

Alcoholics Anonymous

15th European Service Meeting
2009

Recovery
Has No
Borders



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Agenda Digest 15th ESM 2009

Friday 23rd October

Registration and Reception
Welcome and Opening Address
The Twelve Traditions
World Service Meeting Report
Keynote Address
Country Reports

Saturday 24th October

Committee Meetings
Questions & Answers Session
Workshops
Presentation and discussion of Committee Reports
AA Sharing Meeting
Theme: "You are going to find a new freedom and a new happiness"

Sunday 25th October

Presentation and discussion of Workshop Reports
Election of Chairman 16th ESM
Formation of Agenda Committee 16th ESM
Selection of delegate to report to and from 21st WSM
Closing Addresses

Summary

Delegates from twenty five European countries representing twenty seven separate AA structures, gathered together at the Hotel National, Frankfurt, Germany, on the 23rd to 25th October 2009 to take part in the 15th European Service Meeting.

The European Information Centre at York issued invitations to European Service Offices and listed below are the countries which attended. Included are delegates from Estonia, Romania, Slovakia & Greenland who we were delighted to welcome to the ESM for the first time. Unfortunately delegates from the Ukraine, Russia and the Czech Republic were unable to attend at the last minute.

Austria	Belarus
Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	Belgium (French Speaking)
Denmark	Estonia
Finland	France
Germany	Great Britain
Greenland	Iceland
Ireland	Italy
Latvia	Lithuania
Malta	Netherlands
Norway	Poland
Portugal	Romania
Spain	Slovakia
Sweden	Switzerland (French Speaking)
Switzerland (German Speaking)	

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

The 15th European Service Meeting was opened by the Chairman Ib B J, with a moment's silence. Ib then went on to welcome all of the delegates, with particular notice given to the first time countries, Ann N (General Secretary – EIC), Warren S and Valerie O’N who were there as observer from GSO New York, and the staff and secretaries. Lastly Ib went on to deliver a heartfelt Welcome Address, which put everyone at ease, and set a patient and serene tone for the various meetings over the weekend.

Following the Welcome and Opening Address, a very informative report of the 20th World Service Meeting was given by Jacek C (Poland), this was followed by the Keynote Address which was presented by Warren S, International Desk, GSO New York.

The second half of the evening was taken up with individual country highlights presented by each structure represented.

On Saturday during the Committees and Workshops, the sharing of experience in service and various discussions took place, with the final reporting back of recommendations to the full meeting.

Saturday evening allowed a little relaxation with the Sharing meeting. Two personal presentations were given by Mogens A (Denmark) and Monvids D (Latvia) on the Theme: "You are going to find a new freedom and a new happiness".

Following elections on Sunday morning, Jacek Chmielewski (Poland) was elected Chairman of the 17th European Service Meeting 2011, with Michael O (Ireland) as Alternate.

Jan-Ola J (Sweden) is to prepare a report concerning this 15th European Service Meeting to be presented at the 21st World Service Meeting 2010, and then report back with a presentation to the 16th European Service Meeting in 2011.

The Agenda Committee for the 16th European Service Meeting will consist of the following:

Jacek C	Chairman of 16 th ESM
Henrik R	Chair – Agenda, Policy, Admissions, Finance
Vitali Y	Chair – Literature, Publishing, Media Communications
James V	Chair – Working with Other Countries

The Agenda Committee will meet from in August 2010 to discuss questions received at the European Information Centre when the programme of the 16th European Service Meeting will be finalised and the Agenda set.

Finally Ib, our Chairman closed the 15th European Service Meeting with an uplifting Closing Address full of warmth and love for our Fellowship, which looked to the future with great encouragement.

The meeting then closed with the Serenity Prayer.

Opening Presentations

Welcome Address

Recovery has no Boundaries

Chairman - Ib J, Denmark

Good afternoon to all of you.

First of all I would like to warmly welcome every one of you who are attending this 15th European Service Meeting here in Frankfurt am Main.

My name is Ib and I am an alcoholic.

During the next few days it is my privilege to serve you as Chairman of the ESM and I feel honoured. I am grateful being sober so I can serve our fellowship Alcoholic Anonymous in this way.

It's a great pleasure welcoming old and new friends and especially delegates from countries and regions participating for the very first time. I hope we will all experience a meaningful time together in a loving atmosphere.

Our theme for the 15th European Service Meeting: *Recovery has no Boundaries* underline in a way the opportunities and importance of A.A. and as it seems that alcoholism has no boundaries either, A.A. could make a difference for a lot of human beings.

Our First Legacy of Recovery offers a simple 12 Step programme. Coming to A.A. the newcomer may follow these suggested 12 Steps when he/she wants to. If people are having problems with alcohol they become part of an AA Group if they want to. We make it easy getting help, we do not set up boundaries, but have an open door.

As stated in our guidelines for the ESM, our primary purpose *“is the same as that of all AA activity – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he/she may be, whatever the language he/she speaks”*.

Whatever AA activity you may experience in your country or region, whatever challenges you may have to face in your efforts to carry the message, you may share this during the weekend.

Through the Country Reports, Sharing Sessions, Working Committees, Workshops and “meetings in the corridors” we share pieces of information across national borders. We share information, which separately or put together may encourage each of us to find new or previous tried ways to serve A.A.

Last year I had the privilege and pleasure to serve at the 20th World Service Meeting as a delegate. I remember some warm and loving days and recall this

statement: “None of us knows more than all of us”. As I see it this statement holds the essence of the importance of our European Service Meetings.

The 5th World Service Meeting held in 1978 in Finland recommended the setting up of a European Service Meeting. The 5th WSM expressed concern that many countries who might most benefit from the AA experience being shared, could not send delegates to the WSM.

It was therefore suggested that countries with less developed structures be invited to the European Service Meeting. The first ESM was held here in Frankfurt 1981 with the attendance of 17 countries.

Today here in Frankfurt we represent (29 AA Structures from 27 countries). Together we have a lot of experience, strength and hope and each of our AA structures may benefit from this. And if we take responsibility for this service and God is willing, A.A. will still be here in the years to come.

I hope you will enjoy this weekend, and may God bless us all.

Report on the 20th World Service Meeting, New York 2008 Service – Gratitude In Action

Jacek C, Poland –World Service Delegate

The World Service Meeting Statement of purpose says, that... *“The primary purpose of WSM is the same as that of A.A. Activity – to carry the message to 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.”*

59 delegates representing Alcoholics Anonymous from 40 countries and zones gathered for the Fellowship’s 20th World Service Meeting (W.S.M.) at the Crown Plaza, Times Square, New York, New York. The event took place October 26-30, 2008 and was hosted by the General Service Board of the United States and Canada.

Much discussion at the 2008 W.S.M. centred on the theme **“Service —Gratitude in Action.”** Some topics under discussion included A.A. literature distribution, communications and service structures. There also were workshops on new media and A.A. Traditions. The main sessions were in English and Spanish, with simultaneous translations.

Gonzalo P. of Venezuela in his keynote address shared about his journey into service ...

“With great fear and apprehension, I proceeded not knowing for sure what I was doing but moved by a great desire to serve the Fellowship that not only had saved my life but had given me, for the first time, a sense of responsibility and freedom as a human being”

I can only say that I fully identify with that sentence. What started on October 26th and ended passionately four days later with the Serenity Prayer recited in the languages represented was an exciting evolution of A.A. Co-founder Bill W's vision of A.A. “encircling the globe” Nowadays travelling and border crossing is much easier than in 1969, when the first WSM took place, but in spite of that the representatives of some countries could not enjoy and be profited of the meeting, because of the legal issues regarding obtaining the visas. That only shows that the efforts to make our Fellowship really united should be continued. And this is also my responsibility.

The meeting started on the Sunday's afternoon with registration and reception of the delegates and was followed by the traditional Red Ball Meeting. Later that afternoon Leonard Blumenthal non-alcoholic trustee and chairperson of the

U.S./Canada General Service Board welcomed the delegates and in his welcoming address noted that.... *“All of us have witnessed that, the seed of A.A., when planted and carefully tended, results in a flourishing movement embodying hope, recovery, and general well being. This it achieves, in spite of language, culture, politics and geography”*.

Then the delegates had the opportunity to hear the country highlights. What followed over the next four days was plenty of workshops, presentations, discussions, reports of interim and zonal meetings, and meetings of the four standing WSM's Committees: Agenda, Literature/Publishing, Policy/Admissions/Finance and Working with Others.

The following presentations were given during the WSM:

Growth and Change Worldwide – one presentation on the topic **How do I express my gratitude in service** said... *“I'll never be able to express my gratitude and do something so great and beneficial to Alcoholics Anonymous because my sobriety is an utterly impossible miracle and I still can't believe it happened”*.

Ways for Young People to identify and feel at Home – in that panel there were three presentations: **Are We doing enough to Welcome Young People in A.A.**, **Are We doing enough to Welcome Young People in the Home Group** and **Are We doing enough to Welcome Young People in service**. This last was a theme for me – because I came to AA as a young man, and perfectly remember how hard it was to identify with all of those bleeding old-timers. :-)) What helped me to do so was my service in A.A. - *“I have recommended service especially for the young newcomers, because I know from my own experience that service is the best way to feel at home in the A.A. Group.”* said Kalle from Finland.

The next, very useful and interesting presentations were on a theme: **National Membership Surveys – Effective Tool in A.A. Service** In Norway our fellows let a professional nonalcoholic do the job of the survey for them... *“The 2007 survey will remain a valuable tool for those of us who seriously engaged in working with others toward accomplishing our primary purpose which God has given to us: go and reach out another alcoholic”* said Finn from Norway.

The following group of the presentations focused on the theme: **Service Sponsorship** before, during and after the service commitments.

The Importance of sharing A.A. Literature – was the next theme of the presentation given by the couple of delegates. That group of themes consisted of the three presentations: **A vision of the future, Our literature is An inexhaustible Mine** and **A Basic Way to Learn the A.A. Program**. In that presentation Svend from Denmark noted that... *“A.A. Literature has a great importance for the individual person in A.A. and for the groups and that provides the basic way to learn about the unique program of A.A, to get sober, to stay sober and to handle our lives generally.”*

Finally the delegates from Sweden, Brazil and The Netherlands shared their own country's experience in a field of **“On-line Groups – How are they working? Is anonymity protected?”** Good summary of this subject and explanation of the doubts was given by Inge from The Netherlands: *“we are still working on the subject and are convinced that on-line groups and a closed intranet offer possibilities, but we are also aware that prudence is called for: the Fellowship must not lose its serenity, its unity, its power”*

Committees:

Agenda

The most important recommendations were:

The main theme of the 21st World Service Meeting will be: “Sponsorship – our Responsibility”

The topics of presentations and discussions: Women in A.A., 7th Tradition, Young People in A.A. and of course Sponsorship: member to member, group to group, country to country, and many others regarding relationship with the others, impact of the new technologies.

Literature

The Committee accepted the International Literature Fund report, had a lengthy discussion on various aspects of Literature sale. Experience varies widely regarding the percentage of overall office income generated by sales of A.A. Literature – that factor ranged from 34 to 84 %. We also discussed about the controversy on the use of non-Conference-approved literature used or even distributed by the groups.

Policy/Admissions/Finance

Although one of the country's requests for participation at the 20th WSM was approved, that country was not in attendance. The committee encouraged that country to participate in the 21st WSM. The committee also approved requests of Belarus and Latvia for participation at the 20 WSM. The representatives of those countries were present at the meeting. The committee reaffirmed its policy regarding non-English or non-Spanish language delegates and moreover stated that: *“the purpose of the WSM is to carry the A.A. Message to the still-suffering alcoholic and that every effort should be made to assist non-English/Spanish speaking delegates wishing to attend.*

The next World Service Meeting will be held October 17-21, 2010

Working with Others

The discussion was based on different ways of doing service in A.A. by the cooperation with professional community and public information. Some countries had multi-year plans for P.I., some had a special P.I. campaigns including literature and/or CD/DVD kits, posting flyers, radio and TV programs, although the importance of face-to-face contacts and personal example was stressed. Correctional and treatment facilities are a must to be covered by the CPC and PI programs and activities. Some countries shared that the literature translation process can be a challenge. Many delegates noted that their countries had

developed pamphlets containing of aboriginal/indigenous people to try to help carry the message to these populations, which are often severely affected by alcoholism. I let myself to stressed the importance of the last problem – living in single-cultural society in Poland or many European Countries we often do not realize such the basic problems in carrying the message to those of different culture or religion.

Site selection

The following countries were bidding for 21st World Service Meeting: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Finland, German-speaking Europe, Honduras, India, Malta, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden and Switzerland. The committee unanimously recommended that the site of 21st WSM be Mexico and the alternate site be Honduras.

The following workshops took place at the 20th WSM:

New Media and The Traditions

Offices and Boards communicate via e-mail often and efficiently. Almost all countries maintain A.A. websites. Some countries have simple site, some have more professional, sophisticated and dynamic. A.A. web site has many features like: helpline phone numbers, helpline e-mails and “chats” , information for professionals, students, group directories, A.A. literature sales, previous issues of the magazines, “intranet: for A.A. service and many others. Anonymity is utilized in the same way on A.A. Websites as it is used at the level of press, radio and TV. Several noted that there are problems regarding anonymity with on-line A.A. meetings. Some A.A. members show their full faces photos of themselves on-line.

How General Service Board and General Service Offices comply with their country's laws

All countries reported that their boards or service office obtained legal status. Most have obtained non-profit status and/or are considered to be charitable organizations.

Most agreed that having obtained legal recognition has been far more helpful than not. Some felt that it had given those involved in service a heightened sense of responsibility.

Answering the last question most countries stated that hearing about other country's experience was very helpful in the process of complying with their country's laws.

Concept X

Very common opinion was that The Twelve Concepts are not well understood. Delegates share the methods of bringing the awareness and understanding the Concepts – reading them at business meetings, printing them in local A.A. magazines, holding workshops to discuss them. Regarding Concept X – most delegates have stated that they have roles and responsibilities clearly defined. Many delegates shared that in their countries equal authority and responsibility at all levels. Trust is a requirement for successful delegation of authority and responsibility.

After the meeting delegates had the opportunity to visit General Service Office and Grapevine Office in New York City, and then were transferred to Bedford Hills, NY to visit Stepping Stones – home of Bill and Lois. There is no time to fully share the experience – for me it was unforgettable and very personal spiritual event. The delegates willing to do that could take a part in General Service Board of U.S./Canada meeting on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Thank you.

Keynote Address Recovery Has No Borders

Warren S

International Desk G.S.O. – U.S./Canada

Good Evening, my name is Warren; I am an alcoholic. I bring you warm greetings from your friends at the General Service Office for the U.S. and Canada in New York. It is indeed a privilege and an honor to be invited to address you at this the start of the 15th European Service Meeting.

Tonight, I am filled with gratitude. There are some in A.A. that describe gratitude as the acknowledgement of and the giving of thanks for favors unearned. Only a few years ago, this hopeless alcoholic lay on life's garbage heap wishing things had turned out differently. And then, in 1984, the miracle happened. Wrapped in God's grace I found A.A., almost fifty years after that fateful meeting of Bill W. and Dr. Bob. And, because of their strong desire to remain sober, their love for the still-suffering alcoholic and their vision, fifty years later, the program of Alcoholics Anonymous was available, to me, a black man in the United States. As we all know, A.A. and the spirituality it offers is accessible to all religions: Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and to nonbelievers. It is inclusive of women and the young and old alike. So you see — the theme of the 15th European Service Meeting – Recovery Has No Borders — has some special significance for me.

Almost from the beginning, the early A.A.s began carrying A.A.'s message of hope to the still-suffering drunk by crossing into whatever community he or she resided in. And because of that, the recovery each of us has come to cherish began to transcend borders – borders of race, religion, gender and age, as well as of language, culture and geography.

To insure that the A.A. program of recovery continues to permeate even the most formidable of borders, strong service structures have grown up and are continuing to grow around the world in an effort to make certain that whenever and wherever someone reaches out for relief from the deadly disease of alcoholism the hand of A.A. will be there.

In less than a year, Alcoholics Anonymous will celebrate 75 years of existence. The A.A. Fellowship has grown by leaps and bounds since that day in June 1935 when one drunk realized that his only hope of staying sober hinged on his helping another alcoholic.

In the 75 years since A.A.'s meager beginnings, the Fellowship has helped millions of drunks to live the full and productive lives they had only dreamed possible. Today, there is an A.A. presence in more than 180 countries and the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, has been translated into 60 languages with other material published by A.A. World Services, Inc. available in more than 75 languages.

However, we all know that there is still much to be done. Those of us who, by God's grace, have found this life-giving Fellowship know that we can ill afford to rest on our laurels. All of us here this weekend know first hand how high the stakes are. In the next two days, we will look at the challenges we have overcome in transcending many barriers, as well as those still to be met. Let us remember that just as we would go to any lengths to preserve our own personal recovery from alcohol, so too must we be willing to cross those cultural and geographic borders that would otherwise prevent us from reaching the outstretched hand of a still-suffering alcoholic.

The good news is that A.A. members worldwide have always realized how much their own sobriety depends upon carrying our message of recovery to the drunk still stumbling in the dark. And so, "the panorama of A.A. in action today" continues to unfold. As our co-founders envisioned, A.A.'s program of recovery truly is without borders. We have breached the once formidable barriers posed by age, gender, religion, and race. In addition, the A.A. message is now embraced in cultures where, for years, the stigma of alcoholism caused many to deny that alcohol was even a problem.

Many an alcoholic who has had occasion to leave his or her isolated community has come upon the A.A. message and taken it home. As a result, the A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism can be found in dozens of geographically remote communities throughout the world. Still, there are barriers to move aside and trails to be forged.

The service that A.A. provides is very important as evidenced by the millions of lives that have been transformed by the willingness of many A.A.s to carry its life-giving message to the still active alcoholic. Each of us in this room tonight can attest to the profound changes that A.A. has brought about in ourselves and in others. In the words of Bill W. it will always be incumbent upon each A.A. member to "Pass It On."

I take heart in knowing that Alcoholics Anonymous has provided me — us — with the powerful tool of being able to identify with one another. Identification radiates an understanding that many of us did not experience until coming into Alcoholics Anonymous. It is the simple act of sharing our experience, strength and hope. The early-learned fact that we share our experience in an effort to help another drunk demands that we not let the challenges we face keep us from passing on A.A.'s message of recovery and hope.

Thus I am confident that A.A. members filled with passion and gratitude throughout the world will make certain that the A.A. message of hope continues to be a beacon. A.A.'s light will not be dimmed by the "do not enter warnings" sometimes still exhibited when it comes to class, color, or creed. Likewise, A.A.s around the globe will not allow any bumps in the road posed by culture, language, and geography to prevent the hand of Alcoholics Anonymous from being there whenever the still-suffering drunk reaches for it.

The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous must forever be accessible to all who seek a sober life. Hence the theme, “Recovery Without Borders,” reminds us all of our responsibility to one another and to the alcoholics yet to find A.A.

