

Agora Annual Return (2021)

Charity #: 1176974

Voted on during AGM on 10 March 2022

Trustee annual report

Agora enjoyed another successful year in 2021, despite the challenges posed by a lingering pandemic and its associated public health measures.

Structurally the think tank remains the same. Our Executive Committee (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer) provide leadership and sets agendas, informed by a strategy co-decided by the Board of Trustees and Council. A two-day retreat at FCDO executive agency Wilton Park in August 2021 gave us the opportunity to discuss our future developments with government stakeholders too.

In 2021 Agora was a founding member of the Open Think Tank Network, along with partner think tanks in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The Network seeks to promote cross-border research and project collaboration. A flagship piece on feminist foreign policy has already been done to good effect.

Although we did not replicate the previous year's success in taking on an employee, we were able to take on a paid intern through a scheme run by the London School of Economics.

Following on from the establishment of a first regional group in 2010, two more branches were kicked off this year in Northern Ireland and the South West. The former in particular has got off to a strong start.

A pleasing development over the last 12 months was the recovery of a membership base. In 2010 we suffered a disappointing if understandable atrophy of our membership numbers, likely driven by a breakdown of our community meet-ups after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. We ended the year with 31 members, albeit currently largely made up of those who also volunteer for the think tank. Looking forward, our new payment system means that membership recurs automatically, so we can anticipate a growth in our community without seeing the same level of drop-off.

In terms of written output, Agora published 16 blogs (a decline from 27 in 2020), and published a briefing and our first policy paper. The paper offered an opportunity to speak with senior political figures and was also the subject of an op-ed in EU news outlet Euractiv. 2021 also saw us experiment with new forms of content, with the launch of our podcast Agora Radio. So far we have published eight episodes.

Agora put on 13 public events in 2021, mostly online policy panels, the same number as the year before. Representatives of the think tank also attended numerous careers and outreach events on university campuses.

At the end of the year the organisation had 2303 followers on Twitter (up 11% YoY), 940 on its main Facebook page (+7%), 974 across its regional groups' Facebook pages (+524% in total), 561 on Instagram (+21%), and 659 on LinkedIn (+117%). We also created a YouTube page, and Spotify and Anchor accounts to disseminate our podcast on.

Our team goes in to 2022 with ambition to grow the think tank. Through a new strategy for our fifth and sixth years of operation, we have set ourselves three core aims: promoting Agora and its work so that it has greater impact, increasing funding, and ensuring that we have consistent output of content and events. All three of these will be underpinned by a significant increase in our membership.

Accounts

Financial activities

Revenue (£)		Expenses (£)	
Item	Value	Item	Value
Membership fees	640	IT fees	38.38
Donations	174	IT services	71.94
		Banking fees	17.36
		Transport	460
		Gifts	16.1
Total	814	Total	603.78
Net income (£)		210.22	

Balance sheet

	(£)
Carried over from previous financial period	2159.16
Revenue	814
Expenses	603.78
Total assets at financial period end	2369.38