

Alcoholics Anonymous



14th European Service Meeting 2007

Service: Our Future & Responsibility



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Agenda Digest

- Friday 19th October 2007**
- Registration & Reception
 - Welcome & Opening Address
 - World Service Meeting Report
 - Keynote Address
 - The Twelve Traditions
 - Financial Report
 - Qualifications for Participation at ESM
 - Country Reports
- Saturday 20th October 2007**
- Committee Meetings
 - Questions & Answers Session
 - Workshops
 - Presentation & discussion of Committee Reports
 - AA Sharing Meeting “*Learning from Others*”
- Sunday 21st October 2007**
- Presentation & discussion of Workshop Reports
 - Election of Chairman XV ESM
 - Formation of the Agenda Committee for XV ESM
 - Selection of delegates to prepare reports to & from XX WSM 2008
 - Closing Addresses

Summary of the XIV European Service Meeting

Delegates from twenty five European countries gathered together at the Hotel National, Frankfurt, Germany, on the 19th to 21st October 2007 to take part in the Fourteenth European Service Meeting.

The European Information Centre at York issued invitations to European Service Offices following discussions at the Agenda meeting the previous August and listed below are the countries that attended the meeting. Included are the delegates from the Belarus, Croatia and Turkey, all of whom we were delighted to welcome for the first time.

Austria	Belarus
Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	Belgium (French Speaking)
Croatia	Denmark
Finland	France
Germany	Great Britain
Iceland	Ireland
Italy	Latvia
Lithuania	Malta
Netherlands	Norway
Poland	Portugal
Russia	Spain
Sweden	Switzerland (French Speaking)
Switzerland (German Speaking)	Turkey
Ukraine	

On Friday afternoon registration and reception took place which provided an ideal opportunity for the delegates to familiarise themselves with the venue, to renew friendships and to share with those delegates attending for the first time.

The Twelfth European Service Meeting was opened by the Chairman Inge de Rooter, with a moment's silence, followed by the reading of the Preamble. Inge welcomed all of the delegates, especially our 'Newcomers' from Belarus, Croatia and Turkey, also our guests from GSO New York: General Manager - Greg Muth and Julio Espaillat from the International Desk; Ann Napier General Secretary from EIC at GSO Great Britain, Ann Slocombe Hon. Treasurer Great Britain, and last but not least all members of staff from Great Britain and Europe.

The Welcome and Opening Address, an interesting presentation of the Nineteenth World Service Meeting was given by Bodil Lund (Sweden). Bodil's report was followed by an inspirational Keynote Address which was delivered by Julio Espaillat, International Desk, GSO New York.

Following the reading of the Twelve Traditions and the orientation, Ann Napier introduced Ann Slocombe (Hon. Treas. GSB GB) to deliver her exciting presentation on the state and scope of the European Service Meeting Fund. Roger Booth (Chairman Agenda, Policy, Admissions,

Finance Committee), was then called upon to make a presentation on the introduction of the document “Qualifications for Participation at the ESM”, which was compiled by the 14th ESM Agenda Committee.

Each delegate was invited to introduce themselves. There then followed individual presentations of highlights which were given by one delegate from each country.

Saturday was taken up by work in the Committees and Workshops, where the sharing of experience in service, and discussion took place. Final reporting back of recommendations to the full meeting and the compilation of reports took us through to Saturday evening.

Following dinner on Saturday evening there was a little time for relaxation in the form of the Sharing meeting. Presentations were given by Janina Manzuriniene (Lithuania) and Richard Peersman (FSE Belgium) on the Theme: “Learning from others”.

Following elections on Sunday morning, Ib Jensen (Denmark) was elected Chairman of the Fifteenth European Service Meeting.

Mihael O’Reilly (Ireland) is to prepare a report to the Twentieth World Service Meeting 2008 on this Fourteenth European Service Meeting. Jacek Chmielewski (Poland) is to report back to the Fifteenth European Service Meeting in 2009 on the Twentieth World Service Meeting.

Greg Muth, General Manager GSO New York delivered a heartfelt and uplifting address. Greg was followed by Eva Herbst (Austria); Rio Meier (French speaking Switzerland) and Filippo Buratti (Italy), all of whom spoke sincerely and warmly of their experience over the weekend and the years leading up to this ESM.

Finally Inge, our Chairman, closed the Fourteenth European Service Meeting with an emotional and positive address, which looked to the future with hope and encouragement. The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer.

The Agenda Committee for the Fifteenth European Service Meeting will consist of the following:

Ib Jensen	Chairman of Fifteenth ESM
Antanas Balsys	Chair – Agenda, Policy, Admissions, Finance
Gerhild Reiter	Chair – Literature, Publishing, Media Communications
Jacek Chmielewski	Chair – Working with Other Countries
Ann Napier	General Secretary EIC

The Agenda Committee will meet 15th to 17th August 2008 to discuss all questions forwarded to them via the EIC up until July 2008. The programme of the Fifteenth European Service Meeting will be finalised and the Agenda set.

Presentations

Welcome Address

“Service: Our Future and Responsibility”

Chairman – Inge de R, Netherlands

Good evening to you all. It is a great honour and my pleasure to heartily welcome you to the 14th European Service Meeting here in Frankfurt. I hope our time together will be memorable.

My name is Inge and I am a grateful, recovering alcoholic.

It is a privilege to be sober today and truly an honour to serve you as chairperson of this 14th European Service Meeting and to welcome back all my old friends, whom I had the pleasure of meeting during the previous European Service Meetings, and all of my new friends, whom I hope to get to know over this weekend. Some of you I even had the pleasure of joining at the World Service Meeting in Dublin last year.

I feel honoured and grateful for the opportunity to attend a European Service Meeting for the third time. It is my fourth time in Frankfurt. In 2003 and 2005 I served as a delegate for the Netherlands, and in August 2006 I was here to prepare the 2007 European Service Meeting as chairperson.

The theme for this ESM is ‘Service: our future and responsibility’.

As I see it, service has always been a topic, spoken about during our international meetings, European and World, but it has also been a subject repeatedly being discussed during the national service meetings all over the world and in our group meetings when for example the 12th step: ‘... we tried to carry this message to the still suffering alcoholic...’, or the 5th Tradition: ‘Each group has but one primary purpose –to carry its message to the alcoholics who still suffer.’, are being dealt with. It is not only the challenge of how to render service, how to carry out the message to the still suffering alcoholic, but also how to staff the service centres, the committees, how to make our members enthusiastic to be willing to become a delegate and to be a member of our representing bodies, all this in order to carry out the message.

Service means literally: work or duty done for someone. In AA terms, that is work or duty done for the Fellowship so that its message may reach the still suffering alcoholic, may facilitate the recovering alcoholic and may enable the Fellowship to function properly.

In our Fellowship service comprises quite a lot of things:

At group level, service is for instance:

- going to meetings, so that we can share each other's stories and by doing so recover
- opening the door, so that people can come in and attend
- arranging tables and chairs so that people can sit and be comfortable
- making coffee and tea
- being the treasurer or the chairperson

If these tasks are not taken up, a group meeting would not be possible, and the suffering alcoholic, should he want to, pick up his life again with the help of AA, would not have a place to go to, nor would the recovering alcoholic have a place to further recover.

On National level, service could possibly be:

- being a member of the various committees
- being a member, chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer of the General Service Board
- attending Service Meetings and General Service Board meetings
- doing service in the General Service Office

If this service work is not carried out, public information would not be possible, finances would not be taken care of, prisons, schools, hospitals would not be visited, literature would not be translated, AA-magazines would not be published, telephone service centres would not be staffed, general service and board meetings would not be arranged, let alone be attended by delegates, the web would not be mastered, administration would not be kept up to date. In short: all the above mentioned services are necessary for AA to do its work, that is, to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

On an International level, service might be:

- country-to-country sponsorship
- working with other countries
- fundraising
- organizing and attending international - both European and World- service meetings

How would the countries where AA is emerging, be able to set up their organisations properly without help of sponsoring countries? Is not it of the utmost importance that countries work together, and that funds are being raised for literature and financial

support to countries which need such? Is not it of paramount importance that international AA gatherings are being organised so that experiences, views, and ideas can be exchanged? The answer is simply, yes.

We are responsible for the work that has to be done to keep AA alive. We all know that our service work for AA is mostly voluntary work. We also know that it is often hard to find members of the Fellowship willing or able to do this work, willing or able to be on a committee, a board, willing or able to be a delegate, etc. That is what we hear in our group meetings and, regrettably, also in our national and international meetings. During the 13th ESM a number of recommendations to make service work more attractive were made. I mention one: 'be enthusiastic about the service work you do and communicate what it does for your sobriety.'

That is what we, present here, and lots of others back home, do: we communicate that service work keeps us sober, that doing this work gives us the opportunity to learn about AA, to learn about ourselves, to grow, to make new friends and, last but not least, that service work eventually has but one goal: to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. It is great that we, enthusiastic recovering alcoholics from so many countries all over Europe, are here together in this European Service Meeting, to exchange ideas about service in general, about our responsibility towards this and the future of AA. I am thankful for that.

So, back home, may we have the courage and the patience to carry on talking about the importance of service work, and the beneficial effects it has on us as part of the 12th step and of our recovery. But above all, let us emphasize that service work is important for the future and the growth of AA and is therefore the responsibility of the entire Fellowship.

AA must be there for the suffering alcoholic, now and in times to come.

Enjoy and treasure this weekend, and may God bless us all.

Report from the 19th World Service Meeting October 2006 - Malahide, Ireland

Theme: “Anonymous, but not Invisible”

Bodil L. Sweden

The primary purpose of the World Service Meeting is the same as that all of A.A. activity – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, wherever in the world he may be, whatever the language he speaks. The World Service Meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together every two years from all parts of the world. It can also represent an expression of the group conscience worldwide.

56 delegates from 41 countries and zones (German-speaking Europe accounts for three countries) came together 15th – 19th of October.

The Keynote Address was read by Marylou C., delegate from French-speaking Europe, written by Boris S., who was taken ill. Boris referred to our Traditions that encourages us to place principles before personalities. It is therefore clear that anonymity is meant for the members and not for the Fellowship. Nevertheless sometimes this does still cause confusion, not only for some A.A. members, but also, and more often, for non-members who have never had the opportunity to be correctly informed. He also referred to Bill W., who suggested as limits to anonymity to keep “the strongest kind of attraction”.

In the address several examples of contacts with the press were given and also with various national radio stations. A reporter from Radio France International (RFI) broadcasting on short wave worldwide made a program on the National Convention in Versailles. The reporter was taken to an open meeting so that she could record three testimonials. The result was an excellent 20-minute programme fully devoted to A.A. and including contact options sent in French-speaking Africa. Two days later there was an e-mail from a veterinarian living in Bamako, the capital of Mali, who was having problems with alcohol. He was sponsored for some time by the French International Committee by phone and mail and was also sent literature. This is how AA Mali was born. There is now a meeting in Bamako each Wednesday evening.

Committee Reports

Agenda

The committee recommended that the theme for the 20th World Service Meeting be “Service Gratitude in Action”.

The committee recommended among others the following presentation/ discussion topics to be included in the agenda for the next WSM:

- How do I express my gratitude in AA service?
- Different ways of doing service and to feel comfortable in AA
- Growth and Change worldwide
- Service sponsorship: Before, during and after service commitments.

Literature/Publishing

The committee discussed the international literature fund and several committee members shared an increasing interest in the literature fund which had encouraged contributions from their country’s AA Fellowship. The committee reviewed the A.A.W.S. literature translation process and also shared how translation of AA literature is done in different countries. The committee suggested that the presentation of the International Literature Fund be presented early during the WSM for the benefit of the discussions in this committee.

Policy/Admissions/Finance

The committee approved India’s, Malta’s, Ukraine’s and Venezuela’s requests for participation at the 19th WSM. Although China’s request for participation at the WSM was approved, China’s delegate was not attending. The committee encouraged China to reapply to be seated at the 20th WSM.

The committee recommended that the 20th WSM be held in New York City, October 25 – 29, 2008.

The committee recommended that the minimum delegate fee for participation at each WSM be calculated by taking 25% of the total cost of the current WSM and dividing this amount by the total number of participating delegates, with a minimum fee of \$1.100. U.S Not only can more countries afford to participate, but this rate also allows for higher levels of country sponsorship.

The committee felt that each country is responsible to make reasonable decisions regarding rotation of their WSM delegates, keeping in mind the AA pinciples of rotation and principles before personalities.

Working with others

The committee discussed sponsorship, communication, prisons, carrying the message within the walls, working with correctional professionals, how to attract young people to AA, experiences from AA-meetings on-line, are we too anonymous or not anonymous enough and how do we welcome members that come into AA via treatment facilities.

A great deal of the delegates shared their experience of working in prisons and in many countries much work is done to attract young people. It was also widely agreed that much more could be done to make the general public aware of AA through public information work.

Workshop Reports

New Media

What “new media” such as Web sites, public service announcements, videos, DVDs, etc. is your country currently using?

Most of the countries reported that they provide information via their Web sites, like e-mail addresses for each department at its GSO and for each area. One country in South America made announcements regarding international events. AA-meetings are listed. Selling literature over the web site was not widely spread. One country reported that 65% of its literature sales are made through the Internet. Most countries shared that the use of e-mail was a valuable and effective way to communicate faster.

Sponsorship into Service

1. As a sponsor, do you share the Three Legacies with the newcomer?

Many delegates shared that they first share the Legacy of Recovery with newcomers. The newcomer is encouraged to get a service position at the group level and is later encouraged to visit a service meeting or convention. Many delegates reported that they sponsor a newcomer in all the three legacies, but that they focus on AA’s Big Book, the twelve steps and the twelve traditions.

2. What is our country doing to attract members into service?

Many of the delegates shared that they are active with work-shops and seminars to attract AA members into service. Delegates from post-Soviet countries reported that they still need help with the basics. AA members need a greater understanding about what an AA meeting is and what an AA group is. Lithuania is experiencing growth and they offer two Service Conferences each year. They focus on one topic at a time, one Tradition, one Concept or one Legacy.

Additional questions that were discussed in this workshop were: “Does your service structure have a committee or formal process to help sponsor members into service?” and “What literature has your country developed about service sponsorship?”

Most of the countries reported that they do not have any special committee working with the issue of sponsorship and the same applied to literature about sponsorship. Most of the countries had no or little literature in this specific topic.

Communications between Countries

1. What challenges have you experienced communicating with other countries?

Several WSM delegates from the Americas expressed that different languages and lack of access to technology were their greatest challenges in communicating with other countries in the zone. Also the WSM delegates from Europe related that the difference of languages seemed to be a challenge, but pointed out that nevertheless there has been great cooperation and communication between countries in the zone.

2. How can country to country communication be improved?

Many of the delegates mentioned good-will and trust, continuing participation in zonal events and providing the best possible translation of the reports, weekly meetings through the internet and inviting observers to the Service Conferences, were some of the answers to this question.

3. What specific subjects regarding AA around the world are of interest to your country’s service structure?

Several delegates shared that sponsorship between countries was of special interest to their service structures. The organization of their GSOs and their service boards and the relationship between them and the local AA fellowship were of interest for some of the countries. Other delegates reported that their structure’s efforts were addressed to translate AA literature into indigenous dialects and in carrying the message into these indigenous populations. Several delegates from Europe shared their experience of organizing public information committees.

4. Share experience about how Zonal and World Service Meetings have been helpful to the fellowship in your country.

The delegates reported that the attendance at zonal meetings had helped in the development of country-to-country sponsorship. Most of the delegates shared about the importance of exchange of ideas and experience as well as the realization of being part of a greater whole.

Presentations

Reports on Interim and Zonal Meetings

The presentations together with the reports from the zonal meetings constitute a very important part of the World Service Meeting. There were reports from Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting, European Service Meeting, Meeting of the Americas and Asia-Oceania Service Meeting. Moreover there were three presentations on the following theme:” Anonymity – Our spiritual foundation”, and furthermore presentations were made with the following themes “Carrying the AA Message”, “Bridging the gap”, “AA magazines & Newsletters”, “The three legacies”, “Shared Experience: Country-to-Country Sponsorship” and “The future of AA – Our Responsibility”, all of them very memorable.

There was also a report about the International Literature Fund. As of October 18, 2006, contributions to the International Literature Fund totalled \$768.245,0. AAs in many countries have helped underwrite translations, printing and distribution of AA literature in over 70 languages such as Croatian, Greek, Hebrew, Indonesian, Farsi, Chinese, Kazakh and Turkish. More recently, Big Books in Hebrew, Sinhala and Indonesian were completed.

Keynote Address

“Service: Our Future and Responsibility”

Julio E. International Assignment, G.S.O. New York

Good evening, my name is Julio and I am an alcoholic. I am honored and very grateful for the privilege of addressing you this evening at the start of this 14th European Service Meeting, the theme of which is “Service: Our Future Responsibility.”

The road that brings me here tonight, from a very hopeless drunk to a very grateful member of staff at G.S.O. for U.S./Canada, is one that would not have been possible without service. Service in my sobriety is a road that I not always took voluntarily, and it wasn't a path that I created either; there were many along the way who put me on the road and who trudged the way ahead. To them, and to those who went ahead of them, I am eternally grateful.

In his introduction to the “Third Legacy Manual”, later renamed the A.A. Service Manual, our co-founder Bill W. wrote:

“Our Twelfth Step -- carrying the message -- is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer – ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy.”

What jumps out for me are the words, “*society of alcoholics in action*”. This is of crucial importance for me. My sobriety will reflect and be affected by how active I have been in my A.A. life at the moment. In a similar way, A.A. as a Fellowship will be a reflection of how active its members are. As a society we need to continue to carry our message of hope. Complacency for an alcoholic could mean death, for A.A. as a whole it would mean basically the same. Our Grapevine magazine has a recent issue on the topic of complacency and the cover pictures a man quietly reading in his chair, the chair is nevertheless in the middle of the railroad tracks. I thought it is a great image.

Another part of Bill W.'s quote that strikes me is, "*service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer*". In my 'self-centeredness' I always felt I had nothing to share or give. I was fortunate to find a kind sponsor that pointed out that there could be someone who could not stay sober wanting to know how I stayed sober for that day. My road to the coffee pot was also a great teacher. Through this simple service, which I initially vigorously resisted, I found myself feeling part of the group. Other service opportunities broadened my horizon and made me feel part of an even larger Fellowship. I still need to focus on what I can do and look for ways to be useful and of maximum service to my fellows, without focusing on my limitations as an excuse for not participating. There are things that come easy and other tasks that can be a little more challenging, but it is about doing my best. As my sponsor would lovingly point out "it's not about you". In my first few years, I could not explain why service worked for me, but I could feel that "A.A. works for those who work for A.A.", as I later heard someone say.

So what about our future and our responsibility? Well, I think it is clear to most of us that without service work, the future would be questionable. It is also clear that it is our responsibility. I know that I am preaching here to a choir of trusted servants, but as we think of our future, I believe we need to challenge ourselves by continuously reviewing our vision for the future and how we view our responsibilities.

Have we become so set in our ways that we are not looking for new ways to extend the hand of fellowship to alcoholics wherever they may be. As we look ahead we should be flexible without becoming so loose that our methods and our message get watered down. We should maintain stability without becoming so rigid that we cannot bend to meet the changing needs of the still suffering alcoholic. We should continue to explore new ways to cooperate with professionals in the alcoholism field without losing our own identity and purpose. We should yet find other ways to let people know about A.A., what we do and where we are. We must consider new thoughts, new ideas, just as the early members did.

A.A. is part of this ever changing world and as the world and the way we communicate in it changes, A.A. too, should look for the signs in the horizon. There are millions of suffering alcoholics who have yet to find a solution. There must be a new way to reach them. There must be new answers to some of the old questions.

The future of A.A. is in your hands and mine, and in the hands of all A.A. members everywhere. A formula that has worked in the past is "find a need and fill it". This goal and vision can carry us into the future.

For all those already in service the vision should include finding ways to get A.A. members to participate. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all A.A. members had the opportunity to be exposed to the full picture of service? Those who choose the path of service will be enriching their sobriety ten fold with the vitality of the total program, and those who don't will be better informed.

Service in A.A. can be many things, from your duties as delegates at this meeting, to the cleaning of the coffee pot in my home group, but it all plays a part in making it possible for the suffering alcoholic to walk into a room today and find what I found a few years ago: a message of hope and a wonderful new sober life. Service is what will make it possible for alcoholics to find A.A. for years to come.

In this A.A. way of life we have three great and lasting legacies; Recovery, Unity and Service. They are all equal sides of the triangle, but in service is where I see all of them come together. For me service is gratitude in action.

Thank you.

Financial Report

Honorary Treasurer, GSB – Great Britain

Ann S

Good evening, my name is Ann, I am an alcoholic.

Thank you for the privilege of being with you this weekend. I hold the trusted office of Honorary Treasurer of the General Service Board of Great Britain, and would like to encourage you to embrace the concept of using money prudently.

At the first ESM meeting here in Frankfurt in 1981, the theme was “Support Your neighbour Country”, today 25 Countries are represented, therefore, that theme has worked. Strong partnerships have been forged, financial assistance given to countries unable to fully pay to attend the meetings, a responsibility and commitment that continues today.

Ten years ago the theme in 1997 was “Responsibility Begins with Us”, the dedicated delegates who attended that year embraced the concept that ESM funds are needed for sponsoring other countries. Here in 2007 the theme is “Service, Our Future and Responsibility” the lynchpin of fearlessly looking forward, and building on the growth that has been achieved.

Turning back to the Eighth ESM meeting in 1993, the Agenda/ Policy/Admissions/ Finance Committee recommended the ESM fund should always be self-supporting, and the prudent reserve be the cost of two ESM meetings. The accumulation of substantial reserve funds is not acceptable. Therefore with the minimum of friction and a maximum of good feeling, I urge all of you in your committees this weekend to look at positive ways at using some of your reserves. Through mutual support, and unflinching courage we can.

I believe in the sunlight of the spirit, the wonderment in the eyes of an alcoholic, in reading or hearing that by practicing the 12 Steps of Recovery, they can stay sober a day at a time. That look is beyond price. That is what happened to us. We must give it away in order to keep it. Let us not deny the child of today that may be afflicted by the disease of alcoholism in years to come, by being too cautious. Keeping funds donated by recovering alcoholics that form the European Service meeting in dark, dusty and unloving vaults of a bank is not what we are about. We are alcoholics in action.

Remember the AA Pledge:

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. For that, I am responsible.

Concept Nine speaks of Leadership, leadership at all levels. Good Leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. Good Leadership never passes the buck. Within the framework of defined authority and responsibility, decisions can be made and put into action. Bill W spoke of the all important attribute of vision.

He stated,

Vision is I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. God's real Providence has endowed us human beings with a considerable capacity for foresight, and He evidently expects us to use it.

Therefore we must distinguish between wishful fantasy about a happy tomorrow and the present use of our powers of thoughtful estimate. Vision is therefore the very essence of **prudence**, an essential virtue if ever there was one. Let this 14th European Service Meeting explore new ideas and commitment with courage, unity and of course boundless love.



