

# International Meetings Statistics Report

64<sup>th</sup> Edition – June 2023

Comparative tables on the international  
meetings of international organizations

*Edited by:*

Union of International Associations (UIA)  
Rue Washington 40, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium  
[statistics@uia.org](mailto:statistics@uia.org)  
[www.uia.org](http://www.uia.org)

# Introduction

This is the 64<sup>th</sup> edition of this report.

The "new normal" is still developing as it relates to daily life, associational life and meeting activities. As with the previous three reports, the massive impact of the pandemic on international association meetings has led us to revise the presentation of this report. This report offers two sections: a re-presentation of the data for events held in 2019 and a presentation of the data we currently have for what took place in 2022.

## Why 2019 again?

If you are familiar with this report then you will be aware that our data for a given year generally do not stabilize until a point five years further on. This is due to the fact that we are not immediately aware of what took place in the preceding year and are constantly updating our databases of international associations and their meetings activity. The Yearbook generally adds 900-1,200 new organization descriptions during each annual cycle, and these bring meetings of their own to the statistical picture.

We are presenting 2019 again here because it now represents the ***last good year before the pandemic***. We have added hundreds of additional meetings to the database for 2019 in the period between the reports and we have continued our general process of correcting and updating the information we already have. As we continue to elaborate and extend our understanding of the meetings which took place in 2019, the data will be the baseline for analyzing opportunities for recovery and in examining the potential of new initiatives.

## And what of the pandemic years and 2022?

We continue to track meetings which were **cancelled or postponed / rescheduled**. Historically the UIA has not had a firm editorial rule in such matters.

Situations where conflict or natural disaster caused problems for scheduled meetings can be seen in our time-scale data by gaps or drop off in activity (the World Wars being the clearest examples). UIA had not traditionally described the planned events which had not taken place. By tracking cancelled and postponed events we are able to present a clearer picture of significant circumstances in an association's life.

We are now more correctly reflecting the participant status of events with **in-person, hybrid, and online/virtual** being added to an event's description in the database. Historically the only meetings in our data which took place outside a defined town or city were those which happened on a cruise ship or those which took place in a national park or "resort".

The data for 2022 show the continuing trends of some events having to be rescheduled or changed to a hybrid or fully online format. Additionally, most border controls were lifted in 2022, allowing greater freedom to travel to events. In terms of association life, we are seeing a growing trend of conferences now being planned / scheduled further into the future than in the past three years.

## A note on our 2022 data: why does 2022 look the way it does?

Our traditional editorial notes describe the process by which the UIA interacts with international associations and the meetings industry to compile information about association events. As with every other aspect of life during the pandemic the UIA has also faced changes and disruption to our annual cycles of contact and information gathering.

**This has led to:**

- a reduced total number of events in the database for the pandemic years;
- the need for additional editorial attention given to a single event which may have been postponed as many as three times;
- reduced information provided by our partners;
- additional editorial time required to investigate the final status of events.

**The problem of attributing a location to disrupted meetings**

In the case of a hybrid event our expectation is that the location of the in-person element is described as the “location” of the meeting for our purposes. In the case of a planned in-person event which was ultimately held as online/virtual the issue becomes more complicated. Our default approach is that an online meeting with no specified host locale is then attributed to the home office city of the Yearbook organization. For this reason, some traditionally minor cities have risen in the rankings because they host an especially active organization. For example, Piscataway NJ (USA) is home to the meeting-intensive IEEE’s headquarters.

This reflects the economic aspect of how the event technology is contracted or organized. In other cases, we have seen that the planned locale for an in-person meeting takes on the role of technology partner for the online meeting, thus retaining the geographical credit for the meeting. Neither of these approaches is perfect, but they are sufficient for our purposes of describing what took place in the life of an individual international association. They are less elegant in describing how the local committee may have played the greatest role in making the event happen (reviewing papers, organizing break out groups and so on) or where the technology provider was based. As more meetings are deliberately planned as hybrid or online we will see a reduction in these ambiguities; and we will adjust our approach as needed.

As time passes we will know more about what happened in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. What follows below is a presentation of what we know now, with an expectation of an increase in quantity and range as we move ahead.

**What is not displayed in the geographic tables:**

- postponed meetings
- cancelled meetings
- identifying / differentiating between in-person / hybrid and virtual meetings

Events in the International Congress Calendar currently marked with meeting-status information				
	Cancelled	Postponed	Virtual	Hybrid
<b>2020</b>	1071	2153	3822	199
<b>2021</b>	188	801	4356	989
<b>2022</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>1102</b>	<b>1421</b>
<b>2023</b>	11	9	80	295

This report on the year 2022 report takes 499,498 meetings into account, organized in 268 countries, in 12,110 cities, by 28,733 international organizations.