A quote from a talk given at the 1954 General Service Conference of A.A. in the U.S. and Canada by Bernard Smith, nonalcoholic chairperson of the General Service Board, I think, aptly summarizes what has been shared here this evening:

We need to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unmasked and feel welcome. We need to ensure that A.A. never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, [or] what his or her social position is.

So as we share this weekend, may we each be filled with new information and a renewed commitment to finding ways to carry A.A.’s message to the alcoholic who continues to suffer, wherever he or she may be.

Thank you

Country Reports

Austria

General Structure

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

Within the GSAA there are 12 Inter-groups, 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 a non profit organization. Twice a year the Intergroup Meeting takes place, in spring it lasts 2 days, in autumn 1 day. The Business Meetings of our regions usually meet twice to four times a year. In one region there is a Chairmen's Meeting similar to the structure in German - speaking Switzerland.

Number of Groups

At the moment there are 157 AA-groups in Austria with approximately 1300 members. Special feature: One group in Vienna has 11 meetings (Every day there are one or two meetings at the same place during the whole week, but each meeting has its own services). Since more than two years there exists a group especially for young people in Vienna, another Viennese group has "depression" as a focal point. There are English speaking and Polish speaking meetings in Vienna as well.

Finance

AA in Austria works with the principle of the "overflowing hat" as usual. That means that all the money which is not necessary for the groups for their self-support, like rent, literature, etc. is transferred to the region, the leftovers go to the intergroup, from there the still extras go to GSO Germany, they are supposed to pass donations on to GSO in York and New York.

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

Services

There are meetings in prisons, hospitals and Detox-centers and their number grows steadily. The number of information meetings for young people in schools, for apprentices and professionals has grown recently, mostly we work together with members of Al-Anon and Alateen who also share their experiences. The relationship between AA and physicians, nursing staff, staff in prisons, teachers and officers of other organizations is good. If problems arise they usually can be solved immediately.

In 2009 the GSAA Convention took place at Wels/Austria. It was a very harmonious, loving, sunny and successful event. About 2500 AA members attended plus about 900 Alanon and Alateens. The theme was "Alcoholism is a family disease". The meetings were visited quite well. The opening and the final meeting were very impressive and moving. It needed a lot of loving servants to make the Convention a success.

Literature

AA Austria uses the literature of GSAA. At the moment there are two different opinions about adapting our literature to a language that is up to date: part of the groups are for a revision (referring to the concepts!), another big part is against the overworking with the argument that the present literature is good enough, so we don't need a "new" one.... So the group conscience of the GSC 2006 decided to stop every overhauling of the literature. That meant no translations, corrections or advancements, not even the flyers for public relation may be overworked now. The GSC 2007 again decided on the complete stop of revision of literature and installed a committee, which has to work on questions concerning literature. The last GSC constituted another literature team to start working right now. The whole situation leads to conflicts and excitement throughout the GSAA, the consequence is that entrusted servants at the Intergroup Meetings are losing their

serenity and objectivity. More than one friend resigned from his service after careful consideration.

At the last Intergroup Meeting the group conscience decided to confront the next GSC with the revision of literature, outmoded literature is an enormous disadvantage in passing on the AA Message.

Sponsoring of other countries

The number of groups who have an “Ants’ box” or “Beatles’ hat” for collecting money for sponsorship in other countries is growing. This sponsorship money goes directly to the International Funds in NYC. Generally the other sponsoring tasks are left to GSAA as a whole.

Relationship to other countries

AA-Austria has close relationships with the other Inter-groups in GSAA in Germany, Switzerland and of course, South Tyrol. The relations to AA Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are improving. Because of the visits of each others’ meetings our cooperation increases.

Public Relations

In most of the local magazines there are regular informations about the local AA-meetings, sometimes articles about alcoholism and AA. AA-connections, informations and AA-meetings can also be found in internet. A lot of groups and/or regions informs physicians, hospitals, detox-centers, prisons, schools regularly, they receive meeting-lists, literature and flyers.

Many groups celebrate anniversaries by organizing a special day with many Meetings, usually also a Public-Information meeting together with Al-Anon and Alateen.

Internet

Since 2003 the Austrian AA-homepage was closed, the old URL <http://www.anonyme-Alkoholiker.at> is automatically forwarded to the newly designed Webpage of the German speaking AA. <http://www.anonyme-Alkoholiker.de>. However, we have kept the Austrian domain in order to be able to use our old email addresses, since they are well know to many institutions outside of AA. Furthermore, in the near future we will start another Web-forum for exclusively internal Austrian AA purposes like communication, quick sharing of coming events, downloads of service material, etc. The domain name is not yet determined, but chances are that it will be www.billundbob.at in honour of our cofounders.

AA-Magazines

The general German magazine “DACH” is the magazine for GSAA. “DACH” means roof – the common roof for AA in Germany, Switzerland, 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/South Tyrol 2 friends are working for DACH.

Belarus

General Service Conference

The first Conference was held in Minsk in 2003 and since then passes annually. This year we are holding the Seventh. It differs from previous ones in that the delegates have the opportunity to take the initiative. Now the delegates cannot stand aside of affairs. The delegates will be given the opportunity to work in the small conference committees in different areas of service.

General Service Board

At present our General Service Board has an incomplete structure consisting of 7 persons. The Conference trusts the General Service Board to function in an incomplete quantitative structure if necessary.

Groups, Intergroups and Committees

The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Belarus consists of 64 groups. There are 2 Intergroups – in Minsk and Grodno. ‘West’ regional service structure has been reanimated. There is a re-organization of committees and Idle committees have been abolished, but the necessary directions for our Fellowship are being developed.

General Service Office

The office is open four hours per day, except days off, with volunteers working at office on these days. There are three employees: the Director, the Secretary and the Accountant who gets small salaries for their jobs.

Literature

Belarusian General Service Office and Russian GSO participate in publishing of AA books and booklets together. It is not profitable to publish literature in Belarus because of small circulations. Belarusian AA newspaper “The Twelfth Step” has been published since 2005, but now there are intentions to start publishing a magazine.

Finance

Only about 60 percent of 64 AA groups send their donations towards GSO. Our budget is composed of the following: 40 percent are donations from the groups and 60 percent are the AA literature sales. Donations from groups cover only the cost of office maintenance and hired staff. There is no reserve fund in Belarusian GSO.

Hotline and the Internet

There is a telephone number available on a twenty four hour basis.
The official AA of Belarus web-site is: www.aabelarus.org

Work with other organizations

A positive contact of Belarusian AA Fellowship and the Orthodox Church was established recently. There were several round table discussions held with clerics. Now clergymen are getting an explanation of AA activity and the AA Message at Seminaries and the Theological Academy. Our Committees also co-operate with authorities, mass media, medical institutions, social services and correctional facilities. We pay much attention to involving new members in service.

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)

Structure

There are 314 groups spread over the 5 provinces of the dutch-speaking part of Belgium.

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

The GSB supports and encourages everyone in carrying out the resolutions of the General Service Conference.

The board is composed of a chairman, this is a class A (non-alcoholic) trustee; three class A (non-alcoholic) trustees, from the different provinces; ten class B (alcoholic) trustees; the secretary and one representative of each of the seven national services. Six other members participate in a advisory capacity – these are the Secretary of the non-profit association “Aldinea-Bel”, the GSO employee, two WSM and two ESM delegates.

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

Finances

The five provinces pay contributions to the treasurer of the General Service Board. That money comes mainly from the group contributions, the sale of literature and our yearly convention. According to the Financial reports of the last two years, we notice that a substantial decrease has occurred in supporting our Fellowship, 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.

Literature

The publication of our magazine, "Five to Twelve" is handled by the "Managing Editor" who is an AA-member. He is assisted by the Editorial Board. The magazine publishes ten issues a year with a circulation of some 2100 copies per issue.

The Literature Committee is a team of AA-members. The committee is responsible for the translation, developing and the update of our literature and pamphlets. Our most recent translations were; "Came to Believe", "Too Young" and "The best of Bill". The committee is working now on the translation of the book "Dr. Bob and the good Oldtimers." There is an active participation from AA Netherlands.

Loners

The Loners Committee is a hard-working team of AA-members. The members of the Loners Group receive AA-meetings in print, and current information every two months. At the moment we have 47 Loners, 45 Loner Sponsors and 4 Loner Groups.

General Service Office

Our GSO is located in Antwerp. It 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 a salaried staff member, Michèle. The office is open on weekdays from 10.00 a.m. till 3.00 p.m. During off-hours and in the weekends, a telephone service operates.

The seven National Committees make use of our GSO office space, to hold their meetings during the weekends.

Conferences

Our 17th General Service Conference was held in 2009; the theme was; "Patience and Tolerance." A printed final report of the conference goes to all groups. The 18th Conference is scheduled for April 2011 with the theme; "Positive Thinking."

The aim of our yearly National Convention is to have a "get-together" 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 West-Flanders with the theme; "Participate Together." The next convention is scheduled for May 2010 with the theme; "75 years of AA World-wide."

We usually send delegates to the European Service Meeting and the World Service Meeting. We also send observers to the General Service Conferences of our neighbouring countries. Reports of these meetings and conventions are sent to all groups and are discussed by our General Service Board.

Website

Our current website is undergoing a face-lift. We plan to make full and effective use of all modern information, communication and technological tools, to better reach and help the still-suffering alcoholic.

Belgium (French Speaking)

Structure

Belgium's French & German speaking region has made an important change to its structure. We have become an organisation of 4 regions instead of 8.

This decision to change has been the result of lots of trouble and discussions. Some older members of AA are sceptic about this, but we are sure to get more people into the AA services by doing so. Our 2007 Conference decided this radical change, and it was confirmed in 2008 and made legal. There are now 218 groups in the 4 regions.

Literature

“SOBRIETE EMOTIONELLE” emotional sobriety is the title of our newest book. The 2007 & 2008 Conferences agreed to the publication and the first successful sales were in September 2008 during the Arlon event. We are also currently publishing our “PARTAGE” (Grapevine) in cooperation with France and Switzerland (French speaking part). We also offer Box 32 (our 459) to all groups and services in our part of the country. There is also a translation service assured by volunteers. We are trying to approach our senior citizens and the deaf.

Finances

The 2008 income was (without the intervention of publications and the Conference) about € 92.962,50. Sale of literature is about 44%, Seventh Tradition from groups and services represents 32%, another 7% is the “sobriety cent” and there is 1,1% held by our Anniversary Plan.

Expenses in 2008 were € 96.614,06, this means some 27% to buy literature, 61% goes to our GSO and 12% for the services. But the negative difference is due to a important information event to be held in spring instead of autumn.

Balance is quite the same as in 2007, that's why I don't wish to comment or discuss those numbers here. (96.252,13 € i.a. & 96.241,65 € e.a.)

Conference Themes

The March 2008 conference has been turning around the theme: “Communication is serving the AA”

The 2009 edition of this event is dedicated to the theme: “Gratitude through the services in AA”

Congress Themes

The 2008 congress was held in Arlon a town near the border of France and Luxembourg in September with the following theme: “Anonymous, but not invisible”. The next congress will take place in Frameries a town between Brussels and the French border with this message or theme: “AA mine d'éspoir.. AA a mineof hope”

Website

See: www.alcooliquesanonymes.be reshuffled as usual

Public Information

This service is most important, because it assures the 12th Step, visiting schools and companies and the authorities. PI service workers are also involved in the springtime event in Brussels to inform the “privileged partners”, people from universities, hospitals, police and judges. (approx.400 people).

Online Groups

They exist but our conference still doesn't include them as they are now by the N.Y. GSO, so we're still waiting to include them in our structure.

They tried especially to build up communication with Quebec, and as far as I know it works.

Survey

There hasn't been one for the last two years, see the numbers in the reports of the XIV ESM in 2007. Next one projected in 2012.

"Partage" Magazine

This is included in the paragraph under the heading of Literature.

Miscellaneous

Services in hospitals and prisons are growing, not spectacularly but there is something done for these people too.

Future Prospects

We need to work on and adapt our legal status – there is a group of members working on this, but we need to have it controlled by lawyers.

Czech Republic

Short Introduction

AA came to Czech Republic at the end of 1989 or at the very beginning of 1990. It was brought by Czech people living in US to whom were given the opportunity to return home after the Velvet revolution. From this time, we keep going & growing. Every year we set up several Inter-group events, such as Twelve Steps seminars and Anniversary meetings. AA in Czech Republic is going to celebrate its 20th anniversary next year.

General Service Office

GSO is in the meanwhile officially situated in Prague at the address: Na Porici 16, Prague 1, 110 00, Czech Republic. Unfortunately we have to deal with several problems related to GSO activities. Non-Prague groups are unsatisfied with its functionality; opinion of Prague group members is disunited. These problems originate from break of principle of service rotation. Most of our members see it as a break of 2nd Tradition. This summer we took certain steps to solve these problems and we are currently working on it.

GSO manages web-site, bank account of Prague's groups situated at Na Porici (this account was for a long time considered as Czech AA account) and all administrative arrangements of Czech AA. Once a year, usually at the end of January, GSO assembles for the General Service Conference, we had another one this year at the Republic Convention in middle of July. At the above Conference and Convention our trusted servants report to group delegates about, what GSO has done during past six month/past year and will be doing in next six months/next year.

January 2009 at the General Service Conference we elected 5 trusted servants who should supervise GSO activities. To this service were elected these members:

- Jara B. – Prague; who has been the Head Secretary of Czech AA since January 2008 and whose service period ends at the end of January 2010.
- Martin – Ostrava
- Michal – Brno
- Liba – Ceske Budejovice
- Franta R. – Prague

Trustees are elected for the service period of two years. Jara B. will pass on his duties as Head Secretary of Czech AA in January 2010 after the election for this service. Trusted servants as well as Head Secretary of Czech AA are unpaid services.

At the Czech AA Convention, held in July, clarification was agreed of GSO activities and that is going to be found new service organization responsible for administrative and organizational

needs of Czech AA. This organization shall work on virtual basis. We assume that no actual office building is needed for its functionality. All its members will be elected in accordance with principle of 2nd Tradition and with assurance of service rotation which we believe is necessary. Also it was agreed that there will be a new service account opened for national purposes such as publishing of books and pamphlets or organization of national conventions, etc. The Organization should start up its activities officially from the beginning of the next year. In January 2010 at the Delegate Service Meeting shall be finished and approved its concept and immediately after that its activities shall start.

For the purposes of better information about AA's organizational and administrative matters we have established a new email address vsoaacr@blm.cz which is set up as a conference and all emails delivered to this address are distributed to all registered members. Every member of Czech AA may register himself to this conference.

Literature

Two books and several pamphlets were translated into Czech language when AA was introduced in Czech Republic. These books are the Big Book and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. GSO in New York helped us by printing books and pamphlets and gave them to us for free.

Now we are trying to stay independent in these matters. We have started a Literature Fond. We have translated books: Daily Reflections, As Bill sees It, Came to Believe, which have not been corrected as yet. Correction of Living Sober shall be finished by the end of September 2009 and some another pamphlets, now we are dealing with GSO in NY about printing licence for our country.

At the beginning of this year we started to print our own periodical "CESTA". The magazine has been produced by Brno group members, especially by the "younger" ones. Unfortunately we do not have all licences necessary for its publication but we are working on getting them. Some of our members have remarks on periodical content but most of us support its publishing. But for sure we are prepared to consider these remarks in next editions. CESTA is published on quarterly basis and every edition is addressed to a certain Step and certain Tradition (started with the 1st Step and the 1st Tradition then continues with the following ones). The periodical contains entire list of AA meeting with contacts and either entire list of all 12 Steps meetings in Czech Republic (eg. AL-Anon, CoDA, NA, etc.)

We continue on pamphlets translation and Big Book correction. In summer this year we received last 1.200 pcs of Big Book from New York therefore we would like to have the Big Book corrected before printing next edition which is going to be printed at our own expense. As a part of Big Book we would either like to print our member's stories which are being collected by one of our member (Augustin, Prague) and some of them were and/or are going to be printed in periodical "Cesta".

Membership, Meetings and Groups

In last years we have been growing fast. Our groups have more constant members and escalate our possibilities like Sponsorship or working on 12 Steps.

At the moment there are 43 Czech speaking meetings a week in 26 towns of Czech Republic and besides that there are 14 English speaking meeting a week in Prague and 1 in Brno.

Finance

In past years the bank account of Prague AA groups was considered as National AA Account. In respect of growing amount of AA groups in Czech Republic and not sufficient co-operation of Prague's GSO, a need to split both accounts has arisen

At the beginning of 2010 a new account shall be open as we informed you above and finances from Prague groups shall be separated from National finances. Individual groups will have the opportunity to contribute its surpluses to National Account. These finances will be used for national purposes such as literature publishing, preparation of conventions etc. Prague group will

be requested to contribute the finances earned from selling the literature (which was received for free from GSO in NY) to this new account. Besides that all groups will be asked for voluntary donation.

National Account will be controlled by elected members - treasurers. To settle each payment from this account it will be necessary that it is approved by Board of Trustees and each payment has to be authorized by 2 treasurers.

Convention

The Czech Annual Convention is held every year on June. The place of the convention is changing regularly, depending on which group is going to prepare and host the convention. The theme of the convention changes every year too.

Next year's, 2010, convention will be prepared by Brno group and as a part of it will be celebration of Czech AA 20th Anniversary.

Public Information's and the Website

Thanks to people who are interested in our Fellowship there is sometimes an article in newspaper about local groups. Several groups also have their own brief information leaflet, which they distribute in public places like apothecary and medical attendance.

The website brings the basic information about Czech AA, contact of local groups, AA literature and a list of prepared events. Czech websites are at the address: www.anonymnialkoholici.cz and at www.sweb.cz/aacesko.

Several years ago the e-mail address aacesko@seznam.cz was established to improve communication with other people around the world and for people searching for help. This email address is maintained by Prague's office. One or two people are taking care of answering all incoming emails.

There are two people who serve in the position of telephone contact persons. Their personal phones are available for other alcoholics during all day and during the night if they want to (it is up to these persons).

Info-meetings in treatment facilities, relationship with professionals and Al-Anon, Al-Ateen and ACoA (Adult Children of Alcoholics)

Our members take part in the info-meetings which are held in the treatment facilities around the Czech Republic. The main purpose of these meetings is to carry the message to alcoholics who are in the first stage of the treatment, give them the information about AA Fellowship, simply reach the hand. There is a number of doctors who are helping the Fellowship by their co-operation with us. Some of them give their patients the opportunity to visit AA meetings during their treatment or they use the AA Principles in the process of the treatment. Some of them give their patients advice to go and visit the AA meetings. The best co-operation is that with facility of Bohnice, where there is an AA meeting on the regular basis. We co-operate with several doctors who visit our convention just like guests and support us. Some of our events, eg. Step seminars, we can make right thanks to them.

Co-operation with Al-Anon groups is slowly getting better. We try to support Al-Anon Groups for example by letting them organize their own meeting at the convention. There are 2 Czech speaking Al-Anon groups in Czech Republic. One is in Prague the other one in Ostrava. Also we have one English speaking Al-Anon group in Prague. There is one ACoA group in Prague and as we are informed no Al-Ateen group.