ESM Contributions (€)

	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
Switzerland	575	597	4016	1683	1333	0	0	0
Ireland	5094	2815	5513	8208	11595	9923	9774	9737
Germany	2234	2198	2261	2406	2455	2474	4898	0
Denmark	662	515	809	1250	956	1323	0	0
Great Britain	2940	0	3675	0	4410	2940	0	0
Iceland	0	0	726	0	875	0	0	0
Poland	166	0	140	294	162	204	495	0
Belgium	735	735	653	654	2082	534	1458	434
Netherlands	0	0	2096	0	0	0	1455	1943
Austria	517	522	0	563	570	578	581	0
Portugal	664	0	0	0	290	187	198	0
Finland	297	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
France	0	0	0	0	484	0	0	0
Norway	338	0	620	0	933	900	994	0
Sweden	766	594	0	432	1035	1066	2665	2650
Spain	0	0	0	939	0	0	0	0
Malta	0	0	147	0	147	0	0	0
Lithuania	37	0	0	141	0	74	88	269
AAWS	0	495	0	0	0	0	0	360
Unknown	0	0	858	85	872	0	0	287
CSG AA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	245
TOTAL	15025	8470	21513	16657	28198	20201	22607	15926

ESM Contributions (£)

	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
Switzerland	391	406	2732	1145	907	0	0	0
Ireland	3465	1915	3750	5584	7888	6750	6649	6624
Germany	1520	1495	1538	1637	1670	1683	3332	0
Denmark	450	350	550	850	650	900	0	0
Great Britain	2000	0	2500	0	3000	2000	0	0
Iceland	0	0	494	0	595	0	0	0
Poland	113	0	95	200	110	139	337	0
Belgium	500	500	444	445	1416	363	992	295
Netherlands	0	0	1426	0	0	0	990	1322
Austria	352	355	0	383	388	393	395	0
Portugal	452	0	0	0	197	127	135	0
Finland	202	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
France	0	0	0	0	329	0	0	0
Norway	230	0	422	0	635	612	676	0
Sweden	521	404	0	294	704	725	1813	1803
Spain	0	0	0	639	0	0	0	0
Malta	0	0	100	0	100	0	0	0
Lithuania	25	0	0	96	0	50	60	183
AAWS	0	337	0	0	0	0	0	245
Unknown	0	0	584	58	593	0	0	195
CSG AA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	167
TOTAL	10220	5762	14635	11331	19182	13742	15379	10834

ESM Income & Expenditure (€)

Income & Expenditure	2005/07	2003/05	2001/03	1999/01
<u>Income (sterling)</u>				
Contributions	38,532	48,397	38,169	23,492
Interest on Investments	3,105	573	495	66
	41,636	48,970	38,664	23,558
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Delegate Expenses	1,235	2,170	2,067	2,915
Accommodation & Venue	8,098	9,329	9,465	6,738
Bank Charges	157	119	109	143
General Expenses	497	1,524	1,333	516
Staff Expenses	1,658	1,294	1,342	1,105
Printing & Stationary	326	0	842	2,433
Agenda Committee Expenses	4,026	5,383	4,492	3,115
	15,998	19,819	19,651	16,965
Surplus/Deficit	25,638	29,152	19,013	6,593
TOTAL SURPLUS	107,357	81,719	52,567	33,554
<u>Estimated Costs for October 2007</u>				
Delegate Expenses – Travel costs	1,029			
Accommodation & Venue	11,731			
General Expenses	735			
	13,485			
Estimated Surplus after October 2007	93,862			

ESM Income & Expenditure (£)

Income & Expenditure	2005/07	2003/05	2001/03	1999/01
<u>Income (sterling)</u>				
Contributions	26,212	32,923	25,965	15,981
Interest on Investments	<u>2,112</u>	<u>390</u>	<u>337</u>	<u>45</u>
	28,324	33,313	26,302	16,026
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Delegate Expenses	840	1,476	1,406	1,983
Accommodation & Venue	5,509	6,346	6,439	4,584
Bank Charges	107	81	74	97
General Expenses	338	1,037	907	351
Staff Expenses	1,128	880	913	752
Printing & Stationary	222	0	573	1,655
Agenda Committee Expenses	<u>2,739</u>	<u>3,662</u>	<u>3,056</u>	<u>2,119</u>
	10,883	13,482	13,368	11,541
Surplus/Deficit	17,441	19,831	12,934	4,485
TOTAL SURPLUS	73,032	55,591	35,760	22,826
<u>Estimated Costs for October 2007</u>				
Delegate Expenses – Travel costs	700			
Accommodation & Venue	7,980			
General Expenses	<u>500</u>			
	9,180			
Estimated Surplus after October 2007	63,852			

Qualifications for Participation in the ESM

Chairman – Agenda, Policy, Admissions Finance Committee

Roger B

Roger delivered a presentation to highlight the new policy document which was finalised at the Agenda Meeting for this 14th ESM. This document clearly defines the qualifications for attendance at the European Service Meeting. Below is a copy of the document.

QUALIFICATIONS For Countries Participating in the European Service Meeting

1. It is desirable for each participating Country to send two delegates to the European Service Meeting, it is better for one delegate to attend rather than having no representation. It is suggested that countries attending ESM for the first time should send only one delegate to begin the process of rotation.
2. The two delegates from a Country, may both be members of A.A., or one may be an A.A. member and the other a non-alcoholic member of the General Service Board, General Service Committee, General Service Office, or the equivalent thereof in that Country.
3. It is desirable that when selecting delegates, alternate delegates also be selected and held in readiness to attend, if needed.
4. In an effort to stimulate interest and support for the European Service Meeting, it is suggested that delegates report back to their General Service Boards and Conferences. It is hoped that they would encourage reporting to as much of the service structure as possible in an effort to keep members aware of their participation at the level of European service and generate the feeling of responsibility in contributing to ESM.
5. Before the due date for the election of European Service delegates, the secretary of the European Service Meeting will notify each Country of the policy regarding the representation and the financial responsibility for Countries participating in the European Service Meeting. The secretary will enquire whether or not each country wishes to participate in the forthcoming European Service Meeting and intends to fulfil the delegates' commitment and financial responsibility for transport and accommodation. If this financial commitment should be impossible, the ESM Agenda Committee will consider each situation individually.
6. It is recommended that no standardised form for membership of the European Service Meeting be developed and the procedures be as follows: (a) The requirements for new countries to participate in European Service Meeting are that there be an operating General Service Board and/or Literature Distribution Centre. (b) Application that has been approved by the Fellowship of the new country be made to the European Information Centre in York, who will forward the application and background to the European Service Meeting Agenda Committee; (c) Membership to the European Service Meeting of the applying country be advised if the application is approved by a majority vote of the Agenda Committee; (d) New members to attend the next ESM following approval.

Country Reports

Austria

General Structure

AA Austria is a part of AA German-speaking countries (GSAA) which consists of the Federal Republic of Germany, the German speaking part of Switzerland and Austria with South Tyrol (Italy).

There are 12 Intergroups, Austria and South Tyrol is one of them. According to the civil law in Austria AA is organized by the legal association, called "AA Interessengemeinschaft e.V. which is non profit. Twice a year the Intergroup-meeting takes place and lasts in spring 2 days, in autumn 1 day. The Business-meetings of our groups usually are twice to four times a year. In one District there is a Chairman-meeting like in German speaking Switzerland it is usual.

Number of Groups

At the moment there are about 157 AA-groups in Austria with approximately 1300 members. Special feature: One group in Vienna has 11 meetings (The whole week there are every day one or two meetings at the same place, but each meeting has his own services). Since more than two years there exists in Vienna a group especially for young people, another Viennese group has a focal point on "depression".

Finance

AA in Austria works with the principle of the "overflowing hat" as it is usual for German speaking AA as a whole. That means that all the money which is not necessary for our groups for their self-support, i.e. rent, literature etc. is given first to the region, then what is left over is given to the intergroup, any extras go to GSO Germany, they are supposed to pass donations on to GSO in York and New York.

After some recent reminders from the GSO, for more donations of money, the contributions of the groups increased again. The financial situation of AA in Austria seems to be stable, but there still some groups that don't pass on the money.

Services

There are meetings in prisons, hospitals and Detox-centers and the number grows steadily.

The number of information meetings for young people in schools, for apprentices etc. who are really interested, has grown the last time and mostly there are also members of Al-Anon who share their experiences. Relationship between AA and physicians, nursing staff, personnel of prison, teachers and officers of other organizations is good and if problems appear, they usually can be solved by discussion.

The German speaking Convention 2009 will take place in Wels/Austria. So there are many friends involved in preparations. The presentation for the CSC 2009 will be at the end of the CSC 2008 in Erfurt.

Literature

AA Austria uses the AA-literature of GSAA. At the moment there are two different opinions about bringing our literature up to date: a big part is for a revision (referring to the concepts!) and another big part is against working with the meaning, the present literature is good enough, so we don't need new ...). So the group conscience of the GSC 2006 decided to stop all work on the literature. That means no translations, not even flyers for public relations may be worked on now. The GSC 2007 decided against the complete stop of revision of the literature and built a committee, which has to work on questions for this topic and evaluate the outcome of an opinion poll done last year. This situation leads to conflicts and excitement, with the consequence of losing the serenity and objectivity of an entrusted servant of the IG-meeting. This friend put down his service after having had a careful consideration because he felt that he was not able anymore to do his service in the right way. At the last IG-meeting the group conscience decided to confront the next GSC to lift the block of revision of literature because this is a disadvantage for passing on the AA-massage.

Sponsoring of other countries

The sum of € 700,- for the East-European Service Meeting was sent to GSO in America last year because of the ESM-recommendation for East-European AA to take part on ESM.

The number of groups who have an "Ants' box" or "Beatles hat" for collecting money for sponsorship of AA in other countries is growing..

Relationship to other countries

AA-Austria has close relationships with the other countries in AAGS Germany, South Tyrol and Switzerland, also relationship to AA Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Because of visits of each others' meetings, cooperation increases

Public Relations

In most of local magazines there is regular information about the local AA-meetings, sometimes articles about alcoholism and AA. AA-connections, informations and AA-meetings can also be found in internet. By a lot of groups or regions physicians, hospitals, detox-centers, schools etc. get regularly meetings-lists and flyers of AA. Many groups celebrate anniversaries by organizing a special day with many meetings together with Al-Anon and Alateen usually with a meeting Public-Information..

Internet

Since 2003 the Austrian AA-homepage was closed, the old URL

<http://www.anonyme-Alkoholiker.at> is automatically forwarded the new genelas

one URL <http://www.anonyme-Alkoholiker.de> The reason for keeping the Austrian .at-adress in the net is that it is well known to some cooperating organizations.

AA-Magazines

The general German magazine “DACH” is the magazine for GSAA. “DACH” means roof – the common roof for AA in German, German speaking AA and Austria and South Tyrol. The name “DACH” is built of the initial letters of GSAA: D for Deutschland (= Germany), A for Austria, CH for Switzerland. From Austria 2 friends are working for DACH.

Belarus

In April 1989 the first meeting of people who wanted to give up drinking was held in Minsk (Belarus). It was initiated by the American AA member Leo K. who was visiting Belarus at that time. The first AA group in Belarus started working. Now we have 53 AA groups across the country. This year we have marked the 17th anniversary since AA foundation in Belarus.

There was no AA service structure in Belarus for 13 years. From time to time a group of volunteers was functioning which arranged Big AA Meetings. The literature was purchased occasionally in Russia and sometimes it came from Austria in small amounts as donations. In 2002 the representatives of the volunteer group managed to attend the 1st Eastern European Service Meeting of AA held in Warsaw. This meeting completely changed their views on AA services. Valuable experience obtained by them from the members of 14 service groups of Eastern Europe, contributed to the setting up service structure of Belarusian AA. Having analyzed and summarized the experience of our foreign colleagues the AA representatives and their friends started to develop our AA service structure.

In 2003 the first conference on service issues was held in Minsk. The service structure was created following the simplest model, the one that could work. General Service Board of AA of Belarus was elected; it consisted of 9 members, each of which took an active part in the establishment and development of committees. Now we have 5 committees on literature, finances, information, group service and charter. The public relations committee is being set up.

At the moment only one AA Intergroup in Grodno is functioning. The organization of a similar Intergroup in Minsk is under way.

In 2003 before the 1st conference on service issues took place, a group of volunteers applied to AAWS Inc. for financial assistance aimed at the establishment and development of AA service structure in Belarus. AAWS rendered us aid in the form of free AA literature in Russian. All acquired money from selling this literature is spent on development of AA service structure of Belarusian AA. Since 2005 the Russian AA office has been publishing books for Belarusian AA with the money coming from the New York AA G.S.O. It made deliveries of the AA literature to Belarus much easier. Previously, when the literature in Russian came from Austria, we had to pay high tax. We really appreciate the assistance, without it we wouldn't be able to create the service structure and set up the office.

Two years ago the third Service Conference made a decision to register its servicing organization at the Ministry of Justice. They refused to do it. In a year we repeated our attempt and it was a success. Now we are trying to organize the work of the AA office

in Belarus. Consciousness of our groups is slowly starting to develop in the right direction, and the finances, though scarce, begin to come to the account of our Service Center.

Once every two months the newspaper of Belarusian AA called “The Twelfth Step” is issued. The web-site of Belarusian AA is being designed and is functioning (www.aabelarus.org).

Our AA services pay great attention to public relations and popularization of AA ideas among the population of the country. Active work is carried out with mass media and the relations with religious organizations is being developed. Particular attention is paid to our activities by the Catholic Church. This co-operation is developing, and the church gives rooms to our AA groups for meetings. Our organization also works in co-operation with the medical institutions and social services. Special attention is paid to working with halfway homes, where children of drinking parents are kept in temporary isolation. Meetings with drinking parents are also held there. Committee members also visited closed type medical institutions where alcoholics are treated, but unfortunately we cannot organize AA groups there because of the lack of understanding on the part of administration. The same situation is with the prisons. We pay much attention to involving new members in group servicing and in committee work. We hold round table discussions, seminars, speaker meetings on AA serving and exchange experience on these issues.

Our AA fellowship conveys deep gratitude to the organizers of this European meeting and its Fund for financial support and the opportunity given to our representative to participate in such big and important event for exchanging experience, strength and hopes.

Flemish-speaking Belgium

There are 360 groups spread over the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium. Five provincial workgroups are the pivot point of our structure. Each group sends two delegates to the GSB.

These delegates are expected to have at least two years of sobriety and a very good knowledge of the structure and the Twelve Steps and Traditions. The workgroup provides opportunities for the groups to share their experiences and problems, and is also functioning as the “service hatch” between the groups of the province and national services, and vice versa.

The G.S.B. supports and encourages everyone in carrying out the resolutions of the General Service Conference. The board is composed of a Chairman, a Class A (non-alcoholic) trustee; five Class A (non-alcoholic) trustees, one from each province; ten Class B (alcoholic) trustees; the Secretary, and seven national service representatives. Six other members participate in an advisory capacity – these are the Secretary of the Aldinea-Bel Association, a GSO employee, two WSM and two ESM delegates.

The Aldinea-Bel Association, a registered and legally recognized non-profit association, acts as a corporate body to represent and manage the business of AA.

Publication of our magazine, “5 voor 12” is handled by the Managing editor, an AA member, who is assisted by the editorial board. This magazine publishes ten issues a year and a circulation of some 2400 copies. Our most recent publications were the translation of the book “AA Comes of Age” and “Came to Believe” in 2006-2007.

The Loners Committee is a hard-working team of AA members. Members of the Loners Group receive AA meetings in print and current information every two months.

At the moment AA Vlaanderen has 42 Loners, 62 Loner Sponsors and 7 Loner Groups.

Our GSO, located in Antwerpen, co-ordinates the central offices of our Fellowship and is mainly an administrative unit providing services to groups, the provincial workgroups and the Fellowship as a whole. There is one salaried staff member, Michèle. The office is open daily from 10.00 until 3.30 a.m. During off-hours, a telephone service operates. On weekends the seven national committees make use of the GSO office space to hold their meetings.

Our 16th general Service Conference was held in 2005; the theme was, “Anonymous, but not invisible”. A printed final report of the Conference goes to all groups of the

Flemish AA. The 17th Conference is scheduled for March 2009 with the theme “Patience and Tolerance”.

The aim of our yearly National Convention is to have a holiday for all AA members, their family and their friends. There is always a spontaneous expression of happy sobriety and thankfulness. This year our Convention took place in Antwerpen with the theme “AA our Harbour”. The next Convention is scheduled for May 2008 with the theme “It works, when you work on it”.

We are invited, and usually send delegates and/or observers to the World Service meeting, European Service Meeting and General Service Conferences of other countries. Reports are sent to all groups and are discussed by our General Service Board.

We hope to see a significant expansion of the Website of the Flemish AA. We plan to make full and effective use of all modern information and communication tools and technology to better reach and help the still-suffering alcoholic.

Belgium - French Speaking

Structure

Since 2005, there was no change in our Structure, but the Conference of 2007 asked to modify our Structure drastically: from 8 Regions to 4, maximum 12 trustees, an "office" to check the candidatures of the trustees. We would have only 5 national sectors: GSO, Finances, Regions, External Relations and Internal Relations.

As of 2007, the number of groups is 223. Up to now – before the change of the Structure - they still belong to 8 regions within the French speaking Belgium (with some German speaking groups). Some French speaking groups are located in the Flemish part of Belgium are also included in our Structure, as well as German speaking groups located in Belgium.

Each region has representatives in the following national committees and/or bureaus: Finances, Admission and Structure, Literature and Publications, Health, Justice, Telephone Service, Public Information, Convention, Conference. There is also the Coordination and General Policy's Committee which is the link between those entities. Each committee and/or bureau is headed by a member of the Board (Trustee), as well as the General Service Office (GSO). We have now 6 class A trustees in our Board (but still without particular task).

Literature

We produced one leaflet concerning the "Cautions to take when using the 'AA language'", based on our experiences with the professional sectors. We work on a pamphlet "Emotional sobriety into the services".

Finances

Finances are healthy. Our contribution was send to the ESM. Our Anniversary plan of 2005 will serve to send literature to Congo (cost of the literature and costs of the sending).

Conferences Themes

2006	multi-addictions, how do we handle it?
2007	The future of AA, our responsibility

Congress Themes

2006	Cap Serenity
2007	The same message to everybody

Website

Our AA website has been reshuffled as foreseen (www.alcooliquesanonymes.be).

Public Information

In 2006, we organized a "forum" where AA members were asked to invite as much as possible "professionals concerned, through the exercise of their profession, with the problem of alcohol, with the purpose that they meet each others". The result was unbelievable in comparison with old trials: 245 non AA instead of 10 (or less) ! One unexpected comment was that "it was the first time that participants coming from different sectors were together and able to compare their experiences instead of always speaking with their peers" (Justice, Police, MD and nurses, psychologists, Human Resources personal and Social assistants – from organizations and of the private and the public sectors, a.s.o.).

On-line groups

We are still asked by "on-line groups" (particularly if they are run by French Speaking Belgian members), to become part of our Structure.

Survey

We realized a reduced survey only asking, per meeting, the age and the sex of AA members :

estimation AA members : 3764
average AA members per group : 12,46
% women : 34,03 %
% men : 65,97 %
% age :

	Women	Men
+ 70 years	2	6
60 – 70	15	15
50 – 60	33	30
40 – 50	34	25
30 – 40	14	16
20 – 30	3	4
- 20 years	0	0

The Conference of 2007 made a recommendation to make a survey every 5 years but with a larger choice of questions (like US-Canada or UK surveys).

"Partage" magazine

We continue to publish in French the magazine "Partage" (Grapevine like) which is particularly devoted to our friends of Belgium, Switzerland and France (French Speaking Europe) but can be subscribed all over the world. The magazine runs 1.100 copies. Articles are welcome.

Miscellaneous

- We still have to insist regularly to renew or find servants (mainly problem of implication of young members into AA).
- Cooperation did start with Dutch Speaking Belgium and the Triborders Intergroup in Brussels (a trilingual poster in the Underground).
- Invitation to the York U.K. Conference has been a very interesting experience, particularly to open our mind to another Structure.

Future Prospects

We shall particularly focus on the changing of our Structure hoping to come to an approval at the Conference of 2008

In summary, we are at the crossroad of our future.

Croatia

Literature

Zagreb has the most English speaking members, and that city and the central office keep well supplied with English language literature.

We have two books translated, the Big Book and the 12 and 12, and we have approximately fifteen pamphlets translated into Croatian. We currently have a translation underway of Living Sober. Besides Zagreb, our two other major groups are well supplied with our translated material. We hope to translate the Daily Reflections as soon as possible.

Finance

Our central office is nearly two years old and we are not yet paying for it. It is of primary concern to us to become financially self sufficient.

Presently our monthly rent is approx 3000 Kuna (\$600) and our groups can provide only about half of that each month. We have only three major cities with AA groups, Zagreb, Split and Osijek. Only Split and Zagreb participate in the monthly donations to the central office as, reportedly, Osijek has too few regular members and is the poorest region of the three by far.

Our sponsor group in Switzerland has been able to help us cover the losses each month but would prefer, understandably, that their money is more effectively used for attraction rather than promotion. Consequently, we are actively looking for ways to spread the word and fill more seats with still suffering alcoholics. Lastly, our Zagreb group is being evicted from its current location and we must find a new meeting place before the end of October. This is NOT positively affecting our cash flow.

Groups

There are eight AA Groups in Croatia: two in Osijek, two in Split, one in Buje, one in Šibenik and one in Zagreb. A relatively new group was opened and is meeting on Wednesday in Zaprešić.

* Please note: Fuller details of all groups available at ESM (GSO Great Britain).

General Structure

AA in Croatia is made up of 3 primary groups. Zagreb has approximately 30- 40 members with about 25 attending mtgs regularly with Split maybe 10- 15% fewer. Osijek may have peaked at 40- 50 a few years ago but now has 2 groups with 20 or so regularly attending meetings.

Our first central office opened in Split but soon the group conscience agreed that moving it to Zagreb would be more efficient. We have one sober employee who is

paid very little (\$250 per month) but we hope that she can spend more and more time coordinating our combined efforts to pass the message of AA to suffering alcoholics.

The medical community is not supportive and they have a long running program of their own and feel AA is an overseas version. Unfortunately, at this time our central office spends most of the time working out group problems and management.

Prisons, Hospitals etc

We have a good relationship with one Doctor who single-handedly brought NA to Croatia and works in an alcoholic rehab facility within a major Zagreb hospital. He has sent us a relatively steady stream of post rehab alcoholics. Otherwise we have no relationship with other hospital rehabs yet and have yet to try to bring AA into Croatian prisons.

Relations with other countries (including any country sponsorship)

AA Croatia has sponsored seven international conventions on our soil since 1999 so we have established decent relationships with the nascent programs in Bosnia / Herzegovina, Serbia, and Slovenia.

AA Croatia has been sponsored by a French speaking region of Switzerland AA. They helped us with the convention in 2006 and continue to offer financial sponsorship to help us offer the hand of AA in this country.

Internet & Websites

We had a somewhat unregulated AA blog out of Osijek for the last 5 or 6 years and since the establishment of the central office we have tried to set up a new official AA Croatia site, which is now up and running for one year- www.aahrvatska.hr
One of our sober members is maintaining the site.

