

Board member guide

Quick-start handbook for
(future) FEDEC Board members



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THE NETWORK

FEDEC is an international network for professional circus education with more than 80 members in over 30 countries. Founded in 1998 at the initiative of the first vocational circus arts schools, FEDEC aims at supporting the development and evolution of training, teaching, learning and creation in the field of circus arts.



Missions & goals

Our networks aims at:

- Enhancing and developing the quality of circus arts education,
- Representing our member schools at both European and international level,
- Strengthening the links between the different training programmes and organisations,
- Promoting employability, professional integration and synergies with the professional sector,
- Facilitating international educational exchanges and European mobility,
- Advocating for arts education at European level,
- Raising our members' awareness of the EU's political agenda,
- Raising our sector's profile.

THE NETWORK

Since it was founded, FEDEC has worked with European support networks for the development and evolution of training, teaching, learning and creation and employment in the field of formal and non-formal education ([LLL-Platform](#)), arts education ([EYCO](#), [ELIA](#) and [Culture Action Europe](#)) and networks in the circus professional sector ([Circostrada](#) and [CircusNext](#)).



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Who are the FEDEC members?

FEDEC has 2 membership categories, both have the same rights: they can take part in all our events, activities, EU projects, vote during General Assemblies elections.



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FULL MEMBERS

Full members are schools, professional training institutions, higher education degrees or teachers training institutions in circus arts. The membership fees, paid annually, ranges from €375 to €1875, depending on the member annual income. You can find the grid [here](#).



© YOUNG STAGE Festival Basel

PARTNER MEMBERS

Partner members are associations, festivals, national federations, or information centres who are directly connected to the education, training, creation, production, dissemination or the promotion and the advocacy of circus arts and artists. They must have legal status and be able to prove that their main activity is linked to the circus arts sector and that they promote the young circus arts professionals. There is one fee for the partner members: €200.

As from 2024, the partner members will have 1 seat in the Managing Board for 1 mandate of 3 years maximum. The other 11 Board members are full members. For full details, read the [FEDEC Statutes](#).

When a new member joins the network, [FEDEC Code of conduct](#) must be approved with a signature.

PARTNERSHIPS

FEDEC is funded as an organisation by the Erasmus+ European programme.

With its experience in structuring and supporting training programmes, its knowledge of the issues attached to artistic pedagogy, its action regarding various themes and initiatives on the European agenda and its dynamic network, FEDEC is actively involved in building a structured dialogue between civil society and national and European institutions.



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FEDEC is also involved in European networks and platforms which bring together a large number of civil society actors, such as:



- LLL Platform (Lifelong Learning Platform - European Civil Society for Education) the umbrella that gathers European organisations active in the field of education, training and youth.



- ELIA (European League of Institutes of the Arts) the European platform for exchange and development in higher arts education.



- Circostrada, the European network for street and circus arts.

FEDEC current Director is part of the Managing Board of Circostrada and circusnext (the platform dedicated to contemporary circus).

FEDEC is therefore involved in advocacy actions in order to participate in defining the issues and common policy statements to advocate at sector level as well as at local, regional, national and European levels.

FUNDING

In 2024, the annual budget is +/- €350,000, for around 30 activities and a team of 1 full-time + 3 part-time employees.

We have 3 sources of income:

- Membership fees, for a total of +/- €60 000.
- The annual operating grant of €144 000 (DG Education and Culture – Erasmus+ Programme, KA3, Support for Policy Reform - Civil Society Cooperation in the field of Education and Training), to be confirmed each year.
- Occasional EU projects such as RIGGERS, SPEAK OUT – for which the budget varies every year.

FEDEC also receives support from the COCOF (the Belgian French Community Commission) which provides us with offices (phone line and other services) in Brussels city centre (worth +/- €20 000/year).



THE MANAGING BOARD

FEDEC is an international non-profit association established under Belgian law, governed by a Managing Board (MB). This Board is composed by members elected during each General Assembly (GA) in April. The MB is a body which debates, reflects, exchanges information, deliberates and makes proposals to the GA.

