

# **AN UNCHANGED MESSAGE IN A CHANGING WORLD**



**20<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING 2019**

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## European Service Meeting

# Statement of Purpose

The primary purpose of the European Service Meeting is the same as that of all AA activity – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he may be, whatever the language he speaks. The European 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 from all parts of Europe. It can also represent an expression of the Group Conscience throughout Europe.

Experience teaches us that developing a sound structure enables us to deliver our services more effectively. The European Service Meeting encourages the planning of the sound structures suited to the needs and capabilities of the various countries and the exploration of expanding AA Services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, community relations and institutions work.

## Summary

Delegates from twenty-nine European countries gathered together at the Park Inn, York, from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019 to take part in the Twentieth European Service Meeting.

The European Information Centre at York issued invitations to European Service Offices and listed below are the countries which attended.

<b>Austria</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
<b>Belgium (Flemish Speaking)</b>	<b>Norway</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>Poland</b>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Portugal</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Romania</b>
<b>Finland</b>	<b>Russia</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>
<b>German Speaking Europe</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>
<b>Great Britain</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>Greece</b>	<b>Sweden</b>
<b>Iceland</b>	<b>Switzerland (French Speaking)</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Switzerland (German Speaking)</b>
<b>Italy</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>
<b>Lithuania</b>	

Registration and reception were held on Friday afternoon. Old friendships were rekindled, and new friendships were made. Informal discussions took place in a relaxing and upbeat atmosphere over coffee.

The Twentieth European Service Meeting (ESM) was opened by the Chair Rita M (Italy), with a moment's silence, who gave a warm welcome to all the delegates as well as the staff of the ESM including Ranjan Bhattacharyya, General Secretary of the European Information Centre (EIC), and also our special guests from GSO New York: General Manager – Greg Tobin, International Desk – Eva Sanchez, and the Publications Director – David Rosen.

Following the Welcome and Opening Address a presentation of the Twenty Fifth World Service Meeting (WSM) was given by Lotus A (France), this was followed by the Keynote Address which was presented by Greg Tobin, General Manager, GSO New York. David Rosen, Publication Director, GSO New York gave a brief overview of AA literature translation & licensing and Ranjan Bhattacharyya, General Secretary, European Information Centre, also gave a short talk on the Financial Report.

There then followed individual presentations of country highlights which were given by one delegate from each country.

On Saturday the work began in earnest with the Committees and Workshops taking place throughout the day. Reports were given from the Committee and Workshop Chairs detailing these discussions on Saturday afternoon (committees) and on Sunday morning (workshops).

During the evening the atmosphere took on a more relaxing pace with the Sharing Meeting which saw presentations from Amanda S, Great Britain and Michał F on the theme: “Country to Country Co-operation – 40 years of the ESM”. This was followed by sharing around the room.

On Sunday morning, elections were held to determine who would become Chair of the Twenty First European Service Meeting and we are pleased to welcome Yury T (Ukraine) to take up the position.

Nana K (Greece) was elected to prepare and present a report on this Twentieth European Service Meeting to the Twenty Sixth World Service Meeting which will take place in 2020. She will then report back on the Twenty Sixth WSM to the Twenty First ESM in 2018.

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

Yury T (Ukraine)	Chair of Twenty First ESM
Ranjan Bhattacharyya	General Secretary of EIC
Tobias D (Denmark)	Chair – Service Committee
Ivo C (Portugal)	Chair – Recovery Committee
Helen H (Ireland)	Chair – Unity Committee

The Agenda Committee will meet in 2020 (dates to be confirmed) to discuss all questions forwarded to them via the EIC. The programme of the Twenty First European Service Meeting will be finalised and the Agenda set.

To finalise the weekend closing addresses on the theme of the ESM “An Unchanged Message in a Changing World” were given by Ewa B (Sweden), Jon Oli O (Iceland), Nur I (Turkey) and Werner F (Austria). These were all heartfelt and moving shares of their experiences and thoughts on the European Service Meeting.

To conclude Rita M, our ESM Chair, closed the Twentieth ESM with a warm and sincere closing address.

To finish the Twentieth European Service Meeting all delegates formed a circle around the room and took turns to share the Serenity Prayer in their native language, ending with all delegates speaking the Serenity Prayer in English as one.

## **Agenda Digest of the 20<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting 2019**

### **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October**

Registration and Reception  
Welcome and Opening Address  
Twelve Traditions  
World Service Meeting Report  
Keynote Address  
Literature Address  
Report on the ESM Fund  
Country Reports

### **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October**

Committee Meetings  
Workshops  
Presentation & discussion following Committee Reports  
Questions and Answers Session  
AA Sharing Meeting on the theme: *“Country to Country Co-operation – 40 years of the ESM”*

### **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October**

Presentation & Discussion Workshop Reports  
21<sup>st</sup> European Service Meeting

- Time and Place
- Election of Chair
- Election of ESM Delegate to prepare ESM Report for WSM 2020 and report back to the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM in 2021
- Formation of the Agenda Committee

Closing Addresses  
Close of 20<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting 2019

# Opening Presentations

## **WELCOME ADDRESS**

### **“AN UNCHANGED MESSAGE IN A CHANGING WORLD”**

#### **CHAIR – RITA M, ITALY**

Hello everyone and welcome to this 20th European Service Meeting. My name is Rita and I am an alcoholic. I have been elected as your chair for the next few days, and I am grateful to my Higher Power for this honour to serve Alcoholics Anonymous. I wish to thank Ranjan and all the staff in York who have organized and taken care of all the details making us feel at home while here and David, Eva and Greg from the World Services in New York. This makes me understand the feeling of “family” when I speak of Alcoholics Anonymous.

From the International Convention in 1965:

“I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A. A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.”

Bill W.

My comprehension of the unique and worldwide message is represented in these words that Bill W. wrote and pronounced because this is the only way to keep Alcoholics Anonymous living throughout the years in a continuously changing world.

I feel honoured to be only one of those millions of people who are a part of this family who speak with the language of the heart through an “Unchanged Message in a Changing World”. My physical description of Alcoholics Anonymous is a great big puzzle which needs so many pieces to be placed together in each other to complete the symbol. It still hasn’t been completed because life has replaced men and women who have found another place in heaven where they have come to know Bill, Bob and many others. May we remember them all with a moment of silence, thank-you.

We also have the tradition which speaks of rotation, this helps us follow the path which has been fixed before us to have a spiritual growth.

Every time the message touches the heart of a newcomer, our puzzle can continue to find a new piece and live through him or her.

The message which began with the fantastic idea of putting down in words and create official literature where we find written the experiences of men and women who learned the importance of hope, faith and trust helping each other being able to stop drinking and seek sobriety through a Program... The Twelve Steps for Recovery, The Twelve Traditions for Unity and the Twelve Concepts for Service.

Had I not found Alcoholics Anonymous, its’ Program for my recovery together with the experience of many “friends” who I started considering a new family, discovered that only through their shared experience, I could have found my identity in the groups. Without all the patience they had and the help they gave me, I certainly wouldn’t be here with you all now. What is worse, never would I have known the definition of sobriety because I have had the honour to learn from my “friends” to listen first of all, read the official literature to understand the teachings and understand that only Passing it on I can keep sober and help those who are in need and seek help.



Our literature, which is the official legacy that has taught us how tough the beginning was and all the errors made so that Alcoholics Anonymous could keep living through experience and not repeat the same mistakes is the unique message which A.A. has given us. Reading the Big Book, our 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.

The Language of the Heart, Doctor Bob and the Old Good Friends, The 12 Concepts, to only mention a few of the most important books which have been written to give us all the right contact with the sufferings, the capacity to know that spreading the message was and still is the salvation for themselves and for others. This has been the key which helped our first co-founders see their Foundation start off, grow and keep living.

Many have been the misunderstandings, the discussions, the arguments between alcoholics to give birth to AA. Still today the difficulties are many, and through the years we have certainly grown which helped us search the unity for which we are called to discuss these days, find the best way to give the answers to these uncertainties and keep on the right track.

Times and methods have certainly changed through the years and yet, here we are together and ready to discuss the priorities of our Association, and how to do our best to keep it safe and sane.

We now have double dependencies as newcomers, rehabilitation centres who ask our collaboration and this often changes the original way to work our Twelfth Step. Our force comes from that unchanged message, which saved us all.

In May 1964, taken from “The Language of the Heart”, Bill wrote: “Nevertheless effective literature was prepared, and in 1939 the publication of the Big Book became our very first world service. From that time on, it became perfectly clear what AA is, what it believes, and how it works. Millions of our pamphlets and hundreds of thousands of our books are today in circulation. AA’s message can never be garbled; anyone at all can find out about us with ease. What the dividends of this single project in world communication have been, only God himself knows.”

Still then Bill knew that the unique message which AA would have needed to be carried was one and it wouldn’t have been changed throughout the years because this is the message which would have saved millions of lives.

Therefore Bill had already found the way to transmit from generation to generation our simple and efficient method to help whoever asks for help.

“As we continue in the language of the heart to carry AA’s message across all distances and all barriers, may God bless us.”

From “A Message from Bill” The Language of the Heart

Thank-you for your attention and thank-you all for your service in AA

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

### “AN UNCHANGED MESSAGE IN A CHANGING WORLD”

#### GREG TOBIN, GENERAL MANAGER, GSO US/CANADA

My name is Greg Tobin, and I am an alcoholic serving in my fifth year as the general manager of the General Service Office of the United States and Canada. I am sincerely grateful to be in attendance at this 20th European Service Meeting—what an amazing reality that is!—with Eva Sanchez, G.S.O. staff member on the International assignment, and David Rosen, A.A. World Services publishing director, two equally amazing colleagues and fellow workers in the office.

The theme of this meeting, “An Unchanged Message in a Changing World,” strongly speaks to me of our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service, with a particular resonance regarding the legacy of A.A. Unity.

The message of recovery from the disease of alcoholism, the proposition of a spiritual path to that recovery, is found, of course, in the literature we publish at the behest of the General Service Conference, the effective voice and group conscience of the Fellowship as a whole. And the primary text containing that message is the first book published by the founders of our Fellowship – indeed the book from which we take our name: *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Today, are some 40 million copies of that book printed and distributed throughout the world in 71 languages, including the original English-language text.

Most of us know that the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, does not enjoy copyright protection in the United States; it is, however, protected in Canada and every other country throughout the world that is a party to the Berne Convention and other copyright treaties. But, thanks to hard experience, we make no assumptions in this regard. We are as vigilant as we can be in monitoring copyright violations and providing guidance and support to G.S.O.s that encounter violations in their countries. We seek to work with you as partners on publishing, licensing and translation issues. I will not go into detail about that situation, as David Rosen will address the meeting on literature translation and licensing issues in a moment.

However, let us be clear: there is no more urgent need than the proper protection of A.A.’s copyrighted Conference-approved literature in order to ensure the integrity of the “unchanged message,” which in turn fosters worldwide A.A. unity.

In a report nearly twenty years ago, a predecessor of mine stated: “I was preparing a white paper for our Board, and I said that although our procedures may sound like ‘strictly business’ those of us who have been privileged to witness the growth of A.A. around the world to meet A.A.s living, cultural, religious and economic or political systems very different from our own, cannot help but be deeply moved and deeply grateful that the A.A. program can transcend the vagaries of birth and circumstance.”

Is there really any debate as to whether or not the A.A. program is set forth in our Conference-approved literature? A.A. world Services has had a critical and uncompromising role in ensuring that the expression of the A.A. program is the same in Amsterdam, Tokyo, Jakarta, Seoul or wherever, as it is in Akron, Ohio or Toronto, Canada. We hope that this support also gives your overseas service structures credibility in your effort to maintain A.A. unity in your country and we do feel that the ability of your national [or regional] service structures to control the distribution of literature in your country is vital to your efforts to maintain credibility as the unifying service force in your country.

As other countries have continued to form their own autonomous General Service Boards and Conferences [with our approval and assistance], they generally begin a process of translating and publishing A.A.W.S. copyrighted literature. From the beginning, our policy has been to grant licenses to only one General Service entity in each country and distribute A.A.W.S. copyrighted literature.

The literature license is a non-exclusive but singular license and gives the licensee the right and obligation to protect their sole position as publisher and distributor and to protect our copyright. And by “our” copyright, I mean the ownership by the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous of its intellectual property.

Throughout the world, there have been a number of situations in which copyright and licensing have been the cause of disunity, dating back a few decades and even into the present time.

Frankly, the A.A. World Services Board made a mistake in recent years by granting a co-license to two service offices in one country. But it has been a valuable learning experience for us, confirming that the “one license in one country” policy is the valid and enduring principle we will continue to follow. Again, I won’t dwell on this topic in this talk, but am available, along with David, to discuss further with any and all who care to over the coming weekend.

The Third Forward in our Big Book closes with:

In spite of the great increase in the size and the span of this Fellowship, at its core it remains simple and personal. Each day, somewhere in the world, recovery begins when one alcoholic talks to another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength and hope.

As simplistic as this may seem, it describes in a profound way, what we are all about. In whatever language, whether face to face or through electronic media, in whichever country, island, village or neighborhood, our purpose is so totally simple, so completely spiritual, and so absolutely necessary for each and every one of us, as expressed in the Twelve Steps. Carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic is essential to the sobriety and therefore the survival of A.A. member.

The same principle applies to the group, as expressed in the Twelve Traditions, and to the relationship between and among A.A. groups. These, too, are simple and simply expressed ideas that came to the founding generation of Alcoholics Anonymous through hard-won experience, through trial and error.

Unity, as expressed in the First Tradition, is the ultimate aim and quintessential value for all of us, which ensures our personal recovery in each case and our groups’ ability to function within A.A. as a whole to carry the message of the Twelfth Step. Unity is a frequent theme of conferences and other gatherings of A.A. members and those involved in General Service everywhere. Most agree that unity is not to be confused with uniformity of thinking or conformity for the sake of conformity.

In fact, Eva’s immediate predecessor in the International assignment, who attended the two previous ESMs, noted in her report on the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, two years ago, a phrase that has resonated with me, from a delegate’s sharing in 2017: “If we walk together, we can go far.”

So clearly and nicely put...

So, what, more specifically, is this unity to which we cling so desperately, and why is it so important? In his essays collected in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, Bill W. reminds us of the significance attached to this principle:

The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-saving grace of God; His gift to us would be spent aimlessly. Back again in their caves, alcoholics would reproach us and say, “What a great thing A.A. might have been.”

That is a lament we hope never to hear...

Unity also means continuity. We need more than a momentary feeling of unity so that we can continue to exist for the alcoholics of tomorrow. We may not always have perfect harmony among ourselves, but the miracle of A.A. is that through the grace of God and the practice of certain principles, in spite of our differences, we can be led to a greater wholeness. If we continue to listen, learn, change and grow with each other, the core of internal harmony will remain solid so that our primary purpose can be carried out most effectively.

We did not always have unity. None of our legacies, including the Steps, were achieved without trouble, difficulty or internal controversy. They were not handed down to us after a flash of revelation but were brought about through struggle and conflict. Time and again, since the beginning of our Fellowship, the importance of A.A. unity has been manifested.

We remember that in the 1940s, some 70 years ago, there were small, scattered groups of alcoholics, sober but struggling. And there were single members and small groups outside the U.S. in the same condition. These groups communicated only with Dr. Bob and Bill W. Separate from those groups were the trustees of the then-Alcoholic foundation. Supported by Dr. Bob, Bill began to talk about the possibility of a democratic gathering of the representatives of our fledgling society coming together so that the Fellowship would begin to look after its own affairs. In 1950, Bill and Bob together for the final time made that pivotal decision to step aside and allow A.A.'s future to become our collective responsibility.

In removing themselves as the link between the groups and the board, Bob and Bill displayed genuine humility and a true demonstration of the spiritual unity underlying our Traditions and, later, the Concepts. A few years later, at the fifth General Service Conference, we adopted the Declaration of Unity: "This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come."

That declaration is often shared in service meetings in the U.S. and Canada...

If we may, in all humility, state that Alcoholics Anonymous has been a success story, I believe it has been to the degree that there has been unity to our message: that it has remained an unchanged message in a changing world.

Not uniformity (as noted earlier), but unity, and that unity is defined by members worldwide carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic; with telling what we were like, what happened to us, and what we are like now; with sharing the tools of recovery with newcomer; with imparting hope and encouragement to our peers and offering to newer members a sense of obligation to carry this message and pass it on; with sharing how we strive for unity and the actions we take to keep A.A. whole and vital; and finally, it has to do with communication about the critical importance and role of service in Alcoholics Anonymous.

We have all experienced that cultural distinctions can challenge us in terms of carrying the A.A. message, with some alcoholics being made to feel that they are not welcome in our groups. No nation or majority culture in any country is immune from these challenges—we all experience growing pains in this area.

We all experience, to one degree or another, challenges to alcoholic newcomers—and even longer timers—who are "different," that is, in terms of their gender, racial, religious affiliation or lack of religion, age (younger or older) or other characteristics in addition to their basic alcoholic problem. We must, in our individual and particular corners of the world, come to understand and address these "differences," while always retaining focus on our common identification and what brings us together in the first place. We must learn—indeed, I believe we are learning to put aside personal resentments and biases in the face of the A.A. principles we profess. As Eva is fond of stating, "We are what we say." In other words, we must become the message of love and tolerance of others, if that is what we profess in public.

A.A. unity embraces those of us who have received the message of recovery and includes those with whom we seek to share the message...

I choose to be optimistic for two reasons: 1) it is my experience in recovery and service that my A.A. group and A.A. as a whole really do want the best for the movement and to be available to any alcoholic who comes through our doors, and 2) unity has been our safeguard and watchword almost from the very beginning, and we are always drawn back to unity by our cherished Twelve Traditions and the example of our founders.

The cofounders and earliest pioneers—both alcoholic and nonalcoholic alike—were committed to the concept of A.A. unity, even as they witnessed A.A. as a spiritual society always in a state of becoming—never something completed. A matter of progress rather than perfection, if you will.

Bill W. shared about the fears the early members had of A.A. becoming rigid and unable to assess and meet challenges, head-on and realistically. For a movement like A.A., there is a difference between our history offering a context from which we can proceed and, alternatively, our history being set in concrete, holding us in place unable to move and grow and breathe... To Bill and the early members, past solutions were just that—past solutions—not holy, sacred rules to bind us rigidly to some dogmatic path. Indeed, dogmatism may prove to be an obstacle to unity. I believe it usually is, leading most often to rebellion and rejection than to blind adherence (which, in any case, is not very desirable as a way of life).

Change and growth are not the enemies of unity. But our acceptance, as national and regional structures in Europe and North America, of the guiding principles that underpin the Three Legacies, can lead us in the direction of and expectation of A.A. unity for us all.

If you will permit me, I shall close with the Declaration of Unity, once more: “This we owe to A.A.’s future: To place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.”

## LITERATURE ADDRESS

### **“A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF AA LITERATURE AND LICENSING: WORKING TOGETHER WITH ABLE HELPERS AROUND THE WORLD”**

**DAVID ROSEN, PUBLISHING DIRECTOR, GSO US/CANADA**

#### **Introduction**

My name is David Rosen, and I am an alcoholic. I am delighted to be here, and thrilled to share with you a brief overview of A.A. World Services Literature Translation and Licensing, which I have subtitled: “Working Together with Able Helpers Around the World.”

I have spent my professional career working in publishing – the business of words. I am grateful -- beyond words -- to have found sobriety and the life-saving and life-enriching spiritual design for living in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The hand of A.A. reached out to me when I was sick and suffering – and somehow found myself stumbling into a noon-time A.A. meeting that was being held in the dusty and musty basement of a Catholic Church on the very same street that I live in New Jersey. I know now that this was a literature-discussion meeting, wherein the gathered A.A. folks read and discuss that day’s passage from our book *Daily Reflections*. What did I know then? Not much. I thought I had stumbled into an odd sort of reading group or book club – but unlike, say Oprah Winfrey’s book club and unlike any other reading group I had yet experienced, here I was in a roomful of readers who were not discussing the theme or plot or favorite characters in a book. Nope. No favorite scenes or plot twists. Here, rather, in this church basement on the street that I live, everyone was focused, quite intently, on just one single page of that book!

And how they did go on and on and on -- It was deep. They got emotional! They really related to the words on that one page. One dude cried. I loved it. It was the best book club ever!

At the end of the meeting, after we joined hands and said something about serenity, one of the guys high-tailed it over to me.

“Are you new?” he demanded. “Uh, yes, I guess,” I croaked.

He asked if I got anything out of the meeting. I chirped up, “Yeah – I’m a book guy!”

“Oh yeah?” he said. “Well, then, read this book, Mr. Book Guy. ...” Extending his hand, and in that hand, a copy of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Big Book, in softcover.

The Big Book, which didn’t feel all that big, to me, to be honest (now all of a sudden, I was being honest?) – is now in its Fourth English-language Edition, with nearly 40 million copies of the English edition having been distributed since 1939. It is celebrating 80 years in print.

Thus, our beloved Big Book fell into the hands of this suffering “know-it-all” book-loving alcoholic, a guy born in Buffalo, New York to a Jewish father and Lutheran Christian mother, who thereby received A.A.’s profound spiritual message in the basement of a Catholic Church. Hallelujah!

My first meeting in A.A., then, was characterized by a life-saving act of one alcoholic helping another, a total stranger extending his hand out to help, and in that hand: the gift of a book.

Today I have held the professional position of Publishing Director of A.A. World Services for three years, working at the G.S.O. New York City office. And as many of you may know, I began my tenure at the office in 2014 as Licensing Manager.

Since then, helping to shepherd the translation of A.A.W.S., Inc.-copyrighted materials through our necessary processes of review, licensing, registering copyright, and distribution around the world is one of my greatest passions.

## Overview of A.A.W.S., Inc. Publishing Department

Charged with the “great responsibility” of being the official Publishing arm of A.A., the A.A.W.S. Publishing professional team works in cooperation with G.S.O. services Staff, and all other departments at the office, along with what our cofounder Bill W. called the “able helpers” throughout the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, and with our non-A.A. friends. Together we shepherd the origination, editing, revision, translation, production, warehousing, and distribution of our more than 1,000 items of literature – in print, ebook, audio, video and other formats worldwide.

This is indeed, we working as we do together, we together make up a major global publishing program.

Early on, A.A. became its own publisher, responsible for the procedural, and legal and spiritual components integral to our literature. By collectively participating in the generation and distribution of our own literature, it is the A.A. members – through the General Service Conference and A.A.W.S. board and committees -- who create books, pamphlets, videos and more! -- that maintain, preserve, and share the integrity of our A.A. message.

In all our communications, we seek to reflect the broadest A.A. experience possible. Inclusivity and access are ever-present imperatives and ultimate goals. The collective approach supports A.A. Unity in carrying the message locally – and around the world.

On behalf of A.A., the Publishing Department produces and edits literature items in English, Spanish and French with in-house editors, as well as professional freelance translators for the U.S./Canada General Service Structure, as well as in American Sign Language (ASL), and Unified English Braille.

An ongoing surge of worldwide international Translation and Licensing efforts has resulted in more and more of A.A.’s literature being translated by local committees worldwide, from Bahrain to Brazil, Croatia to the Czech Republic, Greece to Ghana, India to Japan, Poland to Portugal, Romania to Russia, and South Africa to Zimbabwe, just to name a few.

A.A. literature is available in more than 100 languages, including our main text the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, which is currently available in 71 languages, and counting -- with more than 20 new or revised translations in the works.

Within the Publishing department, seasoned professionals manage the Inventory, Order Entry, Customer Service and Shipping tasks needed to handle thousands of orders every year.

Whether we are exploring new print and digital formats and platforms to share A.A.’s message; overseeing translations through painstaking review processes by independent linguists; spearheading a new production of the American Sign Language interpretation of the Big Book and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions or a new production effort that is re-recording audiobooks and other items of literature in high-quality audio format; our reaching the finish line delivering a shipment of essential books, booklets, pamphlets, and other literature items to a local A.A. office or new group; sending committee workbooks to District chairpersons; getting General Service Conference final reports out to Delegates, or routing a single postal letter from an alcoholic to a G.S.O. staff member for a potentially life-saving response... the Publishing team helps carry A.A.’s message daily in pursuit on the move as we fulfill our life-saving shared mission.

## The Translation, Licensing and Distribution process

Each item of literature may originate as an “expressed need,” a request communicated to our office – which may be voiced from a local A.A. member or a group, or from a Literature Committee [we very much LIKE committees, we A.A. members, yes?] -- or from a service center or General Service Office. From these often-humble beginnings to the hopeful end result of crossing the finish line, as a translated book, booklet, pamphlet, workbook, flyer, guideline, audio, or dubbed or subtitled video being distributed to a country’s Fellowship, these projects may take months and months and ...sometimes, often in the case of the Big Book, years of working together to complete.

Local committees do most of the painstaking translation and review work. These translations are submitted to our office when the translation or literature committee (and this can be a committee of two or three A.A.s or more -- deems the translation best represents the integrity of the original English. Next, we in the office obtain an independent translation-evaluation report to share back with the local entity.

The Twi Big Book, for example in Ghana is one recent stellar example of the painstaking work we do together: Three women, 9 years of effort, and the book translation was done, impeccably, and printed. So, there were pages, a cardboard cover, beautiful leather, and binding – all printed and ready to bind. How to get it together? What to do? Women of A.A. Ghana formed crafting circles and spent three weekends hand-crafting the of the Twi Big Book, 1,200 copies of the Twi translation of Alcoholics Anonymous, which are now being used in meetings. Miracles do happen in A.A.

Notable new projects are moving forward now in South Africa, for example, as a result of the Zonal A.A. service gatherings such as this.

The following passage is taken from our current policy and procedures, with roots originating in the A.A.W.S. charter and most recently it was re-iterated and approved by the A.A.W.S. Board of Trustees, the body charged with oversight on A.A. Publishing:

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Publishing Department Licensing & Translation Process

Our process takes much care. It is essential that we follow our long-established, thorough procedure of licensing and translation, which includes our obtaining independent reviews of every translation, to ensure the accuracy of all translations. This is of foremost importance, as Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) holds the copyrights for our literature in trust for the worldwide A.A. Fellowship.

We encourage and uphold the principles of Group Conscience and Unity as we set about our translation and licensing endeavors.

A.A.W.S. has a legal and spiritual responsibility to maintain the integrity of the A.A. message in all translations of A.A. literature.

Our collective commitment to the accurate translation of A.A.W.S. material provides all of us the opportunity to work together in unity to protect and share the spiritual core of A.A.’s message as we fulfill our primary purpose.

This process and policy is posted on our website [aa.org](http://aa.org), under Terms of Use on the far bottom right of our [aa.org](http://aa.org) homepage, and when you click that, you’ll find this detail under the headline of “Content Use Policy.” It has been translated into Spanish and French.



I will next share a brief snapshot of the basic stages of the process (or steps – We in A.A. are quite fond of steps, yes?).

I am so very happy to be present here in person, and I will be available throughout the weekend to elaborate on the process (so you need not take notes now) -- and I look forward to meeting with all who would like to move projects forward

The translation process begins with a request. These materials are copyrighted and held in trust for the worldwide Fellowship, and A.A.W.S., Inc. is charged with insuring the integrity of all translations and permissions. So, you need to request – via email is fine -- permission to translate material.

Next, we have found it works best for each country or A.A. entity undertaking a translation to form a committee. The local committee may then work by group conscience to execute the translation or have it translated and then review it. One point person (or contact person) to communicate with the office should be elected so the committee communicates in one voice.

There are documents to be signed and returned at various stages, and we will walk you through them, each stage of the process.

When the committee deems a translation is ready to submit for review, the point person can submit the document to our office, attached to an email or via a Dropbox to: Licensing Administrator Rosa Rodriguez, [rodriguezr@aa.org](mailto:rodriguezr@aa.org) and copy [translationsandlicensing@aa.org](mailto:translationsandlicensing@aa.org).

We will obtain a report from an independent translation-evaluation service, with areas highlighted for improvement and polishing.

When the translation receives a favorable review, we can then issue:

- a) the License to Reproduce and Distribute Translated Copyrighted Work (to a locale with a General Service Office in place)
- or-
- b) an Authorization to Print permission letter (to a locale that has yet to establish a General Service Office).

As of today....

There are

- 70 translations of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous
- 71 languages including the original English (with some 20+ new or revised translations in process at any given time)
- The most recently completed Big Book translations include the Twi (Ghana), Rarotongan (Cook Islands), and the Navajo (or Dine, a spoken language, completed in May 2018, and available in a 14-CD audiobook format).
- Sub Saharan Africa Service Meeting: now, Shona and Lesotho projects moving forward.
- Recent new major Big Book revisions have included the Thai, Czech, Croatia, Slovak, and Polish, among others.
- Items of A.A. literature are published in more than 106 languages worldwide.
- A.A.'s co-founder, Bill W., often called the influence of A.A. literature “incalculable.” Bill W. was quite keen on translations of A.A. literature, In A.A. Comes of Age (published in 1957), Bill states:
- “Good translations of A.A. literature are ever more urgently needed. But able helpers have always turned up to meet the need.”

As we who are gathered here this weekend to continue our good work together, we are the Able Helpers of today. ... We come together in the spirit of love and service to share A.A.'s profound message of hope in all its translations and formats, working together to protect the integrity of A.A.'s message in print. And we work together to preserve the Unity of our Society.

Today we celebrate our work together, in this global publishing partnership – extending the hand of A.A. via our literature to the next sick and suffering alcoholic, as it was extended to me in that dusty and musty Catholic church basement, and as we extend it to all who need it, as we do.

Thank you.

--David Rosen, A.A.W.S., Inc. Publishing Director

## REPORT ON THE 25TH WORLD SERVICE MEETING

### “OUR TWELVE TRADITIONS: AA’S FUTURE IN THE MODERN WORLD”

LOTUS ANDERSEN, FRANCE

The 25th World Service Meeting was held in Durban, South Africa, at Southern Sun & Maharani Hotel on October 6 through 11, 2018. The theme was *"Our Twelve Traditions: AA's Future in a Modern World."*

WSM is an incredible spiritual and human experience. Durban is named “The Rainbow Country” because a wide range of cultures live together and collaborate. The South African preparation committee of local A.A. members was waiting for us at King Shaka Airport in Durban with name signs to accompany us to the hotel. They welcomed us and showed us an unconditional love in the spirit of our Fellowship all through the week.

72 delegates from 45 countries or AA Structures were represented, and Turkey and Bolivia participated for the first time at a world service meeting.

In the tradition of the WSM, we attended the “Red Ball Meeting” so that delegates can introduce themselves by sharing their personal stories. A red ball is thrown to a new delegate after each sharing, to allow everyone to introduce themselves with a small piece of their personal story. It is a warm and original way of meeting each other that connected us between continents and languages from the very beginning.

Our Chair, Frank Vandrau from South Africa General Service Board said among many thoughtful things in his welcoming Address: “Our Twelve Traditions; AA’s Future in a modern World is a theme that gives the delegates an opportunity to reexamine, on behalf of all AA members worldwide, the relevance of our Twelve Traditions. They remind our primary set of tools to secure unity – and even our very existence – in this ever-changing and fast-unfolding modern world.”

Headphones were distributed to all delegates in order to be able to listen to all sharing in a language of our understanding, and an amazing job of constant, fluid translations in Spanish, Japanese and English was assured by five translators through the whole week in committees, workshops and plenary sessions.

The Translators were also available and of great help if two delegates who did not have a language in common wanted to communicate.

The keynote address on the main theme was given with humor and insight by Lubomir Babulik from Slovakia.

Greg Tobin, General Manager from the General Service Office US/Canada gave a most interesting presentation on the International Literature Fund, reminding us how the message is carried worldwide by helping providing literature in countries in need, as well as making translations available in more than 100 languages.

David Rosen, Publishing Director AA World Service gave us a presentation on Licensing and Translation and its process, as well as a summary of current licensing activity. He shared the highlights of the new publishing, and assured that all structures needing an appointment for problems about licensing could meet him in a coffee break during the week in order to get their problems solved and provide answers to bring home.

The two Iranian delegates were held back in the Iranian Airport and could not obtain the permission to leave their country. It was a very emotional moment when they finally arrived at the second day, carried by our prayers.

### Country Highlights and Zonal Reports

The country Highlights were given in different sessions during the week showing us that though we have various, cultural and financial backgrounds, we have but one purpose, carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

The 4 Zonal Meeting reports offered us an insight in the many different topics discussed in AA around the Planet and the beauty of Unity in our program touched us all through the presentations.

- The report of the 12<sup>th</sup> Asia Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM) ,held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, was presented by Yasuhiko Morita from Japan and underlined that the population of the AOSM Zone covers two third of the Earth, counting 72 countries, and that only 16 delegates from 11 countries attended the zonal Meeting.
- The report of the 19<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting (ESM), held in York, Great Britain, was given by Lotus Andersen from France on the theme “Principles before Personalities”
- Jorge Luis Trevino from Mexico presented the report of the 20<sup>st</sup> Service Meeting of The Americas (REDELA) held in San José, Costa Rica with the theme “communication is crucial for the Unity of the Americas”
- The 8<sup>th</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting (SSAM) held in Johannesburg, South Africa, was given by John Lamphrey from South Africa, themed “Working with Others”

## **Committees**

There were four committees, with about 18 delegates in each. An equal participation of first and second terms delegates provides continuity and shared experience to the committees, and a geographical selection covers the four Zonal Meetings uniformly.

### **Agenda Committee**

The Committee recommended the following theme for the 26<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting “The purpose of our service: Sobriety within everyone’s reach”

The recommended presentation/discussion topics for the 26<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting were:

- Importance of the Group Conscience Process
- Encouraging women into General Service
- Young People in AA
- Anonymity
- Safety in AA
- International Literature Fund

The following Work Shop Topics for the 26<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting were recommended by the Agenda committee:

1. Communication – A key to unity
2. The use and value of our AA Literature in Sponsorship
3. The importance of non-alcoholic Friends in our Structures.

### **Literature/Publishing Committee**

The committee approved the AAWS Report on the International Literature Fund as well as the “Country to country-Sponsorship” service piece.

Among other topics, The following related to AA literature were addressed:

- The need for modernizing the language in the book Alcoholics Anonymous
- Who sets the literature prices in your country and what procedures are used?
- What are your countries experience regarding pricing brochures?

The following topics concerning the International Literature Fund were discussed regarding the benefits, pitfalls and development of policy regarding online literature.

- The potential of downloadable literature cannibalizing print literature sales
- The benefits of eBooks and audio books as mean of providing the AA message in a more accessible format

The committee agreed to forward this topic to the 26<sup>th</sup> WSM.

