

# *The Agora Explained*



Dear Reader,

This guide will give you an insight in all the things happening at the biannual General Assembly of AEGEE-Europe, called the Agora.

The guide is divided in three parts; first explaining what should be prepared by the locals beforehand and then giving an overview of all the things happening during the actual event. In the end you can find a summary of CIA regulations concerning the votings and elections taking place in Leiden.

In case you are a relatively new AEGEE member, please attend the "AEGEE for newbies"-session on the arrival day (thursday 14:30 – 15:00pm). If this is your first Agora, please also join the "Agora Speed Course" (thursday 15:00 – 16:00pm).

In case you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact to us at: [chair@aegee.org](mailto:chair@aegee.org).

Your Chairteam 2010  
Sido + Katja + Patrick + Anita + Seren

## **1. Before the Agora - Preparations**

In order to represent your local or WG, you should be well informed about what is going to happen during the Agora. The best source of information in this case are the booklets, which are published by the Secretary General of AEGEE-Europe, Olga Basova. The location can be found in the announcing e-mail to AEGEE-AGORA-L. The booklets contains a lot of information, which is outlined in the following sections. Next to your preparation by reading the booklets, the Agora is the occasion on which you have to fulfil the criterion of the payment of membership fees to AEGEE-Europe. As you know, a certain amount of the fee that you charge from your members has to be transferred to AEGEE-Europe. This fee depends on the corridor where your AEGEE antenna is located. Before the Agora, the Financial Director of AEGEE-Europe, Nico Huurman, will provide you with more detailed information about the exact amount you have to pay. You can either transfer the money in advance or pay at the registration desk of AEGEE-Europe at the Agora. In case you have any questions regarding the payment please contact Nico ([treasurer@aegee.org](mailto:treasurer@aegee.org)).

### **1.1. Agenda**

The agenda has been set by the Chair Team and the Comité Directeur. It gives you an overview what is going to happen when and which are the scheduled issues (reports, votings, workshops etc.).

### **1.2. Reports**

As according to the CIA (Corpus Iuridicum AEGEEense – AEGEE's statutes and working formats) the Comité Directeur, Working Groups, Commissions and Liaison Officers have to present a report of their activities since the last Agora. While they are presented, you can also find them in a more detailed version in the booklet. As you are asked to vote upon the reports presented by the CD, you should discuss the report in advance in your local and also discuss whether you have any questions to the report.

### **1.3. Proposals**

During the Agora also proposals for modification of the CIA are presented. These proposals you can also read beforehand in the booklet. Together in your local you should form an opinion regarding the

proposals which you as delegate or envoy are going to express during the Agora first of all by taking actively part in the discussion, but also by voting on it.

#### **1.4. Candidatures**

Last, but not least the Agora is the place where the AEGEE members are elected for open positions. Those can be positions within the Comité Directeur, the Commissions of AEGEE Europe, the Chairperson and Secretary of Agora and EBM or for the Summer University. The respectively open positions are announced in advance by the Juridical Commission, who is responsible for gathering all candidatures. Finally the candidatures are published in the Agora booklet and also presented at the Agora, where you as a representative of your local have the chance to ask questions to the candidates.

## **2. During the Agora**

This chapter explains all the things happening at the Agora.

### **2.1. Arrival and registration**

Very well, you've made it to the Agora, you survived your long trip and even managed to find the location with the facilities that AEGEE-Leiden is going to provide. So what's next? First of all, if you are an envoy or a delegate of an AEGEE Antenna, Contact Antenna or AEGEE Working group you should register with AEGEE-Europe. This is important for the reasons stated below in section 2. The others can go straight through to register with AEGEE-Leiden. There you will pay the participation fee at the Agora, receive your badge (which you should always have with you in order to be identified easily as Agora participant) and also some more welcome materials.