The Managing Board Meetings



The MB meets 4 times a year:

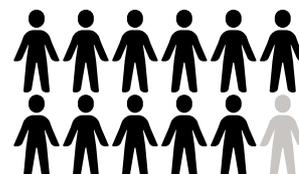
- In January or February, generally on the side-lines of the Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain (Paris).
- In April, during the Spring Talks, hosted by a different FEDEC member every year (during which an ordinary GA is held).
- In September, during an event or online.
- In October, during Circa Festival in Auch (FRA) or online, the week before (during which an Extraordinary General Assembly is held).

Extraordinary meetings may be added, for example during a recruitment process or for deciding a new work programme.

The FEDEC team participate in the MB meetings, which they prepare.

The Managing Board members

The MB is composed of a maximum of 12 elected representatives, of which 1 is a partner member. Partner members are elected for 3 years while full members are elected for a 3-year mandate renewable twice.



The Board members appoint their Executive Committee made of a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer and a Secretary (see details in [the Statutes](#)).



When needed, the MB members can set up ad hoc groups, such as the Human Resources Committee (composed of Stéphane SIMONIN, Adrian PORTER and Anna BEENTJES since 2019) which acts as an interface between the MB and the administrative team regarding any staffing issues. A new series of Working Groups (WG) have been settled in January 2020, with new functioning rules (see specific document).

Together with the WG, the GA and the team, the MB proposes annual, triennial and themed programmes for the federation. The MB is responsible for their implementation, along with the team, once they have been adopted by the GA.

MB members are encouraged to actively participate in the focus groups, which deal

THE MANAGING BOARD

with current network issues, challenges in our sector, defined after consulting the GA members and the priorities in terms of education, training and learning at European level. The composition of the Board can be found [on FEDEC's website](#).

The Managing Board's responsibilities

Responsibility for the content of the work carried out by FEDEC

Board members must “implement the organisation’s programmes and maintain its reputation and assets. They have a duty to manage the organisation honestly and in good faith and they must protect the organisation’s interests. demonstrating the attention and vigilance of a benevolent and cautious person.”

The Board members are responsible for:

- Consulting the members during the GA regarding needs, difficulties & standpoints.
- Confer within each focus group and report back to the other MB members in order to be able to determine the work programmes for the following period.
- Define the network’s strategy.
- Visit new members to welcome them in the network.
- Define the types of partnership, potential networks and partners.

The MB should, in fact, nurture its relationships with people and groups who are not members of the organisation, particularly people likely to become members, with influential community figures, other organisations and various public and private companies. The image projected by the organisation may have a significant impact on the spirit of these relationships.



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It is by effectively making its activities, concerns and points of view known not just to the members but to the entire surrounding community that the organisation builds up its image.

Financial responsibilities

It is the Board members who must collectively think of a funding plan. They also develop a plan for future funding. They propose the discussion on the membership fee amounts to the GA members, with a costed proposal. They distribute the funds among the different resources (membership fees, private contributions and European programmes) and ensure the organisation's priority requirements match the budget.



They are the trustees and managers of the funds the organisation raises, accepts and distributes. All Management Board members are required to demonstrate judgement as a reasonably prudent individual would do when managing his own funds. They must apply the required financial controls to protect the organisation's assets and limit liabilities (for example, procedures authorising expenditure and borrowing, budget control, etc.).



The Director takes care of the monitoring and day-to-day management of the budget, and checks and prepares all the monitoring documents beforehand with the Treasurer as well as the decisions to take to the MB.

When approving the year's accounts, the members must vote to discharge the Board members and the Director.

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Responsibilities regarding the operating procedure

The various actions are taken together for the purpose of defining the organisation's priorities and obligations, then developing the action plans accordingly.

The objectives should be consistent with the needs of the organisation and its members and be reflected by a budget or a use of resources which meets such needs. The activities conducted in the organisation's name must be in line with the established objectives.