### **Policy/Admission/Finance Committee**

The committee approved Bolivia's and Turkey's request for participation on the 25<sup>th</sup> WSM.

- Review qualifications for countries participating in the World Service Meeting, qualifications for delegates and finances and delegates fees.
- Implementation of a World Service Meeting communication Platform for sharing between meetings within the next six months.
- Recommendation that countries that have participated in WSM as member of a Zone and want to participate as an individual country will need to reapply for admission.

The committee reviewed the World Service meeting finances and delegates fees and had a thoughtful discussion about the practical and spiritual aspects of the seventh Traditions principles of Self Support.

The 26<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting was recommended to be held October 25 through 29, 2020.

### **Working with Others Committee**

The committee shared on the following topics:

- Public Information
- How do local AA groups collaborate with AA groups across national borders and what is the role of online meetings?
- Strategies to keep members active in service
- Accessibility of the AA message to underserved communities
- Are all alcoholics safe in AA?
- Cooperation with the professional community

It was decided not to go through all sub topics by lack of time but to carry some to next WSM, and to limit the number of topics in order to have time and possibility to go deeper into each of them.

### **The three workshops**

#### **How to use Internet wisely**

It was shared that AA cannot escape the evolution of the online world, and how different structures deal with both positive and negative aspects of this practice.

Online platforms conducting service and recovery meetings are here to stay, and the question on how to maintain anonymity in this public medium was discussed.

#### **Country to Country Sponsorship**

The delegates shared experience on the benefits of the receiving and giving side of country to country sponsorship, about challenges and solutions and finally about fostering self-support "How much help is too much help?"

## **Leadership in AA**

The following topics were discussed:

- The conception of AA leaders in the different countries
- Serving vs governing
- Spirit of Rotation

It was among many thoughtful things shared that a leader stands with kindness by his or her principles even if it is unpopular.

**The Presentations** on the topics “Safety of the vulnerable Member” and “Special Purpose Meetings” allowed the debate to continue in the in the open sessions “What’s on your Mind”.

A personal and heartfelt presentation “Special Purpose Meeting” opened a very relevant debate on matters considered taboo in many countries, and inspired beautiful sharing on important matters, in particular: sexual minorities, importance of specific groups (young people, women, men, etc.), sexual and moral harassment, and the reception of members suffering from mental illness.

After the closing remarks from the second terms delegates, Frank Vandrau, our Chair, gave a moving closing talk.

The 72 delegates from all over the Planet were called to close the 25<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting saying the Serenity Prayer in their native tongues. There is a very particular connection between us when the prayer is shared in the Language of the Heart.

I’m deeply grateful of the opportunity of being of service in the AA Worldwide Family.

Thank you for listening.

# **COUNTRY REPORTS**

## AUSTRIA

### Historical Timeline



### The General Structure

The German speaking AA (GSAA) in Europe consists of the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria and the German speaking part of Italy, South Tyrol. Austria and South Tyrol is one region of actually 12. The Austrian AA is organized by the legal association, named “AA Interessensgemeinschaft”, which is a non-profit organization. The business meetings are held twice a year, in spring for 2 days and in autumn for 1 day. Austria has 9 intergroups with regular Chairmen’s Meetings twice to four times a year.

### Number of Groups

At the moment there are 172 AA-groups in Austria with 172 meetings weekly, 13 of them in South Tyrol, 9 of them in English, 3 Polish and 1 Slovenian, 2 in Farsi. The 172 groups with approx. 2300 members flourish well. The English, Polish and 2 Persian/Farsi (Iran) speaking meetings are in Vienna, the Slovenian in Carinthia.

### Finance Overview

AA in Austria works with the principle of the “overflowing hat” as usual. After paying all self-supporting expenses like rent, literature, etc., the leftover of the groups goes to intergroup, from there the leftover goes to the region, the still leftover is sent to the literature fund of the GSO in New York City in the name of GSAA. The actual financial situation seems to be stable, but it could always be better. In Austria we maintain our own GSO, that way we are officially listed internationally. We do not have a prudent reserve, all our work is done on a voluntary basis.



## **Public Relations**

Meetings in prisons, hospitals and detox-centers take place regularly. We also offer information meetings for young people in schools, together with members of Al-Anon and Alateens (if possible). All the contacts between AA and physicians, nursing staff, staff in prisons, teachers and officers in other organizations are very productive. In all our intergroups we have telephone service, but we have to learn, that the telephone is less accepted by the “new-comers” than inquiries by internet.

We place regular information about local AA-meetings, sometimes articles about alcoholism and AA, AA-connections and information in some local magazines. Our meetings can be found in the internet. We inform physicians, hospitals, detox-centers, prisons and schools regularly about meetings and give meeting lists, literature and flyers. We have created a spot for TV that seems to be well liked.

## **Length of Sobriety**

The sobriety time required for service positions is a continuous quality sobriety for the following service positions:

Group Level (1 to 2 years) Regional Level (3 years)  
Committee/Board & Delegate Level (5 to 10 years)

## **Convention**

This year's GSAA-Convention was held in Oldenburg/Germany. The topic was (Nice to see you here). The 2020 will be in Berlin/Germany and the topic will be (A gateway to freedom). Members of Alanon and Alateen attend this convention as well.

In 2021 the GSAA-Convention will take place in Wels/Upper Austria. The organisation team have finalized the finance and contract. English speaking meetings will also be available, some other language meetings are under discussion as they already exist in the German speaking areas. Members of Alanon and Alateen will also attend.

Nearly every year there are local 'birthday parties' for single groups that celebrate 5, 10, 20, 25 or 30 years of their existence. Also, there are other different smaller celebrations with information meetings and AA gatherings. These are always mentioned in the local media as well.

We also organized in the last 10 years a conference about the 12 concepts. These are always well attended and support newcomers growing into service, which has a direct impact on every level of our service structure to guide their every day activities.

## **Literature**

AA Austria/South Tyrol uses the literature of GSAA.

## **Internet**

AA-Austria has an own homepage: <http://www.anonyme-alkoholiker.at>, where we also have a calendar for internal Austrian AA-affairs promoting communication, quick sharing of coming events, downloads of service material, etc. We have about 330 visitors on our homepage per day.

## **AA-Magazines**

The general German magazine “DACH” is the magazine for GSAA. “DACH” is the German word for “roof” – the common roof for AA in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and South Tyrol. The name is built of the initial letters of D for Deutschland (Germany), A for Austria, CH for Switzerland.

Friends from Austria/South Tyrol are working for DACH, and many others send their contributions for this meeting in print.

## **Relationship to other countries**

AA-Austria and South Tyrol has close relationships to the other regions in Germany and Italy. The relations to AA Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Croatia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are improving. Because of the visits of each other’s meetings our cooperation slowly increases.

## **BELARUS**

### **Conference**

AA of Belarus appeared in Minsk in April 1990, although the first Service Conference was held only in 2003. Since then, Conferences have been held annually in October.

### **Groups**

Currently, there are about 107 groups in the Fellowship of AA in Belarus. Most of them are located in large populated urban areas (the capital city of Minsk alone, where the General Service Office of AA in Belarus is situated, has about 26 groups). There are but a few groups in rural areas. The total number of Fellowship members is approx. 2,000 people.

### **General Service Board**

In 2010, the Conference decided to transform the Belarusian Service Board into a Board of Trustees. Currently, the Board of Trustees consists of nine members: six Trustees from the Provinces and three Trustees, who are also General Service Trustees. The number of Trustees is regulated in accordance with the needs of the Fellowship.

### **AA Belarus General Service Office**

In 2006 AA Belarus General Service Office was registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus as a public association. Over the past five years due to the rises in rental prices we had to move the Office three times. The costs of the Fellowship are covered by approximately 75-80% of the amount of group contributions.

### **Committees**

At present, the activities are carried out by the following committees: Minsk Regional AA Service Committee, Public Information Committee, Correctional Services Committee, Treatment Facilities Committee, International, Statutory and Finance Committees.

### **Public Information Committee**

The main task of the committee is to inform the public about the activities of anonymous alcoholics and the AA program, to increase public understanding of AA or to prevent the formation of a misconception about the AA program. The committee prepares and holds presentations for authorities, social, public, religious organizations, enterprises. The committee works through the media, radio, television and the Internet. Information about AA is available in public transport, pharmacies and medical facilities, in enterprises. There is a news feed on television showing our AA message.

Our national website provides all the necessary information about the Fellowship so that suffering alcoholics or people interested in AA can learn about us and come to a meeting. We also work with the clergy. Many meetings take place in temples and churches. The committee helps groups conduct round tables and presentations locally. Many groups celebrate their anniversaries, where professionals and clergy are always invited.

## **Corrections Committee**

Members of our Fellowship carry the message of AA to the correctional facilities of different regimes. We carry the message of AA in 13 prisons for men and 4 prisons of different regimes for women. The Committee actively collaborates with the Department of the Execution of Sentences of the Republic of Belarus. Today there are groups in two prisons in Belarus. The Committee meets with law enforcement officials outside prisons.

We constantly inform AA members about the possibility to carry the message behind bars. We deliver AA books to correctional facilities and we hope to further expand our cooperation with them.

## **Treatment Facilities Committee**

The main task of the Committee is to search for new forms of cooperation, establish and maintain contacts with medical workers and treatment facilities (hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and similar institutions).

The Committee collects and archives materials approved by the General Service Conference of AA Belarus, service materials from the GSO AA, AA world experience and other materials that help effectively cooperate with treatment facilities, and distributes them in the regions, districts and AA groups in Belarus.

The Committee also prepares and, if necessary, updates the forms of presentations to various medical, health and rehabilitation organizations that by nature of their activities come in contact with persons suffering from alcoholism.

## **International Committee**

The main task of the International Committee is to maintain good communication and exchange of experience between our GSO and other structures and to appoint and prepare delegates to the WSM, the ESM and other international AA events. "The International bulletin" translated, printed and distributed by the Committee shares information about AA events held around the world. Over the past year our national representatives attended General Service Conferences in Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine and the UK. Members of our Committee regularly turn for experience to our friends in Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Ukraine, France, Switzerland, Portugal, England and the United States. Also, we have recently obtained permission from the GSO Great Britain to print the booklet "Hints and Suggestions on Internet Safety" in Russian for the AA Fellowship in Belarus. We hope that in the future we will be able to independently provide for the travel of our delegates and observers to the Conferences in different countries.

## **Literature**

For four years starting in 2003 AA USA/Canada helped us acquire literature in Russian. We are very grateful to them for it.

In 2006-2014 we cooperated with the General Service Office of A.A. in Russia, which published AA books. In 2014, AA Belarus obtained the license for publication and distribution of AA literature in Russian in Belarus, and three years ago we published our first 1,000 paperback copies of Alcoholics Anonymous and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in Russian. For that purpose, we had to create a subsidiary publishing company, since non-profit organizations are not allowed to sell books according to the national legislation of Belarus.

## **Finances**

Currently, about 75-80% of our costs are covered by group contributions and 20-25% - by income from book sales. Efforts are being made to raise awareness about the membership and the service in the Fellowship. Our national website shows the monthly and annual financial reports of the Office so that anyone could see how the money is spent.

## **BELGIUM – AA FLANDERS**

### **Milestones of AA Flanders**

- 1953 AA Belgium was founded by Mr. André De Boe who was a social worker. Under his impulse an AA group was founded in the Marollen district in Brussels.
- 1956 First Flemish AA-group “Brabo” in Antwerpen
- 1961 First National Convention of the Flemish AA was held in Brussels. Topic of the Convention was “being together”
- 1969 Representatives of the Flemish AA Participated to the 1st World Convention . As from this date AA Flanders will always send a representation to the World Service Meeting.
- 1970-1975 Pre General Service Conference was held in Bonheiden, Antwerpen
- 1971 Foundation of the Association Without Lucrative Purpose ALDINEA-BEL on June 17th.
- 1975 Organisation of the First National Public Outreach Day : “ Public Outreach serving the alcoholic”.
- 1976 First General Service Conference of the Flemish AA. Goal: Defining the structure of the Flemish AA.
- 1981 Participation of a delegation of the Flemish AA to the 1st European Service Meeting. As from then AA flanders will send continuously representatives every year to this meeting.
- 1985 Foundation of the AVDB on Oktober 1st. in Antwerp. (This will be later renamed as “General Service Office”)
- 1999 First version of the Flemish AA website is launched on internet : [www.aavlaanderen.org](http://www.aavlaanderen.org)
- 2003 Celebration of the 50st. Anniversary of the Flemish AA
- 29 November 2015 André De Boe , founder of AA in Belgium, passes away.

### **Structure**

The basic elements of the structure are all AA members gathered in the 331 groups ( an equivalent of 422 meetings every week) widespread throughout the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium (Flanders).

The five provincial workgroups are the pivot points of the structure. Each province sends two delegates to the GSB. These delegates are expected to have at least 4 years sobriety and a 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 also functions as the “ service hatch” between the groups of the province and national services and vice versa.

### **National Service Committees**

#### **Admission Committee- ADCOM**

Responsible for the organisation of the biennial General Service Conference ADC and also general supervision of the work of the service committee within the Dutch speaking AA.

### **Committee for Public Outreach- COI:**

The main task is to provide information about the AA recovery program to the general public and to people who are professionally involved with the problem of alcoholism. This committee tries to provide the needed information through the available media, open meetings, contacts in schools, hospitals, prisons, etc.

To achieve results at this level, its necessary that PI workers are well informed about AA Traditions.

### **The internet workgroup**

Is responsible for the maintenance of our website [www.aavlaanderen.org](http://www.aavlaanderen.org) and is also working on improvements like online registration for weekend gatherings or online web shopping. There is also a reserved part for members only, where members can consult all minutes of the different meetings. More and more people are consulting the internet for information about AA so this workgroup is becoming more important to spread out the message of AA. In 2018 the internet workgroup worked hard to be in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

### **Distribution centre – DC:**

This service is responsible for the distribution of AA literature and for the distribution of the monthly magazine “5 to 12”.

### **Financial Committee – FINCOM:**

This service monitors all financial transactions. It is the place where money and spirituality need to be divided in their correct proportions. Our income comes mainly from group contributions, from the sale of our literature, our yearly convention and other occasional events. The service structures must strengthen their efforts to make clear the spiritual meaning and importance of the Seventh Tradition.

### **Literature Committee – LITCOM**

This committee is responsible for developing, updating and translating AA literature. At this moment, AA Flanders has a selection of 37 titles of AA Conference Approved literature.

### **Committee for editorship magazine “5 to 12”**

This magazine publishes ten issues a year and is fully supported by texts which we receive from our members. Articles published cover personal testimonies, interpretations of the steps or traditions, theme of the month, announcements about open meetings, conventions, weekend gatherings, etc. New for this year is a digital form of the magazine.

### **Committee for written meetings – LONERS**

Some people cannot attend AA meetings for several reasons (illness, traveling or simply due to the fact that they are in prison or rehab). In this cases, members can participate in written meetings. The loners are responsible for the content of the bimonthly magazines they make and they stay in contact with their members via questions and answers.

### **The General Service Board**

The GSB supports and encourages everyone in carrying out the resolutions of the General Service Conference. The GSB ratifies the reports of the national service committees before decisions or advisory actions are implemented. The GSB does not have the right to make structural changes, but if a case it would become so urgent that it cannot wait till next General Service Conference, the GSB has the right to make a decision on the issue ( by 2/3 majority). These decisions are valid until the following General Service Conference, that must ratify this decision.

The board is composed of a chairman, who is a Class A (non-alcoholic) trustee; one Class A trustee from every province; two Class B (alcoholic) trustees; the secretary and seven national service representatives.

Six other members participate in an advisory role: The Secretary of the Aldinea-Bel Association, a GSO employee, two WSM and two ESM delegates.

### **The Aldinea - Bel Association**

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

Aldinea - Bel is composed by 10 AA members (2 of each province) and 2 Class A Trustees. The association is managed by a board of 5 members: one Class A Trustee (non AA member), three Class B Trustee ( AA members) and the Secretary/Treasurer ( also AA member).

The association is also responsible for the work of the General Service Office (GSO –ADB). The GSO is located in Berchem near Antwerp. The Association hires one full time employee (non- AA member) whose job is to answer the phone, replying to demands for information and act as a liaison officer between members, services and the non-profit organisation.

### **The General Service Conference**

The 21<sup>st</sup> the General Service Conference was held in March 2018 in the Abbey of Drongen. The theme for the conference was “ AA in the future”.

The final report is edited by the Adcom Service and is available online. A printed document was sent to all the groups and delegates.

Around 65 participants took part in the conference. There were two observers from the Netherlands and one from Wallonia ( French speaking region of Belgium).

### **The National Convention**

This yearly convention is a celebration day for all AA members, their families and friends, the spontaneous expression of happy sobriety and gratitude to AA.

This year the Convention took place in the province West- Flanders, the theme “ Sober, Happy, Helping”.

Next year the 60<sup>st</sup>. National Convention 2020 will be organised by the province East Flanders the theme “ Consciously....continue....in life”.

### **Final remarks**

AA flanders has become a well structured organisation and still tries to improve its work by attending the works of different international AA conventions and organisations such as the ESM and WSM. After 60 years of existence AA Flanders tries to meet also the new developments in means of communications such as Internet and other media in order to reach more effectively the changing world.

## **BULGARIA**

### **Structure**

The main purpose of AA in Bulgaria is the same as that of each AA group in the world – to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholics wherever they are and whoever they might be.

Bulgaria has 29 AA groups in 3 regions. Meetings are held in 17 cities, with 59 meetings a week. There are 3 English-speaking meetings and 2 on-line meetings.

### **Conference**

Although AA in Bulgaria has been in existence since 1989, the first AA Conference took place in 2017. This year, the Third General Service Conference was held.

The General Service Conference is composed of:

- a) members of the General Service Board, consisting of 5 alcoholic Trustees, each of them responsible for service in the disciplines of Literature, Public Information, Prisons, Finance, Drafting a Service Handbook; a Treasurer and an International delegate who serves as the European Service Meeting and World Service Meeting delegate representing Bulgaria;
- b) 9 delegates elected by the regional assemblies (each Region sends 3 delegates);
- c) editor of the Grozdiv sok newspaper; d) observers from home and abroad.

### **General Service Board**

The General Service Board consists of 5 alcoholic Trustees, 1 non-alcoholic Trustee, a Treasurer and an International Delegate. The non-alcoholic Trustee does not currently participate in conference with voting rights, but rather serves as a consultant and represents the Fellowship in public appearances to institutions and the media.

The 5 alcoholic Trustees were elected during the Second Conference - one nominated by each of the three regions and two nominated by the Fellowship as a whole. Each Trustee and the International Delegate has specific responsibilities in the national service committees: literature, public information, finance, drafting a service handbook, prisons, international contacts.

### **General Service Office**

There is still only a virtual office with this address:

Central Service Office Of A.A.

Office 14

71, Zahari Knyajeski Str

Stara Zagora City 6000, Bulgaria

### **Literature**

This committee is responsible for the translation and distribution of AA literature. In November 2017 the AA Development Fund of AA Great Britain allocated 7290 euros to AA Bulgaria for literature. Thanks to this financial assistance were printed: 1000 copies of the book "12 Steps 12 Traditions", 1000 copies of "Living sober" and 3000 copies of the brochure "This is AA". The printing of the fourth edition of the Big Book is in the pipeline. In November 2018, we received from the GSO New York approval of translation the 4th edition of the Big Book. And currently the choice of printing company in Bulgaria is in the process of approval by the AA Bulgaria General Service Board.



## Public Information

The main task of this committee is to provide information about AA to the public and to professionals who are involved in the problems of alcoholism. The Committee provides the necessary information to media representatives, social workers, healthcare professionals, psychologists, psychiatrists, probation officers and municipal prevention centers through invitations to open meetings, flyers with addresses and telephone numbers of all AA groups in Bulgaria, articles printed in the media and on-line publications, participation in national and regional TV shows, meetings with employers.

At the end of 2018 an open information meeting was held in Sofia with doctors from leading hospitals, as well as the first AA presentation at school, in front of teachers, school psychologists and students aged 16-19.

At the beginning of 2019, members of the AA were invited to a medical seminar at the University Hospital in Varna on the topic "Alcohol and Addiction" to share what AA is and how we could cooperate with professionals.

A big step forward was made when a TV show broadcast in January 2019 by the largest TV station and highly-rated TV show Wake Up. This media exposure has sparked a surge of interest in AA.

The Committee recognizes that our structure is very young and needs assistance in matters related to the media, medical establishments, universities, social services, employers. For this reason, in October 2019, the first public information seminar has been organized with friends of the AA Fellowship in Poland.

## Finance

The main purpose of the Financial Committee is to create a financial budget for the following fiscal year, to take care of spending of the funds collected in the account of AA Bulgaria in accordance with the instructions of Conference and to support the Board of Trustees in making decisions related to unexpected expenses.

The budget is approved in May at the General Service. In general, it can be said that the percentage ratio of incomes is as follows: 53 % from 7th Tradition from the groups in the country, 25% from literature и 22% from National Convention. The revenues from literature sales are increasing every year, but there is more to be desired in order to be able to achieve a greater predominance in literature revenues. This percentage could change after the printing and distribution of the 4th edition of the Big Book, which should happen soon.

AA Bulgaria already has 3 separate bank accounts: for incomes from the 7th Tradition, for the Literature Fund, and a third one, serving only the National Convention.

## Service Handbook

Preparation of the Service Handbook started in 2017 and continued work by a newly formed committee in 2018 to work on this project. From that moment began intensive work on the first version of the AA Bulgaria Service Handbook. Translations of the AA Service Handbook of Slovakia, AA Service Handbook and AA Structure Handbook of Great Britain have been made. The text of the AA Bulgaria Handbook will be an adaptation of these guidelines to meet Bulgarian needs. The aim is, by the end of this committee's mandate in 2022, the final version to be completed and adopted by the Conference. Meanwhile seminars will be held for greater acceptance and understanding of the prepared texts within the Fellowship.

## Prisons Service

The Prison Liaison Committee was set up as a separate committee at AA Bulgaria's Second Conference in June 2018. Carrying the message in Prisons began in May 2014 when first meeting is held in Stara Zagora prison. Thanks to the enthusiasm and perseverance in service of the members of this committee, AA Bulgaria holds today meetings in 4 prisons and 3 prison hostels. In October 2018, the First International Seminar on Prison Service was held in cooperation with the General Directorate of Prisons in Bulgaria, with the participation of liaison officers with experience from the AA Great Britain and AA Poland, attended by board members of several prisons in Bulgaria.

The Committee recognizes the role of the seminar in improving the communication with prisons, the acceptance and attractiveness of AA, and the communication within the committee itself.

A second consecutive seminar will be held in November 2019.

## Website

The site <http://www.aa-bg.info> was born 9 years ago. From March 2016 the domain of the site is owned by the non-profit association "AA Bulgaria". The contact form of the site is linked to the e-mail of the association: [aabulgaria@abv.bg](mailto:aabulgaria@abv.bg)

The e-mail is served by several people and responds to inquiries and requests for help. Information on groups in the site is as up-to-date as possible - in Bulgarian and English.

At our Third General Services Conference, it was decided to update the system that supports our site, thereby engaging a professional member of the Fellowship who will work in conjunction with the site administrators.

## AA Newspaper

In December 2014 the first edition of the newspaper "Grozdov sok" (Grape Juice) was published by group "Priyateli" (Friends) in Sofia. In 2017, at the First Conference, the newspaper became the official AA publication in Bulgaria. Its 12th issue recently came out.

## National Convention

The National Convention is held annually, usually in late August and early September. This is the 12th convention this year. Each year, the number of participants increases with members from both Bulgaria and other countries. We usually have a presence from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, the United Kingdom, Moldova, Spain. During this event, meetings are held in both native and English and Russian languages.

## Relationship to Other Countries

Close relationships and experience sharing are gained from Poland, Slovakia and the UK. In 2010, for the first time we invited guests from AA in Slovakia and Poland to a service working meeting to share their experience, strength and hope for service and worldwide services. Since then, AA Bulgaria have been invited and participated annually in the Polish Conference.

AA Bulgaria has participated with observers in AA GB Conferences since 2016. Thanks to these attendances and the shared experience of these developed structures, many Bulgarian observers have taken an active part in serving to build the structure of AA Bulgaria. We are grateful for the financial support of AA GB for opportunity to attend conferences in Poland and Great Britain, as well as European Service Meetings since 2017.

This year, at the invitation of one of the AA structures in Russia, our alternate of the International Delegate attended their conference as an observer.

We are inspired by the example that the AA Fellowship in the Czech Republic gives, inviting observers to their conferences, both from countries with developed structures and young structures. In this way they draw upon and transmit experience. Our country participates with observers in two of their conferences. AA Bulgaria will follow their example, inviting observers from countries to which we might be useful at next year's conferences.

In June 2019 the Assembly of the Continental Europe Region of AA Great Britain was held in Varna. Local AA groups were invited to attend their work meetings. On the last day of the event, CER servants attended a seminar with local members answering pre-prepared questions about service in AA.

## **CZECH REPUBLIC**

### **History of Czech AA**

Before 1989 revolution, information about AA was fragmentary, as the Czech Republic was affected by political situation, that came of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Though even before the revolution there were two AA members – loners. These were in contact with GSO in New York. In the meantime, on the other side of the world, one Czech-American felt the need of translating Big Book to Czech language.

At the beginning of 1988 first closed AA meetings in Prague were held in secret by the two loners, the mentioned Czech-American and AA members from Santa Barbara. First two chapters from BB were translated. First open meeting was held in May 1988 in Prague psychiatric hospital – it was not public known, it was shielded by the hospital management. The meetings were moderated by friends from Santa Barbara. At the same time members of other countries were visiting Prague meetings, which was great help, too.

The milestone in our history was the Velvet Revolution in November. In December the first official AA group (“Serenity Group”) founded, in 1990 the second one and next in Prague were to follow. First Conference in 1991, still supported by friends from Santa Barbara and other American AA members. In 1991 meetings in other Czech countries were appearing – Ostrava, Karlovy Vary and others.

There is great standing help from GSO New York for Czech AA from the very beginning. Not only material (literature), but they also held Conference in Prague in 1994 and are helping us with solving our issues. Czech AA is growing steadily. In 2010 the Board of Trustees, Public Relations Committee, Literature Committee and Handbook Committee arose. New transparent account was set up.

### **Current AA Structure**

There are currently 68 active AA groups in 48 cities in the Czech Republic, altogether counting approximately 700 members. There is also one registered Skype Czech-Slovak AA group. Most of the groups are smaller, having one meeting per week. However, there are more meetings in a week in bigger cities, in Prague and Brno on a daily basis.

Inter-group level is missing, so we do not have regional elections (regional delegates). Though some near groups are cooperating together and helping each other and groups in Brno and Prague have common business meetings. And not only the Czech ones.

At the beginning of this year a new cooperation between Czech, English and Russian speaking Prague groups arose. They have common business meetings and currently they are preparing a leaflet in all AA-Prague languages. For the future they will continue working on other projects.

We follow AA principles, traditions and concepts. Czech AA structure is based on the principle of inverted pyramid. There are groups, which elect their delegates for the General Service Conference, they are usually elected for two years. Delegates take part at General Service Conference, where they can vote and discuss issues that come (not only) out of the groups themselves.

### **General Service Conference**

Our GSC is held annually, usually in January, and takes three days. We introduce Committee Meetings into the agenda, they work as usual (regular working meeting) and delegates can participate (as observers) in the debates. Not all the groups are represented by their delegates, but attendance is growing every year. We are becoming more successful in cooperation with other countries.

This year we invited foreign observers from Slovakia, Poland, France, Portugal, Bulgaria and Russia. Our aim is to develop sponsorship at country to country level, which helps us in unity and growth.

Organization of the Conference is in hands of the Board of Trustees and the Organizational Committee. Over the past 10 years, the GSC has shifted to a much higher level in the Czech Republic, with increasing number of responsible servants, key topics, connection with the rest of the world, contribution of national delegates and contacts with foreign countries.

This year's GSC approved the first Czech Service Handbook / Manual (Committee of Handbook was/is working on it) and the operating draft of the Articles of Association. Also a new committee emerged – broke away from the Public Relations Committee – Committee for Prisons.

There are these committees: Public Information, Literature, Organizational, Finance, Handbook, Revision. These are functional instruments of the Board. The service time in the committees is four years.

### **Czech Service Handbook**

For the first time in Czech AA the Handbook was approved (at January Conference) and can be used officially for the service. And, it IS already really in use. AA members refer to it and go there for advice.

The approved document is currently undergoing checking and revision in the Czech language – done by the Literature Commission.

The Handbook Commission is meeting on regular basis and is working on modifications and adjustments, which they consider important, and they recommend to the Board of Trustees to discuss these at the GSC in 2020.

### **Board of Trustees and General Service Office**

The General Service Board (the Board of Trustees) consists of seven alcoholics and two non-alcoholics. The alcoholics are still usually also involved in other Committees. The Board of Trustees is executive, cooperates closely with all the Committees and is responsible for AA's financial policy, publishing and spreading literature, copyright and publishing of magazine *Cesta* (issued 4 times in a year, 32 pages).

The Board of Trustees meets monthly via Skype and usually twice a year personally – at the Convention and, of course, at the Conference. In the last year there was a lot to do with preparation of the Conference, the Articles of Association that has to be in accordance of the Czech law and AA traditions at the same time (this was discussed with external lawyer), choosing place for the next Convention, accountancy of the last Convention, financial contributions to the international account of literature and European 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition. Also a lot was searched in a question of supporting other twelve steps programs.

Czech AA's General Service Office is placed in Hradec Králové (established in 2015). This place also serves as a warehouse of our literature. At 2019 Conference was approved, and since that time is in work, the very first paid employee of Czech AA – she only works for a few hours a week, though is a great help with the office work and the accountancy that is needed to be done. This year we have also submitted a tax return and we intend to continue to do so.

### **Public Information**

This year's regular annual active attendance at the Czech Addictological Conference has proved what we have felt for some time already. We became the equal partners to doctors and alcohol-addiction specialists. Even more, they see our contribution to their jobs. This was specifically highlighted at the end meeting of the Addictological Conference.

Long-term cooperation with hospitals, schools, clergies and prisons and doctors continues. Manual for the service on the phone was written and contributed further to AA.

New websites were made and activated, information kept up to date. Also old-new VSO (*this abbreviation stands for General Group E-mail*) was created and is functional – messages about the work of the committees, about special meetings and other AA info is sent through this channel to any AA member who is interested in what is going on in Czech AA and has logged in.

## Prisons

Committee for Prisons emerged out of PI, which was approved this year at the Conference. This happened as a result of a growing effort to work in this area - due to the increase of the servants, number of prisons that we visit and due to their special requirements. In this matter the great help came from AA Poland.

The Committee consists of five members and meets regularly once a month via Skype (as all the committees do). However, this service (attending meetings in prisons) is performed by many more AA members, though still more are needed.

Currently, regular meetings are held in two prisons. Cooperation with other prisons is under way. This year, for the first time in Czech AA, psychologist from one prison took part in the nationwide meeting of AA.

## Finance

The Financial Committee was established at the beginning of 2017. Its main purpose is to create financial budget for the following fiscal year, and support Board of Trustees in making decisions related to unexpected expenses. The very first official budget was created for the fiscal year Feb 2018 till Jan 2019. The budget is approved in January at the national GSC.

Regarding the income, from 2016 it was bigger from the literature – also due to the publishing re-translated Big Book with added 15 Czech stories. At this year's GSC we have discussed 7<sup>th</sup> tradition and gratitude contributions a lot, also our observers (namely the one from France) said very touching words on this matter. Also the Convention was financially very good. This might have helped to the turn of the contribution ratio in favor of the 7<sup>th</sup> tradition. This is how the percentage of annual income develops:

	2016	2017	2018	2019 (Jan-Jul)
7 <sup>th</sup> tradition	43%	39%	40%	57%
Literature	57%	61%	60%	43%
TOTAL IN CZK	303984,-	284063,-	293730,-	251760,-

Several past years we donate 1000,- USD every year to the literature fund and newly we began to donate also the European fund (500,- EUR). We are grateful that this contribution grows year after year. We are grateful, that our finances grow and thus also a possibility to give back what we get for free.

New “collecting” bank accounts were created in 2017 (non-transparent to ensure anonymity). One for the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, and the second account was created for AA events registration fees (e.g. Conventions). Money is transferred from those accounts to one transparent account from which all payments are made to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties. The last account is for AA Literature.

## Literature

The current state of affairs in the Literature Committee is as follows:

- Correction of the Handbook done
- Information for the public – up to date and printed out
- Twelve Concepts Illustrated – being translated
- We are preparing studio and people able to read (good voice, no speech impediments, if possible AA professionals) for audio version of the Big Book,

- Translation of *Living Sober* finished in March, sent for independent review in April,
- *Women in AA* and *Member's Eye-view of AA* finished in June, sent for independent review; waiting for the result of independent review, hoping to be able to publish the titles by the end of this year.

### **Relations with other countries**

Some of our members are regular attendants of foreign Conventions and Conferences. We also keep inviting members from other countries to our Conventions. We also have good and solid relationships with friends in Poland, Slovakia and recently also with Bulgaria and Portugal – we are successful in deepening the relationship and cooperation with these countries.

This year our (ex)delegate had presentation in Barcelona within EURYPAA10 at Globe Level Service Panel about WSM, Zonal Meetings and Delegate Service.

We really appreciate continuous support from AA Great Britain, ensuring our attendance at their General Service Conference, and participation at the ESM and WSM, which helps us to develop AA fellowship in our country.

## DENMARK

### Brief Historical Summary:

Bill W. visited Denmark in 1950. After the visit Alcoholics Anonymous started in some private rooms. It didn't last long before the meetings were held no more. In 1974 the fellowship reignited, most likely on the account of some homebound travellers. In 1978-79 a regular meeting was started up in Ryesgade. This is to-date the oldest still active group in Denmark. The group just celebrated 40 years. In the 80's more groups were active. In this decade the active members in Denmark started up the process of translating The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In the late 80's more meetings started up, and especially the rehabilitating methods from Iceland started up in the country (in Denmark called the Minnesota-model). This gave the fellowship a huge boost in numbers. In the space of a few years the fellowship went from 25 meetings a week national wide, to 100+ meetings a week. The rehabilitating centers were a private sector and not involved in the governmental health care system. Though a lot of the governmental employers covered the expenses for the people sent into rehabilitation. Naturally they continued their development into Alcoholics Anonymous voluntary. The rehabilitation centers were not in any way affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous. This is purely mentioned to specify why the numbers of AA members expanded so much in the space of a few years. Now we have about 430 meetings a week national wide. 7 of them are English speaking, 2 of them are Polish speaking, 2 of them are Greenlandic speaking and 3 of them are Icelandic speaking meetings. At last we have 5 meetings online.