Thank you for having AA Croatia first time here, for listening and sharing with us your experience, strength and hope.

Denmark

Membership and Groups

Currently (July 2007) 441 official AA meetings are held in Denmark. Four meetings (groups) are Icelandic speaking, one Greenlandic, one Finish and four English. We also have one Internet – group. Since the last report 26 new AA groups have been registered, so the number of groups continues to increase. We are all happy about this development. At the same time AA meetings held in Danish language are established in both Spain and Thailand.

Since the celebration of our 50th anniversary in 2005 we have followed up with an annual event each year on the 14th of January in a lot of groups.

To sum up our history in short: the first 25 years we didn't succeed so well, since then we did. The fact that many new treatment facilities recommended their patients to participate in AA meetings the membership grew rapidly. In 1985, 18 AA groups were registered; in 1989 the number was 89; in 1992 we registered 150 and finally in 1999 we could count 346 AA groups. The big boom stopped this year and the increase of AA groups slowed down.

Our first Conference plan - and structure were adopted in 1986. Conferences have been held ever since and more and more AA groups are represented through their delegates. We are convinced that this service structure helped us to stick together during these expanding years – and still does.

Regions

Denmark is divided into six regions. The groups nominate trustees to the Region Service Meetings. The regions nominate one trustee each to the General Service Board (GSB). The regions also appoint a number of delegates to the General Service Conference, regulated by the number of groups in the Region.

Since 2005 almost every Region has created a Service Manual. The Regions build up their service structure like the one for AA National. Further more the Regions have strengthened the public information service through out the country. They cooperate through the national public information committee. Several Regions have succeeded in finding a non alcoholic friend to serve locally.

And finally they seem to divide the work of the GSB representative and the Chairman of the Region into two service representatives. Earlier the chairman of a Region automatically had the representation in the GSB.

General Service Board (GSB)

The GSB consists of 10 members. In addition to the 6 trustees elected by the Regions, the GSB comprises a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Treasurer and a Secretary, who

are all, elected by the General Service Conference. Our non-alcoholic member has unfortunately left the Board in 2006 and our work in finding new non-alcoholic members is postponed using efforts in the Regions instead. The Chairman of the permanent committees also attends the Board meetings. The Board meets every three months at our General Service Office in Copenhagen or in one of the Regions. Normally the GSB arranges “working weekends”, “Seminars” each year to increase the efficiency of the AA service work. Furthermore GSB encourages committees to do the same. The work of GSB has been stabilized and the Board conducts through serving the Conference and helps the committees in their efforts carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

Working Committees and Service Units

A large number of AA-members are doing voluntary work in the following working committees and service units. Actually all work are done only by AA-members.

The permanent committees are:

- Literature Translation
- Box 334 (membership magazine)
- Telephone Service
- E-mail help line
- Finance
- Service Manual and Service Structure Manual
- National public information

Almost each committee has a member from each Region

The Service Units are:

- Literature Sales
- Production (photocopying)
- AA Data (updating meeting lists, conference administration, home page etc.)
- Experience committee

General Service Office

The current General Service Office situated in Copenhagen was opened in May 1999. Spacious (230 sq mtrs).

Conventions/Conferences

The Danish General Service Conference is held each year in April. The 2007 conference had 95 participants, 65 of whom were voting delegates. The last seven years, the conference has taken place at various locations in Denmark, from Saturday morning till Sunday afternoon.

Our conference is still changing. Since the beginning of the nineties we have been inspired and helped by AA in Great Britain. It has become a tradition that 2 members

from GSB attend the conference in York once a year. Beside our working committees at our conference we have workshops too. The delegates have welcomed this innovation. Like the British we manage to write and distribute the conference report before the Conference is over.

Finance

Group contributions are made to the treasurers of the 6 regions. The regions pay contributions to the Treasurer of the General Service Board. The group contributions do not cover all of the GSO expenses for service work. The shortfall is covered by the proceeds of our literature sale. After a lot of years with increasing turnover from literature sales, we have through the last 2 years had a slide decrease. It seems that sales through treatment centres have reached a stable level.

Literature

Most AA literature, brochures, and pamphlets are translated into Danish and sold from our General Service Office. As an experiment to promote our message to the still suffering alcoholic, we have decided to make certain pamphlets free of charge. The result of this experiment was evaluated at the General Service Conference in 2003 and it was decided to make this arrangement permanent. The book "AA's history in Denmark" was published 2005 in our 50th anniversary year. It was the first time AA in Denmark wrote and published a book. During 2006 and 2007, an AA member having a blind friend started to record the 12 & 12, and he succeeded in recording almost all AA literature we have. So we are now able to offer these CD diskettes as spoken literature, which will be sold along with the written literature.

Information

Denmark is in the process of strengthening the total information effort. As many activities as possible are to be carried through at the regional level, but in order to coordinate the effort and make it more efficient, we have held a number of Nationwide Workshops and seminars. In 2006 the attention was placed on the doctors all over the country. An envelope containing AA pamphlets and other information was spread to almost all doctors waiting rooms by volunteer AA members. The waiting rooms with secretaries are one of the frontline connections to a lot of suffering alcoholics. It is the intention that each year will have its own attention to a specific group in the society.

Since many years we have had a Nationwide Telephone Service, with a combination of advisers taking calls at their home and advisers at the General Service Office. The telephone service has one telephone number covering all of Denmark, and the calls are routed to the member closest to the caller or to one of the members at the GSO. The service is available 7 days a week from 8 a.m. to midnight.

Because of the increasing number of e-mails to AA Denmark we have established an Internet answering service based on our experiences from the telephone service. This

E – mail helpline is a success, everyone gets an answer within 24 hours, and the e-mails are growing in numbers.

Several years ago AA Denmark established a web site, which is still being improved. Mail- and Web -address: aa@anonyme-alkoholikere.dk. It is now possible to order literature on the web site. Almost all Regions have their own web sites, connected to the one of AA Denmark.

Electronic Meetings

One of the main issues at the Service Conference 2001 was the Internet “group’s” relation to the AA’s service structure and IT/internet in the service work. The conference did not come to an agreement. Instead, it established a committee with the purpose of forming a proposal for our policy on the Internet, our present and future web site structure and Internet “groups”. At the Service Conference 2002 it was decided to include the Internet “groups” in the meeting lists under a special heading. In the national directory for AA meetings since 2005, the Web - address is mentioned under the headline: Meetings on the net.

Relations with other countries

A Nordic Convention is held once a year. The convention alternates between Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. During the convention, a delegate from each country attends a meeting to share experience.

We also seek to attend General Service Conferences in Norway Sweden, Finland, and two observers are sent to the British Service Conference. We have participated in the European Service Meeting for several years and as of 2002 year we also participate in the World Service Meeting.

On recommendation from AA Iceland we have started to cooperate with AA Groups in Greenland. In 2005 our WSM – and ESM delegates had a meeting with AA members from Greenland. This meeting was the start of a sponsorship in service from Denmark to Greenland. Two AA members from Greenland have participated in the Danish Service Conferences in 2006 and 2007. The trips were paid by AA Denmark. The Service Conference has decided to form a temporary committee to be in charge of offering help to Greenland, especially concerning literature to be translated, and building a Service organisation.

At the celebration of AA groups having existed 20 years in Nuuk in Greenland, a Danish representative was invited to inform more face to face our Greenland service members of how we developed in Denmark. We offer our help but listen humbly to follow what they think is the most pressing area to cope with.

Final remarks

AA Denmark has come of age and our structure has been functioning well, but we still feel that a decisive factor for a wholesome and constant development of our Fellowship in Denmark is to seek inspiration from, and comparing notes with, other countries having achieved greater experience than us. We have also found it a good way of giving the message in service to our successors, by an individual to act responsibly by finding our own successor to the service work we are doing. Rotation principle in Service is 4 years in Denmark.

Finland

Introduction

The Fellowship of the Finnish A.A. celebrates its 60 Years Anniversary next year in August and the preparations are already going on full speed. The celebrations take place in the City of Tampere, where the House of Tampere has been reserved to be the place for the celebrations. Our Fellowship welcomes all AA's and friends to participate to this for the Finnish AA members' noteworthy event.

Structure and Service Activities

The Annual Meeting of the Finnish A.A. groups in Kokkola 24.04. 2005 confirmed the service structure, which was on probation for five years. The most remarkable change compared with our former service structure, is the change in the number of the Finnish AA Service delegates, which diminished from 40 to 21 members.

The Finnish A.A. Service (Suomen AA Palvelu) consists of the delegates who are suggested to serve by the real A.A groups, and are elected in the Annual Meetings of the areas to serve a period of two years. The Annual Meeting of the Finnish A.A. groups confirm the final composition of the Finnish A.A. Service, which chooses the members of the committees from among its delegates. The committees are as follows: Policy and Admissions, Literature, International Affairs, Public Information, Institutions and Carrying the Message. The Finnish A.A. Service can of course, form further committees when necessary for instance, at the moment the Committee of Organizing 60 Years Anniversary. There are also some committees of free service (as we call them) such as the Prison Committee, and the Travel Planning Committee (specially planning overseas journeys to big International Conventions). These committees work independently.

The Finnish A.A. Publishing, Inc.(Suomen AA Kustannus ry.) consists of 6 members, who serve 3 years. The Finnish A.A. Publishing, Inc. takes care of the official connections to the rest of the Finnish public societies, making contracts, publishing A.A. literature, copyrights, and financial matters. Our G.S.O. (Suomen AA toimisto, Pl 201, 01301 Vantaa), works under the control of the Finnish A.A. Publishing, Inc. We have in our G.S.O. a staff of 3 workers. The economy of our Fellowship has been stable for last years, and our ability to pay is changing between 4 – 5 ½ months.

Bulletins

We have two monthly bulletins: Ratkaisu (like Grapevine), which consists of the stories of A.A. members and has a subscription amount of about 2100. Some groups order it for hospitals, police stations, rehabilitation centers, first aid centers, libraries, prisons etc. Our other bulletin is Tiedotuksia (A.A. Information), this is confidential and meant for members only. It contains information of A.A. events, the sobriety anniversary ads of A.A. members (so called Cake and Coffee ads), the changes of connections and meeting times of A.A.groups, the amount of sober years of A.A.s (announced by their home

groups), reports of WSM and ESM and a monthly review of the Fellowship's economy. The members have ordered the bulletin Tiedotuksia, about 2300 copies per year. Both bulletins are published by the Finnish A.A. Publishing, Inc. and the Editorial Committee consists of the chairpersons of the Finnish A.A. Service and the chief of our G.S.O. also the bulletins have their editor-in chief persons.

Internet

The address to our Web Sites is: www.aa.fi and e-mail address is: aa@suomenaa.fi and connections can be taken also in English.

Group activities

The A.A. groups are the backbone of the A.A. Fellowship all over the world and so also in Finland. We have over 600 A.A. groups all over Finland, 58 A.A. groups in institutions and 46 abroad. The Finnish A.A. groups organize 3-4 National Conventions per year in different parts of Finland. These conventions include alcoholic only meetings, open meetings, committee meetings and a big "Brotherly Night" event. Convention program also contains an informative occasion, where prepared topics and speakers can be for instance, the representatives of police, clergy, health care, prison, correctional institutions, A.A. or Al-Anon. Representatives from various public institutions and media are invited to get information about A.A. and alcoholism. The Annual Meeting of the Finnish A.A. groups takes place in April every year during the National Spring Convention.

Carrying the message

The most important task of the A.A. Fellowship is carrying the message to still suffering alcoholics. In Finland we have a Telephone Answering Network, which covers the whole country and is supported by the groups. The Telephone Answering Service in the Capital area (Helsinki and surroundings) gets about 9000 calls per year. Groups also organize many information events. We have received the new updated summary of A.A. for the support, while members are asked to give information of our activities to professionals, who deal with the problem drinkers.

The Finnish A.A. Fellowship and other countries

The Annual Meeting of the Finnish A.A. groups chooses the World Service Meeting Delegates, who serve 4 years rotating so that the starting delegate serves as a first term delegate and the older one as a second term delegate. The first term delegate is also serving as a delegate of Nordic Countries. The both delegates take part in the World Service Meetings and the European Service Meetings and give reports of these meetings to Finnish A.A.s translated in Finnish.

The latest meeting of the Nordic countries' delegates took place in Denmark (Koge, near Copenhagen) on the 21.07.2007 and all the Nordic countries were represented Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Finland).

Some Finnish A.A. members also organize trips to A.A. Conventions to different countries and just at the end of this month (August) there is a group of A.A.'s going to Moscow to celebrate the 20 Years Anniversary of the Russian A.A. The Travel Planning Committee has also started to plan the overseas trip to San Antonio.

Conclusion

The theme of this year in Finland is “ By Serving to Gratitude” and it reminds us, that somebody has taken care enough in serving A.A. before us, and it is now our turn to serve in order to carry the message and protect its contents unchangeable for those suffering alcoholics to come.

France

In France there are 22 Regions, five Territories and 625 Groups (July 2007)

General Service Board

The GSB is composed of 11 Trustees :

- 3 non-alcoholics class A Trustees
- 8 class B Trustees
- 3 General Service Trustees elected by the Conference
- 4 Territorial Trustees (first locally elected then by the Conference)
- 1 world delegate
- 8 service committee representatives.
- 1 European delegate

They all serve for a four year term.

General Service Office

The GSO based in Paris is at the moment composed of :

- the Office Manager
- a full time secretary
- a half time secretary

They are in charge of the contact with all the French groups and with the general public and the institutions. They are in charge of storing and selling the literature, as well as dispatching the review “Partage” edited in Belgium. The GSO edits the “JSG” (GSO NEWS) 4 times a year which informs AA members of what is going on in the different committees.

Finances

The year 2006 finished with a positive result. The global receipt progresses of 1.9 %. The contributions of the group’s progress of 8.7 % but the literature sales have lowed of 10.4 %.

The global expenses fell of 7.7 % in 2006.

During the last 2 years we succeeded in making up our deficit of 2004 and succeeded in reconstituting our reserve.

Literature and Files

Since 2006 we have added to the catalogue :

- A new booklet for young people (edited in France)
- Experience, strength and hope (edited in Canada)

- Twelve steps and twelve traditions on CD (edited in Canada)
- A magnet with the serenity prayer (printed in France)

Because of the literature sales fall, the last conference decided to cut the Big Book price by 20 % for a 1 year experiment.

The classification of the files has continued for several years. A great part of them will be online in 2008.

Projects :

Interviews of the old timers.

Booklet “50 ans après” (50 years after) for the 50th anniversary of AA FRANCE in 2010.

National Call

Creation of a national phone number in 2006. The object is to help the regions to have available help permanently, 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Internet and Websites

The official AA France site is : www.alcooliques-anonymes.fr

A non-official AA France web site (inside AA Web site), is devoted to AA members. We can find there the reports of the different meetings of the committees, and various documents for AA members. This site is : <http://bsg.alcooliques-anonymes.fr>

Congress

The 46th AA France Anniversary was held in METZ (North East of France). It was a big success.

The 47th Anniversary will take place in PAU (South West of France) on the 10th and 11th November 2007 under the theme “Action Program and Spirituality”.

Structure and General Policy

The new version of the French “AA service manual” is actually on the web site but some points have to be finalized.

From the AA beginning in France in 1960 we had a unique association; for a few years in order to apply the 4th Tradition, the Conference encourages the groups to create their own administrative association. Currently 11 groups created their own association. It will take a lot of time to finish this work.

Conference

In 2006 the theme was “Anonymity, spiritual base of our Traditions”

In 2007 “The Sponsorship”

In 2008 it will be “Literature - tool of my recovery”.

In France we have 22 Areas with each of them 2 to 4 delegates, depending on the group's density in the Area (1 delegate for 10 groups). Two third of the voting members of the conference are delegates.

Health

The Health Committee was opened during the last 2 years on the problem of alcoholism and the pregnant woman. On another side we find actually more and more problems of dealing with addictions (drugs and alcohol) especially by the young people.

Justice

AA is welcome in prisons (52 groups in penal establishments). 85 % of the people imprisoned in France are there because of alcohol.

We progress in the actions of probation (there are three times more people under hand of justice than in prison). Specific actions are developed involving lawyers.

Business and Social Workers

The main actions during the last 2 years were developed involving occupational medicine, with success.

International

FRANCE concentrates its efforts on sponsoring French-speaking Africa.

The 1st “Central and West Africa Zone Meeting” (RACO) will be held in France next December.

Conclusion

AA FRANCE progresses to transmit the message in all areas, and works to preserve a balanced financial situation, permitting help to the transmission of our first objective: “stay sober and help others alcoholics to achieve sobriety”.

Germany

Structure and Development of AA Germany and German-Speaking Countries 2005-2007

Structure

AA Germany is a part of the unified structure of AA-German-speaking countries (GSAA). The 10 Intergroups (IGs) of Germany, the Intergroup of Austria and South Tyrol and the Intergroup of German-speaking Switzerland are bound together by the legal entity of the “AA-Interest-Association e. V.” which is registered Association for public welfare according to the German Civil Law. The General Service Office (GSO) and thereby the official seat of GSAA is located in Munich. The Intergroups are based on a different number of Regional Groups (RGs). Regional and Intergroup meetings are held 3-4 times a year. In the eastern part of Germany a functional structure is still under development.

Groups

The number of Groups within GSAA remains stagnant since 3-4 years. In total there around 2.850 groups registered at the GSO in Munich. The number of Groups in Germany only, is about 2.500, and around 100 of them are located at correctional facilities. AA-contact-offices exist in 39 larger cities in Germany. The last one newly opened in 2004 is located in Regensburg/Bavaria. Since a few years these contact offices are provided with the unified telephone-number: 19295 (+ area number before) by the German Telecom. The contact offices are managed by the Groups and Regional Groups in the cities where they are located while insurance for those offices is covered by the GSO in Munich.

General Service Conference

The General Service Conference (GSC) of the GSAA is composed of 72 delegates coming from the 12 Intergroups, the 30 members of the General Service Board (GSB), the ESM-delegates and guests who had been invited by the Conference Team. The amount of delegates entitled to vote at the GSC is never higher than 108 all in all. The 26th GSC was held from April 7-9, 2006 and the 27th GSC was held from April 13-15, 2007 at the GENO-Hotel in Rösrath near Cologne.

The 26th GSC was dedicated to the theme: “Confidence in our Services” and the 27th GSC was dedicated to the theme: “Anonymity and publicity - no/a contradiction?”

At the 26th GSC there was extensive information about Public Relations by a non-alcoholic. It was professional and in some parts a bit provoking.

The 26th and 27th GSCs were forced to focus wide attention on developing remedies against the alarming financial situation of the GSAA after the deficit of the years

before. More about this matter will be discussed under the title “Finances” within this report.

A main theme of the 27th GSC was the literature. There was an inquiry in all groups about new translations of the “Big Book”, “12 and 12” and “Daily Reflections” and some flyers. A working circle will present the result at the 28th GSC.

General Service Board

According to the revised Service Manual the General Service Board consists of up to 30 members. The speaker of the Board, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the “AA-Interest-Association e. V.”, the General Manager and the Secretary of the GSO, up to four Class-A-Trustees beside the Chairman of the Association who always needs to be a non-alcoholic trustee, 12 Class-B-Trustees elected by the 12 Intergroups, four Referees (for Finances, Public Relations, Literature, Internet/New Media), the Editor of the AA-D.A.CH-Magazine and the Speaker of the editorial staff, the two World-Service-Meeting delegates and the Chairman of the GSC-Team. The Editor of the AA-D.A.CH-Magazine and the Speaker of the editorial staff participate at the GSB meetings only on invitations, not regularly. Only the Class-A- and -B-Trustees, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Association, the General Manager and the Speaker of the GSB are entitled to vote. The Referees, the WSM-Delegates and the GSC-Chairman are only counted as consultative members of the board, however, their influence on the deliberations and discussions of the Board is in no way considered inferior.

The GSB of the GSAA with its 30 members seems to be the largest one world wide. The GSB meets only three times a year since 2005 and its discussions are partly conducted in different working circles instead of a plenary meeting.

In October 2006 Johannes Eul was elected as a non-alcoholic Chairman and Gerhild as ESM-delegate. Johannes Eul made contact with AA in 1983, when he worked as a pedagogue in a prison. Now he is retired on a pension and much interested to do this service for GSAA.

Conventions

In 2006 the GSAA Convention took place at Bremen, the Convention of 2007 at Aachen near the boundaries to Belgium and The Netherlands. Both conventions attracted more than 4.000 friends not only from German Speaking countries but also from our western neighbours in Europe. In Aachen main attention was on the contacts with prisons and with schools, and will be continued on following the conventions. It was the first time that the opening and closing meetings were open-air in the arena for dressage and it was a great event.

Finances

For GSAA the years of 1999 and 2000 had been the last two years with a balanced budget i. e. with small surplus in order to keep our prudent reserve. The financial situation did not become better.

In 2005 and 2006 the contributions did not increase any more; they were in 2005 - Euro 336.747 and in 2006 only Euro 294.028. During the first months in 2007 this miserable situation is the same.

Because of the desolate financial situation the GSO will move to a smaller town. So hopefully in 2009 the GSAA will save Euro 35.000 p. a.
The "Beetle-contributions" are still going on.

Bill W. said in 1960: "We have always rallied to meet and transcend failure and crises. Problems have been our stimulants."

Literature & Publications

Our monthly magazine "AA-D.A.CH" is not so successful as it seems first. It is necessary to motivate more friends to write for it about their experiences in AA. The AA-fellowship of German Speaking Switzerland still obtains some own publications beside the "AA-D.A.CH", but this does not mean that the Swiss friends do not make use of our common magazine. Our quarterly communication paper "AA-Intern-422" is more than before used as a forum of critical appreciation and remarks on the different controversial matters within the GSAA. This is a good tool for open discussions.

Since 2006 the literature team of GSAA is not working; that will last until 2008. All translation and new editions were stopped by the GSC.

Public Relations

Our Referee for Public Relations consequently informs the public about our "singleness of purpose". A great matter of interest is the problem of approaching young people below 16 years already addicted to alcohol. In June 2007 there was a week against all kind of drugs, but especially against alcoholism in whole Germany arranged by the government. GSAA took the opportunity to organize different actions in many towns.

Internet/New Media

The Internet is a very popular way of approaching AA. The website of GSAA receives around 930 hits per day. "Beginner-meetings" try to motivate friends who got in touch with AA by the website to visit face-to-face meetings, too. Since 2006 the AA-website has a group-status but so far no structure.

European Service/World-Service & Sponsorship

In October 2006 Gerhild was elected by the GSB as German ESM-delegate, Eva and Jean-Richard are representing the other two countries within GSAA, Austria and Switzerland, at the 14th ESM. The World-Service delegates are members of the GSB, all five mentioned delegates are members of the GSC.

In spite of our desolate financial situation the GSAA was able to sponsor two other Fellowships.

Great Britain

Groups, Intergroups & Regions

In Great Britain we have 4,106 groups registered at our General Service Office, approximately 390 of those are English speaking groups in Continental Europe. 16 Regions comprising of 118 Intergroups, and each Region is represented by six delegates at our Conference.