Relationship with other countries

Our fellowship has the closest relationship with Slovakia. It is the result of the similarity of our languages and of the fact that our countries were the parts of Czechoslovak Republic which was divided in 1993. Our delegates take part in the Slovak service meetings and vice versa. Members of Ostrava intergroup are in a close contact with AA groups in Poland. Thanks to the internet we are in close contact some Czech AA members who live all around the world.

Closing remarks

We really appreciate the invitation of Czech delegates to the ESM. We hope that this can help us to improve our service structure and to carry the message to the alcoholics who still suffer which is the main purpose of the AA Fellowship.

Denmark

Structure

General

During the 1980ies (after “the big slumber”) AA began to grow. The fact that many new treatment facilities recommended their patients to go to AA meetings caused the membership grew rapidly. In 1985 18 AA groups were registered; 1989 the number was 89; 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 was 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.

This year the entire service structure was in a workshop at the General Service Conference, which will hopefully lead to an even better structure going forward.

Meetings and Groups

As of today there are 461 meetings in our official meeting list. Recently a few groups have started having more than one meeting. Generally there are no distinguishing between meetings and groups. 6 meetings are held in English, in three different cities. 2 meetings are in Greenlandic language, four meetings are in Icelandic language, and these are all in the Copenhagen area. There is one Danish speaking meeting in Spain and one in Thailand. There are now 2 meetings on the internet in Danish language.

Regions

AA Denmark is divided into six regions. The Nation Denmark was recently divided into five regions. The groups elect Group Service Representatives (GSR) to meet at 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.

All Regions has created a Service Manual. The Regions build up their service structure like the one for AA National. Furthermore the Regions have strengthened the public information service throughout the country. They cooperate through the national public information committee. Several Regions have succeeded in finding a non alcoholic friend to serve locally. 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. In some regions it seems a little hard to have new people to step up. In others there seem to quite a good representation from the groups.

General Service Board (GSB)

The GSB consists of 10 members. In addition to the 6 trustees nominated by the Regions, and approved by the General Service Conference, the GSB comprises a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Treasurer and a Secretary, who are all, elected by the General Service Conference. All members are obligated to meet or send a deputy.

Currently there are no non-alcoholic members in the GSB. There are no plans of trying to find non-alcoholics for the GSB until we have a clear description of what their tasks will be. A representative for each 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.

The Board meetings have been divided into two parts. In the first part all GSB member and the representatives from standing committees are present and all matters concerning the committees are discussed. Second part is for GSB members only, though matters concerning a certain committee or function will have representatives present while the matter is dealt with.

General Service Conference

The Danish General Service Conference is held each year in April. The 2009 conference had 92 participants, 69 of whom were voting delegates. Guests from Sweden and Greenland were present and in 2008 we also had a guest from the UK. The past 5 years, the conference has taken place in the same location on the island Funen in middle of Denmark, from Saturday morning till Sunday afternoon.

The regional delegates are elected for period of four successive years without option to be re-elected at any time. The regional delegates have two third of the votes on the conference.

For several years we have sent two GSB members to the British Conference in York each year, this tradition is about to be amended as the fellowship now find that the conference is finding its own feet and AA in Denmark has a huge network through our international delegates to get the needed support without having to send people to York.

Beside our usually four working committees at our conference we have workshops too. The delegates have welcomed this innovation. Our General Service Conferences does not have themes – Yet. Like the British we manage to write and distribute the conference report before the Conference is over.

General Service Office

The current General Service Office (GSO) situated in Copenhagen was opened in May 1999. Literature sales, production and AA Data do their work from the GSO. Many Committees and the Copenhagen Region held their meeting at our GSO. There are no paid workers in GSO.

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 non paid AA-members. Chairmen are appointed by the committees and approved by GSB. The rotation period is four years.

Finance

At the 2008 Conference it was decided to build a reserve for 1½ years of expenses, calculated as an average of the expenses for the past three years. This has been practice for a long time, but was put into writing. The reserve at present covers about 15 months of expenses. Approximately half of our expenses are covered by group contributions and the other half from surplus from literature sales. Over the last couple of years we have seen an increase in contributions made to GSO both from regions and directly from groups. The literature surplus has also gone up a bit. All committees are requested to make up a budget for the year.

Literature

Most basic AA literature, brochures, and pamphlets are translated into Danish and sold from our General Service Office. We have decided to permanently make most pamphlets free of charge. All books in Danish have now been recorded. The CD's are sold along with the written literature.

The last publication is a version of the pamphlet “The AA group - where it all begins” created to fit the Danish structure and approved by AAWS. The book “AA comes of age” is almost finished in Danish. All translation is made and only indexes and final reviewing remains.

BOX334 is our nationwide magazine, which has been circulated since the beginning of 1990's.

Public relations

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 co-ordinate the effort and make it more efficient, the national Committee is comprised of one member from each of the six regions.

This year a film has been produced. The film is an informational clip on approximately 30 sec. The clip is shown on national public service TV several times.

For 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 help line is a success. Everyone gets an answer within 24 hours, also the e-mails are growing in numbers.

For the past 2 years AA had had a stall at the yearly conventions for doctors held in Copenhagen. More and more schools and educations request us to give information about Alcoholics Anonymous.

Internet

Several years ago AA Denmark established a web site:

www.anonyme-alkoholikere.dk which is still being improved. It is possible to order literature on the web site. All regions also have their own web sites hosted by AA Denmark. A standing committee (IT) is working on policies for using the electronic Medias and now a working group with representatives from each region is established to give our website a facelift. The committee is also the safeguards for Traditions and especially the anonymity is not being compromised on the internet.

Only conventions and meetings officially held by AA Denmark can be present in the online calendar. There are two e-mail meetings in our meeting list. The Big Book is available online. All meeting agendas and minutes from GSB are published on the website.

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 usually two observers have been 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. 2 AA members from Greenland have participated in the Danish Service Conferences in since 2006. The trips were paid by AA Denmark in the first two years. 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. This committee have now established contact with GSO in New York, who have agreed to pay for translations of 12 steps and 12 traditions and the Big Book in to Greenlandic language. The committee have fulfilled its tasks and has been dismissed. We are still following the progress in Greenland closely and assist with all experience we can. 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.

Estonia

History

The first AA groups in Estonia were established in 1991, with the help of the members of Finnish AA, the groups were launched in two towns, Tallinn and Tartu. Today AA is operating in 17 different Estonian towns with a total of 23 groups. The meetings are conducted in three languages, Estonian, Russian and Finnish. The approximate number of members is 250 – 300, in bigger towns the groups are made up of 20-30 members while in smaller towns the membership consists of 2-3 people.

The first Estonian-language copy of the book Alcoholics Anonymous was published in 1995 with the support of the Swedish AA. For 18 years, AA functioned without an established structure in Estonia. It is known that the representatives of a few groups came together but there was no systematic activity. The established managing committee broke up after a few years.

In 2008 the representatives of all the groups active in Estonia were summoned after many years, with an aim of creating the Service Board to coordinate the activities of AA. The representatives of most of the AA groups participated in the foundation meeting that reinstated the Service Assembly, made up of the representatives of the groups, who in turn appointed the AA Service Board. In late 2008 the AA Service Board was registered as a legal entity and its structure was established. When establishing the structure, we drew on the experience of other countries (Latvia, Lithuania and Finland), tailoring it to the conditions in Estonia.

Structure

Procedure for electing the members of the Estonian Service Board and the term of office

All members of the Service Board are elected or re-elected at the annual meetings of the Service Assembly. The nominal term of office for the members of the Service Board is four years. For the sake of continuity and sustainability, the Service Assembly may renew the powers of the members of the Service Board, but by no more than two one-year terms.

Pursuant to the statutes of the Service Assembly, the Service Board informs all groups about vacancies in the Service Board and asks the groups to nominate candidates. When the candidates have been nominated, the Service Board chooses the one(s) whose preparation best meets the requirements for working for the Service Board at the given time. Next the Service Board presents the candidate(s) to the Service Assembly for approval.

The persons appointed the members of the Estonian AA Service Board by the Service Assembly, elect the chairman of the Service Board meetings for a period of one year. The chairman is responsible for preparing, summoning and chairing the meetings of the Service Board.

The function of the Estonian AA Service Board and its members in the service structure

The Estonian AA Service Board is a permanent working body of the Estonian AA Service Assembly, which organizes the service-related activities of the Service Body in the periods between the meetings. In its activities, the Service Body proceeds from the decisions of the Service Assembly; the issues concerning the Union are presented by the Service Board to the Service Assembly for decision-making. The schedule and budget of the Service Board are approved by the Service Assembly. The activity and financial reports are presented by the Service Board at the ordinary meetings of the Service Assembly. The preparation of the ordinary meetings of the Service

Assembly is also the responsibility of the Service Board and the Service Board has the right to summon an extraordinary meeting.

The members of the Service Board belong to the Service Assembly, but not as an institution – the Service Board – but as single members of the Service Assembly, and they take part in devising the courses of action for the Estonian AA.

A majority of the service work of AA is conducted through the activities of the committees. The managers of the committees are members of the Estonian AA Service Board and as such also the members of the Estonian AA Service Assembly.

The legal entity representing the Estonian AA Union is MTÜ Eesti AA Teenindus: the members of the Estonian AA Service Board are also the members of the management board of MTÜ Eesti AA.

The membership of the Estonian AA Service Board and the eligibility requirements

The Service Board is made up of up to 10 members who are appointed by the Service Assembly. The membership of the Service Board and the election of the members are among the most important factors that ensure the effective functioning and development of the Estonian AA as a whole. There are no specific requirements that a candidate must formally meet in order to be eligible for the membership of the Service Board. However, there are a few indicators and personal characteristics that should be kept in mind when electing members.

Duration of sobriety

The Service Assembly holds that a member of the Service Board should have at least 3 years of continuous sobriety.

Organizational experience

Although an experience in enterprise or some other organizational activity is not compulsory for the members of the Service Board, it is still recommended, because the work of the Service Board is mainly organizational.

Individual managerial qualities

In AA, the following can be considered as such qualities:

The willingness deriving from one's personal gratitude to devote one's efforts and time to AA's work outside the group without remuneration; however, caution should be taken to avoid willingness that stems from a need for attention or ambition. Patience in forming uniform viewpoints and finding the best ways of acting, capability of handling divergent opinions with friendliness; Courage and judgment in explaining one's viewpoints while being ready for and objective about different viewpoints; Good interpersonal skills and ability to get people involved.

Knowledge of the service structure of AA

A member of the Service Board has to know the service structure of the AA, how the decision-making process works and how the decisions are executed. Knowledge of the history and development trends of AA and AA's directions is also desired.

Attendance

The member-candidates of the Service Board should carefully consider whether they have enough energy and time for this job, in order to avoid a negative effect on their families and careers. The members of the Service Board have to participate in the meetings of the Service Assembly, Service Board and committees, communicate with organizations or persons outside the AA, and solve day-to-day issues in their areas of responsibility.

The committees of the Estonian AA Service Board

The Service Board forms committees as necessary. The Service Board determines the competence and the area of activity of the committees. The Service Board also has the authority to dissolve, merge and transform the committees. The chairmen of the committees are in most cases members of the Service Board. The meetings of the committees take place as often as it is necessary in order to execute the action plan: determination of the time, place and agenda of the meetings lies within the competence of the committees.

Active committees

The cooperation partners committee

With its activities, the committee endeavours to achieve a mutual understanding and friendly cooperation between the Fellowship and the organizations or people who work with the matters of alcoholism and alcoholics – the aim of these activities is to contribute to the acknowledgement of AA as a way of healing in hospitals, rehabilitation centres, prisons and other establishments in order to make AA available to the alcoholics there.

We do not have a long-term cooperation with hospitals; there is no Minnesota-type clinic in Estonia. Relations with doctors and social workers are being developed and the first contacts for cooperation have been made. Prisons – an AA group has been operating in a men's prison for 6 years and in a women's prison for 1 year. The meetings in prisons are regularly, i.e. once a week, attended by AA members who live in freedom.

Publishing committee

It prepares and arranges for the publishing of AA's literature in Estonian. It communicates with AA's World Service and other AA establishments; prepares the necessary contracts and conducts necessary projects in accordance with AA's practices, publishing rights and liabilities. It also organizes the sale of published literature.

The book *12 Steps and 12 Traditions* will be published at the end of 2009 while publishing of a variety of booklets is also on the agenda. Publishing of the book is supported by Lithuanian AA, who has paid a part of the expenses related to publishing. The whole process of translating and publishing complies with the AA's rules for publishing literature.

Information committee

It organizes informing of the public about the AA movement and thereby tries to create in the society an attitude towards AA that enables the people, who need the help of AA, find their way to the AA Union in a less painful way.

The committee is also in charge of organizing the information exchange within AA: updating the information on the website of Estonian AA and the development of the website and regular publishing of the (internet-based) newsletter. The committee is also responsible for keeping the AA's information line(s) working.

Internet - AA's website has been up since 2001. www.aaestonia.com

AA's forum was created in 2008. <http://aa-eesti.homediscussion.net/>

Information line is working 24/7, tel. no. (+372) 52 999 55

Support activities

The Service Board organizes activities in the areas that support the service activities, such as the issues of the strategy of the Service Board, international communication, financial issues, functioning of the Service Office etc. The Service Board can establish appropriate working groups or delegate duties to individuals in order to carry out support activities.

Finances

All groups are financially independent, and to date none of the groups has needed any financial support. Most of the groups transfer their excess funds to the joint account of AA. The excess funds are not big because the years-long inactivity has unfortunately led to a situation, where there has been no purposeful activities to spend money to spread the message. Over the last year, the support to the groups has grown, that can be associated with the activity of the AA Service Board, who has explained the aims of spending the joint funds to the groups. There are also groups, who are very critical about innovations, object to any kind of organized activity and do not transfer the excess funds of the group to the joint account.

In 2008 we asked Lithuanian AA to help us publish the book *12 Steps and 12 Traditions* and they supported us with 835 Euros.

The AA Service Board has no paid employees and there is no office. The whole work is done at the meetings that take place at the group's facilities or at the members' homes.

From 2009 on, we proceed in our financial activities from the activity plan, coordinated and approved by the Service Assembly.

The members of the AA Service Board are allocated a limited amount to cover their day-to-day expenses that will be reported afterwards. The report must be approved by the Support Assembly. The whole body of financial information is sent to all groups twice a year.

Number of groups

There are currently a total of 23 groups in 17 different towns operating in Estonia with the approximate overall membership of 250-300 people. The senior members have been sober since Estonian AA was established in 1992; there is unfortunately no more accurate statistics.

Larger groups have approximately 30 members, whereas in smaller places the groups consist of 2-3 members. The groups work in Estonian, Russian and Finnish.

Relations with other countries

We have the longest relationship with Finnish AA, who has been of great assistance in organising the work of the groups. Since 2008 there have been very close connections with Lithuanian AA, who have helped us in creating the structure and supported us financially. There is also active communication with the members of Latvian AA.

Finland

Introduction

Last year, in August, the Finnish A.A. celebrated its 60 Years Anniversary. The celebrations took place in the City of Tampere. A large group of A.A. members and friends visited Tampere. Thank You All over the World!

Structure and Service Activities

The Finnish A.A. Service consists of the 20 delegates proposed by the areal A.A. groups. The Annual Meeting of the Finnish A.A. groups confirms the final composition of the Finnish A.A. Service, which chooses the members to the committees from among its delegates. The committees are Policy and Admission, Literature, International affairs, Public Information, Institutions and Carrying the Message - committees.

The Finnish A.A. publishing, Inc. consists of 6 trustees, who serve 3 years. They are selected in the Annual Meeting of the Finnish A.A. groups. The main tasks of the corporation are the responsibility of the Finnish A.A. office and staff, legal affairs, contracts, finance, PR, publishing actions such as copyrights and printing of AA literature. We have in our G.S.O. a staff of 3 workers. The economy of our Fellowship has been stable during the last years.

Bulletins/Internet

We have two monthly bulletins; Ratkaisu/Grapevine and Tiedotuksia/Information. The first one includes writings of AA members and the other one consists the monthly economical review and information of events, both are subscribed over 2000 copies monthly.

The web-address is: www.aa.fi and e-mail address is aa@suomenaa.fi. Contacts can be made in English as well.

Group Activities/Carrying the Message

We have 722 groups in Finnish A.A., 48 groups in institutions and 55 abroad. The groups are mainly Finnish speaking, partly Swedish speaking and a few English speaking groups. Groups organize

mainly 4 National Conventions yearly. Representatives from public institutions and media are invited to get information of A.A. and alcoholism.

The annual meeting of the Finnish A.A. groups takes place every Year during the Spring Convention.

In Finland we have a Telephone Answering Network, which covers the whole country and is supported by the groups.

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 2 years as a first term and 2 years as a second term delegate. The both delegates take part in the World Service and European Service meetings. They report of these meetings to the Finnish A.A.

Organized trips to different A.A. conventions round the world are usual.

Conclusion

The theme of this year in Finland is "Service as a help of Recovery" and it reminds us simply - the more we give, the more we get.

France

Alcoholics Anonymous France accounts 22 regions, 5 territories, 591 groups

General Service Board

- The General Services Board is made up of :
- 4 non-alcoholic administrators class A, (*of whom E. Palomino is President of AA France*)
- 5 administrators (class B) :
- 2 territorial administrators (for 5 territories - 3 posts are vacant)
- 3 administrators of the General Services
- The post of World Delegate is vacant
- 10 Service Committee Chairpersons (*nominated by the Trustees for a four-year term*).
- 1 European Delegate.

General Service Office

The GSO, located in Paris, consists at present of Office Manager, a full time Secretary and a half time Secretary. The GSO assists the GSB in the implementation of the decisions taken at the Conference.

It has besides :

- Participated in the RACO (meeting of zone of central and western Africa) in 2007
- Put premises in correspondence and settled the situation of the staff
- Revised the insurance contract including the English-speaking groups in France
- Handled more than 1.000 orders of literature
- Published and sent some 800 JSG (GSO News) and 500 reviews "Partage" (Share) sold by subscription in Belgium and in France
- Organized the annual conference

Conference

In April, 2008 the theme was: "Literature, the Tool of My Recovery" and In April, 2009 "The Language of Heart". The next conference will take place from 23 to 26 April 2010, the chosen Theme is: "The Fundamental of the Life of the AA Group".

It was decided to organize during every Conference a “French-speaking European Crossroads of exchanges” with Belgium and Switzerland. It will meet during each of the National Conferences of these three countries, and will be composed of 2 members from every country, and of the World and European delegates of these countries. It will treat subjects which every conference wishes to share.

Finances

Year 2007 finished with a negative result because of unplanned expenses of staff. The contributions of the groups were about stable, the exceptional contributions progressed; on the other hand the contribution of gratitude continued to fall (-31 % with regard to 2002) and the \$ of sobriety stagnates since 2005. The sales of literatures progressed by 2,63 %, the overheads fell of 3,16 %.

In 2008 the contributions were in decline. (-3,70 %).

The beginning of 2009 is promising, and we remain confident.

Literature and Files

The office wonders about the means to promote the sale of the literature. The literature contributes to a third part of AA France's budget, but it is the reading which we try to encourage, because it participates, for a third party also, in our recovery (meeting - telephone - literature).