We appreciate your comments and suggestions.

– The UIA Editorial Team

***UIA Survey on International Association Meeting Issues***

*Related to this Report, the UIA is again surveying international associations on their meeting habits and the report will be released in November 2023 (<https://uia.org/publications/meetings-survey>).*

# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Research Methodology.....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1	General methodology.....	8
1.2	What meetings are counted in this report? .....	9
1.3	What is an “international organization”?.....	10
1.4	Caveat .....	11
1.5	Geographical names .....	11
1.6	Other resources .....	12
<b>2</b>	<b>General overview of international association meetings .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1	Comparison with 61 <sup>st</sup> , 62 <sup>nd</sup> and 63 <sup>rd</sup> editions .....	14
2.2	Number of international association meetings over 150+ years .....	15
2.3	Meetings by continent.....	16
2.3.1	Continental division in the past 20 years .....	16
2.3.2	Continental division in 2022 .....	17
2.4	Meeting size.....	18
2.4.1	Meeting size over 20 years .....	18
2.5	Meeting duration.....	19
2.5.1	Meeting duration for 20 years.....	19
<b>3</b>	<b>20-year rankings .....</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1	Most popular meeting destinations .....	21
3.2	Most popular meeting destinations per continent .....	22
<b>4</b>	<b>2019 rankings .....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1	Most popular 2019 meeting cities (Type A) .....	24
4.2	Most popular 2019 meeting countries / territories (Type A).....	27
4.3	Most popular 2019 meeting destinations by continent (Type A) .....	30
4.4	Most popular 2019 meeting destinations by continent (Type A + C).....	40
<b>5</b>	<b>2022 rankings .....</b>	<b>50</b>
5.1	Most popular 2022 meeting cities (Type A) .....	51
5.2	Most popular 2022 meeting countries / territories (Type A).....	54
5.3	Most popular 2022 meeting destinations by continent (Type A).....	57

5.4	Most popular 2022 meeting destinations by continent (Type A + C).....	67
6	20-year <i>per annum</i> listings .....	77
6.1	Most international association meetings for each of the past 20 years .....	78
7	2019 Full listings .....	85
7.1	International association meetings in 2019 (update) .....	86
8	2022 Full listings .....	128
8.1	International association meetings in 2022 .....	129

# Chapter 1

## Research Methodology

1.1	General methodology .....	8
1.2	What meetings are counted in this report? .....	9
1.3	What is an “international organization”? .....	10
1.4	Caveat .....	11
1.5	Geographical names .....	11
1.6	Other resources .....	12

## 1.1 General methodology

This report is extracted from the Union of International Associations (UIA) database, which is the source of UIA's flagship publications: the *International Congress Calendar* and the *Yearbook of International Organizations*.

It should be noted that UIA's criteria for the collection and inclusion of data in this report have not changed since the first edition in 1960; only the presentation has changed.

Since its founding in 1907 the UIA has collected information on international organizations and their international meetings; a first statistical review was published in its *Revue internationale des congrès* in 1910. Since 1960 the UIA has prepared statistics on the international meetings that have taken place worldwide in the preceding year. This work is based on routine research and surveys undertaken by the UIA for the compilation of the *Yearbook of International Organizations* (published since 1950) and the *International Congress Calendar* (published since 1960).

The prime source of information is international organizations. The UIA editors work continuously throughout the year on the meetings database, adding and modifying event records using information acquired from international organizations and secondary sources, whether for meetings planned for future years or for meetings which took place in years (long) past. The data in this report are extracted every year anew. The most current edition of the report is therefore the most up to date and comprehensive set of data available.

Because the UIA's meetings database is always changing, data extracted from the database today differ from those extracted and published previously, whether they refer to the future or to the past. Changes may arise from the re-scheduling or relocation of meetings and from the addition of supplementary information on recorded meetings or the addition of previously unrecorded meetings. As data are modified, more meetings are added to the database than are removed.

These reports have never claimed to be a complete survey of all international meetings. The editors note that there have been initiatives to determine a standard and generally accepted and applied definition of the term "meeting". While the editors see the need for such an agreement, they point out that the chief merit of the UIA statistics is that they have been compiled over several decades from the same sources and using consistent methods and criteria.

### Reminder

In previous editions, in order to be counted in this report a meeting had to have at least 50 participants, or the number of participants be unknown. As of the 61<sup>st</sup> edition, meetings with under 50 participants are also included.

