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Position Paper of Johanniter International (JOIN) on First Aid

JOIN Annual General Meeting, May 2023, Brussels, Belgium.

The Johanniter International or JOIN member organisations have been European leaders in the provision of First Aid and First Aid training for many decades. Each year, millions of people are reached by our services. First Aid, the act of saving a life, is central to the fundamental principles of the JOIN member organisations.

The European Resuscitation Council Guidelines 2021 on First Aid together with the evidence collected by the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) strongly confirm that First Aid reduces morbidity and mortality in a variety of clinical scenarios, from respiratory illnesses to trauma and from bleeding to cardiac arrest[1]. The Consensus on Science with Treatment Recommendations developed by ILCOR makes evidences available to the public[2].

Furthermore, sudden cardiac arrest remains one of the leading causes of death in Europe, with about 55 to 113 cases per 100,000 inhabitants a year, or 350,000 to 700,000 individuals affected depending on how it is defined[3]. Around 25% to 50% of casualties present a rhythm that would benefit from defibrillation. For every minute that someone is in cardiac arrest without receiving help, their chance of survival decreases by 10%.

Setting high quality First Aid principles at European level, which can be performed in a stressful situation by people with no medical training, contributes to building safer and healthier communities. The *Johanniter International* (JOIN) *European First Aid Guidelines* are built on our extensive experience in the field, and based on evidence drawn from existing literature, program evaluations and advice from leading experts.

The JOIN member organisations advocate for First Aid to be accessible to all regardless of their socioeconomic status or other potential discriminatory factors.

For free download of the following documents in many different languages:

- *Johanniter International European First Aid Guidelines*
- *European First Aid for 5 to 7 years old*
- *Young People First Aid Manual*

GO TO: www.firstaidjoin.org

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[1] *Zideman DA, et al. European Resuscitation Council Guidelines 2021: First aid. Resuscitation. 2021 Apr;161:270-290. doi: 10.1016/j.resuscitation.2021.02.013. Epub 2021 Mar 24. PMID: 33773828*

[2] *https://costr.ilcor.org/document*

[3] *Zideman DA, et al. European Resuscitation Council Guidelines for Resuscitation 2015. First aid. Resuscitation 2015.*

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF JOHANNITER INTERNATIONAL AND ITS MEMBER ORGANISATIONS TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE MEMBER SATES CONCERNING FIRST AID AND FIRST AID TRAINING

Johanniter International (JOIN) and its member organisations encourage European States:

1. **To include First Aid training for driver's licence applicants.**
   The European Union has formulated the ambitious goal to halve the number of road fatalities by 2030 and a long term-goal to move close to zero fatalities by 2050. 151,300 people died from accidents in the EU in 2017, some 3.3 % of all deaths[4]. The first minutes after a road traffic incident can be pivotal to improve outcomes. With the emergency medical services needing to be activated and to arrive on the scene, increasing the likelihood to have a trained bystander able to provide First Aid would make a key difference for the casualties.
   Current national regulations concerning First Aid training for driver's licence applicants broadly differ amongst Member States. It is important not to define lower First Aid standards than the ones that are already existing in some countries.

2. **To include First Aid in the school curriculum.**
   The body of evidence regarding effectiveness and methodology to teach First Aid in the school curriculum is growing, demonstrating that children are indeed able to learn and retain essential skills[5]. This provides a firm base for more extensive and deeper knowledges as children mature.

3. **To promote First Aid training and education across the lifespan of their citizens.**

JOIN and its member organisations call on the European Commission to encourage and assist, through its programmes, the development of a Europe-wide culture of First Aid training and education, and the collaboration of First Aid training and education civil society organisations in the various states of Europe.

The *Johanniter International European First Aid Guidelines* are a reference tool that could contribute to the harmonization of First Aid education and training programmes across Europe and assure that these are based on the latest evidence and information. The intention is not to standardise First Aid techniques and methods, but rather to have a consensus on minimum agreed principles based on our experience as well as the available literature, program evaluations and advice from experts.

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[4] *https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Accidents_and_injuries_statistics*
[5] *Reveruzzi B, et al. School-Based First Aid Training Programs: A Systematic Review. J Sch Health. 2016 Apr;86(4):266-72. doi: 10.1111/josh.12373. PMID: 26930238.*