### Current AA Structure:

**GSB:** 16 trustees. The board is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 1 vice chair, 1 secretary, 12 elected in the regions, 2 international delegates, 2 nordic delegates and finally 2 reporters. Rotation is every 6 years.

**Regions:** 6 regions.

**Service office:** 1 service office located in Copenhagen. Open with voluntary staff members every Monday from around 12 pm - 4 pm.

**Groups/meetings:** approximately 430 a week.

### Other Service Structure:

**National Public Information:** The committee is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 6 elected in the regions, 1 from the GSB.

**Box 334:** The committee is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 1 vice chair, 4 voluntary members, 1 from the GSB. a magazine published to AA members from AA members 6 times a year.

**Telephone and Email:** The committee is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 6 elected in the regions, 4 coordinators, 1 from the GSB. The committee is responsible for having a telephone number open all days from 8 am – 12 am. Making sure voluntary AA members answers the phone from their own home. The committee is also responsible for having an email service open all days 24 hrs. The responding time is within 24 hrs.

**Economics:** committee consists of the following: 1 chair, 3 voluntary members, 1 from the GSB.

ALL COMMITTEES OF THE SERVICE STRUCTURE HAVE A ROTATION PRINCIPAL OF 4 YEARS FOR EACH POSITION.

Because of this principle two committees have been turned into work-in-progress under the GSB, as we need to maintain a service structure:



**Service Manual:** currently consists of the following: 3 voluntary members, 1 from the GSB. The committee have temporary turned into a working structure under the GSB. To be evaluated in 2 years.

**Literature:** Currently consists of the following: 7 voluntary members. The members report to the secretary of the GSB.

### **Sobriety time for service positions:**

Most positions on a national scale are **recommended 5 years of sobriety**. There are some positions where the recommended sobriety is 3 years.

### **General Service Conference:**

The General Service Conference is held once a year. We have an average of 50 – 60 delegates. Also participating are the GSB and one representative for each of the committees under the GSB. The conference is a 2 day conference. First day the delegates are split into 4 committees, working with different proposals from the national fellowship. Second day is started with an hour for the regions to discuss the outcome of the proposals in the different committees. After this the conference continues, where all of the proposals and the committee decisions are read out loud, for the conference to take a vote on. We follow the democracy procedure as it is stated in structure of US and Canada. So for a proposal to go through it needs 2/3 majority and a representative for the minority can be heard before we take a new vote. If it is still 2/3 majority the proposal is for the GSB to follow through. If it is between 2/3 and 1/2 majority it is a recommendation to the GSB. Under 1/2 majority and it is cast aside by the conference and the GSB need not do anymore on the proposal.

WE DO NOT VOTE ON THE PROPOSAL, BUT ON THE COMMITTEES DECISION ON THE PROPOSAL. SO IF A COMMITTEE REJECTS A PROPOSAL, WE VOTE ON THE COMMITTEES REJECTION RATHER THAN THE PROPOSAL. SAME GOES FOR A COMMITTEES ACCEPTANCE OF A PROPOSAL.

### **Service Manual:**

Denmark has its own Service Manual and Structure Manual.

The Service Manual is updated and approved by the General Service Conference every year.

The Structure Manual is updated and approved by the General Service Board after every meeting (8 times a year).

### **Literature/Publishing Overview:**

- The Big Book 4<sup>th</sup> edition (price 225 dkk)
- The Big Book 4<sup>th</sup> edition, paperback (price 195 dkk)
- The Big Book pocket 4<sup>th</sup> edition (price 120 dkk)
- The Big Book 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (price 225 dkk)
- The Big Book 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, paperback (price 195 dkk)
- The Big Book pocket 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (price 120 dkk)
- 12 & 12 (price 125 dkk)
- AA comes of age (price 150 dkk)
- AA in Denmark (price 70 dkk)
- Living Sober (price 125 dkk)
- Came to Believe (price 125 dkk)
- As Bill Sees It (price 125 dkk)
- Daily Reflections (price 140 dkk)

All of the mentioned literature are translated and published in Denmark by acceptance from the GSO in New York.

Also coming soon is **Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers.**

### **Finance Overview:**

These are the actual financial overview from Denmark in 2018:

#### **Income:**

Donations from groups: 540.392 dkk.

Literature: 299.155 dkk.

Box 334 (voluntary member magazine): - 6.211 dkk.

**Income Total: 833.336 dkk.**

#### **Expenses:**

General Service Office: - 331.408 dkk.

Service Work: -525.053 dkk.

**Expenses Total: - 856.462 dkk.**

Minor costs: - 2.743 dkk.

**Total for 2018: - 25.869 dkk.**

### **Relations with other countries.**

We have a Nordic collaboration with Sweden, Norway and Finland. We meet twice a year. We have 2 delegates in Denmark participating. Currently we are not sure if the other countries have elected delegates and we are waiting to see if the collaboration will still be productive in the future. We have been greatly rewarded by the collaboration to take inspiration from the different countries service structure and service conferences. Our delegates usually also participate as observers in the different service conferences and we send invitations to the countries when we host our Service Conferences.

We also have collaboration with the GSB of UK. We participate in the Service Conference UK as observers and they send observers to ours.

Internet and websites:

The Danish website is to be found at the following link: <https://dkaa.dk/>

The Danish website also have a brief information for English speaking people: <https://dkaa.dk/information-in-english/>

### **Bullet points of particular matters:**

Translations: How are new translations received in your countries?

Rotation policy: How do your countries practice the rotation principle in the service structure?

Collaborations: How can we expand the relationships between our countries?

# FINLAND

## History

A.A. has been in Finland since 1948. Today we have some 660 groups in 260 locations. The total number of members in these groups is estimated at approximately 10,000.

## Structure

The highest decision-making body in the Finnish A.A. is the Annual Great Meeting of all Finnish A.A. groups. The Annual Great Meeting elects and/or accepts the trusted servants and delegates to the A.A. Fellowship as well as approves the annual reports, plans and budget. The Annual Great Meetings are arranged along with the national AA spring conventions. Between 900 and 1,500 members gather each year at these conventions. Every A.A. group in the country is entitled to send one delegate to the Great Meeting. Each group can also propose motions to the Annual Great Meeting.

The Finnish AA is divided into 17 regions. The groups or AA regions organize two to four open national conventions yearly. In these conventions there are among others Q/A sessions for members to have a dialogue with the trusted servants. Groups and members arrange several smaller local/area events in different regions. The groups do active Twelfth Step work for example by sharing AA information at municipal detoxifications centers. We also cooperate closely with AI-Anon.

The General Service Office at Vantaa employs two people. Along with administration and communications, the office takes care of updating the Fellowship's website and mobile app to improve them becoming more user friendly. Several AA regions have their own websites, too. Service office, servants on national level, regions and many groups have their own e-mail addresses. Our website has links to web- AA meetings.

Sobriety time recommendation for national service tasks is 5 years sobriety.

In 2015 "Service guide" was published describing AA's 3<sup>rd</sup> legacy and the structure of the Finnish AA and recommendations for the service tasks / servants.

## Finnish A.A. Service

The Finnish A.A. Service consists of the delegates (20) who are elected by the regions in the region meetings to serve for a period of two years. The Annual Great Meeting of Finnish A.A. groups confirms the final composition of the Finnish A.A. Service, which then chooses from among the delegates the chair and the secretary for the Service, as well as the members of the committees. The committees include: Policy and Admissions; Literature; International Affairs; Information and Carrying the Message. The Finnish A.A. Service, as well as the committees, have six meetings per year.

In addition to AA service and its committees we have four independent committees: Prison, AA Helpline, Youth and Travel Planning.

## Finance

Our financial situation is stable. The reserve/liquidity covers six to eight months of expenses. Of the income approximately 40% comes from group contributions, 15% member service (internal information bulletin subscriptions) and 45% literature sales.

## Publications

The Finnish A.A. Publishing, Inc. is the legal entity and consists of six trustees who serve three-year terms. Meetings are held every other month. Group representatives select the trustees at the Annual Great Meeting.

The main task of the corporation is to monitor and support the office and staff, and take care of legal affairs, contracts, finance, public relations, and publishing activities, such as copyrights and printing of A.A. literature. Two books are currently available in e-form through our website.

We publish two bulletins: *Ratkaisu* (“Grapevine”) and *AA Tiedotuksia* (“AA Information”). *Ratkaisu* is published 10 times a year with a distribution of 2,000 copies and it has articles and stories about alcoholism, written by both alcoholics and others. Among the others, the President of the Republic of Finland and the Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland have kindly given input in the bulletin.

*AA Tiedotuksia* comes out every month in an edition of 2,200 copies. This bulletin is an internal newsletter with information on events, anniversaries and memos of Service and Publishing, Inc. Meetings. Also a financial report of all incomes and expenses of the legal entity is monthly published in *AA Tiedotuksia* bulletin thus allowing continuous control by AA members.

### **International Activities**

At the Annual Great Meeting of Finnish A.A., the groups choose WSM delegates who serve four-year terms, rotating in such a way that the starting delegate serves as a first-term delegate while the older one serves as a second-term delegate.

Both delegates take part in the WSM and ESM. They cooperate closely with Scandinavian countries, especially Sweden; communication with other countries occurs on a case-by-case basis.

Both WSM delegates report to the Annual General Meeting, in other words to the groups, and their travel and other reports and overviews are published in our bulletins.

## **FRANCE**

### **General Service Office (GSO)**

Located at 29, rue Campo Formio, 75013 Paris, France.

French GSO has 2 non-alcoholics full time employees.

### **General Structure**

Counting 562 groups in France and overseas regions (Polynesia, Reunion Islands, the West Indies, Guyana and New Caledonia), we observe a slow and continuous decrease in the number of groups each year. There are still empty geographical areas.

Group details: 6 groups in prisons, 24 in hospitals, 494 French-speaking, 53 English, 5 Polish, 1 Spanish, 2 Russian-speaking and one group in French sign language.

New groups created by French expatriates abroad: One group in Kóbe, Japan, one in Hanoi, Vietnam, and one in Thailand.

France is divided into 5 geographical territories mainly for the use of interregional activities, especially the Service Forum and the National Annual Convention.

This year four out of five territories have organized a Service Forum.

### **General Service Board (GSB)**

The G.S.B is composed of 11 members. 3 Class A (non-alcoholic) Trustees including the chairman of Union des Alcooliques Anonyms (UAA), and 8 Class B (alcoholic) Trustees, including 3 attached to General Service and 5 to Territorial Service. The G.S.B meets 4 times a year.

The extended G.S.B has 7 standing committees.

### **The main actions carried out by our 3 Class A Trustees**

- Organization of Round tables discussions with professionals who carry the message to professionals.
- Natural allies from different sectors (health, social, justice, business), testify to an assembly of professionals invited to the event about their experience of collaboration with the groups and the Fellowship as a whole (intervention in hospitals, prisons, etc.).
- Film-debate is a new form of PI, intended for the general public as well as professionals or future professionals (Nurse schools, social workers, educators, psychologists). This approach is based on watching a film on the theme of alcohol and A.A. An exchange follows the film between the audience and a few speakers chosen for their communication skills (Two natural allies and two AA. members).
- The YouTube video project is ongoing. It is about making very simple short videos where professionals (class A or not) explain in a very synthetic and concrete way what A.A. is, for whom, for what... the questions that everyone asks themselves in communication with a wide audience, and make the videos available on YouTube, as this media is used by many, including young people.

## Petition against “Back to Basics” as a concept

In France in recent years, workshops have been organized on the theme of “Back to Basics”. In 2019, a "Right of Appeal" petition gathered nearly 200 signatures. It was launched by mostly Parisian A.A. groups against “Back to Basics” as a concept.

The GSB has made a request to the AAWS for a decision on this issue, and they replied that only literature voted on a conference can be used officially, but that individual members can organize workshops in their own name.

In response to the minority petition, the GSB AA France can state that in Alcoholics Anonymous, the only recognized places where each member can seek and find abstinence and recovery according to our three legacies of unity, service and recovery are the 562 French groups spread across our country and listed by GSB. The GSB has no opinion on the organization of Back to Basic workshops in France, but confirms that this practice is completely outside the structure of our movement and does not involve our Fellowship. “Back to Basics” workshops are nevertheless popular, and there is a real demand, especially among newcomers.

## National Convention, AA France 60 years in 2020

Every year, one of the territories organizes the National Convention through a voted-in committee from the territory. This year (8/10 November) the Convention will take place in Montluçon (Region of Auvergne) on the theme “One Step, One Life”.

The GSB voted for the national Convention to be held in the Center-Paris-Ile de France Territory every 5 years, the year ending on 0 or 5. The convention will take place in the 4 other territories according to a determined timetable.

The National yearly Convention for the 60 years of AA France will be held the 7 and 8 of November 2020 in Dammarie-Les-Lys (Ile de France) near Fontainebleau on the theme « Free and Responsible ».

The public information meeting for professionals is scheduled prior to the convention on Thursday evening, November 5th, to facilitate the arrival of professionals. It will be at a highly historic address, the American Church of the Quai d'Orsay, where the first French group was created in 1960. About 800 participants are expected.



## **Finance committee**

The Finance Committee is composed of 6 members, including the National Treasurer.

The Budget for each years-end 2017 and 2018 ended with a surplus.

The Annual Congresses in 2017 and 2018 returned to balance or even surpluses, thanks in particular to better control of structural costs. A proposal to hold congresses every two years was not voted in by the conference.

Contributions in sobriety dollars for the years 2017 and 2018 were stable.

The measures taken to reserve the sobriety dollar account for the strict actions of the Fifth Tradition have been successful, but the dollar account remains fragile due to the relatively high cost of our widely used national hotline.

The three French Speaking European countries manage together a joint company under Belgian law to print AA literature, and the Belgian G.S.O. on behalf of the French speaking European Publishers has obtained the licenses to publish and reproduce the literature, copyright granted by A.A.W.S. and recently 4 AA Grapevine books.

Literature sales represent 40% of AA France's overall budget and have been rising for the past two years. It seems that the redesign of the covers and the price reduction of several books are one of the explanations for this increase.

The total amount of the payment for the two International Funds ESM and WSM was €700 in 2017 and €1,000 in 2018.

A disbursement of €500 for the International Literature Fund was made from the sobriety dollar account.

The 3 French-speaking countries contributed equally to the travel expenses of our international delegate to the WSM as well as to a country to country sponsorship to Iran for 6 days in February 2019.

In our regions, we are noticing an increase in the number of travel claims for service purposes.

## **General Structure and Policy**

Our service structure is based on the AA service manual of the E-U / Canada General Service Conference (GSC). We have added an addendum specific to France which is regularly updated after the decisions voted in our conference.

The years 2018/2019 focused on a new governmental territorial organization of France into 13 regions instead of 22 and we are planning to make a proposal by the end of the year.

The question is: should the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous be based on the French territorial reform? (Law of August 7<sup>th</sup> 2015).

The 2019 conference passed among other subjects resolutions on the following points:

- The conference recommends to the General Service Board that the period between two national mandates be the same as that between a delegate term and a national term, i.e. one conference year.
- The conference recommends to the General Service Board that the mandate of the National Committee Chair be unique in the same way as that of a Class B administrator or delegate

## **National Committee for Publications and Archives (CNPA)**

The committee is composed of 6 members, including the referring Trustee.

The missions of the C.N.P.A. is to promote our literature, to encourage it's reading, to update it and to propose new titles. The committee also archives printed and digital documents. The organizing of the printed archives is completed, the scanning of the audio recordings continues.

The development of a perpetual calendar as a common project in French Speaking Europe, with quotes from literature and milestones in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous will be available in November 2019. As new publications, this year France is offering the leaflets "le mot Dieu", (The God Word) translated from English with a license to translate and print from GSO GB. The brochure « A meeting in a Pocket » (AA.IE) has also been translated.

The committee, following the resolutions of the French conference, is drafting documents posted on the website [www.alcooliques-anonymes.fr](http://www.alcooliques-anonymes.fr):

A Resolution was adopted by the General Service Conference 2017 to include a text available on the website "To be read in an open meeting" - "To be read in a closed meeting"

The following resolutions were adopted by the General Service Conference of April 2018

The conference recommends to the General Service Board the following documents:

- "A.A. Business meetings, The group conscience and Group conscience meetings"
- "Welcoming a newcomer to the group"
- "Violence and Personal Conduct"
- The documents are available on the AA France website, with the agreement of the GSO GB (General Service Office of Great Britain).

The validation of the text "Is there an alcoholic in your professional environment" will be requested at the French conference 2020.

## **National Health Committee (NHC)**

The National Health Committee in collaboration with the Professional community is composed of 5 members from the different Territories.

Since the 2018 Conference, the implementation of referents for 5th tradition actions became more productive, and has facilitated our collaboration with the healthcare staff of the care units despite the new healthcare policy.

The committee would like to further share the message with the business communities, by contacting occupational physicians, personnel managers, health, safety and working conditions committees, the Economic and Social Committee (ESC) and trade unions, even if it remains difficult: it is not easy to find "the right key".

In several regions, communication between groups has improved through the scheduling of specific community actions. More and more information is being provided to nursing schools and faculties.

The Centers of Care, Accompaniment and Prevention in Addiction are very solicitous of our participation.

The "compass theory" has made it possible to pool together actions of the 5th tradition making them easier.

At the last Conference, delegates proposed that we increase our outreach to business, by contacting companies' health officials, Human Resources managers, Health, Safety and Working Conditions Committees and trade unions.



On a personal basis, members of Alcoholics Anonymous have been able to attend addictology training courses available by the Actions Addictions Funds in order to become « Patient-Experts. » Although there is no official status in France, the role of these Patient-Experts is increasingly recognized by caregivers in the field of addictions. This training helps to legitimize the patient expert's competencies by complementing his or her experience of addiction and self-help groups with knowledge, and to learn to speak the professional language of health care personnel to facilitate communication and collaboration with professionals in institutions.

### **Legal committee**

The Legal Committee has 5 members, with one of them as referring Trustee.

The purpose of this Committee is to define and offer the best way and tools to help volunteers in the correctional field.

The actions in the correctional environment cover essentially 2 sectors: the closed and open environment

The Ministry of Justice and Prison Administration are increasingly appealing to civil society, including AA, to take an active part in the rehabilitation and alternative to incarceration.

The Legal Committee helps volunteers to open groups, units and information meetings in closed and open environments. The Committee is very careful to apply teamwork in the correctional environment. Therefore it is important to attend in order to create strong teams before engaging any action. Single actions are highly discouraged. Regarding the visibility of AA within the professionals of the correctional environment, we signed an agreement with the Direction of Penitentiary Administration (Direction de l'Administration Pénitentiaire - DAP) and share our information and experience about our actions with them. We are in contact with the various civil associations' partners of the DAP and we exchange our experiences with them. We can also pool our forces to improve our conditions of intervention. The DAP in collaboration with AA has produced 4 videos presenting the movement to people in legal custody (available on our national website) The videos are proposed by the DAP to schools for distribution.

The last census of AA's involvement in the incarcerated population in France shows that we are represented in 34 correctional institutions (1/5 of the penal institutions in France), 40 actions: 6 groups, 21 branches, 13 information meetings, 7 regular actions in open environment.

### **Helpline and Internet committee**

The committee is composed of 8 members, including the referring Trustee.

France has a unique telephone number for the helpline, [+339 36394020](tel:+33936394020) which allows an alcoholic in recovery 24/7 to find a meeting or be connected to a 12 step volunteer.

All 22 French regions participate in the rotation for the night helpline at a rate of 2 or 3 weeks per year and have a 12th step volunteer contact. If a region cannot provide service members for all 7 nights, a national call for solidarity is made.

11 regions or intergroups participate in rotation for daytime helpline service.

The documents used by the volunteer service member have been updated in order to help the best possible way the still suffering alcoholic, or guide him or her to other fellowships (12 step fellowships or other associations) if necessary.

The rate of night calls is 80%, and 90% for the day calls, mainly still suffering alcoholics reaching out for help, but also families ...

The National website ([www.alcooliques-anonymes.fr](http://www.alcooliques-anonymes.fr)) was launched in July 2016. It offers public access and member access.

The primary purpose of the public space is to inform the general public and to arouse attraction in order to help the still suffering alcoholic. It is addressed to alcoholics, but also to doctors, journalists, media...

There is a presentation with AA testimonials and Frequently Asked Questions in order to help alcoholics identify, as well as a list of local, national and global meetings and online meetings (Online Intergroup AA-OIAA)

The regional pages with current events of actions are available to the regions.

The resources section contains our publications and useful links to deal with other dependencies.

More recently, information has been added concerning the 3 French Speaking online meetings created about 1 year ago, but also a page with information concerning the legal committee.

This member space is reserved for AA members and concerns general information, literature, the fifth tradition, the life of the group, the service committees, the Journal of General Services (the quarterly AA member publication from UAA), the forthcoming Convention and access to all downloadable documents.

More recently, pages have been added with all useful information concerning the 3 French Speaking Online meetings. Information to Health Centers is also available.

Access to the members' area requires a widely diffused password.

### **Public Relations committee**

This committee, composed of four members, ensures relations with the general public (communication with journalists, media, online media) as well as assistance to groups in communicating with the media.

The committee imagines any medium that helps to convey the message (video, brochures, posters, cards, etc.) using new 2.0 tools, while keeping our traditional means of communication. The latest publication is a general brochure presenting Alcoholics Anonymous in France: There is a solution.

The committee updates our national Facebook® page and a Twitter® account. Since last ESM Instagram® account has been launched.

The Public Relations Committee is in strong interaction with the Helpline and Internet Committee.

### **Working with other countries**

French-speaking Belgium, France and French-speaking Switzerland have close and privileged relationship. They constitute one common entity (French speaking Europe) in relation to the WSM. Since 2009, these three countries have formalized this cooperation through the "French-speaking European crossroad of Exchange"(CEFE) meeting at their three conferences. All three countries manage a joint company together under Belgian law for the edition of publications (copyright granted by AAWS to AA Belgium on behalf of the three countries).

The CEFE is composed of GSB members from the 3 countries who have been invited to the conferences. Its purpose is to prepare joint projects between our three countries. The international delegate is also invited.

A new milestone will be reached this year; the CEFÉ proposes the organization of a European French Speaking Service Forum located in a central area for our three countries. An organizing committee has been appointed, consisting of people from French Speaking Europe and the theme voted in is “AA in French Speaking Europe: How to adapt service to our time?”

In February this year, a country-to-country sponsorship was created with Iran following our meeting for the WSM. An unforgettable meeting in Kerman, Iran, took place over 5 days.

After having experienced a period of significant additional costs , the countries of French-Speaking Sub-Saharan Africa and the Magreb have regained a more modest dimension and are more open to the spiritual notion of sponsorship: France offers better help to the outstretched hands in these countries by helping forming local groups and sending out endowments of publications.

### **General information**

- Alcoholics Anonymous is based on a uniqueness of purpose as stated in our traditions: the mutual assistance of alcoholics suffering from alcohol. However, we collaborate at every opportunity given in service and experience sharing with other twelve-step Fellowships, whom we invite in our national and sometimes regional conventions.
- 3 weekly French speaking online recovery meetings are held with Zoom. The online meetings are offering a possibility for an AA meeting for people having difficulties attending a physical meeting (geographical distances, disability, single parent, isolated members, elderly people ...) Young people, for whom the online world is very well-known, are also attracted to this meeting format.
- A new recovery online meeting for expatriate French speaking alcoholics in Asia started up in August 2019.
- For the GSB, intermediate online service meetings are held between the physical meetings in order to ensure fluidity in the committees and reduce our operating costs. These online meetings or video-conferences are held respecting our traditions and are strictly reserved for the concerned members.

## GERMANY

Dear All,

My name is Ingmar. I am an alcoholic and serve for our fellowship as a world service delegate and represent the German structure. I am living in Germany /Bavaria and happy to have the privilege to be here in York with all of you.

### **Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)**

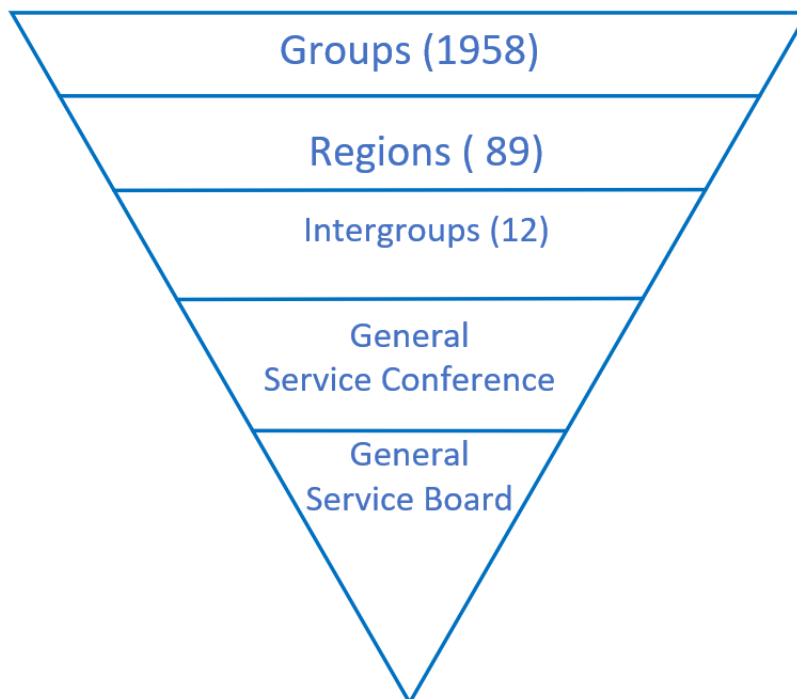
The history of AA Germany began on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1953 with an invitation announced in a local News Paper in Munich. Target audience at this time where American G.I.'s. This was the trigger point for the first AA group in Germany. AA's boom in terms of growth was in the 60's. To the end of the 70's we had around 800 registered AA Groups in Germany.

The first General Service Conference was held on 1981 with the theme "Unity". Till now we have been running the General Service Conference annually.

Starting 1990, Germany, German Speaking Switzerland, Austria, South of Tirol and the former German Democratic Republic have been consolidated into "German Speaking Countries" structure. Saying this, we have a centralized General Service Conference as our highest group conscience. Nevertheless, the individual countries did establish independent "Boards". Switzerland and Austria / South of Tirol has been considered as an Intergroup in the "German Speaking Countries" structure.

As of YTD around 1958 groups in Germany, 140 in Austria & South of Tirol and 110 in Switzerland have been registered.

### **Current A.A. Structure Germany**



**Other Services; for example, Prisons, Hospitals, Public Information, etc.**

Great engagement in all of those.

The service in prisons and hospitals are well received by professionals and aggrieved parties as well. Special Highlights in terms of public information you will find under bullets of “Country Highlights “

### **Sobriety time required for service positions**

- Chair Person of a group, 2 years
- Group representative, 2 years
- Team members of regions, 2 years
- Team members of intergroups, 3 years
- Delegates, 5 years
- Chairperson conference (2<sup>nd</sup> term delegate)
- Members of the board, 10 years
  - Trustees
  - Chair Person
  - Managing-Committee (legal entity)
  - Person in charge
  - World Service Delegates (Class A also possible)

### **General Service Conference (processes, frequency, etc.)**

Frequency is annually (Friday, Saturday, Sunday)

#### **Members (voting right)**

- 72 Delegates (6 per Intergroup)
- 12 Trustees
- Up to 5 Class A (from the board)
- Chairperson of conference
- 3 Managing-Committee (legal entity)
- Chairperson of the General Service Board
- 5 persons in charge
- 2 World /European service delegates
- 1 European service delegate

#### **Members (no voting right)**

- General Manager GSO
- Secretary
- Scribe

#### **The Conference consists of 6 Committees:**

- 1) Structure and question of principles
- 2) Finance
- 3) Literature
- 4) Information and internal communication
- 5) Public information
- 6) Internet and new communication media

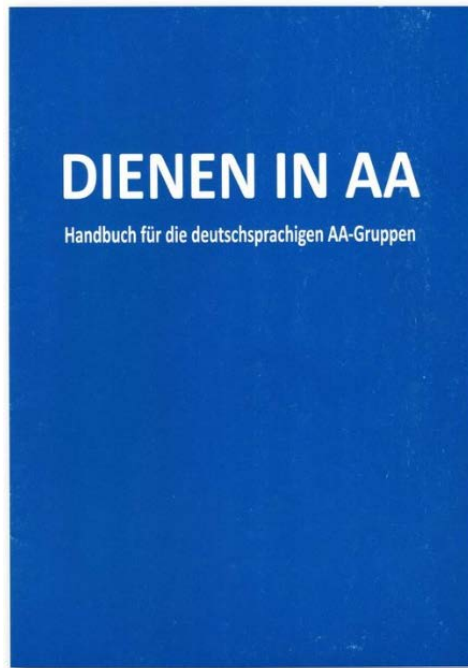
#### **High Level Process**

**Friday (plenum):** Reports of individuals on duty and business throughout last year

**Saturday:** work out in the committees, election of chairperson, theme of next conference etc.

**Sunday (plenum):** Report out of the committees. Voting of the recommendations

**Service Manual (does your country have its own manual?)**



**Literature/Publishing Overview (print/audio/video)**

**Print:**

- Alcoholics Anonymous (average count sold annually > 3000)
- 12 Steps and 12 Traditions (average count sold annually > 1000)
- Living Sober (average count sold annually > 1500)
- Daily Reflections (average count sold annually > 1000)
- Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age (average count sold annually > 50)
- Came to believe (average count sold annually > 400)
- As Bill Sees It (average count sold annually > 500)
- > 30 sorts of brochures (average count sold annually > 80000)

**eBook:**

- Alcoholics Anonymous (average count sold annually > 500)

**Audio:**

- 12 Steps and 12 Traditions (average count sold annually > 50)
- Living Sober (average count sold annually > 50)

**AA DACH Magazine:** (average count sold annually > 40000)

**Finance Overview (you may like to include the approximate percentage of annual income from contributions/literature sales and expenses, etc.)**

Literature 25 %

AA Dach (Magazine) 25%

Contribution 50 %

Balance Sheet >> Almost Break-Even

Cash flow >> still quite healthy YTD

Finance predict potential challenges in 5 years due to cost increases vs. revenue decreases.

A working group has been established by GSB in order to find tactics to medicate for a long run.

### **Relations with other countries (country to country co-operation, how does this work?)**

Out of history >> Austria, Switzerland  
No further activities known out of German structure

### **Internet & Websites (if applicable)**

<https://www.anonyme-alkoholiker.de/>

### **Country Highlights:**

- Leading a Symposium on convention of DGPPN (German Association for Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics) on 2018 and 2019 in Berlin.
- Invited by DHS (German central office for substance abuse problems). Have had the opportunity to introduce AA fellowship and share experience throughout the congress.
- Being present the first time on the German Church Congress this year in Dortmund with more than 200 000 visitors
- Germany convention 2019 in Oldenburg
  - This event is still a highlight annually as we run this convention now for decades in different locations in Germany and Austria
- New homepage and online shop of literature
  - Well received in our structure. Additional convenient channel to purchase literature
- Anonymous Alcoholics in eBook version
  - Well received in our structure as a complimentary product
- Investment in new GSO and database
  - Will move the GSO to Frankfurt in Q4 2020
  - Need to replace access data base. We use an external provider for
  - execution

## **GREAT BRITAIN**

### **Groups, Intergroups (I/G's) and Regional Assemblies**

At the end of September 2019 there were a total of 5573 AA Groups registered with Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain), 684 of these being English-speaking Groups in the Continental European Region. Great Britain consists of the countries of England, Scotland and Wales, within which there were a total of 4689 AA Groups.

The figures indicate that AAGB is still growing increasing by approximately 11 % in 2 years. It has been estimated that there has been between 3 & 4 million attendees at AAGB meetings in the past 12 months.

Each AA Group is represented at its local I/G by a Group Service Representative. I/G's in turn are represented at their Regional Assemblies by Region Delegates. I/G's and Regions are geographically arranged, and there are 120 I/G's and 16 Regional Assemblies. Of the Regional Assemblies, 9 are in England, 5 are in Scotland, 1 is in Wales and 1 is in the Continental European Region.

I/G's and Regions have Liaison Officers who serve in the following disciplines: Public Information, Employment, Prisons, Health, Probation/Criminal Justice Services, Telephones, Literature, Share or Roundabout magazine, Archives, Electronic Communications, Armed Services and Young People. These liaison activities are reported upon below.

### **General Service Conference**

The Fifty -Fourth General Service Conference was held in April this year, the theme being 'Pass it on.' Conference comprised of 93 delegates from 16 Regions; 19 members of the General Service Board.

Matt S – Conference Chair (Continental European Region), Roger B the outgoing General Secretary Secretary and Ranjan B the incoming General Secretary. Six members of staff from the General Service Office attended. Also in attendance were 9 Observers from the following countries: Bulgaria, Iceland, Ireland, Poland, Sweden and Turkey.

The main content of the Conference consisted of: A keynote address from the Conference Chair, the annual financial report from the Fellowship's Honorary Treasurer, annual progress reports from various Trustees, the six Conference Committees Chairpersons reports detailing the deliberations on the elected Questions for Conference which had originated from the grassroots of the Fellowship

These deliberations and recommendations were voted upon by the full Conference on the Sunday morning. The voting system employed by Conference is as follows:

A  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority in favour of the recommendation makes it binding upon the General Service Board to take action.

A simple majority is just a recommendation to the General Service Board to take action if the manpower, time or finances are available.

### **General Service Office (GSO)**

GSO in York provides a focal point for the Fellowship which links individual members, Groups, I/G's, Regions, the General Service Board and the General Service Conference. Acting as the European Service Centre, GSO responds to enquiries worldwide, co-operating with service structures within other countries for mutual benefit. The staff of GSO and the two satellite offices (Northern in Glasgow, and Southern in London) provide services that maintain these communication links.

### **General Service Board (GSB)**



The GSB consists of a Trustee from each of the 16 Regions, and also Trustees occupying the positions of Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer who, along with the General Secretary, form the Executive Committee. The General Secretary is also General Secretary of the General Service Office in York and our Northern and Southern Service Offices. Currently there are also four Non-Alcoholic Trustees, who are able to relate to the general public without having concerns of personal anonymity. Four full Board Meetings are held each a year, plus an annual workshop in July when Board Members reflect upon their personal effectiveness, their relationship with the Board, and the Board's effectiveness in serving the Fellowship of Great Britain as a whole. Each Trustee has specific responsibilities and work within the disciplines that are listed under Groups, I/G's and Regions above and, as previously stated, will be reported on below.

