

AA IN A CHANGING WORLD



22ND EUROPEAN SERVICE
MEETING 2023

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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-five European countries gathered together at the Radisson Hotel, York, from the 20th to 22nd October 2023 to take part in the 22nd European Service Meeting (ESM).

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

Austria	Latvia
Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	Lithuania
Bulgaria	Malta
Croatia	Netherlands
Czech Republic	Norway
Denmark	Poland
Finland	Portugal
French Speaking Europe – (France, Belgium, Switzerland)	Romania
Germany	Slovakia
Great Britain	Slovenia
Ireland	Spain
Italy	Sweden

Due to the weather, and visa issues the following countries were unfortunately unable to attend but submitted reports.

Belarus
Hungary
Iceland
Russia
Ukraine

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

The Twenty Second European Service Meeting was opened by the Chair, Tobias D (Denmark), with a moment's silence. He welcomed all delegates as well as Ranjan B, the General Secretary (EIC) and the staff from Great Britain, and last but not least Bob W - General Manager, and Irene D - International Co-Ordinator, from General Service Office (GSO), United States/Canada. Following the reading of the 12 Traditions a roll call was held and all attendees were invited to introduce themselves. He then gave an opening address which was thought provoking and optimistic, thus setting the mood for the whole of the weekend.

Following the Welcome and Opening Address was the Keynote Address, which was presented by Irene D, International Desk, GSO New York. A presentation on AA World Services Translation & Licensing Publishing was given by Bob W, the General Manager at

GSO, United States/Canada which included a financial report on both the International Literature Fund and the new World Service Meeting (WSM) account. These were followed by a presentation of the 27th WSM which was given by Elena S (Lithuania) & Iza A (Poland).

Ranjan B, General Secretary, EIC, gave a short talk on the ESM Fund and highlighted a large surplus in the account resulting from the closure of a historic deposit account. After being properly proposed and seconded it was agreed that the surplus of £28,279.23 be transferred into the WSM Fund.

Finally, one delegate from each country shared the highlights of their country's report.

On Saturday in the Committees and Workshops took place, with delegates sharing experience, strength, and hope from their country's structures. Each committee and workshop chair reported back on the discussions held within their meetings to the full meeting on Saturday afternoon (committees) and Sunday morning (workshops). All the committee reports were approved unanimously.

Saturday evening allowed a little time for relaxation with the Sharing meeting. Presentations were given by Daniel G (Romania) and Moira S (Ireland) on the theme: "We may refuse none who wish to recover: Inclusivity in AA".

Two question and answer sessions were also held over the weekend with many interesting discussions.

Following elections on Sunday morning, Moira S (Ireland) was elected Chair of the 23rd ESM.

Jony F-T (Netherlands) and Maija T (Latvia) will prepare a report to the 28th WSM 2024 on this 22nd ESM. They will also report back to the 23rd ESM in 2025 on the 29th WSM.

The Agenda Committee for the 23rd ESM will consist of the following:

Moira S, Ireland	Chair of the 23 rd ESM
Ranjan Bhattacharyya	General Secretary EIC
Pascal D, Belgium (Flemish)	Chair of the Service Committee
Dunja P, Croatia	Chair of the Recovery Committee
Regis C, French Speaking Europe	Chair of the Unity Committee

The Agenda Committee will meet during the summer of 2024 to discuss all questions forwarded to them via the EIC. The programme of the 23rd ESM will be finalised, and the agenda set.

To finalise the weekend addresses were given by Nevena B (Bulgaria), Elena S (Romania), Jo F (Great Britain), and Dany DeB, (Belgium - Flemish Speaking), all of whom shared their positive experiences, some recounting their memories of the weekend and others of the years leading up to this ESM.

Finally, Tobias D (Denmark) our Chair, closed the 22nd ESM with an uplifting address, which looked to the future with great encouragement.

To bring the 22nd ESM to a close all delegates were invited to take 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 22nd European Service Meeting 2023

Friday 20th October

Welcome and Opening Address

Twelve Traditions

Roll Call

Keynote Address

AA World Service Translation and Licensing Publishing Report

Report on the ESM Fund

World Service Meeting Report

Country Reports

Saturday 21st October

Committee Meetings

Workshops

Presentation & discussion following Committee Reports

Questions and Answers Session

AA Sharing Meeting on the theme: *“We may refuse none who wish to recover: Inclusivity in AA”*

Sunday 22nd October

Presentation & Discussion Workshop Reports

Questions and Answers Session

23rd European Service Meeting

- Time and Place
- Election of Chair
- Selection of theme for 23rd ESM
- Selection of (1st term) ESM Delegate to prepare ESM Report for World Service
- Meeting (VSM) 2024 and report back to the 23rd ESM in 2025
- Formation of the Agenda Committee

Closing Addresses

Close of 22nd European Service Meeting 2023

Serenity Prayer in all languages

Opening Presentations

WELCOME ADDRESS

“ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN A CHANGING WORLD”

CHAIR – TOBIAS D, DENMARK

Dear delegates, welcome to this gathering of experience, strength and hope on a more structural level. I hope you are all well prepared and enthusiastic to be here. We shall have great spiritual growth this weekend if we are capable of listening and accepting that we don't have all the answers. In the coming days you will be overwhelmed by the temptation to feeling superior to your peers, who are coming from different countries and dealing with the issues of structuring Alcoholics Anonymous in their own way. It might also be a feeling of being inferior to what experience they might have in other countries compared to yours and that your knowledge/experience is limited in comparison. In any circumstance, please hear me; these feelings are natural and not true. You are here because you are representing the fellowship of your country. You have no more to say or no less to say than others. We are all equal. Your thoughts, your words, and your opinions matter. Please do not hold back. We have been chosen to be here to influence and inspire each other; to help each other. We have an obligation to do so regardless of the perspective we come from.

In relation to the theme for this weekend and in the words of the great poet “oh The Times They Are A-Changing”. And have they not always been doing that? We have a tendency to stand from our peak of the mountain and say the times we are living in now are extraordinary special; the challenges we are facing are unique and nothing we will come to face in the future, will be as tough as what we are dealing with now. Is that not a self-centered deceit? Are we not in fact always dealing with tough challenges; dilemmas that the changing times are demanding of us? I believe so and from that point of view the sky is clear. What have been troubling us yesterday has already passed, we must deal with what we are facing now, because we do not know what tomorrow will bring. In that perspective the challenges of Covid becomes almost insignificant, as they are already passed and no longer relevant. Did they force us to adapt and navigate differently? Yes, they did. They also taught us lessons – Unity being the first one that comes to mind. Without unity we are like a star without the light, like a tree with no sun, like an ocean without any fish; we have lost our purpose. Another lesson being presence. A meeting (or a conference for that matter) is not the same in the digital world. Or at least for me it is not, and I have attended 3 out of 4 Service Meetings (ESM and WSM) online. There are probably a lot more lessons that you have come across or that I don't have the capacity to verbalize, but the last one I will try to describe is the way our structure is built. We have a structure based on geography and we don't need to rely on that no more. How we should base our structure is beyond my comprehension but maybe time will tell?

As spoken earlier these challenges are already passed and are almost insignificant in the light of the day of today. What we are dealing with now is, at least in our part of the world, generations that are used to having everything individualized. Our message of recovery, of unity and of service, is a message that you don't hear out there in the big world. Because the times they are a-changing, so the private companies and the governmental institutions dealing with alcoholism are individualizing their solution. They look to what their clients are looking for and alter their solution in order to reach as many as possible.

Alcoholics Anonymous is like a shining light in the darkness, our solution – our message has not changed throughout the years. We don't look to the changing times to alter our message. What we do have to do is to follow with them and make sure we don't become invisible to the society. Come tomorrow we don't know what will face us, but we must hold on to our core values as a fellowship and insist on carrying the message to the alcoholic that still suffers.

In the words of the great poet “oh The Times They Are A-Changing” – yes, they are – always. No matter where you stand in the timeline of this world's history or future, the changing times are a dilemma. You, the delegates of this conference, have to figure out how to cut through the dilemmas and focus on our core values. You will maybe in hindsight see what greater good we did here, and how extraordinary privileged we are to be meeting up like this. At least that's what I did, and I try to live by the principles, that I did learn here, every day.

Because no one, not even the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous, likes to be preached or told what to do. So, I cannot recommend going home and telling others what we need to change in our structure, because of what you have learned here.