**Territorial entities are listed on their own** (for example: Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan are *not* grouped under China)



**New organization descriptions are created year-round.** The editors have always examined information received on international meetings which have no clear link to an international association included in the UIA database, the source of the *Yearbook of International Organizations*. In some cases, this examination leads to the creation of new association profiles in the database, and thus to Type A meetings; in other cases, the meetings are considered for Type B or Type C. (See “What meetings are counted in this report?” for more information on Types.)

## 1.2 What meetings are counted in this report?

This report is extracted from the Union of International Associations (UIA) database, which is the source of UIA’s flagship publications: the *International Congress Calendar* and the *Yearbook of International Organizations*. At the time of producing this edition there were 537,897 meetings in the UIA meetings database of which 499,498 meet the criteria for inclusion in this report. Of these 499,498 meetings 486,461 took place in 2021 or earlier, 8,058 took place in 2022, and 4,979 are scheduled for 2023 or later. Some events take place in more than one city and are counted in this report for each city separately.

Meetings included in this report are divided into three types. The types are indicated by letters: type A, type B and type C. These letters have, in themselves, no significance in relation to the meetings they group and are used merely for convenience.

### Type A: Meetings of international associations

**Type A meetings conform to all the following criteria:**

- The meeting must have a clear link to an international association included in the UIA database, the source of the *Yearbook of International Organizations*. (See also below “What is an international organization?”.)
- The meeting can be linked to either an international non-governmental organization (INGO) or an intergovernmental organization (IGO).
- The meeting is eligible for inclusion regardless of its frequency. A meeting can be a one-off event, part of a regular series, or part of an irregular series.
- The meeting is eligible for inclusion regardless of its location. A meeting series can be held always in the same location, or rotate according to a pattern between locations, or change locations randomly.
- The meeting is eligible for inclusion regardless of its participant numbers.

*Included in this report are 8,264 Type A meetings for 2022.*

Type A meetings are included in all tables in this report.

### Types B and C: Other international meetings

**Type B meetings conform to all the following criteria:**

- The meeting does not qualify for Type A but is nonetheless considered to be of significant international associative character.
- The meeting lasts at least three days.
- The meeting has either a concurrent exhibition or at least 300 participants.
- At least 40 percent of the meeting’s participants are from countries other than the host country and at least five nationalities are represented.

Logically, all meetings counted as Type B are also counted as Type C.  
*Included in this report are 65 Type B meetings for 2022.*

**Type C meetings conform to all the following criteria:**

- The meeting does not qualify for Type A but is nonetheless considered to be of significant international associative character.
- The meeting lasts at least two days.
- The meeting has either a concurrent exhibition or at least 250 participants.

Logically, meetings counted as Type C are *not* all counted as Type B.  
*Included in this report are 97 Type C meetings for 2022.*

**Types B and C meetings are included only in some tables in this report.**

On average, 900-1,200 new organization descriptions are added to the database annually.

## 1.3 What is an “international organization”?

The UIA database, the source of the *Yearbook of International Organizations*, profiles “non-profit” “international” “organizations” according to broad criteria. It therefore includes many bodies that may be perceived, according to narrower definitions, as not being fully international, or as not being organizations as such, or as not being of sufficient significance to merit inclusion. Such bodies are nevertheless included so as to enable users to make their own evaluation in the light of their own criteria.

**“Organization”:** There are forms of social organization that may substitute for more formal or conventional forms, such as a conference series with no continuing committee, virtual organizations, networks, cartels, secret societies, religious sects, and bodies with no formal structure or fixed address. Due to the sometimes-vague structure of such bodies, they may be under-reported.

**“Non-profit”:** The definition of “profit-making”, and the extent to which any “non-profit organization” may incidentally or deliberately make a profit as defined by particular tax regimes, cannot be unambiguously resolved. This grey area is treated with flexibility, though bodies that are unambiguously constituted as “for profit” or with solely commercial aims are excluded.

**“International”:** The editors look for the involvement of at least three countries on a more or less equal footing, to the possible exclusion of bi-lateral international bodies and those in which a particular country is dominant. Indications of “internationality” include distribution of board members, location of meetings, rotation of secretariat, source of finance, and membership. Bodies that are focused on, or derive from, a single country are likely to be excluded, which may lead to under-reporting of, for example, aid and missionary societies, or language and cultural activities.

