

ABOUT AC FORUM

The Associations & Conference Forum (AC Forum) is a not-for-profit association and Europe’s only peer-to-peer platform established exclusively for and by self-managed associations who all host conferences with over 2,000 participants.

Members are associations aiming for excellence in association and conference management. Many members come from the healthcare sector, but membership is open to not-for-profit associations in any sector. Member organisations and their activities, including conferences, must be self-managed and the association must be European or international. They do not need to be based in Europe but have some activities linked to Europe and participate in AC Forum’s activities located there. AC Forum currently has 35 full members and 2 provisional members. AC Forum supports a community working for the benefit of over 25 million professionals and the sectors they represent and serve.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aim of AC Forum is to advance association leadership and congress management. It provides its members with a variety of opportunities to network and exchange experiences in environments that are confidential, trusting and free from commercial influence. All activities are led by members. AC Forum utilises the expertise from among its members, and external experts, to deliver quality, cost-effective, needs-led educational offerings that support association and congress leadership, management and innovation.

The AC Forum is well governed and financially stable, ensuring it is fit for purpose, and its members feel included and valued.

AC Forum’s objectives are:

- to serve as a platform for communication and networking amongst association executives in relation to conference and association management and related activities;
- to enable the exchange of information between members in order to improve the standards of both association management and organisation of conferences and related activities;
- to increase the level of professionalism, in-house knowledge and expertise available within associations and their association executives;
- to contribute and work towards better organised associations and conferences;
- to act as a platform to represent the joint interests of members in their dialogue with suppliers, clients, peer groups, regulatory and other bodies, in their field.

WHAT DOES AC FORUM DO?

AC Forum provides its members with a number of platforms to exchange knowledge, expertise and experiences with peers:

Annual Meeting:	Yearly meeting with general educational programme focused on developments in association management and congress organisation.
Workshops & webinars:	Targeted, small-scale meetings on a specific topic aimed at in-depth discussion.
Task Forces:	Expert groups established to work on key issues.
Website & online discussion forums:	Online member community for the discussion of member questions related to association management and congress organisation.
Collaborations:	Partnerships with other key stakeholders in the association and conference industries to advance knowledge, innovation and leadership in the sector.

ABOUT THE AC FORUM ANNUAL MEETING

In January each year, AC Forum holds its General Assembly (governance meeting) and its Annual Meeting which focuses on developments in association management and congress organisation. The Annual Meeting programme is designed with input from members and an Education Working Group. Contemporary topics and debate are supplemented with case studies to share experiences and innovations. External experts may be invited to contribute on specialist topics.

The Annual Meeting is hosted by a different European city each year. It is an opportunity for host cities to (re-)introduce themselves to the member associations or share with them innovations and new developments. The host city for an Annual Meeting is selected by the AC Forum Board about 14 months prior.

Typical agenda of an AC Forum General Assembly and Annual Meeting:

DAY 0 – Wednesday Board arrival

DAY 1 – Thursday

Morning	Delegate arrival
10.00-14.00	Board Meeting
14.30-17.00	Leadership Forum
17.30-19.30	General Assembly
20.00-22.00	Networking dinner (AC Forum Members only)

DAY 2 – Friday

09.00-12.30	Sessions, 2-3 streams
12.30-14.00	Lunch
14.00-18.00	Sessions, 2-3 streams
19.30-22.30	Gala dinner (for all delegates and city/venue/supplier representatives)

DAY 3 – Saturday

09.00-12.30	Sessions, 2-3 streams
12.30	End of meeting and lunch
Afternoon	Optional visit of the congress centre / City tour

Saturday afternoon / Sunday Departure

PREVIOUS ANNUAL MEETINGS

2020	Helsinki, Finland	2010	London, United Kingdom
2019	Paris, France	2009	Vienna, Austria
2018	Vienna, Austria	2008	Amsterdam, Netherlands
2017	Frankfurt, Germany	2007	Berlin, Germany
2016	Copenhagen, Denmark	2006	Barcelona, Spain
2015	Barcelona, Spain	2005	Monaco
2014	Munich, Germany	2004	Madrid, Spain
2013	Istanbul, Turkey	2003	Dublin, Ireland
2012	Dublin, Ireland	2002	Vienna, Austria
2011	Valencia, Spain	2001	Sophia Antipolis, France

NEXT ANNUAL MEETING

In 2021, the AC Forum Annual Meeting will be held in Rotterdam, Netherlands, 14-16 January.