A catalogue of books was printed and sent to all the groups. This catalogue constitutes an excellent tool to promote literature. This guide contains a source of information, ideas and reflections.

Reflection on the prices : We envisage a collaboration with Belgian and Swiss GSO to group our purchases (literature printed in Europe), and by this method to decrease our prices.

Archives: a guideline is available on the internal site.

National Telephone

The office has a mission to watch the unity of the activities of the telephone services. These services are often first contact points with our AA Fellowship. The services are held and managed locally by intergroup, districts or regions. The office brings support, tools and suggestions.

AA France opened in 2004 a National Telephone number (0820 32 68 83). This phone number is now present on all publications. Our purpose is that a person who calls AA in France can be put at once in direct contact with a sober alcoholic member.

Internet & Websites

The official AA France site is: www.alcooliques-anonymes.fr A non - official Web AA France site (inside Web AA site) is devoted to AA members, there we can find the reports of the different meetings of the committees and various documents for AA members.

This site is: [http:// bsg.alcooliques-anonymes.fr](http://bsg.alcooliques-anonymes.fr)

The new AA France's email is: bsg@aafrance.fr

Structure & General Policy

The Conference of 2008 decided in a great majority on the adoption of the new legal way of functioning of our association :

The new administrative organization : “The Union of Alcoholics Anonymous France”, with new status consists of associations of services.

Nothing changes in our internal and spiritual functioning, based on our program which includes the Steps, the Traditions, the Concepts and the Service Manual.

In 2009 the Conference confirmed the abandonment of the project of the creation of a Service Manual adapted in France, and decided to replace it by an appendix to the Manual " Introduction to the Service Manual".

This booklet will describe the specifications of functioning relative to our Country.

Health

We develop and maintain the presence of AA in structure of care. Informing all the healthcare professionals of the existence of AA, and bring them good knowledge of our movement.

We are present in the meetings of the national institutions of the Health, participate in quite other regional or national actions. We inform about the actions in service of care in the hospital environment as : emergency services, Gynecology, etc. We are at present involved in the National Congress by the holding of stands and meetings.

Justice

This service still frightened the AA members and the office is used to encourage the arrival of new servants. Having established itself little by little in Detention Centre with a certain success, the Office of Justice turned to "opened middle", where we can work as well upstream as downstream on the course of the answerable. The help of our natural allies and the experience of our class A (non-alcoholic) trustees is Invaluable and helps to transmit in Justice middle.

Business & Social Workers

This service post has to help the groups to realize actions of local information.

Two big National Actions are going to be organized. The purpose of these Actions is to make known the existence of one or several groups in the district, the city, or the canton, etc. by putting up posters in pharmacies, City Halls etc. carrying the lists of the groups with dates and times of the meetings. Let us not forget "anonymous but not invisible" we need always to make known more.

Media

The main part of the activities of the service position concerns the relations with all the journalists: press, TV, Internet, radio. We answer all their requests such as : Information, sharing, participation in forums. We suggest them speaking about the association and publishing articles on our existence and our role in the transmission of the message to the alcoholics.

The National Office organizes meetings with the officers' media of regions to help them to set up relationships with the regional media. It is hoped that in 2009 and 2010, to steer their actions towards the young people. Projects in 2009: - realization of a film for fifty years of Alcoholics Anonymous with sharing of old-timers at the origin of the movement in France and the creation of booklet "for the young people", on the web site.

We organize at the moment in the groups a national Gallup (survey) on the number of members.

Sponsoring of French Speaking Africa

France sponsors the groups AA of French-speaking Africa. AA is present in 8 country of this zone: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad and Togo.

A meeting of this zone named RACO (Reunion of the countries of Central and Western Africa) was held in France in December, 2007, and the next meeting of zone will be held in Douala – Cameroon, from November 25th till December 1st, 2009. This meeting is financed by AA France for a part, and by AA USA/CANADA for \$20 000.

One of the projects of the office is to organize a sponsoring of group to group, even from friend to friend.

European Delegate

Further to the ESM 2007, the French Conference decided to invite every year a European delegate from another country to our French Conference. This year Tomasz of Poland participated to our Conference, his presence, his experience and his sharing were particularly appreciated.

World Delegate

Belgium, France and Switzerland are gathered at the world level "European French-speaking Europe " and have two world service delegates: a French delegate, and alternately (every 4 years) a Belgian or Swiss delegate. At present France has no delegate.

Congress

The 48th Congress was held in ANGERS (West of France) in November, 2008 under the subject: "Anonymous But Not Invisible".

The 49th Congress will be held in VICHY (Center of France) on November 21st and 22nd, 2009 under the subject "Alcoholics Anonymous source of hope and serenity".

The office congress prepares actively the AA France's 50th Anniversary which will take place on November 20th and 21st 2010 in PARIS. You will be all welcome there.

Great Britain

Groups Intergroups and Regional Assemblies

We have at present 3,912 registered Groups in GB made up of 120 Intergroups, 16 Regional Assemblies of which 9 are in England, 5 in Scotland, and 1 each in Wales and Continental European Region.

General Service Conference (GSC)

We had our Forty Fourth General Service Conference in April of this year where:

- 95 Delegates from the 16 Regions attended
- 1 Delegate each from our magazines Share and Roundabout
- 22 General Service Board members
- 8 observers from the following countries: Belgium (French Speaking) Croatia, Denmark, Latvia, Poland, Netherlands, and two delegates from Ukraine.
- 5 members of staff from our Service Office

General Service Office (GSO)

GSO provides the links between Groups, Intergroups, Regions, The General Service Board, and the General Service Conference while acting as the European Service Centre. The staff of GSO and the two satellite offices in London and Glasgow are dedicated to providing services such as communication involving the Groups Intergroups and Regions stated above.

Business in an average week for GSO staff includes;

- 400 items of mail received
- 150 telephone calls
- 3 faxes
- 10 visitors
- 700 emails
- 800 pieces of mail sent out

General Service Board (GSB)

Our GSB at present consists of 21 members including 4 Non-Alcoholic Trustees (NAT's) with an Executive Committee of Chair, Vice Chair, Hon. Treasurer and Secretary. The Secretary (of the Board) is also General Secretary of the General Service Office in York and our Northern and Southern Service Offices in Glasgow and London.

Sponsorship

Using the Development Fund we have sponsored delegates from Tobago, Trinidad and Venezuela to the World Service Meeting last year and have financed half of the cost of the Sub-Sahara African Service Meeting in South Africa 2009. (*Delegates sponsored to attend our GSC are mentioned in General Service Conference*).

Finance

As anticipated the Fellowship's finances have been affected by the down turn in the world economy which has meant that Group and Intergroup contributions are down on last year and literature sales are also falling. Among various measures being implemented is Conference Calling for GSB Sub-Committees. This could mean that where ever the individual member of the committee resides it would be possible to link up and discuss the relevant business, while bearing in mind our financial situation.

Literature

Work in progress includes shares from male and female members for publications aimed at the Armed Services and Prisons, which allows new members the opportunity of identification. There is also the continued review of our Guidelines and literature in pamphlet form.

Armed Services

In the past twelve months AA displays and presentations have taken place at 20 different Armed Services establishments and answered other requests with pertinent AA literature. Meetings are in place in Germany at Paderborn and Moenchengladbach Barracks.

Public Information

Key national goals are;

- Attract new members
- Raise public awareness of AA
- Update PI literature and support local activity
- Improve co-operation with professionals
- Advance working relationships with the media

Key Activity Presentations 2008;

- The Welsh Assembly
- House of Commons
- The Scottish Parliament (The Scottish Executive are revising and updating a new strategy on how to reduce alcohol harm and Alcoholics Anonymous will be mentioned within it)

Electronic Communications (The Web)

This year the General Service Board GB decided that the timing was right for our website to be professionally supported. The plan is to have the site redesigned and to supplement our own service volunteers with outside technical support. The website will be upgraded to a new modern system across the whole site which will ensure stability and security for the future.

Our website address is www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

AA Service News

AA Service News is the principle vehicle for the communication of service matters within the Fellowship of Great Britain going out in quarterly issues.

Source of articles include:

- Delegates to European and World Service Meetings provide the Fellowship in GB with the experience of our membership worldwide,
- Members of the Fellowship are encouraged to submit articles that relate to their service experience at Group, Intergroup and Region.
- GSB Sub-Committee Chairs produce, when possible, articles describing their experience of carrying our message of recovery to public and private industry

Archives

Our new DVD *Journey of Discovery* was distributed to all Groups with the spring issue of the AA Service News. Old timers throughout the country supplied significant information to help write the script along with the ever willing office staff at GSO who supplied the needed technology that brought it all together to mark our historical journey.

Employment

The Fellowship has participated in Conferences and Exhibitions all through 2008 including the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, several national trade unions and the Chartered Institute of Personnel Directors.

Health

Approximately 55% of Intergroups and 66% of Regions have Health Liaison Officers (HLO's) in place, covering invitations to attend such areas as the Alcohol and Violence Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. Further points of interest are;

- Hospitals with radio stations are broadcasting AA Public information CD's
- Primary Care Trusts (PCT's), in some areas have been using their internal mailing systems to distribute AA literature. The value of this method is that doctors receive information personally
- AA speakers have attended University Medical Schools resulting in students requesting to attend open AA Meetings

National Conventions

We have four National Conventions in GB consisting of the Northern, Southern, Scottish, and Welsh Convention. Each convention has a Sponsoring Body made up of the surrounding Regions. Each Region has the responsibility of electing an equal number of members who together form the committee which is directly responsible to the Regions through an agreed Terms of Reference.

Germany

Structure and Development of A.A. Germany and German-Speaking Countries 2007-009

Structure

A.A. Germany is a part of the unified structure of A.A. German-speaking countries (GSAA). The ten Intergroups of Germany and the Intergroup of Austria and South Tyrol 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. German-speaking Switzerland gave notice to leave the "AA-Interest-Association e. V.". The General Service Office (GSO) and thereby the official seat of GSAA is located in Dingolfing, in Bavaria since the end of November 2007. The Intergroups are based on a different number of Regional Groups. The Regional Service Meetings are held 4 to 12 times a year, and Intergroup Service Meetings 3 to 4 times a year. In the eastern part of Germany a functional structure is still under development.

Groups

The number of Groups within GSAA has remained stagnant for some years. All in all there around 2.850 groups registered at the GSO in Dingolfing. The number of Groups in Germany is only about 2.500 and around 100 of them are located at correctional facilities. A.A. contact-offices exist in about 40 larger cities in Germany. 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 Dingolfing.

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 and WSM delegates and guests who had been invited by the Conference Team. On the 28th Conference Greg, now former General Manager from the GSO New York, and for the 29th GSC Maciek from Poland came to join us. The amount of delegates entitled to vote at the GSC is never higher than 108 all in all.

The 28th GSC was held on March 28-30, 2008 and the 29th GSC was from April 3-5, 2009 at the GENO-Hotel in Roesrath near Cologne.

The 28th was dedicated to the theme “Unity needs communication” and the 29th GSC was dedicated to the theme “A searching and fearless inventory“. At the 29th GSC it was decided to prepare a new Service Manual with the Charter for GSAA until 2013. The 28th and 29th GSC was forced to focus wide attention on developing remedies against the alarming financial situation of the GSAA after the deficit of the years before.

General Service Board

According to the Service Manual the General Service Board consists of up to 30 members. The speaker of the Board, the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the “AA-Interest-Association e. V.“, the General Manager and the Secretary of the GSO, up to four Class-A-Trustees beside the Chairperson 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 Information, Literature, Internet/New Media, the Editor of the AA-D.A.CH-Magazine and the Speaker of the editorial staff, the European- and World-Service-Meeting delegates and the Chairperson 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 Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the Association, the General Manager and the Speaker of the GSB are entitled to vote. The Referees, the ESM- and WSM Delegates and the GSC-Chairperson 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.

In October 2008 a new chairman of the Association, Frithjof Sahnwaldt, was elected.

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.

Conventions

In 2008 the GSAA Convention took place at Erfurt/Thuringia and the Convention of 2009 at Wels/Austria. The convention at Erfurt attracted more than 4.000 members and the one in Wels more than 2.500 members not only from German Speaking countries but also from our neighbours in Europe.

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.

In 2007 the contributions of Euro 276.926 were less than in 2006; but in 2008 they rise up to Euro 281.495. During the first four months in 2009 the situation became a bit better and increased of about Euro 17.000 comparing to the same time in 2008. Because of the desolate financial situation the GSO moved to the small town Dingolfing in Bavaria.

The “Beetle-contributions” are still going on.

Literature & Publications

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

Since 2009 the literature team of GSAA is working again; the GSB elected a new referee and team. In February 2009 the GSAA got the translation of “Language of the heart” and in July the “Big Book” with some new stories of German members will follow.

Public Information

The Referee for Public Information consequently informs the public about the “singleness of purpose” of A.A. A great matter of interest is the problem of approaching young people below 16 years already addicted to alcohol. In June 2009 there was a week against all kind of drugs, but especially against alcoholism in the whole of Germany arranged by the government. GSAA took the opportunity to organize different actions in many towns. In Oct./Nov. 2009 the GSAA will inform about the activities of the A.A.-Fellowship.

Internet/New Media

The Internet is a very popular way of approaching A.A. The Website of GSAA www.anonyme-alkoholiker.de receives around 900 hits per day and is regularly updated. “Beginner-meetings” try to motivate friends who got in touch with A.A. by the website to visit face-to-face meetings, too. Since 2006 the A.A.-Website has a group-status but so far no structure.

European Service/World-Service & Sponsorship

The ESM and World-Service delegates are members of the GSB, all mentioned delegates are members of the GSC. In spite of the desolate financial situation the GSAA was able to sponsor other fellowships.

“A.A. comes of Age”, p 139:

“... A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of recovered alcoholics in action. We must carry A.A.’s message; otherwise we ourselves may fall into decay and those who have not yet been given the truth may die.”

Greenland

Website

We have our own homepage www.aagreenland.gl and aanuuk@greennet.gl, both pages are rather new, so they are both under construction. You can find the most ordinary things about our work there. We have an editor, who takes care of updating and information. We wish to put in a lot more, but it is a matter of time.

Service Work

We are very few, who takes care of the service work in Greenland. All the work goes on from Nuuk in a very small circle with few persons. Until April 2009 we had a very active Chairman - Anders G, who has been the Greenlandish contact with the European Service Office. He was very involved all over in AA Nuuk and AA Greenland. He arranged for the contacts all over the country, and also arranged the meetings for the different committee meetings in Nuuk.

We usually manage to get some volunteers for the service work, but it has very difficult to make them do what they have promised to do. Often they do not want the job, after they have had it for a short time.

Geographical Information

In Greenland we are 56.000 habitants. The 18.000 live in Nuuk (the capital). We are roughly 300 AA members in Nuuk, and about 600 in the rest of the country, divided over 14 locations. The country is 2.2 million square kilometres, so it is a very big country with few habitants. It is very expensive to visit other cities and most cities can only be visited by air traffic, which is very expensive. We have only contact with the other groups in the other towns by e-mail, telephone, snail-mails (postal service) or when other members visit in Nuuk while there on vacation or for other reasons.

There are 3 cities where you can come for rehabilitation, these are: Nuuk, Sisimiut and Ilulissat. Most of the rehabilitants are in rehab in Nuuk. The rehab is based on the Minnesota principle. Some employees in companies with health care insurance are going in rehab in Denmark. I have myself been in Denmark on rehab, which was very rewarding for me.

Group Meetings

The Greenlandic meetings are usually visited by 25-30 members. The Danish meetings are usually visited by 6-12 members. We have 3 Danish meetings each week and 9 Greenlandic meetings. We can naturally come to both the Greenlandic and the Danish meetings no matter which nationality we are, some of the members come at both kinds of meetings. Often Greenlandic members come for the Danish meetings, because we have more time for sharing, when we are not so many members. They can choose the language themselves. Some share in Greenlandic and some in Danish.

Social Information

We have a big relapse rate of 70-80 %. We often see members a few times and then we see them again in the city scene intoxicated of alcohol or drugs or both. We have not organized visits to members, who are in relapse, like they have in Denmark and other countries. Often we don't know their telephone numbers or addresses. In Greenland the abuse is very visible, because people drink in the streets and in front of the shops. Every one knows every one and people do not care about their behaviour under the influence of alcohol, pills or pot (narcotics are not used in Greenland). It is very expensive to drink in Greenland. 2,6 EUR is the cost of an ordinary beer 4,6 %. About 13 EUR is the cost of a cheap bottle of red wine. Abuse costs society a great deal of money and the loss of self-respect. There are a lot of problems with children, who get no education, food, warm bed or love. Amnesty International says that we do not respect the constitutions for children's rights.

Membership

We have a very few members in AA Greenland, who have many sober years and who also come to the meetings continuously. They come very infrequently and it is difficult to make them do some voluntarily work, such as being Chairman of the meeting, coffee making, cleaning, purchase and so on. It is also difficult to get a sponsor. Lately several people shared about the need for sponsors and it is particularly difficult, for women, because there is very few women, who live by the program here in Greenland. Women come to the meetings, but they have so many problems other problems within our society. We need knowledge and experience in the groups. We have a very little development in AA Greenland. A lot of us keep sober, but we do not get any further by ourselves. We need support to show us the "right" way. AA Denmark has been helping us for 4 years, but that is over now. In 2007 we had a representative from AA Denmark on visit to tell about the service in AA.

Literature

We have a Literary and Structural Committee which is very new. We have a co-operation with AA USA. They will finance the translation of 12 and 12. The first attempt was unfortunately not very good in the translation for Greenlandic. They have spent half a year on that matter, so things take time. It will be a big improvement for us, when we can have 12 and 12 in the Greenlandic language. We have all folders in Danish and Greenlandic which we have translated and set up ourselves, they are very popular and we give them to hospitals, schools, municipalities, institutions etc. Generally we need literature in Greenlandic as many people here only talk Greenlandic, they do not speak Danish or English, it is very difficult for them. We wish to translate The Big Book next time, it will really be a hit for our members. We have problems finding translators, who want to do it for us for free (AA-members will do it for money, but we do not have any).

Finance

Our financial situation is not good. We have no capital reserve. We pay our bills, when we have the money for it. The members pay very little. Some times we cannot even pay for the coffee. We pay no rent for our house, but we have to pay for oil, water, security service, coffee, coins, candlelight and literature, it is very difficult to make the money go around.

Communication

The communication between the cities is newly started. We have established a network in 2008. In Greenland we cannot drive from city to city (no roads, but ice-mountains). As mentioned earlier we communicate by telephone, snail-mail and e-mail. We have sent letters to all known groups in Greenland for collaboration, but none have reacted. We have sent them folders and information about our work and also the Greenlandic folders.

Iceland

Structure

In Iceland the A.A. is growing fast for the last ten years and is highly respected. The last two years there has been more stability in the association, more peace and unity has come to A.A. in Iceland. After big growth for many years, we noticed more and more of young people joining the A.A. and we can easily see two or three generations now in A.A. This change calls for different approaches. 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 based 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 has been 90% financed by the A.A. groups and 10% by the publishing committee, but for the last two years it has been financed 100% by the A.A. groups. 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 at 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 covered the cost to 100% and we retain one year's expenditure. It has been that way for the last two years. Because of financial crisis which has hit the country very hard, we expect that some changes may occur, therefore we are ready to meet less contributions and welcome more people that are in need, or desperate because of the situation.

