
FRANCE-CONGRÈS
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

GENESIS

In 1965, the 10 founding member towns opened a Central Office for Information and Orientation in Paris accessible to conference organisers within companies, federations, trade unions and other organisations.

Thus was established **France-Congrès**, an organisation that could orchestrate joint advertising campaigns and help each member town host its share of conferences and seminars through an exchange of information.

Over the last 40 years the Central Office has become a unique information-dissemination organisation.

MEMBERSHIP

The current membership (2005) stands at 48:

Aix-les-Bains, Aix-en-Provence, Amiens, Angers, Antibes/Juan-les-Pins, Arcachon, Besançon, Béziers, Biarritz, Bordeaux, Caen, Cannes, Chamonix, Deauville, Dijon, Dunkirk, Evian-les-Bains, Grenoble, La Baule, La Grande Motte, La Rochelle, Le Mans, Le Touquet, Les Sables d'Olonne, Lille, Lyons, Marseilles, Metz, Montpellier, Mulhouse, Nancy, Nantes, Nice, Nîmes, Paris, Pau, Poitiers, Rheims, Saint-Malo, Saint-Raphaël, Saint-Étienne ; Strasbourg, Tours, Val d'Isère, Vichy, Vittel, and Martinique (French West Indies) and Saint-Denis de la Réunion in the French overseas territories.

THE MISSIONS OF FRANCE-CONGRES

A new mission statement for France-Congrès was produced by the Executive board in office since 12 October 1995.

It aims at adapting the organisation to recent developments in the market, optimising its budget and positioning the organisation in our line of business.

The Executive board has laid forth the following mission statement:

I - REPRESENTING:

- ⇒ **When dealing with the public sector:** representing conference towns as their nationwide lobby, reviewing all legislation applicable to conference towns – VAT, taxes, social legislation, Law of 13 July 1992, etc.
- ⇒ **When dealing within the private sector :** it is in the towns' interest to act in a strong and coordinated way.
- ⇒ **When dealing with the media.**
- ⇒ **Through internal communication:** disseminating information amongst Mayors of France-Congrès member towns.

II - PROMOTING:

- ⇒ **The conference industry:** increasing awareness of conference towns and what they do.
- ⇒ **Marketing:** giving advice and information to towns about the market, trade fairs, things to do.
- ⇒ **Promotion and representation:** advertising the organisation by disseminating information (no commercial purpose).
- ⇒ **Publishing documents:** France-Congrès Guide to French Conference Towns, La Lettre newsletter, surveys and reviews, etc.

III - UNITING:

- ⇒ **Conference towns:** France-Congrès must bring together most French conference towns.
- ⇒ **Professional organisations:** through synergies with existing professional organisations such as ANAé, Traiteurs de France-the French Caterers' Association, Club Français du Tourisme d'Affaires Réceptif (CFTAR), Maison de la France, European Federation of Conference Towns
- ⇒ **Institutions:** establishing or strengthening relations with institutions in the tourist industry (French Ministry of Tourism, ODIT France), regional development (DATAR), and the economy and any other body directly interested in the development of the conference industry in France.

IV - OBSERVING AND ANALYSING:

- ⇒ **The market and its developments:** through a market indicator drawn up quarterly jointly with ODIT France.
- ⇒ **For all:** France-Congrès constantly disseminates information about the market produced by other organisations (studies and reference works).
- ⇒ **For our members:** organisations, market trends, survey of rates, survey of economic benefits, legal framework.

ORGANISATION

NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION

Established in 1965 to pool means and efforts of conference towns in a joint promotion action both in France and abroad.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Attended by the mayors of all member towns and chaired by the President of the Management Board.

MANAGEMENT BOARD

Members are elected by the first Annual general meeting held after municipal elections.

The Management Board has broadest power for the management of the organisation and endorses new memberships and expulsions.

Under the stewardship of its President, the Management Board entrust the Central Office with the pursuit of the organisation's objectives.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

11 members sit on the Executive Board:

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

President : **Philippe AUGIER**, Mayor of Deauville

Treasurer: **Jean Louis BOURDIER**, Deputy Mayor of Vichy

Vice-Presidents : **Dorothee DA SILVA**, Deputy Mayor of Lille
Stéphan DELAUX, Deputy Mayor of Bordeaux
Marc FRANCINA, Mayor of Evian
: **Gabrielle DELONCLE**, Deputy Mayor of Montpellier
Michel VEUNAC, Deputy Mayor of Biarritz

BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES:

Secretary General **Olivier LEPINE**, Director General, Biarritz Tourisme

Vice-Presidents : **Maxime TISSOT**, Director General, Office de Tourisme et des Congrès, Marseilles
Denis SPORTES, Director, Palais Beaumont, Pau
Jean Claude HANESSE, Director General, Office de Tourisme et du Palais des Congrès, Nancy

The President of one of the committees is co-opted into the Executive Board.