The Executive Committee members

The Executive Committee is made up of the President, the Vice-President, the Treasurer and the Secretary. It is the first level of governance of the MB and is a restricted decision-making body, that can be consulted by the Director in urgent cases, for rapid advice and decisions.

- The President

The President represents FEDEC (politically, institutionally, etc.), and manages the MB: at meetings, he/she facilitates discussions, ensures that everyone

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can express their opinion to reach a consensus, values everyone, and creates a space of respect so that everyone can get engaged.

The President acts as mediator in case of conflicts, and may set limits for disrespectful and inappropriate behaviors. The aim is to create a safe and inclusive space.

- The Vice-President

The Vice-President supports the President in his/her absence, taking over the management and moderation of meetings and AGMs. During meetings, the Vice-President can be the timekeeper, ensuring that items run smoothly from one meeting to the next, and assisting the President in managing the various Working Groups.



- The Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for FEDEC's budget, in collaboration with the Director. He/she presents a financial report 3 times a year to the Board, as well as to the members during the two GAs, and presents the closing of the previous year's budget at the April GA. It is also at this time that he presents the provisional budget for the current year.

In case of financial difficulties, he/she helps to find solutions with the Director.



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- The Secretary

The secretary is responsible for taking notes during the closed-door sessions to inform absent Board members and keep track of discussions.

The secretary is also responsible for proofreading / correcting the minutes of meetings drafted by the team. He/she may also act as an intermediary between the Director and the Board on Human Resources matters.



- Elections (full rules in the Statutes)

The Executive committee members are elected by their peers, the Board members, during a dedicated meeting organised at the end of the Spring Talks General Assembly, or if more convenient, during the following days. Following a call sent by the Director of the network, the candidates to a position are invited to send a motivation letter to their peers and the Director, a month prior to the April General Assembly (board@fedec.eu – isabel.joly@fedec.eu).

Elections are held by secret ballot, one per position. The President is elected separately, by an absolute majority of votes (50% + 1 vote). The vice-President, treasurer and secretary are elected on separate ballots.

The candidate with the highest number of votes is elected to the vacant position. If 2 candidates obtain the same number of votes, an additional round is held between them. In the third round, the President has the casting vote.



LINKS BETWEEN THE MANAGING BOARD, THE TEAM & FEDEC MEMBERS

The Managing Board & the administrative team

Board members are not responsible for team members - that responsibility lies with the Director. Files must first be discussed between Board members and a consensus reached before being communicated to the Director to avoid bilateral requests.

The President is encouraged to establish regular contact with the Director between MB meetings for effective communication and information.

Board members may wish to meet without the team. A 'closed-door' session has now been settled during all the MB meetings.



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© Laure Geoffroy

A Human Resources Committee was set up in 2014 to provide the team with the best support possible with its human resources missions (careers, skills, recruitment, interviews, training courses).

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Performance reviews, recruitment procedures and decision preparation are prepared by the Director who provides the HR Committee with the necessary details for good decision-making (personal interviews, budget data, legal obligations, etc.).

The communication between Managing Board, team & members

The MB communicates its decisions or questions to members via e-mails from its President or the administrative team. The communications, both written and verbal, allow members to understand and support the MB's actions.

It is a two-way process, as the MB must also “take the temperature” of the organisation's members, especially when it is time to establish objectives and plan programmes. The decisions taken in MB meetings must be accounted for, as the GA mandates the MB for this work.



INSURANCE, EXPENSES & CODE OF CONDUCT

Insurance

FEDEC subscribes to an annual insurance policy to protect its Directors.

It is also wise to take out liability insurance for property owned by organisations to cover the consequences of negligent management. A comprehensive liability insurance policy can cover whatever is insured in the event of damage caused to a third party.



© Manel Sala 'Ullis' - Centre de les Arts del Circo Rogelio Rivel

Expenses

FEDEC budgets allocate an amount to cover the expenses of a maximum of 3 Board members per meeting, for the two MB meetings which take place in January and September (not those on the side-lines of GAs) (€135/meeting). The aim of this measure is to allow Board members from schools which are too financially frail to support regular trips abroad to participate.