### **2.2. Registration with AEGEE-Europe**

You have to register with AEGEE-Europe because participation in Statutory events is one of the criteria to remain an Antenna or Contact Antenna. Secondly, here also your membership fee payment is checked, so make sure that you either bring the receipt of your transfer (in case you have paid in advance) or enough cash to pay the membership fee directly at the desk.

Once you have paid, you will receive a receipt from Nico, furthermore you will get membership stickers according to the number of members you have paid the fee for. The stickers prolong the validity of your membership cards for the upcoming 6 months and should be distributed among the members in your local after your return.

After your payment has been checked and you have received the stickers, the Juridical Commissioners Mirjam and Ester are waiting for you with an envelope that contains your votes and a voting card. Remember that you only receive votes if you registered an Antenna or an AEGEE Working Group. Despite the fact that Contact Antennae have to register they do not receive ballot papers. The number of votes depends on the number of members your local has, yet the distribution is not proportionally. Below you find the distribution of votes according to the number of members.

10 - 20 members 1 vote

21 - 50 members 2 votes

51 - 100 members 3 votes

101 - 150 members 4 votes

151 - 200 members 5 votes

201 - 250 members 6 votes

251 - 350 members 7 votes

351 - 450 members 8 votes

451 - 550 members 9 votes

551 - 650 members 10 votes

651 - 750 members 11 votes

751 - 850 members 12 votes

851 - 950 members 13 votes

from 951 members 14 votes plus additional vote for each block of 250 additional members  
AEGEE-Working Groups have 3 votes.

### **2.3. Participants**

During the Agora, not all participants have the same status. Whether they have speaking and voting rights is mainly determined by the body they represent.

There is a distinction between the following participant types:

- a) Delegates (speaking and voting right)
  - up to three delegates per AEGEE Antenna
  - up to three delegates per AEGEE-Working Group (Academy, Cultural WG, Education WG, International Politics WG, Human Rights WG)
- b) Envoys (only speaking right)
  - up to two envoys per AEGEE Contact Antenna
  - up to two envoys per Support/Thematic Working Group
  - up to two envoys per Project Team
  - all members of the Comité Directeur
  - all members of the Commissions
  - all Liaison Officers
- c) Observers (neither speaking nor voting right)
  - up to two Observers per Contact
- d) Visitors (neither speaking nor voting right)
  - number of visitors depends on the capacity of the organising local after acceptance of Delegates, Envoys and Observers the remaining places are given to visitors

### **2.4. Plenaries**

Most of the time during the Agora is scheduled for plenary sessions. The plenaries are the place where a part of the reports (activity and financial reports), proposals and candidatures are presented. As these are important issues for the future of AEGEE it is important that you pay attention and listen carefully to what is being presented. After the presentations you have the chance to ask questions on behalf of your local. Whenever you approach the microphone, please make sure you state clearly your name and body so that the Secretary of the Agora can write them down in the minutes. Finally, during the plenary also the voting upon reports, proposals and candidates takes place. Thus it is very crucial that you have your ballot papers and voting card with you, otherwise you will not be able to express your approval or disapproval.

### **2.5. Prytania**

As you can imagine, discussing proposals with hundreds of people in a plenary is not the most efficient way. Thus there is a kind of workshop, during which the proposals for modifications of the statutes and working formats can be discussed thoroughly: the Prytanium. Each of your delegates should attend one of the (usually simultaneous) Prytania in order to raise the voice of your local during the discussion. The Prytanium looks like a small plenary: an impartial Chairperson – assisted by the Juridical Commission – is taking care that the discussion is steered in an efficient and fair way, the presenter of the proposal is explaining the idea and the motivation behind the proposal while the audience – the delegates – has the chance to ask questions, express their opinion on the proposed articles and finally vote upon it in a roll-call. The result of this voting is only a recommendation and will be presented during the plenary, where the final decision will be taken by all voting bodies.

