

Contacts toolkit



European Students' Forum



Toolkit for Contacts

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Words of welcome

Dear Students,

We are very happy that you are willing to create a Contact of AEGEE in your university and join our great Network.

A Contact is at least one person interested in the work of AEGEE-Europe and willing to set up an AEGEE-local. In becoming a Contact you are showing your interest and willingness to share the values, mission and vision of AEGEE. You will find more information about that in the section named '*What is AEGEE?*'

With this document we would like to provide you with some information, best-practice examples and general support for starting and developing a new Contact. While reading the following text, you may stumble across terms which are unfamiliar to you. Explanations of AEGEE terms and abbreviations can be found in the [appendix](#).

[AEGEE](#)'s structure is based on various bodies working together to contribute to the same cause. Some of the bodies forming the Network for example are the European Board of Directors working in Brussels, Commissions, Committees, Working Groups, European Project Teams and of course around 200 local groups.

The AEGEE locals are divided into AEGEE Antennae and AEGEE Contact Antennae, which were, in the first instance, Contacts.

The Contact needs to fulfil several criteria in order to become a Contact Antenna. In return, a Contact Antenna should fulfil the criteria of a Contact, as well as some other criteria to become an Antenna. But let's go step by step!

We will guide you through the process of first becoming a Contact of AEGEE-Europe, develop your Contact and how to become a Contact Antenna.

For your support you can keep in touch with the Network Director from the Comité Directeur (who is a part of [our board of directors](#)) and one of our [Network Commissioners](#) who assists locals in your area. They can help you in detail with starting a Contact and know the specifics of university, administrative procedure in your country and might also be able to visit you.

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1. What is AEGEE

AEGEE (Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe) is one of Europe's biggest interdisciplinary student organisations, open to students and young people from all faculties and disciplines.

As a non-governmental, non-profit, political (but non-partisan) organisation AEGEE strives for a democratic, diverse and borderless Europe, which is socially, economically and politically integrated, and values the participation of young people in its construction and development.

AEGEE empowers students and young people in Europe to take an active role in society. It creates a space for dialogue and learning opportunities as well as acts as their representative towards decision-makers. Moreover, AEGEE strengthens mutual understanding and brings Europe closer to young people.

Founded in 1985 in Paris, today AEGEE has grown to a Network of 13,000 friends, present in around 200 cities in 40 countries all over Europe.

In order to understand better what AEGEE is and what the membership in AEGEE stands for we would like you to shortly view AEGEE's [Identity Toolkit](#) and basic presentation which you can find [here](#).

2. How to become a Contact

Don't worry, you will not be alone in starting a Contact. To assure that we can create a great cooperation, a Network Commissioner and Network Director will be there to support as well as guide you during the process. To begin, we will assess the potential of an AEGEE local in your city and your university. For that we will set up a Skype Meeting with a Network Commissioner and the Network Director to discuss the strategy to develop the group in your city.

Steps in becoming a Contact

To become a Contact, there are a number of steps you will have to complete. During this process, you will be assisted by your [Network Commissioner](#) and the Network Director, so don't worry, you are not alone. These steps are the following:

1. Try to look for other people interested on opening an AEGEE local. A good idea is to look for friends with same interests, groups from University of students sharing AEGEE interests, etc.... You can also post a message in [AEGEE-Europe facebook group](#) and check for other AEGEEans living in the area!
2. Fill out the application form (which can be found [here](#)) and send it to network@aegee.org.

In this application form, you will be asked to provide a clear motivation letter, a support letter from your university and a description of the situation in your city (number of students, other youth associations, faculties etc.). The purpose of getting a support letter is to establish a clear relationship and contact with your university and the office responsible for student associations. This serves as a proof that you are enrolled in a university and will provide you with the opportunity to establish a good relationship with your university in order to rent rooms and get further support from your university (e.g. free printing, promotion of events etc.)

[Here](#) you can find a template for a support letter.

TIP: We have experienced that most universities are quite slow providing these kind of letters. It would be a good idea not only to send emails but to stop by the office of whoever has to sign the support letter and ask them in person.

2. After your application form is received, we will arrange a Skype meeting. Present at this meeting will be you, your Network Commissioner and the Network Director of AEGEE-Europe. The objective of this meeting is to meet each other and to make sure that you are on the right path. During this meeting, we will answer all your unanswered questions about AEGEE and clarify the details what it means to be part of the AEGEE Network. We will discuss in detail how to best use your potential and the environment in your university for setting up an AEGEE local. The outcome of this meeting should be to come up with first ideas and future plans to establish a sustainable AEGEE local. For that reason we will analyse the student culture, the potential for cooperation with the university and other student organisations to provide you with further advice and guidance.

