break 23 €
 - Lunch 45€
 - Dinner 67€ (cannot be followed by an overnight stay, as dinner should not be a reason for an overnight stay).

Example 2

- Advisory Board in Barcelona on Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Arrival on Thursday during the afternoon
- Hospitality that can be offered = number of hours of scientific activity x 23€ = 4x23€ = max. 92€ to spend on meals, e.g., as follows:
 - o Thursday evening: dinner 47€ (followed by an overnight stay at max. 250€)
 - o Friday:
 - Coffee break 15€
 - Lunch 30 €

→ All meals together respect the maximum amount of 92 € (because 4h of scientific program). The dinner offered on the eve should be included in this maximum amount because there is no scientific program that day.

Overnight stays

- The maximum price per night is **250 €** (breakfast and taxes included).
- An **exception** applies to destinations where, according to the Ministerial Decree dated July 2, 2018, the limit exceeds the maximum subsistence allowance of 250€. For these locations, the limit is assimilated to these amounts published in the aforementioned Ministerial Decree dated July 2, 2018 establishing subsistence allowances granted to staff members and delegates of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation who travel abroad on official assignment or serve on international committees (click [here](#) to consult this M.D.).



3. New fees for visa applications

The Corona crisis had a severe impact on the number of visa applications. Mdeon was faced with a significant drop in the number of visa applications, which forced Mdeon to temporarily raise prices significantly to maintain the same quality of service and to cover the costs of the structure and experts. Thanks to your support, Mdeon was able to continue securing the visa process.

Because the number of visa applications has risen again, Mdeon will be able to **drop its rates again to those in effect before the Corona crisis from January 1, 2023.**

Fees from January 1, 2023 for submitting a visa application:

- V1-visa application: **165 €** excluding VAT.
- V1- visa application for companies member of Bachi, beMedTech, Medaxes or pharma.be: **100 €** excluding VAT.
- V2- visa application: **240 €** excluding VAT.

The price of an emergency procedure remains unchanged (1.050 € excluding VAT).





Tip 1: Do not submit last minute !

Keep in mind the submission deadlines (click [here](#) for a general overview). Keep also in mind that these are working days and not calendar days.

The Visa Bureau notes that many companies submit so late that in case of refusal, no resubmission is possible. Many assume that the Visa Office will then suspend the application in order to still have the chance to make a timely correction. However, this favor granted by the Visa Bureau until today causes excessive inconvenience, which is why Mdeon has decided to **no longer systematically proceed to suspension if the deadline to resubmit has passed.**

So start preparing and submitting your file on time!

4. Tips from the Visa Office

About 85% of submitted visa applications are approved immediately. After resubmission, the approval rate rises to 95% on average. Nevertheless, there are still visa applications that are denied. The Visa Office would like to give you some tips on how to get as many approvals as possible.



Tip 2: Justify taxi costs (FAQ 10.1.c) !

Taxi costs should always be a **realistic estimate** of the actual price. When taxi costs are included in section B.4 of the visa application, an additional explanation must be provided in each case. This info could be, for example, the following:

- In case of multiple participants/consultants: will the taxi be shared?
- Distances to be covered?
- Regular taxi? Private driver ? Limo?
- Add a quote from an agency.
- Add a simulation (see e.g. <https://www.taxifarefinder.com/>).

Tip 3: Respect the 2 conditions for a flex ticket (FAQ 10.1.b) !

Offering flexible airline tickets is permitted, **provided two cumulative conditions are met:**

1. A motivated justification (e.g. flex character is needed to check in luggage, to cancel and recover costs, to shorten stay if the congress stops earlier, because there are no other options, because it is included by default in the chosen class, ...), and
2. A written statement that the flexibility will not be used to extend the stay (leaving earlier or returning later).

Both conditions (motivation and statement) must be mentioned in the visa application itself (e.g. in section B.5 and/or B.8). See here for an example: *"We have opted for flexible tickets in order to be able to recover our costs in case of cancellation, but we declare that the flexible character will not be used to extend the stay"*.



Tip 4: Use the Checklist for completing a visa application

Mdeon has drawn up a checklist that can help you to complete a V1 and V2 visa application. This checklist provides section by section of the visa application V1 and V2 "tips & tricks" to ensure that you do not forget anything. In addition, the corresponding FAQ number is always mentioned, so that in case of doubt you know where to find more information.

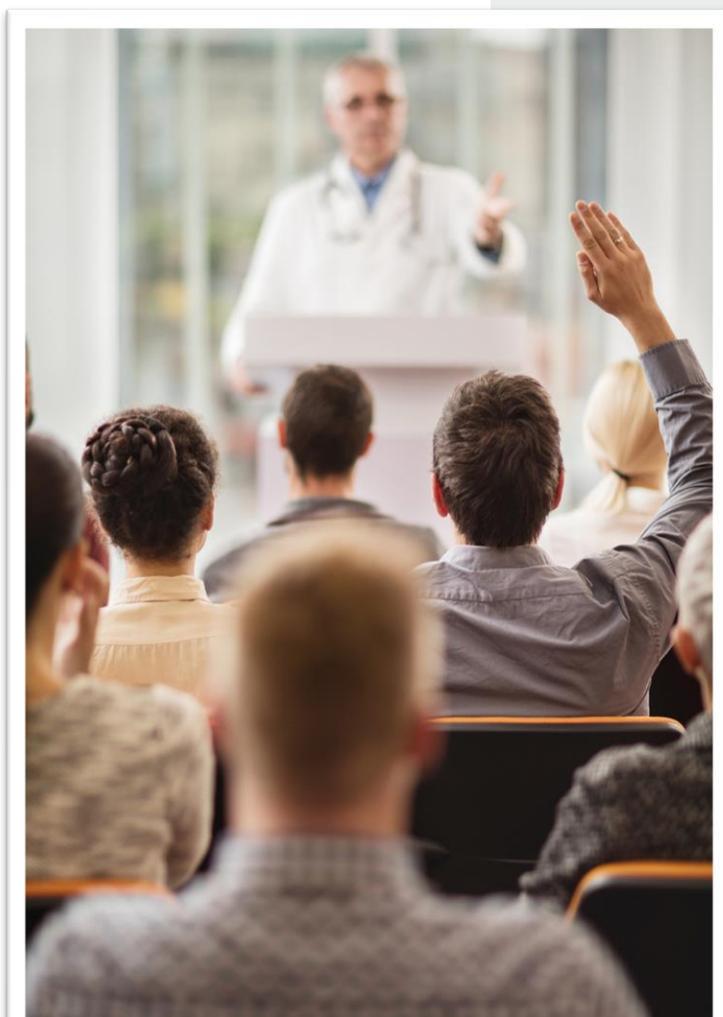
Click [here](#) to consult the checklist V1 and V2.

Tip 5: Third Party Organized Scientific Events

As soon as you sponsor a participation in a scientific event organized by a **third party**, it is always mandatory to include a statement of 1) the price of the registration fee and 2) of what is included in that registration fee.

This obligation applies **whether or not** the registration is offered **and whether or not** a registration fee is charged.

Be sure to add a proper **supportive document in accordance with** the guidelines: for more info, see FAQ 9.4 (click [here](#)).



5. Closing words

Should you have any questions regarding these changes or completing a visa application, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Take a look at our website for telephone contact hours or send an email to secretariat@mdeon.be.

Finally, we wish you all happy holidays and a healthy and fantastic 2023!

