

French HEMA charter

The French Federation for Historical European Martial Arts (FFAMHE) aims at regrouping individuals and groups who share to the same approach to Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA).

Preamble

1. HEMA are defined as the martial practices which are based on the study of historical sources directly linked to them. They include all hand to hand and armed individual combat systems, developed in the European cultural area, whose teaching and practice have ceased, and which require a process of study and reconstruction.

2. The purpose of HEMA is to re-establish, reinstate and practice in a modern society context the ancient martial traditions of Europe, in particular through the practice of sport and physical activities, and by promoting related culture and heritage. Although inherently linked to combat, HEMA promote mutual understanding and sharing as well as the human values intrinsic to martial arts.

3. The approach to HEMA recognises that the practice of a sport and physical activity is a human right. Every individual should have the right to practice HEMA without any form of discrimination, in accordance with the Olympic spirit which requires mutual understanding, friendship, solidarity and fair-play.

Article 1 Purpose of practice

The purpose of practicing HEMA is to learn and achieve technical mastery of one or several HEMA within a confrontation.

The following are not considered as objectives in the practice of HEMA: victory in competitive sport encounters, theatrical and artistic representations.

Article 2 Method of practice

The practice of HEMA must be based on historical documents which allow for a reconstruction of the concepts and martial gestures contained within.

HEMA should be practiced within regular training sessions as regular as possible.

Article 3 Relation to the sources

The potential instructors, and to a lesser extent the students, should:

- be able to name the sources they study,
- give and be given access to these sources, within the limits imposed by law, and
- be able to explain their general content and, if possible, the system of the studied HEMA.

Article 4 Origin of the sources

The historical sources studied by HEMA practitioners must come from the commonly accepted European cultural area. Additionally, they must be written in a language from the aforementioned European cultural area.

Article 5 Sharing spirit

HEMA practitioners share their knowledge and reflexions regarding the sources they study, within their own group and with other HEMA practitioners.

Article 6 Security

Security is at the heart of HEMA practice.

Practitioners and HEMA groups commit to acknowledge and fully comply with the security criteria of common events, workshops, etc. These criteria are established by their organiser; they may vary from one event to another, from year to year, and may depend on which activity practitioners choose to engage in.

Article 7 Multiple activity groups

In the event that a group has activities other than HEMA, practitioners must be given the right to train in HEMA with no obligation to participate in the groups' other activities, should they choose not to.

Article 8 Use of the title of *Maître d'armes*

HEMA being based on the analysis of historical documents, practitioners refuse the use of the title *Maître*, *Maître d'Armes* (i.e. Master, Master at Arms) or any other similar designation used to refer to the persons leading HEMA training sessions. The use of the term Instructor is more adequate.

Note : in France, the use of the title *Maître d'Armes* is regulated and may only be given after specific training as an Olympic fencing instructor of the French Fencing Federation (Fédération Française d'Escrime). A *Maître d'Armes* shall be referred to as an Instructor should he lead HEMA training sessions.