© Christophe Trouillet

A request to the administrative team is sufficient for the expenses to be paid. A budget is also allocated to cover part of the President's expenses (accommodation and travel expenses).

Code of conduct for Board members

Before you stand for election, make sure you have read this guide and that you consult colleagues on the Board and consult the team on how things operate and the availability requirements in order to familiarise yourself with the responsibilities.

1. Before you stand for election, make sure you have read this guide and that you consult colleagues on the Board and consult the team on how things operate and the availability requirements in order to familiarise yourself with the responsibilities.
2. Familiarise yourself with FEDEC's statutes and history.
3. Adopt the idea of belonging to a MB which endeavours as far as possible to govern in a federative, consultative, egalitarian & democratic fashion.
4. Make sure you always think and act as a network Board member for the common good, and not as the Director of your school.
5. Attend all MB meetings, or if you are absent, prepare the agenda with the person to whom you give your proxy. You will be able to fully express your opinion and have the guarantee that the MB hears what you have to say.
6. FEDEC is a dynamic network with numerous missions and activities, in a constantly evolving sector. The MB, therefore, is very active. Think about stepping down if you are unable to do the work expected of you.
7. Read the minutes of every meeting to ensure they faithfully reflect what was said and notify the team of any alterations to be made.
8. Exercise your right to speak at each meeting.
9. Disclose any risk of conflict of interest quickly.
10. Be an active listener.

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11. Make sure you maintain a respectful and benevolent employer – employee relationship.
12. Make sure that the staff in the administrative team are competent and that the job descriptions are clear.
13. Make sure there are proper procedures for inflow and outflow of money and that insurance has been taken out to cover the risks.
14. Make sure the organisation's programmes are regularly evaluated.



THE FEDEC TEAM

Composition

In January 2024, the FEDEC team is composed of 4 people. The Director works full time. The working hours of the rest of the team vary according to the network activity and needs.

- Isabel JOLY, Director
- Lorenzo ALBIERO, EU Project Manager
- Sarah WEBER, EU Project Manager
- Carole BERTRAND, Communications Manager



The team's missions

The administrative team is responsible for implementing the work programme, managing various files as well as European grant applications and their follow-up, personnel management, financial monitoring and organising the different Management Board meetings, general assemblies and other FEDEC events and activities.

For 25 years, FEDEC has flourished thanks to the commitment of its members and also the skills of the team in terms of operation, management, administration, organisation, follow-up, evaluation and dissemination.

The distribution of work between the MB and the team is clearly defined to prevent any disruption to the proper governance of the association. The MB is the decision-making body which meets 4 times a year and the Director has the contractual role and mandate to ensure the proper implementation of the consultation, the work programme, transparency, coordination and reporting (on activities and budget). She is responsible for HR management in conjunction with the MB's HR Committee.

Employees have regular appraisal with the Director. The Director meets annually with the HR Committee for a review.



Contact

FEDEC team is based in Brussels (BEL), in an office free of charge provided by the COCOF, near the Central Station (rue du Meiboom 18, 1000 Brussels).

Since March 2020, the team works partly remotely and is better reached by mail:

- Isabel (Isabel.joly@fedec.eu)
- Lorenzo (lorenzo.albiero@fedec.eu)
- Sarah (sarah.weber@fedec.eu)
- Carole (communication@fedec.eu)

Other useful email addresses:

- To contact the Board: board@fedec.eu
- Question on an event: events@fedec.eu
- Questions on speak out: speakout@fedec.eu
- Questions on RIGGERS riggers@fedec.eu
- To reach the full membership: members@fedec.eu

Documents available upon request

- Statutes of the organisation
- List of FEDEC members
- List of Board Members & contact details
- List of working groups
- Minutes of Managing Board & General Assembly meetings of the past year
- Accounts of the past year
- Draft budget of the ongoing year