General Service Conference

The 42nd General Service Conference was held at the Park Inn Hotel in York on the 20th to the 22nd of April this year. 107 delegates attended including 12 observers from Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Belgium, Lithuania, The Netherlands and Sweden. 22 General Service Board Members and 6 staff from our Service Offices, were also in attendance. The overall feedback from those that attended the conference was one of great enthusiasm and love for AA Service.

General Service Office

The General Service Office has moved to the new address (PO Box 1 Toft Green York YO1 7NJ) in January 2007. This was due to the growth of Alcoholics Anonymous in the UK and the increase in staff members. Stonebow House was no longer suitable to serve the needs of the Fellowship in the UK. AA's archives are now on display in the new premises.

Public Information

Public Information remains very proactive with presentations at the Houses of Parliament in Scotland and Westminster raising AA's profile. Advertising campaigns continue using the Media, Scottish buses, London Underground, TV and the Web, utilising our National Helpline Number and the Message: "If Alcohol is costing you more than money, call us today in complete confidence. Web- www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk"

Young People in AA

A new information sheet titled 12 Stepping and Sponsoring Minors has been formulated professionally and distributed to the Fellowship in the UK, this was due to concerns regarding calls for help from underage drinkers, and the new child protection legislation currently in place.

Armed Services

The Armed Services initiative continues to grow steadily with presentations at various service conferences in London, Cardiff, Liverpool, Newcastle, Birmingham and Portsmouth. Presentations have also been given at the Royal Navy Alcohol Treatment Unit and the Royal Air Force Graduate Entrants Course at Gloucester University.

Health Liaison

Health Liaison work continues to grow with attendance at Nursing in Practise Conferences four times a year, plus other one day events arranged by the Health Services in Scotland and England. A health resource pack has been formulated and adopted to assist liaison work with the health services.

Employment Liaison

Employment liaison attended the Trade Unions Congress, the “NASUWT” for teachers, and UNISON the public service union, plus two other related events this year.

Prisons and Probation Services

Prisons continue to hold AA meetings in 90% of the prisons in Scotland and approximately 60% in England and Wales.

Probation/Social Services continues effectively maintaining contact with the National Probation Directorate and National Offender Management Services who show increasing interest in co-operation with AA. A resource pack is currently being processed to assist liaison officers in their responsibilities.

Annual Service workshops are currently held in York and have proved to be very beneficial to those involved in various service disciplines.

Literature

The Literature Committee are currently redesigning posters and pamphlets for our Service disciplines including reviews of the existing Guidelines. A DVD project is underway to help inform the younger public and others of our approach to alcoholism. The AA Service News has been reduced to A5 size to save the fellowship money on postage.

Telephone Service

The Telephone Service is now able to receive mobile phone calls into 33 of our 42 GB telephone services. Mobile phone calls have increased to 26% of all calls received and continues to grow. The Telephone Service now has a file storage/folder/forum on our website to assist those working on the telephones. Conference this year recommended that this forum initiative be expanded to include Prisons and Probation.

Electronic Communications

Approximately 2920 new members are contacting AA via the website each year, our “e12 Steppers” receive 16 enquiries a day, 8 of which generally are asking for help with their drink problem. The design and appearance of our website is currently under review by the sub-committee. GSO New York has allowed us to link to the online Big Book so those interested can read it on line.

Share and Roundabout Magazines

The Scottish “Roundabout” magazine sales have increased this year, unfortunately the English “Share” magazine experienced a drop in sales.

Finances

Our finances continue to show a healthy upward trend of contributions throughout the Fellowship, enabling support for our primary purpose. The Northern and Southern Service Offices continue to be of great support to GSO, with communication inside and outside the Fellowship.

Iceland

Structure

A.A. is growing fast in Iceland and are highly respected. There is hardly any stigma now associated with being recovering alcoholic. More and more young people are joining the A.A. and are serving on boards and committees, therefore the growth in A.A. in Iceland has been great. Today there are some 350 registered groups in the country. With the population of only 300 thousand this means there is roughly one A.A. group for every 900 inhabitants. Voluntary A.A. takes meetings to hospitals, treatment facilities and prisons.

Service Office

The National Service Office is located in Reykjavik and has a staff of one A.A. member as full-timer. Trustees from the National Service Board also do some voluntary work at the office. The office is 90% financed by the A.A groups, and 10% by the publishing committee. The office is open all weekdays from 11am to 4pm and there is a volunteer-operated 24-hour emergency telephone service.

General Service Board

The National Service Board (NSB) is made up of twelve trustees of whom nine are A.A. members (Class B), and three are non alcoholics (Class A). THE NSB holds regular meetings and organizes the Annual National Service Meeting which is held in May each year. Furthermore, the board is responsible for an Open Meeting on Good Friday every year to commemorate the arrival of A.A. in Iceland on that day in 1954. The participation on that meeting is around 3000 people. For the past few years the meeting has been translated into a sign language.

Finance

Contributions from A.A. groups (90%) and from the A.A. publishing (10%) cover our costs and we retain to one year expenditures.

Literature

Several items of A.A. Conference-approved literature, books and brochures have been published in Icelandic and we also have the Big Book and 12 & 12 on CD. Currently are in place a translation of the book; Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age.

Internet

Our website www.aa.is is regularly updated. At this time we only have an Icelandic version, we are currently working on the English version and the web shop.

Ireland

Groups

It is 61 years since Alcoholics Anonymous was introduced to Ireland in 1946. An Irishman living in America, Conor F, came home to Ireland on holiday determined to carry AA's message with him. He brought some Big Books with him and managed to found an AA Group in Dublin on 18th November 1946. When Bill W. and Lois visited Ireland in 1950 there were 6 Groups. By 1956 AA had grown to approximately 650 members in 15 Groups. Today there are 725 Groups with over 14,000 members of the fellowship, holding over 85,000 meetings annually.

Structure and General Service Conference

The first meeting of the All-Ireland National Intergroup Committee was held in Dublin on 24th November 1968 (re-named the General Service Conference of Ireland, at its second meeting in Newry, County Down).

Our Service Structure begins with our AA Groups. Each Group sends two GSR's (General Service Representatives) to a local Area Committee. Each Area Committee sends four representatives (Intergroup representatives) to the Provincial Intergroups. Each Intergroup sends four elected delegates (Conference Delegates) and the Intergroup Secretary to the General Service Conference of Ireland, which meets twice annually. The General Service Conference of Ireland consists of Seven Trustees (4 Alcoholic and 3 Non – Alcoholic), sixteen Conference Delegates, the four Intergroup Secretaries, two World Service Delegates who serve at European and World Service Meetings, and a Secretary to the Board.

At the 3rd Meeting of General Service Conference of Ireland in May 1969 it was decided to set up a General Service Office. In 1970 premises on Essex Quay, Dublin were leased and our first General Service Office was opened. This premises served the Fellowship well until 1987 when the General Service Office moved to offices at 109 South Circular Road, Dublin 8. In the last year the Board have successfully negotiated a lease on new modern premises at Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park, Swords Road, Dublin 9. The new General Service Office opened on Monday 23rd July 2007. It is hoped these premises will serve us well into the future.

The Seven Trustees form the General Service Board and run, on behalf of the fellowship, the General Service Office in Dublin and a Central Services Office in Belfast, which is operated by Ulster Intergroup. The Fellowship operates in two legal jurisdictions and in two currencies.

Finance

Through the generosity of our members and their adherence to the Seventh Tradition, Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland is in a healthy financial state and was fully self-

supporting for the year to the end of October 2006. Conference and the Fellowship as a whole were happy to contribute 75,000 Euro to the World Literature Fund and 10,000 Euro to the European Fund in 2006.

Literature

Literature sales continue to grow each year. There are a wide range of AA books and literature available in English and some in Irish. The Big Book “Alcoholics Anonymous” and “Twelve and Twelve” is also available in Chinese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, French, Korean, Latvian and Lithuanian.

The Board publishes our magazine “The Road Back” every two months. It is called a meeting in print because it contains the stories of recovery written mostly by members of the fellowship. “The Road Back” was first published in April 1949. It is the longest continuously published AA magazine in Europe and is distributed through the Fellowship worldwide.

A News Sheet is also published bi – monthly. The News Sheet is a general service update for members, containing general discussions of the Traditions, articles on the history of AA and pamphlets relevant to the Fellowship in Ireland.

A Directory of meetings in Ireland, for use within the Fellowship, with meeting times, locations, contact names and phone numbers is produced and revised three or four times yearly.

A “Service Handbook for Ireland” was first published in 1978 and has since 1992 been constantly updated to reflect Conference decisions on a yearly basis. All Conference decisions come by way of motions from the Groups or by way of Board recommendations.

Website

The General Service Board operates the only official AA Website in Ireland at www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie Conference has decided that this Website is to be used for Public Information purposes. It displays times and venues of meetings of Groups who wish to have them on the Website. It also displays a list of AA related events happening (Conventions etc.) around the country. It also provides price lists and order forms for literature available from GSO.

Archives

The Archival material was donated to the General Service Board in 1980 and Archives were available to be seen in General Service Office. A mobile Archives display started in 1988 so that members around the country could more easily view the Archives.

During 2005 the Board of AA in Ireland engaged an Archival company to review the Archives and to put it onto a database. This work was completed and arising out of this, the Archivist made recommendations that the board is currently reviewing, now that a new premises has been required. The emphasis on Archives remains on maintenance and the Board is very grateful to everyone concerned and especially the many Area committees who co-operate by sending in their minutes. The minutes held in GSO, of all Conferences and Intergroup Committees up to and including 2006 are preserved for posterity in digital form.

Conventions

The first All – Ireland Convention was held in Dublin in 1958. This Convention rotates yearly between the four Intergroups. The 50th All – Ireland Convention was held in Letterkenny, County Donegal in April 2007. There are about fifteen or sixteen Area Conventions also held around Ireland during the year. The All – Ireland Convention in 2008 will be held in the Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, County Westmeath on April 18th – 20th 2008.

Sponsorship

There is some ongoing concern about the difficulty of getting new members involved in service. It is hoped that a greater effort will be made by those in service to sponsor new members by emphasizing the benefits of service to individual recovery and by displaying a spirit of rotation when ones time in service comes to an end.

Finally I would like to quote from the Big Book 3rd Edition Page 152

“We have shown how we got out from under. You say “Yes I am willing. But am I consigned to a life where I shall be stupid, boring and glum, like some righteous people I see? I know I must get along without liquor, but how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute?”

Yes there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous. There you will find release from care, boredom and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus we find the fellowship and so will you.”

Italy

During the two years since the last ESM, not many changes occurred in the life of our Fellowship,

apart from the following. I would like to remember that in 2007 AA-Italy celebrated his 35th Anniversary, the first Italian Group having been founded in Rome in 1972.

Group numbers

The number of A.A. Groups in Italy is almost the same as in 2005, being at present an estimated number of 480 Groups. Their distribution is concentrated mainly in the northern and central regions of the country (about 60% of the Groups are in the North, 30% in the Middle, and a 10% in the South). Among the decisions taken in order to extend our presence in the South, in 2004 a new non-alcoholic Trustee of the GSB was appointed, in the person of an Alcoholology professional working in a southern city.

General Structure

A.A. in Italy is made up of 19 Areas, usually corresponding with our administrative regions. Each Area includes a variable number of Zones which in turn may include from five to 15 Groups each.

Now we have an updated version of the Service Manual of AA-Italy. The new version includes a better definition of the different tasks respectively of the Areas and the Zones: in few words, while the Area should have to carry out services for the Groups by means of its Committees, the purpose of the Zone should be essentially to promote and support the spiritual growth of the Groups.

The Conference of May 2005 has partially renewed the composition of the General Service Board by appointing four new Trustees (Administrative, International Delegate, two Regional). The Board is composed at present by twelve members, of which: five are regional Trustees (representative of three macro-areas: North, Middle and South), five are Trustees responsible for one Committee each, one is the National Secretary and one is the non-alcoholic Trustee.

The Internal Affairs Committee is at present engaged in the study of a redefinition of the proceedings of the Conference, especially with regard to the functioning of the workshops and the choice of the topics to be discussed, in order to improve the participation of the fellowship as a whole (Groups, Areas, Delegates) to the Conference itself.

Public relations

Regarding Public Relations, we can say that A.A. in Italy has surely obtained a wide and consolidated recognition of its role in the system of Alcoholology. A sign of this is

the fact that an A.A. member is a permanent guest of the ‘National Council for alcohol and alcohol-related problems’.

From a legal point of view our Association is now registered as an “APS” (Association of Social Promotion), which puts us in line with standing fiscal requirements and will also give us some facilities when interacting with official institutions.

Other Services

At present in many Areas of Italy there are members of A.A. who are sponsoring Groups inside the prisons, although we still don’t have a national committee which could coordinate this kind of services. Moreover, many institutions have their own regulations that we have to respect, as well as trying to remain within the limits of our Traditions. In the past some mistakes have been made with this delicate service, and it would be better not to repeat them in the future.

Finance

According to the financial report made to the Conference in 2005, contributions from the Groups in the last year correspond to almost the same amount of six years ago, which means that a substantial decrease has occurred in supporting the Association; this deficit is not compensated by the sale of the Literature and of the magazine “Insieme in A.A.”, that has also decreased. For this reason all the Service structures will need to strengthen their efforts to make clear the spiritual meaning and the importance of the Seventh Tradition. At last, if we do not improve our global income, we’ll be forced to give up some services that could have been useful for transmitting the message.

Literature

The Literature Committee has completed the task of reviewing the Italian translation of all Conference-approved Literature; it has been printed a “Catalogue of the Literature” containing a brief summary of 15 books and 24 booklets. We have also printed a paperback edition of the ‘Big Book’, for internal distribution only.

At present, the real problem is the poor knowledge and utilization of the Literature in many Groups, where it seems that until now the best known book is “Living Sober”. We think that promoting by every means a better knowledge of the contents of our Literature is a strategic point for pushing the spiritual growth of our Groups. Furthermore, literature promotion is a service in which elderly members of A.A. could be utilized.

Internet and Website

A.A.-Italy’s website is now completely realized and fully active (www.alcolisti-anonimi.it). We have also an A.A.-Italy news bulletin which is now printed online quarterly.

In the last months we also began to experiment with an internal network (Intranet), in order to improve the communication among ourselves; in the first period the connection has been made between the Trustees of GSB and the Areas' Coordinators.

We have a national Telephone Service functioning as a helpline, which is volunteered by a group of AA members living in Rome.

Conclusions

In many respects the last General Service Conferences carried on an inventory of the state of health of A.A.-Italy which had began about four years ago, stimulated by the observation of a prolonged stasis in the growth of our Groups. We think that one of the main causes of this stagnation is the persistence of what we usually call a “two-steps culture”, based on the conviction that the First and the Twelve Steps are all we need to go on. Unfortunately, this is a rather common belief, influencing Groups that become more and more isolated, that don't sponsor the Service and finally don't have a strong attraction to younger members of A.A., because only one part of our principles are really worked out.

At present, we feel the necessity to concentrate on the obstacles found in the spiritual growth of our Groups. We think that among the means to cope with such difficulties, one of the most important should be the Zone, as the structure where Groups could share their problems and find a common way to solve them in a spirit of real Unity. The Zone should also be the place where we could promote Service more effectively. In the same spirit, this year Conference will focus its attention on the role of Group Representative.

We are aware that this change will need a lot of time, but we are also confident because we trust in the love and concern that each of us is feeling for A.A.

Latvia

History

The very first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in Latvia took place on November 8, 1988. This year 2007, we will celebrate 19th anniversary. The first meeting took place on the premises of an alcohol and drug treatment clinic. Prospective members were sent to the meetings by the resident staff physician. The meetings grew in attendance and it became necessary to find additional meeting space. Meetings were held at the homes of the earliest members but the need for larger space persisted. At the end of 1991 a good location in Riga was found at Streilnieku Street 1b. AA then registered with the proper national agencies and was granted a registration number as a non-profit organization. At first, meetings and the GSO were located at the Streilnieku iela address. It was suggested by GSO New York visiting staff, that in order to avoid conflict regarding expenses and contributions to the Service Board from other AA groups, the AA Office should be physically separate from where groups held their meetings. In December 1999 AA groups voted to set up an AA Office and to find a separate location. This was accomplished in 2002 and space was found at Brivibas iela 62-9 , Riga. The Latvian AA GSO continues to be located at these premises.

We have gone through a variety of structural and communication changes in order to better reach and extend help to the Alcoholic who suffers. Due to financial constraints we were unable to have full telephone answering coverage. We have finally set up a system where our telephone is answered by AA member volunteers. This is accomplished by means of a computer assisted telephone forwarding service. We have approximately 20 members taking turns answering our national telephone +371 67333523 via daily rotation.

Membership

There are about 45 AA groups with a combined estimate of 800 members, or one member per 2300 inhabitants in Latvia. There are not many changes during this two years in the life of our Fellowship, but we are becoming more organized. In middle of 2004 was performed questionnaire among AA members. The result is following.

Ratio women/man:

Women	36%
Men	64%

Age of members:

Under 20 age	0,3 %
20 – 30 age	5 %
30 – 40 age	30 %
40 – 50 age	43 %
50 – 60 age	17 %
Above 60 age	4.7 %

On average Latvian AA member is 42.5 years old.

Years sober:

Less 1 month	9 %
1 – 3 months	10 %
3 – 12 months	14 %
1 – 3 years	20 %
3 – 5 years	13 %
5 – 10 years	25 %
10 and more	9 %

Structure

The Service Board is elected for two years by representatives (GSR's) of the AA groups. Each group has one vote and 2/3 majority rules. The Service Board consists of Director, Service Centre Administrator, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, Chairman of Literature, Public Relations, Relations with Professionals Committee, Conventions, Intergroup and International Contact Committees.

Two times in the year, in spring and autumn, we have Service Conferences, where the meeting of representatives of groups take place. The Service Board meetings are more frequent, and are on as needed basis.

Literature

We now have the "Big Book" – "Alcoholics Anonymous", "44 Questions", "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", "Living Sober" and 6 new booklets in Latvian. We have finished the re-translation of the "12 and 12".

Finance

We are self – supporting at the group level. More and more AA groups now understand the need of Service structures and support them in funding and in spirit. Literature sales cover 50% of our administrative expenses with group donations covering the remaining 50%.

Activities

Besides the AA group meetings, the main activities are the AA Groups Anniversary Conventions and dancing parties afterwards, this mixed with marathon AA meetings. Each month there are some events of this type with 30-150 participants.

This year we had our AA Summer Days Conference. It is a four day event. Prices for camping and other services are low and affordable.

On the 23rd of June we have our National "Ligo" Festival, so called "Jani". Inhabitants of Latvia drink large amounts of beer on this night, but AA's rent some place next to a lake or river for a celebration get together at this significant event, without alcohol.

From time to time individual AA's organize trips to other countries celebrating Anniversary of AA. We have been in Lithuania, Estonia, Denmark, Poland, Finland, Russia, USA and some other countries.

The monthly newsletter "Vinoga" informs about all these events. This newsletter also publishes some articles by our AA members and some life stories of AAs and some "reflections of day", as well as some anecdotes about our common subject. Thanks to interview with AA members and translations from other AA newsletters the "Vinoga" for last two years has doubled in size.

Since January of 2002 we have the website www.aa.org.lv for current news and event information online.

Country Sponsorship

The Latvian AA fellowship has received some very meaningful assistance from other AA Fellowships in other countries. The U.S.A. and Canada Fellowships have provided AA literature, as well as helping to translate from English to Latvian. The European Service Meeting Fund made it possible for the first Latvian delegate to attend the European Service Meeting in 2001. The German Fellowship made funds available to get our computer, copy machine and telephone answering machine for the AA Office (GSO). A group in Switzerland made it possible to print 2,500 copies of a newly translated pamphlet "A Newcomer Asks". The Irish fellowship covered the expenses for two of our fellowship to be observers at the Irish Board Meeting near Dublin. In the time between the 2003 ESM and this year, we have received from New York GSO the following printed literature: "Alcoholics Anonymous", "Living Sober", booklets: "AA Group", "Understanding Anonymity", "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship", "Is there an Alcoholic in Your Life?" and "If you're a Professional". We are grateful for the support we have received and look forward to the time when we can help another country's Fellowship.

Lithuania

Service Conference

Up until now our Service Conference met twice a year. It was made up of the Board of Trustees, Office manager, 7 Regional Chairpersons, ESM and WSM delegates and delegates from each of our 131 groups. Due to our growth, the Conference has become too big to afford direct representation and we voted to begin a transformation to a regional delegate system. Using the North American and Great Britain Service manuals as models, we have completed a draft of our own Lithuanian Service Manual.

The past year has been spent informing our members about the new Conference structure, the how's and the why's. Much effort has been applied at the national, regional and local level. With increased understanding, resistance to the possible changes is beginning to fade. Our upcoming Service Conference is dedicated to further explain and discuss the new Service Manual with the possibility of a vote for its adoption.

Literature

We have 6 books and 14 brochures translated into Lithuanian. Last year we finished re-translating the Big Book, adding a selection of Lithuanian stories. This year we are finishing re-translations of 12 & 12 and Daily Reflections. Some of our early translations were not of good quality and we are making an effort to correct the mistakes made in the past. Our quarterly magazine "The 5th Corner" is showing a profit and selling about 1200 copies a quarter.

Our website anonalko.puslapiai.lt went online in October 2001 and is currently receiving about 600 hits per month.

Malta

Introduction

To understand the environment in which AA Malta operates one has to understand the demographic and cultural aspects of the Maltese islands. Malta is situated just 90 miles south of Sicily, hence the Latin culture that characterizes the population, added to this the 150 years of British occupation, most of the Maltese population adopted the British way of living which is still evident after independence.

Alcoholism is a very serious problem in Malta due to the fact that as the Maltese society is a very closed one, the problem is latent and till today it is considered to be a stigma. It is only due to the efforts previously of AA members and now the Government Agency for Drug and Alcoholism Treatment that the problem is being identified and considered as a disease.

Since the conception of AA in Malta it is our priority to inform the public of the availability of a solution.

The structure of AA in Malta is as follows: There are fourteen groups in Malta and Gozo (a smaller island with a population of 25,000). Twelve are located in Malta and two in Gozo. These groups have regular meetings so as to have a total of 9 Maltese speaking and 11 English speaking meetings a week. The average attendance is 15. Each group has a secretary and a treasurer. The General Service Committee is formed by three members (Chairman, Treasurer and General Secretary) elected by the group secretaries after consultation with the members at a business meeting. The General Service Committee meets regularly in the General Service Office in Valletta. This office is being rented from the Lands Department of the Malta Government. Secretaries' Meetings are held to discuss groups' problems. Aiding the GSC are several members who work in the literature, public information, cooperation with professional bodies etc.

The first Maltese Speaking Group was formed in 1981 and its first priority was to have as much AA literature as possible translated into Maltese and distributed to members who could not understand English. These proved to be fruitful for newcomers especially. The Chapter Five of the Big Book was also an early translation and is still today being read at all Maltese language meetings. An old-timer has embarked on the Herculean task of translating the Big Book and this is at present under consideration for printing.