No, what I do recommend is being a living example of the testament that happened here, live by it every day. Listen to the challenges; the dilemmas the ever-changing times are throwing at your doorstep and try to be constructive, but also persistent in keeping in line with our traditions. I am very much looking forward to being a part of this weekend, and this journey with all of you blessed alcoholics. I wish you the very best experience this weekend and if there is something you would like to discuss, I am always available to do so.

In love and service

Tobias D – Toby Wan Kenoby
Denmark.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN A CHANGING WORLD”

IRENE D, INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR, GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE, UNITED STATES/CANADA

Good afternoon, my name is Irene, and I am an alcoholic. I would first like to thank the planning committee for the European Service Meeting for inviting me to give this keynote address. My thanks to all of you for allowing me to participate in this small way. I am looking forward to this full weekend of sharing, and for the opportunity to meet with new friends gathered here. My colleagues back at our General Service Office in New York and our Board members are sending a message of AA love and gratitude for what you do to help others find our message of hope and recovery from alcoholism.

Before I came to this event, in a typical alcoholic fashion, I was having some fears because of my accent. Then a colleague reminded me that at this gathering I will be one of many, you are coming from 20 countries, and you all speak other languages, and you might have a strong accent like mine. I got sober in NYC and I had my last few drinks before touching bottom convinced that alcohol was the only way to belong.

When I came to AA everything was prepared for me: I was in the hospital psychiatric emergency room and because of you the doctors and nurses knew what to do with me, they knew that I needed you and they took me to a room where an AA meeting was happening. It seemed all strange to me that doctors would take me to a room of ordinary people and not to an specialist in alcohol.

I am telling you this because the topic you asked me to share this afternoon: AA in a Challenging World reminds me of my beginnings and how a stubborn alcoholic, who did not want to stop drinking has never tasted alcohol again, and in that process that person became another one. You would ask what is the relation between those early days of sobriety and the topic? Well, first you taught me to keep it simple and thanks to following that simplicity I grew up. I was 45 years old when I met AA and during these 18 years, I evolved into someone that I never dreamt of. I think I became an adult. Many things happened during that time, losses, break ups, financial insecurity, fear of the future. I walked through all that guided by our principles, the steps to keep me honest, the traditions to help me navigate the world. My life got bigger and bigger, the concepts guided my path as a service person and later as a worker in our offices.

Today in a world that changes and challenges us at the very other minute I think of the AA Promises: “No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others”.

In the forward to the Third Edition of our Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous it reads: “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 an alcoholic talks with another alcoholic: sharing experience, strength, and hope.”

This weekend you will share the experience, strength and hope of each of the structures you are representing, and you will return home on Sunday bringing to your local fellowship the richness of that sharing, perhaps with many new questions but surely with many answers. Each of us in the recovery process had to confront many obstacles, the world did not stop when we got sober, life sometimes got more complicated, or more modern but we had our principles, without them we wouldn't have changed.

In his writings, Bill shared clearly about the fears the early members had of A.A. becoming rigid and unable to realistically assess and meet challenges.

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. Our pioneers concluded that we would survive and function well if we maintained a willingness to change. And we can freely embrace a willingness to change to the degree that we adhere to, practice, and celebrate A.A. principles and purpose. It allows us to have one focus, one purpose and thus offers us a creative freedom to extend ourselves to all suffering alcoholics whether they are rich or poor, gender A, B or C, young or old, of our culture or of another, of our race or of another, within our national borders or outside of them.

I was recently attending our Zonal meeting REDELA (the meeting of the Americas) in Medellin, Colombia -and I was awestruck of the multi-faceted challenges faced in some of the countries. To participate one delegate had to walk hours crossing a treacherous bridge that separated his country from the neighboring one and then take a 15-hour bus ride. He was always smiling and when I asked him how he could be so optimistic, he said: it is you, it is being around AA that keeps me optimistic. At REDELA there were difficult conversations at the table: the few women delegates reclaimed their right to participate fully, there were concerns regarding shrinking membership, fears of emerging structures, and opposing views regarding virtual meetings, whether they are damaging to our unity or whether to embrace it. One structure shared how they survived despite extreme challenges product of difficult political situations in their countries, one who forbade the use of the word fellowship because it incited political statement.

Once again, I am reminded that AA worldwide is extraordinary, unbelievably persistent, and abundant with kind, generous, caring gestures to help others. The doors of AA are so very wide and the commitment to make AA accessible to all is truly inspiring and humbling.

Regardless of how many groups, members, years, with or without structure or emerging structure- the sacrifices you make in service are many and the challenges and

circumstances you face at times can be overwhelming and discouraging. We may be separated by country, language, culture or distance but we all have something in common – alcoholism and a way to live sober with love and understanding. When we begin our journey in service eventually we become open. Whether living on the mountain top or in the valley that sense of purpose in us preserves and keeps the lighting the way.

A.A. is a movement, a great work-in-progress – it is ongoing; there is no end point. It is with this beautiful generative spirit, in my view, that A.A. can continue to meet any new problems we might face.

If we keep open minds and open ears and most important, open hearts, together we will reach solutions on how to practice A.A. principles that are best for each particular problem.

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

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

Thank you for all that your home groups, committees, and local offices and you do in service helping others and for keeping AA doors always open.

AA WORLD SERVICE TRANSLATION AND LICENSING PUBLISHING REPORT

BOB W - GENERAL MANAGER, GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE, UNITED STATES/CANADA

My tenure as General Manager of the General Service Office of the United States and Canada began in June of 2021. Very early on, I determined that the international licensing and translation services of our literature we provide worldwide greatly needed additional resources and new processes. Some of you may recall my communication in February of 2022 acknowledging our shortcomings in fulfilling our responsibilities of this important service. I committed our pledge to clean up the backlog of requests and to develop and implement new processes, procedures, and policies.

Since that time our office has been working hard to make this happen.

Licensing

TL@aa.org

The TL@aa.org email address was established in February of 2022 as the beginning point in gaining an understanding of the gravity of the overwhelming number of backlogged licensing service requests. We asked the international community for their patience and to forward any new or outstanding requests to us again. Internally, we also moved requests from our old email addresses to the TL@aa.org address so we could organize and centralize them. This quickly rose to an email exchange of over 3,000. It's important to note that the number of emails didn't equate to the number of licenses or questions as an individual email could potentially contain multiple requests or questions.

Immediately upon establishing the address, we began to filter through these emails and process requests. On June 27, 2022, we launched a request management solution in our automation system to manage the AAWS translation licensing function. This was a key shift for us as we were then able to begin moving open requests from the TL email into our integrated management system allowing us to process them more efficiently than through email. We subsequently began building a new portal, Translation Licensing Connection (TL Connection), to be the primary contact point for international structures to submit and view all translation and licensing service requests.

Until September of last year, the international licensing function was managed within our Publishing Department. To provide more focus and direct oversight, the licensing function was reorganized into a separate department also including functions of intellectual property, copyrights, and general legal coordination. And just one month prior, Beverly Jones-King joined the General Service Office as Executive Legal Administrator to lead this transition.

ERP and TL Connection

The development and building of TL Connection was completed earlier this year and is fully integrated with the G.S.O. ERP solution (our automation system). We also integrated DocuSign, an automated method to sign and deliver licenses, into the workflow, which significantly increases our speed and efficiency in processing licenses. We tested TL Connection with three countries, which was very well received and successful. We also added two temporary employees in March, to step up our progress.

In April, Translations Licensing Connection was officially launched to the international community. Attendees included representatives from several GSO's, Literature Committees, international delegates, and some of our own trusted servants. It was recorded and will be available for viewing for those who were not able to attend. We have also conducted additional virtual 1 on 1 meetings with various international structures to provide more training and to answer questions.

To date, approximately 50 structures have completed the TL Connection application form and now have access to it. TL Connection gives these structures the ability to input requests directly, review status updates and connect with the Licensing team. We continue to encourage all structures to register and use TL Connection to request and manage their licenses as this is the most efficient and preferred way to receive licensing requests, see statuses and pose questions.

We are now in a very exciting stage of this organizational restructure as both the request management solution and TL Connection are fully functional and, with virtually all requests being directly uploaded into TL Connection, we have less to transfer from email ourselves and can focus on processing! This has given us a more accurate reflection of the status of our work.

Where we are now

The international licensing and translations backlog has been completed. Internal policies and procedures are in process. We have made good progress and established many new workflows that allow us to keep current with requests received within the most recent 45-day period. All inquiries receive an immediate automated acknowledgement with notification that we will respond promptly.

