

About the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM)

The World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM) is an international nonprofit, nongovernmental organization promoting the cooperation between associations of Friends of museums throughout the world, in order to enhance the value of museums and encourage the safeguard of our cultural heritage.

The WFFM holds its annual General Assembly and its triennial Congress in a different city of the World every year where all its Members may meet, exchange ideas and share best practices.

The WFFM encourages and develops Young Friend's movement within the Federation to include new generations in its thoughts and actions and to prepare the future of Friends of Museums.

1- History

At the 1971 General Conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) held in Paris, guidelines were proposed to develop a new structure to become a credible counterpart of museum institutions and of their managing agencies, a transnational association open to diverse experiences and to the needs of different culture.

In 1975, the World Federation of Friends of Museums was officially set up, and the Statues were approved by Friends of Museums delegates from nine countries.

In 1989 the WFFM was recognized by UNESCO as an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization). The WFFM's initial observer status to ICOM Executive Council meetings had been upgraded over the years.

The Members of the WFFM represent now over one and a half million Friends of Museums.

Today, the official languages of the Federation are English, French and Spanish.

2- Goal

The purpose of the Federation is to foster international co-operation between Associations of Friends of Museums in order to promote mutual understanding, to exchange information and to pool the experience acquired with the purpose of intensifying the life and developing the function of such associations to benefit museums and the public.

3- Function

The Federation collects and circulates among its members, by all appropriate means, information from every part of the world of interest to Friends of Museums, to make and develop contacts and exchanges between national and regional federations and associations of friends of museums.

The “Code of Ethics for Friends and Volunteers of Museums”, adopted unanimously by the WFFM at its IX Congress held in Oaxaca, Mexico in 1996, is to provide all members with a guide that contribute towards reinforcing and strengthening the relations between Friends and volunteers of museums and museum professionals.

The “Verona Charter of Young Friends of Museums” signed by Young Friends during the XVIth Congress in 2017 declares the vision and mission of the Young Friends representatives for the preservation of artistic and cultural heritage through a closer international cooperation.

4- Who are “the Friends of Museums”

“The Associations of Friends of Museums” means any nonprofit group constituted to support a museum or museums.

- A “**museum**” is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

According to this ICOM definition they are different kinds of museums. A museum may be a garden, a site, a reserve, a monument, a house, a village, a library, an archive, a collection...

- **Friends of Museums.** Major art museums world-wide have long had a ‘society’, often primarily to raise funds, but in the last decades a wave of small museum expansion in rural, regional, suburban and city areas has caused a new need for Friends’ groups that bring the museum closer to its public, and the public closer to its museum.

There are many kinds of Friends: they may be members, volunteers, trustees, associates, honorary curators, supporters, benefactors or taskforce workers.

Friends of Museums may be called a society, an association, the ‘Friends of’, or anything chosen with the museum management. It may range in number from very few to thousands.

The Friends of Museums may be independent, although closely associated with the management, or they may be a department within the museum.

5- Members of the WFFM

The WFFM consists of Active Members, Associate Members, Honorary Members, Donor Members and Individual Members.

Active Members (500\$ annual fee) are all national federations or groups of associations of friends of museums, each duly constituted according to the regulations in its country and having legal personality, provided that only one national federation in each country may be an Active Member.

Associate Members (150\$ annual fee) are all associations of friends of museums that are duly constituted and have legal personality and that are not national federation.

Individual Members (100\$ annual fee) are all individuals who have paid the annual subscription for the current year.

Donor Members (250\$ annual fee) are all individual or corporate members who have paid the annual subscription for the current year.

6- Governing bodies

Governing bodies of the WFFM are the General Assembly, the Council and the Executive Committee.

The General Assembly which adopts new policies and proposals, elects Council members, approves the budget and the accounts, The General Assembly is composed of all WFFM's members, Active Members, Associate Members and Individual Members.

The Council is the managing body of the WFFM and its activities are subject to the approval of the General Assembly. It comprises the members of the Executive Committee, the delegates of all Active Members, Young Friends representatives, and four delegates representing Associate Members.

The Executive Committee, elected by the Council, examines and decides on all matters relating to the policy, programme, membership, procedures and finances of the WFFM.

He is made up by the WFFM's officers: the **President**, the **Secretary General**, the **Treasurer** and **one Vice President** for each geographical region established by the General Assembly, **Africa-Asia-Pacific, Europe, North America, and South America**.

Remarks: *The different documents quoted in this presentation paper, statutes, Code of Ethics, Verona Charter, as well as the practical handbook "How to Start a Friends Group" are available on the WFFM websites <http://www.museumfriends.com/fr/home-2> or <https://www.wffmcongress.com/>*