## **Sponsorship**

We have made financial contributions to the International Literature Fund and have funded the first publication of AA literature in Bulgaria.

Sponsorship of the Sub-Sahara African Service Meetings in South Africa continues, shared equally with USA/Canada. The General Secretary Ranjan and Board Trustee Denise attended the South Africa meeting in June 2019. We also sponsored the Polish Conference last year. AAGB also provides the accommodation for observers to our Conference.

## **Finance**

The Fellowships finances are currently in a stable position. The annual Gratitude week continues to take place in the week following Founders 'Day (10 June). During Gratitude Week all AA members are invited to contribute to the Gratitude Pot' in addition to their usual contributions. We have financed new posters and a new video for Young People and they will be presented to Conference in April 2020.

## **AA Service News, Share and Roundabout**

AA Service News (AASN) is the General Service Board's principal medium for communication of service events and developments throughout all regions of AA Great Britain. It is published quarterly, with articles that emphasise, in particular, matters affecting our primary purpose: to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. The Winter issue contains the Conference Questions and the Summer edition the recommendations from the General Service Conference pertaining to those questions. Additionally, news and details about Parliamentary events in England, Scotland and Wales and other notable service events are published throughout the year in articles written for and by the Fellowship. These include General Service Board Sub-Committees vacancy notices (and information on how eligible AA members may apply), regional Seventh Tradition and In Memoriam contributions, as well as a Concept or Tradition and a Calendar of AA events in Great Britain and overseas. Copies are posted to the mailing contacts for all Groups registered in the Great Britain Service Structure.

Share and Roundabout are our meeting between meetings 'magazines which contain personal shares and useful information for the AA member. Roundabout is the Scottish magazine and Share is for members south of the border. Share 2020 diaries and calendars have been printed and are available from GSO.

## **Archives**

The Kelvingrove Public Exhibition: This event was hosted by the 5 Scottish Regions and was opened by the Granddaughter of Sir Phillip D who along with Grace O were among the founder members of AA in Great Britain. This was the first of its kind to be held in a public space in this case, the Kelvingrove Museum in Glasgow. The Archivists worked alongside members from PI to put on an extremely successful event. The subcommittee are building on the success of this and similar exhibitions have been held in Manchester and other locations. It has been agreed to have a permanent display at GSO. This will take the form of banners displayed on the wall in the Archives room.

**The Borthwick Institute Cataloguing and Digitisation Project:** Conference 2016 unanimously endorsed the Committee 5 Question 1 recommendation to make the Fellowship's Archive more accessible digitally and therefore more widely accessible to the whole membership. The Borthwick Institute presented the General Service Board with a project proposal in May last year which fully meets the remit of Conference. They carried out a comprehensive assessment of the Archive held at GSO, along with the Archive material which they already hold in their storage facility. The Borthwick have employed a professional Archivist to carry out this project which is now at the cataloguing stage. This cataloguing stage will take some considerable time and the Board are being kept fully updated on progress by the Borthwick through the Trustee, Fellowship Archivist, General Secretary and Projects Coordinator at GSO.

### **The 75th Anniversary Publication Working Group**

This working group was set up by the Board to oversee the production of a special publication along the lines of Share and Roundabout to commemorate this momentous occasion in the history of AA GB. It will also celebrate Share Magazines 50th Anniversary and commemorate the major contribution that Roundabout has made to AA's history especially in Scotland. It comprises of members from the Archives, Share, Roundabout and 75th Anniversary subcommittees. It is chaired by the Archives Trustee who reports to the Board on its progress. It also provides regular reports to all its constituent subcommittees listed above. Work is progressing well and it plans to produce the completed publication by June 2021. It has asked the Fellowship to provide material in the form of Regional histories including founder Groups and Intergroups. This also includes history of service disciplines.

### **Armed Services**

The Armed Services is gradually increasing its coverage of the organizations to which it is carrying the AA message. There have been many inroads to various barracks, there are some coffees mornings being held where the problems of alcohol are discussed these are in garrison towns and have an Alcoholics Anonymous presence. There has been continued contact with US Military installations of RAF Molesworth, RAF Alconbury, RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath. It is understood that the Chief of Defence staff has recognised that there is a problem with alcohol in the forces and has issued a directive that this should be tackled. It has been noticed that some personnel from barracks where some presentations were given are seen attending meetings and this is a result of the ASLO's & RASLO's giving of their time. In summary we have continued to maintain contact with the following: • Director General, Army Medical Services. • Services Medical Directorate. • Service Base Medical Centres. • SAAFA • Royal British Legion. • Combat Stress. • Help the Hero's

### **Electronic Communications**

Our website has enjoyed a particularly busy year attracting some 1.25 million visitors. Many are newcomers who can find our Helpline number or can choose to contact us directly by email via our Online Response Service, or one-to-one via our ChatNow Service. Each of these is in contact with some 10,000 people each year to help them get started on their journey of recovery. Many existing members access the website in order to find meeting information and since a high percentage of these are mobile users, a change has been made to the website design to make the pages easier to read on these devices. The 'Near me' function is ideal for AA members on the move. A major overhaul of the website has been completed. We have also overhauled the 'back end' – the workings unseen by the user which interact with other areas, group records, shop etc. In this connection, the file store has been rebuilt which requires all users to re-register, ensuring that we comply with current data protection legislation. Our Privacy Policy has been updated and published. The website content is not changing significantly at this time, but its style and layout are being brought up-to date. Most of the images on the site are from library stock, and ECSC invite members to send in any photographs that they consider suitable for publication. New data protection legislation (GDPR) came into force in May 2018 and ECSC continues to offer help to the Fellowship to ensure compliance. In order to preserve anonymity and to comply with GDPR, we continue to offer generic email addresses for all posts at Intergroup and Region levels. The Online Responder Service (ORS) is an email-based service which enables people who think that they may have a drinking problem to enter into an email conversation with an Online responder.

The ultimate purpose of the ORS is to encourage the person to call the national AA telephone number (0800 9177650) so that they will have the opportunity to be taken to an AA meeting if they so wish. It is available on the website: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

## **Employment**

Liaison Officers have been in contact with: The Department of Works and Pensions, local job centres, the Police, G.P.'s, Railways, Large employer's assistance programmes, the BBC, Large Hotels, Legal Practices, Occupational Health, Health Centres, Banks, Construction Companies, Institute of Personal Development, Metropolitan Police, Trade Unions and many others, passing on our message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

## **Health**

The Health Sub-Committee have been working closely with Health Liaison Officers throughout the regions to carry the message at every opportunity to all Professionals working with the still suffering alcoholic. These include frontline Healthcare, Judicial, Universities, Emergency Services, Clergy, and many others. The Health Sub-Committee was asked to contribute to the NHS England 5-year Mental Health Plan and the trustee with responsibility for Health AAGB, was invited to attend and deliver a presentation at the annual AA event at the Scottish Parliament, which resulted in an excellent follow up from many and diverse professionals. The Open Meeting Workshops have proven to be very popular and have been adapted and delivered in many locations and to more than 1500 people including GP surgeries, hospitals, treatment centres, dentists, universities, training colleges, nursing degree students, post graduate psychologists, etc. As follows: South East Region - Brighton and Sussex Medical School, the University of Brighton, and Mid Sussex and Brighton General Practitioners Vocational Training Scheme. London Region South – St. Georges Hospital Tooting and with Paramedics at the School of Health Science. London Region North – General Practitioners Training Scheme, Bromley. Glasgow Region - Health Liaison Officers are working closely with addiction nurses and doctors to assist with a home detox pilot project. Highlands & Islands Region - University of the Highlands, Inverness and Outer Hebrides campuses, delivering presentations to first year nursing degree students.

## **Literature**

The literature sub committee has produced some new information this year as a result of the outcome of the General Service Conference 2018. This is:

*Now that I'm a GSR (Group Service Representative) What do I do?*

All literature is available to order through the online shop on the website.

## **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.

## **Prisons**

AA (GB) holds meetings within prisons in England, Scotland and Wales through the work of Region and Intergroup Liaison officers working with local members. We also have a Prison Postal Service. GSO holds a database of members willing to correspond with prisoners. The Board Trustee with responsibility for Prisons liaises with the National Offender Management Service to discuss issues around access to prisons.

## Probation

Throughout the country there are various liaison arrangements between I/G's and Probation Officers (in England and Wales) and Criminal Justice Social Workers (in Scotland). AA members working in this discipline will make themselves available to meet offenders who are being supervised in the community and offer to take them to an AA meeting. A proof-of-attendance system also operates in some areas when the offender is subject to an Alcohol Treatment Requirement. In November, Maxine W, the Probation Trustee, will be visiting a prison in Bulgaria in order to learn about the significant cooperation there between the prison authorities and AA and also to share her AA experience in Great Britain. Maxine will take over back-issues of 'Beyond the Bars' and some presentation material from our June Prison and Probation seminar.

## Public Information (PI)

The focus within the sub-committee has been on working on roadshows – where the committee has gone out to the Regions to encourage and support them in their PI service.

During the spring and summer of 2018 Northdown Intergroup PI members ran a whole series of events in Winchester to celebrate the Centenary of Bill's visit to Winchester and his memorable sighting of Thomas Thetcher's tombstone in the Cathedral Graveyard. AA was able to put on a display commemorating the event in Winchester library, and in the cathedral later on in the year. In July, Winchester Festival commissioned a play about Bill W; it was written by a local playwright and was attended by many people in the Cathedral. This was followed in August by an AA meeting in the Cathedral to celebrate the 100th anniversary day of Bill W's actual visit to Winchester. A couple of weeks later one of our Non-Alcoholic Trustees, Mani was interviewed by BBC TV on its 'Songs of Praise' programme in front of Thomas Thetcher's tombstone. This was a memorable record of Bill's W story and about the work the AA Fellowship does. In total the Winchester Bill W centenary story gave AA considerable exposure to both national, regional television, radio and press.

Advertising Campaigns: The two London Regions North and South, ran a large Poster Campaign on the London Underground in October. It was very impressive to see so many of our In-house AA posters on the London Underground at several stations! Newcastle Intergroup likewise ran a Poster Campaign on their Public Transport System in November.

The main national events are our annual presentations at the three seats of government in Great Britain: Westminster in London, Holyrood in Scotland and the Welsh Assembly. These events raise our profile with professional bodies including Members of Parliament, medical experts, police, members of the prison and probation services and other professionals. We explain what we do and what we don't do and how we can co-operate with the health, judicial, social services and other organisations.

## Survey

The Board set up the Survey Subcommittee to meet the remit of Conference 2017. Work on producing the questions for the 2020 survey is well under way. The subcommittee are also discussing ways of how best to publicise this survey throughout the whole Fellowship.

## Telephones

The main source of enquiry for the person who asks about receiving help with their drinking problem is our free-phone national helpline (0800 9177650), which is answered locally through a divert system by British Telecom (BT). However, during recent years, the number of first-time enquiries has decreased. A reason for this is unclear but may be due to the increased visibility of AA through our upgraded website, which facilitates access to meetings.

## **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention**

At Conference 2016 there was a decision to hold a 75<sup>th</sup> celebratory convention in 2022. Since that time a committee was formed from a number of Regions, namely, North East, Midlands, South East, Scotia, North West and South West. The financial criteria we were given was to aim to be self-supporting, so particular attention has been paid to budgeting and learning as much as possible from the information and records from the Convention celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Several locations were researched and Leeds Arena was the final agreed decision, so contracts have been signed and the deposit paid. Your Committee wish everyone in the Fellowship to be included and involved in this event so the following initiatives have been and are being undertaken: i) A working group has been formed to produce a special edition of Share magazine for the event. The working group comprise of representatives of Roundabout, Share, Archives and a member of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee. All Regions have been contacted so that they can participate by including their histories in the publication. ii) A logo competition was held with over 100 entries. iii) Surveys have and will be distributed at Regions and Conventions to receive as wide as possible range of ideas from members of the Fellowship. A website [www.aa75.co.uk](http://www.aa75.co.uk) has been set up and is counting down the days, hours, minutes and seconds until the Convention – 10 to 12 June 2022.

## **Young People**

Since Conference 2015 the role of the Young People's Liaison Officer has been formally incorporated into the service structure and at Conference 2016 agreed Chapter 12 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

In the last two years the Sub-committee has worked hard to encourage those in I/G's and Regions to take up the service. This year Conference decided that more needed to be done to help those interested in the service but unsure of the role and as a result the Sub-committee will hold a series of roadshows across the UK to help. The first roadshow will be in Winchester in November.

A new video and posters for young people have been produced and will be presented to Conference in April 2020 for approval.

## GREECE

### The background

The first groups in Greece started in the middle of 70's. They were taking place in the American bases, especially for the American soldiers. They were also open to all English-speaking alcoholics of the overall population. The Greek-speaking groups started in 1981 in Athens, which in time spread all around the country.

### Bibliography

The books (recovery guides) of the AA which are handed out in Greek are:

- "Alcoholics Anonymous", 3rd Greek edition 2010 (with four Greek stories) ISBN 978- 0-916856-98-4
- "12+12", 1st Greek edition 2000, ISBN 1-893007-02-2
- "Living Sober", 1st Greek edition 2002 ISBN 978-1-893007-29-1
- "As Bill sees it", 1st edition 2011, ISBN 978-0-916856-81-6
- "Dr. Bob and the Oldtimers", 1st edition 2016, ISBN 0-916856-07-0
- At the time being, the following books are being prepared for publishing:
- "Daily Reflections"

A Translation Group, which is working out new titles for translation, has been created. In the past, the books used to be published in the USA. Today, they are printed in Greece with the treasury money of the Greek GSO. The books are disposed to the groups and members at the printing cost price.

### Leaflets

In Greece the following leaflets are available:

- "My chance to live"
- "A newcomer is asking"
- "Is AA for you?"
- "Alcoholics Anonymous in your region"
- "Understanding Anonymity"
- "44 Questions"
- "Inside AA"
- "Public Information Guide"
- "What is AA? What does AA do?"

Each group locally can publish its own leaflets. For example, Athens group has printed 2 leaflets under the titles "who we are" and "members stories". Bibliography service includes translation, printing, storing, stock-taking and distribution of the books and pamphlets/leaflets. This service is supported by the treasurer and two assistant servants in co-operation with the translation group.

Every year books (recovery guides) and pamphlets are printed and distributed to the groups, the Pan-Hellenic Committee of Public Information and to those interested, as well. Big Book has reached its 4th Edition as an indication, from January to May 2019, 450 recovery guides were disposed to groups, while at the time being (June 2019) there are still about 1000 guides on the shelves of our library.

## Finances

A.A are self-supported, declining outside contributions. Every group has its own treasury, supported by the contributions of the members who want and can afford a small amount of money. Every group spends its money on activities supporting its primary purpose of the A.A, as well as on the current needs of each group, which decides separately on its contribution to the treasury of the Greek G.S.O. Regularly, the Greek G.S.O. contributes to the treasury of the New York, USA G.S.O, with a certain amount of money.

The money of the Greek G.S.O. is spent on the translation and publishing of books and pamphlets, on the support of groups when they reasonably ask for financial help, on the holding of conventions and the running expenses of the office. The money is handled by the elected treasurer with his/her assistant in co-operation with an accountant, who is an outside collaborator. The treasury money is deposited to A.A's bank account. The treasurer is authorized to make all the transactions using the bank account. The accountant takes care of all the necessary actions so that A.A are legally compliant towards the Greek State and he is paid with the treasury money. The Greek G.S.O. has suggested the realization of a "business meeting" with the treasurers, for the carrying of the experience of this service.

## A.A groups in Greece

Nowadays in Greece 21 Greek-speaking (3 new ones), 18 English-speaking, 2 Russian-speaking and 1 Polish-speaking groups are running. In Attica there are 8 Greek-speaking groups (Athens, Ilion, Brahami, Phaliro, Chalandri, Glyfada, Stathmos Larissis, Attikon Hospital – this one is used by the patients of the hospital) and 3 English-speaking (Parthenon Group, North corner Group, South Corner Group.). The rest of the groups are all around Greece (Thessaloniki, Grevena, Kastoria, Katerini, Serres, Trikala, Corfu, Hydra, Mykonos, Paros, Patra, Preveza, Rhodes). There's also an Internet Group (Ionian Group) which is carried out through Skype. Members from all around Greece and overseas Greek people can take part in this group, as well.

There are also several loners, Greek and English-speaking in various regions of Greece, like: Giannena, Zakynthos, Kefallonia, Kalamata, Sparti, Levia, Lamia, Serres, Komotini, Rethymno, Chania, Heraclion, etc.. The groups communicate with each other and exchange experience through Intergroup. In Athens three English-speaking groups are held, while during summer months English-speaking meetings are held in Chania, Corfu, Hydra, Preveza, Patmos, Rhodes and Zakynthos (Zante), Folegandros, Kythera, Lefkada, Lesbos.

## General AA Structure

AA groups in Greece take part in the Greek Intergroup with representatives that they vote themselves. Intergroup consists of five members of the Greek GSO (General Service Office) and of the group representatives. It is open to all AA members. Intergroup holds meetings six times a year, every two months. According to the Greek legislation, since we print and distribute books and pamphlets, our fellowship should have a legal basis with a head and a VAT Number. For this reason, 15 years ago, the simplest possible legal form was created in the form of a non-profiteering organization under the name "Association for the Co-ordination of the AA Group Activities". For this purpose, a lawyer was assigned to draw up the relevant articles, which are deposited in the qualified institutional organ (Court of the First Instance). According to the articles, the goals of the society are:

- 1) "The accomplishment of sobriety through abstinence from alcohol based on Traditions and Steps, in the way they are expressed by the universal fellowship of the Alcoholics Anonymous(AA), as well as the bibliography, which comprises the copyright of the Alcoholics Anonymous(AA).
- 2) The co-ordination of the work of AA Groups in Greece, so as to achieve the biggest possible carrying of their message.
- 3) The presentation of the work of the AA to special scientists of mental health, correctional institutions, as well as to social Groups.

4) The promotion of the AA work to the mass media in agreement with the Steps and Traditions of the AA. The society will seek to become a member of the international Confederation of similar associations of European or international unions which it will co-operate with and to which it will announce its activities." Every year elections based on the Articles are held and the five-member "Board of Trustees", which consists of the chairman, the vice - chairman, the treasurer, the secretary and the representative in the International General Service Office, is elected. In the language of our fellowship, the Board of Trustees is a committee of Trusty Servants (Greek General Service Office), which consists of the co-ordinator, assistant to the co-ordinator, secretary, treasurer and the fifth member who is in charge of the bibliography. The elected members as well as the representatives are willing members to assume service, who fulfill certain conditions, such as their sobriety time and experience in service. These conditions are defined by the conscience of the Greek General Service Office.

The sobriety time required for each service is:

- Chairman /Co-ordinator: 3 years
- Assistant to the Co-ordinator: 2 years
- Secretary: 2 years
- Treasurer: 2 years
- Member in charge of bibliography: 1 year

There are two more substitute members elected to serve as assistant to treasurer and e-mail handler/ GSO Contact person.

The five-member committee holds separate meetings (business meetings) six times a year, every two months, for the purpose of preparing the Intergroup topics as well as for the operational and administrative central issues. These meetings are open to all members of A.A. Both in the General Service Office and Intergroup, members from all around the country can take part through Skype. Totally, six meetings of the Greek G.S.O and six Intergroup meetings a year take turns, while open business meetings of secretaries and treasurers are being programmed within the bounds of service of the Greek G.S.O, service committees formed for a short period of time, are brought into action.

These committees are the following:

- 1) Pan-Hellenic Committee of Public Information: The aims of the committee are the sharing of experience in Public Information issues, the activities of Public Information ,the support and carriage of experience to groups who carry out their own activities of Public Information ,in case they ask for it, the communication with authorities who ask information about A.A, etc. The committee holds meetings open to all A.A members twice a month. Representatives of groups from all over the country take part in this committee either physically or through Skype.
- 2) Pan-Hellenic Convention Committee. Each year a new Convention committee, which consists of members from one specific group of members from various groups, is elected. The aim of the committee is the organization and holding of the annual Hellenic (Greek) Convention, which takes place each October.
- 3) Bibliography group: It consists of the treasurer, the assistant to the treasurer and willing members who are called for support. The aim of the committee is organizing the library, the book distribution and the financial support of bibliography and printing.
- 4) Translation Group: It's formed by members willing to translate new book titles and pamphlets, as well as the elaboration of texts to be republished.

The money of the committees is money of the Central treasury. Every committee is an autonomous group which functions on the basis of the 12 traditions and refers to the Intergroup.

The means of communication (telephone and mail) are handled by members of the Pan-Hellenic Committee of Public Information.

G.S.O co-operates with the Committee holding the International Convention, which takes part in Greece in May every year.



## Other services

Regularly and repeatedly both P.C.P.I and groups in Athens and the rest of Greece hold local activities for the service of our primary purpose. These activities are:

- Presentation of the A.A programme to radio and TV programmes.
- Presentation of the programme to institutions , such as hospitals, prisons, police schools, etc.
- Insertion of informate spots and publications in press, radio and internet.
- Carrying of the message to alcoholics who are treated in hospitals or are imprisoned.
- Informing the relevant authorities associated with the issue of alcoholism, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, institutions of mental health and hospitals, church, government agencies as police, correctional institutions and mass media with forwarding letters with informative bulletin.
- Dispatching our books to libraries of institutions and schools.
- Sticking up bills in central public sports of cities.
- Forwarding invitations to government agencies for their participation in the Greek Convention and in our open meetings.

## Specifically:

For the last two years a great progress has been made concerning the spreading of the message to the still suffering alcoholic:

- 1) One-day conferences in various cities of Greece open to professionals and the public have been held.
- 2) A lot of interviews in magazines, newspapers, radio and T.V. channels have been held.
- 3) Internal training to groups of Public Information has been made taking into consideration the Greek mentality.
- 4) Visits to hospitals, prisons, schools have been paid. As a result, an A.A. group inside a hospital has been created.
- 5) A satisfactory contact with the ministry of Health - Addictions department - has been made. As a result, A.A. was placed on top of the biggest Addiction Supporting Centers.
- 6) The Chairman of the High Court was informed about the A.A. for the first time and was sensitised to take alcoholism into consideration in bringing about modification of the legislation.
- 7) The Chief of the Police Force was informed about the A.A. and the 24 hour call has been proposed to be used.
- 8) The Mayors of three big cities were also informed about the A.A. and as a result, 3 new groups have been created in these cities.
- 9) The website of the Municipality of Athens included the A.A. site , to which the professionals can turn for information and help.
- 10) In conclusion, 5 new Greek , one Polish and two Russian groups have been created.

## **Relationships with other countries**

AA in Greece wish to promote the development of communication and relations with the AA all over the world, so as to enrich our experience continually and bolster up our primary purpose. The annual International Convention which is held in May each year, makes up an ideal opportunity for countries from all over the world to meet and experience to be exchanged. Our country keeps in continuous contact with the GSO of the USA, not only for bibliography items but for the carrying of experience and support that the Greek groups demand for various issues, as well.

Also, we've offered help to our neighbour Turkey presenting our structure, for the creation of its own Intergroup.

## **Internet and websites**

For almost 17 years we have registered website page under the address [www.aa-greece.gr](http://www.aa-greece.gr) Our page includes all the relevant information about us, like: "who the A.A. are", "what the A.A. do ", "what the A.A. don't do", our bibliography, our meeting lists, announcements about conventions and events, related links, etc. In this page there's also the link in English.

So far, the page was informed and supported by trusted servants with relevant knowledge. Recently, the updating of the page was decided to be done by a professional - outside collaborator. There are also pages that contain entries about the A.A in Greece and our activities.

The committees of the Central Office inform the groups and members, after each meeting of the Greek G.S.O. and its committees, through e-mail.

In 2009, with the exploitation of the potentialities of technology, online Skype Greek- speaking AA meeting (Ionian AA) was made up in Greece, which carries out meetings four times a week. This new experience contributed in the creation of the corresponding German online meeting and it was spread as an application and use all over Greece for the realization of business meetings with the participation of members from remote areas.

There's also the possibility to join the Continental Europe Region's online Skype meeting ([aa-europe.net](http://aa-europe.net)).

## ICELAND

### Structure

In September 2019 were 298 AA meetings held in Iceland every week, a country with a population of only three hundred and sixty thousand. All alcoholics are welcome at any A.A. meeting, whatever language they may speak. It was twenty one Icelandic meetings abroad (four of which are on Skype), twenty women's meetings and eighteen men's meetings. There were also five English speaking, four Polish speaking, one Russian speaking and one German-speaking meetings held in Reykjavík.

The number of A.A. members in Iceland has been steadily increasing for many years and we notice that more young people are joining our fellowship. We can now easily see two or even three generations at an A.A. meeting. It has also been an increase in meetings with women only and with men only.

A.A. volunteers take meetings to hospitals, treatment facilities and prisons.

### Internet

Some A.A. members use the Internet to communicate, but it is a matter of individual and personal choice and is not done through an A.A. website. Some members use Skype or Internet options, such as Facebook, to connect. We have updated our website with new graphic and with more information [www.aa.is](http://www.aa.is)

### Intergroups

We have been encouraging A.A. members and groups to create Intergroups in the countryside. There are four acting Intergroups in Iceland, in the south, north, south-vest and in the Reykjavík area. Some run a volunteers-operated 24-hour emergency telephone service. All take on the task of communicating with treatment facilities, hospitals, prisons and schools for informing about A.A.

### General Service Board

The National Service Board (NSB) is made up of twelve trustees of whom nine are A.A. members and three are nonalcoholic trustees. The NSB has monthly meetings in the winter time. The board runs the National Service Office for A.A. in Iceland, and organizes the Annual National Service Meeting. Furthermore, the board is responsible for an Open Celebration Meeting on Good Friday every year to commemorate the arrival of A.A. in Iceland on that day in 1954. Some 3,000 people participate in that meeting. For the past few years the meeting has been translated into sign language.

We were backup for the World Service Meeting 2018 in South Africa.

### General Service Office

The National Service Office located in Reykjavík, at Tjarnargata 20, has a part-time staff of one, an A.A. member who started work in the office 2014 and since then the committee and the staff have been reorganizing our work methods.

The office is open all weekdays from 11 am to 3 pm and takes care of all regular and routine work for A.A. in Iceland, similar to other GSO's.

### Finances

Contributions from A.A. groups usually cover all the cost for running the National Service Office and other costs that the NSB undertakes, such as sending delegates to WSM and ESM. We try to retain one year's expenditure which has been going well in recent years.

## **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 Twelve and Twelve on CD. Then we also have *Dr. Bob and the good old timers*, *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*. We have been in process of revising the Icelandic version of the Big Book since 2012 and the work is still on going.

In 2017 were we finishing the work on the pamphlet *Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix*. We also have a pocket-size edition of the Big Book.

We are seeing increase in sale of the Big Book in other languages, especially in Polish. We import them and sell them direct from our office to A.A. groups, hospitals, treatment facilities and prisons.

Our general service office also offer to order books and pamphlets in any language if requested for members.

In 2019, the Safety in A.A. Our Common Welfare was translated into Icelandic and to distribute to all AA groups in the country.

## **Conference & Conventions**

The Service Manual for A.A. in Iceland is still evolving through our Conference's votes. The annual National Service Conference is in May each year, and it is similar to other such conferences in other countries.

## **Contact Information and Websites**

The National A.A. office in Iceland is at Tjarnagata 20, Reykjavik, open on working days between 11am and 3pm. Tel +354 551 2010, our E-mail: [aa@aa.is](mailto:aa@aa.is) and website [www.aa.is](http://www.aa.is)

## IRELAND

### Brief Historical Summary

Alcoholics Anonymous was introduced to Ireland 72 years ago. An Irishman named Conor F. emigrated to America in 1929 and eventually got sober in 1943. He returned home to Ireland on holiday determined to carry A.A.'s message with him and met another alcoholic, Richard P, who was a patient at St. Patrick's Hospital in Dublin. They found four or five others and began to meet in one of their homes. They held the first closed A.A. meeting in Dublin on November 18<sup>th</sup> 1946 and the first A.A. group in Ireland was formed. The second group was formed in Bundoran, Co. Donegal in April 1948. When Bill W and Lois visited Ireland in 1950 there were six groups in existence. By 1956, A.A. had grown to approximately 650 members in 15 groups. Today there are over 900 groups with 15,000 members and up to 100,000 meetings being held annually across the country.

### Current A.A. Structure and General Service Conference

"The strength of our whole AA service structure starts with the Group and with the General Service Representative (G.S.R.) that the Group elects. I cannot emphasise too strongly the G.S.R.'s importance".....Bill W.

Our service structure begins with our A.A. groups. The groups send two general service representatives to the local area committee. Each area committee sends four representatives to a provincial intergroup. Each intergroup sends four elected Conference Delegates and the Intergroup Secretary to the General Service Conference of Ireland which meets annually with a reconvened Conference if necessary. The General Service Conference of Ireland consists of the Board of Directors (four alcoholic trustees and three non-alcoholic trustees and the Board/Company Secretary), 16 conference delegates and the four Intergroup Secretaries and two World Service Delegates who serve at European and World Service Meetings.

At the third meeting of the General Service Conference of Ireland in 1969 it was decided to set up a General Service Office. In 1970 premises were leased in Dublin and our first GSO was opened. The office relocated to its current location in 2007. The General Service Board in Ireland is responsible for the GSO and its operations. Three full time staff are employed to deliver the day-to-day services to AA members, AA Groups and the general public.

### Finance

Through the generosity of our members and their adherence to the Seventh Tradition AA in Ireland is fully self-supporting with a Prudent Reserve. We are approximately 85% self-supporting from table-top contributions, the remainder comes from the sale of literature and convention surpluses.

### Public Information

In April 2018 a new Public Information folder was prepared and published for use by members involved in carrying the AA message of recovery to the wider public. Another initiative undertaken during 2018 was the establishment of contact with the national radio broadcaster, RTE, and Virgin Media in relation to having AA's contact information listed on their helpline and support section.

Our film, The Road Back, which depicts the lives of people in recovery from alcoholism continues to be used to reach the wider public and has been subtitled in various languages throughout Europe. A short animated film titled "One Minute to Save Your Life" is available on the AA website.

## Archives

In 2018 a part time voluntary position of an AA archivist was created and work has commenced on the preservation of archival material with a view to making it available for uploading to the website. Future plans include the transfer of old film reels to an up to date media storage system and the creation of a PowerPoint presentation of a selection of archival material for use at Conventions etc. The Archives are available for viewing by appointment.

## Website

In August 2018 a new AA website for Ireland went live online. It includes many new features, including an online payment system which is being availed of by members all over the country. There is a new Members Only area where members can view minutes of Area, Intergroup and Conference. There is also an email facility included in the Members area where members of groups can email other groups and area and keep each other informed of AA news and events.

On the public area of the website there is information on meetings along with an area for professionals in the healthcare field. The AA film “The Road Back” is freely available to view or download and there is also a short animated film titled “One Minute to save your Life which offers information on alcoholism.

A link to all officially required information including a list of directors, annual accounts and company reports is now included on the homepage.

## Literature

A wide range of A.A. books and pamphlets is available in English and *Alcoholics Anonymous* and the “Twelve and Twelve” are also available in Chinese, Polish, Spanish, French, Korean, Latvian and Lithuanian. The Big Book is now being printed in Ireland and this helps reduce the cost to our members.

During 2018 Conference approved a number of new AA publications, including a Notice for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing which has been distributed to all groups in Ireland free of charge. Other publications include “Guidelines for Public Information” and a new Treasurer’s Handbook which has been brought up to date to comply with reporting regulations and has been renamed “The AA Group Financial Guidelines and Record Book”. This has been distributed to every group in Ireland, also free of charge.

The Group Information Sheet has been updated and is available for download on the website as well as in hard copy.

The “Service Handbook for Ireland” is in the process of being updated to be brought to Conference for approval.

There was a long discussion at the 2018 Conference regarding code of conduct at meetings. It was decided that the Code of Conduct Pamphlet currently in use in the UK “*Suggested Guidelines for Personal Conduct and Appropriate Behaviour for AA members*” would be rewritten to make it more suitable to the problems encountered in Ireland. This was done and a copy of Ireland’s “Suggested Guidelines” was circulated to all groups for their approval and feedback.

## The Road Back – a Meeting in Print

Our magazine is published bi-monthly by the Board and continues to provide stories of recovery to the fellowship. It was first published in April 1949 and is the longest continuously published A.A. magazine in Europe. Contributions from the fellowship take the form of stories, articles, jokes or wisdom heard at meetings.

Surplus copies of the magazine have been brought to Area and Intergroup Committees for distribution to Hospital and Prisons.

### **The News Sheet – An aid to service**

The News Sheet is a bi-monthly publication produced by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland. It is an aid to recovery and service and lists AA conventions and one day events. Each group receives approximately five copies per issue. It is now also available to view under the member's area of the website.

### **Sponsorship and Service**

Country to country sponsorship is working well with ongoing sharing of experience and information. It was decided at Conference that a contribution to the International Literature Fund would be made this year. Ireland has been a strong contributor to this fund over the years but, due to the downturn in the economy, has not been in a position to contribute for the last few years.

Efforts continue to be made to get new members interested and involved in service. At the 2018 a separate round-table discussion was held on "Encouraging Members into Service" and the findings have been circulated to all Conference members.

## ITALY

Hallo everybody, my name is Massimo and I am an alcoholic. I am here representing AA Italy as first term delegate.

Alcoholics Anonymous in Italy was established in 1972, for these past 15 years it has a stable number of groups estimated as a total of 460. It is a fact that only two third have an active participation to AA's life and structures. These numbers have been updated recently with a national survey through a questionnaire by AA members who wished to fill it in. Our class A trustee is now helping to elaborate these data to update our last survey of 2011.

The Areas are represented by our geographical regions, therefore we have 19 Areas.

Our General Service Board consists of 11 (eleven) Trustees: 4 (four) are Territorial Trustees; 5 (five) have a Committee (Agenda, Public Information, Literature and "Insieme in AA", Finance and Budgetary, International); 1 (one) is our National Secretary and 1 (one) our "Class A" Trustee.

During the year with the help of Territorial Trustees, our A class Trustee and the Areas, AA Italy organizes Seminars, Literature day, Public Information in schools, hospitals and correctional Institutes often with Professionals to inform and pass the Message on.

The Southern territory of Italy has been enriched this year with the opening of an AA group in Matera. It is important because Matera has been designated as "European Capital of Culture 2019". The will for a constant growth and give the groups all the assistance necessary in order to Carry the Message, is the main purpose for the Trustees in the General Service Board.