2022 AC FORUM ANNUAL MEETING AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The requirements for hosting the Annual Meeting and General Assembly are outlined below. Applications are invited from any European city that fulfils these criteria, be it a capital city, a well-established conference hub or a city making strides in building up its conference credentials. Holding the Annual Meeting in different cities and types of destinations allows members to gain a better understanding of the wealth, diversity and quality of European destinations. AC Forum welcomes all applications fitting its requirements and especially appreciates innovative approaches.

The Annual Meeting and General Assembly in 2022 will take place on 20-22 January.

Special Note:

If, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 Annual Meeting and General Assembly cannot be held face-to-face, then Rotterdam will host the 2022 event and the host city selected for 2022 will carry forward to 2023.

HOST CITY APPLICATION CRITERIA

- The city should have adequate facilities to host large international congresses (min. 2,000 delegates).
- The Convention Bureau/city/venue/suppliers should support and organise the following:

1. Meeting Facilities:

The **Board meeting** on Thursday morning may take place at the hotel.

It is preferred that **sessions** take place at the same venue on Thursday afternoon/evening; Friday and Saturday may be located elsewhere using one or two conference facilities.

Day	Event	Requirement
Thursday morning	Board meeting	Meeting room, U-shape, 10 pax
Thursday afternoon	Leadership Forum	Session room, cabaret style, c. 50 pax
Thursday late afternoon	General Assembly	Session room, cabaret style, c. 100 pax
Friday all day	Sessions	Plenary room, cabaret style, c. 120 pax; 1-2 breakout rooms, cabaret style, c. 50-70 pax
Saturday morning	Sessions	Plenary room, cabaret style, c. 120 pax; 1-2 breakout rooms, cabaret style, c. 50-70 pax

2. AV & IT:

All AV and IT, including adequate WiFi for voting, etc., required for the meeting should be provided.

The AV supplier may take the opportunity of providing its services to the meeting to showcase its proficiency and innovative solutions, with the approval of the AC Forum Board.

Day	Event	Requirement
Thursday morning	Board meeting	Projection facilities, WiFi
Thursday afternoon	Leadership Forum	Projection facilities, sound system & mics, WiFi
Thursday late afternoon	General Assembly	Projection facilities, sound system & mics, WiFi
Friday all day	Sessions	Projection facilities, sound system & mics, WiFi
Saturday morning	Sessions	Projection facilities, sound system & mics, WiFi

3. Catering:

All catering at the venue(s) during the days of the meeting should be provided.

The catering supplier may utilise the lunch(es) to present its services with imagination and flair, with the approval of the AC Forum board.

Day	Event	Requirement
Thursday morning	Board meeting	Continuous coffee break & lunch, 10 pax
Thursday afternoon	Leadership Forum	Continuous coffee break, 50 pax
Thursday late afternoon	General Assembly	Water, 100 pax
Friday	Sessions	Water in session rooms Coffee breaks, morning & afternoon, 120 pax Lunch, 120 pax
Saturday morning	Sessions	Water in session rooms Coffee break, morning, 120 pax Lunch, 120 pax

4. Accommodation:

It is preferred that all delegates stay at one hotel, but accommodation spread over 2-3 hotels in very close proximity to each other will be considered. The Board members should all be accommodated at one hotel.

Day	Group	Requirement
Wednesday	Board	8 rooms
Thursday	Members	Approximately 120 rooms
Friday	Members	Approximately 120 rooms

5. Transportation:

The host city must manage airport transfer logistics, as well as movement of the group about the city. If there is an efficient and well-functioning public transport system in the city and from/to the airport, then the provision of public transport tickets to delegates is preferred. Otherwise, private coach transfers should be arranged.

6. Networking Events:

The networking events are an ideal occasion for the city to introduce the representatives of the member associations to the highlights of the city.

The **dinner on Thursday** is a private event for AC Forum members only and is a more casual affair. Entertainment is not required.

The **formal gala dinner on Friday** frequently takes place at a city or municipal building, such as a museum or city hall, and representatives of the city, venue, suppliers, etc. mingle with AC Forum members. It is usual for the mayor or other city dignitary to give a speech and some typical entertainment is provided.

Day	Pax	Requirement
Thursday	c. 120	Private dinner for AC Forum members only (business casual)
Friday	c. 120 members + host representatives	Gala dinner for all delegates + city/venue/supplier representatives (formal)

HOST CITY BID PROCESS

- An application letter accompanied by a detailed proposal outlining the prospective host city's offer, and covering the essential elements outlined, must be submitted by the Convention Bureau, or similar institution of the potential host city, to the AC Forum Secretariat (secretariat@acforum.net) before the deadline.
- **Application deadline: 1 October 2020**

Please contact the AC Forum Secretariat at secretariat@acforum.net with any queries