



International Art Medal Federation  
Fédération Internationale de la Médaille d'Art

## FIDEM CONGRESSES: A GUIDE

These guidelines are intended to acquaint FIDEM Congress organisers with what is generally expected of a FIDEM Congress. However, Congress organisers are welcome to bring their own ideas to their particular Congress and may, if they wish, diverge from the practices detailed here. The FIDEM Executive Committee is happy to advise on any departures from standard practice and to help in any way it can.

### 1. BACKGROUND

The International Art Medal Federation or Fédération Internationale de la Médaille d'Art (FIDEM) was founded in 1937. More information can be found at [www.fidem-medals.org](http://www.fidem-medals.org).

FIDEM Congresses are FIDEM's most important activity. Each Congress is held in a different venue, although this does not preclude revisiting a venue on a subsequent occasion. Each congress is organised by the host country.

Congresses are generally held once every two years, although occasionally there is a period of three years between Congresses.

Congresses generally attract around 100-150 participants.

The principal elements of a Congress are generally:

1. The FIDEM Congress itself, which usually takes place over four days and includes talks and workshops;
2. An international exhibition of contemporary medals. The exhibition usually opens officially during the Congress and remains open to the public for at least one month;
3. An exhibition catalogue;
4. An official medal commemorating the Congress.

The FIDEM Executive and Consultative Committees generally meet at the host venue the year before the Congress (at their own expense), to discuss the programme with the Congress organiser and to visit the various sites.

Each Congress is fully recorded in FIDEM's periodical *Médailles*.

### 2. PLANNING

It is recommended that the host country establish an Organising Committee, which holds regular meetings in the run-up to the Congress. This committee generally consists of representatives from the host country, including the country's FIDEM Delegate and Vice-Delegate, plus the President of FIDEM or his/her nominee. FIDEM is always pleased to offer the Congress organiser whatever assistance it can.

The Congress organiser is encouraged to work closely with such bodies as national numismatic societies, coin cabinets, national mints and artist societies, to secure a broad-based Congress. Engagement on the part of such bodies may be encouraged by including their representatives in the Organising committee.

A Congress can represent a substantial source of income for a venue and the Congress organiser may therefore find that local conference offices and tourist organisations are willing to help with planning and accommodation advice.

Before publicly announcing the programme and fees for the Congress, these should be agreed with the FIDEM President, General Secretary and Treasurer. Fees should be kept as low as possible to encourage maximum participation.

The Congress organiser should also discuss with the FIDEM webmaster ([webmaster@fidem-medals.org](mailto:webmaster@fidem-medals.org)) in advance the manner by which information on the Congress is to be disseminated. The official FIDEM website can play an important role here.

The handing over to an external body of any element of a Congress (an event, the exhibition, the catalogue, etc, etc) should be the subject of a legal contract.

About twelve months before the Congress, initial information concerning location and date should be placed on the web.

About six months before the Congress, registration for Congress participants should open, enabling participants to register attendance. Participants should be able to do this through the internet.

At the same time the following information should be announced:

1. An outline Congress programme;
2. The standard registration fee, which will include all lectures, workshops, social events, the Grand Dinner, the Congress medal and the exhibition catalogue;
3. The 'early bird' registration fee, and the date from which this is no longer available;
4. The fee for optional extras, such as visits to places of interest;
5. The fee for accompanying persons (who would not receive the catalogue or medal);
6. Accommodation details and costs;
7. Payment methods;
8. The Congress organiser's contact details;
9. Information on how to get to the Congress venue;
10. Information on nearby places of interest, to help those who wish to extend their stay before or after the Congress to organise their own programme.

Day fees may be made available to anyone who enquires but should not be widely publicised, so as to encourage participants to attend the whole Congress. The total cost of the day rates should be higher than the standard registration fee.

### **3. CONGRESS PACK**

Participants should be presented with an official Congress pack on arrival. This generally comprises:

1. A Congress bag containing:
2. A printed Congress programme, which includes:
  - a sequential listing of all meetings, talks, workshops, tea and coffee breaks, visits and social events
  - a map showing the locations of all venues
  - abstracts of all talks
  - the location and opening times of the Congress bureau
  - lost property information
  - emergency procedures
  - information on nearby places to eat and drink, internet cafes and WIFI areas, printing shops, and medical facilities;
3. The Congress medal;
4. The exhibition catalogue;
5. An individual badge giving the name and country of the participant, to be worn at all times;
6. Tickets for any events or visits;
7. (If appropriate) an envelope containing the accompanying person's invitations, leaflets, etc.
8. A printed list of participants with the country of each;
9. Any maps, leaflets or tourist brochures thought to be useful.