This year AA Italy's Conference was held from 11 to 14 of April 2019 with the following theme:

"I start from myself, I accept the Program and the change"

### **THE ONLY QUESTION FOR ALL THE COMMITTEES WAS THE FOLLOWING:**

Are groups aware of the usefulness of the Conference? Are Groups following and practicing the decisions and suggestions? Does the Conference have a feedback about this?

#### **Domanda per tutti i Comitati**

I Gruppi hanno coscienza reale dell'utilità della Conferenza? Cercano di metterne in pratica le indicazioni? E la Conferenza opera un lavoro di verifica affinché siano portate a compimento le sue indicazioni e decisioni precedenti?

#### **ANSWER:**

The Conference finds that the groups have a high knowledge of the Conference usefulness also if some critical situations exist. A positive answer to indications and suggestions of the Conference come from the groups when a good communication, sharing and cooperation, finds place among Delegates, group Representatives, Area, Zone and Trustees because this is how a well informed Conscience should be. The Conference should become more and more aware of its leading role and its supporting role of the General Service Board.

The Literature Committee this year translated into Italian the brochure "Many paths to Spirituality", we obtained the License and authorization from AA World Service and the brochure is now available in our language. Our economical situation is stable, we are receiving contributions from the groups which also helps us understand that the groups put their trust in the General Service Board and their will to serve.



The Italian government is reorganizing the third sector (ngos, no-profit, assistance and volunteering associations, Aps ecc.) since AA Italy is inscribed in the Italian Register as APS (Association for social promotion) our Statute has to be modified according to the new laws that require a register of members. This could affect our anonymity and we wonder if any of the present countries is having or had a similar problem and could share the solution for this problem.

Our economical situation is stable, we are receiving contributions from the groups and Literature which also helps us understand that the groups put their trust in the General Service Board and their will to serve. We have a prudent reserve.

From now October 2019 to October 2020 year of the WSM in New York we will go through a national survey of the Italian groups to consider the candidature of Italy as hosting country for the ESM 2022. In the year 2022 AA Italy will also celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and it would be great if both events coincide.

Our toll free number does receive requests for help, the website has been completely renewed and is continuously updated in order to have all the information possible for those who search for help.

Thank-you for your attention,  
B class Trustee International Service  
AA Italy,  
Massimo F.

# LATVIA

## Historical Summary

Last year AA Latvia celebrated 30 years anniversary.

## Current AA Structure

There are:

86 AA groups, 64 Latvian speaking, 12 Russian speaking, 1 English and 9 bilingual Latvian + Russian. There is also a Skype meeting for Latvian expats and travellers abroad.

29 from all groups hold their meetings in capital of Latvia, Riga (more than 30 %)

Mon	Tue	We	Th	Fr	St	Su	Together/week
21	17	13	16	11	8	14	100

The number of participants in each AA group varies – starting from 2-3 people up to more than 40.

There are two Regional formations, General Service office in Riga as well as General Service Board.

## Other services

Serving in prisons has increased up to 8 meetings/groups (6 previous year) from 10 prisons of Latvia. Cooperation has began with the Probation service, which so far has not happened at all.

In 2018, cooperation with medical institutions and professionals has significantly improved. All the medical institutions where it is needed to serve was gathered. This list has been sent to groups. A collaboration was established with the hospital staff to enable AA members to serve in hospitals.

Sobriety time required for service positions is 3 years of sobriety except Audit Commission that asks 6 year of sobriety.

## General Service Conference

We hold a General Service Conference once a year for two days in March. About 60% of groups send their elected representative to the conference. This conference is also attended by the representative of the AA General Service Board. The Conference helps in spreading the message and educating members of groups regarding the Traditions, Concepts and Principles of AA. Conference elects chairperson of Latvian AA, deputy chairperson, chairpersons of Committees and all elected persons serve on the basis of rotation.

There are several Committees participating in the service of our General Service Board – Finance, Events, Literary, Committees that cooperate with Professional Community and Society as well as our magazine “Grapevine” editorial board. The GSO coordinates the rotation of people serving with the help-line phone (24/7) and our website [www.aa.org.lv](http://www.aa.org.lv).

In cooperation with several groups, Summer Camp (one week, usually at the beginning of August) for alcoholics and families and friends, Midsummer’s Night event, New Year’s Eve event, AA annual Anniversary is organized.

## Finances

Our financial situation can be characterized as solid. Our main expenses are comprised of professional accounting, rent for the main office, help-line phone, translating, editing and publishing AA literature, and salary for GSB employee.

## **Literature**

The Literary Committee has been working very actively. This year the new edition of “Daily Reflections” was published with updated and improved translation. Also the first translation of “Dr. Bob and Good Oldtimers” is about published.

Starting from March 2018, a new version of the Latvian AA edition of “Grapevine” is available. It features life stories, articles about steps and traditions, AA member experiences around the world, and other information related to the AA program and recovery from alcoholism. The new "Grapevine" also has articles in Russian.

## **Relations with other countries**

Preparation for 1st Baltic Convention for Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous in Riga, Latvia has started already in year 2018. So we hope that this event (25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> of October, 2019) will gather AA members that feel young in heart from all around the world.

We have established a very good relationship with the Polish AA Fellowship. Each year two of our AA members go to Poland to observe the Polish GSC. In 2018 Latvian AA members visited Polish experience exchange workshop about AA service. We also cooperate with Lithuanian AA. Every two years we participate in the ESM and our members also take part in the WSC.

Our Fellowship is visited by brothers and sisters from Lithuania, Estonia, Russia, Belorussia, Finland, Poland, Great Britain, USA and other countries. In return, our members are invited to other events in these countries as well.

# LITHUANIA

## Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)

- A.A. Fellowship in Lithuania was established on 30 June 1988. First meeting of A.A. in Lithuania.
- 13-16 June 1991 – was held first Conference. First statute approved.
- In 1993 there was 8 A.A. groups, 3 translated AA books.
- In 1994 was opened A.A. Service Office.
- In 1995 was established A.A. Service Board, modified in 1998.
- In 1998 there was 46 A.A. groups, 5 translated AA books.
- In 2008 was approved new A.A. Service Structure with 7 regions that remains unchanged until this day. In 2008 A.A. counted 128 groups in Lithuania, 10 Lithuanian-speaking groups in foreign countries.
- In June of 2018 A.A. in Lithuania celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The event was held in the Sports Hall of Palanga City. More than 1.000 participants arrived from Lithuania and other countries, including special guests – GSO members.

## Groups and Membership

There is currently a total of 137 A.A. groups in Lithuania. 1 of these is English-speaking group and 7 - Russian-speaking. There are 5 groups located in prisons, 14 Lithuanian-speaking groups in foreign countries (United States, England, Ireland, Sweden, Norway), 1 group operates via "Skype".

## Current Service Structure

Current Service structure was approved in 2008. A.A. groups in Lithuania are divided into 7 regions: Aukštaitijos, Dzūkijos, Kauno, Panevėžio, Suvalkijos, Šiaulių, Žemaitijos.

Our General Service Board consists of seven trustees, one from each of the region, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Vice-chairman, the Treasurer and our Office Manager.

Our Conference is held each year in November, for two days. Voting members are: Board of Trustees, five delegates from each region, representative of Lithuanian-speaking groups abroad, editor of A.A. magazine plus our ESM and WSM delegates. Also we are inviting guests, usually from neighbour countries (Latvia, Poland, Belarus, Russia).

The Conference work is assigned to the several committees (Finance, Internal, Public Information and Literature/Publishing) which prepare recommendations for the Board of Trustees. Conference takes a very important place in our Service structure.

Our Service structure is described in our Service Manual, created in 2008 and updated annually. Few years ago (in 2016) it was additionally decided to hold convention of all groups representatives, just as it was before 2008. This convention meets in the spring, when most representatives of groups meet to share their group experience.

## Other Services

Open AA meetings are held regularly in hospitals, detox-centers, addiction disease centers, psychiatrics, and other type of hospitals. We collaborate with the police, probation/criminal justice services, prisons, the army corps, and other various social work places.

## Literature/Publishing Overview

Our Service Office publishes General Service Conference-approved A.A. literature. So far there have been published and distributed 15 A.A. copyright pamphlets/brochures and following books: *Alcoholics Anonymous (1991/2006)*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (1992/2007)*, *Living Sober (1993)*, *Daily Reflections (1994/2008)*, *Came to believe (1996/2010)*, *As Bill Sees It (1999/2008)*, *A.A. Comes of Age (2011)*, *Twelve Concepts for World Services (2015)*. We also have an audio CD of *Alcoholics Anonymous (2008)*.

Our latest book is 30 years history of A.A. in Lithuania. The publication is called literally *AA in Lithuania in 1988–2018 (Anonymous Alcoholics in Lithuania 1988–2018)*. In the words of compilers of the book, “The 30th anniversary of A.A. in Lithuania is just an excellent opportunity to try, at least in part, to look back at the events of our fellowship, to show that it works, and how it works.”

Our periodicals are: quarterly magazine *Penktas kampas (The Fifth Corner)* and service leaflet *Aušra (Dawn)*, by the name of first A.A. group in Lithuania).

All literature is on sale in our General Service Office, some books can be found in major bookstores and online bookstores. The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* can be read online on our website.

### **Finance Overview**

The financial situation is stable and there are no significant changes in this field. Incomes from sale of the books and incomes from 7<sup>th</sup> tradition in recent years became very similar (near 50/50).

### **Relation with other countries**

We keep in touch with A.A. in Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, England, Ireland, U.S., Canada and other countries. Our members often visit A.A. conventions in nearby countries, also we inviting members from foreign countries to our Conference and conventions.

### **Contact Information and Website**

Our Service Office location: J. Basanavičiaus square 16, Birštonas city, LT-59211 Lithuania. Phone +370 319 45141, mobile phone +370 683 67786, e-mail: [info@aalietuvoje.org](mailto:info@aalietuvoje.org).  
AA in Lithuania website: [www.aalietuvoje.org](http://www.aalietuvoje.org)

### **Today's challenges**

- 1) Class A (nonalcoholic) Trustees. We are planning to discuss the procedure for nominating/electing Class A trustees at this year's Conference. The challenge consists in novelty of the question, lack of experience.
- 2) Internal communications of the groups, regional collaboration, unwillingness/ lack of motivation to serve, the gap between General / Regional Service Board and groups.
- 3) Disagreements based on Traditions 1, 2, 4, 6, 10.

## MOLDOVA

First attempt to organise an AA group in Moldova took place in 1990, when the first missionaries from US (one of them was famous Leo K, who helped to establish AA in Ukraine and Russia) came to Moldova. However, this first group lasted only several weeks, possibly due to an extremely unstable economical and political situation in Moldova at that particularly time (collapse of Soviet Union, military conflict in Transnistria). Unfortunately, first two-three people attending meetings, used to belong to different political groups. We do not have any information on what happened with these people later.

Therefore, we consider that the first AA group in Moldova was started August 19, 1991, when Valeriy A, alcoholic from Kishinev, came home after a month in a new US-USSR treatment center and contacted Marina, who also was a patient of these center. Group received a name OBRATNAYA SVIAZ (Feedback) .Initially it had very few members till 2000 and it was the only group in Moldova till 2003, when group Vozrozhdenie (Renaissance) was started.

Today in Moldova we have 6 groups, 5 of them are in Kishinev, one in Beltsy, alltogether approximately 70 members and Intergroup as a service body.

We visit hospitals, shelters, rehabilitation center and start visiting prisons this year.

General Service Conference-no

Service Manual-no

Literature Publishing-no

Finance overview-not available, according to my best knowledge, 99 % comes from members contributions.

Close relationship with AA from Poland, joint conferences, seminars.

Website <http://aamoldova.org/>

## THE NETHERLANDS

### General

AA was introduced in The Netherlands in 1948. At the moment there are 200 groups with approximately 2,500 members. There are also English-speaking AA groups (about 47) and the cities of Amsterdam and The Hague have 2 Polish-speaking and one Spanish-speaking groups. The English-speaking groups are affiliated with York, UK. There is good interaction between the various communities.

### Structure

In accordance with our Concepts, AA in The Netherlands is based on delegated authority. We have repeatedly reaffirmed our desire to conduct ourselves according to the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts. We are divided into six regions. Each region has five delegates per eligible for the General Service Conference and one for the General Service Board. Every year a General Service Conference takes place.

We had an extra GSC at the beginning of this year to discuss specific ideas to improve the visibility and attractiveness of AA in the Netherlands. The plan as a whole was too large to take a decision. The plan was divided into sections and we voted on the various elements of the plan. Now it's time to work out the parts that are approved.

The General Service Board meets quarterly to carry out the decisions of the previous General Service Conference, as well as actions requested by AA groups and AA commissions. The board is composed of selected members from each region, preferably the regional chairpersons, and the national coordinators of various committees and services.

Day-to-day administration of Dutch AA is carried out by the Executive Committee, which consists of preferably five active members of the General Service Board.

The General Service Office is the hub of all services and information within Dutch AA. All administrative workers are volunteers. The general secretary is responsible for daily operations with ultimate responsibility lying with the General Service Board.

The General Service Office is the hub of all services and information within Dutch AA. All administrative workers are volunteers. The general secretary of Dutch AA 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. As such, AA in The Netherlands consists of two foundations: the AA groups and publicity. Last year the statutes of these foundations have been simplified and adjusted to meet the requirements of the Dutch law without compromising the AA traditions and AA concepts. The whole process took about 20 years of discussion before we could finally agree on the outcome.

### Committees and other services

**Finance:** The Finance Committee reviews the proposed budgets of all committees, subcommittees and services. It further advises the General Service Board on all financial matters. This committee consists of one delegate per region. Income for the active foundations is generated by the AA groups (7<sup>th</sup> tradition) as well as the sale of literature. In 2018 the overall budget was positive. We adhere to the principle of a prudent reserve. Donations and gifts from AA members (alive or deceased) are currently restricted as per the directives from AA World Services.

**Literature:** The Literature Committee is responsible for translating, developing and updating all AA literature in the form of books and pamphlets. The committee is currently working on the translation of “Language of the heart”. It is expected to be ready in 2019. Translations of “Spiritual Awakenings” and “Daily reflections” are in progress. The Dutch translations of the brochures “Many Paths to Spirituality”, “AA for the older alcoholic – never too late” and “Young people and AA” and the book “One to one” are available now.

**Public Information:** The National Committee for Public Information oversees all requests for assistance and information from organizations outside AA and offers an information package in kit form for the public media. They are very active in their efforts towards the press and other media.

There is a positive atmosphere developing between AA and a growing number of professional help organizations concerned with alcohol abuse. Many such organizations have based their programs on AA’s Twelve Steps. However negative experiences also occurred, because commercial interests of the treatment facilities sometimes conflict with the AA interests.

Schools and clinics are requesting speakers from AA and the contacts that have been established to reach the suffering alcoholic within correctional facilities are very promising. The last few years we are happily invited by universities for presentations about the AA program. The National Committee for Public Information has established a closer cooperation with the English-speaking Public Information in the Netherlands.

**Executive Committee of the General Service Board:** At the moment this committee consists of four members, hopefully later to be increased to five.

### **AA Telephone Helpline**

The national AA Helpline telephone number is available on a twenty-four hour basis and is staffed by an enthusiastic group of volunteers. The phone will be automatically diverted to the volunteer on duty at that time. A continuous search for volunteers is necessary to keep the Helpline in service.

A number of groups have their own answering service to aid people from their local community.

### **Internet**

The current website conforms to all guidelines published by AA World Services. It includes a complete overview for anyone seeking help with alcohol related problems. It is GSC approved and has been released in 2015. It has an integrated web-shop for (Dutch) AA books and pamphlets, sobriety chips and other small AA related items. Last year the shop’s back-end has been improved to make life easier for the staff-members at the General Service Office.

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. There is an up-to-date agenda for all known upcoming events. Links are provided to Al-Anon, Alateen and English speaking AA in the Netherlands.

According to a decision made in our last GSC the current website needs a face-lift. The revision will comprise a split in three sections: for the still searching alcoholic, for the people that have found AA already (members) and one for the families, professionals and other non-alcoholics.

Local groups sometimes do have their own website or a combined website for all the groups in a specific town.



## **Contacts with other countries**

There is a close traditional contact between Dutch AA and Dutch-speaking AA in Belgium. English speaking AA flourishes in the Netherlands and holds its own yearly convention. The National Dutch AA Convention is held each year at the beginning of October. Both open conventions attract around 200 to 300 AA and AI-Anon members, their families and a considerable number of visitors from abroad.

## **NORWAY**

### **General**

Norway is situated in the northern part of Europe. We are 5,3 million inhabitants. One million inhabitants live in our capital, Oslo.

### **Meetings and Groups**

Although AA came to Norway as early as 1947, as the second country in Europe, we are relatively few AA-members, about 2000 members in about 180 groups. We do not grow as much as we would like, but the percentage of women coming to AA is steadily increasing. At some meetings the participation of women is 50%.

We have English and Polish speaking groups in the larger cities, in Oslo also Icelandic speaking group. Abroad we have Norwegian or Scandinavian speaking groups in Thailand, Spain and Canary Islands.

#### **General Structure**

Norway adopted our present AA-service structure in 1975. We are divided into five regions, with the principal purpose of nominating trustees to the General Service Board. The regions are divided into 21 districts.

The groups in each district elect one District Representative (DR) for every eight groups, to represent as delegate at our annual General Service Conference which is held in or nearby Oslo during March/April. The DRs constitute a two-third majority at the conference. Also participating are members of the General Service Board, the general manager of the General Service Office and volunteers, plus the editor of our magazine, Boks 205. In addition representatives from the other Nordic countries are invited as observers.

### **The General Service Board**

The General Service Board is at the moment composed of three Class A trustees and seven Class B trustees, one of those as alternate. All trustees are elected on a five year turn. Each of the Class B trustees are an elected chairman of a standing committee. The standing committees are Finance, Literature, Public Information, Policy and Communication within AA.

We are happy and grateful to welcome our three new Class A trustees, Lawyer Randi Hagen Spydevold, psychiatrist Sharam Shaygani and priest Yngvar Ruud. They are all very qualified and a great help in our work to reach the still suffering alcoholics.

### **General Service Office**

The General Service Office is located in central Oslo. Opening hours are from 1000 to 1400 four days a week. We employ one person, our general manager, in a full time position and an assistant in a 20% position.

### **Finances**

Our income is divided between contributions from groups and members, and the sales of literature. Unfortunately, we see a slight fall in literature sales, which means that the contributions from our groups and members have to grow in order to maintain our activities. In 2017 the Service Conference increased the general manager's position from 70% to 100%, so far the contributions from groups and members have covered this expense.

Norway attend with two delegates at the European Service Meeting and the World Service Meeting.

## **Literature**

Norway is well provided with literature and our Literature Committee is keeping a close eye to new publications and renewals from the GSO.

The Big Book has been published in pocket-size and become popular.

Our magazine, Boks 205, with a print-run of 800 copies, has maintained a very high standard and continues to be very popular among our members.

## **Internet and Telephone**

Our website [www.anonymealkoholikere.no](http://www.anonymealkoholikere.no) is still being improved.

AA in Norway has a national telephone service seven days a week. This service is operated by the groups on a rotation of one month each. Many of our members came to AA through this helpline. The organisation of this service is currently being reorganized. Shared experience from other countries are welcome.

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

## **Working with Other Countries**

Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway are taking turns in hosting the annual Nordic Meeting. Delegates from each country share experience and learn from each other.

## **Other Services**

The Intergroups and groups around the country are doing service and set up meetings in hospitals, treatment centres, prisons, schools and other.

In 2022 we will celebrate AA 75 years in Norway. We would like to make a jubilee edition, but this idea has been canceled.

One of the regional healthcare enterprise in the eastern Norway has invited AA into their project group for cooperation between the users and the helpers (doctors and healthcare personnel). This is a major step for AAs participation in the healthcare society in Norway.

## **Final remarks**

Even though the spirit is good in AA Norway, we are still not growing as much as we would like. We have a lot of work to be done. Let's focus on honesty and quality in all our tasks and affairs, and hope that will be attracting to the still suffering alcoholic.

## **POLAND**

### **Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)**

Last August we celebrated the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of A.A. in Poland.

Here is the list of selected "THE FIRST" events in A.A. structure in Poland:

Autumn 1957 - The first idea to set up the first A.A. structure in Poland resulted in an unsuccessful attempt.

September 1974 - The first A.A. group was formed in Poznan.

15.10.1983 –The first intergroup started in Poznan.

13-14.11.1982 – The first Provisional National Service Committee of A.A. was set up.

06-07.10.1984 - The first National Congress of Alcoholics Anonymous was held in Poznan – attended by GSRs from 34 AA groups mandates. Trustees' Body comprised of seven trustees was formed.

21-25.10.1984 The first participation of Poland's A.A. structure representatives at the World Service Meeting in New York.

08–10.03.1985 - The first official participation of Poland's A.A. structure representatives at the European Service Meeting in Frankfurt

23.03.1985 – The first National Service Conference of A.A. Poland was held in Czestochowa.

23.03.1985 - The first edition of the "Anonymous Alcoholics Movement" bulletin was published

04-07.07.1985 - The first official participation of Poland's A.A. structure representatives at the A.A. International Convention in Montreal

01.08.1986 - The first edition of Poland's A.A. national bulletin "Zdrój" was published.

15.06.1991 – The first official edition of the Big Book "*Anonymous Alcoholics*" was published and distributed throughout Poland A.A. structure.

18.12.1993 - The first A.A. region in Warsaw was formed, one of the current fourteen regions.

01.06.1995 - The Foundation "Alcoholics Anonymous National Service Office in Poland" was registered. The Board of Foundation was formally set up, and all members of the Board of Trustees were included.

09.09.1995 - A.A. National Service Office (GSO) was established in Warsaw. The first director of GSO Management Board was appointed.

December 1995 – The first edition of the national newsletter "Skrytka 2/4/3" was published.

01-02.03.1996 - The first National Convention was held in Gdansk.

17-19.03.1996 - The first licenses to reproduce and distribute 4 books and 22 brochures were obtained from AAWS.

18-20.04. 2002 - The first International East European Service Meeting was held in Warsaw, attended by representatives from 26 countries.

12-16.10.2014 – The first hosting in Warsaw, Poland of the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Service Meeting.

16-18.08.2019 - The 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of A.A. in Poland.

### **Current A.A. Structure**

The main purpose of A.A. in Poland is the same as that of each A.A. group in the world – to carry the message to still-suffering alcoholics wherever they are and whoever they might be.

Poland has 2900 groups divided in 94 intergroups in 14 regions including the European Region, which comprises 218 Polish-speaking groups in 16 countries.

### **General Service Conference**

The General Service Conference is composed of a) members of the General Service Board; b) 56 delegates elected by 14 regions; c) general manager and GSO staff cooperating with the Conference committees.

The Conference is held annually in a location chosen by the Conference delegates in the preceding year. The delegates work on four Conference Committees: Agenda, Finance, A.A. Literature and Publications, Public Information and Cooperation with Others outside A.A.

Topics and questions addressed to the GSC come from the whole A.A. in Poland to the Conference Steering Committee to be reviewed, selected and passed on to four Conference Committees for drafting final answers and voting by the Conference.

### **General Service Board**

The Board of Trustees is currently made up of 14 alcoholics (one from each of the 14 regions), 5 nonalcoholic members and 2 national delegates serving as the European Service Meeting and World Service Meeting delegates representing Poland.

Each trustee and national delegate has specific responsibilities and works on one of the trustees' committees. The trustees and national delegates are also available for other A.A. services activities as requested by the GSB and GSC.

### **General Service Office**

The General Service Office is a registered foundation providing effective and efficient legal, financial and administrative services for the whole Polish-speaking A.A. Fellowship. Its functions also cover publication and distribution of A.A. literature, coordination of national conferences, workshops and other A.A. events.

### **Service**

Service starts at the group level. Groups have a chair, a secretary, a general service representative (GSR) who serves in the intergroup, a treasurer, often a literature representative and sometimes a welcoming committee.

The intergroup responsibilities include carrying the A.A. message locally, often to hospitals, correctional and treatment facilities, and organizing information meetings for professional communities.

The regions run contact offices, telephone and online service; they also provide public information. Their additional task is to ensure that Conference delegates have easy access and adequate logistical and financial support to visit the intergroups and groups in their area and discuss with them the Conference agenda and report back the Conference conclusions and recommendations.

For over 30 years we have been carrying the A.A. message into correctional facilities. Currently 176 A.A. groups are present in 146 jails and prisons. Every year intergroup and regional services organize workshops for prison officers.

Once a year, each time in a different town, a national convention and “Zdrój” bulletin festival takes place.

Every year we organize national service workshops for A.A.s representing all levels of the A.A. structure – A.A. groups, intergroups and regions, separately for various disciplines: literature and bulletins, telephone and internet, correctional facilities and public information.

Special consideration is given to the cooperation with professional communities, real friends of our Fellowship. Regardless of everyday working relations with a wide range of people having in their work a direct contact with alcohol addicted persons we appreciate meetings with them in one place in Poland every two years.

Inclusion of doctors and medical personnel on the list of A.A. friends requires intensive efforts, patience and time, and informational meetings are held on a regular basis at the regional level for students of medical colleges.

Significant efforts are put into the Public Information area. We have been keeping regular contacts with the Polish Parliament and governmental institutions, including State **Agency for the Prevention of Alcohol-Related Problems (PARPA), a specialized subordinate agency of the Ministry of Health to raise awareness of the alcohol addiction among the society.**

In some cities and towns A.A. groups and intergroups started providing public libraries with "Alcoholics Anonymous" to make it available to the professional community.

### **Sobriety time required for service positions**

- Trustee Class B and National Delegate- eight years of continuous sobriety, desirable but not mandatory.
- General Service Conference Delegate – six years of continuous sobriety, desirable but not mandatory.

### **Relation with other countries including country- to- country sponsorship**

We have established warm relations and inspiring cooperation with A.A. structures in other countries through common attendance at national and international A.A. events and through country-to-country sponsorship rendered at various levels of A.A. structure: groups, intergroups and regional services.

Our goal is to encourage those countries to participate in ESM and WSM. Our financial contribution to the ESM fund helps delegates to attend from countries who could not normally afford to take part.

In the last two years foreign observers from Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine and Great Britain joined us in our General Service Conference. A.A. Poland with the financial support of A.A. GB provided the full board accommodation and transport lump sum refund for our guests. New contract provisions with A.A. GB allow us to bear the full cost of foreign observers' participation.

We also get invited to attend Conferences in other countries. Our representatives have been for years actively participating in GSCs in Great Britain, Belarus, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, Slovakia and Ukraine.

Other forms of country-to-country sponsorship carrying the A.A. message worldwide have been applied for years to help jumpstart and develop A.A. in other Central and Eastern European countries, including but not limited to organizing workshops on Steps, Traditions, Concepts and Spirituality as well as seminars on Conference Charter and Service Manuals.

Similar sponsorship activities are being performed to help A.A. structures in other countries: Belarus, Moldova, Latvia, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Last April a group of Poland's AAs travelled to Kazakhstan to organize workshop and informational meeting for professional community.

We are very responsive to queries raised in email correspondence with current and past ESM and WSM delegates.

## Finance

The A.A. structure in Poland is self-supporting with 38% of the costs of the GSO activities coming from members' contribution and the remaining 62% covered from literature sales.

Having in mind that this ratio is still unsatisfactory many efforts have been aimed at changing the groups' awareness in this matter. Workshops on self-support are held regularly at various levels of the A.A. structure including national workshop for all A.A. treasurers that is held every year in September.

Two pamphlets "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" and "Your Seventh Tradition Contribution. Carrying Our Message Beyond Your Home Group" help to raise awareness of self-support. Additionally GSB' letter to all members of our A.A. structure was distributed last April to remind all of us that generous contributions and other financial support is needed to effectively carry the message.

## Literature

Our GSO publishes GSC approved A.A. literature. So far we have published and distributed: *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Living Sober*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, *A.A. Comes of Age*, *As Bill Sees It*, *A.A. in Prison: Inmate to Inmate*, *Came to Believe*, *Daily Reflections*, *Pass It On*, *Dr. Bob and the Good Old-timers*, and *The Best of Bill and Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

A long process of translation and licensing the fourth edition of "Alcoholics Anonymous" with 42 stories came to a close last year. It was published and distributed last November at the 47<sup>th</sup> GSC.

This year saw publication of a long awaited Volume 2 of "The History of A.A. in Poland" covering the period 1997 – 2017 and "Language of the Heart" – the whole Poland's A.A. structure has been waiting for year The book was distributed at our August 2019 Convention to mark the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of A.A. Fellowship in Poland.

Forty one pamphlets have so far been published including items to newcomers representing new communities and walks of life: "AA and the Armed Services" for Polish soldiers and officers, "Many Paths to Spirituality" for atheists and agnostics, Polish version of "LGTB voices" for LGTB community, "Welcoming a Newcomer to the Group" for newcomers of all ages and "G.S.R. May Be the Most Important Job in A.A." to help our trusted servants to link their home groups with the whole of A.A.

Our bulletin "Zdrój" with a circulation of about 3000 copies and a service bulletin "Skrytka 2/4/3" with a circulation of 1400 /500 copies in print/e-edition are published bi-monthly. A special bulletin for professionals "Wieści z AA" is emailed every quarter to over 700 persons. A new bulletin for inmates in prisons and jails "Nadzieja" with a circulation of 2100 copies is edited every quarter.

Our own pamphlets, still under preparation shall be addressed to specific groups of society who still suffer from alcoholism: Handbook for a Newcomer and a leaflet for uniformed services containing personal stories.

Recently PI trustees' committee produced seventeen video films available on our website that provide information about A.A. to the public. These are short talks of A.A. friends working directly with alcoholics in their professions.

For a few years we have had the ESM and WSM reports translated into Polish.

Each year the A.A. Fellowship in Poland contributes a sum of \$1,000 to the International Literature Fund.

### **Service Manual**

We have had since 2014 our own Service Manual for all members of our Polish Speaking A.A. structure of A.A. Fellowship. Although a great number of A.A. s in Poland treat it as a Bible, in fact the manual containing useful information on A.A. structure and all levels of service positions, is only intended as a guide to service. It is not intended to cover all eventualities but intended to reflect all changes and alterations in our A.A. structure. Therefore, last year a nine-person trustees/service manual committee was set up to update the current edition.

### **Internet, Helpline and On-line Duty**

Our GSO maintains an official A.A. website which receives over 60,000 visits per month and it continues to grow.

A new website that was launched three years ago provides information for three main audiences: a) the newcomer and/or a family member looking for information about A.A. b) the existing A.A. member looking for a group, or other relevant A.A. information and c) the professional community interested in how A.A. works for their clients.

Our webpage also includes the basic information on AA activities and events, interactive on-line duty which was last year available for over 3,000 persons.

It has an online shopping and subscription for A.A. literature.

It is now also a useful vehicle for reading A.A. literature. *Daily reflections* in Polish has been posted on a single website and some pamphlets.

Internet is also used for internal communications between A.A. services, including GSB and Conference committees' forums and chats. Internet communicator EMITENT is used by all 14 A.A. regions to email important A.A. messages and reports to over 7,500 recipients.

Our National Telephone Helpline has been operated for ten years by over 300 volunteers; last year about 8,000 people were offered a helping hand.

A website is being handled by a few hundred volunteers. Regional information services have been set up to update regional database of A.A. meetings, to be on on-line duty and to organize workshops on the topic "How to carry the A.A. message via National Helpline and Internet?"

The Board of Trustees sees the huge potential of the Internet as well as its dangers that can occur with the breaching of anonymity. Last year the decision was made to develop a project I2K, which will help to improve communication between members of 12<sup>th</sup> Step Service Groups without disclosing A.A. membership and personal details. The project will facilitate to make direct contact with a person in need.



## PORTUGAL

### Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)

The origins of A.A. in Portugal are not well known, since the first members have not left any written reports or testimonies about this period.

In 1956, it is known that there were two A.A. members registered in the New York GSO.

From 1957 to 1972 the archives refer to English-speaking groups of 2 to 12 members, distributed between Lisbon and the Lajes Base (Azores).

In 1972, an Englishman named Reg W. arrived in Portugal coming from Brazil. He began to arrange regular A.A. meetings in Lisbon. It is believed that this was the first official A.A. group in Portugal and named the International Group of Lisbon.

In 1975, Ed L., an A.A. member from USA, came to Portugal and began to carry the message of A.A. in hospitals, voluntary associations and to some physicians. With the help of Mr. Aires Gameiro, a psychologist working in Telhal Health Center, he began to hold meetings for the patients, who came to be the first Portuguese-speaking A.A. members, although none of them achieved sobriety. The meetings were conducted in English; Ed was in charge of the translation into Portuguese.

In 1978, Ed carried the A.A. message to Jorge L., who stopped drinking and began to accompany him in the visits to Telhal. The first Portuguese speaking A.A. members began to go to the meetings of the International Group of the Holy Body.

In June 1979, the A.A. Group of the Holy Body was officially created, having regular meetings that took place on Mondays and Thursdays at 9 pm.

In 1989, the first rudimentary structure of A.A. service was created in Portugal, integrating the groups of Lisbon and surrounding areas. The integration of these groups into a common structure through the Intergroup representatives intended to ensure the basic services of A.A., namely those of literature, answering, hospitals and little more. One of the first concerns was the translation into European Portuguese of the A.A. literature approved in conference, since many A.A. members find it difficult to relate to certain Brazilian expressions. It was soon perceived that recovery had to be based on the A.A. program as described in the literature, starting, therefore, to translate the basic leaflets and, subsequently, the basic text of Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as the Big Book, which was, in 1994, translated and published for the first time in Portugal.

The idea of approaching and sharing experiences of all A.A. of Portugal paved the way, in 1992, for the 1<sup>st</sup> National Convention of A.A., subordinated to the motto "Unity to Grow", which for the first time counted with the participation of members of the groups then existing in the country. Shortly thereafter, in 1993, the Northern Intergroup was created, like that of Lisbon. After the experiences of the intergroups of Lisbon and Oporto, the first four A.A. conventions in Portugal (two in the district of Lisbon and two in the north) and some meetings and service forums that strengthened the common unity, as well as the sharing of experiences. Among all, the Alcoholics Anonymous groups in Portugal decided to set up a meeting of representatives, which worked in 1994 and 1995.

In October 1995 and with the sponsorship of Alcoholics Anonymous from Spain, the Assembly of Representatives decided to become a general services assembly, thus starting to have a common and permanent structure of general services of Alcoholics Anonymous in Portugal, adopting a first regulation and instituting the General Services Board.