### **2.6. Activity Reports Session**

All Activity reports except of the Activity Report of the Comité Directeur (for example reports of Working Groups and Commissions) are presented in two parallel sessions after the opening plenary. Please make sure that your delegates attend these two sessions to get an overview about the activities of the network since the last Agora.

### **2.7. Progress Meetings**

There are usually one or two Progress Meeting Sessions in the Agenda for the Agora. Basically these sessions are workshops aimed at working on topics that have a direct organisational relevance to the association as a whole. For instance to discuss the budget for the upcoming year is discussed in one of these sessions, as well as the strategy of the Network Commission and for Agora Kyiv there is a session on how to use the AEGEE Intranet.

## **2.8. Workshops**

Of course, next to all the rather administrative issues, there is also some time reserved for the thematic development of AEGEE. Depending on the number of workshop proposals, there will be three or four different time slots from Friday to Sunday, during which the workshops will take place. The general duration is about 2 hours. Which workshops will be offered you can also find out by reading the Agora booklet in which all WS leaders present their topics with a short description. Workshops at the Agora are THE place to be when you want to find out more about current or planned projects or about Working Groups and want to get involved in European level activities, there is such a wide range of topics offered, you will surely find one of your particular interests among them.

## **2.9. Voting**

As the main decision-making organ of AEGEE the Agora decides upon reports, proposals and candidates.

There are three different ways how you can express your opinion:

a) by acclamation

- used usually for ratification of minutes or the agenda
- if there is no objection, the audience ratifies by clapping

b) by roll-call

- in a roll-call the chairperson calls all the voting bodies, who state their votes in favour, against or abstaining
- in a roll-call in the plenary, every antenna has as much votes as given during the registration (according to the number of members)
- in a roll-call in a prytanium, every antenna or AEGEE-WG has exactly one vote, the number of members is not relevant

c) by ballot papers

- during the AEGEE-Europe registration, you receive from the Juridical Commission an envelope which contains all your ballot papers, make sure you always have them with you during the plenaries!

There is a distinction in the papers between votes and elections:

### *1. Vote*

- o for each of the votes (e.g. on moral and financial report, proposals) you receive one ballot on which is written the number of votes that your Antenna or WG has
- o these votes you can split by writing numbers in the boxes for "in favour", "against" and "abstention"
- o IMPORTANT: the total amount must NOT exceed the number of votes that is written on top of your ballot, otherwise your ballot paper is invalid and your votes are not counted
- o Make sure that you also fill in the name of your local and sign the ballot before casting your vote

### *2. Elections*

- o for each election of candidates every Antenna/WG receives a number of ballots corresponding to the number of votes (e.g. if you have 6 votes you will receive 6 of the same ballot papers for the election of the CD candidates)
- o on these ballot papers you do not write numbers in boxes, but you have to put crosses for the candidates you would like to elect
- o on every ballot is written how many candidates have to be elected this is the maximum number of crosses you can put on the ballot paper
- o IMPORTANT: do not exceed the maximum number of crosses per ballot, otherwise your ballot is invalid!

Before the voting starts, the Juridical Commission will thoroughly explain the voting procedures, so please listen carefully! You can find specifications of elections and votings in Leiden at the end of this document. Of course, if you have already any question you can contact the JC via e-mail: [juridical@aegee.org](mailto:juridical@aegee.org).

## **2.10. Networking**

As you probably know the term Agora is greek and means forum/market place. Thus, it is not only the occasion to elect and vote, but also to meet, discuss and do some networking. Next to the already mentioned parts of the programme also many other meetings take place (formal or less formal): there

is the possibility for the members of the locals to meet and hear more about the European Level during the AEGEE-Fair; project teams, Working Groups and Commissions use the opportunity to meet face to face and discuss internal matters, but also to inform interested newbies about their activities and plans. Last, but not least traditionally the Comité Directeur offers CD candidates and those that are planning to run for the CD in the future the chance to meet and get to know more about the CD life and work.