It is important to understand that inquiries to the Translations and Licensing team vary and often require international structures to supply us with certain information and documents. It is truly a joint effort between their point of contact and our team. For instance, when a license is requested, our team prepares the licensing agreements and forwards them for signature. Sometimes there can be long delays before we receive the signed documents as the local structures have their own autonomous processes such as the need for board or other approval procedures. There are also many other types of inquiries that generate the need for a regular exchange between local structures and our team. This is particularly true when any new translation takes place. The key is to do our part and move the process along quickly.

Continued development of policies and procedures are ongoing with swift progress close ahead. We are working with our legal counsel to streamline our licensing forms so various licenses can be included in one agreement and chosen on an a-la-cart basis. We are also adjusting language within the agreements to allow for automatic renewals and automating that process, which will tremendously reduce renewal processing time.

As the demand for access for digital, eBooks and audio books has increased, new policies are necessary to meet these needs. Consultation with the AAWS Board through its ad hoc committee on Intellectual Property will begin shortly to reaffirm past policies and create new ones where needed. Our goal is to address and accommodate the needs of structures around the world.

Draft procedures have begun based on our new processes which utilize the new Translation and Licensing Connections program (TLC). Completion of our procedures and processes will happen as we determine policies with the ad hoc committee and enhancements to our agreements.

AA Grapevine Titles

To date our focus on clean-up of backlog has been specific to A.A.W.S. This is largely due to the fact that our request management solution in our system is integrated with our webstore which doesn't include Grapevine titles. This is why Grapevine requests have not yet been processed.

We are currently developing a project management solution specific to Grapevine. It will include a Grapevine license request form accessible within TL Connection so when structures complete the form, they will be delivered directly to Grapevine personnel. This form will be added in the next few weeks.

Further conversations among Grapevine and AAWS management will determine complete workflows between each office including issuance and the possible use of DocuSign for execution. The final process will provide both AAWS and Grapevine details of timelines and the status of requests.

New Process and Policy Development

As I mentioned, we are beginning to draft official detailed policies and procedures to request and process new translations and licenses, our renewal, amendment and other processes. I would like to provide you with some thoughts as to what these will look like.

Some general guidelines:

- AA World Services, Inc. literature can only be offered for sale by an official General Service Office (GSO) and/or General Service Board.
- The standard term of licenses will be issued for 10 years.

- Countries that do not have an established GSO or General Services Board may still be eligible to obtain A.A. Literature translation permissions and print authorization. These authorizations will provide authority that local printers may require to print specific quantities and titles without a license.
- Licenses to print and distribute literature in languages other than a structure's primary language may be available, however, distribution within the primary license holder's country is restricted and reserved to the primary license holder.
- The use of on-line or electronic translation tools such as Google translate, iTranslate, etc. are helpful to many of us when communicating with each other but are not an accepted method for the translation of A.A. Literature.
- AA World Services, Inc. does not charge for translation rights to the literature they publish.
- The General Service Office in New York handles all copyright registrations for all translation, therefore other structures don't need to be concerned with this process.
- Translations, Licenses, or amendments will be available in print (books or pamphlets), eBooks, audiobooks, and video.

New Translations

Each translation begins with an expressed need within local A.A. communities. Most often, a committee within the local community is formed to help manage the process with one point person or chairperson identified to work with our office. This allows for the clearest communication and helps to eliminate confusion and delays as multiple representatives may have conflicting information.

Requests are submitted through TL Connection.

Requests are reviewed to ensure that all necessary information has been submitted and criteria met.

If you need assistance with your submission, you can request a virtual meeting with us through TL Connection (TLC) for guidance with the process. If you don't yet have access to TLC, please send us an email at TL@aa.org

Generally, your local committee drafts the initial translation. This allows for your local community to participate in the process, ensuring that your local culture of the new language is captured properly.

We will interact with you through the process to answer your questions and share experience when needed.

Upon receipt of your complete submission, our Licensing Administrator arranges for review by an outside, independent-translation-evaluation professional.

This review service locates a professional linguist familiar with A.A.'s literature, who will report on the submission's clarity, adherence to the sense, spirit, tone, the passion of the original English work and the translation's overall integrity.

The evaluation service provides a report which we will pass on to the chairperson. The report may include suggestions for improvement such as grammar or word choices and a general critique.

The report then serves as a guide for the local committee to correct and polish the text for completion.

Upon re-submission, the edited document is re-evaluated by our service.

Upon their approval, A.A.W.S. executes licenses through DocuSign to reproduce and distribute.

We are now exploring an alternative approach to address situations where there may be challenges finding expertise within a structure that has command of the English translation which is needed to translate into their native language. Without this expertise, the development of new translations is limited. Where these challenges exist, we are considering beginning new translations through our translations service professionals and then sharing their work with the local committees. This approach holds a significantly higher cost but without it may mean a translation may never get started.

Renewals

As mentioned previously, we are now investigating implementing automatic license renewals whereby a communication will be made several months before a license is due to expire. This communication will provide time to decide whether or not to renew. If no action is taken, licenses will automatically renew and a notification to execute through DocuSign will be sent.

Amendments

Amendments are generally issued when licenses are held for specific titles and there is a desire to license in an additional format such as an eBook.

Current and Pending Translations

Similar to other types of inquiries to the TL team, processing of new translations has been slower than in past years. Despite this slowdown, this year the team was still able to process and complete twenty-seven new or re-translations of various books and pamphlets with seventeen others in process. We will be providing an increased focus to move these new translation projects to the forefront including budgeting and use of the International Literature Fund.

eBooks & Audio Books

Items of A.A. literature in print in translated languages (other than English, French and Spanish) may be converted into ebook formats. Upon completion, we will issue an amendment to your print license for each item.

Although A.A.W.S does not provide eBook conversion services, we acknowledge the requests the World Service Meeting Literature Committee:

- “That AAWS gather shared experience on creating e-books and making literature available online with proper copyright protections in
- place. The committee discussed that it would be helpful to develop a service piece that would provide this shared experience.”
- “A service piece that outlines the mechanics of electronic literature, methods to produce e-books, how to produce read-only online materials, audio streaming, and protection against the illegal distribution of electronic literature is essential.”
- To address the issues related to electronic literature, production, licenses, etc., the committee also suggested that AAWS consider the idea of utilizing a centralized vendor for electronic literature for all languages and that it be administered by AAWS.

Our Experience

Now that the backlog of licensing inquiries has been completed, we will begin gathering shared experience on creating eBooks and audio books. Our structures experience and guidance with e-books is as follows:

- eBooks use the same translated text as print editions; therefore, review of your converted eBooks is not necessary.
- Our eBook conversion charges range from \$1,000 - \$4,000 each, depending upon word and page count totals and the number of illustrations.
- Conversion is completed by a reputable outside vendor who provides read-only access and ensures security measures and protection against illegal distribution.
- Our eBooks are available for our Fellowship in English, French and Spanish.
- We set list prices for eBooks (and audiobooks) as close to the list prices of print books, for fairness and equal access.
- For audio books, we retain a professional narrator “talent” and use professional studios. This greatly improves the quality of the completed Audiobook.
- Narrators are required to sign official release forms which our office will supply.

eBook Distribution Options

Each structure has the latitude to decide how their ebooks will be distributed. Once you receive the amendment to your license, you may distribute the ebook.

You may distribute ebooks directly from your official A.A. website or via a vendor or a vendor hub. Vendor hubs may include platforms that carry ebook distribution to individuals, libraries, institutions, professionals, and subscription services.

Websites & Apps

A license is required to post your approved translated books, booklets or pamphlets in PDF format or Audiobooks, on your structure's official website. We will need the URL / domain name of that website confirmed, to be included in the License.

International Literature Fund

Since the inception of the International Literature Fund in 1990, the impact on the increase of the reach of our literature into the hands of hopeless alcoholics is incalculable. The generous contributions from around the world since that time are truly amazing and are now in excess of over 2 million dollars.

In 1992, the literature/publishing committee of the World Service Meeting agreed that the International Literature Fund should be under the purview of the World Service Meeting literature/publishing committee. The committee also suggested that "A.A. World Services (A.A.W.S.) use proceeds of the International Literature Fund to offset A.A.W.S.'s expenditures for foreign literature assistance, and to reimburse similar expenses incurred by other overseas A.A. offices or boards." They further noted that "A.A.W.S. should have the latitude to prioritize the use of these monies based on the need as expressed by each GSO and World Service delegate."

Since that time, the General Service Office of the U.S./Canada has carried out the administration of this fund. Over the years the activity levels of assisting other countries with the cost of translating, producing, and distributing literature have been very robust. To illustrate this this point, when the idea of the fund was born in 1990, the Big Book was translated into about 17 languages and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions into 3 languages. Today they are translated into 72 and 51 respectively. And that's only the translation of two books! There are so many other titles and pamphlets that have been through the same process. You can imagine the hours and efforts that went into making this possible. Without this fund, we wouldn't have been able to come close to this achievement.

