



World Federation of Friends of Museums
Federación Mundial de Amigos de los Museos
Fédération Mondiale des Amis des Musées

General Assembly of the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM)

Athens, April 23–26, 2026



Eighteen countries—Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom gathered or were represented at the General Assembly of the World Federation of Friends of Museums —WFFM—which was warmly hosted in Athens from April 23 to 26, 2026, by the Hellenic Federation of Friends of Museums (ΕΟΣΦΙΜ), for the third time in its history following 1986 and 2004.

It was also an opportunity to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the WFFM as well as the 40th anniversary of ΕΟΣΦΙΜ. The creation of the World Federation in the 1970s, initiated by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), led to the establishment of national federations of friends of museums as we know them today.

Fifty-one Friends, including seventeen young people, representatives from ICOM, and numerous Greek museum and heritage institutions participated in this event, which opened with a symposium on the theme “Museums and Their Friends: Challenges and perspectives in an ever-changing world” organized by ΕΟΣΦΙΜ.

Numerous presentations, ranging from general reflections to local experiences, addressed issues of sustainability, the economy, climate change, accessibility for people with disabilities, and the growing threats facing museums—both from illicit trafficking and the risks of war.

Throughout the symposium, museums emerged as “places of trust” by nature; they are becoming vibrant spaces, essential venues for social interaction in a democracy, where Friends can fully bring them to life as the museums’ primary audience and an integral part of tomorrow’s social fabric.

At its General Assembly, the WFFM continued to implement the action plan adopted in 2025. Five priorities were identified: increasing the number of member federations and associations in all regions by seeking to forge new relationships around the Mediterranean and in Africa; developing international partnerships, primarily with ICOM, but also with UNESCO; deepening the exchange of experiences among Friends, particularly through digital channels; increasing their visibility by internationalizing the European Day of Friends of Museums ; and finally, continuing the restructuring of the World Federation.

The bylaws of the WFFM, an international non-profit association, are registered in Belgium. They were drawn up in 2006. They are currently being updated to comply with the legal provisions of the new Belgian Code of Companies and Associations.

A new Vice President for North America was elected in Athens: Marie Sénécal-Tremblay from Canada.

The WFFM has accepted four new associate members: the Friends of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, Hungary; the Friends of the American University of Beirut Museum in Lebanon; the Club of Cultures of the Museum of Cultures (MUSEC) in Lugano, Switzerland; and the Association of Friends of the National Museum of Burkina Faso in Ouagadougou.

The working groups established in 2025 to revise the World Federation’s code of ethics, identify and contact former and new members, recruit individual members, and seek funding provided an update. The working group on funding submitted its final report, which the WFFM will implement. The other groups are continuing their reflections.

A strategy and guidelines are needed to manage the WFFM’s growing digital presence, particularly regarding the use of its logos and videos. A new “WFFM Member” logo has been proposed in the three official languages. The WFFM encourages the use of this logo within its member federations and associations as a sign of shared values.

The European Day of Friends of Museums will become the World Day in 2026, still held on the second Sunday of October under the theme “Your Museums, Our Passion!” with a new, adapted logo.

An expanded Euro-Mediterranean meeting will take stock of this first World Museum Friends Day in late October in Bucharest, hosted by the Friends of the National Museum of Art of Romania. Communicating about the World Day is important. The WFFM is preparing a press kit that will be made available to all members. Everyone is encouraged to share the events organized by their associations with the WFFM.

The WFFM, an ICOM-affiliated organization, encourages its members to establish partnerships with ICOM’s national committees. It will participate in the upcoming ICOM General Assembly in Paris in June to follow up on the discussions initiated at the ICOM Triennial Congress in Dubai last November.

The Young Council, established in 2024, met in Athens with 17 Young Friends from five countries: Canada, France, Germany, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. Led from the outset by French representatives, the Young Council will be headed in 2026–2027 by Megan Batty of Canada.

Finally, the Argentine Federation of Friends of Museums (FADAM) has offered to host the next WFFM General Assembly in Córdoba, Argentina, from April 14 to 18, 2027.