

HISTORY

History, objectives, organization and activities of the European association of former members of parliament of the member-states of the Council of Europe

1. On the occasion of the General Assembly of the Belgian Association of former members of parliament, in 1984, in Bruges, representatives of the associations of former parliamentarians of Belgium, Germany, France and Italy talked about future collaboration. It was agreed that they should meet once a year for information and coordination talks. In 1987, the "Four" decided, in Strasbourg, to set up an informal group, to give a European dimension to the activities of their associations and to concrete their engagement in favour of the European ideal. In 1994, this Group, which had been joined by Turkey in 1988, created officially the "European Association of former members of parliament of the member states of the Council of Europe" (Association européenne des anciens parlementaires des pays membres du Conseil de l'Europe). With the creation of the website in 2005 (<https://www.fpap-europe.org>), the Association has been also using the abbreviation "FP-AP".

2. In 1995, Cyprus joined the European Association, followed in 2000 by the Netherlands, in 2001 by Spain, in 2002 by Greece, in 2003 by Ireland and Luxembourg, in 2004 by Austria and Switzerland, in 2006 by Malta, in 2008 by Portugal as well as by the European Parliament Former Members Association, in 2010 by Sweden, and in 2012 by Andorra and Poland, in 2015 by Lithuania (since 2017 again observer) and the United Kingdom (since 2020 again observer; however, so far there was no reaction on FPAP invitations). In 2019, Finland and Norway joined the association as a full member. In 2023, the observer status was granted to Denmark and Iceland.

3. In June 2001, a very important decision was taken with respect to two different ways how to cooperate with the European Association:

The normal membership with full membership fee and voting rights including full representation in the Bureau

- The observer status for two years (without paying any fee). This status provides the possibility to make acquaintance with the European Association and gives the necessary time to create conditions at home for a full membership. Before becoming full members of the European Association, several members made use of this status.

4. The Association is open to all national associations of former national members of Parliament of the Member States of the Council of Europe and for the Former Members Association of the European Parliament. Every member Association remains autonomous, its membership of the European Association translated through respect of the Statutes in use.

5. The explicit objectives and convictions of the Association are embedded in the [Statutes](#): The Association is convinced that the consolidation of peace founded on justice and international cooperation is of vital interest for the preservation of human society and civilisation. It is inextricably attached to the spiritual and moral values which are the common heritage of their peoples and are the origin of the principles of

individual liberty, political freedom and the primacy of law, on which a true democracy is based. In order to safeguard this ideal, social and economic progress should be favoured.

The Association wants to contribute to the European construction and to make better known and promote the key role of the European institutions, in particular the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly as well as the European Parliament. With this in mind, a [Memorandum](#) of understanding on cooperation has been concluded with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 2009.

The Association may organise meetings, seminars and colloquies dedicated to the study of major social problems. It maintains mutual exchange relations with equivalent Associations at world level sharing the same values.

6. The Association had two organs: the executive being the Bureau, where every association was represented by two delegates; the General Assembly (GA) was composed by three delegates of each member Association.

After modification to the Statutes and the Rules of Procedure in 2023, the European Association has three organs: The Council (each association is represented by 2 delegates), the GA (3 delegates), and the Bureau (formerly known as Restricted Bureau).

The delegates are appointed for a two years mandate on the proposal of the member associations, which shall ensure a balanced representation of men and women in all FP-AP bodies.

The Bureau dealing with current issues operates within the Council. The President, first Vice-President and the secretary general are elected by the GA. The Council appoints a second, third and fourth vice-president. On the proposal of the Council, temporarily associated members can be added.

French and English are the two official languages of the Association.

7. The Council appoints an administrative Secretary General. His/her task consists of coordinating the different activities of the Association. This appointment has to be confirmed by the GA. This person attends the meetings of the Bureau, the Council and the GA. He/she prepares the agendas for the meetings of these three bodies.