The number and variety of organizations in the UIA database are indicators of the problems of information collection. Documenting organizations and their meetings is challenging for reasons such as the following:

- News of the creation, existence or dissolution of an organization may only be received some time after the fact. Information on an organization's activities may take time to be received and registered by the editors.
- Some organizations are reluctant to publicize their activities. They may not respond to questionnaires or may omit significant information from their replies. Some may not perceive themselves as sufficiently formalized to be mentioned in the same context as those that are legally established.
- Some organizations are ephemeral creations or are only "activated" for infrequent meetings, events or projects.
- Some organizations have frequent changes of secretariat, making continuing contact problematic.

**Approximately 60% of UIA's profiles of currently active organizations include information on meetings activity.** These data form the basis of this report.

More information on UIA's hierarchical typology can be found on the UIA website in the article "[Types of organization](#)".

## 1.4 Caveat

The UIA editors work continuously throughout the year on the meetings database, adding and modifying event records using information acquired from international organizations and secondary sources, whether for meetings planned for future years or for meetings which took place in years (long) past. The data in this report are extracted every year anew. The most current edition of the report is therefore the most up to date and comprehensive set of data available. Readers are reminded that data, especially for recent years, are therefore provisional: data will change as research continues and the database is updated.

**The number of meetings in the database for the year just past will, on average, increase:**

- **by about 11% over the next year**
- **by about 34% over the following five years, and**
- **by about 37% over the following seven years.**

## 1.5 Geographical names

It is not the intention of the editors to take a position with regard to the political or diplomatic implications of geographical names or continental groupings used. The country, city, and continental names used in this publication are chosen for the sake of brevity and common usage in English. Within the limits of standardization required for statistical purposes, the geographical names used by the organizer of the meeting are respected. This may sometimes lead to territories and dependencies being listed separately, which then affects the totals per country.

The editors are aware there may be inconsistencies in spelling or usage of city names and would welcome being given the information necessary to correct these. Some apparent inconsistencies, however, may be due to the preferences of the organizer (for example, indicating a meeting is held in a suburb or distinct district of a major city rather than in the city itself), or to the exigencies of postal agreements.

## 1.6 Other resources

*Custom research reports based on these and more data from the UIA database are available on request. [Contact us](#) for more information.*

Readers wishing to study the overall association meetings market may also find it useful to consult the statistics reports produced by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). This complementary resource can be used alongside UIA statistics to create a more complete understanding, rather than an alternative or competing view, of the same market segment.

The UIA and ICCA statistics differ, in the first place, because they are based on differing definitions of what constitutes an “international not-for-profit organization”. (See above “What is an international organization?”.) All three of these terms – “international”, “not-for-profit”, and “organization” – are large enough, and vague enough, to be interpreted differently. In a matching exercise carried out by UIA and ICCA together, it was found that about four-fifths of the international organizations in the ICCA database also qualify for inclusion in the UIA database; the remaining one-fifth does not meet UIA’s criteria for “international not-for-profit organizations”.

UIA’s association database has many organizations not included in ICCA’s database because UIA has a broader definition of “international not-for-profit organization”, and because UIA’s criteria are not restricted to organizations holding regular, rotating meetings. ICCA’s focus on the meetings activities of international associations, and its definition of “international association meeting”, further refine its selection of the international organizations behind those meetings, while UIA’s broader definitions allow a wider range of meetings and of organizations. For example, UIA’s database also includes organizations which have no (known) meetings activity at all.

Secondly, the UIA and ICCA statistics differ because they are based on differing definitions of what constitutes an “international association meeting”.

- Both include only events organized by international not-for-profit associations, but, as described above, their interpretations of those terms differ.
- ICCA includes only the meetings of non-governmental organizations; UIA includes meetings of both non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations (and acknowledges the grey zone in between).
- ICCA includes only events which occur regularly; UIA includes meetings regardless of their frequency, including one-off events.
- ICCA includes only events which rotate between at least three countries; UIA includes meetings regardless of their location, including events held always in the same location.
- ICCA includes only events which attract at least 50 participants; UIA includes meetings regardless of their participant numbers.

Finally, ICCA and UIA differ in their focus. ICCA collects the information from its members – “specialists in organising, transporting and accommodating international meetings and events” – and also from international associations. UIA derives its information chiefly by direct and regular contact with international associations, and, in the second place, from national, regional, and civic tourist authorities.