Press inserts such as a contact postal address and a telephone numbers have good response. The telephone number of the GSO is shown daily in the leading newspaper. There is a telephone answering service available manned by one of our members.

High on the GSO's agenda is the creation of a website showing all the possible details of AA activity in Malta. At present there is available an email address 121287@onvol.net which is manned by the General Secretary.

An information Campaign directed towards the medical profession is in hand, as well as the printing of leaflets showing contact details that are to be distributed to hotels and other tourist localities.

Every effort is being made to get the Government Agency for the Treatment of Alcoholism attracted to AA however there are various difficulties that are beyond our control and are a hindrance to this co-operation.

Regarding finance and the Seventh tradition, the funds available are always limited because of the limited number of members and these funds are exhausted quickly for printing, mailings, rents etc.

AA in Malta was honoured to have one of its members chair the last ESM held in Frankfurt, Germany. Attendance to this Meeting by Maltese members has been regular for many years. Some members also attend regularly the Italian National Meeting in Rimini, as well as other conferences. It is planned to have a conference in Malta in autumn 2007.

The General Service Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous in Malta thanks the International Desk of the GSB New York for its help and pledges to do its utmost to pass on the message to suffering alcoholics in Malta and Gozo.

The Netherlands

General

In 2008, AA in the Netherlands will celebrate its 60th anniversary. At present the number of groups is 209 with total membership of approximately 3600 people. There are also 38 English speaking groups and Amsterdam has a Polish and a Spanish group. The English-speaking groups are affiliated with Great Britain. There is a good interaction between the various communities.

Structure

AA in Holland is based, per our concepts, on delegated authority. We are divided into 6 regions. There are five delegates per region eligible for the General Service Conference and one for the General Service Board. In even numbered years there is a two-day General Service Conference and in the odd numbered years there is a one-day Conference.

The General Service Board meets quarterly to carry out the decisions of the General Service Conference. The Board is composed of selected members of each region, preferably the regional chairpersons, and the national co-ordinators of various committees and services.

The General Service Office is the hub of all services and information within Dutch AA. All administrative workers are volunteers. The General Secretary of the General Service Office is responsible for daily operations with the ultimate responsibility lying with the General Service Board. The General Service Office is administered according to Dutch civil law and social traditions. As such, AA in The Netherlands consists of three foundations, to wit, The AA Groups, Publicity and The Big Book..

The efficient conduct of various service functions, in particular the office of Vice-Chairman, Vice-Secretary, and Vice-Treasurer, is an ongoing problem. These important service positions have been vacant for a considerable length of time. Dutch AA has a Nominating Committee whose task it is to recruit persons for service positions, but to date it has been unsuccessful in solving the problem of complacency amongst AA members.

Committees and other services

Finance

The Finance Committee reviews the proposed budgets of all committees and sub-committees, and services. It further advises the General Service Board on all financial matters. It is made up of one delegate per Region. Income from the active foundations is generated by donations of the AA-groups, the selling of literature and through “The

Boei” (our equivalent to the Grapevine). In 2007 the overall budget is negative but acceptable.

Literature

The Literature Committee is responsible for translating, developing, and updating all AA- literature in form of books and pamphlets. There is active participation from Belgian AA. At the end of 2007 we expect the fourth edition of The Big Book to be ready for printing.

The committee is also busy with translation of “The Language of the Heart”. In 2006 the Belgian translation of “AA comes of Age” was completed and published.

Committee for Public Information

The National Committee for Public Information oversees all requests for assistance and information from outside AA organizations and offers an information package in kit-form for public media.

There is a positive atmosphere developing between AA and a growing number of professional help-organizations concerned with alcohol abuse. Many such organizations have based their programs on AA’s 12-Steps.

Schools and clinics are requesting speakers from AA, and the contacts that AA have been establishing, to reach the suffering alcoholic within correctional facilities are very promising.

The law in the Netherlands says that the local authorities have to offer a digital counter of aid. We have accomplished that most of these counters give references to local AA-groups.

De Boei

Dutch AA has its own “Grapevine”, “De Boei”, with the same objective i.e., a printed meeting by and for AA-members. The articles are very personal and reflect a large number of experiences and opinions. Causes concerning AA as a whole are actively discussed.

AA Telephone Helpline

There is a telephone number available on a twenty four hour basis.

AA and the Internet

Our current website is undergoing a face-lift. The website conforms to all guidelines published by the AA World Services in New York. It includes a complete overview for anyone seeking help with alcohol related problems.

Relevant information is provided for each AA group. A summary of the AA program is provided and links to the National Committee for Public Information are available. AA-literature can be ordered via the website, as well as subscriptions to “De Boei”. There is an up-to-date agenda for all known coming events. Links are provided to Al-Anon, Alateen and English-speaking AA in the Netherlands.

In the recent past an effort was made to simplify, promote and modernize communications between AA groups and individuals. An intranet was created for this. Unfortunately, this project raised more questions than it answered. Many members felt that matters regarding their anonymity and other Traditions and Concepts were violated, and that ever-present question, “Who is in charge?”, kept raising its ugly head. The project has been officially abandoned.

Contacts with other countries

There is a close, traditional contact between Dutch AA and Dutch-speaking Belgian AA. This includes an active participation on each country’s literature committee. There is also a mutual representation at each country’s General Service Conference. English-speaking AA flourishes in the Netherlands, including its own yearly convention. The National Dutch-AA Convention is held each year around the beginning of October. Both conventions attract next to the Dutch participants a great number of visitors from abroad.

AA in the Netherlands strives to send two delegates to the ESM and WSM.

Norway

AA started in Norway in 1947. Today there are roughly 200 groups, 2000 members in 20 districts.

District representatives (DR), General Service Board (GSB), General Service Office (GSO) and the editor of our magazine Box 205, meet at the General Service Conference (GSC), which is once a year in April. The Board meets every three months in Oslo.

A large number of AA members are doing voluntary work as members of working committees and service units such as telephone service and literature translation information work. The activity is increasing so our office is getting too small.

Norway AA participates in the Nordic Convention and in GSC, General Service Conference in Sweden and Denmark, also in the European Service Meeting and in the World Service Meeting.

More than 150 Norwegians celebrated the 70th anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous in Toronto.

We have a strategy-plan for AA in Norway. The goal is to become better known in society and we have an action-plan, separately, to improve the knowledge of AA among our members.

There are still many myths about AA in Norway; such as God, money and so forth.

The authorities do not accept alcoholism as a disease, in spite of giving economic support to most of the "treatment industry". Norway is a rich country, and that may be one of the reasons why AA has not increased.

So, what have we done the last two years, and what shall we do?

We have now 6 alcoholics and 3 non-alcoholics in GSB General Service Board.

1. Journalist; taking care of the press
2. MD psychiatrist – out acting, giving courses for alcoholics and medical profession
3. Professor in sociology; making a member-survey.

With regard to point 3, members are asked to answer questions and the answers will tell us who we are, and the authorities and the public, will probably learn more about

the alcoholic. People believe that AA consists of old burned-out men, smoking; and talking about God. We want to visualize that AA is for men and women, young and old. Therefore the heading of the survey is "Who is the AA-member".

In the work with another alcoholic, it is sad to experience that too many come to AA once or twice and then disappear.

In the political climate of today, it is a necessity to show what kind of resource AA is, and what AA can do. Everybody know that alcohol leads to great personal problems and great problems in the society. Nobody can, like the alcoholic, tell what damage and costs alcohol leads to. In the same way is the AA-member a living proof of what sobriety can give of joy and happiness.

We have had meetings with the Director General of Health, Politicians in the Health Department and our different committees, local and central are in action in working with others in all fields.

We have recently decided to join in the country sponsoring system. We want to develop established contacts in the society, so that we do not have to invent the wheel many times.

Routines for taking care of the newcomer and the elderly can always be better. Our new tool, the "Who is the AA-member", will be expected to have great influence on our work in the next two years, to let the world know that AA is alive, flourishing, and available as a community resource locally and internationally. So we are entering a time with excitement and action, anonymous but not invisible.

Poland

Structure

As of 15th September 2007 the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Poland consists of about 2000 groups, about 160 of which have meetings in correctional facilities, 61 Intergroups and 13 Regions. The number of Regions is constant; each Intergroup can choose the Region they wish to join. Each Region sends four delegates to General Service Conference and elects one trustee to the Board of Trustees, which is made up of 13 alcoholics and two non-alcoholic members. The Board of Trustees offers recommendations, suggestions and sets questions to Committees of General Service Conference. The main principle of service of the Trustees is to inspire all the service members in the AA Fellowship in Poland to improve the methods of carrying the AA message and protect the spiritual values, which result from AA Traditions.

Two national delegates to the World Service Meeting and the European Service Meeting, The General Manager of BSK (General Service Office) and editor-in-chief of Zdrój bulletin are also voting members of General Service Conference. Altogether the Conference has 72 delegates. The Conference takes place annually in Warsaw. The delegates work in four standing committees: Agenda, Finance, Literature, and Public Information and Cooperation with Others.

On all levels of service structure rotation is the basic principle. XXXI General Service Conference in 2002 elected the first in the history of Polish AA Class A (non-alcoholic) Trustee – a doctor, who has been a friend of AA in Poland for many years. The second non-alcoholic trustee was elected in 2006 and he is also a doctor involved in treatment.

Service

Service starts at the group level. The groups have a chairperson, a treasurer, often a literature representative, a GSR, and sometimes a welcoming committee. Each group has its GSR who serves in the Intergroup. The Regional Conference elects from its members, four delegates to General Service Conference. The Intergroups' responsibilities include carrying the AA message in the area of groups which form the Intergroup, most often to hospitals, correctional and treatment facilities. The Regions run contact offices, telephone and on-line service; they provide public information.

Once a year, each time in a different town, a convention and Zdrój Bulletin Holiday takes place. In September 2009 we will celebrate the 35th Anniversary of our Fellowship in our beautiful city located in the west of Poland - Wroclaw. The special organization committee and a special bank account for the members' donations have been just established to support that event.

We maintain contacts with the Fellowship in other countries and with Polish-speaking groups all over Europe – we invite observers from other countries to our Conference - and they are not only neighbours. With the support of the UK Fellowship we would like to invite other countries, especially post-Soviet countries to our conferences, where there will be an opportunity to share experience, strength and hope regarding building the structure and publishing the literature. Our goal is to encourage those countries to participate in ESM and WSM. This project is not a trial to build another new structure like ESM. The time of the project is also limited to three, four years.

We get invited to Conferences abroad by other countries, like the UK, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia etc.

Thanks to the reports from WSM and ESM, our General Service Conference works to adapt the Conference work to the principles of work of WSM and ESM. The lack of a Service Manual is a problem to understand 12 Concepts. Advanced works to publish that position are in progress. We hope it could be published in the second quarter of the next year.

Finance

The Fellowship of AA in Poland is self-supporting thanks to contributions (60-20-10-10 Plan), Birthday Plan and the sales of AA literature. The Groups are suggested to send 40% of their basket money to the Intergroup, the Intergroups send a quarter of their money to the Region, and a quarter to General Service Office. It covers more or less 18% of the costs of Polish AA General Service Office's activities. The remaining 82% of the office's activities is covered from the income from the literature sales. That ratio seems to be unfavorable and there are many efforts to change the Groups' awareness.

Literature

BSK AA publishes General Service Conference approved AA literature. So far there have been published: Alcoholics Anonymous, Living Sober, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, Came to Believe, As Bill Sees It, Daily Reflections (6,000 copies), Pass It On. Twenty-four pamphlets have also been published. Our bulletin, Zdrój, with a circulation of about 3000 copies, and 'Skrytka 243', with a circulation of 1,400 copies, are published bimonthly. A special bulletin for professionals "About AA" is distributed via e-mail, but a decision has been made to publish it also in a printed form. For a couple of years we have had a full translation of the reports from the European Service Meeting and the World Service Meeting (300 copies). We also published the second edition of the Big Book with personal stories of recovery on Twelve Steps of AA members from Poland as well as our own AA pamphlet informing about the AA program of recovery in print and on CD's. Our service

structure issued a procedure of publishing our own literature – there are some positions which have just been published (one of them is a reprint of the famous article about AA published in one of the leading newspapers more than twenty years ago “Sickness or Sin”. Our last issue of Conference Approved Literature in Polish is “Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers”.

Internet, Helpline

Our GSO maintains an official AA website at the domain www.aa.org.pl. We observe a constantly increasing number of visitors; we also maintain on-line contact and an information service served by our volunteers. In October 2005 we ran a special on-line service for people seeking information on AA – we call it “On-line Duty”. There are works to increase the applications of the Internet in carrying the AA message and in improving the internal communication within the Fellowship. There are many tools available like Trustees’ Forum and Chat etc. Recently, regional information services have been set up, which contain meeting lists and other important information about the Regions.

There are about 20,000 visits on the site per month! In General Service Office there was installed a communication server via which individual Regions send information to groups and Intergroups. The Groups Database is available via website and WAP/GPRS protocol on mobile phones and PDAs. There also runs an Internet shop, where members can subscribe to AA bulletins and buy AA literature.

The web site addresses: www.aa.org.pl, www.anonimowi-alkoholicy.org.pl

A couple of weeks ago an agreement with telephone company was signed and AA in Poland has its own country-wide infoline 0 801 03 32 42. The Regions should start to maintain that helpline very soon.

Portugal

Literature

In Portugal, we have made a clear division between what is Conference Approved Literature and other, periodic or non-periodic publications that we use in conventions, service forums or workshops. These publications include, for example, our magazine “Partilhar” (Share), our Bulletin “Os Três Legados” (The Three Legacies), surveys and some other paperback or pamphlets. According to this division we have now two separate committees: Literature and Publications. These are independent but they work together many times.

In 2006, we started the translation of “The Jack Alexander Article about AA” and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship”. In April 2007, both translations were done and we are now dealing with the graphical composition and revisions. We are also doing the graphical tasks for the Twelve Concepts for World Service.

Work has now started on the translation of “The AA Member – Medications and Other Drugs”.

We have made a special literature catalogue for Institutions. We build a list of institutions possibly interested in our literature and sent out letters with this catalogue to around 250 Institutions.

In 2007, we started the work of the new Members Survey. The answers will not be received until the end of October. The last one was made in 2003.

Finance

The process of changing Portugal AA into a “Public Utility Institution” continues. During 2007, we had some legal penalties we didn’t expect. These penalties were due to some fiscal obligations that we didn’t fulfil. We think that, by now, we have our fiscal situation almost cleared.

Thanks to the effort and contribution of the AA Portugal’s Members, 2006 has ended with a positive situation and although 2007 didn’t start very well, we are certain that AA Portugal will know how to leave behind this difficult moment and give right to the slogan: “In AA, when needed, money arise”.

Groups

Since 2005, the AA Portugal’s number of groups has somewhat increased. By that time, there were 83 groups having 7.488 meetings per year. Now, there are 92 groups having 7.956 meetings per year. The groups exist mainly by the coast areas and in and around the greatest cities, although a new group has started in a “white zone” and another one in Madeira Island.

Structure

Our structure is working as suggested and there are no major changes since the 13th ESM. We are seeing, however, an increasing difficulty in finding new servers compared to last years.

Due to several reasons, we had a rotation of our Board of Trustees: we have changed 3 Class B and one Class A (President) Trustees. It was not possible to elect a Regional Trustee because there were no proposals. In a normal condition, the composition of our Trustee Board is 2 Class A and 8 Class B Trustees. Last Conference was also short of Delegates: we had the presence of 13 of the possible 18. In face of these difficulties, we feel that we need to increase the group awareness of this reality.

We emphasize the growing number of groups (from 83 to 92) between 2005 and 2007 as well as the consolidation of the Azores Islands' Structure through the creation of an Intergroup sponsored by a Mainland Area. We are also pleased with the beginning of the Madeira Island Group.

Other Services

Our Telephone Answering Service shows a slow but consistent decrease in the number of received calls since 2004. We think that this is due to the fact that most of the information is now available on the Internet. Our site was launched in 2004.

We keep meetings in some Hospitals; the meetings in a prison are, for now, suspended.

Relationship with other Countries

In this time frame we don't have regular contacts with other countries besides those needed to support Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde (Cabo Verde). We did receive a welcome visit of a Class A Trustee from Brazil and profited by this visit to have a pleasant get together and a healthy sharing.

Internet and Web Sites

We are in the process of redesigning our site. We want, and will make it more attractive and useful. We feel that the use of new technology can be a powerful vehicle to carry the AA message. This work is almost at the end phase and we plan to go live shortly in the near future.

As per some statistics: during 2004 we had more than 18.000 visits; during 2005, more than 28.000; during 2006, more than 35.000 and between January and end June 2007, we had around 23.000 visits to our website: www.aaportugal.org

Russia

The A.A. movement in Russia began roughly at the end of 1980s. At present more than 300 A.A. groups are serviced by the Board, working in about 120 cities, towns and settlements, including 3 groups in prison. Assistance with A.A. literature and information materials is provided to Russian-speaking groups abroad. The total A.A. membership is estimated at 6000 members. The past 5-6 years have seen slower growth in the number of Russian A.A. groups (approximately 50 new groups appeared for the aforementioned years) and no growth was registered for the last two years. At such a rate of growth, membership can double only in 30 years and it would take more than two centuries to achieve the number equal to the German AA membership. For example, Moscow has 11 million inhabitants but A.A. groups number less than 35; the situation in St. Petersburg, the second largest city, is the same - with an almost similar number of groups there. In 2004-2007, new groups appeared in Siberia, the Altai Territory, Kamchatka, Sakhalin, Kursk, Yakutsk and the South of Russia (the Northern Caucasus), i.e. A.A. growth is observed mainly in regions of Russia rather than in big cities, where many groups have ceased to exist. The reasons for the growth retardation have not been explored yet.

Service Structure

The General Service Conference is annually held in Moscow in mid April. The Conference voting members (40-50 people) include delegates from the groups in the regions without an A.A. service entity, delegates from the local A.A. service committees or intergroups, members of the General Service Board, the Manager of the A.A. General Service Central Bureau (Office) , the Editor of the Russian A.A. magazine “Dozen” and Russian A.A. delegates to international A.A. service meetings. The number of delegates to the Conference from groups, intergroups and committees has had a tendency to diminish in the last few years. The following issues have not yet been resolved in the Conference activities:

- the rotation and nomination procedures for delegates from groups and local service units need adjustment;
- Conference agendas are overloaded with questions of minor importance;
- Sometimes the Conference considers and makes decisions on questions pertaining to the authority and responsibilities of the Board; questions to be considered by the Conference need better preliminary study and substantiation;
- Conference Chairpersons usually have inadequate knowledge of the A.A. general service principles and the state of service affairs;
- Reporting to the Conference, the Board and its committees’ members do not touch on unresolved problems and issues and outline possible ways of solving them, thus giving the false impression of full prosperity;
- In their understandable effort to improve the A.A. general services and facilitate the growth of A.A. groups, the delegates from the regions quite often take no

account of the real potential shortcomings of the Board and its few committees, therefore many Conference advisory actions remain on paper;

The Russian A.A. General Service Board consists of 11 A.A. members; six of them are from Moscow and the Moscow Region, five members are from other regions. Each Board member is eligible to serve for a two successive year term; this term can be extended by one additional two year term only once. A continuous sobriety term for candidate Board members is 5 years. Non-alcoholics are not elected to the Board membership. Board meetings are held monthly. Board Regional members participate in the Board activities through Internet and telephone.

Fifteen local A.A. service units (committees and intergroups) are established and function in 12 cities of Russia: Barnaul (the Altai Region and Western Siberia) , Irkutsk (the Baikal Area, Eastern Siberia and the Far East), Kazan, Magnitogorsk, Mineral Waters (the committee serves groups in five cities of the Southern Russian Federation), Moscow (the city of Moscow and the Moscow Region), Petrozavodsk (Karelia Autonomous Republic) , Rostov on Don (the city and the Northern Caucasus), Samara, Omsk, St. Petersburg (the city and the Leningrad Region), and South-Sakhalin.

Great distances and population density differentials make general services and the growth of AA in the Asian part of Russia difficult. At present there are about 40 groups, two service committees (in Barnaul and Irkutsk) and three intergroups (in Omsk, Chita, and the South-Sakhalin). The number of AA groups in the Altai Territory doubled in the last five years, now they number 12. A few A.A. groups are now functioning in rural areas (villages and settlements).

The last 19th Conference adopted a Board's motion to begin spade-work on forming delegates areas in the Russian AA service structure.

Finances

Net revenues for 2006 were 1 032 695 roubles (rbs) and \$258 (US dollars), of which 798 520 rbs \$256 (US dollars) are literature sales (88%) and 97 468 rbs are contributions received from groups and individual A.A. members (12%). The Russian A.A. Service Office employs four paid workers: the Manager, Bookkeeper and two secretaries with minimum salaries. The annual salary schedule totals 324 386 rbs (31% of the net revenues). Literature publication costs equal 314 354 rbs (30% of all the expenses). The total Russian A.A. general service expenses are equal to 1 057 190 rbs. We are experiencing financial difficulties in publication of A.A. literature. We only have enough money to reprint and support the existing literature assortment, but we do not have money to print new publications. An essential part of the published literature (30%) is sold through an outside dealer, selling it to rehabilitation centers and religious organizations. The financial policy of the Board still suffers from

uncertainty regarding the selection of AA literature for publication and selling to AA members and outside the Fellowship and also with regard to the insufficient financial support for Russian AA services by AA groups. Only 44% of all the groups support the Board's AA general services with their contributions, which come to 12% of the net revenues. It is essential for us to bring to light and remove the causes of the insufficient financial support by AA groups.

Literature

At present the Russian A.A. Fellowship prints the following USA/Canada A.A. Conference - approved literature: 5 books (the Big Book is printed in two formats), 32 pamphlets, 13 booklets, a total of 50 titles. The Russian AA Directory is published regularly. The book *As Bill Sees It* has been published. The pamphlet *The A.A. Fact File* has been translated but not yet published.

We have not yet managed to start overcoming the difficulties in the Board's translation work pointed out in the previous Report and the translation committee recommended by the last Conference has not been set up.

In recent years, the Russian A.A. magazine "Dozen" has appeared irregularly, from time to time encountering serious content and financial difficulties. Unfortunately, owing to the fact that the Magazine was far from being "the voice of Russian A.A.", it did not enjoy popularity, was not in high demand, and its costs were barely reimbursed. Recently, the Editor of the magazine "Dozen" sent in her resignation, since the Board hardly helped an inexperienced Editor and she could not form an editorial board and tried to cope with all the work herself.

The Russian AA Service Office of the Board issues a newsletter "P.O. Box 33" three times a year.

Many local service committees and intergroups publish AA magazines (in Omsk and Barnaul) and news leaflets (in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Rostov-on-Don, Irkutsk, and other places).

Work in Treatment and Correctional Facilities

As before these services have not been started in the Board activities and respective service committees have not been formed. Many groups and local service units in various cities cooperate with narcological dispensaries and addiction clinics and hold A.A. meetings there. The AA Office started arranging an account of the groups working in treatment facilities.