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 we have a translation of the book; Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age. We are now publishing a new service manual for Iceland and we have the A.A. book now in pocket size.

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.

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.

A census of the membership of AA in Ireland is being conducted during the month of September 2009. The purpose of the census is to update our numbers and information regarding gender, years of sobriety and age profile of members.

Structure, Conference

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. There are 4 Intergroups, which are Connaught (5 Areas), Leinster (13 Areas), Munster (9 Areas) and Ulster (10 Areas) each of which sends four elected delegates (Conference Delegates) and the Intergroup Secretary to the General Service Conference of Ireland, which meets 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.

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)

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.

General Service Office

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 was 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 year 2006/2007 the Board, acting on the instructions of Conference, 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 was opened on Monday 23rd July 2007. It is hoped these premises will serve us well into the future.

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 2008. Conference and the Fellowship as a whole were happy to contribute 75,030 Euro to the World Literature Fund and 10,015 Euro to the European Fund in 2008.

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 books "In our Own Words", "Emotional Sobriety" and "I am Responsible" have been introduced to stock. A number of new CDs have also been added for sale. The CDs include The Big Book "Alcoholics Anonymous", "The Twelve and Twelve", "It Works if you work it" and "12 Traditions".

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.

Telephones

The Intergroups in Connaught, Leinster and Ulster each have a central telephone service manned by the Areas in their Intergroup. There are six telephone services in the Munster Intergroup run by different Areas in Munster.

Prisons

Each of the Intergroups organises members to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to inmates in the prisons of both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland.

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. The work of scanning the Archival material to computer is ongoing.

The Archives Room is now fully furnished. Anyone who wishes to visit the Archives may do so by submitting a request form, which are available at GSO, and giving nine or ten days notice of such a request as either a Board Member or Board Secretary must accompany them on their visit.

Conventions

The first All – Ireland Convention was held in Dublin in 1958. The All-Ireland Convention rotates annually between the four Intergroups. The 52nd All – Ireland Convention in 2009 was held in Connaught in the Salthill Hotel, Galway, on 24th to 26 April 2009. The 53rd All – Ireland Convention 2010 will be held in Munster in the Mount Brandon Hotel, Tralee, County Kerry, from 16th to 18th April 2010.

There are about fifteen or sixteen Area Conventions also held around Ireland during the year. There are also many Mini Conventions, Days of Gratitude and one day events held by Areas and Groups throughout the year.

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.

Italy

It is 37 years since Alcoholics Anonymous was established in Italy; the first Italian Group was founded in Rome in 1972.

Group numbers

The number of A.A. Groups in Italy, in 2009, is an estimated number of 480 Groups, which is quite the same of the last years. 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).

General Structure

A.A. in Italy is composed of 19 areas, which basically correspond to our regions. Each Area can elect up to a maximum of 3 delegates to the Conference.

Each Area includes a variable number of Districts, which may include from five to 15 Groups each and are designed to grow the groups in terms of spirituality.

General Service Board of A.A. Italy should be composed of twelve members, of which: four 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.

March 2009 Conference has partially renewed the composition of the Board by appointing four new Trustees (Administrative, Internal and two Regional).

The 2010 Conference will elect one International Delegate and one Regional Trustee.

Actually there is only one non-alcoholic Trustee of the GSB, anyhow the Conference of this year suggested to appoint one or more non-alcoholic Trustees.

Where approved amendments to the Statute of "AA Alcoholics Anonymous" regarding the inclusion of AA ITALY into the National Register of Associations of Social Promotion (APS) and the Area. Even the Service Manual has been changed particularly regarding the Conference.

The External Committee of Italian General Services is composed of several members with the continuous co-operation of media professionals (XI° Concept).

The most recent initiative has been the proposal of the "Guidelines to the Outside", adopted by A.A. Italian Conference – 2008. These Guidelines give suggestions on the structure of A.A. Italy at all service levels and on the traditional principles and rules applicable in the Public Information and Relations with Institutions. Also, after a positive assessment by the Conference, this Committee has overseen the drafting of the document "Suggestions for open meetings," a compilation of experiences available for groups on how to manage or to do this *kind* of meeting.

The Committee has dubbed an American television spot, visible on A.A. Italy web site. This spot has gained important institutional recognition and will appear soon on national public television channels.

In collaboration with Internal Committee, who will take care of logistics, and with the help of some professionals, friends of AA, the External Committee proposed the creation of a "National Membership Survey" (already done in 90s) by distributing a questionnaire to collect data on AA and groups for merging into a brochure to use information to the outside.

The Committee participates in the sponsorship and takes care of the website of AA Italy as an important instrument for transmitting the message and communication to the outside.

Finally, this Committee is sponsoring in particular the establishment of regional committees (Area) dealing with P.I. and that they remain in constant contact with the Italian General Services in order to unify the action of AA in this area at all levels of service.

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. There are good relations with most of the public and private structures and organizations operating in Italy (hospitals, public assistance, professionals and non-profit volunteer associations.

We are a part as "standing invited" (without the right to vote and without making formal commitments) of the National Alcohol Committee we have ongoing relationships with the Italian Government (Ministry of Welfare) and with the major organizations dealing with alcoholism in Italy. We have good relations with religious institutions in Italy, first with the Catholic Church and the Vatican State which is based in Italy.

We succeeded to publish numerous articles in the press and obtain broadcasting services regarding AA at both national and local level and especially at our Annual National Convention. We particularly care about our relations with the media and national institutions, ensuring that the Journalists and representatives of various sectors of Italian Alcoholology are always present during these events.

Prisons

Since many years and in many Areas A.A. members are sponsoring Groups inside the prisons. During one of the last National Convention in Rimini some years ago some members of A.A. working in the prisons had a meeting in order to share the different experiences and to start to build a national committee dedicated to this service.

Hopefully this coordination can take into account in order A.A. in Italy could offer the same kind of service in the prisons. The fact that the prisons have their own regulations that we have to respect, as well as trying to remain within the limits of our Traditions.

Finance

According to the financial report made to the Conference in 2009 and according to the previous financial reports, contributions from the Groups during the last years are quite the same, 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. Regarding the financial situation of A.A. Italy we must say that for some years, namely 2005 to 2007 the office manager and later trustee, computer expert, has removed, in various ways, large amounts of money, manipulating the accountancy, from Association hands. The 2009 Conference decided not to take lawsuit against this person, in accordance with our spiritual principles. It has been asked by several delegates to exercise, in the future, greater control on the Accountancy, however the last checks indicate that the financial situation is improving.

Literature

The promoting at any level of A.A. structure and with different means continued during the two last years. The increase in knowledge of the contents of our Literature represents a significant spiritual growth of the Groups but also avoids and reduces the conflicts among the members and among the Groups.

The relevant news are the publishing of "Experience, Strength and Hope", "Who? Me." and "A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional".

The Literature Italian Catalogue was up-to-date.

Internet and Website

Following what has been done at the official web site of the General Service Office (GSO) of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc., A.A. Italy has felt the need to increase the service and information on its site, which has been on line since some years.

In fact, the various Committees of General Services have started to put all the most relevant information allowing its members and groups to have an up-to-date knowledge of the service that each Committee is doing.

Presently also updating the Italian Groups List (data, addresses, phone numbers, timetable of meeting, new entries etc) is done directly by the Areas. Soon a multimedia section will be published and will allow the viewing of short films concerning public information, as well as direct experiences of some of our members.

Conclusions

We think that one of the main causes of stagnation in the growth of A.A. Italy is still caused by the persistence of what we usually call a

“two-steps culture”, based on the conviction that the First and the Twelfth Step 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.

Huge efforts have been made in recent years to improve the growth of new Districts and to promote the participation of all to the meetings, which were often limited to only a few servants.

The topic of the XXVI Conference to be held in March 2010 in Rimini will be "Concepts" and it is expected that this issue will also be elaborated during the next Conferences.

The National Convention of Rimini (25th to 27th September 2009) has as its topic "Young People in AA" and suggested sub-themes are: "Young people and our language," The Young and the service "and" The Young and the welcome."

Latvia

After 20 years of development, last year was the first time that the Latvian fellowship was represented at a new level – the World Service Meeting.

In 2008 we placed our first self-supported order for literature to the GSO in New York. For several years we have taken the steps to print and distribute AA literature in Latvia. In this way we are continuing to become more self-supporting.

Recovery

Just for the last five years we have the “Big Book” translation in the Latvian language. Because we now have this foundation more and more alcoholics are starting to work the Steps with their sponsors. In the recent few years we can't see noticeable change in our membership growth of Alcoholics Anonymous in Latvia. Currently we are surveying groups. We have however noticed quality of sobriety changes.

In our fellowship we are experiencing the growth in numbers of young people recovering in AA. We are however experiencing difficulty to get them involved in service work, they say they do not have time to spare. It takes time to find members who are looking for a challenge in active participation in service work. It is also apparent that we need to place greater effort into 12 Step work.

Service

In 2000 we reformed the Service Board and established a General Service Office. We began organizing annual family oriented summer camps. We start to learn how to team build and

team-work. Gradually we initiated rotation in the Service Board and to establish a few new permanent committees.

Over the last ten years we regularly publish a monthly newsletter of our Fellowship, and since 2002 we have a web site.

Literature

In Latvian language we have most of the AA literature that is highly important in the process of recovery and service to the groups. This includes 7 pamphlets and 5 books. One of these – first printed this summer in Latvia by our own efforts is “Best of Bill” (plus there are a few pamphlets that we have translated and printed prior to that). We have almost ten translations in the processes of finalizing, and to receive publishing permission from the GSO.

Now our Literature Committee started work on the new translations of “Twelve Traditions Illustrated” and “Daily Reflections”, and a few other materials. There is no official Latvian translation of the full text of “Twelve Concepts” and maybe because of that we have some problems in service organisation. We just do not have enough people who are interested to take part in service.

For more than a year, we have not found a new Office Manager for the AA General Service Office in Riga (there is the current manager, who has worked in this position over the last nine years without pay). Meanwhile our General Service Office employs a paid part time bookkeeper with our Office Manager receiving one euro per year. AA Fellowship in Latvia has a stable budget situation, but we have not enough contributions to employ a paid Office Manager with a normal wage.

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%.

Unity

Our participation in the ESM began in 2003 and this is the Fourth time for us. The German Fellowships supported our attendance of one of their Service Board Meetings which was the first that our observer attended, and the Irish covered the expenses of two of our observers to one of their Service Board Meetings and the Polish Fellowship covered the expenses for two of our Fellowship members to be observers at the last 3 Service Meetings in their country. We practice rotation so that the observers are different members of our Service Board.

Since 2000, two times a year we have Group Service Conferences, where the meeting of the representatives of groups takes place. We have no inter-groups and no regional conferences. Latvia is a small country and we have just 45 AA groups.

We have large population of Russian speaking people, most of them lived in Riga and in other big cities – each of them have AA group with meetings in Russian. We had already purchased AA literature in Russian from the Moscow GSO, but now we received it straightway from GSO New York. We try to involve people from all the groups into service. We have had to overcome difficulties due to a difference of opinion regarding the understanding of the Twelve Traditions. We have resolved these differences of opinion, not wishing to risk breaking-up our unity.

We are grateful for the support we have received from other countries and looking forward to the time when we could help another country's Fellowship. That time came a few years ago, when we shared our experience with organizing our Service Conferences, Service Board and General Service Office with our friends from Estonia.

Lithuania

Structure

The first new format Service Conference took place in the autumn of 2008. The delegates in the conference were 5 representatives from 7 regions operating in Lithuania, also trustees, delegates to the World and Europe, the stewardess of the Service Office. The Conference worked in committees (Finance, Inside, Public Information and Literature/Publishing). They couched recommendations for the Board of Trustees in that way sharing with it the weight of responsibility enabling to work the decision made by groups a year ago. In the spring of 2009 Lithuanian Alcoholics Anonymous Fellowship as a judicial unit was reregistered into Lithuanian Alcoholics Anonymous Service (LAAT) Board of Trustees. This was done for the purpose that legal registration correspond with the fundamental imperatives of the AA 3rd Tradition, and the essential principles of anonymity and membership.

This summer the Board of Trustees decided to move the Service Office from Vilnius to another town – Birstonas where the Service Conference is held, renting the office more spacious rooms in order to increase service to groups and AA members, and make it still more effective. New address is: J. Basanavicius av. 16, Birstonas. Tel. 8 319 45 141.

Service

Since the spring of 2008 up to now an intensive presentation of AA 12/12 Programme is being accomplished to the police workers in all districts of Lithuania. About 1000 meetings have taken place. It's a great benefit. Not a few police workers and people directed by them already attend AA meetings.

There is Lithuania's website and each AA region has got its own website which are supervised by Trustees and regional office employees in order not to disturb the AA Traditions.

In the summer of 2008 AA Fellowship celebrated the 20th Anniversary of its existence in Lithuania. The celebration of the festival was held in the Sports Hall in Kaunas. About 1400 participants arrived from Lithuania, and guests from Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, GSO.

Finance

There are no big changes in this sector. 1/3 of all the means necessary for upkeeping the office come from sale of books. The rest – from the 7th Tradition. The groups' donations to the regions increased obviously for their activities have become stronger. After the new format conference legalization they take a very important place in the Service Structure.

Literature

In the spring of 2009 the Board of Trustees revived publishing of the issue "Ausra" which was stopped in 2003. In the 6th edition the members share their experience in serving with all the AAs in Lithuania. Meanwhile, it is published in addition of 500 copies.

A CD with the reading of the Big Book was produced, and a Service Reference Book was published and such books as "Daily reflections" and "As Bill sees it" were republished. Lithuanian Service Conference recommends to publish the book "AA comes of Age" in 2009-2010.

Malta

Malta being a small group of three Islands in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea has been influenced through the ages by various cultures with the most recent being with its entry into the European Union and more freedom of movement. The main influences remain the British and the Latin.

The population of around 400,000 spread over the two Islands of Malta, where the majority reside and the smaller sister Island of Gozo. The population is in the main bi-lingual in Maltese, the native language and English with a large portion also speaking Italian.

Structure

The structure of the AA Fellowship in Malta is organised over 14 home groups till the middle of this year which we are happy to say have now risen to 16 with the addition of a further two groups. 14 of these groups are located in Malta and 2 in Gozo. The meetings take place on a regular basis both in Maltese or English depending on which a member chooses to attend and the two new meetings are bi-lingual and held at times later in the evening to be able to allow those members due to work commitments to attend more regularly.

The GSO is made up of 5 members, The Chair person, the treasurer, the secretary and two other members. The GSO is rotated on a yearly basis and members nominate those they feel will further the aims of the Fellowship to provide a helping hand to suffering alcoholics in Malta & Gozo. Each home group nominates its own Treasurer and Secretary; however the challenge has always been to find members available to provide service both within the home groups and the GSO to allow us to have a healthy rotation of Fellowship members.

Literature

We are happy to say that since the last ESM, with the help of the WSO, without which it would not have been possible, the first edition of the Big Book in Maltese has been printed and circulated. Hot on this we have moved forward with the approval to translate the 12 & 12 and the Daily Reflections into Maltese to continue to add to the literature available to members and the public in Maltese. The wish is to hopefully have these available in November for the 4th International Malta AA Convention. This is the third year in a row that this has been organised in Malta with healthy participation from Fellowship members from Europe without whom it would be impossible to run. Further to this for the second time in the AA Malta's history a one day workshop/seminar was held at the start of the year in Maltese at the GSO premises in Valletta, the intention is to add this on a yearly basis to our calendar to invite more active participation across the Maltese speaking members and groups, as well as interaction with our Fellowship in Gozo.

Finance

Funds continue to be the biggest challenge to the Fellowship in Malta as we are completely dependent on the approximate 150 members locally that are thankfully supplemented throughout the year by our foreign friends visiting Malta. The literature stocks of the Fellowship were at a low level this year and so the bulk of the funds raised through member donations were invested in replenishing the stock.

This year AA Malta is once again sending 1st and 2nd term delegates to the ESM with the remainder of the available funds. However we must at this point mention our heartfelt thanks the ESM Fund who has provided us with the financial assistance in the past and hopefully will again in the future should the need arise to ensure that Malta is represented and participates at the ESM.

Last year a 1st and 2nd term delegate attended the WSM in New York however this is an even bigger challenge as members attending this do so at their own expense so it may not always be possible to have Malta present, much as we wish at the WSM. However we trust to our Higher Power to provide the means to allow us to be able to bring home the shared experiences from both the ESM & the WSM.

Currently the GSO is working on a bi-lingual initiative in public information in Local Councils, Band Clubs, Schools and other hubs of the Maltese public life to spread the message that help is available to fight the addiction so many of us have had to fight over the years. Unfortunately the interaction with the NGO's in Malta and other groups that work with alcoholics is still in its infancy however we in AA Malta will continue to strive to further the message to other suffering alcoholics out there.

Last but not least we must thank once again our friends in GSO York and GSO New York for their continued help to allow the Fellowship in Malta to reach as many suffering alcoholics as it can. It would be remiss to forget to mention our numerous friends from the AA worldwide who visit, many on a regular basis, our Island and share their experiences, hope and recovery with our members here in Malta & Gozo. God bless and hopefully we will see some of you at our National convention in Malta from the 6th to the 8th November 2009, a full information pack is available from the GSO Malta.

Netherlands

General

In 2008 AA in the Netherlands celebrated its 60th anniversary. At present number of groups total 220 with membership of approximately 3500 people. There are also 32 English-speaking groups and in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, there is a Polish group and a Spanish group in Amsterdam. The English-speaking groups affiliate themselves with British Fellowship. There is a good interaction between the various communities.

Structure

AA in Holland is based, per our Traditions, 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 co-ordinators of various committees and services.

The General Secretary of the General Service Office is responsible for daily operations with ultimate responsibility lying with the General Service Board. The General Service Office is administered according to Dutch civil law and social traditions. AA in The Netherlands is comprised of three foundations. To wit, The Big Book, "The Boei" (equivalent to the Grapevine) and all the AA groups.

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

The General Service Office is hub of all services and information within Dutch AA. All administrative workers are volunteers.

Committees and other services:

Finance

The Finance Committee reviews the proposed budgets of all commissions and sub-commissions, and services. It further advises the General Service Board on all financial matters. It is made up of one delegate per region. Income from all three foundations, in 2009 the budget is negative and not acceptable.

Literature

The Literature Committee is responsible for translating, developing, and updating all AA literature in book and pamphlet form. It insures conformity with AA's Three Legacies. There is active participation with Belgian AA. Recently we published the Fourth Edition of The Big Book, it will be ready for publication. The committee is also busy with translation "The Language of the Heart".

Committee for Public Information

The National Committee for Public Information oversees all requests for assistance and information from outside AA organizations. It offers an information package in kit-form for public media. There is a positive atmosphere developing between AA and a growing number of help professional 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 contact AA within correctional facilities is very positive.