# Chapter 2

## General overview of international association meetings

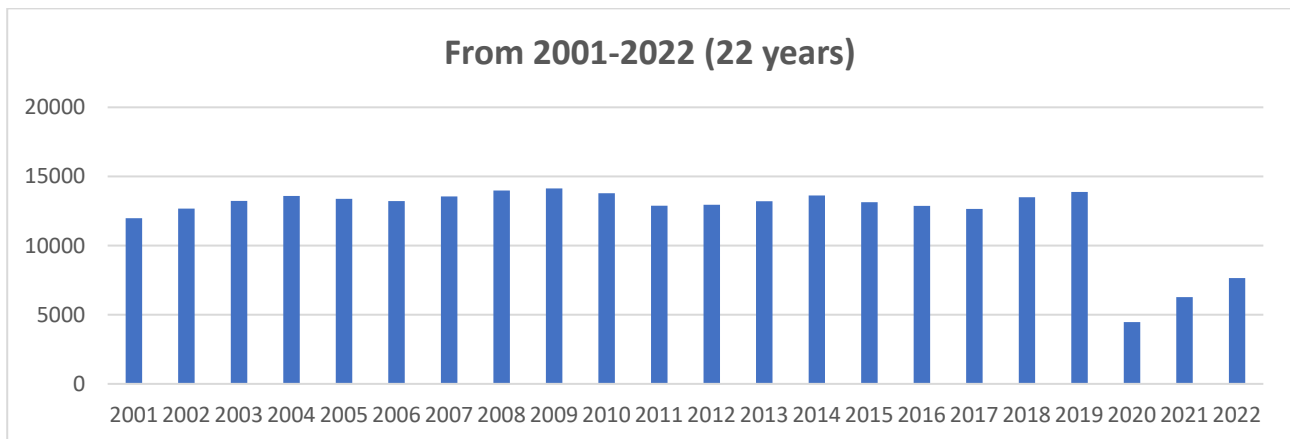
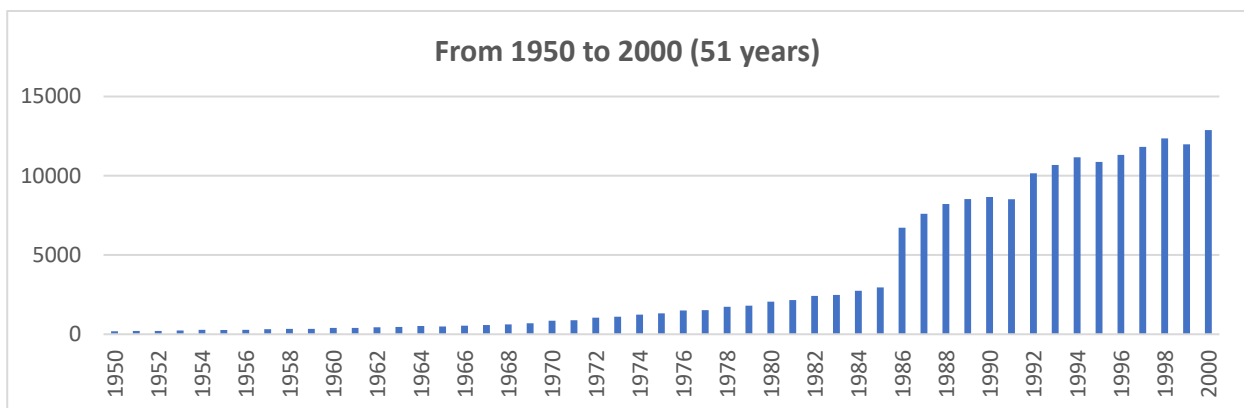
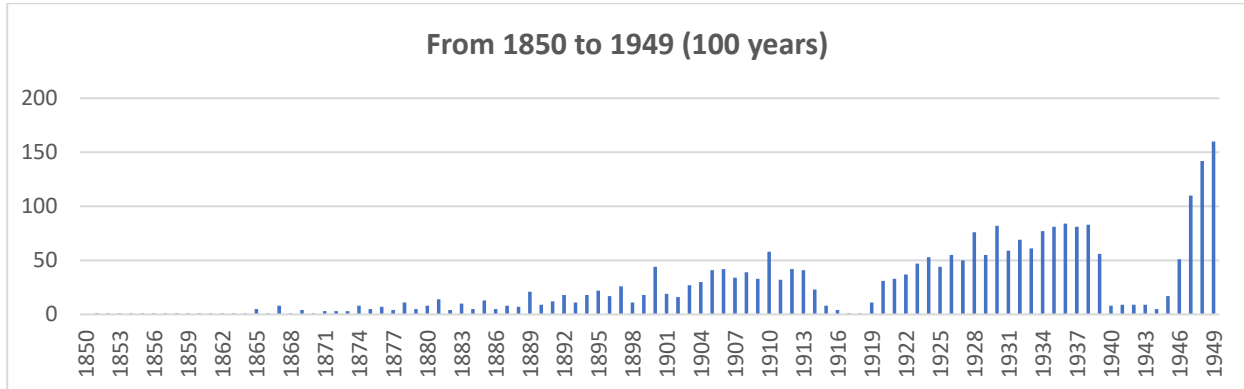
- 2.1 Comparison with 61<sup>st</sup>, 62<sup>nd</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> editions ..... 14
- 2.2 Number of international association meetings over 150+ years ..... 15
- 2.3 Meetings by continent..... 16
  - 2.3.1 Continental division in the past 20 years ..... 16
  - 2.3.2 Continental division in 2022 ..... 17
- 2.4 Meeting size..... 18
  - 2.4.1 Meeting size over 20 years ..... 18
- 2.5 Meeting duration..... 19
  - 2.5.1 Meeting duration for 20 years..... 19