3. After the online meeting you will receive an answer from AEGEE-Europe if you have been accepted, and in case of a positive answer a new Contact of AEGEE-Europe will be established in your city, or whether you have to provide any additional information or clarifications. Then, your Network Commissioner will stay in contact with you to set up the first steps in developing the Contact as well as promote your AEGEE group in your city. Together, you will create a plan for the future of your Contact.

After successfully completing the steps 1-3 mentioned above (application form, university support letter and Skype meeting), you will become a Contact and be announced to the Network via one of our internal mailing lists as well as AEGEE-Europe's Facebook page.

As a new Contact of AEGEE-Europe the Network Director will then create a new account in the AEGEE Intranet <http://www.intranet.aegEE.org/>. You be invited to register and be able to manage your own Intranet account to handle your membership management, fee payments and use it as a database. You will be allowed to call yourself AEGEE-Contact in (your city), but you cannot yet use the logo and the name of AEGEE-(your city).

3. Develop your Contact

Congratulations! You are a Contact now! You should totally celebrate it! But do not forget that it is only the first step in your AEGEE journey!

Your next goal is to become a Contact Antenna, you can check the criteria [here](#). We will have a look at them more closely a little bit later so, don't worry. Before that, you would need to think about a few things:

Do's and Dont's

DO's

- Ask questions! You have already met your Network Commissioner, she/he is here to answer your questions so feel more than free to ask whatever you want.

TIP: Sometimes you cannot think about questions but... a quick chat with your Netcommie (or the Network Director) could be useful! Why don't set up a Skype meeting and you introduce your Netcommie to the rest of the people in your local?

- Contact neighbouring locals to organise exchanges (check out this [map](#) to find out which locals are located close to you). Or just a quick email saying Hi could be super amazing!
- Contact other European associations in your city. Collaborations are really useful and will make both of you stronger!
- Encourage your members attend any kind of AEGEE event: They will return with new motivation and will share their experiences with other people. [Network Meeting/European Planning Meeting/Agora](#): It will inspire you and your members, and they will have the opportunity to learn a lot about the organisation.
- Check out the materials on the [Members' Portal](#)
- Network with the university staff related to student associations that can help you find information about interesting opportunities for your Contact and your members (e.g, International Relations Coordinator, Erasmus office.).

TIP: They might offer you free rooms, etc... A free room is enough to have an event! So this networking is really valuable!

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- Take the time to meet the interested potential members, they will appreciate it and it will motivate them.

TIP: Try to make more a personal relationship. If you take the time to get to know them, what are their strengths and interests, they will be more likely to stay in the organisation.

- Take pictures of all the activities you attend and organize and post them in your social media to make other students interested in AEGEE.
- Be proactive and promote your new Contact among the students in your city. Be creative when you do it!

DON'Ts

- Don't see other organisations as a threat, but think about ways to cooperate (and benefit!) with them.
- Don't use the name "AEGEE-Europe" or "AEGEE-Your city". Your official name is "**AEGEE Contact in Your CITY**".
- Don't use PR materials for Contact Antenna and Antenna, unless you have signed the [Convention d'Adhesion](#) and have attained the status of being a Contact Antenna. There are specific materials designed for Contacts that you can use for your PR strategy.

Tips, resources and advices to develop your Contact

You will need to think about a few things on your first weeks. So, maybe put these things in the agenda for your first meetings.

- **How often will you have your meetings?** Any advice can be given here, some Antennae work really well with meetings every month, others meet every few weeks, others do it every week. Maybe, at the beginning, it would be nice to do it every week, this way, you will be able to get to know better all the other members, and meetings are going to be shorter and funnier.

TIP: Try to make meetings as dynamic as you can. Make sure that you have a plan of what to discuss during the meeting and that the conversation doesn't go too far from that.

TIP: Remember, keep it as entertaining as you can! Why not having some beers after the meeting?

- **Who will be present at those meetings?** Some antennae have different meetings for board members and normal members. But maybe again, since your Contact might have a small number of members, it would be better to have as many people present as possible! Also this will prepare people to, in the future, have board positions, and also to be able to help with activities.

- **Local events:** You will need to organise some events to make people know your organization and to become closer to other members. Why don't you try to host an event in the next few weeks?

TIP: Remember that you have nearby locals ready to help you!

- **PR:** You might want to create a Facebook page to promote your activities. Name one responsible for it but make sure that the activities are promoted with enough time in advance. Also be careful with what you post, you will be representing your Contact there.

