

QUESTIONNAIRE for Eurocon

General

Name of Bid

MetropolCon

What dates are you bidding for?

We haven't fixed dates yet for 2026, but are looking at late spring again (late April/early May)

What is your proposed convention host city? Is your convention site in a city center location or a suburb? If a suburb, what are the transport options into the city centre? How far is the site from the city centre?

Berlin. If we can work with the 2023 venue again, it's central. We aim to be close to public transport in any case. We have an alternative venue in mind (slightly bigger, as central & connected). When answering the rest of the questions, the answers fit both.

What are your main facilities? How far are your hotels from your main venue?

Several rooms of various sizes, hotels in walking distance and beyond.

Who is your bid chair? Who is on your committee? What experience do they have in general?

Bid chair:

Dr. Claudia Rapp (has mostly enthusiasm; PhD in literary studies, professional translator, editor, writer; organized readings & workshops, a tiny one-room book fair, dabbled in project management)

Committee:

Constanze Hofmann (Displays Co-Area Head for Dublin 2019, Crafting Team coordinator for Glasgow 2024; engineer & IT professional)

Dominic Riemenschneider (many years of experience in finances, budgeting, accounting, including responsibility for government budgets; organized an academic conference for 220 people; worked as event & exhibition manager; art historian working on his PhD)

Grit Richter (publisher & graphic design professional; graphic design for the now-defunct Phantastika; organized "Deutscher Phantastik-Preis", a large & renowned audience award, twice)

Steffi Zurek (PR & conference management professional; press office, website & translations for the Hanover & Brussels MCM Comic Con; filker; co-wrote a book about fan fiction)

Patric Schirrmann, (IT professional, software developer)

Ralf Bayer (IT professional)

Christian Schütz (social media professional)

Sylvana Freyberg (professional editor - medical books on the job, SF magazines in her spare time)

Ivo Schwarz (IT professional, consulting, project management)

Anja Stephan (psychologist, ghostwriter, author)

Sabrina Železný (cultural anthropologist, editor & translator)

If known, who will be the chair of the convention? What experience do they have?

see above: I hope we're still a team after we pull off MetropolCon 2023, and THEN we'll all have the experience of hosting a new convention for ~700 people!

Travel

Do international flights, as well as domestic, fly into your local airport? Which airlines? If not, where is the closest international airport? Are direct flights from the cities above flown into your local airport?

BER is an international airport, with lots of direct connections. We do want to encourage traveling by train though, and the expansion of night rail services by Austrian, Swedish & other rail companies is looking promising.

How far is your convention site from the nearest airport/train station and what is the likely cost of getting to the hotels by both public transport and taxi from that airport/train station?

Public transport: central train station to venue 15-20 mins, long-distance bus station to venue 15-20 mins, airport BER to venue 40-50 mins. This includes the 5-minute walk from the venue to the local bus, underground, and city train station. (add another 5 minutes on each end for slow walk/wheelchair. 2nd choice of venue might take ~10 mins longer)

Public transport ticket for most of the city is 3 Euros (or 3.80 all the way to the airport). Hotels in walking distance or a few stops away from the venue.

A regular taxi to the airport could easily cost 50 to 70 Euros however.

Facilities

What hotel(s) are being used for the convention? How many rooms have you secured, what type are they, do they accommodate accessibility needs, etc.?

It's not going to be a hotel-based convention. We will try and negotiate special rates for nearby hotels.

What are your hotel room rates? Do these rates include breakfast? Do they include internet access in the room? How firm are these rates? What additional taxes and fees are there?

See above.

What does parking cost at your main hotels?

Not enquired yet – prices will most likely rise until 2026, if only because of climate protection measures. Part of our vision is encouraging public transport whenever possible, and Berlin is well-equipped in that respect.

What is the distance from the nearest door of your main hotel(s) to the closest entrance of the convention site? What are the transportation options for those who prefer not to walk or who have mobility difficulties?