## 2.1 Comparison with 61<sup>st</sup>, 62<sup>nd</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> editions

	<b>64<sup>th</sup> edition</b> published in 2023	<b>63<sup>rd</sup> edition</b> published in 2022	<b>62<sup>nd</sup> edition</b> published in 2021	<b>61<sup>st</sup> edition</b> published in 2020
Total number of meetings in the UIA database	<b>537,897</b>	523,764	511,371	504,822
Number of meetings included in this report	<b>499,498</b>	485,157	471,800	465,381
Number of meetings taking place prior to the reporting year (2021 or earlier)	<b>486,461</b>	473,937	462,627	448,035
Number of meetings taking place in the reporting year (2022)	<b>8,058</b>	6,473	4,242	12,472
Number of meetings scheduled to take place after the reporting year (2023 or later)	<b>4,979</b>	4,747	4,931	4,874
Number of countries represented for all years	<b>268</b>	262	256	254
Number of cities represented for all years	<b>12,110</b>	11,849	11,647	11,468
Number of countries represented for the reporting year (2022)	<b>156</b>	141	127	161
Number of cities represented for the reporting year (2022)	<b>1,213</b>	1,034	802	1,251
Number of active international organizations	<b>43,836</b>	42,947	42,201	41,534
Number of active international organizations known to have meetings activity	<b>28,733</b>	28,065	27,465	25,709

## 2.2 Number of international association meetings over 150+ years

These charts show the number of international association meetings of Type A from 1850 to 2021.\*



\* The data in this report are drawn from the UIA database, the source of the *International Congress Calendar* and the *Yearbook of International Organizations*.

Note that each chart has a different **scale on the Y axis**: number of meetings.

The significant change in the mid-1980s is due to **digitalization** enabling a more comprehensive collection of data. UIA still holds a significant paper archive of earlier years.