Convinced of the benefits of the full institutionalization of such a structure of general services in light and respect for the traditions of A.A., as well as matured by the experience itself and strengthened by the example followed in other countries, the service representatives General of the 45 groups of Alcoholics Anonymous existing in Portugal, meeting in the Assembly in Colares on October 5, 1997, decided to establish the General Services Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous of Portugal, thus proceeding to the definitive legalization of structure that serves the A.A. community in Portugal, which is guided by the general principles contained in the constitutive letter of the General Services Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous of Portugal.

From 30 April to 2 May 1999, the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of General Services of Alcoholics Anonymous of Portugal was held in Colares, subordinated to the motto "Serve United to grow". This Conference recommended that the National day of A.A. be celebrated on 19<sup>th</sup> of March (date when, in 1994, all groups of Portugal were gathered for the first time in a service meeting).

### **Current A.A. Structure**

The Portuguese A.A. Fellowship is organised through the General Service Conference model. For legal purposes, it is a non-profit association, formed in 1998, named "Associação de Serviços Gerais de Alcoólicos Anónimos de Portugal". The registered head office – Santo António dos Cavaleiros, Portugal – corresponds to our General Service Office.

Currently, there are in Portugal 87 A.A. groups with 140 meetings weekly. Those include an online group, being 75 Portuguese speaking, 10 English speaking, one German speaking and one French speaking. We estimate that 600 A.A. members attend the meetings regularly.

The territory is divided in 12 Areas but one of them hasn't had any A.A. group for a long time now and unfortunately we don't expect the scenario to change soon.

The groups belonging to each Area, through their GSR's, elect a Delegate. The Areas Delegates are members of the General Service Conference, along with the General Service Board, with three Head Office Trustees, three Trustees for the Regions - North, Centre, South and Islands (Madeira and Azores) and two non-alcoholic Trustees.

The General Service Office is directed by the General Secretary, which is one of the Head Office Trustees. An employee, Élia, takes care of most of the daily duties and tasks: accountancy, answering the phone, receiving and posting mail, sending the literature packages... It is where the literature and archives are kept, and where the General Service Board and the National Committees' meetings take place.

### **Other Services**

The Head Office Trustees manage the General Service Office and the five National Committees, which are the following: Answering Service, Events, Public Information, Institutions and Cooperating with the Professional Community, Literature and Publications and Internet and Websites.

#### Answering Service

This committee oversees receiving and answering help and information requests that come by phone or by e-mail. Our helpline (+351 217 162 969) is available for immediate answer every day from 10 am till 10 pm. Usually the calls are redirected to a cell phone, so that the servants don't need to be in the General Service Office to answer them.

The committee servants meet once a month to share their experiences and discuss ways to improve the service efficiency.

All the data related to this service is registered for statistical purposes.

### Events

The Events Committee takes care of surveying the best facilities for the yearly National Service Forums and General Service Conference meetings, as for the biennial National Conventions.

Also, they help the General Service Board and the other National Committees to organize occasional service meetings.

Regarding the National Service Forums and Conventions, all the arrangements, such as registrations, rooms booking, invitations, agendas or pamphlets, are up to the Events Committee.

### Public Information, Institutions and Cooperating with the Professional Community

Despite the lack of servants, this Committee has succeeded in corresponding to all the invitations for members sharing or lectures in schools, universities, polytechnics, college and police and army academies, which occur on an average of twice a month.

Regular contacts with the media are kept. At least twice a year a newspaper, magazine or TV channel asks for interviews. The non-alcoholic Trustees have been very cooperative in this matter.

A press release is issued to announce each National Service Forum, General Service Conference meeting and Convention.

The Areas Committees carry most of the service in prisons and treatment centres, but the National Committee is still busy organizing regular meetings with all the servants in order to provide new ideas and means to carry the A.A. message to more institutions.

This Committee is composed by four A.A. members, plus one General Service Board Trustee. They meet fortnightly.

### Literature and Publications

The Literature and Publications Committee is in charge of collecting, reviewing and editing the articles for our four-monthly magazine (“Partilhar”) and bulletin (“Os Três Legados”). The magazine has an average printing of 270 copies. All the editing and printing is done by the Committee servants in the GSO.

In 2018 and 2019:

- We managed to translate and publish the brochures “The ‘God’ Word” and “Many Paths to Spirituality”.
- A.A. meeting room sign was published;
- An extend wallet card was published;
- Literature and publications catalogue was revised and printed;
- “Just for Today” Card was reprinted;
- “Big Book” 2<sup>nd</sup> edition was revised and reprinted;
- A tent card reminding for written sharing was distributed to all the groups;
- Anonymity Board was translated and printed in two sizes (A3 e A4).

### Internet and Websites

This Committee keeps working on turning our site ([www.aaportugal.org](http://www.aaportugal.org)) more appealing, with the upload of videos and media contents, and improving its facilities, such as the online shop, the diffusion of all A.A. events, the constant updating of meetings information.

The visits to the Portuguese A.A. site have increased constantly, having now surpassed 6.000 monthly visits. New ways of IP through internet are being discussed.

This Committee is also responsible for maintaining all the GSO computer and electric hardware, as well as keeping the computer archives safe.

## Sobriety time required for service positions

In 2019, General Service Conference approved the suggested sobriety time for each service position, which is resumed in the following board:

Service Position	Sobriety time required
<b>GROUP</b>	
<b>GSR</b>	3 years
<b>Secretary</b>	2 years
<b>Treasurer</b>	2 years
<b>Literature</b>	1 year
<b>Answering</b>	2 years
<b>Public Information</b>	2 years
<b>Co-ordinator</b>	1 years
<b>DISCRICT</b>	
<b>Delegate</b>	Minimum 4 years; preferable 5 years
<b>Alternative Delegate</b>	Minimum 3 years preferable 4 years
<b>Chairperson</b>	5 years
<b>Secretary</b>	2 years
<b>Treasurer</b>	3 years
<b>Literature</b>	2 years
<b>Public Information</b>	4 years
<b>GENERAL SERVICE BOARD</b>	
<b>A Trustees</b>	
<b>B Trustees</b>	Minimum 7 years preferable 10 years
<b>NATIONAL COMMITTEES</b>	
<b>All members</b>	5 years
<b>GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE</b>	
<b>Chairperson</b>	5 years
<b>Secretary</b>	5 years

## General Service Conference

The General Service Conference meets yearly for three days, usually on the weekend before Easter. Actually, the General Service Conference is also the yearly Assembly for the non-profit association which is compulsory according to Portuguese law.

The General Secretary is responsible for compiling the Conference Agenda contents, which are mainly the General Service Board activities and accounts reports, the Areas reports, the General Service Board Budget and 8 theme questions.

In June of the year before, the Agenda Committee asks all the groups to send suggestions of the questions to be discussed by the Conference. In September, the Agenda Committee meets to select the 8 questions that represent the majorly concerned subjects and again asks all the groups to answer to what are by that time called the pre-Agenda questions.

It's the Delegates task to sum up the groups answers and send their report to the GSO until the end of December.

The Agenda is distributed to all the Conference servants in February, usually at the National Service Forum. The Conference has two Committees, each one taking care of discussing four of the questions, plus the Nominations Committee that only is formed when there are candidates for being Trustee for a Region, and the Agenda Committee which chooses the themes for next year's National Forum and General Service Conference.

### **Service Handbook**

The Portuguese Service Handbook is simultaneously the Structure Handbook. It was originally based on the Spanish Service Manual, as the Portuguese A.A. structure was initially based on the Spanish structure. Over time, emerged the need to make the formed structure to match the Portuguese reality. Therefore, the Conference Charter and the Association's Articles were amended recently. Service Manual is currently being reviewed because of those changes.

### **Finance Overview**

From 2017 the financial position of A.A. Portugal has been improving, having had surplus for two years in a row, due to the increase of the groups' contributions. Yet, we cannot say for sure whether this is transitory, or we can be confident. Anyway, the incomes have offered the opportunity to increase our prudent reservation, buy new equipment and make some improvements in our General Service Office. In 2018, the General Service Board budgetary execution data revealed a surplus of 1.130,86 EUR.

From the total amount of income (50.183,97 EUR), 6.040,00 EUR came from the literature and publications account. That is the set amount as it was decided by the General Service Conference. The groups' contributions were of 50 013,11 EUR.

The literature and publications account had, in 2018, a shortage of 459,55 EUR, exclusively because of the costs for printing new items and reprinting Big Book. Nevertheless, literature sales income was of 12.117,63 EUR. There were sold 217 Big Book copies and 266 Living Sober copies.

### **Relations with other countries**

A.A. of Portugal was sponsored by the Spanish Fellowship in the 80's and 90's of last century. Portuguese and Spanish Fellowships were quite close, and it was very common that Portuguese members attended the Spanish Conventions and vice versa.

In the recent years, we are very grateful to have been helped and sponsored by A.A. of Great Britain, raising the invitations for A.A. Portuguese members being present at General Service Conferences.

Due to Portuguese members' participations in European Service Meeting and World Service Meeting, new bonds have been established. In 2018, General Secretary of the General Service Board of A.A. Great Britain and a member of A.A. of Czech Republic spoke at the National Service Forum. In 2019 Forum, we received a Class A Trustee from Slovenia and a member of A.A. of Italy.

Also, we were invited to attend 2019 General Service Conference of Czech Republic and of Brazil.

A.A. of Portugal has maintained regular contacts with the groups of Angola and Mozambique, offering to sponsor in the possible ways, considering the geographical distance and political situation in those countries.

On the occasion of last year's World Service Meeting, in South Africa, both Delegates from Portugal visited Mozambique's groups and organized a service meeting.

## **ROMANIA**

### **History of the Romanian AA**

The first AA Group in Romania was established in 20 February 1991 in Timișoara, by two women, one of them psychiatrist, and bears the name of “*Grupa Una*”.

The second Group formed on 13 July 1993 at the “*Al. Obregia*” Clinical Hospital of Psychiatry in Bucharest with the name “*Grupul Unu*”, by two Mormons (Patricia and Lee R.) and doctor Doina Constantinescu, a friend and supporter of the AA Community.

The next Group was created on 1 June 1994 at Piatra Neamț.

The first AA Service were developed by Ioan Z. at Piatra Neamț in 1998. The GSB then relocated at Timișoara, to be later relocated again at Cluj, where is still operating today.

### **General Structure**

Since last year, we have the General Service Board which is formed by 12 alcoholics and 1 non-alcoholic.

Now there are 56 Groups in Romania in 3 regions, coordinated by the 3 Inter-Groups.

Since 3 years ago, we hold the National Conference every year in May, at different locations. The Conference is attended by Group delegates, AA Service Board members and the director of AA’s General Service Office Romania.

### **Other Services**

We don’t have any Groups in prisons as we were unable to get any help from the responsible authorities when we tried different forms of collaboration.

We have protocols in place with a few hospitals, but, unfortunately, only in a few major cities. There are some doctors that are very helpful to us, but, as long as the government is unwilling to take this disease seriously, we are unable to accomplish much.

### **Sobriety Time Required for Service Positions**

Since last year, the National Conference decided that if there are no members with at least three years of sobriety, then we accept members with only two years of sobriety. This way we encourage younger members involvement in Service.

### **General Service Conference**

The Conference establishes committees for producing recommendations for AA Service regions and elects Board Members.

Since 3 years ago, we hold the National Conference every year in May, at different locations. The Conference is attended by Group delegates, AA Service Board members and the director of AA’s General Service Office Romania.

At this Conference we have four permanent committees: Literature, Finance, Internal Relations and Organization, Relations with Professionals.

## Finances

The Fellowship of AA in Romania is self-supporting through contributions from the groups and the sales of AA literature, but it seems not to be sufficient. Our delegates have to support all the cost for participation at the Conference themselves.

Another difficult problem that we are facing is in the area of book printing, as we are few members and the cost are high as they can't scale.

## Literature

There is an approved translation of the Service Manual (based on the 2016-2018 edition of the AA World Service Manual) in Romania since 2017. We also have a Service Guide (approved in 2014, at the Annual Conference Meeting in Alba Iulia) adjusted according to our actual structure (regions, areas, GSO and GSB and committees).

There are a few books published at the current moment: "*Alcoholics Anonymous*", "*Living Sober*", "*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*", "*Came to Believe*", "*As Bill Sees It*" and "*Daily Reflections*", and we are continuing to translate "*Pass It On*" and "*Dr. Bob and the Good Old-timers*". Ten pamphlets have also been published and we are working on translating and publishing another ten.

Our magazine, named "*Noi Înşine*" ("*We ourselves*"), has a circulation of about 200 copies and we print a service bulletin with a circulation of about 100 copies, both of which are published twice a year (not at the same time).

## Foreign Relations

The Romanian AA was sponsored by the AA of Belgium until 2016.

In the present, Hungary is the country that has promptly responded to our help requests. As there are many Hungarian speaking Groups in our country, they sent us brochures and literature in their language.

We are sponsors for the AA Groups in Moldavia. We invite them to various workshops, Conferences and we help them with brochures and the literature.

## Internet & Websites

Our online identity consists mainly of two websites: <http://alcoholiciianonimi.ro/> and <https://grupuri.aaromania.ro/>. While the first one contains information for newcomers or for those who don't know us, the second one has more specific information: meetings list, AA brochures, guides about service and recovery. Also, we continuously update the meetings list on the smartphone app "*Meeting Guide*".

## **RUSSIA – [www.aarus.ru](http://www.aarus.ru)**

In May 2019, the regular Annual AA General Service Conference in Russia was held. The Final Report on the Conference is now published on the official website of AA Russia. At present, there are about 600 AA groups in Russia. We work in more than 200 cities of Russia. Over the past year, we held numerous events aimed at developing the AA Fellowship: dozens of seminars on sponsorship, 12 AA traditions, work with correctional institutions, and hospitals.

Russia is a very large country. AA groups are scattered throughout its territory, from Kaliningrad in the West of the country to Uelen (Chukotka) in the East. Many of AA problems are rooted in great distances of our country. It is especially referring to small settlements in the Far North, such as Tiksi, Provideniya, Anadyr. However, new groups are opening up and the number of group members is growing. The AA General Services Office in Russia serves all AA groups in the Russian Federation and also provides assistance to Russian-speaking AA groups abroad. Russian-speaking groups hold their meetings in Belarus, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan, England, Israel, Spain, the USA, Finland and Sweden.

### **Correctional Committee**

We experience a lot of difficulties in cooperating with correctional institutions in Russia. But the Twelfth Step work is ongoing and a new experience is emerging. We provide correctional facilities with AA literature sets. AA members are carrying our message to those in prisons. The Committee receives and accumulates information flow from groups working with correctional institution and shares the experience with other A.A.s.

### **Literature Committee**

AA Publishing Service prints and publishes AA literature and the officially registered Russian AA Magazine named "Diuzhina" (Dozen). We continue our work for translating AA literature into Russian. For example, the book "Pass it on" is now almost entirely translated into Russian and we expect it to be prepared for publishing in 2020.

There are now two AA Service Conferences in Russia. Both structures provide services for AA groups. Structures representatives are staying in contact and are hosting joint events. We apply efforts to overcome disagreements, to unite structures and to hold a Single United AA Conference in the future.



## **RUSSIA – [www.rsoaa.ru](http://www.rsoaa.ru)**

### **Groups number**

AA Fellowship started in Russia in the late 80s. GSO had registered the first AA group from Moscow in 1987.

In 2019, delegates from 548 groups were represented at the XXXI meeting of the Russian AA Fellowship Service Conferences. The exact number of groups in the country we can not name, because there are groups not yet registered in the Central service Bureau (GSO AA Russia).

According to the GSO AA Russia, the number of AA groups and members has increased over the past two years. AA meetings are held in 70 locations. In large cities, several meetings are held every day, there are groups in which meetings are held from early morning until late at night. In small towns, meetings are held daily or several times a week.

The number of local service structures is growing. At the last meeting of the GSC 3 new locations were registered.

### **Service structure**

Russian AA Fellowship Service Conferences are held in Moscow annually, in early April, they last 4 days.

The Conference is attended by: group delegates from the groups which do not have local service structures, delegates of local AA service committees, Russian AA Service Board members, international delegates of Russian AA, Director of AA Service Office (GSO AA Russia).

The Conference establishes committees for producing recommendations for major AA service areas, elects Board Members. The recommended period of sobriety for Board members is 5 years. The Conference acts in accordance with the 'Russian AA Fellowship Service Guidelines'.

Problems of violation of unity are not completely overcome. Part of the AA groups of Russia does not participate in common Affairs, is not part of the structure of the GSC. There are a small number of groups holding their annual meeting. However, these groups are gradually integrated into the service structures, and their representatives participate in the work of regional and local committees and assemblies. The doors of our GSC are open to all groups. And we hope that in the near future the unity of our Fellowship will be fully restored.

The publishing and distribution license for AA literature was transferred to the Russian GSB (Russian GSO) on December 1st, 2015.

### **Literature**

Reprinted in beautiful, hard covers of the book "Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers", " AA Comes of Age ", "Daily reflections". Books: " Came to Believe ", " As Bill Sees It", reprinted in more reliable cover. Qualitatively changed the appearance of the pamphlets "Young people and AA".

"AA for women" - this brochure is outdated, but in demand. It was replaced by "Women in AA", currently the text is being translated. The comic book "Too young" was published.

Starting 2008, we started working on more precise Russian translation of Alcoholics Anonymous. In 2013, we started preparing several amended chapters for publication.

Work continues on refining the Russian translation of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous".

The translation of the Guidelines placed on the aa.org, the translation of the guideline for the Committee on public information was also carried out.

The work on translation of the book "alcoholics Anonymous" into the Tatar language has been completed. At the moment, work is underway to form all the chapters in a common file for sending it to the publishing services of RSO and A. A. World Services, Inc.

In 2018 RSO AA of Russia and FOAA, on the basis of the license granted (RSO AA of Russia), were signed an agreement on a single supply of literature AA "Living sober", " Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers" and "AA Comes of Age" in accordance with the recommendations of the GSO (to Provide AA literature at the lowest price (purchase price + taxes))

## **Interaction with the public**

### **Medical institutions:**

Russian medical institutions committee of the RSO stays in close contact with the top Russian doctor in toxic substances addictions. Together with the local institutions and organizations participates in different events related to carrying the message such as round table conferences with doctors, events related to the Sobriety Holiday celebration as well as participating in doctors' conferences related to addictions. Information boards with AA information are installed at hospitals and smaller medical centers. Many AA meetings in Russia are held at addiction treatment centers.

### **Penitentiary institutions:**

Established contacts with the interior Ministry and the Federal penitentiary service. The committees of the local service structure ensure the 12th step and availability of AA literature in pre-Trial detention and correctional facilities.

For AA members seminars "How to go to a correctional institution with news about AA (what you can, what you can not)."

The Committee on medical and correctional institutions compiled a folder with recommendations, which collected experience in establishing contacts with the administration of correctional facilities.

### **Religious institutions:**

Traditionally, we have the closest relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church, then with Catholic and Protestant Churches. Russian Orthodox Church representatives participate in our round tables, which results in opening AA groups at churches and publishing AA related information there.

### **Social and public institutions**

Since recently we increased our activities in relationship with social services representatives – we have round table discussions with them, which results in more AA groups started at their premises.

Our cooperation with Moscow based public organizations may be an example. These organizations provide premises for local groups and intergroup meetings.

### **Police:**

AA groups together with local organizations hold meetings with police representatives. As a result we more meetings at local police stations and have AA related information located there.

Close cooperation with local authorities plays a significant role in organization of AA group meetings at police stations.

## **Finance**

The main sources are voluntary donations, which make up 30% of revenues, 70% gives the distribution of literature.

## **Internet**

The official site of AA of Russia: aarussia.ru. Also their sites have the local service structures.

## **Relationships with foreign countries:**

Traditional and very close relationship between the AA of Russia and AA of Belarus. We cooperate in matters of AA literature, carrying to message, participate in the GSC of our countries. Also actively developing relations with the Baltic countries, especially with Lithuania and Latvia. Now this cooperation is in matters of literature AA, as in these countries there is a significant number of Russian-speaking population. In recent years, we have participated in GSC of Poland and the Czech Republic. Observers from different countries, such as the USA, Bulgaria, Mongolia, Lithuania, Canada, come to our GSC.

Cooperation with the Fellowship AA of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan has begun to develop. AA members travel to these countries and help organize AA groups and information meetings there. We also regularly send them AA literature.

There are close contacts with the Fellowship AA of Mongolia, mainly the District structures of local service structures of Eastern Siberia are engaged in this cooperation. For many years, our delegate has been attending the AOSM.

We also participate in the WSM, interact with GSO on licensing of literature, audio and video materials

# SLOVAKIA

## Brief Historical Summary

Slovakia, officially Slovak Republic is located in Central Europe bordering with Austria, Poland, Czech Republic, Ukraine and Hungary. The population is a little over 5 million, the capital city is Bratislava and the official language is Slovak. In Year 2020, Slovak A.A. will celebrate its 30th year anniversary.

## Current A.A. Structure

Currently in 2019 we have 47 registered groups in 35 cities with approximately 450 members across 5 regions. Especially we have one English, one Hungarian/Slovak and one Russian speaking group.

Groups can choose to participate in their local area's Intergroup. The fellowship is registered as an Association with the Slovak Ministry of Interior under its legal name "Združenie pre služby Anonymným alkoholikom v Slovenskej republike". The General Assembly for the legal Association is our Fellowship's *General Service Conference*.

We have an A.A. e-mail group called "Sober space" (continual meeting 24 hours day by day) which was established in 2006. At the present It has more than 750 Slovak and Czech speaking members living all over the world.

GSO registered Czech-Slovak Skype group "Zvláštní spojení" offers daily miscellaneous meetings by the Skype application (two time in Wednesday). They also participate in our GSC and are an invaluable resource for people unable to get to a meeting in their area.

## Other Services

Intergroups coordinate their group activities regarding local conventions, events and meetings. We have regular A.A and informational meetings in 6 hospitals, 3 prisons and 3 rehab centres. Our Public Relations Committee has been organizing and attending conventions and conferences with public, doctors and other professionals, conducting interviews in press or radio. An important part of service is Sponsorship which is also on the rise but is mostly concentrated in more populated metropolitan areas. During the year, groups with more experience regarding the 12 Steps conduct Step study workshops at different locations throughout Slovakia. This helps to spread the program of recovery, promote sponsorship and involvement in service. Some members use Skype to sponsor people in remote locations until more sponsors become available.

This year we will be hosting our 22th Slovak National Convention in the city Poprad. The convention is also attended by our friends from other countries. During conventions we cooperate with other 12 Step programs who are welcome to attend and create their own meetings. We established cross-country cooperation including sponsorship between groups, members and service structures, mainly with Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Hungary, UK, Denmark and USA. We have been blessed to be able to participate in the past European Service Meetings which has been a tremendous source of information and experience during the past few years. Our upcoming plans are to promote Service and Traditions workshops because we see a lack of their understanding and more importantly their application within our Fellowship.

## General Service Board

The General Service board is made up to 9 Class B Trustees, up to 5 Class A Trustees, Chairman of the Board, Vice-chairman of the Board, Treasurer, Editor magazine "Prameň", 2 ESM/WSM delegates and the GSO coordinator. Committee chairs are also part of the GSB (from Organizational OC, Literature LC, Finance FC, Service Manual SMC and Public Relations PRC committees). GSB trustee nominations, elections and their service responsibilities are guided by the Conference approved Service Manual.

GSO oversees our General Service Office, which is currently located in town Nitra. It is managed by the Conference elected GSO coordinator.

Sobriety Time of persons in service are minimum 3 years (recommended requirement).

Most of our groups have a formally elected group secretary, treasurer, GSR and an Intergroup delegate. GSRs sometimes serve as the group's GSC delegates when it comes to smaller groups.

### **General Service Conference**

Each year, generally in April, we hold our *General Service Conference* in a city approved by the previous conference (next year in town Nitra). The GSC is made up of one delegate from each group willing to participate in the GSC and members of the General Service Board. Standing committee chairs are also part of the GSC participants (from the Organizational, Literature, Finance, Service Manual and Public Relations committees). International and local A.A. observers are encouraged and regularly invited to our GSC. Our A.A. members attended many GSCs in other countries, which proved to be a great source of experience. During the past General Service Conferences we dedicated ample amount of time to present, explain and amend our current Service Manual, which has proven to be an invaluable asset to our fellowship. We used other countries' service manuals as a starting point and customized it to better fit our current local needs.

### **Service Manual**

At the moment we have Service manual AA Slovensko approved by GSC. Final version are work of Service Manual committee couple of years. Parts of this manual includes „AA Charter“ and „Constitution of the Association Združenie pre služby Anonymným alkoholikom v Slovenskej republike“.

### **Finance Overview**

Our complete service structure is made up of volunteers without having any paid positions. Our costs are mainly for GSO rent, printing and publishing costs, OC, PRC related costs and for organizing conventions. Our major source of financing has come from the sale of literature 60-65% and then from group/intergroup/member contributions 35-40%.

Note: Unfortunately, some groups belonging to a specific Intergroup had decided not contribute funds to GSO but rather keep their funds at their local Intergroup level. They also decided not to participate in any national activities in cooperation with other Intergroups. This was mainly due to personal disagreements between some members within our Fellowship. We are making efforts to explain the importance of applying all of our Traditions during conventions, meetings and articles published in our magazine.

### **Relations with other countries**

Very close and warm relationship we have with AA in Czech Republic because we have no language problems. We attend each other at events (conventions, 12 steps seminars). In 2019, the members of Slovak AA were as observers Czech General Service Conference and Czech members participated in our GSC. Our members are taking parts at different AA events all over the Europe more and more often.

The inspiring relations we have with Poland though common attendance at AA events, by having our observers at Polish Service conference and trough inspiration how to approach the service.

In this Year our AA member attend National Convention in Bulgaria. Cooperation will be growing.

## Literature

A.A. Slovakia distributes numerous General Service Conference approved literature in the Slovak language.

*Books:* Alcoholic Anonymous (3rd edition without any personal stories), Living Sober, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Daily Reflections, As Bill sees it, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, Experience Strength & Hope.

*Pamphlets:* The AA group...Where it all begins, Is AA for you?, AA as a Resource for the Health Care Professional, A Newcomer Asks and 44 Questions, Many Paths to Spirituality.

*Magazine:* Since April 2002 we have been publishing our magazine "PRAMEN" is published quarterly with about 300 copies per issue. The magazine brings personal stories of AA members about their experience, strength and hope, guest articles. Furthermore, there are information about AA meetings, AA events and AA literature.

Magazines are distributed to the treatment institutions, libraries and AA groups. This magazine is self-supported.

## Internet & Website

Our official website ([www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk](http://www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk)) contains group and meeting information (including phone numbers) and is regularly updated. In the year 2018 we settled the "Help line" phone for people which looking for a help. Currently, we have innovated website which are mobile friendly and enhanced for meeting search capabilities.

We have an A.A. e-mail group called "Sober space" where members share their experience, strength and hope.

We have Czech-Slovak Skype group "Zvláštní spojení" for people unable to get to a live meetings.

# SLOVENIA

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

We celebrate this year 30 years of Alcoholics Anonymous in Slovenia. First A.A. group in Slovenia was established on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1989. As the membership and number of groups grew constantly a need for some sort of connection between groups had to be organized. An Intergroup was established with an aim to exchange experience between groups, first of all concerning new members, public relation and anonymity. Soon intergroup was too weak for growing membership and in 2002 decision was made to establish democratic organization as it is in U.S.A and Canada, adjusted for possibilities, circumstances and conditions in Slovenia.

## A.A. STRUCTURE TODAY

**Today there are 52 groups in Slovenia with approximately 600 members.**

The Conference of AA on March 21st 2015 established new/improved Organization of AA Slovenia:

Each group has a chairman, treasurer, literature man and a delegate (General Service Representative), elected for two year period.

General Service Conference (GSC) takes place once a year. Each group among its members elect one GSC delegate. All delegates join at the Conference, listen to Committee reports of last year and discuss the next year program. Every second year the delegates elect one third of new GSB members. Administrative and technical tasks for the Conference are done by GSO.

General Service Board (GSB) is responsible for all the activities accepted at the Conference. It consists of 9 members (1/3 are non-alcoholics, who promote the management of alcoholism in various fields of the society and support the activities of AA, 2/3 are alcoholics that are sober for at least 5 years, know well the structure of AA functioning, are able to serve with their knowledge and have the capacity to lead and connect people). The members of GSB are: Chairman, who is Class A -non-alcoholic trustee, the secretary, 2 members – non-alcoholics and 5 members – alcoholics, that are also leaders of one committee (for public relations, for publications, finances, for electronic communications and for AA meetings). Each committee consists of three members with four years mandate. Previous, present and future (previous delegate cooperating in, but is not member of GSB) leader rotate on their posts every two years.

General Service Office (GSO) is formed by the members of GSB. They function also as administrative workers of the Board. We don't have professional employees in GSO. 24hrs service for still suffering alcoholics is covered by AA servant.

**Finances** committee takes care about planning, disbursing and reporting to Conference about finances once a year. One-year budget of Fellowship is under 10,000 €. Main incomes are from contributions 75% and literature 25%.

**Committee for Public Relations** Collaborates with media: notes about AA in newspapers, occasional TV shows, we have announcements in national TV station CPC with Medical school (yearly informative meeting for doctors specializing in psychiatry), Faculty for Social Work, and Centers for Social Work. Several times a year we arrange informative meetings for patients at alcoholic clinics. One AA group is in penitentiary where inmates are convicted for more than three years, inmates in other penitentiaries are allowed to join AA meetings outside.

**Committee for publications** is comprehensive. Included are, besides three elected rotating members, several A.A. members with professional skills: translators, editors, editor of Slovenian A.A. magazine **Koraak** and webmaster for webpage.

Alcoholics Anonymous, 12&12, Living Sober, Daily Reflections, and As Bill Sees It, ten pamphlets and three leaflets were translated and printed so far, all licensed by AAWS. Our magazine Koraak is printed twice a year, containing contributions of A.A.'s. This year we have published publication on our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AA aimed at professionals and interested public.

**Relations with other countries** runs mainly through the connections we established with our cooperation at ESM and WSM meetings. Past Delegates supply our fellowship with information and encouraging members and our structure to make international connections and ask for experience.

From 2012 we organize International AA Convention in Gozd Martuljk- Kranjska Gora which is growing and is increasingly welcomed among members.

**Committee for electronic communications:** All information for the alcoholic who is still suffering are available on telephone: +386 69 665 478. There is also the web page [www.aa-slovenia.si](http://www.aa-slovenia.si) with relevant information and the list of meetings in Slovenia. E-mail addresses: [info@aa-slovenia.si](mailto:info@aa-slovenia.si) ; [international@aa-slovenia.si](mailto:international@aa-slovenia.si);



## **SPAIN**

### **STRUCTURE**

Nowadays structure of Spain it' s formed by 25 Areas along 4 regions, 610 groups of which 13 are in penitentiary institutions. In total approximately we are 960 members. General service board it is formed by one Custodian Class A and eight trustees Class B, of them, in the center city, and one in each regional zone.

We talk with groups of no Spanish language located in our country (from England, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland) to work together and help them their integration in Spain structure, if they require.

Likewise, we are talking with groups that have meetings in Spain language in Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Geneva, London, Brussels and Sydney.

Also, we continue participating in the Forum of service that are celebrated in each of the regional areas. Go custodian class A of the city Forum and custodian of the region. This serves to bring the group together and the activities to the groups and viceversa, facilitating the exchange of experiences between different areas that ser involved in that forum.

### **GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**

Since last Service European Meeting we have celebrated the XXXIX and LX Conferences of General Service.

The XXXIX Conference has been celebrated on 29<sup>TM</sup>, 30<sup>TM</sup> and 31<sup>TM</sup> of March in 2018, with the slogan "Delegate: structure link".

The LX Conference has been celebrated on 18<sup>TM</sup>, 19<sup>TM</sup> and 20<sup>TM</sup> in 2019, with the slogan "40 Years remembering the basics".

### **GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE**

The operation of out office is still possible thanks to the excellent work of the hired workers. The responsibility to celebrate Public Informations continues in the white zones where there aren't implanted groups.

Also of the activity of the groups and their areas, The Board celebrated the necessary activities to the commemoration of "June 10<sup>TM</sup>", in the cities of Merida and Almeria in 2018 and 2019.

Two members of the General Service Board attended to the XXV World Service meeting celebrated in Durban (South Africa) since 7<sup>TM</sup> to 11<sup>TM</sup> of October 2018 with slogan "Our 12 traditions in the future of A. A."

In 2017 and 2018, we have attended to different Congresses of Medical Professionals, in care and work environment, with a stand. We have done institutional visits to official agencies and entities. AA of Spain is integrated in the National Drug Plan, as another resource.

## **FINANCE**

In 2017 and 2018 voluntary contributions of members and groups haven't covered all approved budgets in the previous finance year.

The good management of the financial resources of OSG have allowed maintenance of the Reserve fund in the similar levels in previous years. So economic now is correct to attend all our needs.

We keep contributing to World Literature Fund.

## **LITERATURE**

Every year we send about 500 orders of literature to groups, area committees and members. Our literature since last Europe Meeting of Service, keep the same levels of sales.

We continue making our magazines "Akron- 1935" and "Sharing" with more than 2000 subscriptions per year.

We send 430 reports of "Akron- 1935" to no alcoholics professionals and we continue to reiterate the need to increase subscriptions.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The official website of Spain has been remodelled [www.alcoholicos-anonimos.org](http://www.alcoholicos-anonimos.org)

Allowing to consult the information in Spanish or English, we observe growth in the web views.

This allows that we can attend more quickly and in personality form the questions of people interested in our recovery program and their families deriving them to nearly group.

## **SPONSORSHIP**

Today we don't sponsorship none country.

Even though a fluid relationship with Equatorial Guinea.

We send them literature.

## SWEDEN

### Structure

A.A. in Sweden was founded in 1956. Today we have about 460 groups; there are also English-, Finnish-, Icelandic-, Polish-, Russian- and Spanish-speaking meetings. There are also about 20 Swedish-speaking groups abroad and three online groups.

The General Service Board consists of eight trustees, one from each of the six regions and one Class A members and two international delegates. The trustees of the board and the international delegates are elected by the Service Conference.

Assisting the General Service Board is:

- the members of the Board of Association Alcoholics Anonymous in Sweden
- the following committees: Finance, Economy, Information, Literature, Nominations, Policy, IT, National Hotline and Archive
- the General Service Office

The committees are composed of members with sound professional knowledge in conjunction with solid A.A. experience, which facilitates their handling of their various agendas. The person who calls the committees together is a member of the General Service Board, except for the Nomination Committee.

The Alcoholics Anonymous Association in Sweden is a registered non-profit association, founded in 2001 and represented by the General Service Board. The association runs the publishing business and is also responsible for the General Service Office. The General Service Office has one full-time and one half-time employee.