The law in the Netherlands says that the local authorities have to offer a digital counter of aid. This counter references to local groups.

De Boei

Until April of the year 2009 AA had 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. Being in want of copy and an editor De Boei had to stop its activities after 52 years.

AA Telephone Helpline

There is a telephone number available on a twenty four hours basis. We are happy that we always have enough AA-members to participate. We require a sobriety period of 9 months for each participating member

AA and the Internet

Our 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 for Al-Anon, Al-ateen, Aca and English-speaking AA in the Netherlands.

Since June 2009 we have a virtual meeting. The name of the group is AIA (Anonymous Internet Alcoholics) This meeting is meant as a addition and not a replacement for personal meetings or contact.

Contacts with other countries

There is a close, traditional contact between Dutch AA and Dutch-speaking Belgian AA. This includes an exchange of representation 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.

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

Norway

Norway is a small country, situated in Scandinavia, in the northern part of Europe. Its coastline is 21,465 km long, which is longer than half the way around the earth. There are approximately 4.5 million people living in Norway, and we have a well developed social security system.

Despite the fact that AA came to Norway in 1947, as the second country in Europe, there is still much left to be done before we can be satisfied with the results. Even if the spirit is good in AA Norway, we still don't grow as much as we want. It seems that we are much fewer members than

the other Nordic countries, and to find out if this is the correct picture, we are now looking into whether we are doing the counting in the same way or not. What we do see, is an increasing number of women coming to AA. Whilst ten years ago was quite common to be the only woman in a meeting, now there might be more women than men.

Number of Groups

Today there are some 200 groups in Norway, with a total of about 1800 members.

General Structure

Norway adopted the AA Service Structure in 1975. We are divided into 5 regions, with the principal purpose of nominating trustees to the General Service Board. The regions are divided into districts of which, at the moment, there are a total of twenty. In some big cities the groups corporate in Intergroups.

The groups of each district elect one District representatives (DR) for every eight group, to represent the district at the annual General Service Conference. The recent General Service Conference was held in Oslo in March 2009. The groups were represented by their district representatives who together constituted a two-thirds majority. Also participating were members of the General Service Board (GSB), the general manager of the General Service Office & volunteers, plus the editor of our magazine Boks 205, also an observer from Denmark attended.

The General Service Board

The General Service Board is composed of three Class A trustees and six Class B trustees, all elected on a five-year term. Each of the Class B trustees is an elected chairman of a standing committee. The standing committees are: Litterature, Finance, Policy, Working with others, ICT & Telephone helpline.

The 3 Class A trustees are very qualified people within sociology, medical and police, we are very lucky to have them.

General Service Office

The Norwegian General Service Office is located in Oslo. For the time being we employ one person in a 60 % position. We do, however, have a number of volunteers filling in and the office is functioning quite well.

Relations with Other Countries (including country sponsorship)

Norway AA participates in the Nordic Convention and in General Service Conference in Sweden and Denmark. We also attend in the European Service Meeting and in the World Service Meeting. We have also joined the "Sponsorship country to country" service and are working together with Sweden in helping Slovakia.

Internet & Websites

In June 2008 we published our new web-site www.anonymealkoholikere.no

The use of many new media requires care, e.g in relation to anonymity. We have therefore translated the GSO's "Guidelines – Internet" to Norwegian. The ICT-Committee is now customizing these for Norway, and will submit it for the Service Conference next year.

Membership Survey

In 2007 we performed our first ever proper national survey in Norway. It was performed by the other dear non-alcoholic in the board, Professor of Sociology, Kari Moxnes, and it has given us useful information. Separate reports have been published; eg "Who is the AA member", and "The consequences of drinking", followed by articles in the media.

Knowledge Bank

We have established a knowledge bank, an overview over people capable of doing workshops on different AA topics. To make it feasible for groups all over the country to “require” help, we have a fixed rate for workshop participation. The extra cost (travel, hotel etc) is covered by the general office.

Other Services

The Intergroups around the country are doing services i.e. in treatment centers, prisons, schools and others.

In Norway, radio & television commercials are not allowed on Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, and Whit Sunday. This broadcasting time is distributed among non-governmental organizations. We have produced information material for radio & television which are broadcasted several times.

Miscellaneous

Along with the new website, a great facelift is going on; we have created new exhibition equipment, the literature is modernized in language and layout.

The objective of our Strategy Plan is to be better known in society, and our dear non-alcoholic in the board, Psychiatrist - MD Kjell Hultmann has done a tremendous job over the years against the medical society. He is now lecturing on Twelve Step recovery at the medical school on a regular basis, and is invited to speak in the medical association.

Poland

Structure

As of year 2009 the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Poland consists of about 2100 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 two candidates to the Board of Trustees, which is made up of 13 alcoholics, 2 trustee-at-large National delegates and two non-alcoholic members. The basic change of the electing the members to the Board is that, The Board by its Nominating Committee chooses the proper candidates and recommends those who were chosen to The General Service Conference. The Board of Trustees offers recommendations and suggestions, and sets the 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.

The General Manager of BSK (General Service Office), editor-in-chief of Zdrój bulletin, employees of the office involved in working with The Committees are also voting members of General Service Conference. Altogether the Conference has 75 delegates. The Conference takes place annually in the place near Warsaw. The delegates work in four standing committees: Agenda, Finance, Literature, and Public Information and Cooperation with Others. For the last two years, at our GSC we've been organizing the special international panels for mainly, but not limited to the post-soviet countries.

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 Intergroup's 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. We have very good relationships especially with the Correctional Facilities Management, there is no prison in Poland without the A.A. Group, we are organizing workshops for The Correctional Facilities Officers, we share the experience in that matter with other countries.

Once a year, each time in a different town, a convention and Zdrój Bulletin Holiday takes place. In August, this year we celebrated the 35th Anniversary of our Fellowship in a city located in the west of Poland - Wroclaw. There were much more than 6000 participants from Poland and abroad.

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 neighbors. With the financial support of the UK Fellowship we are inviting 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, Latvia 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 produce that publication are in progress. We hope it could be published in the nearest future.

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 20 % of the costs of Polish AA General Service Office's activities. The remaining 80% of the office's activities is covered from the income from the literature sales. That ratio improved a bit, but still it 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, Pass It On, and Dr. Bob And The Good Old-timers. Twenty five pamphlets have also been published. Our bulletin, Zdrój, with a circulation of about 3200 copies, and 'Skrytka 2/4/3', with a circulation of 1,600 copies, are published bi-monthly. 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. 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 titles 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 "The Best of Bill". Now we're working with Grapevine to approve our translation of "The Language of The Heart"

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 meetings lists and other important information about the Regions.

There are much more than 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 address: www.aa.org.pl

Poland has its own country-wide infoline 0 801 03 32 42. The Regions have started to maintain this helpline and now we are building the army of volunteers wishing to work in this area of service. The special Committee was formed, many workshops were organized on the topic “How to Carry The Message via National Infoline”

Romania

Groups

The AA got in Romania in 1985, but the first group was established only in 1991, in Timisoara. Only after two years the next group was established, in another big city in the country. Then, slowly, the message was passed on and more and more groups were brought into existence.

At present, the Romanian AA Fellowship counts about 30 groups in 20 cities, with an approximate number of 300 members. Only one group was set up in a village.

Almost all groups are trying to follow the AA Traditions and to put into practice the 12 AA Steps. There are 2 or 3 groups that only partially follow the Traditions and accept interference from outside in their programs, but they are independent and do not affect other groups or AA as a whole.

Structure

Since 2008, we have a Service Office, legally established, with statutes and juridical personality. The Romanian GSO has a Board of Directors formed out of 7 members chosen at the National Conference, all of them AA’s. Since the GSO was established, we have managed to build a website: www.alcooliciianonimi.ro, and to print a quarterly magazine with a circulation of 100 copies. Since this summer, we also have an online group, with a constantly increasing number of members. We have tried to divide the country into 5 geographical areas, in view of creating Regional Intergroups, but some regions have few groups and for now every group is represented by one delegate. Because of the problems we are dealing with, and through the short but intense experience, this year we came to the conclusion that it would be good to bring some improvements to the GSO Statutes and work on a Guideline after which to guide our activity.

Literature

With the literature, at this moment, things are going well. Thanks to the International Community and through the International Desk in New York, we have recently received flyers, brochures and the three books translated in Romanian (Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Living Sober). At the moment we are trying, with permission from the NY Department of Publications, to finalize the book “Came to Believe”, so we can receive the printing license. In the meantime, a few members are translating several works from the AAWS approved literature, in view of sending them for verification through the same department mentioned earlier.

Finance

Finances: there isn't much to say here. Only a few groups and a few member separately are contributing to the GSO Fund. But the future looks brighter, as more and more groups are starting to see that the Romanian Services are trying to help the community, and hopefully they will starting helping financially. We have literature now, out of which we are hoping to get some money to send to the International Literature Fund.

Connections with Other Countries

In the past years, we have been helped by a group of AA members in Belgium. Since last year though, a change has happened, but we are still hoping it's a temporary one, and we may still benefit from their experience. Some of us have participated and learned a lot of interesting things from the International meetings in Hungary, Slovakia, Belgium and Poland (this year).

In Conclusion

The Services in Romania are only at the beginning, we are now making our first steps, with no experience. We got a lot of help from the Country Reports that we found and translated from the Report of the 20th AAWS and the Report of the 14th ESM. We are being inspired by the English service literature we have, but we are hoping that thanks to the contacts that we have established in the last period, we will be able to share with other communities and try to learn from their experience.

Thank you for all your help given for our Romanian delegate to this ESM. We are sending everybody the warm and sincere greeting of the Romanian Community.

RUSSIA

The A.A. movement in Russia began at the end of 1980s. In 1987 the first AA group in Moscow has been registered in GSO. The first Intergroup has been formed fall 1989, which at the beginning contained 4 AA groups. 13th of April 1991 Russian AA service Conference formed the first Service Structure of the AA groups. At present more than 330 A.A. groups are serviced by the Board, working in about 120 cities, towns and settlements, including 3 groups in prison and approximately 80 AA "loners" – in different parts of the country. Assistance with A.A. literature and information materials is provided to Russian-speaking groups abroad. The total A.A. membership is estimated from 6000 to 10000 members. According to the survey made by Russian GSO of AA in 2008 the middle age of Russian AA member is 43, average time of sobriety is more than 4 years, and more than 45% of the members has their sponsors. During the past years we have seen slower growth in the number of Russian A.A. groups. For example, Moscow has 11 million inhabitants but A.A. groups number less than 44 (and 17 in Moscow region); in St. Petersburg, the second largest city – 17 groups in the city and 10 in Petersburg's region. In 2007-2009, new groups appeared in different areas of the country, for example in Lipetsk, Sakhalin, Tuva republic and others.

Service Structure

The General Service Conference is annually held in Moscow in mid April and going during 3 days. The Conference voting members include delegates from the groups in the regions without an A.A. service entity, delegates from the local A.A. service committees centers or intergroups, members of the General Service Board, the Editor of the Russian A.A. magazine and Russian A.A. delegates to international A.A. service meetings, the Manager of the A.A. General Service Central Bureau (Office). In the last few years the number of voted delegates to the Conference has had a tendency to diminish. The Conference consists of the committees which are given recommendations concerning main directions to AA Service work, elected the members of the GSB and the Chairman of the next year Conference. Conference is governed in its work by "Service Manual of AA in Russia", which consist of last Conferences decisions, and the Manual and Conferences regulations are also included.

The main problems in the Conference activities are raised when the Conference considers the questions which are not considered beforehand by service structures, committees and the Service Board, and that's why many of the decisions are difficult to carry out. Also much of the Conference's time is taken up by questions of minor importance and financial questions. Many local structures are not registered by GSO of AA in Russia, and send their own delegates to the Conference, and there are some problems about that. For example Moscow region sending 5 delegates from its 60 groups, and some small town with its own 3 groups sends 3 delegates from each group, because they have no registered service structure. The AA service structure in Russia re-established nowadays. There are some already formed Regional Committees in Ural, Altay, Eastern Siberia and Far East regions, and also Saint-Petersburg region are functioning successfully. For the purpose of making legitimate financial affairs of the Fellowship in 2001, after Conference's decision Russian AA GSB registered non-commercial legal structure "Service Foundation of AA". Members of Russian GSB of AA are the members of the board of this "service Foundation of AA". General Service Office of AA is executive body of this structure. The Service Foundation of AA is registered now in Russian Department of Justice. Funds creating makes possible to publish literature in required quantity, making provisions of a lease of premises for AA meetings, and to conduct internal affairs of the whole Russian Fellowship.

In 2009 the Russian A.A. General Service Board consists of 8 A.A. members; 3 of them are from Moscow, 5 members are from other regions (there were 5 members voted from the Moscow region beforehand). 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. In accordance with Russian AA Service Manual a continuous sobriety term for candidate to Board membership is 5 years. However the GSB can elect the members to the board with less term of sobriety. Non-alcoholics are not elected to the Board membership. Board meetings are held monthly.

Finances

Net revenues for 2008 were 2 229 777 Rubles, of which 1 259 400 Rubles are literature sales (56%) and 843 405 Rubles are contributions received from groups and individual A.A. members (37, 8 %). In addition 126 972 Rubles (5,7%) entered to the Office account at the expense of souvenirs items sales. In 2008 the rate of contributions growth reached high level for Russian AA. In comparison the sum of contributions increase by 244,6 percent against 2007. Such increase in contributions could happen mostly because of growth of special-purpose contributions for new literature publishing, and which became more than 25% from the whole sum of the donations to the Office. But during first six months 2009 decrease of contributions happened. The Russian AA GSB making hard work with the groups concerning self supporting responsibilities of AA in Russia.

The Russian A.A. Service Office employs four paid workers: the Manager, Financial Manager, Accountant and the Secretary. The annual salary schedule totals 634 057 Rubles (28% of the net revenues). Literature publication costs equal 617 589 Rubles (29% of all the expenses). The total Russian A.A. General Service expenses are equal to 2 205 500 Rubles. For all those circumstances we still experiencing financial difficulties in publication of A.A. literature. All the AA literature distributed throughout Russia and abroad to AA groups and members by Russian GSO of AA. The rights of control to GSO's financial policy being made by Boards financial committee.

Literature

At present the Russian GSO of A.A. 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. In recent years has been translated into Russian, obtained GSO's permissions and already published the following books: "Dr Bob and the good old timers", "AA comes of age", "As Bill sees it", and "AA Service Manual" with 12 Principles of AA Service work (US\Canada) and "AA Fact file". The directory of local AA groups published regularly. The work around Russian AA magazine established again in 2009 by GSB of AA. The work of bringing into accord with uniformity of AA literature and pamphlets has already begun.

Work in Treatment and Correctional Facilities

Many groups and local service units in various cities co-operate with narcological dispensaries and addiction clinics by holding A.A. meetings there. There are not many AA friends among some experts in addiction. A.A. groups in correctional facilities are working in four cities: St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg and Chita and Kostroma. However, the experience of working in correctional facilities has just begun collecting, the "Corrections Workbook" is under translation now. The "Treatment Facilities Workbook" was published recently.

Public Information

The AA press conferences are held on a regular basis at the Independent Press-Center in Moscow, 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.

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

International Co-operation

Since 1991 Russian AA participated in ESM, with the exception of 2003. In 1998, 2000, 2008 the delegates from Russia participated in WSM, and in 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2009 in AOSM - Asia, Oceania Service Meeting (for one delegate to each meeting). Today we are maintaining contacts and co-operation with many of the countries. The main support we still have from US GSO as usual. Russian GSO of AA supply literature in Russian to individual members and groups in Germany, Israel, and the near abroad countries. It should be noted about publishing AA literature in co-operation with Ukrainian and Belorussian AA.

Forums and Workshops

The annual whole of Russia AA Forum usually takes place at the beginning of December and held under the control of Russian GSB of AA. Forums motto or theme and host town usually choose by GSB of AA and Conference. The Forum is very popular among AA members. Lately local AA service structures started to organize their own Forums. Russian GSB of AA in co-operation with GSO of AA is making special workshops with participation of those members who had experience in working through The Steps, Traditions and Principles. Special car forums "Forums on wheels" are conducted by the local service structures, the purpose of which is to spread the AA message of hope and sharing experience in working through AA Programme into those towns and settlements where there are no AA groups. For today there are the following Forums functioning: "Forum on wheels" (Central Russia), "North shoe", "South ring", "Forum on wheel" (Altay).

Nominating Committee

This Committee is very important for the Fellowship. It has been functioning since 2007. Committee's statute has been adopted. The process of generalization the experience about experienced AA members for service Boards structures already begun. The GSB has plans of making annual workshops and service meetings for candidates to the GSB, candidates to the Conference, and for candidates to the local service structures.

Slovakia

Beginnings of AA in Slovakia stretch back to the year 1990, when a group of students from Austria helped to establish the first AA group in Bratislava. With the help of friends from Poland, another AA group (independent of the Bratislava group) was established in Nove Zamky. In 1996, GSO was established in Bratislava. In that time about seven AA groups existed in Slovakia. Gradually other groups were being established; however, due to different reasons some of them ceased to exist.

Structure of AA in Slovakia

In the present time 26 AA groups operate in Slovakia. They are spread all over the country. Most of them operate in South-West Slovakia. The estimated number of AA members in Slovakia is about 350 – 400 members. Each AA group sends out two members for an Inter-group session. There are four Inter-group meetings per year. Their program is agreed on prior to the meeting. Each group receives an invitation for the meeting with an attached program of the meeting. Since 2008 the Inter-group has had an elected member who is a non-alcoholic. Minutes from each session of the Inter-group are sent to each AA group. The Inter-group makes decisions on all important issues of AA in Slovakia.

Besides Inter-group there is another elected body of AA – Regional Council of AA Slovakia. Regional Council has seven members – chairman of Inter-group, head of AA National Office, AA secretary, AA economist, editor in chief of Prameň (Slovak AA magazine), and two other elected members of Inter-group. Regional Council administrates the work of AA between the Inter-group sessions, and administrates all common AA issues.

Since 2005 The National Office of AA Slovakia has been operating in Nitra in rented facilities. The Office deals with common agenda, AA literature, and other AA property. The National Office does not have a full time employee. All business is done by internet communication. Local groups serve as contacts for those who need AA service.

Since 2009 AA Slovakia has its elected delegate in the European AA Service Meeting in Frankfurt.

The Work of AA

Ministry of AA is organized through local groups which elect their chairman, treasurer, a member responsible for literature, and two representatives of the group in the Inter-group. The work of the Inter-group is carried by almost all AA groups. One of the obstacles to effective work is e.g. the distance between AA groups (up to 400 kilometers). That is why the attendance at the Inter-group meetings is about 60%. We try to minimize this problem by organizing Inter-group meetings always in a different part of Slovakia, and in this way we allow all groups to participate in the meetings.

In 2003 there was the first Annual Conference of AA in Slovakia announced; however, there was not much interest to participate and thus a decision was made that all key decisions will be made by Inter-group. We assume that in year 2010 the second regular conference of AA services in Slovakia will be organized. We try to follow the principle of rotation in electing people responsible for different service positions within AA group or Inter-group.