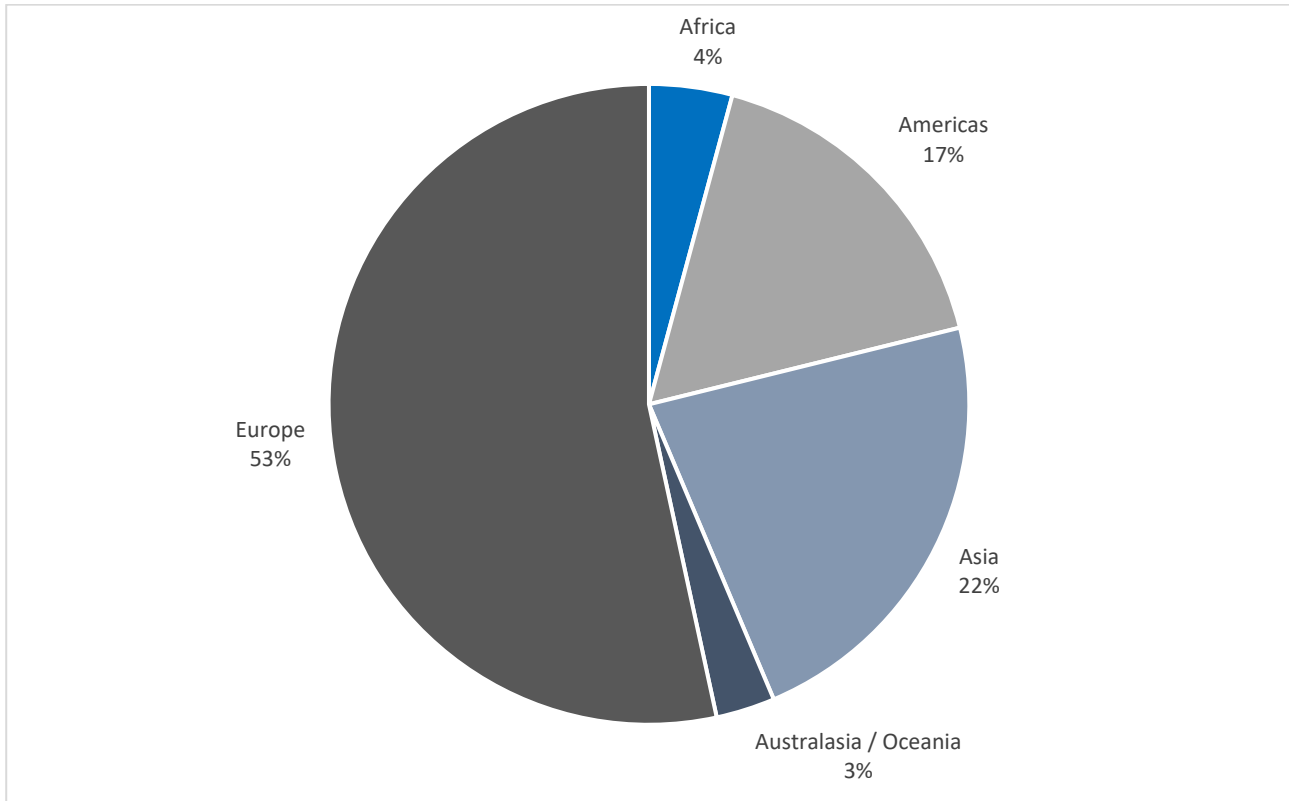
**Caveat:** The number of meetings in the database for the year just past will, on average, increase by about 11% over the next year, by about 34% over the following five years, and by about 37% over the following seven years.

**Definitions** of meetings of Type A, of Type B, and of Type C can be found in section 1.2, pages 9-10.

## 2.3 Meetings by continent

### 2.3.1 Continental division in the past 20 years

This chart shows how the international association meetings of Type A held from 2003 to 2022 are spread over the continents.\*



\* The data in this report are drawn from the UIA database, the source of the *International Congress Calendar* and the *Yearbook of International Organizations*.

**Caveat:** The number of meetings in the database for the year just past will, on average, increase by about 11% over the next year, by about 34% over the following five years, and by about 37% over the following seven years.

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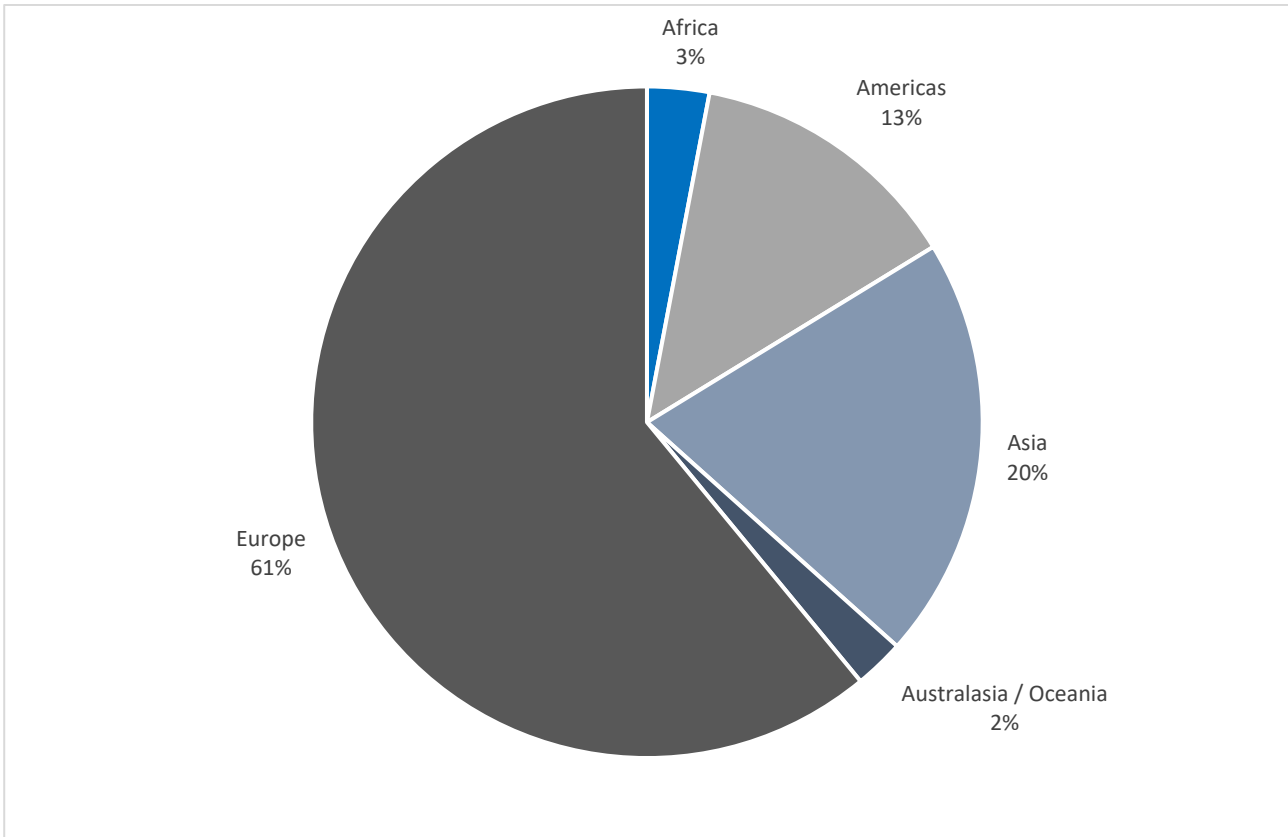
**Countries and cities:** see “Research Methodology” regarding geographical names.