### **4. PROGRAMME**

A FIDEM Congress usually takes place over four days, from Wednesday through to Saturday.

The principal events are generally:

1. An Opening Ceremony, generally held on the Wednesday morning. This is conducted by distinguished figures from the host country and the FIDEM President.
2. A plenary lecture by a widely respected speaker on a general subject relating to medals. This generally follows the Opening Ceremony.
3. A programme of talks on both historical and contemporary subjects, which are spread over Wednesday–Friday. These talks may be divided into two or three parallel sessions. A call for papers (requesting title, brief synopsis, and speaker's curriculum vitae) should be sent out about nine months in advance of the Congress. This should indicate a theme or themes for the talks, if this has been agreed upon in advance between the Congress organiser and FIDEM. The Congress organiser and FIDEM should decide jointly on the acceptance/rejection of talks, the composition of the various sessions, and the appointment of a chair for each session. Talks outside any set themes should generally be accepted if they appear to be of interest. Speakers should be notified as to whether their talk has been accepted at least six months in advance. The preferred medium for talks is PowerPoint, and the Congress organiser should request the presentations from each speaker in advance to ensure the smooth running of the programme. Talks should be given in rooms with good acoustics and black-out facilities.

4. One or two practical workshops on medal-related subjects and techniques led by artists. These may last between half a day and 1½ days. They may run concurrently with the talks, but care should be taken with the scheduling, so as to minimise difficult choices for participants.
5. One or more visits to places of interest, preferably related to medals or related arts. One afternoon may be given over to this, and another afternoon may be designated as free time.
6. The official opening of the international exhibition of contemporary medals, generally on the Wednesday evening, with other social events on the Thursday and Friday evenings.
7. A Fair at which artists and dealers can sell their medals, usually held on the Saturday morning;
8. A General Assembly, usually held on the Saturday afternoon.
9. A final Grand Dinner, usually held on the Saturday evening.

With the exception of the visits (5 above), all these events should be open to all participants.

Non-FIDEM members may give talks and lead workshops.

It is helpful to have a Congress Bureau open throughout the Congress, to answer questions and provide practical information. Its opening times should be publicised in the Congress pack and elsewhere.

It is useful to have an official photographer to ensure a good photographic record of each Congress.

## 5. OTHER EVENTS

The day before the Congress opens (generally a Tuesday), the following events usually take place, for which venues need to be found by the Congress organiser:

1. In the afternoon, a FIDEM Executive and Consultative Committee meeting. Generally about 12 people. 1½ hours.
2. Directly following, in the afternoon, a FIDEM Delegates' meeting. Generally about 40 people, 1½ hours.
3. In the evening, a reception hosted by the US Delegation for guests invited by the US Delegation. Generally about 60 people. This reception is paid for by the US Delegation.

## 6. EXHIBITION

The FIDEM exhibition offers an opportunity to display new medals from around the world, including work that stretches boundaries.

The year before the Congress the Congress organiser should inform the FIDEM President and General Secretary of the number of medals that can be accommodated in the exhibition venue. This is generally around 900 to 1,000, although this is negotiable. The FIDEM Executive Committee then determines the national quotas.

In order to plan the exhibition, the Congress organiser may wish to set a maximum size for each medal (for example, 150mm in any dimension). The Congress organiser may also wish to stipulate that two examples of the same medal, submitted so as to be able to show both sides, count as two medals.

All the medals should have been made within the previous five years and should not have been shown in an earlier FIDEM exhibition. Generally, the subject matter of the medals will be open. If the Congress organiser wishes to suggest or impose a theme, this should be agreed with the FIDEM President and General Secretary and advertised two years in advance at the very least.

The year before the Congress, the Congress organiser should place on the internet submission guidelines for the exhibition, a form for information on each artist, and a form for information on each medal. The Congress organiser should provide full instructions regarding the despatch of the medals, including information as to whether an ATA carnet will be required.