A.A. groups in correctional facilities are working in three cities: St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg and Chita. However, the experience of working in correctional facilities

is not properly collected, summarized and studied by the Board and guidelines for these services have not been developed.

Public Information

In the past few years the work of this Board committee improved noticeably. In Moscow, press conferences at the Independent Press-Center are held on a regular basis, usually in connection with A.A. events or anniversaries; advertisements about A.A. are published in various newspapers; the A.A. Office telephone number was entered in all the Moscow city major directories, including “Yellow Pages” and telephone inquiry offices. Radio and TV interviews are conducted, A.A. presentation and PI open meetings are held; professionals are supplied with literature about A.A.; The Public Information Workbook in Russian is in popular demand with AA’s.

Arrangements, aimed at establishing permanent information contacts among the Belarus, Ukraine and Russian AA Fellowships are being put into effect. Russian AA took part and had an information stand at the Russian Conference on Production Ecology and Man in the city of Nizhny Novgorod. Some TV stations in the Moscow Region began providing AA with time for on-air broadcasting; the central TV channels do not show common understanding with us.

Service committees and intergroup, and many groups cooperate with local press, radio and TV stations with the aim of carrying the A.A. message. Their experience must be analyzed and summarized.

There is a noticeable pattern that those groups which do not inform the public of themselves are doomed to complete collapse, i.e. they disintegrate with time.

In 2006, the Russian AA Information Internet Site (www.aarus.ru) was set up and currently operating, where one can find Internet site addresses of the local service units and much other useful information about Russian AA. The AA Office has the following e-mail address: aarus@online.ru

There is a section under the Board on work with loners, AA members who cannot go to AA meetings.

Co-operation with Professionals

Cooperation with the Public Order Preservation Department of the Russia Internal Affairs Ministry (RIAM) has begun, whereby certain officers were appointed to work through interaction practices at present with the aim of carrying our message to the suffering alcoholic. In the regions, this cooperation with RIAM will be implemented through police precincts, supporting public order points, RIAM media and its other sub-units. Cooperation with the Russian Commodity Producer Alliance (RCPA) and the International Commodity Producer and Employer Alliance (ICPEA) was established and it continued to develop; these organizations suggested that we should

carry our message through RCPA and ICPEA forums, conferences, also through their branch associations and with the aid of media in charge.

The Chairman of this Committee and the AA Office Manager were invited and participated in a conference on “Russia Anti-Alcoholic Policy Concept”, held with participation of governmental bodies, State Duma committees and big corporations.

The similar cooperation with institutions of the Russia Healthcare Ministry, the Science and Education Ministry and “Russian Railways” made headway. Much work on carrying this committee experience to local intergroups and committees lies ahead.

International Co-operation

Two Russian AA delegates participated in the 13th European AA Service Meeting (ESM) and two delegates in Asia-Oceania Service Meetings in Australia (in 2005) and Japan (in 2007). Their travel expenses were covered partially by raising money from groups, partially by delegates spending their own money, with very little money being paid by the Board.

The Board’s International Committee prepared draft Russian AA Reports to the 13th and 14th European Service Meetings (ESM) and abstracts of the 13th and 14th ESM Final Reports (with a complete translation of committee and workshop materials), and revised the translation of the “ESM Guidelines.” The Committee informed the Board of the AA World and Asia-Oceania Service Meetings and the 2004 USA/Canada General Service Meeting. The 13th ESM materials were included in the last 18th AA Service Conference delegate’s folder.

The international service activities’ shortcomings, highlighted in the previous Report, continue to take place. The International Committee (IC) did not manage to convince the 19th AA Service Conference this year, and the Conference did not uphold the Board’s proposals, that Russian AA should not send its delegates to international AA service meetings any more at the expense of other AA fellowships, or at their own expense, as was the case in the past, until Russian AA achieves fuller financial self-support. In other words, until the Board has the resources to pay for our delegates’ trips to international AA meetings, a move was made to suspend the authorities of all the previously elected delegates and to reduce our further participation in such meetings to submitting our reports on the state of service affairs in Russian AA to international meetings and to studying and using the reports supplied by these international meetings. The Board also made a proposal to set up a probation period of 1-3 years (depending on the level preparedness) for candidate-delegates to international meetings to work on the Board’s International Committee before nominating them to the Conference.

Forums and Workshops

The recommendations for arranging “Forums On Wheels” has been specified in order to prevent them from turning into tourist, sports, or entertainment measures (which happened in the past); the programs of such forums should include: meetings with representatives of the local authorities, alcoholism treatment institutions and media; distribution of booklets containing contact telephone numbers; holding open AA meetings (if possible), daily AA meetings of the Forum participants, and ensuring financial self-support.

At the past Conference, views were voiced to adopt and attach an AA status to entertainment, sports, tourist, and similar actions carried out with the participation of AA members. Thus, the current methods of AA experience exchange and carrying the message applied in Russian and foreign AA are ignored, such as workshops, big meetings, roundups and forums, where entertainment and similar arrangements perform a necessary but auxiliary role.

The next all Russian AA Forum will be held in the city of Samara on December 7-9, 2007. Annual forums take place in Petrozavodsk, Rostov-on-Don, Ivanovo, Kazan, Moscow, Samara, St. Petersburg, in Baikal and Altai territory.

Nominating Committee

Foreign AA service structures include a Conference nominating trustee committee, and the same Board committee selects AA staff for Board’s service units. The Conference and Board never consider candidates to the above service positions if they are not nominated by these committees.

Guidelines for such a committee were adopted, but the committee itself has not been set up. The activities of the committee in selecting and nominating AA personnel would substantially increase the Board’s efficiency and accelerate the resolution of the problems facing Russian AA (such as the attainment of fuller self-support, insufficient contributions from AA groups and their low growth rates, streamlining AA literature translation work, and so on).

We are experiencing difficulties in involving able, experienced, and expert people into A.A. general service work.

Keeping Archives and the History of Russian AA

Materials about the development of A.A. in Russia and Russian A.A. history were collected a long time ago. Last year the Board elected Chairman of the Russian AA Archive and History Committee.

In August of this year the AA Moscow Intergroup celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Moscow AA; the Board and the Conference (for the second time) did not uphold a move to regard the date of the first Russian AA group registration with

the G.S.O. in New York as Russian AA's birthday because no authentic data about it have been forthcoming from the regions. Though it is a long term problem, the Board does not even have a brief preliminary reference about how AA arose in Russia or suggestions about which of the past events should be taken as Russian AA's birthday.

Spain

Literature

We continue publishing our magazines “Akron-1935” and “Compartiendo”, which have reached more than 2000 subscribers. This means that during the last year, the number has increased in more than half of the Areas. Although there has been a positive balance, we will try to improve it on following years.

The Public Information Guide has been finally published. It comprises 4 pamphlets aimed at setting up and developing the work of the different committees (PI, etc)

New editions: The Book of the Twenty Five Conferences and the Literature Guide.

Our magazines have undergone a review to revamp the publications. As regards “Compartiendo”, we have printed special editions dedicated to Regional Service Forums and the functioning of Committees.

The February-March 2007 edition of “Akron-1935” dealt with our 8th National Convention.

We receive more than 500 literature orders each year. Our sales have increased since the last ESM, thanks to the work of our groups regarding public information. We are making ourselves more and more known to Professionals and the mass media.

Finances

The groups and members contribute regularly to the GSO, which allows us to achieve the budgets approved by our Conference. Our economy is in shape and we must emphasize the fact that we almost achieve the budget with the contributions of our groups and members.

At present, we are updating the General Service Provision Fund.

We continue contributing to the World Literature Fund and to the European Office.

Structure

Nowadays AA’s structure in Spain is formed by 24 areas divided in 4 regional areas and more than 520 groups.

We keep in touch with non-Spanish speaking groups in order to work together. Their opinions and ideas are taken into account at our regional forums, and in this way we make them feel part of the Spanish structure. We usually invite them to any regional or national event (National Convention).

Regional Service Forums are regularly held and fortunately, they are favouring the good functioning of the Areas. It also helps the General Service Board to be well known for groups and areas.

The topic for our 28th Conference, held this year in April, was “Service rotation, the key to our future”.

The 8th National Convention was held in October 2006 in Mojacar (Almería). The total number of participants was approximately 1600, including people from English, Italian and Portuguese-speaking countries.

In November 2006, we assisted to the 26th SEMFYC Medical Congress, in which 7000 professionals took part.

According to the criteria of the professionals who co-operate with us, and taking into account the suggestions made by the Conference in relation with white areas, the Board decided to celebrate a meeting on June 10th in Arenas de San Pedro (Ávila).

Our Web receives lots of visits from professionals and mass media. We have included one pamphlet for young people and another one containing a survey, in reply to their request.

We have decided to use new material and visual resources in order to improve the way in which the message is carried to professionals and the mass media.

Committees

There have been no changes since the last RSE. There are Public Information committees in most of the Areas but this is not so with Facilities Committees, because they appear as a need of the PI which usually handles for everything.

Sweden

Structure

AA Sweden was founded in 1956. Today we have about 425 groups; there are also English, Finnish, Spanish and Icelandic speaking meetings as well as Polish and Russian speaking meetings.

The General Service Board consists of six Trustees, one each from five of the six Regions and a Trustee at large, who is also a World Service Delegate. One Nordic delegate and the other World Service Delegate have been added to the General Service Board at times. For the time being there is no Trustee A.

The Chairman of the Upper Northern Region, which has no Trustee, will be added to the Board when needed. The Trustees of the Board and the International delegates are elected by the Service Conference.

Assisting the General Service Board are:

- The Association Alcoholic Anonymous in Sweden
- The General Service Office and the following committees:

The Economy Committee; The Information Committee; The Literature Committee; The Nomination Committee; The Policy Committee.

In the committees there is good professional knowledge in conjunction with good experience of AA in order to pursue and prepare various questions. The person calling together the committees is a member of the General Service Board.

The Association Alcoholic Anonymous in Sweden is a registered non profit association, founded in 2001. The General Service Board is the principal of the association and represents the association against the society. The association runs the publishing business and is also responsible for the General Service Office. At the General Service Office there are two persons working full-time.

For all above commissions there is a clear description of the service and the qualifications desired.

Literature/Publishing

“Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions”, “As Bill sees it” and “Daily Reflections” have been re-translated in the whole and have all been published. The new and complete Service Manual has been distributed. “Pass it on”, “Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers” and “Came to believe” have been translated into Swedish. The Big Book has been edited as a talking book.

The approved AA-literature today consists of nine translated books and also one book edited by Swedish AA. There are 60 booklets and pamphlets, decals, shades, cd's, videos and dvd's in Swedish.

The magazine "Bulletinen" – "A meeting between the meetings" is published with six copies a year. We also have an excellent Newsletter, where all important news is published, i e from the Conference, GSB, about economy, conventions etc.

Information

The Swedish website, www.aa.se has been increased and is an important link in the network

of carrying the message. The meeting list is available. During the last year about 1350 orders of AA-literature have been made via the webshop, i e 63% of the total sale.

The network of local information committees continue to increase and today there are 30.

Finances

AA in Sweden is still not self-supporting. Approximately 65% of our income comes from the sales of literature. Sweden pays SEK 25.000 each year to the International Literature fund, and in 2006 Sweden has paid additionally SEK 50.000, in a way to celebrate its 50th anniversary. AA in Sweden has also decided to pay the full fee for two delegates to the World Service Conferences hoping that by doing so it will make it possible for new countries in AA to participate in this very important event.

Working with other countries

Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden are taking turns in hosting the annual Nordic Meeting (NM) in combination with their National Convention. We are working on getting also Iceland, Greenland and The Faroe Islands to join us. In 2006 the Nordic Meeting was held in Finland.

Events during 2006/2007

Sweden celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2006. AA in Sweden started on March 27, 1956. On March 27, 2006, there were open meetings in every Swedish group and the theme was "Gratitude". During the Annual Convention in Karlstad on August 11 - 13, 2006, AA's Anniversary was especially celebrated.

On November 25, 2006, all the members of the committees, International delegates, Association Alcoholic Anonymous, representatives from GSO and the Bulletin and the Chairs of each Region had a Service meeting, where the Service Manual was thoroughly discussed.

The Service Conference was held April 13 – 15, 2007, and the theme was "Willingness to change". Participating in this conference were 19 delegates, 4 trustees,

1 member of the Association Alcoholics Anonymous, two employees from GSO, and the International delegates. There was also a guest from Norway.

One of the World Service Delegates and one member of our GSO participated as observers at Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain Forty-Second General Service Conference in York 20th -22nd April 2007.

Switzerland – German Speaking

History

AA was established in Switzerland in 1963. An initial meeting took place in Lucerne (Central Switzerland) with the support of German friends, particularly friends from the Karlsruhe group. In the same year further initial meetings were set up in Zurich and Basle.

Structure

AA Switzerland is one of 12 Intergroups of the German speaking part of Europe, i.e. Germany, Austria, (including Southern Tyrol) and Switzerland. The Swiss Intergroup consists of six Regions.

The GSO of Switzerland, established in 1996, is operated by two persons on a part-time basis. The offices are located in Zurich. The GSO regularly organises the meeting of both the General Service Board (GSB) and the General Service Conference (GSC), which usually takes place twice a year, i.e. in June and November. The GSO performs commercial tasks and facilitates flow of information or correspondence to other GSOs and between delegates and committee members.

After the creating a flyer for a better understanding of AA (presented to the ESM two years ago) the team for Public Information is now examining the possibility of a specific campaign with posters. Still a lot of AA members are providing information about AA in schools and specialised clinics.

Membership and Groups

About 120 groups are registered in the German speaking part of Switzerland with an estimated number of 800 – 1,000 members. English speaking groups are located in major cities of Switzerland, such as Basle, Berne, Geneva, Lucerne and Zurich.

Literature

The GSO Zurich orders the Conference Approved Literature from the GSO Munich and sells it to the groups, AA members or any other interested person. Usually one or two Swiss AAs join the meeting of the German Literature team. A specific team is actually examining and clarifying the revision of the literature.

Although there is a magazine “AA-DACH” printed for the whole German speaking area, AA Switzerland edits, in addition to "AA-DACH", its own monthly magazine "Irgendwo AA" (Somewhere AA) and a Newsletter "AA Welt" (AA world-wide) twice a year, usually distributed on the above-mentioned GSC in June and November. The newsletters mainly report about European and International themes of AA.

Finance

The balance sheet shows a solid financial situation of AA Switzerland. For this reason it is possible to send an amount of CHF 9'000.- p.a. to Munich for several years. The donations of the different Swiss Regions constitute an important part of the incomes, and usually varies according to the needs of AA Switzerland.

Latest News

Since its creation in May 2005, the new telephone-helpline is operating very successfully. The staff of about 40 is answering 24 hours a day to approximately 3,000 calls a year concerning AA and Al-Anon issues.

The GSC has mandated a work group "Quo Vadis" to analyse the organisational integration of the German speaking part of Switzerland into the German speaking area, taking account of the different legal and tax basis in the two countries Germany and Switzerland, and to submit modification proposals if necessary. Actually, the group has completed its appraisal and examines now possible modification proposals.

Switzerland - French & Italian Speaking

General Service Board (GSB)

After its renewal and partial reconstitution, its work is now undertaken in a sober and calm mood. Its meetings take place in an ambiance of goodwill and a willingness to understand the others. The two new non-alcoholic members distinguish themselves by their will to integrate themselves and to respect the AA spirit.

The GSB structure has not changed, with one exception: the Secretariat has become a fully fledged office: the secretary can thus assume his functions with more ease and with the help of other friends.

The position of the ESM delegate within the GSB organization has to be cleared up and fixed with a job description, to be approved by the annual AA Conference. Today, he participates sometimes as GSB member, sometimes he is asked to refrain from voting.

To be able to fulfil his function, he needs to be up-to-date on what is happening within our fraternity: the GSB meetings are the ideal vehicle for such information.

Addition of a General Policy Committee

Our conference has approved the creation of this committee, as it exists elsewhere. It is furthermore mentioned as one of the standing committees in the chapter on the Eleventh concept of the Service Manual.

It aims at lightening the burden on the GSB by preparing the subjects submitted to its attention for decision by the GSB. As such it has no decision power, but will among other things take on the reports by the World and by the European delegate and propose to the GSB the decisions to be taken on that basis.

Number of Groups

As of September 30, AASRI counts:

- 52 French speaking groups
- 7 Italian speaking groups
- 5 Intergroups

In a parallel English speaking AA organization in the same area as AASRI, there are - 17 groups.

Public Information

This activity has gained in vigour, both at the central level (OIPI) and in the regions (CPI).

In 2007, one action with flyers and one with posters have been launched in co-

operation with our Swiss German friends, for the first time ever. The wording was translated into the three main national languages. Institutions are being called upon systematically, generally together with our friends from Al Anon; the PI activity aimed at the institutions has been developed systematically.

Finances

The groups' contributions to the GSB have diminished so far in 2007. Several appeals were made. The treasurer has reined in some of the budgeted (and unbudgeted) expenditures to avoid running into deficit or keep it as low as possible.

AASRI Events

The 1st National Convention ever to take place in Switzerland was organized in Fiesch with our Swiss German friends and has been a great success (26 - 28.08.06).

The AASRI National Congress, 50th anniversary of AASRI, took place in May in the Fribourg Area with the topic of "One common solution". It drew considerable outside attention, particularly among journalists and some politicians, and was a great success. It certainly carried our message beyond our organization. Some Croatian friends gave us the pleasure of accepting our invitation to participate in this meeting and shared their experiences so far with us.

The French speaking areas' action in favour of some countries of French speaking Africa is presently expecting further developments. AASRI has not been active in this action.

We have participated in our Belgian friends' action of providing "Big Books" in Voltaire's language to some African countries.

The Croatia sponsorship, carried on with the "sobriety dollar" fund, continues. It fills us with joy to see their organization develop itself and their delegates participate in this meeting.

The Louverain Convention has been carried out for the 35th time and had thus the pleasure of celebrating this anniversary, with a good attendance.

www.aasri.org

Our site has been improved and modernized constantly and has become a very valuable vector of PI.

Since January 4 to this day, October 15, it has been consulted 32211 times, in an area with a population of 1.6 mio or between 80,000 (5 %) and 160,000 (10 %) alcoholics, to gain some perspective

Turkey

This will be the first time that a Turkish delegate will be participating in the ESM. In 2002, Turkey stopped being an Intergroup and became a GSO. After this change, which was made possible with the precious help of Greg Muth and his team at the GSO New York, for which we are very grateful, our service structure is run more professionally. Of course, as in the example of Bill and Bob, there have been, and there are still, many growing pains from this process, because members have not adapted to the new structure and there are some problems as a result of this. For example, in May 2006, Doug Richardson visited us in order to explain the importance of becoming a legal entity. He explained this in great detail to all group representatives. His speech made such an impression that both GSO and Office decided that Turkish AA should become a legal entity. We visited many groups in the Third Region of Turkey (middle Anatolia, Aegean and Marmara areas) in order to carry the message but, contrary to what we proposed the AA members, supported by the oldtimers of the area, turned down our proposal. As a result of this, there are now two fractions in AA, those in favor of AA becoming a legal entity and those against AA becoming a legal entity. The majority is for AA not becoming a legal entity. In our last business meeting in Antalya (June 2007), we decided to postpone making a decision on this issue, so as not to cause a split in Turkish AA. However, not being a legal entity in Turkey is causing AA a lot of legal problems, such as not being able to rent a meeting space in AA's name, not to be able to have our own account with the public utility companies, not to be able to receive help that is being offered to us by public officials and prominent public figures. As you can see, we have not made a lot of progress on this subject, and would appreciate some ideas from your experience on this issue.

Groups

There are new groups in Turkey every month. Turkey is not, nor has it ever been, a country where Islamic law is in force. Therefore, alcohol is legally sold everywhere. It is also a fact that Turks love drinking alcohol and a lot of alcohol is consumed on every festivity or social occasion. (It is also a well known fact that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, was an alcoholic and died of cirrhosis of the liver). AA started late in Turkey. In 1988, three Turkish AAs came from abroad and they decided to start an AA meeting in Turkey. Until 1990, they found other suffering alcoholics in hospitals and they decided to form groups. In the beginning, they got help from the Center for American Culture and gave them a meeting place, which raised the hopes that AA would develop in Turkey. Meetings were taking place every day. Nowadays, we have 30 groups and 10 loners in various cities in Turkey. There are three principal regions named Anakom (Committee for Central Anatolia and Eastern Turkey), Marmarakom (Committee for the Sea of Marmara Areas) and Egekom (Committee for the Aegean Sea Areas). In general, the groups are found in

the western and central part of Turkey. Both Egekom and Anakom organize regional and national conventions every two or three months.

Our committee has tried very hard to carry the message to the eastern areas of Turkey. As a result the groups of Tarsus and the groups of Mersin have been formed. Having been helped also by individual AAs, these two groups have grown a lot in the years of their existence, and their members have been working the program with enthusiasm and dedication. The message also has been carried to many loners in the west of Turkey by those groups. There are now loners in the cities of Antakya, Diyarbakır, Van, Kars, Ardahan etc. Each of the three committees incorporates the groups that are included in its geographical region.

General Structure

Each group in Turkey has got a representative for the GSO and the National Business Meetings. Also, loners have one representative. Therefore, there are 31 representatives for the Committee as well as for the GSO. Group representatives have many responsibilities. They must inform their home groups on the various issues which then will be decided at their business meeting. Then the group representatives will bring these issues to be voted at the representatives' meeting at GSO level, in accordance to whatever the group consciousness of the group has decided. There are three national conventions every year and one international convention every two years. During these conventions the Business Meetings are held, in order to exchange views over different proposals, attend to group matters and vote on the items already proposed by the representatives to their home group, and decided at group level. In this type of meetings only group representatives, either for the committee or for the GSO, are able to participate. All other members are welcome to attend. Elections for both the Committee and GSO take place every two years. For example, we have been elected in October 2005 and our term will expire in October 2007. However, as it has been voted recently, it is possible to extend this term for another 2 years if the representatives choose to do so. There are no non-alcoholic trustees in our GSO, unfortunately. Turkish AAs are very averse to this idea. We hope that this attitude will change in the future. However, there are a lot of non-alcoholic friends of AA in Turkey, who are willing to help us at any level, just like a trustee would. In addition, these people give us much needed help at the level of press and media.

Committee Members

Chairman: SAIM G. (15 years of sobriety)

Assistant Chairman: ADEM T. (15 years of sobriety)

Secretary: DAVUTHAN O. (4 years of sobriety)

Treasurer: MEHMET I. (14 years of sobriety)

General Service Office Members

Coordinator: NADIR D. (3 years of sobriety)

Assistant Coordinator: MURAT O. (3 years of sobriety)

International Relations: MUSTAFA C. (Eng), DAVUTHAN O. (Fr., Eng.), SİNAN (Ger.)

Archives: METIN G.

Help in Carrying the Message: MURAT O.

Internet, Web site: ÇAĞATAY

Media Relations: METIN G.