In 2016, the 24th World Service Meeting expressed the need for more detailed accounting of the International Literature Fund. The increase in detail over the last few years has been notable, however, the accounting of the fund has, in my opinion, fallen short. As we took our inventory, we noted a good accounting and reporting of the contributions to the fund but had not done so effectively with financial outflows. When I was hired as general manager, I committed to infuse A.A.'s principles embodied in our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts, into the operations of our office.

To this end, at the last World Service Meeting, I offered amends on behalf of our office and acknowledged that we have fallen short of our responsibility to administer the fund and to fully report on its activity. For those here today who were not at the last World Service Meeting, I offer our sincere amends to you as well. My personal understanding and practice of the amends process comes with a commitment to do my best to change behavior in order to help me not repeat my mistakes as I move moving forward.

In a similar spirit, the General Service Office has taken steps to draft detailed guidance to apply to all opportunities when these funds are utilized. We have instituted new accounting procedures that allow us to better account for both inflows and outflows of the fund in full detail. Based on the many activities related to the international literature assistance we provided to other structures for literature, we are certain costs have been well in excess of the funds received. Of particular note is our investment in new computer systems to track translation and licensing activity, which allows us to assist countries more efficiently.

Our new accounting and governance policies have now been implemented along with new procedures that allow for the detailed and transparent reporting which has been asked of us for some time. Of note is the establishment of a new separate bank account dedicated specifically to the International Literature Fund. This is a key step in the changes we've instituted as it allows for regular reconciliation of all activity within the fund.

As promised at the last World Service Meeting, we are now providing interim reports to each of the zonal meetings this year and will continue to do so. Our new governance policy also requires that complete fund activity be reported to the AAWS Board on a quarterly basis for review and be subsequently forwarded to the Trustees International Committee of the General Service Bord for their review. This has also been implemented.

After an analysis of fund activity through 2022, the AAWS Board agreed to transfer \$19,821 in January of 2023 to serve as a beginning point for new reporting. I have provided and attached detailed a year-to-date report.

World Service Meeting Fund

I also wanted to share some thoughts regarding the World Service Meeting Fund. It was created during the 2018 World Service Meeting and is recent enough that we have full and transparent accounting. Similar to the International Literature Fund, we have created a separate bank account specific to this fund. At the time the new bank account was created, the fund held a balance of \$25,246.81 which we transferred into the new account. Final accounting had not yet been completed for the 2022 World Service Meeting, so we subsequently transferred an additional \$11,437.74 after that was completed. I have also provided a detailed year-to-date report for this fund.

Our structure underwrites approximately \$250,000 for each meeting and typically more when they are held in New York City. The decision to meet virtually the last two years was a very difficult and largely based on the uncertainties of the pandemic but also out of prudence for our own finances. Like many of you, our structure is dealing with financial challenges.

Reductions in our literature sales and revenue combined with inflation, and the demand for additional services, have posed challenges to us that make it even more critical to bring the World Service Meeting closer to being self-supporting.

I recognize reaching the goal of self-support will be challenging, but I have faith we can find a way. All of us hold an equal Seventh Tradition responsibility to the World Service Meeting Fund. The fund is a key component to achieving self-support.

The most important aspect of the Seventh Tradition is participation. Contributions to each of these funds no matter how small, all hold equal spiritual value. With this in mind, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the sacrifices so many countries around the world have made to participate. They have assisted so many counties in carrying the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic.

Thank you very much.

REPORT ON THE 27TH WORLD SERVICE MEETING 1-6 OCTOBER 2022, AN ONLINE EVENT

THEME: "CARRYING THE MESSAGE OF A.A. IN THE DIGITAL AGE"

ELENA S, LITHUANIA & IZA A, POLAND

The World Service Meeting (WSM), established in 1969, serves as a biennial forum for sharing the experience, strength, and hope of the assembled delegates in carrying the message of A.A. and can represent an expression of the worldwide group's conscience.

With record high participation, 75 delegates from 49 countries and regional service structures met for the 27th World Service Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous from October 1-6, 2022. To avoid the risks of Covid 19, the WSM was held remotely for the second time in a row.

Mongolia participated as a country for the first time, with their delegate Tserennyam D. expressing an enthusiasm for taking part that lifted hearts across all language barriers.

More than 20 people helped to make the 27th AA World Service Meeting happen - current and former staff and employees of GSO USA/Canada, translators, technical staff, the WSM moderator – Bob. W., and coordinator – Racy. J.

The meeting opened with a virtual red ball roll call and orientation where delegates could see and hear the depth and breadth of A.A.'s reach around the world, followed by welcoming speeches (Bob W., GSO USA/Canada CEO and Racy J., 27th GSO international staff coordinator) and the WSM keynote address on "Carrying the Message of A.A. in the Digital Age" (Tadeusz Ch., Poland).

The six-day agenda included: short reports/highlights from each participating country on A.A. service activities in their countries and reports from Zonal Service Meetings (AOSM, ESM, REDELA, SSASM), GSO USA/Canada reports on the International Literature and World Service Meeting Funds and Licensing and Translations, presentations related to the main theme of the WSM, work in committees and approval of committee recommendations in the main sessions of the WSM, three workshops and their presentations in the main sessions, and time for sharing relevant experience.

The World Service Meeting was translated into English and Spanish, the two official languages of the body, the WSM was also heard in Japanese, Mongolian, and Persian by interpreters provided by their local structures.

All participating countries are valued and given equal importance, but delegates from countries attending for the first time and those who do not speak English or Spanish are welcomed with sensitivity and special appreciation.

Delegates to the AA World Service Meeting are encouraged to share not only the best practices of A.A. services in their countries, but also to share openly the challenges their services are facing, the problems they are facing, and how they are being solved. Delegates are encouraged and empowered to share their experiences of WSM in their own countries as widely as possible after the World Service Meeting.

General reflections from country reviews/other sharing

The Covid 19 pandemic, which has gripped the world, has forced the A.A. to look for new ways and opportunities to act. While A.A. groups have returned to live meetings, and Service Offices have opened their doors to visitors, many countries are struggling with how to integrate remote (online) A.A. groups into their A.A. structures.

In recent years, the ways of passing on the A.A. message, organizing A.A. activities and Service work, service, and communicating with professionals have changed - it is not only face-to-face meetings that are taking place, but also new opportunities are opening up on the internet and social networks.

While there are challenges of anonymity, the internet, and social media are seen as opportunities by A.A. Services and it is important to take advantage of them in order to adapt to the present.

Here is the important role of Class A trustees (non-alcoholics) who can talk about A.A. by revealing their identity. It was proposed that the 2024 World Service Meeting should include a meeting of non-alcoholic trustees to share their experiences.

The importance of paying sufficient attention to the accessibility of A.A. for young people, people with mobility difficulties, A.A. members who are geographically distant or otherwise excluded from physical A.A. groups, or those seeking help was highlighted.

New forms of service appear - skilled A.A. members help A.A. members who are digitally isolated and struggling with modern technology to stay connected to A.A. and participate in online meetings.

A.A. services are focusing on strengthening and expanding A.A. helplines - the usual methods, phone calls, are being supported by various chats, apps integrated into websites or used separately (E.g. Brazil: In 2017 A.A. structure created a chatbot character called "Friend Anonymous," a messenger chatbot that helps people who connect to it identify characteristics of alcoholism. By sharing a story of someone dependent on alcohol, "Friend" invites people to reflect on their own experiences with drinking and describes the Twelve Steps to recovery. Using a call-to-action button, the chatbot also indicates the nearest support groups, using the location provided by their device, and provides an emergency button (for those who are at risk of relapse). Part of the success achieved by "Friend Anonymous" is related to the anonymity and non-invasive approach of the bot, which only responds to people who start conversations with it. Thus, those interested can learn about alcoholism and recovery without exposing themselves, and without being disturbed in moments or situations when contact is not convenient.). Helpline committees/working groups are being set up to coordinate the work of the helplines and to find the best ways to reach out to alcoholics still suffering.

Opportunities are also being explored for the online collection of the 7th Tradition - mobile apps, 7th Tradition buttons on websites, "e-7th Tradition".

Some delegates shared that A.A. Service Offices in their countries are fragile or are in the process of restructuring.

The importance of sponsorship between countries has been mentioned. For countries where A.A. structures are in the start-up phase or have just begun to operate, and for countries struggling to survive on contributions from the 7th Tradition, such assistance is essential (E.g. Mexico has 7 countries under its sponsorship).