TIP: When people will hear about your organization they will first look at your Facebook page. You need a good profile picture and a good cover picture. You have free websites to build your own fancy cover picture, do not hesitate to use them!

TIP: Remember that right now you are not able to call yourself AEGEE-YourCity, so it is really important that you respect that rule.

- **Networking:** Look at [our network](#). You are not alone! Why don't you designate somebody to send an email to the antennae that are close by?

How to attract members

In case you need support with human resources and recruitment, it is advised to check the [Human Resources Cycle toolkit](#) and the [Board Roles Knowledge Transfer Template toolkit](#). Your Network Commissioner can also help you to get support from other European Bodies, such as the Human Resources Committee. (hrc@aegee.org).

AEGEE Support and Resources

- One useful tool that you can use during the development phase of your Contact is the [Members' Portal](#). Here, you can not only find information on various bodies of our network, but furthermore explore a great amount of resources that might be helpful to you. Just take some time to browse through this website and explore all that AEGEE has to offer.
- AEGEE Europe has also an awesome [youtube channel](#) with several promotion videos.

TIP: For sure your University will have facebook groups for new students or students with different interests. Why don't you share the videos there saying that you just started a branch of AEGEE in that University?

- In order to promote the activities in your university, you can use materials [designed for Contacts](#) to promote AEGEE in your city.
- As mentioned before, we have a large Network, why don't you take advantage of that!? Don't hesitate to email other locals and offer them the possibility of doing a quick and informal exchange. A few members of that local coming to your city just to visit the city and have some beers is a perfect way to meet other AEGEEans. Also they might have faced the same problems that you have or you will have, therefore they will be having a valuable experience to share!

Activities

It's a good exercise to decide what will be the focus of your local. Is your local more focused on a specific aspect or thematic of AEGEE? AEGEE decides every three years what topics we will be working on. We call it strategic plan and we structure it in 3 or 4 focus areas.

For 2017-2020 the four main Focus areas are:

1. EQUAL RIGHTS
2. CIVIC EDUCATION
3. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
4. EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

[Here](#) you can find access to official documents and further information about the Strategic Plan.

Activities according to [AEGEE Means](#)

AEGEE has 5 principal Means to achieve its Mission and Vision according to our Strategic Plan. These means are:

- Intercultural Exchange
- Personal Development and Non-Formal Education
- Forum for Discussion
- Thematic Projects
- Advocacy and Lobbying

According to the Means of AEGEE-Europe we would like you to provide with ideas for Activities to get some ideas what you can also organise:

Intercultural exchange

- Organise an exchange with another local to establish good cooperation, learn how to run a student association from other groups and exchange ideas and best practices.
- Organise a local cultural event e.g. cultural evening with presentation of specialties, food, videos, films of one or many specific countries (from groups of people and each group represents one country).
- Attend [Network Meetings](#) and AEGEE-Europe events
- Promote [Summer Universities](#) as a unique intercultural experience
- Organize a Buddy Program/ Exchange Student Mentorship Program if there isn't one in your university. This would mean you could get in contact with the international office of your university in order to get in touch with the exchange students in order to provide them with support and guidance when they arrive. Being in contact with exchange students will provide you an opportunity to organise international events
- Organize a [Running Dinner](#) to meet people and tell them about AEGEE
- Organise events for international exchange (Erasmus) students on your own or in cooperation with other international student organizations like ESN (Erasmus Students Network) in your city

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- Organise a language café or tandem. People exchange their native language with other people willing to learn it.

Personal Development and Non Formal Education

- [Regional Training Course](#)
- Language Days in the University (organize a day filled with learning languages; just find someone who can teach languages and offer students to get a small insight into different languages...be creative: you might also be able to find someone who can teach sign language, Russian, Danish, Romanian...etc)

Forum for Discussion

- Debate on Europe or the EU in your university in cooperation with other groups and try to attract members there promoting of joining AEGEE
- [Local Training Course](#) (If you need trainers you can contact AEGEE Academy board@aegee-academy.org)

Thematic Projects

- Join one of AEGEE-Europe's projects and organise a conference or a Training together with them (Democracy in Practice, Europe on Track, the AEGEEan, Europe in Exchange, Youth UnEmployment, Election observation Project)
- Organise street actions about current issues to raise awareness and create a good image of your association and promote yourself in the meantime (e.g. Free Hugs, attend demonstrations as a group)

Policy and Advocacy

- Join AEGEE's Online consultations on Advocacy and Lobbying matters, e.g. for the [Structured Dialogue of the EU](#) in order to consult young people on policy fields that directly affect them. You may also consult your Network Commissioner about how to find out more about this topic via our mailing lists, such as the ANNOUNCE-L mailing list.