8. Up to now, the Association had the following presidents: Giuseppe Vedovato (Italy), Jacques Augarde (France), Ferdinand Boey (Belgium), Uwe Holtz (Germany), Ali Bozer (Turkey), Manuel Nuñez Encabo (Spain), Mrs. Nuala Fennell (Ireland), Camille Dimmer (Luxembourg), Ninos Hadjirousos (Cyprus), Mrs. Mechtild de Jong (Netherlands), Luis Nandin de Carvalho (Portugal) and Lino DeBono (Malta). Rune Rydén (Sweden) was from March 2018 for 4 years president until June 2022 (exceptionally because of covid-19). In June 2022, two candidates -Jean Pierre Fourné (France) and Walter Schwimmer (Austria) -, ran for presidency. Both got the same number of votes. At the lottery, Mr Fourné came out first and started as president the first year (until May 2023), then Mr. Schwimmer took over the presidency from May 2023 for one year.

9. The [former Presidents of the European Association](#) and the former Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, who were members of the FP-AP Council, shall be ex-officio members of Council and the General Assembly with advisory vote.

10. The annual contribution of the member associations is fixed by the General Assembly and levels at 1.800 € pro association. This amount covers the working costs of the Association - in particular, translation costs into the two official languages (French and since 1999 English) - and includes a lump sum to the Belgian Senate for the administration (because of the very exceptional circumstances leading to lower budget expenditures, the annual fees for 2020 and 2021 were reduced to 1.000 €).

11. The seat of the European Association is established in Paris at the Assemblée Nationale, 126 rue de l'Université - PARIS 7ème. Until 2023, the administrative seat was the Palais de la Nation in Brussels, i.e. the Belgian Senate, whose former administrative director Roland Roblain is the Secretary General of the European Association.

The General Assembly may take place either in PARIS, BRUSSELS or STRASBOURG, or in a city of the country of a member association.

The Council may organise its meetings either at the seat of the Association or in the country of one of the member associations. The calendar of the meetings and events is regularly finalised by the Council.

12. Since 2000 and according to its objectives, the Association has decided to organise every two years a European colloquy, the title of which is chosen by the Council. A rapporteur, appointed by the Council, will submit several text versions in the light of the colleague's discussions and of the proposals made by the member associations. At the end of the working process, the colloquy will take place in a town of a member association. Here, possible amendments are finally considered by the up to five delegates sent by each member association; then, the colloquy delegates vote on the amendments, with each delegate having an own voting right. This is the "Declaration" of the cities in question will be 'born' - with specific follow-up activities.

- In 2000, the first European colloquy has successfully taken place at the Palais de l'Europe, seat of the Council of Europe, in [Strasbourg](#). There were more than 60 participants. Theme of the colloquy was "strengthening the parliamentary dimension of the European institutions: Council of Europe, European Union and OSCE". The Strasbourg Appeal adopted by the colloquy participants, was sent to all the parliaments in the OSCE states as well as to the European transnational assemblies.
- The theme of the second colloquy in [Rome](#) in November 2002 was well chosen: "Common European values - Pillars for a European Constitution". About 100 participants adopted the Declaration of Rome which was sent to the President and other members of the European Convention as well as to the European Parliament, to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and other parliaments.
- The theme of the third colloquy in [Berlin](#) in October 2004 was "European Political Integration in the Face of Global Challenges" (about 80 participants).