For all the above assignments a clear description of the service post and the qualifications desired is provided.

A.A. in Sweden has had its current structure since 1999. The GSB decided in December 2012 to review the structure for central service and appointed for that purpose a working group, which has submitted a final report in December 1, 2014. This report is implemented since august 2015. The final report also includes a comprehensive review of our Service Manual, which now has been in work for one and a half year.

### Literature/Publishing

The approved A.A. literature today consists of 11 translated books and one book published by A.A. in Sweden. There are 20 booklets and pamphlets, in addition to decals, shades, CDs, DVDs in Swedish.

The magazine Bulletin – “the meeting between the meetings” – is published six times a year and is economically self-supporting through subscription fees.

We also have an excellent newsletter, Service letter (Servicebladet) published four times a year, which contains service information from GSB, International delegates, The Alcoholics Anonymous Association Board in Sweden, GSO and Bulletin.

### Information

The Swedish website, [www.aa.se](http://www.aa.se), has been expanded and is an important link in the network of carrying the message. The meeting list is available. During the past year about 1,500 literature orders were made via the web shop, i.e., 90% of the total sales.

There are today about 15 local information committees.

The new website is now working with the latest technology since august 2015.

## **Finances**

A.A. in Sweden is still not self-supporting by own voluntary contributions. Approximately 50% of our income comes from the sales of literature.

A.A. in Sweden has decided to pay the full fee for two delegates to the World Service Meeting, hoping that by doing so it will make it possible for new countries in A.A. to participate in this very important event.

## **Working With Other Countries**

Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden are taking turns in hosting the annual Nordic Meeting.

## **Events during 2018/2019**

In 2018 we had an extra day in connection to the Service Conference in April. The theme for the Conference was "The Understanding of principal before personality".

The Service Conference in 2019 was held April 5 –8 with the theme ", AA Future in a modern world". Next Service Conference will be held in April 3-6 2020. The Theme for That Conference will be "An Unchanging message in a changeable world"

Participating in the Conference are the members of GSB and delegates from the six regions and one employee from GSO. Also attending were one member of the Association Alcoholics Anonymous, one representative from Bulletin and the international delegates. There were also guests from our Nordic countries.

The two World Service delegates participated as delegates in the World Service Meeting in Durban.

The Country Meeting in 2019 was held August 3-4 with the theme "AA Future in a modern world". In 2018 the meeting were held in August 4-5 and had the theme "The Understanding of principal before personality".

The Big Book is now translated into Swedish (3 TH Edition) and we are happy to say that it sells very well. The Literature Committee is now busy working with booklets and pamphlets, so they are in line with the new translation of the Big Book.

## SWITZERLAND (FRENCH AND ITALIAN SPEAKING)

Currently there 55 groups in French and Italian speaking Switzerland (further referred to as “AASRI”): 6 groups are in Italian speaking Switzerland and 49 in French speaking Switzerland. There are also several “international” groups where AA members may share in English or French (one “seasonal” multilingual group will be open as of December 2019 in Zermatt which will work during the holiday seasons).

### General Structure

AASRI is divided into three areas, which are represented on the General Service Board by a trustee who is elected by the Conference. In these three areas there are five Inter-Groups, four in French speaking part and one in the Italian-speaking part.

### General Service Board

Currently the General Service Board is composed of 9 class B Trustees and 1 class A Trustee, who presides the Board. The General Service Board meets four times a year and carries out the affairs of AASRI as a whole including, where applicable, execution of the decisions of the Conference.

### AA Conference

The General Conference of AASRI takes place each year in March and lasts two days. Each group is supposed to send one delegate (with voting right) and one substitute (without voting right).

In 2018, the group consciousness has decided to replace regular General Service Conference committees by “brainstorming” committees, where each delegate could express his/her concerns regarding AA service in the region. This experience was taken from the Belgian AA Conference from the previous years. All the questions were minuted and a special committee was created which after the Conference gathered and regrouped the raised questions. The main topics of this “brainstorming” were proposed for discussions at the Conference in 2019 in regular Conference committees.

The main 2019 Conference committee topics/questions included:

- 1) The Conference analysed whether it would be possible to simplify AASRI’s service structure (for example, possibility to merge certain service positions, etc.). The Conference decided to create a committee which should work in collaboration with the existing committee working on Service Manual review, which would have as an objective to create an attractive and detailed service structure org. chart, update of the description and requirements for existing service positions, analysis on any possible merger of certain service positions (i.e. ESM delegate vs. international delegate).
- 2) The Conference discussed the importance of the resolutions taken thereat and considered after how long and under which conditions the same topic could be raised again at the Conference. The group consciousness has decided that any resolution may be proposed at the Conference provided that the same subject has not been discussed thereat at least during last three years and that there is a new argumentation. In addition, the Conference resolved to establish a comprehensive list of taken resolutions, including the argumentation which brought to its acceptance or objection.
- 3) The Conference discussed on how local Fellowship could more efficiently use new technologies in communication in the service and in carrying the AA message, while respecting anonymity (social web, skype, etc.). It was resolved to create a committee, reporting to the Board of Trustee, which will establish guidelines for respecting anonymity in relation to the new technology. For this the committee should analyse experience of other countries and more specifically in French speaking Europe.

## Finance

The finance policy is quite sane; groups are supporting their service structure. The general service functions within its planned budget. The income comes mainly from the contributions of the groups; additional income comes from the AA literature.

## Web site:

AASRI has its own web site: [www.aasri.org](http://www.aasri.org)

On this website there is a general information about AA, AA literature, detailed information and time-table of meetings, as well as session dedicated to members, where any AA member having the login information may obtain AA related information, manuals, minutes of the Board Meetings, Inter-Groups and of various committees, various international documentation, etc.

## Public information

Each Inter-Group has a public information committee which is responsible for carrying the message in hospitals, prisons, local authorities, etc. The Chairman of such committee is a part of the public information office (BIPi) which is presided by a Trustee responsible for public information. This way we tend to harmonise each action in order to act in unity. Various actions, like advertising on cantonal or federal levels are managed on the level of the General Service Board.

On the level of these public information committees, currently, our region has a long lasting stable collaboration with various hospitals and rehabilitation centres.

Billboards are having lots of success helping us be more visible for everyone; it is quite effective and commonly considered as an excellent tool in the ratio of price and quality. As of 2019, in some cantons billboards are done in both French and English languages and have both hot line numbers.

Carrying AA message into prisons is not performed on this day as in Switzerland each canton has its own laws and systems. The cantonal authorities in French-speaking part are very reluctant for AA members to carry their message in prisons as it implicates active involvement of these authorities (assistance before, during and after AA public information meetings).

In general, there is a smooth functioning of public information; we have printed out and on all the levels of our service structure distributed (for further distribution inside and outside of the Fellowship) various pamphlets and flyers in Italian and French speaking Switzerland.

## Helpline

Help-line phones are managed by public information committees, being supervised by Inter-Groups. There is an annual calendar according to which each group takes the phone for two weeks or so and groups' members share the service.

## Literature

French speaking literature is published by "Editions AA francophone européennes", a company established by AASRI, French speaking Belgium and France. AA World Services Inc. grants license for French speaking literature in Europe to one of the three countries, namely to the AA General Services of the French –speaking Belgium which mandates "Editions AA francophone européennes" to print the books for the three countries. It reflects unity and fruitful collaboration between our countries.

According to the annual financial statements and reports of the Trustee responsible for literature, the sale of AA literature in AASRI is quite stable.

Some groups offer to the new-comers the Big Book or the Living Sober book. Pamphlets are managed by the AA Literature Committee of General Services, whereas flyers are managed by the BIPI.

To give you some indicative figures the prices of our main literature on this day are as follows:

- Big Book (hard cover) – CHF 20.00
- 12x12 – CHF 10.00
- AA Comes of Age (soft cover) – CHF 22.00
- Daily reflections – CHF 10.00

AASRI has its own Service Manual. Since several years the Manual is under general review by a specially dedicated committee. At the Conference 2019, the committee presented their work and it is expected that at the Conference 2020 the new Service Manual will be presented for its approval.

### **Country sponsorship**

Currently AASRI does not sponsor and is not sponsored by any other country, but we rather tend to unite more and more within French speaking Europe.

### **CEFE (Carrefour Européen Francophone d’Echange)**

The CEFE is a committee which meets at each 3 Conferences, in French and Italian speaking Switzerland, in French-speaking Belgium, and in France. The ESM, the WSM delegates and the External Relations Trustee always participate in CEFE, other trustees or other trusted servants may also participate in the committee.

There are more and more actions that are taken to improve collaboration between our three countries. As afore-mentioned, AA literature is managed by a common literature committee and legal entity with representative of each of the three countries represented on its Board of Directors. There is a new project which is currently under elaboration of “Editions AA francophone européennes” and our three countries for creating and printing of a perpetual calendar in French language with citations from “less known” AA literature. Once the project will be elaborated, it will be presented to each of the respective Conferences.

The committee brings its motions and then each respective Conference takes vote in each respective country.

For example, upon proposal of CEFE in 2019 AASRI Conference has decided / wished:

- 1) In 2018, France, French-speaking Belgium and French and Italian speaking Switzerland have decided to organise a common service forum between our countries. At the AASRI Conference in 2019 it was decided that for this service forum, a second service person is required from AASRI and the committee responsible for the organisation thereof shall establish a budget of the planned service forum.
- 2) Prior to bringing any concrete motion to a Conference, AASRI Conference wished to study a possibility of creation of one common Facebook page for the three countries (France, French-speaking Belgium and French and Italian speaking Switzerland).

### **Congress 2020 in Switzerland**

First National AA and AI-Anon Congress will take place on 29 and 30 August 2020 in Lucern. All are welcome. More information is on the web-site: [www.incontro2020.org](http://www.incontro2020.org).

## **SWITZERLAND (GERMAN SPEAKING)**

### **AA development**

The development of AA has been declining in German Speaking Switzerland for years.

In 2004 we had 120 German-speaking groups, today there are still 89.

At the same time, English-speaking groups in German-speaking Switzerland have increased from 8 to 19 groups.

There are three reasons for this:

- In Switzerland, more people work with native English or second language.
- In addition, people with Swiss nationality go to these groups to practice their English.
- These Swiss feel that in these groups the AA program is more lived than in most German-speaking groups. That is one possible reason why they no longer go to German-speaking groups.

Try these AA friends German-speaking groups to bring the AA program closer are usually not appreciated. Mostly these friends hear the answer. We do not need that; we are not here in America. Because of the small number of meeting participants, everyone is the other sponsor.

These friends justify the decline of the German-speaking AA with the fact that we have a well-developed social network in Switzerland. This may help in my opinion but is not the main reason.

Especially young people are very little in the German-speaking AA groups. These are often politoxikoman and therefore go to Narcotic Anonymous. As the NA meetings are also closer to the program, the young people stay there.

### **AA Structure**

The AA Association of German Switzerland is responsible for legal matters. He also runs the central office in Zurich, Switzerland with a staff of 40%. The AA Association is run by a non-alcoholic. Other members are current and former employees of the Intergroup.

The AA Association of German Switzerland represents the community of Alcoholics Anonymous by a nonalcoholic person.

AA in German-speaking Switzerland is divided into 6 regions.

In each of these regions, regional working meetings take place twice a year. The chairperson of the groups as well as the employees of the region take part in it.

The spokespersons of these regions and the staff members of the Intergroup meet twice a year for an intergroup meeting. In these Intergroup Meetings recommendations are made to the chairperson assembly.

The chairperson meeting take place twice a year. All AA friends can participate and have the right to speak. All Chairperson of the groups as well as the employees of the Intergroup are entitled to vote. The resolution of the Chairperson Assembly is subsequently examined by the AA Association and adopted for implementation. If this is not possible in individual cases, this business will be returned to the Chairperson Assembly. There it will be treated again at the next opportunity.



## Services

There are the following services in AA German Switzerland.

Group Chairperson, Group cashier, literature responsible.

Region representative and his deputy, Regions cashier and his deputy and for the control of the bill two auditors, Public relations officer and his deputy.

Intergroup representative and his deputy, Intergroup cashier and his deputy and for the control of the bill two auditors, Public relation officer and his deputy, Clerc literature and his deputy, AA monthly magazine "IRGENDWO AA" clerk and his team.

## Sobriety time

Group Services; 1 year of sobriety is required for these services.

Region Services; 2 Years of sobriety is required for these services.

Intergroup Services; 2 Years of sobriety is required for these services.

For all services is also regular visits to meetings and living in the AA program requirement. The period of service is 2 years and can be extended by 2 years. The public relations officer can make another 2-years election possible. Totally 6 years.

## General Service Conference

The General Service Conference is called in Switzerland chairperson meeting. This take place in spring and autumn.

The Chairperson Conference is the supreme organ of the community of German-speaking AA groups. She is responsible for all business, elections and property issues which are outside the competence of the groups, regions or the AA Association.

It is there to advise and vote on applications and transactions. The employees report on their work. Elections are held. The annual accounts and the budget for the coming year will be discussed and approved.

## Service Manual



The service manual should contribute to the harmonious and effective cooperation within AA of German-speaking Switzerland so that as many alcoholics as possible who are still suffering the message of AA receive.

In particular, the service manual sets out to identify the tasks and competences of the different services, delineate where necessary, and thus to ensure that the continuity of work in AA is ensured.

### **Literature**

In Switzerland we sell the official AA literature which is translated and printed in Germany. There is only one license for German-speaking Europe, and it is in Germany.

In 2018 was for 11888 SFR. Literature sold. Many AA friends buy the same literature in Germany or Austria because it is cheaper there for various reasons.

We also have a monthly magazine called IRGENDWO AA (ANYWHERE AA). This magazine was sent in 2018 to 408 subscribers. Thus, in 2018 a turnover of 26311 SFR was achieved.

Both the sale of literature and the sale of the monthly magazine are profitable.

### **Finance Overview**

The annual financial statement for 2018 showed a minus of 3557 SFR. Through rigorous austerity measures, the budget in 2019 shows with a plus of 350 SFR.

These austerity measures were necessary because the assets of AA German Switzerland have always gone back in recent years so that a critical limit has been reached. The annual cover for current expenses would soon no longer be guaranteed.

### **Relation with other Countries and between different Languages in Switzerland**

Over the past nearly 30 years there has been cooperation between the German-speaking countries in Europe. This cooperation has not always been to the satisfaction of all countries involved. Therefore, various initiatives have been made to improve this cooperation. In February 2019, these efforts have reached a low point. Therefore, the AA of German-speaking Switzerland has decided to interrupt this cooperation for a few months. Now we have a suggestion from AA Germany and Austria how the cooperation can be arranged in the future which is welcomed by the Swiss AA. We are convinced that there will be a viable way to cooperate in the future.

These difficulties have led me to give my world service for German speaking Europe prematurely back. In my opinion, I could no longer act as a representative of German-speaking Europe. I represent here today only German-speaking Switzerland delegated as a European service. The World Service in German-speaking Europe should be redefined in my opinion. So that no longer the same person does world service for German-speaking Europe and European Service for their own country. This would avoid conflict potential.

Collaboration between the French and Italian AA groups in Switzerland was intensified last year. As well as the cooperation with the English-speaking groups of Switzerland.

The Swiss AA convention INCONTRO from 29. / 30. August 2020 is carried out in cooperation of all three language regions as well as the English-speaking groups. Of course, AI-Anon is invited to join us. The other 12 steps communities like NA, EA, OA and others are invited to join INCONTRO.

## **Internet & Website**

The website of the AA German-speaking Switzerland has been newly revised and is up to date. See [www.anonyme-alkoholiker.ch](http://www.anonyme-alkoholiker.ch)

The document management is electronic. The AA friends and the employees can download the documents with special passwords on the homepage. Printed documents will only be sent on paper in case of request.

## TURKEY

### History & Today:

In the year 1988, the A.A. members living in Turkey, after having gone through meetings with Aegean University Psychiatry department, they have initiated first A.A. Meetings, gathering once a week taking place in the University Hospital. The same year Istanbul and Ankara groups were formed. In 1989 in Ankara 7 Turkish AA members and 11 American AA members gathered together to realize the first Turkey AA Service Conference. After this conference AA Groups in Turkey started to form all over Turkey. Today we have about 32 active groups all around Turkey. Today we have a big conference twice a year and regional conventions 3-4 times a year. During the conferences and conventions AA members find the opportunity to discuss how to best run the fellowship & carry AA message in their own cities, groups and also on a country level.

### General Service Office: Committee & Structure:

In the year 2001, A.A. Turkey General Service Committee and Office were established. In year 2010 working principles of 12 concepts adjusted to Turkey and Committee Office Job Descriptions were adapted and accepted.

Turkey General Service Committee is formed under the below listed headings to further carry out Turkey AA Services:

- Press & Public Relations,
- International Relations & Representation
- Cooperation with Public Authorities & Government
- Control of the Financial System
- Translation Services
- Book, brochures printing & distribution
- Panels, seminars and conferences
- Management of the AA Association Legal Management and procedures
- Transfer of knowledge, service and experience to AA groups
- Preserving our Traditions
- AA Turkey website control, update & development\*

General Service Committee coordinates relationships between groups. Most importantly, it serves as the protector of 12 Traditions & applies 12 Concepts while representing A.A. in national addiction related conventions and government institutions. \*GSC maintains and updates [www.adsizalkolikler.com](http://www.adsizalkolikler.com) - website. The website is a very big website with vast amount of helpful information for both the newcomer and the current AA members. The number of AA members registered in this AA Turkey website are 1500.

### General Service Conference & Conventions:

Turkey General Service Committee organizes a country wide conference twice a year. To this service conference all the regions and groups attend. General Service Council is held during these conferences. Regional committees organize other regional meetings several times a year. Turkey General Service Committee, Regional Committees and Groups organizes panels, speeches and meetings to transmit A.A.'s message. They provide a helping hand to any alcoholic in need, and directs them to a related group. Hospital visits & prison visits, school/university panels remain as part of the regular service structure and agenda of each group.

**Literature:**

Turkey General Service Committee provides all book and booklet needs of all A.A. group translates books to be published. Since the year 1988 when first AA Meeting was held, the AA literature started to be translated by our fellows. After year 1994, the process of getting AA Literature translations approved started. Today all of the the main AA Literature exists in Turkish, however a committee of English speaking AA members are working on renewing the translations. The big book and 12&12 has been – translated by a professional translator hired by our GSO recently on May 2019. Both books are currently being reviewed by AA members to reflect original AA spirit.

**Finances:**

Average income from contributions and literature is around 13,000 TL (2200 USD) per year. Expenses are about 13,000 (2200 USD) - (excluding expenses made from AA members own budgets). There is a sum of 16,000 TL (2700) in savings of the GSO which is kept as a security fund. Following the 7th Tradition, our structure remains self-supporting, regardless of the low level of contributions.

**Legal recognition:**

ADSIZ ALKOLİKLER AYIK YAŞAM DERNEĞİ – ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS LIVING SOBER ASSOCIATION, has been formed on 7th February 2018 with all necessary legal approval and authority taken from government offices. The official address has been changed and registered as: KORKUTREİS MAH.İLKİZ SOKAK 22/8 ÇANKAYA ANKARA.

The Association now, with its legally recognized identity, joins and organizes panels, conferences in hospitals, prisons or other governmental associations and supports the AA groups activities with the necessary literature.

**Government relations:**

A big step after forming the association has been the recent co-operation with governorships. In 81 cities, in the governorships “Addiction City Council Units” have been formed. We have applied for membership in these Councils, while protecting our 6th, 7th, 10th traditions. In these councils, the Assistant Governor of each city, surgeon generals of hospitals, Chief Constables, non-profit organisations take place. These members work on the field of “Addiction”. With these efforts, AA Turkey remains loyal to our 11th tradition.

**AA Legacy in Service:**

All AA Turkey activity is based on AA’s “Three Legacies of Service” – Recovery, Unity and Service. In line with legacies, AA members are encouraged to application of 12 step recovery program, protecting the 12 Traditions and following the 12 Concepts in Service. In our country, through our fellowship; at each hour, at each city, there is an alcoholic helping another alcoholic to recover in line with AA principles.

# UKRAINE

## Country Report

The first group of Alcoholics Anonymous appeared in Ukraine in 1989, so this year we are celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of A.A. in our country. At present there are about 130 active A.A. groups in Ukraine. They are attended by about 1,500 A.A. members. (NOTE: This includes 11 groups in Eastern Ukraine that are now included in the A.A. of Russia service structure).

There are five functioning regional service structures: Kyiv, Volyn, Western Ukraine, Poltava and Prydniprovyia. The Eastern Ukrainian Region is not represented on the General Service Board. The former trustee from that region stepped down from the board in May 2017 saying that the region as such has stopped functioning due to a shortage of members willing to participate in service work. Also, 11 groups that were formerly in the Eastern Ukraine Region are now part of the Russian service structure. Five A.A. groups with 15 members remain as part of the Eastern Region in A.A. Ukraine's service structure. The Southern Ukraine A.A. region exists in name only as it has never actually functioned as a region, with representation at the annual General Service Conference and on the General Service Board. Fifteen groups in Crimea, which were formerly in A.A. Ukraine's service structure, continue to function and are listed on the website of A.A. of Russia.

## General Service Conference

Our 21<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference was held in Poltava in May 2019. Participants in the Conference included five trustees representing five A.A. regions, our new Class A trustee, the international delegate to the World and European Service Meetings, delegates to each of the four Conference committees, the chairman of the "Pravlinnia" (the committee overseeing the General Service Office), the office worker at the General Service Office and the temporary editor of A.A. Ukraine's publication, *Dzherelo*.

The Conference was held over a three-day period as compared two days in earlier years, giving more time for participants to talk about and discuss important A.A. activity and service work.

International Delegates from Poland and Belarus, Michal Flidrzynski and Aliaksei Yakushevich, respectively, attended the Conference as guest observers. They were with us throughout the Conference adding to the positive A.A. spirit and sharing their experience with us. They also gave a talk on the second day on the Conference's theme "The Future of A.A. – Our Responsibility."

The 21<sup>st</sup> Conference in Poltava voted to accept an updated version of the bylaws pertaining to our General Service Conference and A.A. Ukraine's service structure. And as mentioned earlier, the Conference elected a Class A trustee to the General Service Board to help with its service work. We have been without a Class A trustee since the unexpected health-related death in September 2015 of our previous Class A member. Nadiya Pyrkalo, who is a psychiatrist from Poltava and familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous, was elected onto the Board during May's General Service Conference.

For the third time, we also had presentations by Conference participants (four) on the topics of Unity, Group Consciousness, Service after Service and Spiritual Awakening. For the third year we had a speakers meeting at the end of the first day and included a "What's on your Mind" sharing session at the end of days one and two of the Conference.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Conference, which was held in Kyiv in May 2018, brought together trustees from four of six A.A. regions, delegates to each of the four Conference committees, and the international delegate to the World and European Service Meetings. The editor of A.A. Ukraine's publication, *Dzherelo*, did not attend. A few representatives of local A.A. groups also attended the Conference.

Two delegates from the newly formed Prydniprovyia Region began participating in the Conference officially on the third day of the Conference, after the Region was officially accepted by the Conference into Ukraine A.A.'s service structure.

Two guest observers attended our Conference: Lubomir Babulik from Slovakia and Aivars Eipurs from Latvia. Both were International Delegates in their respective A.A. structures. They were with us throughout the Conference sharing their experience and insights, while adding to the positive A.A. spirit. They participated in the Conference's general and committee sessions and also shared on the opening day of the Conference on the Conference's theme, "Keeping it Simple."

For the second year, we had several presentations by Conference participants on various topics such as Unity, Carrying the Message and Service. For the second time we also had a speaker's meeting at the end of the day two as well as a "What's on your Mind" sharing session.

As mentioned earlier, the Prydniprovyia Region, which comprises five groups from the cities of Dnipro, Kryvyi Rih and Zaporizhia was accepted into Ukraine A.A.'s service structure.

The Southern Ukraine Region, comprising A.A. groups from the cities of Odessa, Mykolayiv and Kherson, did not send any representatives to this Conference either.

### **General Service Board**

The General Service Board of A.A. in Ukraine at present consists of seven members: five Class B trustees elected at regional service conferences, a Class A trustee and one international delegate to the World and European Service Meetings. We meet monthly (more often if necessary) on Skype and have three board meetings where we meet face-to-face.

The General Service Board held its second board inventory at its February meeting and was again assisted by former U.S. and Canada General Service Board member and International Delegate Bob Wilcox, who linked up with us through Skype. Ukraine's A.A. established a relationship with Bob when he attended our General Service Conference in 2016.

### **Committees**

We have four active standing Conference committees: Literature, Information, Organizational and Finance.

### **General Service Office**

The office of the Ukrainian Service Center of A.A. (Ukraine's General Service Office) relocated from Kyiv to Poltava in May 2016. It was re-registered in accordance with Ukrainian law in December 2015. It is open three days a week and has one part-time paid employee. Calls and emails are answered daily. The office manager, who volunteers his time, is also head of the Office's oversight committee ("Pravlinnia").

### **Literature**

There is a large number and adequate selection of A.A. books and pamphlets approved by General Service Conference in the Ukrainian A.A. service office. A.A. literature is distributed through the office by mail, through regional service structures, as well as at weekend forums and conventions in several cities in Ukraine.

We continue to focus our efforts on building up an inventory of A.A. literature in Ukraine. This includes preparing layout for printing, and working on translations and licensing agreements. We are working in close contact with A.A.'s G.S.O. office in New York.

The literature committee continued to translate brochures into the Ukrainian language in 2018 and 2019. Three brochures were translated and printed in Ukrainian – *If You Are A Professional, The 12 Concepts Illustrated* and *Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace. This is A.A.*, was re-edited and reprinted. *Understanding Anonymity* and *A Newcomer Asks* were printed in 2018 after being approved in 2017. In 2018, a Ukraine A.A. specific version of *A.A. and the Armed Services* was printed. It was put together with material translated from the brochure by the same name published by A.A. World Services as well as the version published by UK's General Service Office.

We have also printed the Russian language translations of *A.A. Comes of Age* and *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers* in Ukraine and other literature which was translated into the Russia language by A.A. in Russia.

All newly translated and printed pamphlets, as well as those that are reprinted, are designed to look like the A.A. literature currently printed by A.A.W.S in New York.

We have re-translated the Big Book in the Ukrainian language and have editorial approval for it from A.A.W.S. We are continuing our work of gathering recovery stories from A.A. members in Ukraine and will be translating selected stories from the English language Fourth Edition of the Big Book. This work is moving slowly.

The A.A. magazine in Ukraine *Dzherelo* ("Wellspring") is published quarterly and is distributed mostly among A.A. groups and members in Ukraine. The magazine is printed in Ukraine's two most widely used languages, Ukrainian and Russian. We print 200 copies of the magazine and almost break even.

## **Finances**

Our projected expenses in the budget for 2019 totaled 233,500 UAH (app. \$9,242 USD). The projected income was 230,000 UAH (app. \$9,104 USD). Projected total income from literature sales was 190,000 (\$7,721 USD). Projected income from the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition was 18,000 UAH or about 8% of the total projected income.

Due to our challenging financial situation, at this point, it is not possible for us to pay for our international delegate to attend the WSM and the ESP or to pay transportation costs for our invited A.A. guests to attend our Conferences.

Informational materials and A.A. group directories are published with funds from contributions from A.A. members and groups.

Our monthly income allows us to pay for office rental, wages for our part-time office worker, office supplies and equipment, telephone and Internet access. We have also been able to provide some free Ukrainian language A.A. literature to several countries that have Ukrainians living there, including Poland, Italy and Portugal.

## **Meetings, Forums**

More than a dozen major A.A. celebratory forums are held throughout Ukraine during the year. Two quarterly meetings of the General Service Board, held in Lutsk (July) and Kyiv (February), coincide with the forums.

Representatives from Ukraine A.A.'s General Service Conference take part in service conferences in Poland. The International Delegate attended the World Service Meeting in Durban, South Africa, in October 2018, and the General Service Conferences of Poland in November 2017 and the United Kingdom in April of 2018. He will be attending the European Service Meeting in October 2019.



We also continue to organize service workshops to share, learn and carry the message within our own A.A. community. Seminars on Steps, Traditions, Concepts, Carrying the Message, Sponsorship, Home Group and other topics have been organized by Regions, with the Kyiv Region continuing to be the most involved in this service work.

Our General Service Board continues to reach out to Ukraine's A.A. members. Board members and A.A. members involved in service at the regional level have attended several special outreach meetings held mainly in cities with new groups.

## **Public Information**

We use the print and online media by supplying them with informational articles about A.A., as well as announcements about the time and place of A.A. meetings. We have also organized press conferences with television journalists before A.A. forums/conventions. Additionally, radio interviews are an important part of the work we do in bringing A.A.'s message to the general public.

We have had fruitful results in our interaction with state social service agencies from sharing our experience about alcoholism and recovery with them. We also provide literature racks with A.A. brochures to hospitals, detoxification and rehabilitation centers, and prisons and make sure that they are refilled with literature.

## **Prisons**

The A.A. group "Light Way" has been bringing meetings weekly to men's correctional facility #64 in Poltava since March 2012. For five years now, an A.A. meeting has been held twice a month in the Poltava women's correctional facility #65. Another meeting for men is being planned at correctional facility #65.

In the Kyiv Region, an A.A. meeting, which was started four years ago, is still held monthly in the Zhytomyr correctional facility #4. In the past two years, A.A. meetings were also started in maximum security facilities in Bucha and Bila Tserkva, twice a month. Since 2018, a monthly meeting has also been brought to the women's correctional facility in Chernihiv.

A.A. members from Stryy, in the Western Ukraine A.A. Region began taking a meeting every two weeks to a correctional facility in Drohobych. A.A. members in the Prydniprovyia Region in central Ukraine began taking a meeting into a correctional facility in Kryvyy Rih and were planning to do so in Dnipro, where they have already begun to meet twice a month with individuals who are on probation and have a drinking problem.

In February 2019, a seminar on corrections service work was held in Kyiv. Attendees included A.A. members from Poland and Ukraine as well as corrections officials from both countries. Another such activity is planned for March of 2020.

## **Internet**

A.A. Ukraine's official website ([www.aa.org.ua](http://www.aa.org.ua)), which has been in operation for 13 years, was improved and upgraded. It has information about the Twelve Steps of A.A. and Twelve Traditions of A.A., and lists addresses and meeting times of A.A. meetings in Ukraine. The sections "Announcements" and "News" are constantly updated with information about upcoming A.A. events held in various cities in Ukraine and in other countries. The section titled "Service" provides the minutes of the last three General Service Conferences and our Conference and service structure by-laws. The literature section describes the literature that is available in both the Ukrainian and Russian languages from the General Service Office. Other sections of our website provide information for newcomers, professionals and the media.

We make use of the internet for service meetings as we continue to hold committee and General Service Board meetings on Skype.

## **International contacts**

We interact with the A.A. service structures in Poland, the European office in the UK and the G.S.O. in New York. Members of our national and regional service structures regularly take part in service conferences and conventions in neighboring countries.

As mentioned earlier, our international delegate participated in the 25th World Service Meeting in Durban, South Africa in October 2018 and will be at the European Service meeting in York, England, in October 2019. He also attended the General Service Conferences of Poland in November 2017 and the United Kingdom in April of 2018.

He shared his experience and impressions from the Conferences at Ukraine's General Service Conference and at four conventions – Ivano-Frankivsk (2017, 2018) and Lviv (2018, 2019), and in Kremenchuk and Lutsk in 2019.

Two representatives from A.A. Ukraine attended Poland's General Service Conference in November 2017 and 2018. In April 2018 and 2019 two representatives from A.A. Ukraine attended a corrections conference in Poland.

Our Polish A.A. friends regularly participate in service workshops and A.A. conventions in Ukraine. The support of A.A. members from several Regions in Poland includes participation in workshops on the Steps, Traditions and service principles.

The Western Ukraine A.A. Region has sent in a proposal to the Continental European Region (CER) of Alcoholics Anonymous of Great Britain to host its September 2020 quarterly service meeting in Lviv, Ukraine. A decision on the request was expected to be made at CER's Sept. 8 quarterly meeting.

# **Committees & Workshops**

## SERVICE COMMITTEE

Chair: **Yury T** Ukraine  
 Alternate: **Pat D** Ireland

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Johan R – *Belgium (Flemish)*  
 Iliana T – *Bulgaria*  
 Tamara L – *Czech Republic*  
 Tobias D - *Denmark*  
 Juha I – *Finland*  
 Erik A – *Great Britain*  
 Nana K – *Greece*  
 Pat D – *Ireland*

Massimo F - *Italy*  
 Terje O - *Norway*  
 Magdalena O – *Netherlands*  
 Tadeusz C - *Poland*  
 Aleksandr M – *Russia*  
 Zdravko Z - *Slovenia*  
 Jose G – *Spain*  
 Ray L - *Sweden*

The Chair opened the committee with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of committee: delegates were invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

- I. How can we use new communication technologies more effectively in service and to spread the A.A. message? For example: Service Meetings/Recovery Meetings/Online Meetings/Social Media (Facebook, YouTube, etc.)/Online Chat... Please share the experience of your country.

**Most countries spoke about technology being used widely to carry AA's message and to conduct AA's business. While many spoke about multiple uses of technology it was agreed that caution, adherence to AA principles and traditions was of paramount importance.**

**Communicating by email, Viber, Skype and WhatsApp is common so is Facebook, and online chat. These communications facilitate General Service Board meetings, Intergroup meetings, committee and other service meetings.**

**Many countries have online AA meetings, websites with meetings and other information including videos, 24hr chat service, speaker meetings and/or recordings on You tube.**

**Several countries spoke about guidelines for internet usage, one country has an Electronics Communications Sub Committee that addresses guidelines and challenges of the use of technology.**

**Pursuing the use of technology was felt to be important in continuing to address the communication needs of young people. Care must also be taken not to exclude those who are not up to date with technology.**

2. Please share your country's experience regarding operating the A.A. telephone help line. Does your country have one national help line number? How is the telephone service organized in your country? Which part of the service structure is responsible for the A.A. help line? How are the incoming queries forwarded to local A.A. contacts? How is this number promoted outside of A.A. (for example: is it available on the internet, advertised on billboards or/and TV, etc.)?

**Most countries have a 24 hour helpline to accept calls from people seeking help. These helplines seek to provide the quickest assistance to callers and expedite connecting them with local members, where possible men with men and women with women. Most countries follow the principle of rotation in fulfilling the service. The person manning the national helpline number would often connect callers to local AA members. Helpline numbers are posted on AA websites, business cards, posters and leaflets. Phone numbers of members are for the most part not given out but calls are returned. Information mostly given is about meeting times and locations, and AA's services.**

3. Would your country be interested in a European A.A. Convention? If yes, how could your country be involved and contribute in organizing such a Convention (services, finance, etc.)?