Other problems were mentioned: low awareness of A.A. groups, lack of A.A. members in service, the gap between main Services and A.A. groups/members, anonymity on the Internet, and lack of funds due to the decrease in the contributions of the 7th Tradition.

Despite our differences - countries, languages, races, genders, sexual identities, and the challenges that these differences sometimes bring - we find a common language in A.A.: the language of hearts.

Presentations

International Literature Fund and World Service Meeting Fund (presented by Bob W., General Manager, GSO U.S./Canada)

International Literature Fund was established in 1990. In 1992, the Literature/Publishing Committee of the World Service Meeting agreed that the International Literature Fund should be under the purview of the World Service Meeting Literature/Publishing Committee. A.A. World Services takes care of the administration of this Fund.

In 2016, the 24th World Service Meeting expressed the need for a more detailed accounting of the ILF. Bob W. mentioned that an inventory of the administration of the Fund had been carried out and that steps were being taken to establish detailed guidelines to be followed in the allocation and use of the funds of the International Literature Fund. New accounting rules have been introduced which already allow for better and more detailed accounting of the Fund's income and expenses.

A new accounting and administration strategy is currently being implemented, which will lead to complete and accurate reporting in the future. In this context, a separate account has been set up exclusively for the International Literature Fund. This is an important step to ensure regular coherence between all the activities related to the Fund. GSO USA/Canada has committed to providing interim reports to each Zonal Meeting and a full report on the activities of the Fund between the 2022 and 2024 WSM.

The World Service Meeting Fund was created just four years ago during the 2018 World Service Meeting. The WSM Fund has a separate bank account specific to this fund.

Countries donating to this Fund support the WSM and contribute to the financial assistance of countries applying for financial support to participate in the WSM. The Fund is administered by A.A. World Services under the purview of the World Service Meeting Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee.

Bob W. mentioned that face-to-face meetings are very useful and although it will be difficult for the WSM to achieve its goal of self-support, ways will be explored to make it happen. The fund is a key component to achieving self-support.

Participation is the most important aspect of the Seventh Tradition. Contributions to each of these funds, no matter how small, have the same spiritual value.

With this in mind Bob. W. expressed his sincere gratitude for the sacrifices so many countries around the world have made to participate. They have assisted so many counties in carrying the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic.

Licensing and translations (presented by David R., Publishing Director, A.A. World Services)

David R. mentioned that A.A. World Services has seen a steady increase in the number of international translation and licensing inquiries and requests, which has grown more than 300% per year.

In recent years, especially during the pandemic, there have been difficulties and disruptions, such as communication breakdowns, loss of correspondence, and barriers to sharing signature and master print document file licenses via the Outlook application. David R. apologized for the delays in responding to requests and the past inefficiencies.

To solve these problems, in order to best respond to the needs of the international A.A. community, decisive action has been taken since January 2022. In order to respond to the growing number of requests, the Office has prioritized the troubleshooting of the communication and document exchange system and the development of a new optimized system.

A.A. World Services was audited by a leading international publishing business consulting team who reviewed and audited the current state of internal (in-office) translation and licensing staffing, volume of correspondence, workflows, project management tools, backlogs, license execution, and reporting. A.A. World Services' work was compared with industry best practices. The result is clear professional suggestions on how to increase efficiency, especially in the use of technology to implement important changes. The best technology consultants were also brought in to help implement and customize the new unified technology system for Office work.

Publishing, translation, and licensing activities have been separated. All translation and licensing activities are carried out in a new dedicated department within the Administration, with the technology and staff adapted to respond quickly to international translation and licensing requests. The new system for handling international requests and requests for translations and licenses is being tested. There is a strong focus on continuous data entry, improving system processes, and ensuring access to accurate reports. More efficient and secure ways of exchanging digital documents are also being explored.

Currently, the majority of licenses are valid for 10 years. A possibility is being considered for international licenses to be automatic renewal if not otherwise specified. Each country is invited and encouraged to express its views on this subject.

David R. concluded by reminding us that together we are in a great international publishing partnership, united in the deep spiritual work of passing on the essential message of Alcoholics Anonymous to suffering alcoholics and those who help them. Working together - with the help of the latest technology, skilled project management professionals, and best practice systems we are putting in place - we have a bright future. We can indeed be the "capable helpers" whom Bill W. referenced when he wrote A.A. Comes of Age, published in 1957.

In a number of sessions spanning the six days, delegates also heard presentations that covered a range of topics about new technologies and their effect on A.A. unity, recovery and service, our non-alcoholic friends, the Seventh Tradition, the attraction of A.A., responsibility for the future of the A.A.

Presentations given by WSM delegates

1. A.A. and New Technologies.
 - A) Do digital platforms strengthen or weaken our communication today? Do they broaden A.A.'s accessibility to all backgrounds, genders, ages, socioeconomic demographics, and geographies? (Maria Z. – Brazil).
 - B) A.A. literature on digital platforms. (Masaya O. – Japan).
 - C) Technology and A.A. – Reaching All Generations (Stephen S. – Great Britain).
2. What is our attraction? Unity, Service.
 - A) Unity – We are a diverse Fellowship with a singleness of purpose (Juan O.-Chile).
 - B) Service – Passing it on (Gholamreza “Reza” V.-Iran)
3. The Seventh Tradition: Fully self-supporting in the Digital Age.
 - A) Passing the “basket” on virtual platforms (Gonzalo M. – Mexico).
 - B) The spiritual significance of being self-supporting (to myself, to my group, and to my local A.A. entities) (Leonor P.-Portugal).
4. Our nonalcoholic friends.
 - A) Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community committees reaching professionals “on the frontlines” (Alfonso O. – Colombia).
 - B) Does A.A. literature attract and encourage professionals to refer clients to A.A.? Do we speak “their language”? (Frank G. - South Africa).
5. Alcoholics Anonymous has already come of age. Is there any danger that it may get too old?
 - A) Has the global pandemic taught us lessons to better inform our Twelfth Step services? (Gregory B.-Australia).
 - B) “Young People” in A.A. (potential members, members, and participation in service) (Dimitry K.- Belarus).
 - C) How to incorporate online groups into our service structures (Moira S.- Ireland).
6. How to invest in the future of A.A.
 - A) Learning from our history and stepping out of our comfort zones (Daniel G. – Peru).
 - B) Keeping the Fellowship United (Lokesh B. – India).

Workshops

The WSM participants met in three workshops. They included discussions on the topic of encouraging the Seventh Tradition during pandemic isolation at all structure levels; how to incorporate virtual groups into the General Service Conference structure; and A.A.'s relationship with networks and social media:

1. How to encourage the Seventh Tradition in the time of a Pandemic/Social Isolation at each level of the structure.
 - What are the barriers for members in contributing to their groups and service entities?
 - What is the effectiveness of the virtual basket? Have virtual baskets increased or decreased group contributions to A.A. service entities? Are the A.A. groups contributing or are we leaning on individual members' contributions?
 - Does sharing our experiences and stories of how A.A. uses 7th Tradition funds help inspire members to contribute in order to support the services?
2. Virtual Groups: How can they be integrated into the General Service Conference structure?
 - Do your local service entities list virtual groups and if so, are the groups considered geographically based?
 - Do virtual groups have a vote and a voice in your structure?
 - How might virtual group participation in our service structures help or inhibit A.A.'s growth and reach?
3. A.A. in Society: Relationship with networks and social media.
 - How do we adhere to A.A. Traditions while being on the platforms where people search for help? (Example: Anonymity and affiliation)
 - What social media platforms are members, groups, and service entities using to carry the message of A.A.?
 - How do social media platforms and professional networking platforms help alcoholics we have yet to reach? Is the language we use on these platforms from our literature an effective way to reach diverse current and potential members?

There has been talk that we must encourage participation through the Seventh Tradition, and how we communicate that is important. Groups react to stories about where the money goes, and the lives that are saved. It's easy to explain: money in the basket is a chance to save lives. When a need is communicated, the Fellowship supports the need.

Most countries indicated that online groups were listed. However, the ways in which online groups are listed vary widely with each country developing its own approach based on the needs of the Fellowship and their group conscience. Many countries list online groups so alcoholics who want to can attend them for recovery but at this time listing online groups does not necessarily mean they have been accepted into the service structure in that country or region.

