

Agape Fund

Terms of Reference

Agape Fund is an instrument of the European Forum created to allow persons from underprivileged contexts to attend the annual conferences of the European Forum and its AGM. The aim is twofold: to support the growth of the movement in challenging contexts and to ensure the fullest possible representation of the movement in the organisation's key event for the sake of fairness and the organisation's cohesion.

What is Agape Fund for?

Agape Fund scholarships can cover one or both of the following types of costs: the conference participation fee and travel expenses (e.g., tickets, visas, insurance, city transfer). Accommodation and subsistence during the conference are included in the participation fee.

How can applications be made?

The application process is part of the registration process for an annual conference. It starts with the registration opening (usually in December/January) and finishes after approximately a month (in January/February). Applicants are either invited to fill an additional form or to answer additional questions in the main registration form. Applicants can apply for scholarships to cover the abovementioned costs in full or partially.

Who can get this support?

There is a set of factors that are considered when the application is assessed. Some of them have more value than others.

- The applicant must reside in Europe, as such is the mandate of the European Forum and Agape Fund. Persons from other regions interested in the conference are welcome to register and take part as paying participants but they are encouraged to look for support from other sources.
- Within Europe, it is obvious that some regions are less privileged than others in general: there are higher chances that Agape Fund scholarships will be given to applicants from the South and East, rather than from the North and West. However, underprivileged contexts may include such cases as migrants, refugees, persons of colour, persons with disability, or students in a Western country, etc. There should be special attention given to underrepresented identities within the LGBTI+ community.
- Sometimes, there will be special areas of attention, e.g. in 2022-2023 it was important for the European Forum to make sure Ukrainians are present at the conference.
- The key reason for applying for this scholarship must be financial difficulties. The person must state that they won't be able to finance this trip and/or participation themselves. The European Forum, however, doesn't ask for proof of financial standing. We trust the

applicants and will rely on the information provided to us by the reference contacts or others we may ask for their opinion on a concrete application.

- The age of the applicant is not a criterion as such. Yet, it often is a factor contributing to the financial difficulties. However, the correlation between age and privilege is not linear.
- Having in mind the aims of the Fund, the European Forum reserves the right to give preference to those who are connected to its local member groups. Those applicants nominated by their group to ensure their representation in the AGM may take precedence.
- In general, the applicant should be involved in the local movement, should be genuinely contributing to the work of the existing group or building a new one, etc. They should demonstrate some vision of how their participation contributes to their work back at home.
- Some scholarships may be given to applicants from underprivileged contexts based on the assessment that their participation is crucial for the success of the conference, e.g., they are one of the key programmatic leaders, interpreters, etc.
- To ensure fair access to this support instrument, a person may not be awarded Agape Fund scholarship more than 2 times within 5 years. An applicant who has received support twice in the past may only apply again for support for their participation in a conference that is sixth in a row counting from the first one they got support to attend (e.g., if support was given in 2022 and 2023, the next time that person can apply is for the year 2027). Exceptions can be made in special cases for representatives of local groups, primarily small ones, by an agreement between the group and the Board, and for persons whose work is crucial for the conference success, e.g., interpreters.
- One of the criteria for selection of participants if there are more applications worthy of support than available funds is diversity: the Board will try to ensure that it doesn't create additional tensions or imbalance and will focus on bringing participants from most underrepresented groups to the conference.
- An important factor is the so-called good standing of the applicant. If they have participated before, especially as supported participants, there shouldn't be any negative experience or consequences related to their participation. They should be known to have come intentionally to the European Forum conference (as opposed to, e.g., using it as a pretext for tourism or leaving the organizers in the dark as to their plans to ask for asylum during or after the conference, etc.). High attendance and/or fulfilment of entrusted tasks speak in their favour. It is also important to be able to show how their participation had a positive impact on their local member group or movement.
- In the application, candidates are encouraged to provide as references names of persons within the European Forum who know them. It is not obligatory but is quite helpful for the consideration of the application.

How does the process look like and who makes the decision?

- Applications are received through the registration process until a set deadline. After the deadline there is normally no technical possibility to submit applications. If, for technical reasons, an application is submitted after the deadline, that application is only

considered if there are remaining funds available after considering all the applications submitted before the deadline.

- When all applications are collected, the Board of the European Forum considers them and makes their decision based on the criteria above and available funds. There may be situations when the Board would like to support more applicants than it actually can at the moment, in this case it puts certain applicants on the waiting list. If additional funds become available for Agape scholarships (through additional donations, fundraising of the organizers of the conference, etc.), the Board may increase the list of supported applicants.
- The Board may decide to provide full or partial support for the applicant's participation from other sources at its disposal instead of Agape Fund.
- The Board may contact the provided reference persons and other contacts, e.g., representatives of member groups, partners from the region, etc.
- In case of multiple applications from one member group, the Board may choose a lower number of persons to support and suggest to the applicants to either choose between themselves or involve the member group in finding support for those who didn't fit in the number resulting from the amount of available scholarships.
- The Board announces the decision made within two weeks after the application deadline.
- Decisions of the Board are final.

15 September 2023