



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

By associations for associations – advancing association leadership and management

AC Forum is a not-for-profit association and the only peer-to-peer organisation established exclusively for and by self-managed associations.

Members are associations aiming for excellence in association management. Member organisations are supranational, self-managed, not-for-profit associations. AC Forum supports a community working for the benefit of professionals and the sectors they represent and serve.

The most highly valued benefit of membership is the honest and open exchange between members.

It is immeasurably beneficial for associations to learn from each other, and truly rare that they feel at ease sharing privileged information, which makes it all the more remarkable that our member organisations are comfortable and secure in the confidential environment of AC Forum.

Our Mission and Vision

Our Mission: To be the pre-eminent platform for international associations, supporting a dynamic community and inspiring innovation and excellence in leadership and impact.

Our Vision: Associations as driving forces of societal progress, envisioning and crafting a progressive future.

Our Strategic Objectives

- Deliver valuable meaningful education
- Advance excellence in association leadership
- Facilitate thought leadership, advocacy, and influence for impact
- Build a sustainable inclusive organisation

Our Goals and Purposes

- Deliver valuable, meaningful education, utilising expertise from among our members and from external experts.
- Lead the way for associations driving innovation and excellence in leadership for impact
- Provide members with a variety of opportunities to network and exchange experiences in environments that are confidential, trusting and free from commercial influence
- Serve as a platform for communication and networking amongst association staff in relation to association management and related activities
- Enable the exchange of information between members
- Increase the level of professionalism, in-house knowledge, and expertise available within associations and for association staff in association management
- Contribute and work towards better organised associations

What We do

Everything we do is guided by our values – integrity, inclusivity, community, collaboration, accountability.

- Provide a safe space for self-managed associations to share knowledge, challenges, successes, and failures
- Facilitate networking and connection building between members
- Deliver valuable, meaningful education for members
- Develop resources to advance excellence in association leadership
- Demonstrate thought leadership and influence for impact with external stakeholders and partners
- Collaborate with third parties on activities, projects and issues of mutual interest and benefit to our members

Membership Benefits

Members are entitled to:

- Participate in educational events, including workshops, webinars, campfires, and joint education experiences, on topics of high relevance
- Use the member communication platform – an unparalleled resource where members share information and expertise
- Participate in the Annual Meeting, a 2½-day conference for education and networking – up to five staff per member organisation are covered for registration, accommodation, F&B, and social events
- Submit case studies for consideration to form part of the Annual Meeting programme
- Participate in the General Assembly, the members' meeting for policy and decision-making
- Access the member area of the website for member-only content
- Access the Knowledge Hub – the exclusive gateway to a treasure trove of association information and insights
- Join in thought leadership and research projects with third party collaborators

The most highly valued benefit of membership is the honest and open exchange between members, be it on the communication platform, at our events, or via one-to-one relationships forged through AC Forum.

It is immeasurably beneficial for associations to learn from each other, and truly rare that they feel completely at ease sharing information, which makes it all the more wonderful that our member organisations are comfortable and secure in the confidential environment of AC Forum.

Membership Criteria

Member associations must:

- Be self-managed, i.e. have overall responsibility for and control of all aspects of the management and decision-making of the association
- Be non-profit
- Be supranational
- Represent a particular profession or professional field
- Attend the General Assembly each year
- Commit to fully participate in AC Forum activities in Europe, including education and Annual Meeting
- Have a majority of salaried staff in its personnel
- Organise a supranational conference of at least 1,000 participants on a regular basis (at most two years between conferences)
- Have ownership of the conference
- Have overall responsibility for and control of all aspects of the management and decision-making of the conference and other events
- Comply with the articles of the Statutes of AC Forum and respect the resolutions of the General Assembly
- Pay the annual membership fee annually and on-time
- Maintain an active membership by means of the regular participation in, and contribution to, activities of AC Forum by multiple staff members with diverse roles
- Respect that all discussions within AC Forum are confidential and may not be shared outside of the AC Forum members' circle'

Membership is not open to commercial or for-profit organisations, nor to organisations or associations for association professionals.

Application Process

Organisations applying for membership must provide AC Forum with credentials establishing their eligibility for membership, with any supporting documentation required for verification of their eligibility. This must be done via the official application form only.

Applications are reviewed and assessed by the Membership Sub-committee (MSC). Upon invitation, applicant associations present their organisation to the MSC and respond to questions. The MSC makes recommendations to the Board regarding membership applications.

The Board recommends associations for membership to the General Assembly, which takes place in January. Up to two representatives of these associations are invited to attend the General Assembly while their application for membership is being presented. They are not required to make another presentation at the General Assembly, but may be asked questions by members.

If the applicant association is successful, membership will commence immediately following the General Assembly, and the representative(s) of the association may then participate in the rest of the General Assembly and stay on for the Annual Meeting sessions.

Timeline

Date	Action
2025	
June	Membership application opens
1 September	Deadline for applications
September	MSC meeting - review applications
September-October	Follow-up with applicant associations
1 November	Deadline: final information from applicant associations
November	MSC meeting - applicant associations present to MSC. Presentations recorded for General Assembly.
November	MSC prepare recommendations for Board to review
November	Board meeting - review recommendations
Late November	Final follow-up with applicant associations, if necessary
3 December	Deadline: MSC final recommendations for GA to be submitted to Board
9 December	Deadline: Board review of MSC recommendations
Mid December	Board's recommendations circulated to the General Assembly
2026	
22 January	General Assembly - members vote on membership

Membership Fee

The current annual membership fee is 2,000 EUR.

Application Deadline

The closing date for applications is **1 September**, for membership to commence in January of the following year.