While many acknowledged the benefits of technology in reaching new populations of alcoholics, along with the professionals and institutions that encounter alcoholics in need, some delegates expressed fears about social media and its impact on the A.A. message and Traditions. These were themes that delegates considered throughout the week with many coming to understand that they were building service experience around the world that would allow them to walk through the fear and find faith on the other side of the tech barrier.

The Committees

During the week the four World Service Meeting committees (Agenda, Literature/Publishing, Policy/Admissions/Finance, and Working with Others) also met and reported their conclusions to the body, which deliberated and voted on their recommendations. These decisions set policy for the WSM itself and are not binding on any participating country.

The members of the committees are elected by lot, taking into account geographical diversity and in accordance with a balance between first and second-year delegates. All four committees seek to keep the numbers of delegates the same and all of them have voting rights. The committees are assisted by secretaries without voting rights. The work of the committee is moderated by the chairperson (or alternative chairperson) elected at the previous WSM. All committees start their work by reviewing the composition, scope, and procedures of the committee. If there are suggestions received or items postponed from the previous WSM, amendments are considered and proposed.

Agenda Committee

The purpose of the committee is to review and make recommendations for the agenda of the next World Service Meeting.

Recommended theme for the 28th WSM: “The Three Legacies in the Digital Era: Our Great Responsibility to the Alcoholic Being Born Today.”

Recommended the following presentation/discussion topics for the 28th WSM:

1. Are Our Groups and GSOs Doing Everything We Can to Reach the Still-Suffering Alcoholics in Our Communities?
 - Is our structure prepared to face the change to digital?
 - This shows the importance of regular review and inventory at all levels
 - How to reach young people
2. Paths to Embrace the New
 - A.A. in a virtual world
 - Finding a balance between innovations and traditions
3. Home Group: Action and Service Derived from Gratitude
 - Gratitude in action at the grassroots level is enhanced by having a home group
 - The home group: the beginning of service
 - Are we encouraging newcomers to serve by letting them know that they will share tasks with other A.A. members?

4. To Serve — A Debt of Gratitude
 - A.A. saved my life: how do I give back to that which was so freely given to me?
 - Expressing our gratitude through service
 - How to choose the right service for me. Is it what I like to do or am good at? Or, will it help me grow as a person?

5. Diversity In A.A.: Our Heritage of Inclusion
 - Anonymity as a spiritual principle — we are all equal in A.A.
 - Are we truly inclusive of atheists and agnostics?
 - How can groups help alcoholics with mental disorders and stay safe for everyone?

6. Country-to-Country Sponsorship
 - Face-to-face sponsorship
 - Online sponsorship
 - Hybrid sponsorship

Recommended workshop topics for the 28th WSM:

1. Are Our Groups Really Practicing the Traditions?
2. Seventh Tradition: Self-Supporting in the Digital Era
3. Online Groups in the World: Here to Stay

The committee elected Frank G. of South Africa as chairperson and Julienne L.L. of Norway as alternate chairperson

Literature/Publishing Committee

The purpose of the committee is to review and make recommendations on literature and publishing. It shall also review any recommendations addressed specifically to the Literature/Publishing Committee.

The committee accepted the AAWS Report on the International Literature Fund regarding the fund and the disbursement of funds with the suggestions for the International Literature Fund Contribution Report. The committee was made aware of the AAWS service piece SMF-219 “The International Literature Fund” and encouraged to use it or adapt it to help raise awareness of the ILF.

The committee discussed the widespread concern and frustration about delays in licensing and the lack of communication but expressed high expectations regarding the changes presented for implementation to speed up and simplify the processes of approving translations and licensing. Experiences were also shared on topics related to AA literature, AA videos, translations, and periodicals.

The committee elected Marie-Paule M. of French-speaking Europe as chairperson and Leonor P. of Portugal as alternate chairperson.

Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee

The purpose of the committee is to review and initiate recommendations relating to strategies, finances, and applications for admission to the World Service Meeting.

The members of the committee met remotely prior to the 27th World Service Meeting and considered the applications of 3 new candidates for the World Service Meeting. Following the evaluation of the information provided by the countries/zones, and in accordance with the regulations for the admission of new members, the application of Mongolia to participate at the 27th WSM was voted and approved.

The committee proposed to add to the committee's procedures that committee members will meet remotely prior to each WSM to consider requests received regarding the participation of new members at the WSM.

The committee reviewed the qualifications for countries participating in the World Service Meeting and recognized the need to clarify wording and establish a deadline for countries/ groups of countries applying for participation in the WSM.

The qualifications for delegates to the WSM were also reviewed. Suggestions were made for adjusting the qualifications for countries and delegates.

The committee reviewed the preliminary budget for the 27th WSM and the AAWS report on the history of WSM expenses and delegate fees. The committee discussed the longtime history of financial responsibility that the General Service Board U.S./Canada has underwritten for the WSM. The committee suggested that AAWS use more direct and clear wording in the reporting document noting what costs have been shouldered by the U.S./Canada General Service Board. The committee also suggested that the reporting outlining specific expenses of the World Service Meeting be reported in more detail in individual line items. In the spirit of Self-Support, as outlined in A.A.'s Tradition Seven, the committee recommended that the delegate fee be increased to \$2,000 for the 28th WSM.

The committee recognized the vital importance of the World Service Meeting in carrying the A.A. message around the world. Acknowledging the challenges with expenses for the WSM, the committee offered suggestions to help strive to make the World Service Meeting more self-supporting.

The committee recommended that the 28th World Service Meeting take place in New York, October 27-31, 2024, in keeping with the rotation.

The committee elected Justin T. of Great Britain as chairperson, and Elena S. of Lithuania as alternate chairperson.

Working with Others Committee

The committee was established at the fourth WSM and assumed responsibility for public information, cooperation with the professional community, and spreading the AA message within the institutions.

The purpose of the committee is to help achieve the purpose of spreading the message of A.A. to alcoholics who are still suffering, by informing the general public about A.A., in cooperation with the professional groups and individuals working with alcoholics and helping to introduce A.A. to individuals in correctional and treatment facilities.

Experience is being shared within the committee on the following topics:

- Public Information
- Cooperation with the Professional Community
- Carry the Message into Institutions (Hospitals, Rehabilitation, Treatment Centers, and Jails) and to Homebound Members
- Experience and Impact of Online Groups.

The committee elected Marita R. of the United States as chairperson, and Lars D. of Sweden as alternate chairperson.

The delegates shared freely in general sessions, expressing their gratitude for the entire experience of the World Service Meeting. At the breaks between the focused business of the WSM, delegates joyfully greeted each other and rekindled those special friendships formed from A.A. service that traverses time and distance. The first-term participants got to know one another through multiple opportunities to communicate with their fellow trusted servants throughout the week. The 27th WSM delegates celebrated their connections across the globe by dancing in front of their laptops to lively music, exchanging personal news via the chat function, and inviting fellow delegates to see their living spaces and share a meal.

Despite the opportunities offered by modern technology, there were some delegates who found it difficult to participate at the WSM due to natural disasters, political unrest, or war in their country. However, the WSM staff made every effort to enable these delegates to present their reports and to feel as much as possible the unity spirit of the WSM.

At the end of the WSM, closing remarks were shared by the second-year delegates. Bob W., U.S./Canada GSO general manager, noted in his closing remarks that there was a freedom in the principle of autonomy that allowed each structure to adjust to wrap A.A. principles around each culture. "The spirit of this WSM has been so strong. I've heard so many of you share about what you've learned; so many things that have just come to your mind for the first time here and you are the legacy of Alcoholics Anonymous," he said.

The 27th World Service Meeting concluded with a Serenity Prayer in 29 languages - in the delegates' national language or the language of their choice.

Country Reports

AUSTRIA/SOUTH TYROLL

In Austria the meetings are working well. New friends join the meetings. Especially young women. The problem I see is that we have only a few who are willing to offer them sponsorship. The problem is, that in all meetings and regions friends come, join the meetings but don't want to have any responsibility or make service.

We had some very nice AA-weekends with many friends. Now we are working on our "Germanspeaking Convention" which take place July 2024 in Wels.

Our General Assembly now take place in a new hotel and we all feel very comfortably there.

We worked with friends from Germany and Switzerland on a new structure for our work. We finished the work last year. It went through the Conference. But we got a minority objection and so we have to wait what will happen at the next conference.

We are working for including the „new media meetings“ in our structure, but ther is a long way infront of us.

BELGIUM (Flemish Speaking)

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
- 2003 Celebration of the 50st. Anniversary of the Flemish AA
- 29 November 2015 André De Boe , founder of AA in Belgium, passes away.

Covid 19 and AA.