Although the Congress organiser will need to request the medals arrive well in advance in order to prepare the catalogue and exhibition, care should be taken to keep this to a minimum. Certainly medals should not be away from the national Delegates for more than a year in total, as this can affect their status as temporary imports.

The national Delegates are responsible for getting the artist and medal forms filled in by the artists and sending them to the Congress organiser. The information on these forms provides the basis for the entries in the exhibition catalogue. National Delegates should ensure that artists' statements are a maximum of 50 words and are urged to encourage artists to focus these statements on the exhibited medals rather than on their *curriculum vitae*. The information should be typed, as handwritten documents are not accepted.

National Delegates are responsible for assembling their country's medals and delivering them to the address provided by the Congress organiser. Each country's medals should be sent as one consignment. National Delegates meet the costs of transport of the medals to the Congress organiser and insurance while in transit. The medals should be packed securely in containers indicating on the outside that they are temporary non-commercial imports for exhibition purposes only. Each container should include a list of the medal it holds. If the medals arrive in poor condition or are damaged in transit, the Congress organiser is

advised to contact the national Delegate immediately and provide photos. In such cases, the Congress organiser is not responsible for the damaged medals and should return them immediately.

The Congress organiser is responsible for insuring the medals during the exhibition and is expected to meet the costs of returning the medals to their countries of origin and insuring them while they are in transit on the return journey. Each country's medals should be returned as one consignment to the address indicated by the national Delegate. They should be packed securely and returned in the container in which they were sent. Particular care should be taken with medals made of breakable materials such as glass or ceramics. It is the responsibility of the Congress organiser to ensure that medals arrive back with the national Delegates in the same condition as that in which they were received.

The exhibition is open to all FIDEM members, to employees of mints that are corporate members of FIDEM, and to tutors and students of educational institutions that are corporate members. Non-FIDEM members may also exhibit at the discretion of the national Delegates, but such artists should either join FIDEM within one month of the deadline set by the Congress organiser for the receipt of the medals at the exhibition venue or pay a fee (currently 20 euro) through the FIDEM website. (A member of a national medal society is not deemed to be a member of FIDEM even if that society is a corporate member.)

The exhibition display should be divided by countries. It is recommended that the catalogue number, name of the artist, and title of the medal are given in each case, so that visitors to the exhibition can easily identify each medal. The Congress organiser should also give due consideration to the design of the exhibition. In order that the medals can be seen to best effect, care should be taken that light levels are good and that no medals are placed either too high or low. As far as is practicable, all countries should be given equal prominence.

If additional exhibition space is available, the Congress organiser may decide to devote this space to works requiring more room than allowed for under the size restrictions referred to above (eg. videos, installations). In such an eventuality, the Congress organiser should publicise this possibility the year before the Congress. Any submissions of this sort fall outside the national quotas and national Delegates wishing to submit such works should communicate directly with the Congress organiser. The final decisions as to whether to include such a space and whether to accept individual works rest with the Congress organiser, who will need to consider whether the required resources are available. If the Congress organiser is unable to accommodate these works, they may be able to advise on alternative exhibiting possibilities. In such cases the works would not be part of the official exhibition or catalogue, but they could be featured in *Médailles*. Works such as these can also be discussed in the programme of talks and perhaps shown at the Fair.

## 7. CATALOGUE

The Congress organiser is responsible for the production of the exhibition catalogue. As the catalogue is the permanent record of the exhibition, it should be produced to as high a standard as possible. It will be a substantial book, but regard should be paid to the costs involved and to the fact that Congress participants must carry it home with them, so it should not be unnecessarily heavy.

The main language of the exhibition catalogue should be English.

The medals should appear country by country. As far as is practicable, all countries should be given equal prominence, so an alphabetic arrangement is usual.

The catalogue should include an introduction to each exhibiting country. At the discretion of the Congress organiser these may also be in French, the other official language of FIDEM. In the interests of uniformity and space-saving, no other languages should be included unless there is good reason. These introductions are supplied by the national Delegates. The usual length is about 4-500 words.

Within each country the medals should appear alphabetically according to the artists' surnames. Contact details should be given for each artist, including email addresses, along with an artist's statement of 50 words maximum, which should focus on the exhibited medals rather than on the artist's *curriculum vitae*. The catalogue should include an alphabetical index of artists.