CENTRAL OFFICE – PARIS

Supported by the Committees, the Central Office submits action plans to the Management Board for approval and implements them in coordination with town officials.

COMMITTEES

Elected officials and business representatives, chosen amongst candidates presented by towns, sit on the Committees in equal numbers (6/6). The Committees are chaired by a business representative appointed for a 3-year term.

Promotion and Development Committee

Chairman: Olivier LEPINE, Director General, Biarritz Tourisme.

The committee devises the appropriate PR and marketing policy with the assistance of the Central Office and submits them to the Management Board for approval.

Economic and Social Committee

Chairman: Christophe Gabreau, Director General, Lille Grand Palais

The Committee reviews management issues in convention centres. Through its work it enables elected officials and others to call upon relevant government services and suggest relevant answers. It also provides a toolbox to manage convention centres effectively.

WHY BECOME A MEMBER OF FRANCE-CONGRES?

A QUALITY SEAL FOR CONFERENCE TOWNS

There are a number of requirements in terms of facilities to become a member of France-Congrès. This therefore represents:

- **An official recognition of the town's purpose as a conference town:**

Member towns are part of a network of carefully selected towns which have shown a political determination to host conferences and have positioned themselves on the national and international conference markets thanks to their facilities.

- **A guarantee on the quality of service for customers:**

Conference organisers contact France-Congrès member towns knowing that they have adequate facilities and service.

AN ADVERTISING TOOL BRINGING INCREASED PUBLICITY IN FRANCE, IN EUROPE AND INTERNATIONALLY

⇒ **In the press:**

Regular contacts with the press (national, professional, economic) keep journalists abreast of the changes and news of the organisation and its member towns.

France-Congrès is the privileged partner of journalists, inciting them to write surveys and reviews of the market, and of the assets and potential of member towns, and providing them with background information.

⇒ **In professional organisations:**

Through its membership of a number of professional organisations France-Congrès brings member towns recognition and opportunities:

- in France: Maison de la France, Club Français du Tourisme d'Affaires Réceptif (CFTAR), Odit France, Conseil National du Tourisme.
- in Europe: Fédération Européenne des Villes de Congrès (FEVC)
- internationally: Union des Associations Internationales (UAI).

⇒ **In "La Lettre de France-Congrès", our direct link with customers**

La Lettre de France-Congrès, our quarterly newsletter in French has a circulation of 8000 copies. Four times a year the newsletter updates you on the latest improvements and modernisation of venues and host towns.

⇒ **In the Guide to French Conference Towns**

This unique guide summarises, over four pages per town, all the technical information needed to help in the initial choice of a venue for conferences, seminars and other events. It offers meeting prescribers the best and most prestigious French conference towns.

This bilingual (French/English) colour guide updated yearly has a circulation of 9000.

⇒ **On its website.**

The website gives a presentation of France-Congrès member towns (contact details, access, presentation of the towns and its facilities...). Towns can be sorted according to the needs of prospective conference organisers (capacity of meeting rooms, hotels, location...).

Member town websites are accessible directly from the France-Congrès website.

The venue comparison function and the possibility to send specifications to a number of towns simultaneously are amongst the novelties included in the new updated 2005 website.

⇒ **Through its advice and support to PR operations :**

France-Congrès Central Office can help you choose a venue in Paris, facilitate your contacts with service providers and send your invitations through its database.

⇒ **Member towns automatically enjoy publicity**

Across the world within Maison de la France offices, during trade fairs attended by France-Congrès and through contacts developed by France-Congrès. In France thanks to our database, the Talks and other trade fairs.

SALES ASSISTANCE

⇒ **A unique database of conference organisers.**

Our detailed, worldwide database of some 10.000 customers, including 8.000 in France, is regularly updated.

⇒ **Access to detailed customer projects.**

France-Congrès advises customers in the quest for their ideal venue on the basis of their exact needs in terms of meeting rooms, accommodation and other services. This information is immediately passed on to the relevant towns with a request for an estimate. The local conference department then has sole and direct responsibility over relations with the customer.

⇒ **The France-Congrès Talks:**

This event has been organised yearly by the Central Office for the benefit of member towns for 28 years.

This is an event that conference towns and organisers await with great expectation.

Attendance: 400 customers with projects.

More than 500 contacts passed on to towns.

A UNIQUE THINK-TANK

⇒ **With its Working Committees**

The Committees review management issues in convention centres and produces invaluable surveys and reviews used by town officials to define their management policies (review of rates) and their marketing policies (prospective market research), and refine their knowledge of the market (economic observatory of business tourism).

⇒ **With its Seminar**

The Seminar, held in a different town every year, provides elected officials and professionals with an opportunity to have a fruitful exchange of views and ideas. The specialised topics discussed in the various workshops are typical of the concerns of elected officials and convention centre management alike.