4. How to become a Contact Antenna

As mentioned in the beginning of Chapter 3, your Contact needs to create its own statutes, submit a members list to AEGEE-Europe, send at least one member to a Network Meeting and present an activity plan of your future activities to be able to be upgraded from a Contact to a Contact Antenna.

Overall, in order to become a Contact Antenna you will need to:

1. Create Statutes compatible with the Convention d'Adhésion and the Statutes of AEGEE-Europe.
2. Send a members list with at least ten members of which at least five are not a member of another local.
3. At least one of your members has to attend a Network Meeting (*NWM*).
4. At least one of your members should attend an *Agora* and present itself and a plan of their future activities to the Agora. In case you cannot make it, your Network Commissioner or the Network Director can present your plans at the Agora instead of you.

Yes, just those four things! Easy, right?

1. Create Statutes

You are now part of the biggest interdisciplinary student organization in Europe, which means that you also need to have some rules (as other organizations do!). We understand that to start statutes from scratch is really difficult, so [here](#) you can find a template to start with. You should have a meeting with the other members and have a look at it. Important is that the Statues have to be made both in English and in your local language as well.

TIP: Maybe it would be more effective if one of your members volunteers to do the small changes that the model requires and sends this draft to everybody a few days before the meeting. This way, people would be able to have a look at it before and the discussion will be shorter and more effective.

Once you are done with it, you have to send the statutes to our beloved Juridical Commission (juridical@aegee.org). They will check the documents and will give

you suggestions on how to improve them, and at the ends approve them in case they comply with the requirements. Your Network Commissioner or the Network Director will inform you about the deadline to submit the statues to the Juridical Commission.

2. Members list

This step should be fulfilled a few weeks before the Agora. (your Network Commissioner or the Network Director will tell you when the deadline is.) But be careful! Even though 10 members might not seem to be a lot, prepare to work hard to get those 10 members!

TIP: People might be reluctant to join organizations that only advertise activities abroad. In order to get members it is really important that you can offer local activities as well. They do not need to be really complicated and they do not need to be expensive, they can be as simple as a movie night. In the last pages you have a few suggestions for events, you should totally have a look at them. Feel free to come up with your own ideas as well! Do not forget that the objective of these events is not only to get new members, but also to make sure that your members have fun and they are happy to be part of our Network!


Once your members list is ready, upload it through the system (you will receive instructions on how to do it) or send it to network@aegee.org

3. and 4. Network Meeting (NWM) and Agora attendance/Activity Plan.

You are part of AEGEE now, with hundreds of events per year all over Europe. Therefore, encourage your members to start travelling. In order to become a Contact Antenna you have to send one of your members to a NWM. The rule does not state which NWM you have to attend. If possible, attend a Network Meeting within your area (ask your Network Commissioner for the dates and location of your next NWM!).

Encouraging people to go to AEGEE events would be really helpful for the future. They will meet people from all parts of Europe, have their first AEGEE experience and they might come back really motivated to start working hard for your local!

TIP: It would be awesome if that person could do a really quick presentation about what kind of event it was and what they did. This will make other people more curious and keen to attend events!



Once you have fulfilled those 3 requirements, you should attend the Agora and present your Contact and your future plans (you will also be fulfilling the requirement number 4). At the Agora you will need to do a small presentation showing what you have done and what are your future plans are! Again, remember that your Network Commissioner or the Network Director is there to help you! He/She will be really keen to help you with your presentation. In case you cannot make it, they can present your plans at the Agora instead of you. Your Network Commissioner or the Network Director will inform you about the deadline to submit the Activity Plan of your Contact.

The official act of becoming a Contact Antenna is the signing of [Convention d'Adhesion \(CdA\)](#) between the President of AEGEE-Europe and your local. The CdA document embodies the official membership of your local in the AEGEE Network and states that you both work in the interest of the association.

And, if you have done it properly.... **congratulations!** You are now a Contact Antenna!

5. What's next after being Contact Antenna?!

PR: After signing the [Convention d'Adhesion](#), you will get access to PR materials provided by AEGEE-Europe. These PR materials can also be found online in the [Members' Portal](#). Once you receive approval from the Comité Directeur, you can also customize the PR materials according to your needs and with your own AEGEE logo.

Attending Statutory events: After being getting active you have the opportunity to be upgraded to Contact Antenna and therefore officially becoming part of the AEGEE Network, you have with the right to use your own logo, and send [envoys](#) to the [Agora](#) (AEGEE's General Assembly).