**Continental divisions** follow UIA’s standard practice.



## 2.3.2 Continental division in 2022

This chart shows how the international association meetings of Type A held in 2022 are spread over the continents.\*



\* The data in this report are drawn from the UIA database, the source of the *International Congress Calendar* and the *Yearbook of International Organizations*.

**Caveat:** The number of meetings in the database for the year just past will, on average, increase by about 11% over the next year, by about 34% over the following five years, and by about 37% over the following seven years.

**Definitions** of meetings of Type A, of Type B, and of Type C can be found in section 1.2, pages 9-10.

**Countries and cities:** see "Research Methodology" regarding geographical names.

**Continental divisions** follow UIA's standard practice.

## 2.4 Meeting size

### 2.4.1 Meeting size over 20 years

This table shows the total number of international association meetings of Type A for each category of participant numbers from 2003 to 2022. \*

Participant numbers of Type A meetings in 2003-2022			
Participants	Total meetings 2003-2022	Average meetings per year	% of total meetings 2003-2022
≤ 100	18,492	924.6	27.9%
101 to 500	32,403	1,620.2	48.9%
501 to 1000	7,811	390.6	11.8%
1001 to 3000	5,143	257.2	7.8%
3001 to 5000	1,149	57.5	1.7%
5001 to 7000	456	22.8	0.7%
> 7000	784	39.2	1.2%

\* The data in this report are drawn from the UIA database, the source of the *International Congress Calendar* and the *Yearbook of International Organizations*.

**Caveat:** The number of meetings in the database for the year just past will, on average, increase by about 11% over the next year, by about 34% over the following five years, and by about 37% over the following seven years.

**Definitions** of meetings of Type A, of Type B, and of Type C can be found in section 1.2, pages 9-10.

Only meetings with a known number of **participants** are included in this table.

## 2.5 Meeting duration

### 2.5.1 Meeting duration for 20 years

This table shows the total number of international association meetings of Type A of different durations from 2003 to 2022.\*

Number of Type A meetings by duration in 2003-2022			
Days	Total meetings 2003-2022	Average meetings per year	% of total meetings 2003-2022
1 day	28,718	1,435.9	13.7%
2 days	38,463	1,923.2	18.3%
3 days	55,727	2,786.4	26.6%
4 days	41,662	2,083.1	19.9%
5 days	27,451	1,372.6	13.1%
> 5 days	17,655	882.8	8.4%

\* The data in this report are drawn from the UIA database, the source of the *International Congress Calendar* and the *Yearbook of International Organizations*.

**Caveat:** The number of meetings in the database for the year just past will, on average, increase by about 11% over the next year, by about 34% over the following five years, and by about 37% over the following seven years.

**Definitions** of meetings of Type A, of Type B, and of Type C can be found in section 1.2, pages 9-10.

The *International Meetings Statistics Report* is produced for the use of the Associate Members of the Union of International Associations. The Report is available for their exclusive use the first three months following publication.

Custom research reports based on these and more data from the UIA database are available on request.

Associated and complementary information is available in the *Yearbook of International Organizations, Volume 5: Statistics, Visualizations and Patterns*.

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