1st choice venue: 500 m away, 2nd choice venue: 50 m away (across a main street). Buses, city trains take you to lots of others.

Please describe the restaurant scene near your site.

Fast food options (e.g. Döner, Vietnamese, Chinese, sausage, vegan), but also regular restaurants nearby (on-site restaurant for our 1st choice of venue)

Please describe the policies / laws regarding smoking in your hotel(s), convention centre, and city.

In Germany, smoking is only allowed outside or in designated smoking rooms (1st choice venue has its own inside smoking room with ventilation.)

Given the current pandemic, have you considered any arrangements have been made for social distancing and the health and safety of members? If you have, can you describe what your current plans are?

Since the venue space is limited, if social distancing is still mandated, that would cut the attendant number in about half. We are considering a hybrid format, or at least, some virtual/streamed program items, depending on the situation.

Miscellaneous

What type of weather can we expect during your convention? What is the average temperature during that time of year?

If it's late spring, we can expect 15, with luck even 20 degrees, but rain averages 7-8 days in April or May.

What are some of the main tourist attractions of your city?

Where do I start ... It's Berlin. Brandenburg Gate, a host of museums (from art ancient, modern and anything in between, to technology to history to film, even a museum for computer games ...), lots of green, two defunct airports (Tempelhof, whose former airfield is now a gigantic open-field park, and Tegel, which will become a new quarter of tech, sustainable living, and culture – should be all spruced up by 2026!) and so on and so forth.

Are you planning to have any membership discounts for certain demographic groups and which ones?

Still figuring out pricing and calculation, but yes, probably. If not, see “solidarity ticket fund” further below.

What is your vision for your Convention? How do you plan to make it happen?

Building on the – hopefully successful – 2023 MetropolCon, we envision a diverse, inclusive, accessible, sustainable convention that invites fans from all backgrounds – we want to open it up to curious newbies to the scene, focus on progressive trends, and encourage marginalized voices, without neglecting or forgetting the core of regulars and traveling con-goers.

What is a notable aspect of your local fan culture and how do you plan to incorporate it into your Convention?

MetropolCon 2023 will include the annual “Branchentreffen” of PAN (the network of German speculative fiction authors), which serves as general assembly, conference, and networking meetup. This provides us with a number of talks and panels of high quality right off the bat, and ensures that the majority of active German genre writers will attend. If 2023 is a success, we plan to incorporate this event into our go at Eurocon, too.

Maybe the notable part of the fan culture is the many separate groups and clubs and registered societies, which is why we aim to bring them together, offer something for everyone, and build bridges (we hope MetropolCon 2023 lays a solid foundation for that).

Do you have a code of conduct? If so, is it available online and if so, where?

Not yet, working on that, studying the ones recent cons have used ...

What do diversity and inclusion mean to you?

Berlin is home to people from all kinds of backgrounds, many cultures. We'd love to showcase that, but also invite fans and creatives from all over Europe, so exchange can flourish. One difficult aspect is always money, so inclusion would also entail trying to enable the attendance of people who can't normally afford a con.

How are you working towards your goals in these areas?

Trying to bring marginalized groups to the table in 2023, so we can build a network before we host Eurocon.

“Solidarity ticket fund”, so people can sponsor tickets for those who can’t afford them, applying for public funding for the inclusion of disadvantaged people.

What changes or challenges do you expect the current pandemic to present?

We hope there will be no pandemic in 2026, but there’s always hybrid and virtual, if necessary. Biggest worry is that a lot of venues won’t even exist anymore if we have more years like 2020/21.

Have you planned for a virtual component to your convention?

We want to stream at least part of it and maintain a Discord server or similar platform, to allow more people to join, even if they can’t afford to/don’t want to travel, but the scope of the virtual parts will depend on *gestures* everything.

How many of your programme items will be in English?

For 2023, we currently plan 25%, but that may change if the out-of-country interest is huge, for the Eurocon, we think more like 75%.