Professional, Hospital and Prison Relations: NADIR, METIN, MUSTAFA, MURAT, ADEM

AA Documents and Distribution: DAVUTHAN, SİNAN

Public Relations: SAIM, NADIR

Conventions: SEREF, SAIM

Translations and Proofreading: MUSTAFA C., DAVUTHAN, SİNAN

Government and Public Entities Relations: MEHMET

Financial Affairs: NADİR

To elect a trustee we are looking for members with some sobriety. This is why the years of sobriety of the members of the committee appear in this document. All work done for the committee or for the office is done strictly on a voluntary basis. There is no remuneration given to any member in any form.

Relations with the Media

Sometimes we appear on television in programs about AA, always in accordance with the Traditions. We are taking extreme caution to respect Tradition 11. However, there are some members who appear on the media by violating tradition 11, and there is not much to be done to prevent this from happening, since we do not have the authority to coerce our members to do or not to do something. It goes without saying that attraction, rather than promotion, goes a long way on TV as well.

Last, but not least, we have also acquired a lot of new members by means of the printed word. Some of our members have written articles on AA in various newspapers. Also, a very good friend of AA (who is also a founding member), Candan O., has written a book titled “I am not drinking today”, which has helped us and is helping us a lot in this respect. We have gained a huge number of members thanks to this book, and we are very grateful to Candan.

Finances

Our group contributions are our only source of income. As we all know, AA members in general have had a turbulent life and some members have lost all. Our group members in general are very poor. There are a few rich members, who help us in accordance to their ability. However, groups give us very little money. The reasons for this are not clear. This is why our treasury is very poor. As a result, we are not able to compensate the expenses of members carrying the message or going abroad for conventions, etc. We are only able only to pay the basics, such as water, electricity, telephone. At present, there is only 300 New Turkish Lira (approx. 166 Euro) in our treasury.

Literature

Because our country has a big population, there is an influx of a lot of members. There are still many suffering alcoholics in Turkey. This is why we have requested a big quantity of literature from GSO New York, which has always been very helpful to us. However, because we are not a legal entity in Turkey, we are not able to receive a big quantity of documents from customs. This is why GSO New York has sent to us their Publications Trustee, so as to help us solve those problems, and an agreement with a printer was made so as that all the literature could be printed in Turkey at a very good price (May 2007) We now have the data CD in our possession and are waiting to start printing as soon as we get approval to print from GSO New York. We hope that this will resolve all our problems in the future. In this respect we can help other European countries as well, because we can help print literature in Turkey at a very convenient price and have it sent abroad, since there is Customs Union with the European Union. As we have observed, the more important book for newcomers is “Living Sober”. Another problem is that we do not have a book on the Twelve Concepts in Turkish. A translation we have made with permission from the USA GSO has been distributed to the groups. It is very important to explain to the groups the Twelve Concepts, otherwise members are not at all familiar with the service structure and service work in general.

Public Relations in General

Nowadays, internet is vitally important. We are using it a lot in Turkey in the last 4-5 years. Thanks to our website, young people are getting in contact with us all the time and come to the groups. One of our trustees (Cagatay), who is an expert on computers, is helping us a lot on this subject. Since last year, we have been trying to modernise our website in order to serve better, but we still have some problems. For example, our website is not in English and there is no literature in our website. We are still working on this. We are also trying to establish an online system between members who are using computers. In our opinion, it is very important to communicate between ourselves, just like it says in “Living Sober”.

Every one of our groups, as well as the loners, has a hotline by means of mobile phone. This is functioning 24 hours a day. This is also a tremendous help in carrying the message.

Relations with Hospitals in Turkey

There is considerable progress in this subject in the last years. We are participating in conferences on addictions (for alcoholism, because other addictions are an outside issue for us) and there we have the occasion to communicate with related professionals from Turkey and abroad. This year we will also be participating in the National Conference for Addiction in Turkey, where we are offered a stand in order to present AA to the general public.

In addition to this, we have excellent relations with some hospitals in Turkey. Most important among them is Gazi University Hospital in Ankara. The Main Department for Psychiatry and the Director of its Alcohol Sector, Prof. Zehra Arikan, gives us such dedicated support, as if they were our own trustees. They recommend our groups to their patients and send people to us every day. Our relations with both staff and medical personnel of this hospital are excellent. We have meetings with the patients of the hospital once a week. Then there is the Centre for Alcohol and Narcotics of Numune Hospital in Ankara. They also help and support us and we are also having a meeting once a week there. Ankara SSK Hospital, Izmir 9 September Hospital, Izmir Ege University Hospital, Denizli Public Hospital, Karadeniz Technical University Zonguldak Hospital, Istanbul Amatem Hospital, Istanbul American Hospital, Istanbul Balikli Rum Hospital, Mersin Hospital, Adana Public Hospital, Trakya University Hospital are also supporting us and recommend us to their patients.

Conclusions

We are really only at the beginning of this ongoing trip. Because we are still on the start, there are a lot of difficulties and problems. Our groups are both working hard on the programme, and for the programme. One problem is that members in Turkey are not particularly familiar with the Twelve Concepts. Also, there are many members working the Programme only on the basis of the Twelve Steps. We believe that this is going to change in the future. However, there are enormous demands being made from the still suffering alcoholics. In order for both groups and members to become more effective, we must constantly explain the importance of the Programme (12 Steps – 12 Traditions – 12 Concepts) and use them in all the groups. Also, mistrust of both the Committee and the Office by the individual members that have elected them, is another matter that impedes progress. Members believe that they are being directed by either the Committee or by the GSO, and they are averse to authorizing any type of expense for any member of the Committee or the GSO. However, this is not the case. We are there to serve both groups and members. Greece and the USA have helped us a lot in this matter regarding the relations between the Committee and the members. For this, we are grateful to them. Last, but not least, we are in need of your help too, because we need you to explain to us the structure of AA. We are inviting you to Turkey so that you may share your experience with us. Please share this with other groups and within ESM. Thank you again, one day at a time!!!

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Ukraine

We appreciate being given the opportunity to speak at this European Service Conference.

An American member of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, Leo K, held the first Ukrainian meetings of AA in the cities of Lutsk, Kyiv and Odesa in 1989. Since that time, the number of AA groups in Ukraine has greatly increased and we currently have more than 60 groups operating on a regular basis. We have been through some difficult periods of development and organised our first Service Conference just 9 years ago, establishing new priorities for our development, and determining how best to serve Ukraine's AA groups.

Unfortunately, at present, our two new committees are not operating at full strength. These are the Information Committee and Public and International Relations, which are responsible for, not only carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic, but also informing the public of the existence of AA and the 12-Step Programme of recovery in our country.

Members of the Fellowship continue to co-operate with NGOs and detox facilities. We recently installed display stands in these facilities, providing information on the 12-Step Recovery Programme, addresses of AA meetings, booklets and brochures.

This year has seen successful conventions take place in Kyiv, Lutsk and L'viv. At our most recent conference, L'viv was chosen as the venue for an upcoming International Convention to celebrate 20 years of AA in Ukraine. The date will be in June 2009 and details will be posted on the Ukrainian AA website nearer the time.

We have traditionally invited psychologists, specialists in addiction, NGOs and members of the church to our open meetings. We have occasional contact with people from governmental bodies and hope to gain more support from them in the future.

Examples of our work with the public include regular newspaper articles concerning AA conventions, a television broadcast regarding the 71st anniversary of the founding of AA, and a presentation to Mayoral Authorities in the city of Kyiv.

In the last six months, we have tried to address the problem of supplying literature to groups throughout Ukraine. We co-operate closely with literature committees in other countries where Russian is widely spoken, namely Russia, Moldova and Belarus. We have been publishing our magazine "Dzherelo" (The Source) since 1997. Over the last two years, issues have been disseminated on a regular basis. We are currently in the process of registering the magazine as an official AA publication. Our website www.aa.org.ua has been in existence for the last three years and is the only source of information for many. We are currently working on an additional website for the International Convention to celebrate 20 years of AA in Ukraine.

We have received help from members of the Fellowship in Poland, who participate regularly in our conventions, particularly in the western part of Ukraine. There are currently less groups in eastern and southern areas; we are looking for support from

neighbouring countries in order to exchange experience. Members of the Fellowship from Ukraine participate in service conferences in Russia, Poland and Belarus. We have three Intergroups based in Kyiv, Lutsk and L'viv, which form an important part of our structure. The Fellowships of Al-Anon and Alateen co-operate with us. We have plans to create separate websites in these three cities in the future.

We do not currently have enough funding to meet our existing requirements and are unable to finance representation at Worldwide and European conventions however, we do send delegates to service conferences in Russia, Belarus and Poland.

Stressing the importance of the Seventh Tradition to both AA groups and members has traditionally been important on an annual basis. Lack of contact with AA worldwide has affected our ability to carry the message to the newcomer, as the few people available to do 12-Step work are currently struggling to meet demand.

Ukraine's General Service Office (GSO) operates from 10am to 4pm every day and is located at Kostelna, 17, Kyiv, Ukraine, 01001. We rent space from St. Alexander's Catholic Church. Our office workers answer phones, look after the post and internet and send out literature.

We really hope that through attending this conference we will be able to draw upon the experience of AA members in other countries, and that this will have a positive influence on the growth of AA in Ukraine. We also ask delegates at the conference to give our request for help closer consideration.

Committees & Workshops

Agenda / Policy / Admissions / Finance Committee

Chairman: **Roger B** Great Britain

Alternate: **Bodil L** Sweden

Mogens	Denmark	Kalle	Finland
Maryse	France	Kári	Iceland
Séan	Ireland	Filippo	Italy
Monvids	Latvia	Antanas	Lithuania
Emily	Malta	Ruud	Netherlands
Per	Norway		

The Chairman opened the meeting with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who were invited to introduce themselves.

1) Review:

- a) total costs of the 13TH ESM

Accounts were reviewed and clarified. It was suggested that the legalities of transferring money between restricted funds be investigated.

- b) contributions to the ESM Fund to date

Contributions continue to be made at a consistent level.

- c) ESM Guidelines in general

ESM guidelines were reviewed and reaffirmed.

- 2) Consider a policy for finding new countries to attend the ESM, bearing in mind the uncertainty of contributions and the need to help countries who are struggling with new structures.

It was suggested that countries without a GSO or a literature distribution centre be invited to send a member as an observer.

It was suggested that a staff member be employed to further the work of the ESM and take up suggestions between meetings.

- 3) How could the suggestions made at the ESM be successfully taken up

It was felt that at present there is no mechanism in place to enact suggestions raised during the ESM. An example would be that if staff were employed as above (2) it would be part of their role to investigate countries not currently represented.

- 4) How can we improve the relevance of the questions to the ESM's participating countries

It was suggested that a questionnaire be compiled and distributed to participating countries. It would be helpful if questions were devised in order to enable sharing to learn from each other.

- 5) Would the committee consider advance payment of ESM delegate costs for accommodation and meals. This would assist in the administration of the ESM and help to alleviate the confusion that has arisen in the past.

Advance payment of ESM delegate costs was agreed by substantial majority.

- 6) Suggest a theme for the 15th ESM .

“Recovery has no borders” was suggested as a theme for the 15th ESM.

- 7) Elect a Chairman & Alternate for the 15th ESM

Antanas B (Lithuania) was elected Chairman of the Agenda/Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee for the 15th ESM, with Emily A (Malta) as Alternate.

Literature / Publishing & Media Communications Committee

Chairman: **Ib B J** Denmark

Jan	Belgium (Flemish)	Ivica	Croatia
Gerhild	Germany	Vince	Great Britain
Arvids	Latvia	Janina	Lithuania
Deo	Malta	Cees	Netherlands
Finn	Norway	Antoni	Poland
Jorge	Portugal	Marivi	Spain
Walle	Sweden		

The Chairman opened the meeting with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who were invited to introduce themselves.

- 1) A lot of literature needs to be translated. Does AA use professional translators or, is it carried out by AA members with the knowledge of English or other languages, and experience in translating this work? What is preferred considering the quality of the translated literature?

Apart from Spain, who now make use of a professional translator, the other countries have members of AA with the knowledge of English who do the translations. Those translations are later proofread by other AA members, in most cases members of Literature Committees. Finally, the translations are sent to GSO New York for authorisation.

This does not apply yet to Croatia who still need to learn how to conform to the procedures for literature publications.

- 2) AA needs to be more accessible to the still suffering alcoholic. What means do we have to implement this (both financial and other).

The members agreed that the best way to be more accessible to the still suffering alcoholic is to be active. Instead of waiting for the phone to call, we go out and give them the information if they want.

We run Public Information meetings for open public and in hospitals, prisons, treatment centres and schools. Country governments' policy can be very beneficial when they regard AA as a possible cooperative partner as is the case in the UK and the Netherlands.

An ever greater role is played by our websites, which provides information and ensures 100% anonymity for the website user.

**Non-alcoholic trustees and friends, speaking at various occasions, spread the information about AA, where members of AA cannot do so.
Finances were felt to play a minor role.**

- 3) What does AA do to bring Alcoholics Anonymous to the notice of young alcoholics?

We do not wait for the young people to turn up. Most countries use flyers, pamphlets with cartoons and other pamphlets addressed at young people. In all countries AA is allowed to visit schools and give talks, though often the problem is that AAs are too old and the young people cannot identify. The internet seems to bring a lot of young people closer to the information about AA.

Public Information campaigns are run throughout the year.

Problems mentioned included lack of attractive materials and age of AA speakers (Germany) and cross-addiction (Malta).

- 4) How do you explain the Traditions to the media or professional caller?

We have press releases explaining who we are in a common language.

When we inform about the Traditions we stress the importance of Tradition 3, 7, 11 and 12 and ask the media to take these into consideration.

If we have non-alcoholic trustees, we ask them to explain our Traditions to those interested.

- 5) What is your country's experience of providing information about Alcoholics Anonymous via the website?

All the countries have very good use of the websites, which they continue to develop.

The websites provide all necessary information for outside visitors as well as AA members, for example, meeting lists, home and abroad, literature available etc.

Countries feel responsible only for the information that is contained on the official national GSO website.

- 6) How best can we make contact with professionals informing them of AA and its works, in order that we can attract more suffering alcoholics?
 - a) Which literature titles do you have for helping the media and professionals understand AA, and what it does and does not do.

Countries use 'This is AA' to provide basic information. Depending on the addressee, additional titles are used, for example, 'AA at a Glance'.

- b) Does your country have a pack of literature which you send out on request to the media or professionals? If so what sort of things do you use in the pack?

Some countries do have a pack of literature and other countries are developing information packages.

- 7) Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 15th ESM Literature/Publishing and Media Communications Committee.

Gerhild R (Germany) was elected as Chairman of the Literature/Publishing & Media Communications Committee for the 15th ESM, with Jan C (Belgium - Flemish) as alternate.

Working With Other Countries Committee

Chairman: Rio M F.S.E. Switzerland

Eva	Austria	Vladimir	Belarus
Richard	Belgium (French)	Michael	Ireland
Jacek	Poland	Duarte	Portugal
Svetlana	Russia	Lola	Spain
Jean-Richard	Switzerland (Ger)	Davuthan	Turkey
Oleg	Ukraine	Alexei	Ukraine

The Chairman opened the meeting with the preamble and welcomed the delegates, he invited them to introduce themselves, which they did.

We went over the statements on which the questions were based

The questions are based on the following statements:

- AA's reason for being, and its purpose is to pass our message on to the still suffering alcoholic.
- Within the ESM, this Committee's purpose is to improve the transmission of our message by learning from other countries' best practices and applying them in our own, whenever feasible.

On this basis and with the aim of improving our Committee's way of achieving the above, the following questions are suggested:

- 1) a) What were the results brought about in your country by the suggestions made at the 13th ESM's "Working With Other Countries" Committee?

Some of the countries had practical results, such as:

- **Asking for help from other countries**
- **Asking the GSO York/New York for help**
- **Sharing experience (probation, structure, internal difficulties,)**
- **Contributions for sponsoring other countries went up.**
- **Awareness of the existance of the ESM has increased.**
- **Some countries sent delegates to other countries' conferences for the first time ever.**
- **Achieving a more objective view of one's own country problem**
- **Group members became more open minded with regard to ESM**
- **They learned to ask for help.**

b) How were these results brought about?

They were brought about by:

- **Short summaries to conferences**
- **Written summaries distributed up to the group level where possible**
- **Reports to the GSB Meetings**
- **Workshops in local conventions**
- **Invitations to representatives from other countries' fellowships**

2) What conclusions can we draw as to the effectiveness of the “Working With Other Countries” Committee with regard to concrete results?

At present there are no tools to measure the effectiveness of this committee, it becomes the responsibility of every single delegate to transmit the ideas and suggestions to regional conferences and conventions through their presence and communication. Reporting in all its forms and at all levels becomes one of the key actions.

3) How can we become more effective in our task of learning from other countries to better carry the message, and in applying what we have learned ?

- **It needs a clear definition of the problems and clear proposals for the solutions. The clearer the better.**
- **Communication between committee members via internet is one possibility to keep updated.**
- **We must carry the message – they take it or leave it, “we sell our ideas”, others pick it up.**
- **We have to increase our awareness that we tend to have partial perception and strive to avoid it. So that what we pass on is the full measure of suggestions and ideas.**
- **The existing internet forum “ESM Newsletter” serves communication well, but could also be used by the members of this committee to communicate more extensively.**
- **ESM proposals and reports can also be distributed to the groups in printed form (Country's newsletter).**
- **ESM news should be published separately.**

4) a) How can assistance to other countries be implemented?

b) What is your experience with country to country sponsorship and how could such co-operation be encouraged?

- **Got to other countries!**
- **Invite other countries!**
- **One country has extended invitations to their forthcoming GSC, and conventions.**
- **Communication!!! Knowledge of the English language?**
- **Refer questions as a first step to the EIC.**
- **Use a common description of a delegate's job and profile, the choice of the delegate, her/his preparation, her/his participation and the implementation of her/his proposals and ideas to facilitate communication.**

5) Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 15th ESM Working With Other Countries Committee.

Jacek C (Poland) was elected Chairman of the Working with Other Countries Committee for the 15th ESM, with Michael O'R (Ireland) as Alternate.

Workshop "Concept Five - Throughout our world services structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered."

Chairman: **Per J O** Norway

Richard	Belgium (French)	Mogens	Denmark
Kalle	Finland	Maryse	France
Sean	Ireland	Monvids	Latvia
Emily	Malta	Antoni	Poland
Duarte	Portugal	Lola	Spain
Walle	Sweden		

The Chairman opened the meeting with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who were invited to introduce themselves.

- 1) What difficulties have countries experienced in implementing the right of appeal?

At the level of the Conference there are no problems with implementing the right of appeal.

At the level of group and other levels of structure there are problems resulting from the fact that people either simply don't know the Concepts or are unwilling to learn about them.

- 2) What experience have you of resolving differences where there are strong minority opinions?

With strong minority opinions, the general procedure is to allow additional discussion and another vote.

Well-informed group conscience is essential. The majority may bend as much as possible but not accept the tyranny of the minority, which may oppose majority's efforts just for the sake of opposition. The voice of minority is presented at another level of the structure and/or brought to the Conference. The problem may be that minorities express their voice only after binding decisions have been made, often after the meeting.

- 3) What actions are taken when a service officer proves not to be able and conscientious?

Service Manual clearly describes the requirements for each position and these should be followed when electing people for positions.

No matter how difficult it might be if service officers fail to carry out their duties, they are asked to resign on their own. This should be done even if there are not enough people for service.

In the case of legal entities, legal procedures are taken.

- 4) To what extent does this Concept influence the effectiveness of AA on an administrative level?

It was generally agreed that Concept 5 does not apply to hired workers, who are employed on general terms.

- 5) Select a theme for the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop

“Service Rotation” has been selected as the theme of the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop.

- 6) Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop

Duarte B (Portugal) was elected Chairman of the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop, with Mogens A (Denmark) as Alternate.

WORKSHOP "DEVELOPING UNITY IN THE SERVICE STRUCTURE"

CHAIRMAN: SVETLANA V S RUSSIA

Vladimir	Belarus	Ivica	Croatia
Vince	Great Britain	Kári	Iceland
Arvids	Latvia	Janina	Lithuania
Ruud	Netherlands	Finn	Norway
Jacek	Poland	Jorge	Portugal
Davuthan	Turkey	Oleg	Ukraine
Alexei	Ukraine		

The Chairman opened the meeting with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who were invited to introduce themselves.

- 1) Some groups call themselves AA groups, though they do not use the AA programme. They do not endorse the three legacies and neither do they contribute to the national service office. However, they are on the official website of AA as official AA groups.
 - a) Are these groups allowed to call themselves AA groups?
 - b) How do we deal with them?

Most delegates felt that we cannot stop groups which do not use the AA programme and do not endorse the 3 legacies. However, groups that do not contribute can still be official AA groups as financial decisions are made by the group conscience.

Many countries visit the groups to explain the programme and invite them to participate in service as sometimes there is a lack of knowledge or understanding. We must sponsor them. It was felt that leading by example is one of the best ways to deal with the groups.

It was agreed that these types of groups do not last for very long.

- 2) What action does your country take if a group attempts to restrict its membership?

Traditions are shown to the groups to show that they cannot be restrictive. Some countries send letters then visit to clarify that they should not restrict. Other countries felt that the problem tends to be self regulating as these groups do not last long.

- 3) What does unity in the service structure imply?

- a) How have countries developed unity within their service structure?

One country has a national convention to promote unity.

Another country holds annual service workshops for Region and Intergroup officers.

Other countries have meetings for any member with themes selected by groups. This inspires members into service.

- b) What experience have you of disunity being resolved in your country?

Several countries had experience of disunity with Intergroups or Regions who do not accept the service structure of the country. In one country, despite this, the GSO included them in directories.

One country has a problem with a regular religious meeting which the organisers call an AA meeting. Their GSO has sent many official letters to the organiser but with no result yet.

- 4) Select a theme for the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop

Concept Three has been selected for the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop.

- 5) Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop

Vince O (Great Britain) was elected as Chairman of the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop, with Davuthan Ö (Turkey) as alternate.

Workshop "Concept Eleven - While the trustees hold final responsibility for AA's world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Therefore, the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern."

Chairman: **Filippo B** Italy

Eva	Austria	Jan	Belgium (Flemish)
Ib	Denmark	Gerhild	Germany
Roger	Great Britain	Michael	Ireland
Antanas	Lithuania	Deo	Malta
Cees	Netherlands	Marivi	Spain
Bodil	Sweden	Rio	Switzerland (French)
Jean-Richard	Switzerland (German)		

The Chairman opened the meeting with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who were invited to introduce themselves.

- 1) How do countries ensure that the best people are appointed / selected or elected to serve the Fellowship in the best interests of AA?
 - **We never have an absolute guarantee for selecting the best person, but we may trust that everyone tries to do her/his best.**
 - **Many countries have nominating committees, especially on national level.**
 - **Service vacancies should be announced through printed matters and online.**
 - **Living with service vacancies sometimes is better than being forced to fill a position with an unfitting person.**
 - **Most countries have clear descriptions of the qualifications required for each service.**
 - **Sponsorship into service is essential to help the new servant.**
 - **Most countries have clear procedures agreed by the majority for finding new servants.**

- 2) What experience is there of reimbursing expenses incurred when serving the Fellowship?