Inter-group in co-operation with selected groups regularly organizes The National AA Convention during the third week of September. This year will be the 12th National AA Convention held in the East Slovakian Region, Drienica – Lysá.

Besides convention, International AA Meeting focused on AA Steps and Traditions is organized each year during the first weekend of February. In 2009, the 5th International Meeting attended by AA members from Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia was held. From 2010 we would like to focus these meetings on AA service and sponsorship. In order to deepen the work on Steps, we organize similar meetings in Trenčín, Levoča, and Nitra.

Finances

On May 5, 2009 we had 4,651.45 Euro at our disposal in our bank account. We have about 300.00 Euro in our petty cash. From the petty cash we pay our yearly rent – 558.00 Euro, internet costs – 200.00 Euro, post and other expenses – 100.00 Euro. Annual contributions of AA groups for the AA work are about 700.00 Euro. Income from our activities is about 350.00 Euro, income from literature is about 740.00 Euro. Because of low expenses of our National office we are able to cover its expense from our income. From the income we get from the sale of literature we print AA books and pamphlets.

Literature

In our National Office we have presently the following number of publications:

Alcoholics Anonymous – Second Slovak edition	800 copies
Alcoholics Anonymous (Czech)	40 copies
Twelve Steps	200 copies
Twelve Traditions	350 copies
Living Sober	90 copies

In these days we have received a shipment of books from GSO. These books will be a great help for our work. We have received:

Living Sober	2 700 copies
Twelve Steps	1 100 copies
Twelve Traditions	700 copies
Alcoholics Anonymous	150 copies

In 2007 we printed the second edition of Alcoholic Anonymous book (2000 copies); however, in 2010 we will need to print the third edition of this book.

We submitted the project of translation of two new books into Slovak to GSO – As Bill Sees It and Daily Reflections. Presently we wait for GSO permission. In March we sent them all the needed records, as well as samples of the above mentioned books. The project counts with returnable financial help from AA Poland, Norway, and Sweden. Finances should be returned back before 2015. Because of the small number of AA members and groups in Slovakia, Slovaks are not able to provide enough money for printing from their own sources yet. We presume that if we get GSO approval soon, we could prepare these books for printing in years 2010 – 2011.

We translated the following AA pamphlets:

This is AA
Is AA For You?
AA as a Resource for Health Care Professionals
Where Do I Go From Here?

We made a reprint of these materials this year and we presume that we will have enough of them for about two years. In the close future we would like to translate pamphlets: A Newcomer Asks and Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.

Provided that the groups will purchase these information pamphlets we presume that this system will allow us to collect financial means for reprinting the materials.

International Relations

AA Slovakia cooperates closely with AA Poland. Not only do we participate in AA activities in our countries, we also prepared some activities in co-operation, e.g. Meetings with AA Traditions and Steps. We also have broad contacts with AA in Czech Republic. We have good contacts with AA in Hungary, Romania, Austria, and Germany, namely in area of mutual participation in organized activities. We are grateful to AA individuals from the US who helped to spread AA in our country.

During the last four years representatives of our Inter-group have been attending Services Meetings of Central and East Europe which are organized by AA Poland. This year our delegate is attending the European Service Meeting in Frankfurt, Germany for the first time.

Public Relations

As for our public relations, we have two kinds of relations; those with treatment centers and those aiming at improving public awareness. We work with treatment centers through our members and their participation in AA meetings at these facilities. We have groups in Pezinok, Trenčín, and Predná Hora. In Predná Hora we succeeded to introduce 12 Steps as a part of the addiction treatment for those who decide to take part in the Steps. Our friends from America, who lived and worked in Slovakia, helped us in this achievement.

As for AA public awareness, we have broadcasted three programs in co-operation with Slovak National Radio which created much interest in AA. Other media, e.g. local newspapers and Christian periodicals have published information about AA as well. Most information about AA is distributed by the means of brochures and leaflets as well as through our website where we always find many responses. At the present we are preparing an information brochure about AA under the title “Alcoholics Anonymous – information for the public”.

Internet

Our website (www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk) is available for all of our members as well as for the public. Each visitor can get acquainted with information about AA, with the brochure 44 Questions and with some testimonies taken from our magazine Prameň. There is an updated directory of AA groups and the program of upcoming events in Slovakia and the surrounding countries. There are links for websites of AA in other EU countries – Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Croatia, and Hungary as well as for Al-Anon website. In 2008, 261 019 clicks were recorded on the website.

People can also register on our website and take part directly in online meetings about particular Steps and AA Traditions as well as other topics. They can also suggest a new topic and share their story. Today there are 152 registered users in this group. Within a year 2282 respondents have taken part in some form of Internet meeting.

Within our Internet space we also have a group called “Sober Space” as an independent Internet AA group that was established in 2006. Today it has 240 Slovak and Czech speaking members from all over the world. It is a good solution for all of those that do not have an AA group in their town or for those alcoholics whose health does not allow them to take part in real (live) meetings.

Magazine

Since April 2002 we have been publishing our magazine PRAMEŇ quarterly. The magazine brings testimonies of members of AA groups about their sobriety and their experience with the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions programs. An important part of the magazine is the part bringing information about AA meetings and events, and about possibilities of buying relevant literature. The magazine is published in 300 copies and is distributed to treatment houses and libraries. It is self-supported and financed by money gained from its sales. The members of the editorial office do the work for free and are not paid for their editorial activities.

Spain

Structure

Nowadays AA's structure in Spain is formed by 24 areas divided in 4 regional areas and more than 550 groups. (12 of which are inside correctional institutions) and about 11,000 members.

We keep in touch with non-Spanish speaking groups in order to work together, they take part in Regional and National events as well as in the Regional Forums, and their opinions and ideas are taken into account as a way to make them feel part of the Spanish Structure.

Regional Service Forums are continued to be held, they contributed to the good functioning of the Areas and allows the work of the General Service Board not to be strange to the groups or areas.

Two delegates of the General Service Board attended the World Service Meeting Conference (October 26 to the 30th in New York). The Regional Service Forum has also been present at the XV Spanish Society of Forensic Psychiatric Symposium (April 18th and 19th in Salamanca), II International Congress of Dual Pathology (May 31st in Madrid), XXIV Summer Course of the University of Cantabria (July 23th in Laredo), XVII Congress of the Spanish Society for Labor Security of the Public Administration (October 1st, 2nd and 3rd in Girona), Department of Health and Consumption (October 27th in Madrid), XXVIII SEMFYC National Congress (November 19th to the 22nd in Madrid), “Women and Alcohol” National Sessions (December 17th in Toledo), in 2009

we have visited the Government Delegate for the National Plan about drugs (January 13th in Madrid), the General Secretary of Prisons (April 23rd in Madrid) and the General Counsel of the Judicial Power (June 22 in Madrid).

The XXX Conference with topic “Alcoholics Anonymous, an open reality to society” took place in the month of April.

The 74th Anniversary of the Alcoholics Anonymous foundation took place in Valladolid in order to increase the presence of the community in this Autonomous Region.

Our Web page design is improving, it continues to get more and more visits from professionals and mass media and the general public.

We are in the process of actioning the Members and Groups surveys, the results will be included in our publications.

Finances

Until the last RES, almost the totality of the approved amount budgeted for the Conference was covered thanks to the commitment and responsibility of our members, Groups, and Areas with their regular contributions. Nevertheless in the last two years we are experiencing some difficulties that have caused our Prudent Fund of Reserve to practically disappear and this places us in a very dangerous position that can compromise even our responsibilities with third parties.

At the last General Service Conference a budget was approved that was intended to endow us again, in a time limit of 5 or 6 years, of a Prudent Fund of Reserve, giving us security for punctual situations of budgetary shortfall. It seems that the communication, the debate and the discussions in the Conference, Areas and Groups, has contributed to stabilizing this situation. Although till the 31st of July we still carried a negative balance in the contributions with regard to those budgeted.

Literature

We have proceeded to the renewal of the licenses to reproduce and distribute the Alcoholics' Anonymous literature protected by the rights from A.A.W.S. until October 2018, as well as including these publications on our official Web page (www.alcoholicos-anonimos.org) in “pdf” format without the printing option.

The new Public Information Guide has been created to be used as a tool that allows professionals to get a brief and clear knowledge of our Principles and fundamental aspects of our Community, as well as the phone numbers of each Area where they can locate us in each one of the Spanish provinces.

We continue with the delivery of our literature to individual Members, Groups, Areas and Committees, with a steady increase of our sales due to the day to day increase of Public Information Services, which has permitted us to better known between professionals and society in general.

Our official bulletins “Akron 1935” and “Compartiendo” continues to be published and distributed between more than 2000 subscribers, out of which about 570 are not alcoholics (they only receive “Akron 1935”).

Committees

The work in committees is promoted, and in almost every Area there are Public Information and Telephone committees. The number of committees increase as needed, responding to the growing service activity and implication from members of the Community.

Sweden

AA Sweden was founded in 1956. Today we have about 430 groups; there are also English, Finnish, Spanish and Icelandic speaking meetings as well as Polish and Russian speaking meetings.

Structure

The General Service Board consists of eight trustees, one each from the six regions and two friends of AA. One Nordic delegate and the two World Service Delegates have been added to the General Service Board at times. 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:
Economy, Information, Literature, Nomination and Policy.

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

“Language of the heart” has been translated into Swedish, though not printed yet. The approved AA-literature today consists of eleven translated books and also one book edited by Swedish AA.

There are 34 booklets pamphlets, decals, shades, cds videos and dvds 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 1650 orders of AA-literature have been made via the webshop, i.e. 65% of the total orders.

The network of local information committees continue to increase and today there are 34.

Finances

AA in Sweden is still not self-supporting. Approximately 65% of our income comes from the sales of literature. Sweden has contributed to the International Literature fund each year. In 2008 Sweden has paid SEK 25.000. AA in Sweden has also paid the full fee for two delegates to the World Service Meetings 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, Iceland and Sweden are taking turns in hosting the annual Nordic Meeting (NM). We are working on getting Greenland, The Faroe Islands and SAPMI to join us. In 2009 the Nordic Meeting was held in Sweden with the theme “Meeting across borders”.

Events during 2008/2009

In November 08, 2008, the General Service Board, all the members of the committees, international delegates, Association Alcoholic Anonymous, representatives from GSO, Bulletin and the chairs of each region had a Service meeting, where the guidelines for committees and the web site were thoroughly discussed.

The Service Conference was held April 17 – 19, 2009, and the theme was "Service – our responsibility and future". Participating in this conference were 21 delegates, nine trustees, one member of the Association Alcoholic Anonymous, one representative from Bulletin, one employee from GSO and the international delegates. There were also invited guests from Norway, Denmark and Finland.

The two World Service Delegates participated as delegates in the World Service Meeting in New York, 26 – 30 October 2008. One of the World Service Delegate visited Slovakia in September 2008 at their annual Country meeting. The other delegate visited Denmark at their Service conference in April 2009.

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 the flow of information or correspondence to other GSOs and between delegates and committee members. The GSO is also managing the list of all AA-groups, -meetings and addresses in Switzerland.

After creating a flyer for a better understanding of AA, the team for public information has designed a very successful 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.

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. 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 30 are answering 24 hours a day to approximately 3'000 calls a year concerning AA (approx. 66 %) and Al-Anon (approx. 33 %) issues.

Two years ago I reported, that the GSC had 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. Meanwhile this group did a solid and intensive job. The conclusions of the group can be summarised as follows:

- It seems, that the best way to help our suffering friends, as soon as it concerns basically and principal problems and aspects of AA and questions of AA-literature, is to do it together with our German friends and to participate in the corresponding committees.
- To use our local and Swiss structures for legal aspects and question of local and typical Swiss character.

On this basis the work group – together with a committee made up of delegates from Germany and from Switzerland has elaborated proposals that were approved by the GSC of 8 November 2008. Key-elements of these decisions are the followings:

- Switzerland will keep its own legal unit/association "AA-Schweiz" and will end its membership to the German association "Anonyme Alkoholiker Interessengemeinschaft e.V.". Switzerland will also keep its own GSO and will be informed by the German GSO in the same manner (GSC, GSB; etc.) than the other Intergroups of the German speaking area of Europe.
- Switzerland will participate in the GSC with the speaker of the (Swiss) Intergroup and two (instead of six) delegates and in the GSB with the speaker of the Intergroup.
- Switzerland will continue to get the literature from the German GSO. Switzerland will keep its own monthly magazine "Irgendwo AA" (Somewhere AA) and it's Newsletter "AA Welt" (AA world-wide) and will support the magazine ""AA-DACH".
- Switzerland will maintain its own structure for public relations and its own Homepage (with Links to the Website of the German speaking area of Europe).
- Switzerland will fully pay for all the services connected with the remaining German speaking area.

Switzerland (French & Italian speaking)

Literature

Within the frame of our 2008 literature promotion, we have sent to each group and regional CIP (Public Information) two samples of a booklet called "For the young ones" – not sure how it is exactly called in English. This booklet is published in France.

During the spring, we have promoted the new book published in Belgium called "Emotional sobriety through the Steps".

We have noticed a slight decrease in literature sale but an increase in the subscriptions of “Partage”. The editor of “Partage” has requested that we collaborate in the reading of some articles in the issues.

Number of groups

We have 55 groups with a large majority in the French speaking area.

General Structure

AASRI is divided in 3 territories.

We have 3 Class A administrators (non-alcoholic), 5 Class B administrators, an accountant, a person responsible for managing the group who is organizing the yearly conference, a person responsible for the BIPI (Public Information) as well as a person responsible for the literature.

Each year in March, we hold a Conference during 2 days where the Groups Representatives are suggested to attend. We also host the PIG (president of the Inter-Group) plus several invitees from France, Belgium and a Swiss German representative. This year 37 groups were represented out of 55.

This year, we had 4 workshops to discuss:

- Communications, medium
- What do we do with the reports of our delegates (world and European)?
- The delegates to the conference (who should they be)?
- AA and the young people

Public Information

This activity is pretty alive: Articles in the newspapers, participation to a local TV and several local radio broadcasts, participation to the national day against alcoholism taking place in November. We organized to have a plate installed in the rear of the public transports buses in Geneva.

We plan to have something for the young people within our internet site (still a project).

We have also visited a lot of institutions. And thus, our message to the still suffering alcoholic is well spread in our region.

Relations with other countries

We have started a relationship and the set-up of groups in Madagascar. Prior to this, we have sponsored Croatia during 2 or 3 years.

Prisons: We try to get in but, in the case of Geneva, the prisons are only for short sentences or those waiting to be displaced in penitentiary. In Geneva, many convicts don't speak French rendering the mission even more difficult.

Ukraine

AA was founded in 1989 in Ukraine; there are now around 60 meetings and 3 intergroups all over the country.

Structure

Conference. The 11th service meeting was held in April, 2009. There were delegates, guests and observers from Russia and Belarus. In addition, we were also able to welcome delegates, who had participated in international conferences.

Service Board

A resolution on the new composition of the board was passed at the most recent conference: a) one representative from each region; b) one non-alcoholic; c) one office worker. We believe that this resolution will enable future development in the right direction.

There are three committees, which are still more nominal than real:

- a) literature - preparation and editing of translations of AA literature into Ukrainian;
- b) public and international relations - we include here all our outside contacts, including those in other countries, the mass media, the healthcare system, educational institutions and government bodies;
- c) information - contact with groups, organization of conventions, seminars and web support.

Service Centre (Office)

The office was created following a decision taken at our 4th Service Meeting in 2003 and officially registered. It represents our interests everywhere.

Literature

We currently have enough books in stock and they are primarily distributed through the AA office or at conventions in different cities throughout the country. We have started to co-operate more closely with Polish AA and their literature committee in particular.

At the same time, we are translating AA's leaflets into Ukrainian. We are hoping to receive the necessary new licences for copyright from GSO in New York. Our magazine has unfortunately ceased being published as of this year, as we do not have a strong enough support team to ensure the printing on a regular basis.

Finances

The office (Service Centre) is able to pay a salary to one of its workers. The office's main income is derived from selling literature and group donations. We are able to cover the costs of the rent, stationery, the telephone and internet.

Conventions and Forums

This year, in the city of L'viv we celebrated 20 years of AA in Ukraine. We are grateful to all those, who supported this event. We have about 15 conventions in different cities on an annual basis. We hold our service meetings at three of them: Lutsk (July), Zhytomyr (November) and Kyiv (February). Our delegates participate in different international conferences thanks to the support of AA worldwide.

Mass Media Information

Through our non-alcoholic board member, we have gained further opportunities to present our ideas to government bodies, as well as medical and educational institutions. Although we have some access to participants dealing with alcoholism at national conferences, we are always looking for new ways of carrying the message of the 12-step program to society at large.

Our website www.aa.org.ua has been in place for 6 years. On the site, interested parties can easily find all the necessary information on recovery, the 12-step program, including all AA's links. We maintain information relating to all national and some international AA events. There are also two websites for the Kyiv and L'viv intergroups.

International Relations

We co-operate with the AA service structures in Poland, Russia and Belarus. Our delegates are welcome guests at AA gatherings in these countries. In the last year, we have ourselves welcomed AA speakers from the USA and Poland. Such unplanned events always present a good opportunity for us to swap experiences. Due to international support, we have recently become more active in contacting the European, British and American AA fellowships.

Issues of Concern

Our main concern continues to be the slow growth of groups all over the country. One of our key priorities for the coming period is to make AA more attractive across our whole society.

Committees & Workshops

AGENDA/POLICY/ADMISSIONS/FINANCE COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: A - Lithuania

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

1. Review total costs of the 14th ESM.

It was suggested that delegates raise awareness of the ESM and the need to finance it within their own countries.

The Committee felt that all costs were in line and there were no suggestions to cut costs.

2. Share experience on how delegates communicate the work of the ESM in their own country.

- a) How are ESM suggestions implemented?

All delegates make an oral report to their Service Conference.

Many countries published written reports in AA magazines or on their websites.

Some delegates report directly to groups when requested.

Just as AA members benefit from attending meetings, AA member countries benefit from attending the ESM.

- b) How do service structures in each country benefit from the experience shared at ESM?

Experience was gained from learning about mistakes that were made. It was suggested that countries not be afraid to share what went wrong as well as what had worked.

- c) Have you been able to pass on your experience to developing countries?

Some delegates felt that being invited to the Great Britain Service Conference was very beneficial. Invitations are sometimes based on personal requests or information gathered at the ESM and WSM. Some countries were invited more than once dependent on their need. Apart from

Great Britain, Denmark, Poland and Finland had invited observers. Estonia invited observers in an advisory capacity.

It was felt that it was important to share experience with other countries but not to tell them what to do.

- d) What benefits do you find when communicating with other delegates between ESMs?

Upon discussion we found that there is no communication between delegates between ESMs. Due to this there was a recommendation to consider sharing email addresses and forming an online question and answer forum.

3. How could the ESM facilitate new countries to form service structures?

It was suggested that ESM participating countries be encouraged to include their Service/Structure Manuals on their websites. Free translation software such as Google Translate can be found easily online.

A recommendation was made to consider the development of a virtual advisor bank of people as a way of enabling question and answer sessions with advisors from other countries.