The year 2020, the first lockdown due to the corona pandemic. Groups are no longer allowed to meet, meetings may no longer take place. AA looks for alternatives and finds them by organizing Zoom meetings. Not only the regular AA meetings but also the services meetings will all start organizing video conferences. The groups are still finding alternatives so that the members can stay in touch. Some groups organize walking meetings with 4 people, messages are sent with WhatsApp, emails are circulating and telephone contact is also maintained.

Every day a newsletter is forwarded to the members who have registered, this means about 200 newsletters to +/- 1.500 members.

We are coming out of lockdown and a first protocol is made in collaboration with our administrators A and the Ministry of Health. This protocol is regularly updated and adjusted, even a second protocol is issued. We can have our normal meetings again but with restrictions and rules. Mouth masks, disinfectant gel, restriction of participants, ventilation of the room, CO2 meter etc... Some people do not yet dare to come to meetings and there are groups that drop out and cease to exist.

October 2021 : at the moment it is almost as before Corona but with the difference that many things remain as alternatives to the meetings, just as a bonus or because it is sometimes easy. It is advised that the physical meetings take precedence and remain the most important.

AA has adapted and has continued "No matter what!"

08 and 09/10/2022 General Service Conference for the Flemish AA (ADC)

This Congress happened in the Abbey of Drongen.

It isn't easy to find new volunteers for our services, we tried to speak personally to some persons, but it doesn't work like we would like to have. Of course the first thing they like to stay sober, and go to the meetings and see the members of their group.

Also we need to look for young people, they can have "young" ideas and things we don't think about these days.

2023 Celebration of the 70st. Anniversary of the Flemish AA

2025 General Service Conference for the Flemish AA (ADC) 29-30/03/2025
"AA in the future, my responsibility"

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).

Covid has reduced a few groups and also reduced AA members.

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 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 21st General Service Conference was held in March 2018 in the Abbey of Drogen. 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 60st. National Convention 2022 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.

Covid 19 and AA.

The year 2020, the first lockdown due to the corona pandemic. Groups are no longer allowed to meet, meetings may no longer take place. AA looks for alternatives and finds them by organizing Zoom meetings. Not only the regular AA meetings but also the services meetings will all start organizing video conferences. The groups are still finding alternatives so that the members can stay in touch. Some groups organize walking meetings with 4 people, messages are sent with WhatsApp, emails are circulating and telephone contact is also maintained.

Every day a newsletter is forwarded to the members who have registered, this means about 200 newsletters to +/- 1.500 members.

We are coming out of lockdown and a first protocol is made in collaboration with our administrators A and the Ministry of Health. This protocol is regularly updated and adjusted, even a second protocol is issued. We can have our normal meetings again but with restrictions and rules. Mouth masks, disinfectant gel, restriction of participants, ventilation of the room, CO2 meter etc... Some people do not yet dare to come to meetings and there are groups that drop out and cease to exist.

October 2021 : at the moment it is almost as before Corona but with the difference that many things remain as alternatives to the meetings, just as a bonus or because it is sometimes easy. It is advised that the physical meetings take precedence and remain the most important.

AA has adapted and has continued "No matter what!"

BULGARIA

Brief history of AA in Bulgaria

The first A.A. meeting in Bulgaria took place on December 5th 1989 in a room of the only state psychiatric hospital in the country for the treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction, located near the capital Sofia. It was organized with the help of the head doctor in this hospital and thanks to the message received through the Big Book brought earlier by the same doctor during his working visits abroad. The big book was later translated by an enthusiast close to an alcoholic, a member of the group.

A.A. in Bulgaria went through, which continues to this day, many difficulties, struggles and mistakes in order to be able to get to where we are today. We now participate with two delegates in the European Service Meeting (ESM). A.A.Bulgaria's participation in the ESM is taking place for the third time. Last year 2022, A.A. Bulgaria participated in the World Service Meeting (WSM) for the second time.

Structure

Currently, A.A. groups in Bulgaria number: live meetings – 34, across 20 cities, English-speaking – 3 and online – 10. A.A. Bulgaria is divided into 3 geographical regions West, Central and East. After the COVID pandemic, the three largest online meetings were incorporated into their region as groups and joined the A.A. structure in Bulgaria. They also take part in the national service A.A. Meetings are held regularly at two of the major psychiatric clinics where alcoholics are treated.

Conference

The General Service Conference is held once a year, usually in June. So far, they have only been held live. This year was our 6-th National Conference.

At the 5-th Conference, an entirely new Board of Trustees was elected due to the expiration of the 4-year term of the previous Class B Trustees, elected for the first time in 2018.

At the 6-th Conference, a new international delegate (1-st term) was elected.

The Conference consists of nine delegates with the right to vote with a term of office of two years, nine without the right to vote, trainees to take the place of those entitled to such. All of the members are elected from the three regions. The members of the General Service Board, as well as observers from the country and abroad.

The Conference is organized by the Conference Organizing Committee, elected by a vote of the previous committee.

The General Service Board consists of three Class B regional trustees, two national Class B, two non-alcoholic Class A, a site moderator, and an international delegate.

The trustees have a term of office of 4 years, among them a Chairman of the Board is elected. It meets regularly between the Conferences, with meetings usually online due to geographical distance. Each of the trustees is responsible for a Service Committee, which are: Literature, Finance, Public Information, Prison Service, and Treasurer.

General Service Office

We still do not have a General Service Office, but we have a postal address to which the correspondence of A.A. Bulgaria is sent through the provided national email address, as well as through the contact form on the website of A.A. Bulgaria operating the so-called "virtual office". Three trusted servants duly respond to each request and letter. In this way, members and groups within the A.A. community, inquiries from still-suffering alcoholics, non-alcoholics and institutions are made.

National Telephone Number

At the beginning of this year, after a long delay and discussions during the Conferences, a national number of A.A. in Bulgaria was activated. It is already published on our site, as well as on the world website of A.A. – aa.org. We are currently taking our first steps and experience in this service, looking for the most fruitful way for the message to reach the suffering alcoholic.

After two online seminars with the participation of A.A. members from Poland with experience, it was decided to rotate the phone between A.A. members in Bulgaria with appropriate experience in sobriety and service.

Literature

At the last Conference, a new trustee was elected to form a new working committee on literature.

Currently three books and two brochures are printed and distributed in Bulgaria. These are: "The Big Book" with the stories, "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" and "Sober Life". Brochures are: "Meet A.A." and "A.A. as a resource for the medical profession".

Over the past year, a small team, again with A.A. members with knowledge of English, have translated and prepared for approval the following brochures:

- Brochure "Message to staff in places of deprivation of liberty" - translated, edited, awaiting graphic design and publishing license.
- Booklet (brochure) "It's never too late". Material that appeals to the elderly in A.A. The booklet has been translated and edited.
- Book "Thoughts for every day" - partial translation and edited
- Brochure "Understanding Anonymity" - translated.
- Brochure "You think you are different?" - translated.

Nine brochures are still translating and when they are ready the translated documents will be sent to the G.S.O. U.S./Canada for approval.

Finances

For one year now, financial receipts and expenses have been managed by the treasurer chosen on the 5-th General Service Conference. As the General Service Board met monthly for workshops that year, all the movements of the financial resources were brought to its attention. One month before the preparation of a draft budget for the coming year, all trustees responsible for the work of the existing National Committees have requested the funds they need the following year.

The cash desk of A.A. Bulgaria is divided into three bank accounts - one is for the proceeds from the sale of literature, and accordingly the cost of printing materials is used by this account, second bank account is the account for proceeds from the seventh tradition, and the third bank account is for the preparation of the National Convention.

In 2023 there has been an increase in the growth of receipts according to the seventh tradition. Despite the still insufficient financial resources available to AA Bulgaria, in 2023 and at the moment the receipts from literature and from the Seventh Tradition have greatly increased.

The General Service Board, together with the Treasurer and the Finance Committee, took action to encourage voluntary contributions from AA members themselves and from groups to regional and national structures. A seminar was held on the Traditions and in particular on the Seventh Tradition.

On the 6-th Conference for the first time was approved so called "Thanksgiving Week" (the week including June 10, 2023) so that everyone who has the opportunity to contribute further in gratitude.