Every country agreed that reimbursement is fundamental given that the AA service has been approved by the fellowship. It is also essential that every member of AA is entitled to do any service with no restriction due to his/her financial condition, no one should be excluded! Everybody doing service has to be reimbursed, we have the right of participation. If you want to return the money you can do it anonymously.

- 3) Why is rotation important?

Rotation is one of our fundamental principles. No rotation – no growth! It has among its consequences:

- **Possibility of service for everyone**
- **Protection against concentration of power**
- **Increase of humility**
- **Ensuring anonymity**
- **Putting principles before personalities**
- **Emphasizing the right spirit and attitude**
- **Preventing to become tired of work in AA**

- 4) When choosing the themes for Workshops, would it be more relevant to the countries of the ESM (particularly newer structures) if these were kept to a basic topic, rather than getting involved with the abstract and difficult questions connected to the Concepts?

Concepts are basic and practical tools. Concepts are the backbone of AA structure. It cannot be early enough to get new structures involved with the concepts. “Service without concepts is like an AA meeting without steps!”

- 5) Select a theme for the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop

“Concept XII” has been selected for the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop.

- 6) Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop

Jan (Belgium (Flemish Speaking) was elected Chairman of the 15th European Service Meeting Workshop, with Michael (Ireland) as Alternate.

Sharing Session & Closing Addresses

Sharing Session

Presentations from Janina M. & Richard P. on the theme: “Learning From Others”

Richard P (Belgium – Flemish Speaking)

My name is Richard and I'm an alcoholic.

During my drinking period I thought I knew everything and that what I thought and knew came from my extended knowledge of everything solely produced by my wonderful brain.

Of course I was aware that I knew and still know a lot of valuable things about a lot of matters. Many relatives or friends come to me and say "I'm sure that you know something about it". Alright. But where does it come from? From me? What a selfishness if it was so!

I admit today that all what I know (maybe with an exception for things that I learned from personal experiences) comes from others. From the beginning of my life until now, all what I've learned, I learned it from others: my parents, my family, my teachers, etc. Or from the many books that I read and still read.

Of course when I came to AA., it is obvious that I have learned from others. From those who were able not to drink and said I could stop and remain happy too without alcohol. To be honest I was suspicious at that time about what they told me about AA, not about how to stop drinking. So I went back to the source, I mean the English texts. Nobody told me lies. But I've found a lot of things that were useful. Again I learn from others, from those who wrote their experiences, their trials and errors, to build our program.

Helping to translate into French "Dr Bob and the good Oldtimers" (my favourite book) was a great experience for me. How great it was too to discover the spirit of Dr Bob and what he did to create groups, introduce women and Afro-American and Hispanic-American and blind people into our fellowship.

When I came to the European Service Meeting 2 years ago, I understood that I was going a step further in what it means to "learn from others".

Translation was only a "non-active" job in the sense that it was only writing words that were published but I thought that I had done all I had to do.

With the experience of the European Service Meeting, followed with participation at a Conference in United Kingdom and then the one of my Dutch speaking Belgian friends, I realized that there is a lot of ideas to be learned from others by sharing the experiences of our countries. But now I think it is my duty to pass it on in my country, hoping some of my friends will also learn from others, meaning that we learn something from other countries, other languages, other structures, instead of thinking we are able to find our own solutions "at home", without help from outside.

I hope that learning from you will help my country to help AA to grow, to progress, to avoid errors others have already made and to implement good behaviours into our structures.

Thank you for listening and ready to learn from our sharing.

Janina M (Lithuania)

To begin with I want to thank you for my being here and having this amazing possibility to share my life and experience with you. When Angela wrote me a letter informing about this opportunity I was startled and lost. Then I told myself that I won't speak for sure because my heart can't speak English and that nobody reads from the sheet at a closed meeting. Time was going on and I was getting ready to write Angela about my refusal but I couldn't calm down in no way .I wrote Angela that I can only read from the sheet because I have to do a translation from Lithuanian to English. I hoped she would say "no, it's impossible". Unfortunately, she wrote that everything's all right and I can read it. I still like putting off complicated and important things. The same was this time. When the time was off I understood that there was no way back and I'd have to write. The thoughts were mixing in my head about what to tell you. I wanted to very good at that. One day God as I understand him enlightened my mind and I realized that I have to let my heart speak. Then I took my car, arrived to my friend's farmstead, sat down on the bridge and started writing. The theme of the meeting is "Learning from others". When you and God found me I was it seems to me like an empty box the walls of which and the bottom were covered with different fears.

I was born and grew up in an alcoholic family. My dad was an alcoholic, he died 15 years ago and I am now 12 years sober and with you. I hope he is in heaven with God and he did his very best for me and my brother to stop drinking. (my brother is sober for 10 years). I went through my family misfortune, shame and troubles. I used to be scared at school lest somebody tells me about my drunken father lying on in a ditch. I remember my brother and me looking for our father and finding him somewhere entirely drunk. I was always afraid to meet some familiar people on the way home. If I did, the person became my greatest enemy for he had seen my father drunk. I think it was then that I started escaping people and running into entire solitude. I hated the children in the yard for they often mocked me and my dad. It was very painful inside and I became more and more unsociable and lonely. The world for me was strange, unsafe, and cruel.

Before I found vodka in my life I had several friends, only those who have never asked me or talked about my family life. I always felt fine in nature and with my cat. I hated myself for being so unfortunate and unhappy. I was very good at school, always tried to be the best at carrying out the tasks but was never joyful. I have never blamed my family when I stopped drinking and started realizing how horrible the disease of alcoholism is and that its influence upon the family members is simply tragic. In my family I couldn't learn anything what could help me to find and know myself and others and the world around me. Shame, guilt, fear and anger were always my companions.

I started drinking at the age of 16 and at once I understood that I Have found a friend which will help me to live. It accompanied me till I was 36 and helped me to associate with people, to love, do sports, work and not to feel that what I did feel. Only when I stopped drinking I understood that while being sober I can neither study nor work, neither dance nor live in a general way. It was very difficult to accept myself as such, but when my brain got dry I started realizing that you were the same as me, and little by little we were teaching each other to live without alcohol. The "12 Steps" Programme has become the main tool on the way back into a sober life.

Since the first day I sacredly trusted the members of Alcoholics Anonymous, firstly because it was possible for such a hopeless person like me to come back to life and live sober for one day. I managed to get a sponsor straight at the beginning of my sobriety in AA, who I am very grateful to. He helped me to understand that the "12 Steps" program is wonderful, and it can help me to become mature. At the beginning I couldn't understand what he meant for I was 36 and thought I was grown up enough, but later on I caught on.

When you found me I was a small girl who was afraid of everything. She felt thirst for the warmth, love, attention and support, but her little heart was closed and very cold. Years passed, and I trusted you and the programme. I started using the steps more and

more in getting to know myself, people and the God of my understanding. Your love warmed my heart and I began letting people into my life.

At every meeting members patiently taught me more new things which gave me a possibility to believe the Earth is really a safe place for me to live on. Thanks to you I've changed my profession and have worked as an addictions consultant for ten years. I love my job for I can take part in God's great works.

Thanks to you, God and the programme, I am learning to stay beside my daughter, she's twenty now. You have helped to raise her, she is now a student and for 12 years already, she has had good sleep at night knowing that I am responsible today and ready to help her whenever she needs me.

I learn to love everybody outside AA, meeting lots of marvelous people who are also my teachers. The time has come when I want to serve you and others. I wish and I am a success in doing more good jobs. I am hopeful that you will help me to turn from a person once being entirely destroyed by the powerful weapon of alcoholism into a decent person. I am only 48 now and I'm just a very young student, though when I was 28 I felt very old. You teach me to be a good daughter. My mum is 73 and she is getting old but I love her dearly. I make amends sharing my time and talking to her. We are now joyous and happy. You have taught me to be a good friend with myself, respect, forgive and love myself, and not to make great demands of myself. I let myself make mistakes and correct them when it's possible. I also learn to be a good friend to others. It's hard for me to put up with my husband's disease. He's got serious problems with alcohol but only I can see it not him, yet. Here Al-Anon group is of great help for me.

I try to forgive people, be more tolerant, respect their choice and opinion, try to admit that people can be good friends to me, and it turns out more and more often.

I will be open to tell you that it's still easier for me to be friends with my old dog than with you, but I already want very much to be with you and be a little better than yesterday. I really hope to come back from here different- a bit better, warmer, more open, more loving people. God and myself thank you very much for my daughter Dian's life, my mums life, my brother's, my own and your lives. Please forgive me for what I haven't learned yet from you up to this day, but I promise to strive being a humble student in the future. Thanks for listening to me, for my being alive and sober today. I love you very much.

Janina, an alcoholic.

P.S. When my speech was already finished and typed my mum suffered a stroke and on the same day I buried my old doggie. My mum is in a very grave condition, but during this period of time I understood that you and the members of AA helped me to

grow up, that I can with God's and your help humbly accept the situation. As never before I know that I can't make any plans about doing anything for even an hour. The time has come when I can check myself in whether I believe in what I say or do, and I sacredly believe. I am grateful to Alcoholics Anonymous and you once again.

Closing Addresses

“Service – Our Future and Responsibility”

Greg M – General Manager, GSO New York

Greetings: My name is Greg, I am a grateful alcoholic, and blessed to serve as General Manager of the General Service Office (G.S.O.) in New York City. On behalf on the General Service Board of A.A. (Canada and the United States), the A.A. World Services’ Board of Directors, and all employees of the Office, I bring greetings and warm wishes to you and to the Fellowship you serve. Your participation in the 14th European Service Meeting demonstrates your respect for the Conference process and undergirds our mutual belief that God’s will is expressed through the group conscience of our beloved Fellowship. Together we will fulfil the promise that A.A. offers to each man or woman seeking help with a drinking problem, there is a solution.

These words written by Cofounder Bill W., and published in *The A.A. Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service*,¹ page S1 are the foundation of A.A. Service:

“Our Twelfth Step--carrying the message--is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die.

“Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer--ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call, a cup of coffee, and to A.A.’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.”

I arrived at my first A.A. meeting beaten into submission by years of uncontrollable drinking and a very real desire to end my life. In that meeting, I was given the keys to freedom through an outpouring of A.A. love, combined with the frank and open words of A.A. members who shared their personal stories with me. I was shown a new way to live by those members and my sponsor, who walked hand in hand with me into a new way of life, gradually introducing me to the First Legacy: Recovery through our Twelve Steps.

¹ English language, published by A.A. World Services, Inc

Soon, I was asked to participate with other group members in a Twelfth Step call on a man who was reached out for help. This was a new and strange experience, for I had never before gone to the assistance of anyone without expecting to be rewarded for my efforts.

Members of my group stressed the importance of the Twelve Traditions, sharing that their lives as recovering alcoholics depended squarely on each member's willingness to help others; to set aside his or her desires for the good of the group. They explained that Unity must come first or there could be no individual recovery. Other group members spoke of our collective responsibility, common welfare, and the immense value of membership in A.A.

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My group stressed the true meaning of anonymity as humbly finding ways to be useful to my fellow members, my Higher Power and others about me, without seeking recognition or reward. Thus, my friends passed on the Second Legacy: Unity.

Soon after the beginning of our Fellowship, the founders realized that if they were to reach the hundreds of suffering alcoholics in their communities, they must find a way to convey their experience, strength and hope. Thus, began an invaluable project of our fledgling society, the Big Book titled *Alcoholics Anonymous* was published and gave life to our Third Legacy: Service.

Alcoholism can and does strike men and women of all races, creeds, religious beliefs, ethnic backgrounds, and in all social and economic strata. Our founders and early members witnessed one miracle after another; each new member's recovery was testimony to the fact that A.A. had a solution for alcoholism. Great blessings were bestowed on A.A. as it transcended barriers of language and background with a simple, profound message conveyed by one alcoholic helping another to achieve a spiritual solution to his or her drinking problem.

Our early members pondered how to inform the public and professionals of the wholesale miracle that had been set before them by a loving God. A.A. groups acting autonomously could not possibly devise a public relations policy that would be effective and understandable for all. Our founders and the early members realized that this responsibility would have to be vested in a single service entity or structure.

”The General Service Conference of A.A. is, of course, the practical instrument for preserving, enhancing, and administering this great Third Legacy of Service. The concept of the Conference from the beginning has been simple and compelling. It is grounded in the belief that all of us who have been associated with A.A. during its early growth and development owe an obligation to society. That obligation is to insure that this fellowship survives, that this flame of faith, this beacon light of hope for the world, must never be extinguished.”²

The A.A. program is the Three Legacies, a foundation based on the anvil of experience absorbed by our Cofounders and the early members over approximately 28 years, and committed to writing by Bill W.

What makes our Legacy of Service function so well? An acute awareness of our individual and collective responsibility for the future of Alcoholics Anonymous, coupled with a sincere desire to be of service to God and our fellows. We establish a spiritual connection through the daily practice of the Twelve Steps, receiving a willingness to make any sacrifice necessary for continuance of our society. The Twelfth Tradition reminds us that anonymity is expressed by true humility, and that the spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice.

Spiritual and fiscal support of our Service Centers is essential to fulfill our commitment to insure that the hand of A.A. will always be out-stretched and available to anyone, anywhere who reaches out for help. We embrace the Seventh Tradition, and recognize that we need to fully support the services we’ve asked our Boards and committees to provide so that you and I can reach the sick and suffering alcoholic.

What actions can you and I take to insure our survival?

Sponsorship: How many of you have a sponsor? My sponsor saved my life by sharing with me the program of A.A. as expressed in the Three Legacies. I would never have found the way on my own. I needed help to stop drinking, to be shown the new way of life, and the A.A. way of helping others. I have a sponsor and I sponsor other men.

The Committee system: God of our understanding expresses Himself through the group conscience. All too often I have listened to the voices in my head and followed that direction, sometimes leading me to make serious errors. I’m learning to share with others, listen to their wisdom, so that our discussions and decisions may reflect a Power Greater than any one or two of us. God’s Will as expressed in the group conscience is the A.A. way; that’s what occurs in the committee system. Once God’s Will becomes clear, the direction we take is divinely inspired.

Home Group: Each of us has a home group--an A.A. group where we feel comfortable, identify with other members and develop an attitude of gratitude that

² *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, page 280

fosters a strong sense of responsibility for the group's well-being. The home group is where each of us accepts responsibility for service positions, and votes on matters of national conscience. The A.A. way of life begins with the Home Group.

I am deeply grateful to each of you for your untiring service to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, insuring that the child born today destined for alcoholism will find an open door leading to a room of warm and welcoming A.A. members. We have come together this weekend to share our experiences, strengths and hopes for the future. We are trusted servants exploring new ways to serve God and our fellows.

I have had the great privilege of attending many zonal meetings over the last 9 years; my spirits have always been lifted by the dedication of Delegates in attendance. This will be my last European Service Meeting as I will be retiring from G.S.O before your meeting in 2009. I want to express my deep gratitude to the Trustees of the General Service Board of Great Britain for their collective vision and ongoing commitment to support the growth of Alcoholic Anonymous in Europe and around the world.

Bernard Smith, a great friend of A.A. and past Chairman of our General Service Board, left us with these words concerning our great responsibilities for A.A.'s future:

“It is because we know of the tremendous impact that A.A. can have on generations that will follow us that we have been so painstaking in building a structure of service in the General Service Board, the General Service Conference, and the many service agencies that perform the essential daily tasks of carrying the A.A. message throughout the world. It is with good reason that Bill has described this structure of service as a legacy, deserving of the same attention and understanding accorded the First Legacy of the Twelve Steps and the Second Legacy of Twelve Traditions.

“But this Third Legacy of Service has a string to it. And the string is that we are granted the use of this legacy for our lifetime upon the condition that we will not only look after it, but increase its spiritual content for the generations that will follow us. Each succeeding generation, as it receives this legacy, must similarly protect it if they wish to employ it and gain life by it and pass it on to the next generation with an enriched spiritual content.

Thank you for my life,

Eva H – Austria

One sunny Sunday morning an old and esteemed AA friend called me and asked me for ESM-service. I was shocked and my argument for rejection was my bad English.

He didn't accept that, but countered that I've an English-speaking sponsor, read English literature, go to English-speaking meetings and write and share my inventories in English. Then he asked: "Do you want to volunteer or do you want to be brilliant and admired?" Now I had no more reason to say no. Yes, the truth was, that I wanted to be brilliant and admired – or course, but I admitted it only to myself.

So I tried to get information about my "new job" and God gave me a wonderful sponsor in service, in the form of an old and dear AA friend. I read a lot in the concepts and also the former ESM reports to learn as much as possible about ESM. I was very afraid of this service – I was afraid to be a failure.....

And so, at my first ESM two years ago I was very nervous, made a lot of pressure and nothing I did was good enough (for me!) - did I want to be perfect? I think so....

I had to pray a lot. I prayed for humility, for faith in God and AA, to do God's will, to be a useful tool, to be of maximum service to God and the people about me – as it is written in our Big Book.

ESM passed by well. It was hard work for me, a lot of new impressions and a lot of spirituality.

Afterwards I had to make my report and try to spread the information around AA in Austria. So I reported in intergroup meetings, at GSC, and in region meetings, and I think the friends were interested.

But reporting in the groups I had sometimes to experience that I wasn't everywhere and every time welcome. I was quite shocked when sometimes faced refusal and resistance. Some groups only wanted "their meeting" – nothing else.

I prayed for intuition and shared with my service sponsor I call lovingly my "mother-hen", but I had to face and accept the situation and to try to have an understanding for these friends: Our groups get a lot of minutes, reports and messages, so that there is sometimes an overflow. For me this means more love, patience and understanding instead of being touchy and making a retreat. Praying for humility I remembered that I was sober only by the grace of God and only for today. But God also gave me the strength to speak up and emphasize that it's not fair to vote for somebody to do certain service and then not want to hear anything about it. Service efforts use a lot of energy, work and money – money from AA as a whole. Most of these friends changed their mind and listened, and I tried not to tell too much at once, so this wonderful service gives me possibility to grow and mature by and by.

This ESM was my second, and I really could enjoy it. I wasn't as afraid and nervous as I was 2 years ago. I will try to pass on what I got to know and also will introduce my successor as well as I am able.

Thank you for all your help and support, for your love and understanding! God bless AA and God bless you all – thanks!

Rio M – Switzerland (French Speaking)

I am feeling very emotional and thankful to be here with you all and grateful for my life today. The gratitude I feel is deep and special, with a total absence of any negative feelings.

I remember my first and second AA meetings, and in those early meetings, how people were expressing their feelings, both negative and positive. I had no feelings for anyone or anything for many years, neither negative or positive. Then, like turning a switch, I learned that **I could feel**, and found the true enrichment of my life.

I can learn from everyone here. Every one of you have given me something. I am so happy that today I can express and share my emotions. Although, just for the moment, words do fail me as the feelings are so strong and good, but I will carry them home with me to share and keep with me for ever.

Thank you all.

Filippo B – Italy

When I was first approached to give a closing address I felt very worried, nervous, and now that it's here, rather emotional.

Early on, I was told by an “old-timer” at a little group in the middle of Italy that doing service is the most gratifying feeling, and now I know that it is, and service is always important. I am not able to think of my years of sobriety, without service work, and I really enjoy it.

These last three days with you have been full of emotion and happiness, but I have to go back to my home group in Florence and it’s not easy to talk about Europe at group level, but when I report at the Italian Conference, everyone was interested when I spoke about other countries.

At first, I wasn’t sure that I wanted to do European Service because I thought that we would be dealing with abstract questions, but in truth the questions were important. I began to think, and use experience gained from the ESM, even at my own group. All groups need to feel part of the whole. I am not alone, and my Fellowship not alone in Europe.

I found it very interesting going to the Great Britain Conference. Following the experience, the Italian Conference is adapting the way in which we get questions, so that they come from the Italian Fellowship rather than GSB in Italy.

I shall miss everybody. It has been special being with everyone and at this hotel, which is a bit old fashioned and not contemporary, but part of the whole “comfortable” atmosphere of this ESM weekend.

Thank you all.

Closing Address

Inge d R – Chairman 14th European Service Meeting

Dear Friends. I am Inge, and I am an alcoholic.

Two years ago I was chosen chair of this ESM and I felt grateful for, and honoured by your confidence in me. Last year I was here again as a member of the agenda committee together with Ann, Ann, Angela, Roger, and Rio to prepare this meeting. It is over now, and that makes me a bit sad. Time goes quickly when you are with friends, so apparently do conferences when you are with them.

It was such a privilege to be chair, to be able to do this inspiring job with the help of all of you, and especially with the help of the staff, and last but not least with the help of my Higher Power. I would not have been able to do this on my own.

When I drank, the idea that I would be able to do work like this, to be of real service, was far beyond me. It is incredible that I have learned so much by surviving my addiction, that I have become more capable because of my addiction than I ever could have been without it, that I have become useful instead of useless. I found AA almost 15 years ago. For me there would not have been any future if AA had not been there for me, and I would not have been able to take my responsibility now, to be of service to the Fellowship together with all of you. AA was there for me. I was a suffering alcoholic and AA did what it had to, and was able to do: it carried out its message to me. It rendered me service: it sent two sponsors who told me their stories, they took me to my first meeting, there I met others, they gave me a chair, a table to hold on to, coffee and a lot of hope, hope that I would be able to overcome my addiction, that after so many years of endless trying to become sober, I would have a chance to become a sober, happy alcoholic, as long as I would listen to what was being said in the meetings and by my sponsors, as long as I would be prepared to do the Programme. It was too early to believe in Promises. At that time I had not heard of them yet, neither had I heard of the Big Book. Now after so many years I believe in them, gradually they are becoming true, thanks to the service rendered by the Programme of AA.

During this meeting you discussed the theme ‘Service: our future and responsibility’ in the plenary meetings, in the workshops and committees. It was a pleasure to observe the unanimity with which you confirmed the conclusions that the several workshops and committees presented. It has been gratifying to see the competence and care you showed in addressing the various topics.

I thank each of you for your kindness to me. It was great to make so many new friends again. I hope that each and every one of you will go back to your own countries full of

peace, joy and serenity, and that you will share your experience of this ESM with the Fellowship at home.

Now, I would like to read to you a poem that I found in the book 'Search for Serenity and how to achieve it' by Lewis F. Presnall

The search is yours and mine.
Each finds his way with help,
But yet alone.

Serenity is the goal.

It comes to those who learn to wait
And grow;
For each can learn to understand himself
And say, 'I've found a Joy in being I,
And knowing you;
A knowledge of the depths I can descend,
A chance to climb the heights above my head.'

The way is not so easy all the time.
Our feet will stumble often as we go.
A friend may need to give some extra help,
As we once gave to others
When in the hour of fear.
This is no picnic path that we have found;
But yet compared to other days
And other times,
It seems a better route.
We lost our way before;
In fear,
And guilt,
Resentments held too long.
Self-pity had its way with us;
We found the perfect alibi
For all our faults.

We do not know what life may bring
From day to day.
Tomorrow is a task not yet begun,
And we could fail
To pass its test.
But this will wait,
While in Today we do the best we can
Today we try to grow.
Today we live,
We seek to know,
To give,
To share
With you.

Thank you