Homepage: Once you are a Contact Antenna, it is also possible to host the webpage for your local in the [Visual Identity](#) form on our [aegee.org](#) homepage under <http://www.zeus.aegee.org/portal/resources/it-resources/> in the form of www.locals.aegee.org/local_name, go to <https://www.zeus.aegee.org/encrypt/> in order to request webspace.

Tip: Have a look at the [Visual Identity Manual](#) to figure out what the requirements are for designing official materials.

Fee: You will need to pay a small fee to AEGEE-Europe so in your first meetings you will need to decide what fee you are going to have. To start off, we suggest that the membership fee should be about 25% of the fee you have to pay to AEGEE-Europe or at least 4€. The best advice is, at least at the beginning, to keep the fee as low as possible, while still collecting enough money to print papers, get some refreshments during your small events, etc... You will also need a treasurer and a place to put that money! The Financial Director will calculate the amount of membership fee you need to pay towards AEGEE-Europe based on your annual membership fee for your members.

Appendix: AEGEE Terms and Abbreviations

Here you can find a collection of the most important terms and abbreviations which you will come across during your time in AEGEE:

Action Agenda: The **Action Agenda** outlines the means of implementation of the Strategic Plan for the upcoming year. The Action Agenda is drafted by the European Planning Meeting.

AEGEE: Association des **Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe** (also known as *European Students' Forum*).

Agora: The **Agora** is AEGEE's General Assembly and the main decision-making body of our organization. Members find out what the state of the organization is, suggest new ways and choose new leaders and representatives. The Agora takes place twice per year, once in Spring and once in Autumn.

Antennae Criteria: **Antennae Criteria** are certain criteria which need to be fulfilled in order for a local to be able to maintain their status. Certain Antenna Criteria also need to be fulfilled in order for a Contact to be upgraded to a Contact Antenna or a Contact Antenna to be upgraded to a full Antenna.

CD: **Comité Directeur** is the international board of AEGEE-Europe.

CdA: **Convention d'Adhésion** is the contract a Contact signs that gives it the status of contact antenna.

CIA: **Corpus Iuridicum AEGEense** is a document which contains the statute and all formal rules of AEGEE.

Delegate: Each AEGEE-Europe Antenna has the right to send up to three delegates to the Agora. They represent the antenna at the Agora, make decisions for it and voice its opinion. Unlike other types of Agora members, delegates have speaking and voting rights.

Envoys: **Envoys** are representatives of Contact Antennae and European Bodies (such as projects, working groups, commissions, committees, etc.). They are at the Agora to

represent and speak on behalf of the body they represent. They cannot vote, but they can state opinions and ask questions.

EPM: European Planning Meeting takes place once per year and is the largest thematic conference of AEGEE. Each year it focuses on a different topic and makes recommendations towards decision-makers on this topic. Also, participants draft the Action Agenda of the next year, which are made at each EPM.

LTC: Local Training Course is a basic level training course of local level skills (e.g. on topics like presentation skills or aspects of antenna management) and usually lasts for one weekend.

NetCom: Network Commission is responsible for the contact within the network by fostering collaboration between the locals and European bodies, as well as strengthening AEGEE's structures internally.

NWM: NetWork Meetings are organized by each Network Commissioner (NetCommie) and offer the opportunity to exchange best practices, start cooperation between AEGEE antennae and discuss general AEGEE matters.

Observer: Observers are representatives of Contacts of AEGEE-Europe. Each Contact can send at least two observers. Observers don't have voting rights. They don't have speaking rights, but can ask the Chair for speaking rights if they want to ask a question.

RTC: Regional Training Course is organized by one or several AEGEE locals. It serves as a training course for future boards and as an opportunity to network with the members from a similar area. Members from the whole Network can apply to attend this event.

Strategic Plan: A document which entails AEGEE's thematic focus for a total of three years. Every three years a new strategic plan is proposed by the Comité Directeur and then needs to be approved by the Autumn Agora.

SU: Summer University is a very interactive summer program where one or more AEGEE antennae host about 20 to 50 participants who get the chance to explore their host countries' culture and landscape for two weeks during the summer.

Visitor: Visitors are invited to the Agora to contribute to the discussions and learn more about AEGEE. They don't have voting rights. They also don't have speaking rights, but can be given speaking rights by the Chair if they ask for them at a specific moment.

Visual Identity: As it states in the name, AEGEE's Visual Identity aims to have coherent visual presence which would identify the organisation, to brand it on the market. You can look on example of Coca Cola, it is very famous brands which is identified with red color and typical style of logo used in all occasions and this create such impact of the visual brand. You can find more detailed information on the Visual Identity [here](#).



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