At least one medal by each artist should be illustrated in the catalogue, preferably in colour. Images should be as near to life-size as practicable. It is recommended that a way is found to make illustrations of all the medals available electronically.

Whether or not to include advertisements in the catalogue is a decision for the Congress organiser.

The print run should take into account the following recipients:

1. All Congress participants (except accompanying persons). These copies of the catalogue should be included in the Congress pack;
2. Exhibiting artists who have informed their national Delegate that they wish to receive a catalogue. The fee charged to FIDEM members for this should be substantially lower than that charged to non-members. The fee is set by the Congress organiser and the proceeds go into their budget;
3. Other purchasers. The Congress organiser should determine a price for the catalogue and place it on sale during and after the Congress. Any profits from sales will go into the Congress organiser's budget.

National Delegates should inform the Congress organiser of the number of artists who fall into categories 2 and 3 above, so that after the Congress the Congress organiser can send the required number of catalogues to them for distribution.

## 8. CONGRESS MEDAL

The Congress medal should in some way reflect the Congress and the host country.

The Congress organiser is responsible for selecting the artist to make the medal. This is generally a respected artist from the host country. The medal should be commissioned well in advance of the Congress.

The shape, material and size of the medal are left to the Congress organiser and artist-designer. However, the dimensions are usually no less than 60 millimetres and the medal should be easily held in the hand.

The method of production is also left to the Congress organiser and artist-designer. However, given that more than 100 will be required (for each congress participant), striking is the usual method.

An inscription generally gives the city of the congress, the year, the name FIDEM and the number of the congress in Roman numerals. It is best to keep the inscription to this minimum if possible.

Generally the best results are obtained if the artist/designer is given a free hand as to the imagery. The artist should be urged to make imaginative use of the two sides of the medal.

Each Congress participant (except accompanying persons) should receive an example of the medal. The Congress organiser may also place the medal on sale.

## 9. ACCOMMODATION

The Congress organiser should negotiate hotel/hostel accommodation prices to ensure good value.

Varied accommodation should be suggested, including a range of hotels (probably two or three options) and a cheap hostel and/or college accommodation (one or two options).

Participants are generally expected to reserve their own accommodation, using information made available by the Congress organiser.

## 10. FINANCE

The cost of a FIDEM Congress is financed principally by the fees paid by participants. However, it is recognised that goodwill on the part of venues and other organisations in the host country also often plays a major part in financing FIDEM Congresses. Sponsorship may also be sought for the various elements of a Congress.

FIDEM can help to try to identify sources of funding. Moreover, FIDEM itself generally offers to contribute 15,000 euro to each Congress. FIDEM can also lend up to 10,000 euro on the understanding that this is returned in all or in part if the Congress recoups its costs without it. A Congress budget must be agreed before FIDEM releases any funding.

The principal expenses to be met through the registration fees and any other income are:

1. Production of the catalogue, including photography of all the medals;
2. Costs associated with the programme, including tea and coffee breaks, the Grand Dinner, production of the congress medal and insurance;
3. Sending the catalogues to the national Delegates for distribution to those participating artists who have bought it;
4. Insurance of the medals during the exhibition;
5. Return of the medals to the national Delegates, including insurance.

## 11. SCHEDULE

This is very approximate and for guidance only. Principal activities only are included.

MONTHS BEFORE CONGRESS	ACTIVITY	RELEVANT SECTION ABOVE
12	Information on place and dates placed on web	2. Planning
12	FIDEM General Secretary informed of the number of medals to be included in the exhibition	6. Exhibition
12	Forms for medals and artists placed on web	6. Exhibition
12	FIDEM Executive and Consultative Committees and national Delegates meet at host venue	1. Background
12	Congress medal commissioned	8. Congress medal

MONTHS BEFORE CONGRESS	ACTIVITY	R E L E V A N T SECTION ABOVE
9	Call for papers sent out	4. Programme
6	Speakers informed whether their paper has been accepted	4. Programme
6	Medals sent by national Delegates to Congress organiser	6. Exhibition
6	Outline programme and other information placed on web	2. Planning
6	Registration opens	2. Planning
4	'Early bird' registration closes	2. Planning

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