

Proposal from the Board

1. Background

For the last three years, and since our founding in 2018, SOS International has been hosted by one of our three founding organisations, Danske Studerendes Fællesråd (DSF). This relationship has worked well for SOS International, and DSF has effectively incubated the organisation and created the conditions for it to thrive. However, in 2021 the two key core staff at DSF, Toke Dahler and Jens Bonde Mikkelsen, both left their roles. Whilst DSF is still supporting SOS International, the new Chief Executive has indicated that they are unable to provide the full hosting service for us beyond this summer, in part because their bookkeeper has too much other DSF work on. As such the Board have been working with DSF to find a solution. We have looked at other host organisations in Denmark, and looked to outsourcing host functions like the bookkeeping, but have not found a suitable replacement in Denmark for the service that DSF provides. We have therefore decided it would be best for one of the other two founding organisations, SOS-UK, to host SOS International from this summer. Linked to this, the Board are keen that SOS International becomes more member-led, and that the leadership of the organisation extends beyond the three founding organisations of DSF, NUS-UK and Union of Students in Ireland (USI). Having discussed these issues with many of our members through the two consultation calls in April and May 2022, the Board have developed the two proposals below for approval by members at the General Assembly on 31 May 2022.

2. Proposal to move our host organisation

It is proposed that SOS-UK, which is part of NUS-UK, hosts SOS International from this summer for at least the next three years. The SOS-UK Board have kindly agreed in principle to this and can offer a full support package including finance, HR, payroll, IT, operational policies, indemnity insurances and an employer-supported pension scheme. At present SOS International does not use DSF's policies or indemnity insurances, or have a proper HR service, or an employer-supported pension scheme, so this move would substantially help with the professionalisation of SOS International. The SOS-UK Board have agreed to offer those services on the same terms as DSF, which is on non-fee / cost-recovery only basis. SOS-UK is about similar size to DSF and is in a strong position financially. You can read more about them at www.sos-uk.org.

The SOS International staff have been consulted on this proposal, as it will mean them being issued with new employment contracts, and they are happy in-principle with the arrangements. Their move will be treated as continued service, so they will get associated benefits like additional leave entitlements. As the UK is outside of the EU, it is proposed that the balance of our bank account is moved to SOS-UK and ringfenced in a separate budget code, as this will help the SOS-UK finance team effectively administer the accounts without having to deal with the complexities of reverse VAT, and the uncertain legalities of managing an account in an overseas country. This would mean that we still file full accounts via Redmark at the end of 2022 (albeit covering just the first half of 2022), but from 2023 the SOS-International accounts are presented as an addendum to the SOS-UK accounts.

The Board have looked at the pros and cons in relation to this proposed hosting solution and decided that overall it is the right thing to do for the organisation, given the changes at DSF. The main drawback of the new arrangement is that, in time, we will be ineligible to apply for some EU

grants, due to Brexit, although the Board resolve that we might still be eligible to apply through some of our other members. SOS-UK has considerable expertise in raising funds for collaborative work, so is well placed to secure funding for SOS International's work, including funding that we can distribute to our members to facilitate collaboration. We will also need to work with our funders to ensure they are aware of the transition, including amending the bank details for the organisation for future payments.

3. Proposal to creating a rotational presidency

As part of the Board's commitment to become more member-led, and to further engage our members in collaborative work, and given the proposed change in host organisation, the Board proposes that we initiate a rotational presidency for SOS International. Only active member organisations will be eligible to apply, and there will be a full application process run by the Board during November and December 2022, which will be ratified by members at the 2023 General Assembly in May 2023. The term of the Presidency will be for two full years, with the first presidency term starting on 01 June 2023. The role of the member organisation holding the presidency will be to chair the Board, to lead on the Board's strategy work, and to be a high-profile representative of the organisation and our membership, including attending global events on behalf of SOS International, such as the climate COPs. The host organisation will be paid an annual fee of 2,500 Euros (5,000 Euros per two-year term) to compensate for presidency time commitments, as well as having expenses and the costs associated with attending our events covered in addition. As SOS-UK will likely host SOS International from this summer, the board resolves that SOS-UK will not be eligible for the Presidency whilst it is host. The Presidency will rotate to a new member organisation after the two-year term has ended, with a recruitment exercise happening for the second presidency during January 2025.

4. Recommendation

Members are asked to approve the Boards proposals to move our host organisation from DSF to SOS-UK and to agree for a rotational presidency to start from June 2023.