4. What difficulties have you found and are you finding when developing your structure?

It was generally found that there was a lack of information and difficulty in finding examples of what works in other countries.

A recommendation to consider the development of a digest of most often asked questions and answers about the service structure to be integrated into to the above mentioned online forum which would be maintained by the European Information Centre.

It was suggested that delegates bring questions about structure in their own countries to the ESM.

It was further suggested that delegates discuss the possibility of posting all Conference questions and suggestions on their website.

5. Select a theme for the 16th ESM to be held in 2011.

The Committee selected 'Unity As Our Safeguard' as the theme for the 16th ESM in 2011.

6. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 16th ESM Agenda, Policy, Admissions, Finance Committee.

Henrik R from Denmark was elected Chairman of the Agenda/Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee 16th ESM and Trudy K from Netherlands was elected as alternate.

LITERATURE/PUBLISHING AND MEDIA COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: **GERHILD R** Germany

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

1. What material does your country use to reach those who may have reading difficulties?

In the case of immigrants or minorities living in a country, the literature, both written and audio, in the original languages can be obtained from GSO's abroad, provided it is available.

However, this question may also refer to problems with reading as such. In this case, some countries have produced cassettes or CDs with the Big Book or 12x12, for example.

Other solutions include using simplified materials, e.g. 12 Steps Illustrated, using large print and pictures. For blind people, literature in Braille is also available in Great Britain. In Great Britain, there is also available a DVD addressed at young people.

Some countries do not have any special materials.

2. How many countries are using TV spots and how do you handle this?
 - a. Have you produced a film or video, still photographs with a speaker or a text?
 - b. Have you used humour, irony or a more serious approach?
 - c. How does your country decide the difference between attraction and promotion (Tradition 11) when you address the public for example via TV spots, films etc....?

In the past, some countries had bad experiences with TV and learnt from their mistakes. Now, they are more careful and follow Tradition Eleven. However, in some countries there are still cases of breaking Tradition Eleven for personal reasons. Most of the countries do not have their own films or videos, although there are some documentaries produced for self-government or local TV stations.

Only a few countries – Great Britain, Flemish-speaking Belgium and the Netherlands – have made their original TV spots and Italy is making use of a dubbed American video. Usually a serious approach is adopted.

3. What guidelines do your country use when producing magazines? Who makes editorial decisions?

Some countries have their own magazines, some produce them together with other countries and others do not have any magazines now. Most of the countries work with their own guidelines. It is teams who make editorial decisions.

4. Please share information of what your Class A Trustees (non-alcoholic) on the General Service Board do for AA in your country.
 - a. Do you in your country have a list of tasks which the A Trustees deal with?
 - b. Do you ask for specific qualifications or skills from your A Trustees?

Some countries still do not have Class A Trustees in their General Service Boards. Those who have them often see them as peace makers. Most often, they do not need any special qualifications or skills, they carry the message to the public where AAs cannot do it.

5. What is your country's experience in providing information and carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic via national and/or regional telephone answering services or helplines? Do you provide some kind of training to the responders?

Nearly all countries have some sort of telephone helpline. Usually no special training is given to responders, although some kind of instruction and reference materials are provided. They need some experience in and with AA., also at least one year's sobriety is expected from potential responders. It is often the families and partners of alcoholics who seek information and help, then they are advised to contact e.g. Al-Anon or Al-Ateen.

6. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 16th ESM Literature/Publishing and Media Communications Committee.

Vitali Y from Belarus was elected Chairman of the Literature Publishing and Media Communication Committee 16th ESM, and Vera N from Romania was elected as alternate.

WORKING WITH OTHER COUNTRIES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: JACEK C - POLAND

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

1. What has your country done to help sponsor countries who are not yet participating in the ESM?

Nearly all countries donate money to the International Literature Fund (especially Ireland because being an island they have no neighbours near them they could sponsor), the WSM and the ESM funds.

Norway, Sweden and Poland sponsored Slovakia by financial aid, by literature, by personal contacts and help with any other problems.

The Netherlands are going to support Surinam.

Iceland is trying hard to sponsor Greenland, they donated money to the International Literature Fund for translation into Greenlandic.

Lithuania is sponsoring Estonia (this time the first time at the ESM), with experience and translations.

French speaking Switzerland has been supporting Croatia for the last 3 years, from now on they will start sponsoring Madagascar.

Belgium (Flemish) was sponsoring Romania (this time the first time at the ESM), and will go on doing so.

Denmark tries hard to support Greenland, contacts are hard because of the geographical situation.

France and the French speaking countries are supporting French speaking Africa (Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mali, Congo, Chad and Togo). They also supported the first West African Reunion Meeting in 2007 and will support the one in 2009 as well.

The countries present at this ESM should continue the efforts to invite new countries to the ESM using their contacts and financial possibilities.

2. How does your country communicate with other country's conferences, seminars and international workshops? Give definite examples.

Nearly all countries invite and/or are invited to the General Service Conference of their neighbouring countries and other countries they co-operate with. The Nordic countries have their own zonal meetings, the French speaking areas work well together as well, the former Eastern European countries also frequently share their experience by visiting each other. Some countries offer seminars and invite the ones around them.

Creating a list of European countries NOT YET present at the ESM will help to identify these countries.

3. Share experience on how to register Alcoholics Anonymous as a legal entity.

All the countries present have a legal entity according to their local laws. Developing and new countries should ASK FOR HELP! anywhere (neighbouring GSO, GSO in York, GSO in New York, other delegates,...) and any time.

4. Could we share experience on the following subject: Those convicted of driving while drunk, then going to AA meetings instead of going to prison. For instance, how do we co-operate within our societies in relation to our Prison Services, Courts of Law etc.

There are no countries in Europe where judges would send such people to AA. Some judges know the AA message and react friendlier. Some people are sent to treatment facilities and educational programmes, and that is where AA comes in. Most countries have meetings in prisons or in treatment centres and will keep those as part of their PI work. Prison work has developed and is subject to rotation.

5. Could ESM hold seminars in specific topics, for example Public Information, instead of the present workshop provision?

After a lively and vivid discussion our group conscience came to the suggestion that the ESM workshop topics should remain in the traditional way, giving more consideration to actual problems looking for solutions.

6. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 16th ESM Working with Other Countries Committee.

James V from Flemish Belgium was elected Chairman of the Working with other Countries Committee 16th ESM, and Chantal D from French speaking Switzerland was elected as alternate.

WORKSHOP: 'SERVICE ROTATION'

CHAIRMAN: MOGENS A –DENMARK

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

1. The principle of rotation is vital for our service structure and democracy, how do we make sure that this is functioning?

All the countries present agree that rotation is vital to our structure, this principle is stated in every service manual. Most countries have no problems with rotation, even the countries with a younger structure are doing well.

- a. Sometimes it happens that AA members would like to rotate from one service position to another, especially when they are members of General Service Board, does this happen in your country?

The length of service is stated in most service manuals. Some countries require a year of “no service period” before entering into a new service position. Other countries don't allow that at all. Some countries stretch the service time because they have too few AA friends to chose from.

- b. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this arrangement?

All countries try to keep a healthy balance between “new blood” and oldtimers' experience.

- c. Share experience on sponsorship into service in your country.

Shadowing a servant helps to make another friend available for the position. This is one way of sponsoring, usually we look for someone that could follow into our position. We have to be aware not only to find a willing servant but also to find the RIGHT person for the job.

- d. How can we best use the experience of our veterans?

Some countries have a special arrangement for oldtimers in an experience group or on their Board.

2. How easily do you find people to do service in your country?

In the different countries this ranges from “no problem to find someone” to “very hard to find anyone”.

3. Select a theme for the 16th ESM Workshop.

No suggestion made

4. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 16th European Service Meeting.

Jim T from Great Britain was elected Chairman of the 16th ESM and Ana M.V from Spain was elected as alternate.

WORKSHOP: ‘CONCEPT 3 THE RIGHT OF DECISION’ (and our entire AA Program) rests squarely on the principle of mutual trust, Bill W wrote. He also warns against using “The Right of Decision” as an excuse for failure to make the proper reports of actions taken; or for exceeding a clearly defined authority; or for failing to consult the proper people before making an important decision.

CHAIRMAN: VINCE O – GREAT BRITAIN

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

1. How does your country organise the General Service Office and General Service Board, bearing Concept 3 in mind?

The principle of mutual trust was stressed as the underlying principle of all our conduct.

All the countries have their General Service Offices (GSO) and General Service Board’s (GSB) job descriptions clearly defined. Their relationship to the General Service Conference is also well defined. All important decisions should require GSC’s acceptance.

Some countries reported that their GSO/GSB make important decisions without seeking GSC’s acceptance.

2. What are the advantages of giving conference delegates the right to act according their own conscience?

As trusted servants, Conference delegates feel more confident in participating at GSC.

Feeling the sense of trust and responsibility they are able to act. This ensures the real time aspect of the Conference.

3. How does your country prepare newly elected Trustees?

After being elected, Trustees may have to wait for a year before taking the position.

Some countries report that in addition to preparations they also use a selection process.

Other statements associated with this question were:

- **Service sponsorship and individual recommendations from former Trustees**
- **Job description**
- **Information passed (to Trustees) well ahead of the General Service Conference.**

4. Select a theme for the 16th ESM Workshop.

How to raise the awareness of the Concepts in our countries?

5. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 16th European Service Meeting.

Tomasz L from Poland was elected Chairman of the 16th ESM and Matti L from Finland was elected as alternate.

WORKSHOP: ‘CONCEPT 12’ *This Concept consists of the General Warranties of the General Service Conference. The Warranties also express spiritual principles which apply to all other A.A. entities as well, wrote Bill W.*

CHAIRMAN: JAN C – **BELGIUM (FLEMISH)**

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

1.

- a) Do any countries have difficulties the “sufficient operating funds plus and ample reserve” and if so, how do they manage this problem? (Warranty Two).

Many countries had problems with funds. It was felt that it was important for all countries to have enough to cover working costs.

It was felt that groups must have trust and confidence in the service structure in order for them to make contributions.

It was also felt that groups must be well informed about their countries finances. If they are aware where funds are spent they are more likely to make contributions.

Ensuring that Tradition 7 is understood by the members was also considered important in increasing funds flowing through the structure.

- b) What is considered a prudent or ample reserve in your country?

The prudent reserve varied from 1 year to 3 years.

It was generally felt that a prudent reserve should be enough to cover operating costs.

2. Warranty Four: *“That all important decisions should be reached by discussion, vote and wherever possible, by substantial unanimity.”* Share practical ways to achieve substantial unanimity.

In some countries it was difficult to reach a substantial unanimity as questions were misunderstood.

It was suggested that questions to be voted on should be simplified and background information be provided if necessary.

In Germany if a decision cannot be made following discussion, a break is held before votes are taken.

3. Are the Concepts part of your country's Conference Charter? What consideration is given to Concept 12 when developing your country's AA Service Structure?

In most countries, the concepts are not well known throughout the Fellowship. The young do not know them and the old forget them. Therefore it is very important to keep learning and educate others.

In many countries the Concepts are included in the Conference Charter or Service Manual.

4. Select a theme for the 16th ESM Workshop.

The committee selected "Awareness, Education & Information" as the theme for the 16th ESM Workshop.

5. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 16th European Service Meeting.

Kristin L from Norway was elected Chair of the 16th ESM Workshop and Pavol G from Slovakia was elected as alternate.

Closing Addresses

Valerie O (GSO New York)

Dear Friends I thank you for the privilege of joining you for your service this weekend. I particularly want to thank the EIC in York, all the people who helped us, and Ib our Chairperson.

From the earliest hours of this meeting till these closing hours we have received all of the information that we needed to be able to share together and to arrive at each of our homes with new dedication and experience. I can see that each delegate experienced the meeting where borders lost their meaning and the common goal of best serving the suffering alcoholic became the most significant aspect of each country's report, each workshop, each committee meeting, and the AA Sharing meeting. AA had given each of us the right to sit with our fellow alcoholics as an equal and important part of this meeting.

Sober sharing and the willingness of each delegate to participate in this meeting without borders has broadened our experience. I can see that no one in this room will leave today without additional AA wisdom, strength and hope, that they will be able to pass on to benefit AA members, their service structure and ultimately the alcoholic who is waiting in the dark for our message of hope.

If I may I would like to take you back to 1935, Akron, Ohio and New York City. What it must have been like in those early days. No long term sobriety, if you had a question you found someone with six days of sobriety, if you were lucky. No literature, the Big Book isn't published until 1939 (actually 70 years ago this year). No money, or what we call in America – 'low bottom drunks', and great social stigma that we know that many alcoholics still experience today around the world. In spite of those challenges those early AA members made an anonymous spiritual commitment on behalf of AA worldwide, to provide information about AA to anyone who asks, no questions asked.

For the 15th European Service Meeting's dedicated members, like you, have continued to honour this commitment. You have met together, not so you can promote AA, but to enable you to build a stronger AA foundation in your respective countries. You have met together to accept the responsibility of protecting the message passed on by those earliest AA members and our co-founders to a Fellowship that knows no borders, but knows the suffering of active alcoholism, and that offers the freedom of sobriety.

What I have seen here is a small part of AA history. Over time the names of the 15th ESM delegates may be forgotten but all will not be lost, what will be remembered will be the anonymous personal sacrifice of time, the miles travelled by plane, car and by bus. The willingness to meet new friends and to put aside the anxiety of being a newcomer once again, the anxiety of speaking and listening in English, and worrying if our participation will be adequate. You join a long history of dedicated service to AA, and you also join a long history of practising a spiritual programme based on the principles of AA. We know that our own spiritual house must be in order before our Higher Power can use us as trusted servants in AA.

Although the agenda here says 'Closing Addresses', I think of this sharing as 'Opening Addresses'. As you leave today you will begin another chapter of AA history in your own personal recovery and in your country's structures. In my experience there will come a time and a challenging AA situation when you will remember something from this weekend, and it will be the perfect sharing for that situation.

There is a story that after Bill Wilson's death Lois said that 'you are all now the co-founders of AA'. I will leave tomorrow personally knowing that AA in Europe is in good hands. I've seen respect paid to those who came before us, and a profound faith that dedication to anonymous service is a privilege that enriches our AA communities wherever they are. Today we all share a community without borders, a community of AA principles, a community filled with sober experience and hope, a community where our common history of suffering becomes a gift to be shared. Once again I thank you for allowing me to join you as you have lived AA's vision of hope together.

In Thailand, where I was recently, they have found many barriers in AA, there was a history of separation by social standing, education and profession. How could there be an equal relationship – sponsor to sponsee? Their simple answer was to accept the concept of friend helping friend. I thank you for being part of the weekend, this weekend of friend helping friend.

Thank you.

Walle S (Sweden)

My name is Walle, an alcoholic from Sweden. Firstly I would like to thank all of you AA has saved my life, and today its proudly given that I am a member of AA. I came to AA a little more that 20 years ago, and I started with service directly. For the last 15 years I have worked in central service in Sweden, and I have tried to sponsor some people into service and if I do it good or bad, I don't know, only God knows that.

I have been in many countries these 20 years, visiting AA meetings in 44 countries, however there are 3 countries here I haven't visited yet – Belarus, Romania and Greenland – I hope to come there soon!

Everywhere I go I am welcomed with and take away with me affection. I feel unity amongst all of us here this weekend. I like the triangle in AA, with the top being the groups over all, and here we are as down as we can come in the triangle.

There are many words in AA that I like, and I like the English words better than those translated in Sweden. In Step 2 –'Restore us to sanity' that's very good for me, we have some other translation. Then there is Step 3 'The fight is over, no

more struggles' and it is my favourite Step. Another word is 'remove' we have some other word in Swedish –'remove my defects and my will to drink' and so on. Also for me Step 9 which will be with me for the rest of my life, in fact all of the Steps will. So I live with the Steps and take care of the Traditions.

I read about what Bill W said when he was in Sweden in 1952, and I like it. He said 'there is no excuse for garbling the AA Message when you can read'. There are also other things he wrote, particularly when he was in Dublin,(I like the Irish, they are so tough and heartfelt). Bill wrote of the Irish 'They have all I wanted... and a little more'. I believe that this appears in AA Comes of Age.

I have a sponsor from 15 years ago, we work every day for one hour, and talk and talk. Some day I said '... and now I know Tradition 7' he say 'Good, and who do you think you are!'. He is a good man, and we still have some contact over the telephone.

So with this I will thank all of you and hope to see all of you again some day, some how. AA from today, and for ever.

Thank you.

Jean-Richard (Switzerland)

Hello, my name is Jean Richard and I'm an alcoholic. I'm grateful for the opportunity to enjoy two times the European Service Meeting in Frankfurt and I am very grateful that this was made possible for me. I have made a lot of interesting and very important experiences together with you.

For me it's very impressive that I could have similar experiences as I did the first time that I went to the group meetings. In the group meeting I was still very impressed that we are together although we were all quite different persons. Despite of the different social and cultural backgrounds there is are so many common points in our lives that come out through the sharing and continues to be a very great experience for me. This helps me to see that recovery has no borders. We are all delegates from different countries, with different cultures and a different historical past etc, the problems and the challenges that we have faced are quite alike, and I think that this is the strength of AA. I feel very grateful for this experience. I would like to say 'thank you' to you all.

Maryse (France)

Hello, my name is Maryse and I am an alcoholic.

Some years ago I was crying in my kitchen with my glass of wine. I thought that I was a bad wife, I was a bad mother and I wanted to die, it was the end of my life.

By the grace of God I met AA and I discovered that I was able to stay, one day at a time, without alcohol. I discovered that I was able to be a secretary at my AA group, to be a GSR, to be a delegate, I was completely surprised at myself! Confidence came back little by little and today I am here with you all at the ESM... what an adventure! Of course I owe that to the members, my sponsor and my God.

Two years ago I arrived in this city, in this hotel and my legs were shaking. I was welcomed by the staff and came to share with some delegates and very quickly I was in my family. This year I am more quiet, I know that my English is not very correct, but I would like to continue this adventure with some of you. I be will at the next French Conference for the service of our next ESM delegate.

Thank you for your help, thank you for your love, I will keep you all in my heart.

Ib J - Chairman of 15th European Service Meeting

My name is Ib and I am an alcoholic.

I would like to thank you all for a wonderful, exciting and loving 15th European Service Meeting. I'm so grateful having had the opportunity to attend this meeting serving as your Chairman.

Our various AA service structures throughout the world, don't build fences or walls for us to live in isolation. We try to build bridges between countries and regions, this weekend has exposed this in many ways.

Our different kind of experiences flow freely across national borders. This forum, the European Service Meeting, has the same primary purpose as that of an AA group and all other AA activity: to carry the message of hope to the still suffering alcoholic.

This weekend ESM Delegates have shared experience, strength and hope so when we return to our respective countries, we can contribute to a more sound and effective Service.

Zonal-meetings throughout the world, like the ESM, are working to strengthen internal communication, community relations and institutions work. We are progressing in our efforts of AA services and I find this work of great importance, to serve as an ESM Delegate.

Finally I would like to thank our friends from the US - and Canada structure, the Agenda committee 2009, the Secretaries, the Staff you Delegates, have a safe trip back home and ma Anonymous.