**Most delegates said that their countries would be interested in exploring a European AA convention but most agreed that more information would be needed before making any decision. While it was viewed positively the question was raised as to how many people this would be serving, how many would actually be able to afford attending such a convention?**

**It was felt that there is experience in Europe as well as with AAWS New York. Major questions remain regarding who would take the lead on such an undertaking, the financial implications and others. It was viewed as a major undertaking and to some an intriguing idea.**

4. How do you make sure that there is good communication, understanding and cooperation between the General Service Board and its committees? How do we ensure collective responsibility? How do you deal with individuals who despite having rotated out of their service position continue to participate in and exert influence in the service structure?

**It was generally agreed that there is good communication, understanding and cooperation between General Service Boards and their committees. Having face to face meetings, Board representation on committees, having board members chair committees as well as sharing reports and minutes assured for this cooperation between General Service Boards and their committees. General Service Conferences and conventions also help the flow of two way communication.**

**Most countries did not experience situations where an individual continued to exert influence after having rotated out of their service position. In the event this did occur a face to face conversation handled sensitively might be a solution as would the suggestion to embrace the important function of being coffee maker at one's home group. Some countries mentioned that they have opportunities for trusted servants who have rotated out of service to share their experience.**

5. Each committee should suggest one theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM. A vote will be taken on Sunday to choose the final theme.

**The Service Committee proposed the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Theme: 'Our Legacies, Our Future'.**

6. Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Service Committee.

**The committee elected Tobias D, Denmark as Chair of the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Service Committee and Juha I, Finland was elected as Alternate.**

## RECOVERY COMMITTEE

Chair: **Lotus A** France  
 Alternate: **Amanda S** Great Britain

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Sonya A - <i>Bulgaria</i>	Michał F - <i>Poland</i>
Ján K – <i>Czech Republic</i>	Ivo C - <i>Portugal</i>
Amanda S – <i>Great Britain</i>	Dmitry Na - <i>Russia</i>
Georgios B - <i>Greece</i>	Marek B – <i>Slovakia</i>
Erla S - <i>Iceland</i>	José F - <i>Spain</i>
Zita Z - <i>Latvia</i>	Toni H – <i>Switzerland (German)</i>
Ainas R - <i>Lithuania</i>	Marko A - <i>Finland</i>

The Chair opened the committee with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of committee: delegates were invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

- I. A.A. literature contains the unchanged A.A. message and solution. How can we attract A.A. members' attention to the literature? How are the sales of the A.A. literature in your country? Is it stable, increasing or decreasing over the past 5-10 years? How can we bring attention to the spiritual nature of contributing to the International Literature Fund?

**Across the countries literature sales were generally stable and in some cases on the increase, despite the threat to our sales from online retailers i.e. Amazon. New publications and new translations in different countries have ensured that literature sales remain constant.**

**Countries shared their experience of how the literature had helped them to get sober and transform their lives. Others shared how literature was used as the focus of the meeting and newcomers are encouraged to purchase literature.**

**Many countries shared how the International Literature Fund had helped them to develop and now they want to give back to the Fund. Many delegates shared that the spiritual nature of contributing to the Fund had been highlighted at their General Service Conference.**

2. Does your country publish and distribute literature approved only by your A.A. Service Conference? If yes, please share the purpose of such literature and briefly describe your publication/s (pamphlets, books, history books).

**Most countries publish and distribute AA Conference Approved literature. However, a few countries shared experience where non-conference approved literature had caused disunity.**

**There was a wide-ranging selection of literature across the countries. Specific literature is produced in some countries to reflect their cultural needs and issues, especially related to the 5<sup>th</sup> Tradition. Some delegates mentioned that the AA GB 'The God Word' pamphlet had been adopted in their country, showing country to country co-operation.**

3. Do you have meetings on Steps, Traditions and Concepts? Do you change the meeting format if a newcomer shows up? Does your structure have specific meetings for newcomers/beginners?

**The majority of countries had regular Steps and Traditions meetings, but Concept meetings were very rare.**

**Most countries shared that the newcomer was the most important person in the room and would change their meeting to accommodate the newcomer. However, some delegates shared that this could be quite disruptive if there is a constant flow of newcomers and would not change their meeting format.**

**In some countries there are specific newcomers/beginners' meetings.**

4. What emphasis is placed on sponsorship and working the steps in your country? How fast do you suggest to a newcomer to get a sponsor and to work the steps?

**It was agreed that sponsorship and working the 12 Steps is imperative to recovery and leading a sober life. Some countries shared that they have a lack of sponsorship, but with the new generation of young people coming into AA this situation is now changing.**

**The experience in the room was that getting a sponsor and working the Steps as soon as possible led to long term recovery however it was shared that there are many different approaches that work.**



5. Each committee should suggest one theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM. A vote will be taken on Sunday to choose the final theme.

**The Recovery Committee proposed the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Theme: 'Love and Service'.**

6. Elect a Chair and alternate for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Recovery Committee

**Ivo C, Portugal was elected Chair of the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Recovery Committee with Zita Z, Latvia as Alternate.**

# UNITY COMMITTEE

Chair: **Ewa B** Sweden

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Werner F – *Austria*  
Flor C – *Belgium (Flemish)*  
Ingmar E – *German Speaking Europe*  
Jon Oli O - *Iceland*  
Helen H - *Ireland*  
Aksels T – *Latvia*  
Marius L - *Lithuania*

Richard de - *Netherlands*  
Odd Einar V - *Norway*  
Porfírio S - *Portugal*  
Elena L – *Romania*  
Peter P - *Slovakia*  
Ewa B - *Sweden*  
Fatma Nur I – *Turkey*

The Chair opened the committee with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of committee: delegates were invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

1. How does your country ensure that an informed group conscience is sought for and arrived at by AA's throughout the whole service structure? How can good communication be established at all levels of the service structure? How can your General Service Board contribute towards unity in the fellowship?

**Communication is vital but often difficult.**

**Information is being passed on in many ways including electronically and other means of communication but it's not always being read.**

**It was felt that the delegates visiting groups personally seems to be the best way to communicate. They can inspire the groups to get involved in service.**

**It was highlighted that asking for feedback was important but only if we use the feedback.**

2. At open meetings in your country, are individuals with other addictions allowed to share and have service positions within the group? How do you deal with people with problems other than alcohol who regularly attend such groups? What are the risks for the future of A.A. in letting non-alcoholics (except Class A Trustees) be involved within the A.A. service structure?

**Individuals with dual addiction are welcomed at open meetings but are asked to confine their experience to alcoholism and recovery.**

**Some countries start their meeting with the primary purpose statement card, which emphasises only to about alcoholism and recovery.**

**It was felt crucial that meetings speak about the solution more than the problem.**

**The general consensus was that the majority of non-alcoholics would not be interested in doing service but where they are it would be of no benefit to them or the fellowship.**

3. Are we 'too anonymous' or 'not anonymous enough'? What could be done to make the general public aware of A.A. through Public Information work? Please share your country's experience.

**It was felt that we are too anonymous, and more can be done to increase our visibility.**

**Every country has a PI Committee, but the work is hard and continues. We may learn more by sharing our experience with other countries. Perhaps this could form a question for another committee.**

4. Is AA in your country self-supporting? Does the income from groups/members contributions and sales of AA literature cover expenses? What is the proportion of the total income between groups/members contributions and sales of the AA literature? How can we attract each A.A. member's attention to the spiritual nature of contributions?

**Most countries were self supporting though their own contributions and literature sales but in some countries service representatives have to fund their own service work.**

**The remaining countries are self-supporting through a combination of literature and contributions.**

5. Each committee should suggest one theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM. A vote will be taken on Sunday to choose the final theme.

**The Unity Committee proposed the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Theme: 'Anonymous but not Hidden'.**

6. Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Unity Committee.

**The committee elected Helen H, Ireland as Chair of the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Unity Committee and Richard de N, Netherlands was elected as Alternate.**

## **WORKSHOP: HOW CAN WE BENEFIT FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF ROTATED TRUSTED SERVANTS?**

Chair: **Iliana T**

Bulgaria

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Werner F – *Austria*

Flor C – *Belgium (Flemish)*

Tamara L – *Czech Republic*

Amanda S – *Great Britain*

Erla S - *Iceland*

Pat D - *Ireland*

Ainas R - *Lithuania*

Terje O - *Norway*

Tadeusz C - *Poland*

Dmitry N - *Russia*

Jose G – *Spain*

Peter P - *Slovakia*

Zdravko Z - *Slovenia*

Yury T - *Ukraine*

The Chair opened the workshop with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of workshop: delegates were invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

Share experience from your country on the theme “How can we benefit from the experience of rotated Trusted Servants?”

**The spirit of rotation and gaining experience from our trusted servants is what keeps our Fellowship alive. Experience was shared on the importance of being sponsored into service by those leaving the role and passing down lessons learnt both good and bad.**

**Some delegates spoke about those who were unwilling to rotate out of service and how in those situations it had negatively impacted the person, the Fellowship and its unity. The wisdom of those gone before us is invaluable in teaching us how we can best carry out our responsibilities.**

**In countries where it is difficult to fill positions, rotated trusted servants, who share how their experience of service has benefited their sobriety in meetings and forums, may encourage others to follow and help fill those positions where they are needed.**

Select a theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Workshop

**The theme selected was: 'Allowing our group conscience to guide our service work'.**

Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Workshop

**The committee elected Tamara L, Czech Republic as Chair and Flor C, Belgium (Flemish) was elected as Alternate.**

## WORKSHOP: BACK TO BASICS

Chair: **Porfírio S** Portugal

Alternate: **Aksels T** Latvia

Ján K – *Czech Republic*

Tobias D - *Denmark*

Lotus A – *France*

Juha I – *Finland*

Ingmar E – *German Speaking Europe*

Nana K – *Greece*

Aksels T – *Latvia*

Marius L - *Lithuania*

Richard de N - *Netherlands*

Odd Einar V - *Norway*

Elena L – *Romania*

Aleksandr M – *Russia*

Marek B – *Slovakia*

José F - *Spain*

Ewa B - *Sweden*

Toni H – *Switzerland (German)*

The Chair opened the workshop with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of workshop: delegates were invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

Share experience from your country on the theme “Back to Basics”

**What is ‘Back to Basics’ was asked. There were two ideas as to what is meant by the term. One referred to the book ‘Back to Basics’. The other refers to getting back to basics into the AA Programme (doing meetings, the home group, service, sponsorship, working the Steps and respecting the Traditions).**

**Eva S from GSO New York helped to clarify the meaning of the general term ‘back to basics’ in AA, which is used to get back to the primary purpose. She also stated that the programme was ‘suggested’.**

**Other delegates who come from structures still in development are still unsure as to what back to basics means for them. Some groups in some countries use non-conference approved literature and find the methods mentioned are popular and helpful for many of their members.**

**For the majority of delegates back to basics meant working the programme as above to stay sober, many delegates felt that the Big Book is all that is needed to get ‘back to basics’.**

Select a theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Workshop

**The theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Workshop is 'Spiritual Freedom'**

Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Workshop

**The committee elected Ingmar E, Germany as Chair and Elena L, Romania was elected as Alternate.**



## **WORKSHOP: UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION OF THE 12 CONCEPTS**

Chair: **Fatma Nur I** Turkey  
Alternate: **Marko A** Finland

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Johan R – <i>Belgium (FlemisMh)</i>	Massimo F - <i>Italy</i>
Sonya A - <i>Bulgaria</i>	Zita Z - <i>Latvia</i>
Marko A - <i>Finland</i>	Magdalena O – <i>Netherlands</i>
Erik A – <i>Great Britain</i>	Michał F - <i>Poland</i>
Georgios B - <i>Greece</i>	Ivo C - <i>Portugal</i>
Jon Oli O - <i>Iceland</i>	Ray L - <i>Sweden</i>
Helen H - <i>Ireland</i>	

The Chair opened the workshop with the Preamble and welcomed the delegates who will be invited to introduce themselves.

Format of workshop: delegates were invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

Share experience from your country on the theme “Understanding and Application of the 12 Concepts”

**Across the European Service Structures there are varying understandings of the concepts that goes from those countries that don’t have them translated, to those that have workshops on them.**

**The development of the various service structures however means that even unconsciously we make use of the concepts.**

**It is often from conflict that the greatest lessons are learned, and often it is then that we really learn not only of the need of the concepts, but how to best use them.**

**The use of the concepts helps to make the group and the individual feel safe, so when we are about to make decisions within the group, it is not just one person telling me this is the way it should be done, it is the experience of the whole of the fellowship worldwide. It follows on then that the experience of the past applies to our services today.**

**The steps were built on the experience of the first 100, the traditions on the experience and mistakes of the early fellowship, the concepts help us preserve our future by understanding the experience of our past.**

Select a theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Workshop

**The theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Workshop is ‘How to make the newcomer feel part of the group’.**

Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 21<sup>st</sup> ESM Workshop

**The committee elected Georgios B, Greece as Chair and Ray L, Sweden was elected as Alternate.**

# Sharing Session

## **SHARING SESSION**

### **PRESENTATIONS ON THE THEME: “COUNTRY TO COUNTRY CO-OPERATION”**

#### **AMANDA S (GREAT BRITAIN)**

My name is Amanda and I'm an alcoholic and tonight I am right where I need to be. I am blessed that I had the willingness to get involved in service early on in recovery otherwise I would not be here, and we would never have met.

I am a second term ESM delegate and it is lovely to be back amongst you all. My first experience of the ESM was in 2017 and I arrived not really knowing what to expect but left with a sense of gratitude in my heart, a better understanding of how AA works in other countries and some new found friendships.

This is amazingly the 20th ESM spanning 40 years, we've come a long way from that very first meeting at the Hotel National in Frankfurt in October 1981 at which 14 countries were represented.

Over the years this meeting has grown and strengthened as we all unite together and learn from each other. In 2013 a recommendation was made to move the ESM from the Hotel Frankfurt to here in York, where the European Information Centre is based.

We have an amazing 31 countries involved in the ESM this year from Austria to The Ukraine and it is hoped that one day we will have representatives from every country in Europe coming together to share their experience, strength and hope.

So, it is perhaps fitting as we look back over the last 40 years that this year's theme is 'An Unchanged Message in A Changing World'. The message of recovery has not changed but the way it is delivered has with the invention of the Internet and mobile phones - the world has become a lot smaller.

I have been a member of this wonderful Fellowship for 15 and a half years and when I came to my first meeting a broken alcoholic I had no idea that a number of years down the line my service in AA would enable me to meet such inspirational and amazing people like you all before me.

I do service because I am forever grateful for the new life that was borne out of my recovery. AA has given me a family of my own who love and respect me, I have a peace of mind and a sense of belonging that I never had before so it is only right that I give back what was so freely given to me in service.

Tonight as we are all here together – a bunch of alcoholics in recovery - active in service - we may not speak the same first language but we all suffer from the same condition of alcoholism and we all understand the isolation, powerlessness, feelings of being worthless, that we suffered when we were in the grips of our illness.

AA's three legacies of Unity, Recovery and Service is the common bond which binds us together knowing that we are all in the same lifeboat.

What the ESM brings is the knowledge from each country - we are all different but we can all share our experience, strength and hope on how our Fellowship works in our country to pass onto another. This country to country co-operation which spans 40 years is very special. Where else would an alcoholic from Russia share a cup of coffee with an alcoholic from Great Britain and perhaps find a new way in which to help them work in their country.

In AA GB & English-speaking Continental Europe we are very fortunate to have numerous meetings every day in almost every major town and city. Finding a meeting is never a problem for me, I have my home group in Beckenham on a Tuesday in South London but if I want to attend other meetings, I can literally start my AA meetings from 6am and I can find meetings on some days open up to 11pm. But having met with other alcoholics here there are some of you who only have a few meetings a week and who struggle to be self-supporting yet we can all learn from each other and help each other on our journey.

Today in our different committees and workshops we have discussed many things and shared our experience, strength and hope - what always amazes me is the magic that happens when we all get together and share our experiences and stories. We will be going home with new ideas of how we can fulfil our Primary purpose to carry the message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers whatever language they speak.

I will end on a quote from a letter of Bill W. from July 1955:

"AA service is anything whatever that helps us reach a fellow sufferer, ranging all the way from the Twelfth step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to AA's General Service Headquarters for National and International action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy."

## MICHAŁ F (POLAND)

Let me start with a quote from the 2017 version of the G.S.O. U.S./Canada service piece SM F-168 “Country-to-Country Sponsorship: Carrying the Message World Wide”.

“Just as a sponsee one day becomes a sponsor, so countries that have benefited from country-to-country sponsorship will be able to pass on the message of recovery to other countries. Poland, for example, which welcomed A.A.s from outside the country in the 1980s, is now in a position to help jumpstart A.A. in other Eastern European countries.”

This statement was confirmed by Alunia, our past national delegate in her presentation “Country-to-Country Sponsorship: In Countries Where There is No Established Service Structure 24<sup>th</sup> WSM Let me quote a passage from this presentation:

“After World War II, Europe was so effectively divided that the A.A. Fellowship reached Poland 20 years later than other countries in the western part of the continent. Together with the foundation of the first A.A. group in 1974, the first single members of A.A. arrived in Poland from behind the Iron Curtain. They crossed the borders protected by the army, smuggling A.A. literature in their personal luggage. They were our friends from Germany, who brought the books, smuggled the paper necessary for printing the A.A. literature across two borders, and talked for hours about the program, the Traditions, and A.A. structure. The first to provide some money for printing brochures were the people from Finland, who showed alcoholics in Poland how to create A.A. groups in prisons. However, as a Fellowship, we still needed about ten years to start forming national, regional and intergroup service structures.”

Once we established our service structure we were, with the partial (50%) financial support of A.A. GB, in a position to help jumpstart A.A. in other Eastern European countries.”

We have established warm relationship and inspiring cooperation with A.A. structures in neighbouring countries through common attendance at national and international A.A. events and through country-to-country sponsorship rendered at various levels of A.A. structure: groups, intergroups and regional services.

Foreign observers from Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine joined us and are still joining us in our General Service Conference. During the Conference our guests usually participate in meetings, where they can share their A.A. service experiences with the literature, public information, financial and agenda committees. They also join conference committees in preparing responses to questions received the Conference.

A.A. Poland has provided the full board accommodation and transport lump sum refund for our guests. New contract provisions with A.A. GB allow us to bear the full cost of foreign observers' participation.

Other forms of country-to-country sponsorship carrying the A.A. message worldwide have been applied for years to help jumpstart and develop A.A. in other Central and Eastern European countries, including but not limited to organizing workshops on Steps, Traditions, Concepts and Spirituality as well as seminars on Conference Charter and Service Manuals. Similar sponsorship activities are being performed to help A.A. structures in other countries: Belarus, Moldova, Latvia, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Last April a group of Poland's AAs travelled to Kazakhstan to organize workshop and informational meeting for professional community.

Our goal is also to encourage those countries to participate in ESM and WSM. Our financial contribution to the ESM fund helps delegates to attend from countries who could not normally afford to take part.

Starting from 2019, our A.A. structure has assumed full responsibility for covering the costs of foreign guests' stay. Another change concerns the program of our conference, replacing the meeting of foreign guests with our Board of Trustees by a working panel, where foreign observers can share their own experience of growing in service and development of service structures in their countries. Such a meeting will be moderated by one or two national delegates.

In compliance with request from our A.A. members Our Board of Trustees has repeatedly asked A.A. structures in other countries for support in specific areas of A.A. services. Cooperation with Professional Community is a good example. A.A. Great Britain has supported us by sending its Class A trustee to attend the meeting with Friends of AA held in Poland every second year. This year we hosted a Class A Trustee from USA / Canada, working with corrections and probation officers.

Let me refer to the service piece that I mentioned earlier. Following the example of A.A. US/Canada and using the experience of A.A. Mexico, which prepared the "Manual of Country Sponsorship" as a result of the decision made at their conference in 2013, we are currently working on our own service material in this topic. Poland A.A. structure seems to play a very similar role for Eastern and Central Europe that is played by Mexico in Latin America; that is why A.A. in this country is an excellent example to follow.

Finally, I would like to share my personal experience in the current service of the national delegate. I participated as an observer in conferences in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Great Britain and French-speaking Belgium. In each and every place I met amazing hospitality, friendship and A.A. love. It was a great thing in my life to experience that the AA Fellowship has no borders and is a truly international being. Conclusion is that we have something to share, and we can use the experience of other countries. Let's do it. We carry A.A. message wherever we can find still suffering alcoholics.

# **Closing Addresses**



## Ewa B (Sweden)

I'm Ewa and I'm an alcoholic. Service, I think I was a little bit odd when I first came here because I'd been to two World Service Meetings before, but I wasn't a delegate. But I met all the delegates and I got a little, oh they think about that and they talk about that and I got curious. My friend told me "You will have to be a World Service Delegate!" Oh no, I'm too old, I can't do that. Oh you speak like a good AA member! He was right.

I got sober when my oldest daughter kicked me and told me "Mother you're an alcoholic, if you don't stop drinking I won't meet you. I won't see you again." Then I drank, and they drove me to an AA meeting. I was drunk and I was crying and I was talking. I pitied myself and I was an alcoholic, everybody left and I didn't understand. But I went back the second time ashamed. Hoped that nobody would see me and thought oh they will kick me out, don't look at me. I went up to the house we had and they hugged me. They hugged me as a welcome back, they didn't think I would be back. I felt 'I'm with friends!' for the first time in my life I was with friends. And I haven't had a drink since that.

I've been good on the 12 Steps because my two daughters followed me. One two months after me, the other three years after. We don't drink alcohol in our family and I'm proud of it, I'm proud of my daughters and I'm proud of my grandchildren because they say, "Grandma we trust you, we know we can always depend on you!" I'm proud, I'm so proud. I'm so grateful because my oldest daughter had cancer and now my youngest also has cancer, the doctor thinks. But I am reliable for my grandchildren, for my daughters. I haven't done this myself; I've done service.

I always talk about the key I got the first time they said I had to make coffee. I was afraid, I didn't know how to manage but I did. I got the key to our house. They're depending on me! I didn't do that myself, but they did. And then I went on with service and something happened inside me. I met people who said "Just do as good as you can. You're not perfect and we don't want you to be perfect." Then I met more and more people and I did more and more service and I learned. I was so grateful and it grew and it grew and if I was working or anything, I had it. I had something that my friends don't have. I have friends I can depend on. I had a teacher who told me "If you have a list of names and you can call them in the middle of the night and ask for a cup of coffee, then you're rich." I'm rich. I'm so rich. I still have that list.

Now I'm looking at you all. I met you some two or three times. You're sitting here, I'm standing here, it's a miracle. It's really a miracle and I'm so grateful.

Thank you very much.

## **Jon Oli O (Iceland)**

Hi, my name is Jon, I'm an alcoholic from Iceland. If you don't believe in miracles, I am a miracle. The reason for that is simple. When I started my journey, the best way to describe it is I didn't believe there was a solution for a guy like me. Because my goal was, I really loved passing out. That was the only goal of every day of my life, the drink that made me pass out. For me standing here, the guy who went rehab only to save his job and his wife, his marriage, and standing here because I did not want to go to AA. I did not want to have a sponsor. I did not want to read the book, do the steps. I later learned about service, I didn't want to do that. And that is why I tell you I am the miracle.

Because one guy came to me and said, "Jon I need a little help, in my group we greet people when they come to the meetings and I really need your help." For some reason I said yes, and from that day I started doing service. And so for me to stand here today it's a miracle because my life has changed. I'm so grateful to get the opportunity to listen to all your stories, what you are doing in your countries. That moves me to do more and more. To get the message out and help people.

Thank you very much.

## Nur I (Turkey)

Hi, my name is Nur and I'm an alcoholic. I would first like to congratulate my friend Yury, my dear friend because I had the privilege to spend quite a long time with him on Friday, we went to an AA meeting together and I listened to his story, so really congratulations from deep in my heart! I just benefitted from spending four or five hours with him and I'm sure the ESM will benefit much more in three or four days.

I was asked to speak about half an hour ago so I'm going to try to improvise. I'm not very good at improvisation, I like really preparing my stuff and everything, but I'll try to talk from the heart. First of all in terms of my alcoholism I'm not here to talk about that I'm here more to talk about service and the ESM, and what the ESM brought me but maybe I'll just do a little introduction.

I have two different sobrieties, I could say I actually have a BS sobriety, a 'before service' sobriety, and AS, an 'after service' experience. Unfortunately, or fortunately, I'm one of those who had a very, very bad relapse and in my first sobriety I did not do service at all and I barely said "I'm an alcoholic" at the meetings. I went to meetings, I didn't drink but I didn't do what I was told so it was an amazing very big experience for me because after the relapse, which lasted about a year, it was very difficult for me to accept that I was an alcoholic because I'm a dipsomaniac so I can stay months sober but once I touch a drink – I'm gone. My dad was an alcoholic and he was drinking twenty-four hours so for me that was an alcoholic, not me.

So now, in my life, the way I live my life, after the relapse, one day at a time. I really try to do whatever I'm told, and whatever I'm told to do is mainly service. That's why from an AA addict I became a service addict because an AA addict was meetings, literature and all that and now service, that's above it. It's really, as I always said from the beginning, for me to stay alive I really have to serve. I think it was Bill W and I think it was in the Big Book, or 12 & 12, I don't want to say it for sure, but there is a phrase that touches me a lot. It says the twelve steps are suggested as it would be suggested to a person to take a parachute and, I'm sure you know this, to jump out of the plane. So, for me service I just replaced the twelve steps, well after having done all that, because while I'm doing service I'm also doing the steps.

It's really for me, its suggested in this position and I take it very seriously, so I'll tell you how we came to this European Service Meeting. After I went back from an American Convention after hearing these psychologists and psychiatrists saying that the ones who had longer sobriety are the ones who did service, I go back and I go to my structure and I say "I want to serve." What I'm best at, you know I like talking, my English is good, I mean whatever you give me! Then in one of the conventions or conferences there was a man and he was non-Turkish speaking and he would just sit at the meetings and just listen. He didn't speak Turkish and he didn't understand Turkish and I went to him and I said "Would you like me to translate? But just one question, does it count as service?" for me, because it was the very beginning of my service here, does it count as service if I translate? So that's how I started and through that person came the opportunity to attend this European Service Meeting two years ago and the World Service Meeting one year ago, to become a part of the international structure.

The European Service Meeting, I'll focus on that, has been for me, especially now the second time being here, it's just really love. I betrayed my own workshop proposal, the topic it was a different one, and I voted for 'Love and Service' because I feel it deep in my heart.

I felt a lot of love during these days, and apart from the information I took to my country which helped in the debate of being an association or not, it helped enormously, the reports, everything. The love that I'm taking back to my country is just tremendous. And I would really like to thank you for that.

I'll finish with this. When I was a student I had the privilege to get a scholarship in the United States and there I had some host families. One of these host families wrote a thank you letter, like a reference letter, to the place that gave me the scholarship. It was saying she wears her heart on her face. Unfortunately, when I was an active alcoholic I was not wearing my heart on my face. I was wearing my heart on my face when I was young, but then when I became an active alcoholic I was not. Its thanks to you, and thanks to service that I again starting wearing my heart on my face because you all are wearing your hearts on your faces. So I really want to thank everybody for making this possible.

## Werner F (Austria)

My name is Werner and I am still an alcoholic. And I'm a miracle too, I think we are all miracles. Where should I begin, I don't know. At the beginning as they say of course! I'd love to talk about service and not my recovery, but I have to say I began my journey of recovery in Jersey in the Channel Islands and I am still a resident there. In the end of my drinking, when I discovered AA, in the 'Who Me?' booklet I could identify myself, that I had a problem, that there is a solution. I could identify but I couldn't put it into action. If I go to a meeting that's what I did. After a little while in recovery, in AA in my meetings for a few months, and I learned about the steps and traditions and I heard about PI, what PI did and work they would do in service, and it dawned on me suddenly, yes! When I was in hospital this message of information, when I recovered after three weeks of drinking around the clock, that was put there for me by the hands of a PI person in service.

As I recovered at the same time I was always thinking about these services. Even in my first meeting, I remember in Jersey it was a very big meeting about 35/40 people in the room, on the same day I left hospital I went to my first meeting. I managed to get through the door, there was laughter, there was a different atmosphere but I felt home. People greeted me, people were chatting, this that and the other before the meeting and suddenly the meeting started. "Wow!" I said to myself, all of a sudden there was quietness. That chairperson he impressed me, my god he's got that bunch of alcoholics in his hand, I wish I could do that, how does he do it? That impressed me. Five people shared, alcoholics talking about themselves. I could feel it, I'd done that too, so I could feel I'm going to be asked next.

What did I say? I just simply said "My name is Werner and I'm an alcoholic. It's my first meeting, I'd just like to listen." That's what I said without realising or thinking about anything, just from my heart and that is what I wanted to say. I was still bottled up with this shame and guilt that had to come out. Saying this in front of and surrounded by other alcoholics, that feeling got me free. I was about half a year in that meeting and straight away I moved around different meetings and got to know different people and met people who did service. How did they do service? Why does it work? Why does this work, why does that work? All that kept me coming back. These things were going round in my recovery, do I really need all this? Yes I do! This stuff went around my head and it drove me back to meetings.

My first service job I was suddenly asked "My time in literature is finished can you take it over?" Me? I was shocked! They're asking me? I felt honoured. I just said yes! Ok what do I do? "Just take that Tuesday box, put the literature out, spread it out." And I discovered after doing that a couple of times at the bottom of this box there was the handbook. What's in the handbook? Just looking at the literature of different services, the books and this and that and the other, I thought I'm never going to get all that. How do I get this stuff, what is this about, what's that about? But at the bottom, as I said, I found a handbook of the structure of Great Britain. I asked someone "Can I take this home with me? I'll bring it back next week and put it back in the box." "Yes you can do that!" So I took it home with me and read about it, hardly understanding anything, but what I understood was how everything was connected with one another. From groups to intergroups to regions and so on.

Of course, not the way I understand everything today, I've been through a bit of service levels. It all started in the group, at group level. I never asked for anything. I never knew what service I would do next, simply I heard the message that if you're asked to do something in AA try to do it. That's what I've always tried. This morning we voted love and service and I could feel the love, and the love for service needs to be there too, to make things work and to make things work for me.

I felt I could understand everything better in AA, about the traditions, about how it comes together and how it works. Even getting the first book in recovery somebody showed me straight away the page how it works, you know, so all that was very important to me, how does recovery work? At the same time the balance how the services all work and just this connection of thinking. I remember the coin my sponsor gave me, the legacy, and said "Do you understand the legacy? Do you know what it means?" I said "Yes its quite simple. We recover, the unity, we're together and all that, and we do service!" "Yes!" he said "That's the balance! Make sure you always have a service job." And that's what I did.

So, I'm here to represent Austria, how did that come about? Since my retirement I've spent a lot of time in Austria and the area I'm in has no English-speaking meetings. So, I had to adapt, and I had to grow into German speaking meetings. My mother language is German, but I've been in jersey since 1973 and started AA in 1996. I had to get back to my mother language in AA and it felt strange to me, it really felt strange because even today I still read everything in English only the necessary stuff when I'm in Austria. Obviously I got used to the groups very quickly, got around doing service and that's where it leads to. Finally they suggested to me "Have you ever thought about being the European delegate?" I said "No, not really". They said, "Think about it!" I forgot all about it. The next minute I missed one regional meeting and then I was in the regional meeting again and I was in the minutes! They said I'm taking the job as the European Service Delegate! Oh wow! I said "Friends, I said that I'm thinking about it but not that I'm standing for it!" But anyway, that's how I got here. I don't know what's coming next!

But briefly what's been happening here. I enjoyed last time and I was looking forward to the second time and meeting everybody again from the first time being second term delegate this time and I wish I could come again. But my time is over, I have to move on with something else. Something will come, I don't know what, I'm not focussing on anything just simply a day at a time and see what life brings. It was amazing you know, seeing everybody again, being here and sharing, sitting in a room and feeling this conscience, this spirit we've tuned into and to get the right answers. My friend Jose, Jose over there! I'm talking about you! This guy is a miracle too you know, many times I had dinner with him on the table, he wanted to talk to me. We could only communicate through his daughter translating everything but even in the meetings he had the answers already printed out but his heart and soul with it. The way he communicates without speaking English is marvellous, it works. His heart is there, his spirit is there, I could feel it. I could feel it with so many others of you, all of you of course.

And the way it's been organised. Sophie, I remember the first time I came here. Austria said to me "Don't worry, all the papers will come to you" but they didn't! what did I do? I wrote to GSO, Mary was on the front desk and replied and put me on the right path. I said they'd nominated me as the next European delegate in Austria, but I haven't got anything yet? She said, "Get in contact with GSO York" and I will be there at that event as well, she promised me in that email. So obviously I'd written to York and Sophie answered, replied straight away and sent me all the stuff through and I got on with it. But my conscience, my fear! How am I going to get this together? I just out things in my own head and got on with it. I did it in many things in service.

I don't know what the next service jobs will bring but whatever it is, whatever has to be done I try to do it. When I get back in every meeting, wherever I am I encourage people to do service. Like I say in helps keep me sober, it keeps me straight, it keeps me in spiritual thinking and it really does because it keeps me in tune with myself, with AA as a whole, and I think I'm already going over time. Everybody's hungry, everybody wants to go home, and I don't want to finish it! I want to do it all over again! But I'll finish with one thing, and what I have contributed to commemorate here and id like to share this with you to end my talk for now.

On this spiritual bright milestone occasion, it is an awesome feeling how deeply affecting this spectacle of AA successes in our good part of Europe works. We are so much more than simply neighbours, we are friends and bound together by our common experience, mutual interest and shared principles and values, and deeply invest in each other's future. Let us hope we will continue to be an indispensable force for the good in our World and that our Fellowship that binds us together will continue to create fruitful opportunities for us all. In the spirit of our ESM, let us hope; trust God that we have a happy destiny. God bless you all, thank you.

## **Rita M (Italy) – Chair of the 20<sup>th</sup> ESM**

Ok, now I'll just close this wonderful ESM. I wish to thank each and every one of you for having been collaborative, for having always responded well with the reports, with the question and answer sessions. I wish to thank the World Services, Eva, David and Greg, who's no longer here with us but I ask you to bring him my thanks. I appreciated your service. If something went wrong I make amend and ask your forgiveness! I wish to thank the staff who have always been by my side, who have always helped. I want to wish Yury a very good service for your next ESM and all the next agenda committee. I'm very sure that Alcoholics Anonymous will keep living until we find people who are in service like you are. Thank you very, very much.