- The fourth colloquy in [Limassol](#) (Cyprus) in November 2006 was dedicated to the theme “Europe, the Mediterranean and the Fight against International Terrorism” (about 50 participants).
- The fifth colloquy took place in [Athens](#) in October 2008 on the representative and participatory democracy (about 75 former MPs).
- In 2010, the sixth colloquy in [Kiev](#) (Ukraine) dealt with migration issues (about 47 participants).
- In [Malta](#) in 2012, the seventh colloquy addressed the issue “Support of Democratic Transition Processes in the Southern Mediterranean and in the Middle East”.
- For the eighth colloquy, the Bureau chose the theme “The challenges for democracy in times of globalisation – how to strengthen the democratic institutions and people’s participation?” ([Brussels](#), European Parliament, November 2014).
- "Challenges of Immigration" has been chosen by the Bureau as the theme for the ninth colloquy ([Lyon](#), October 2016).
- For the tenth colloquy held in [Strasbourg](#) October 2018, the theme "Future of Europe" was chosen (55 participants).
- Berlin would have hosted the eleventh colloquy in October 2020 on the theme "Europe facing Global Powers at a Horizon of 10 years" (because of covid-19 postponed to 2021 and then held by email). Finally, the [Berlin Declaration](#) was adopted unanimously on 25 November 2021 by email.
- On 22 September 2023, the twelfth colloquy took place in Lugano, addressing the topic “Influences of climate change on migration and social policy: role of the parliamentary diplomacy”. The [Lugano Declaration](#) was adopted unanimously by some 50 participants.

13. In the past, the European Association - in cooperation with the member associations - organised seminars on different subjects. Just to give you a few examples:

- In 2003, the Turkish association organized a symposium “Turkey - a European country”.
- In 2004, the Irish Association organized a seminar on the occasion of the Irish presidency of the European Union.
- On 12.06.2015, the Portuguese association organized in Funchal a seminar on "Regional and Political Autonomy".
- On 09.10.2015, the Austrian association organized in Vienna a seminar on "Seventy Years of United Nations".
- On 17.06.2016, the Swedish association organized in Stockholm a seminar on "the Arctic, a hot topic".
- On 03.11.2017, the Maltese association organized in La Valletta a seminar on "[Statelessness](#)".
- On 25.05.2018, the Belgian association organized in Brussels a seminar on "Europa Quo Vadis".
- On 28.06.2019, the Swedish association organized in Lund a seminar on "Climate Changes".
- On 25.10.2019, the Italian association organized in Cagliari a seminar on "History and Role of Sardinia".
- On 09.03.2022, the French association organized in Paris a seminar on "Convergence of Health Care"

- On 16.06.2022, the Finnish association organized in Helsinki a seminar on "Finlandization" (initially scheduled on 26.06.2020 but because of covid-19 postponed to 2021 and again to 2022).
- On 14.10.2022, the German association organized in Berlin a seminar on "From a dictatorship to a democracy. Experiences with the German unification".
- On 23.02.2023, the French association organized in the Senate a seminar on the "Challenges of representative democracy".
- On 05.05.2023, the Norwegian association organized a seminar in Oslo on "Are democracies under pressure today?"
- On 03.05.2024, the Austrian association plans to host in Graz - within the framework of a Council meeting - the FPAP celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Council of Europe.

14. The member organisations invite from time to time the other organisations to special events, e.g. in 2002 the German Association and in 2005 the Belgian Association at the occasion of their 25th anniversaries. The German Association invited the other associations in 2007 and in 2017 to celebrate respectively the 30th and 40th anniversary as did the Italian Association in 2009 for its 40th anniversary or the Belgium Association in 2010 for its 30th anniversary.

15. The European Association pioneered in 2009 by holding in Lisbon (Portugal) a seminar on the role and status of former parliamentarians and their associations in the political and civil society in Europe. One follow-up of this seminar was the elaboration of the "European charter of former parliamentarians". This [charter](#), unanimously adopted in October 2011 at a seminar held in the premises of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, lays down all the principles and aims guiding and inspiring the work by the FP-AP, and recalls the methods recommended assuring its influence and impact.

16. Deeply concerned about the attacks on democracy in the United States of America and dangerous tendencies in Europe, the European Association together with the associations of the USA and Canada launched the [Appeal for Democracy and Dialogue](#) on 05.02.2021.

17. For member associations the European Association offers the following advantages:

- member association will be represented in the Council with two delegates and the General Assembly with three delegates.
- Every two years, may actively participate in the preparation and implementation of the European colloquy as well as in other manifestations, seminars or days of reflection on selected issues.
- They are invited to anniversaries or of other associations.
- The European Association can be used to develop and enrich friendly contacts to other associations and to promote the European integration.

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Honorary President
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