Public Information

At the last Conference, a new Trustee was elected, who assumed responsibility for the National Public Information Committee. Here are some of the reported activities from the three regions in Bulgaria:

- Numerous regional media broadcasts and posts in newspapers, magazines and via radio in connection with the activities of the AA groups in Bulgaria.
- The 5-th AA Conference in 2022 commissioned the Committee on Public Information and a uniform color and trademark of AA Bulgaria, draft business cards of AA Bulgaria members, Letterhead of AA Bulgaria, as well as an image poster in pre-print and jpeg format were prepared. It's finalization is forthcoming in order that they can be used by all groups.
- The service in the hospitals included meetings in ten psychiatric clinics and three private centers where we could provide brochures and books and arrange meetings as well. For each of the services a coordinator was elected.
- At the regional meeting of the Western Region was elected coordinator for service in the hospitals.
- At the 6-th Conference, the trustee chairing the public information committee submitted his application to withdraw from that service and a new trainee was elected to service in the committee. At the 7-th Conference this person will be proposed for election as a trustee.

Prison service

After the pandemic, when prison service had stopped altogether for more than a year, it resumed with great enthusiasm on the part of A.A. members, going beyond the geographically distinct regions and the location of the prison institutions themselves.

While until 2020 meetings were held in two strict regime prisons and four light-duty dormitory-type prisons, in 2022 meetings began in seven strict regime prisons, including the only prison for women in the country. The number of dormitories increased to six.

The third seminar on prison service was held, attended by prison officials, A.A. members serving in prisons across the country.

A.A. Bulgaria traditionally takes part in the Prison Seminar in Poland every year. One of the Class A trustees is a psychologist in one of the country's strict regime prisons. In its work, the Committee on Prison Service in Bulgaria meets with the great support of officials in penal institutions.

Service Handbook

At 5th General Service Conference, the text of the first Service Handbook of A.A. Bulgaria was voted for unanimously. It was proposed at the previous Conference and distributed in electronic format to the e-mails of all groups.

The experience and difficulties during the past year show that some of the guidelines for building a structure at the regional and national level are very few and incomplete. In the upcoming years, until this handbook is fully approved and published, texts will be added based on our experiences. Currently the committee continues its work, related to recommendations and guidelines on the following issues:

- The individual positions in serving at the regional level, their responsibilities and necessary qualifications;
- Who has the right to vote in the regional assembly;
- Money in the region;
- The group's money;
- The holding of the General Service Conference - composition of the committee for its organization and holding, responsibilities and terms of service of its members;
- The chairmanship and work of the individual committees during the Conference;
- The organization and holding of the annual national convention of AA Bulgaria.

The committee will propose the full texts of the amendments in the indicated issues, within the deadline set by the committee for organizing the next 7th General Service Conference in order to facilitate submission of questions and proposals for consideration by the Conference, so that the Brotherhood has enough time to get acquainted with them.

The committee also expresses readiness, if desired by the groups and regions of AA Bulgaria, to organize a seminar related to the texts of the Service Handbook.

By the end of the year, the committee will be ready with the translation and editing of the brochures "The A.A. Group...where it all begins", "The Pot...where money and spirituality mix" and "Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W." - essays that are an integral part of the US/Canada Service Handbook. Upon completion of this activities, these three documents will be sent to the G.S.O. U.S./Canada for license of the translation.

Website

In August 2020, the completely renovated website of Alcoholics Anonymous in Bulgaria was launched. The domain from the previous site has been retained - www.aa-bg.info. The new site was built on an open source platform (WordPress) in order to use the easy and intuitive content management system, which allows people without technical knowledge to train to work with it and maintain the content of the site. The widespread distribution of this system also allows for the easy transfer of service from one administrator to another, as it is widely available and easy to manage. According to the moderator's report to the 5th Conference, the transition from the old to the new site was carried out without losing the 10-year history of Google, using technology to redirect old addresses to the new site, while preserving and improving the ranking of the site in search engines. More than 50 new pages of content were prepared, such as the Big Book and 12 Steps and 12 Traditions chapters.

In his report on the last 6th A.A. Bulgaria Conference, the moderator reported that between the current and previous Conferences the site attendance has increased by about 30%.

An A.A. group registration system has been established in Bulgaria. The possibility of buying literature from the online site is being studied.

National convention

Traditionally, the National Convention is held at the end of the summer on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. This may be A.A.'s most anticipated event in the country, with many A.A. members from the country joining foreign A.A. members living in Bulgaria, as well as friends from abroad. At the Conference, an organizer of the upcoming annual national convention is elected, with the right to form a committee for its organization, attracting volunteers for service – members of A.A.

Relationships with other countries

The Bulgarian A.A. maintains warm and fraternal relations with A.A. Great Britain, A.A. Poland, A.A. the Czech Republic. It is also open to establish such relationships with fraternities from other countries. Traditionally, A.A. Bulgaria participates with a delegate to the General Conference of A.A. Britain and A.A. Poland. At the beginning of the year, the International Delegate took part in the A.A. Czech Service Conference. This year's Convention will be attended by the previous Chair person of the General Conference of A.A. Great Britain 2023. At the last Conference, funds were voted for the participation of two observers from abroad at our Conference next year 2024.

CROATIA

Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)

Our Sober in Zagreb had its first AA meeting over coffee in 1996 by two visiting Americans at the time and who are still sober and pillar members of our group. By 1998, our first mtg room was secured, and we maintained membership of 3 to 5 members in slow growth for the first 5 years. Since then, we moved through three locations and opened 4 weekly meetings over the period of 25 years, with most recently adding the fifth weekly meeting during this year. Our membership grew and reached up to 10 to 15 members at our peak 10 years ago. However, last 3 years largest percentage of member increase happened for us here in Croatia. Influx of new members is at its highest and it continues to grow, which is absolutely amazing to watch, take part in and share now with you. Today, we count 15 to 20 at our crowded meetings.

Furthermore, with long-term recovery members moving to Zagreb from different parts of the world and our “Covid-inspired” attendance in online meetings, our groups and meetings benefited from the received experience strength and hope so we started to more actively integrate AA traditions into our meetings such as evolving in the principles of service, rotation, meeting formats, etc. Along with this expansion, we increased our participation with CER and UK AA. Along with Zagreb, there are also long-standing AA recovery groups in the cities of Osijek and Split. The city of Osijek, in the east, peaked at 40 members at one point. The city of Split on the Adriatic coast followed soon after Zagreb and holds nearly daily meetings. The highlight was the early offering of an international AA convention first organized 22 years ago which has grown in attendance from 30 to 150-ish, with its recent post-Covid resuming this year in the city of Trogir.

Current A.A. Structure (board, regions, service offices, number of groups/meetings)

Zagreb did establish an AA Central Office; however, this was short-lived and only lasted 1 or 2 years, as we just were not strong enough to maintain. There are three long-standing groups in Croatia, located in the cities of Zagreb (Sober in Zagreb), Osijek, and Split. Furthermore, Osijek now runs a regular Zoom meeting, as well as both Split and Zagreb have regular English and Croatian meetings. Finally, in the cities of Rijeka, Zadar, and Varazdin impromptu meetings are offered to fellow travelers in need.

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

The idea of AA in Croatia for the most part is still of foreign idea. The medical/recovery community in the country has their own long established post rehab treatment program to which most treated alcoholics are referred. AA Zagreb has intermittently brought the program to Hospitals with some success, but never have we been invited back regularly. PI is service offered in Zagreb and we do reach out to suffering alcoholics through PI posters and handouts, and advertise in a popular Catholic publication annually.

Sobriety time required for service positions

At this time, we recognize the following service positions: meeting chairs (with rotating at 3 months and requiring at least 3 months of recovery), group treasurer (requirement of 1 year of recovery) and literature representative (1 year recovery requirement). However, our service group representatives are at the voluntary basis and this is an item to vote on in our business meeting following the take-off of the planned service manual study group.

General Service Conference (processes, frequency, etc.)

Aside of our group attending the ESM this year, we had a representative attending the Fifty-Seventh General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous - Great Britain, held 14 – 16 August 2023 in York. During the same, the representative was in an observer capacity as a member of the committee, participating in all of the meetings and events.

Additionally, we have been invited to York 3 previous times, the most recently attended by one of our fellows via Zoom.

Finally, the Sober in Zagreb group has also hosted CER assemblies in 2015, as well as is in the process of organizing their return to Zagreb for a 2023 assembly this coming weekend on September 2nd and 3rd.

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

While not having our own service manual yet, our attending the European Service Meeting is in spirit of setting us toward this goal of both integrating the general AA service manual as well as with time developing our own. There is much more exciting growth ahead of us in this area. At this time, a recovery study group is in planning that will have a goal of reading through the service manual and finding ways to integrate it deeper into our group structure.

Literature/Publishing Overview (print/audio/video)

There is a long list of AA literature translated into Croatian language, dating in the late '90s with the first printing of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and Living Sober publications. In the year 2012, the idea came out for the Big Book translation and as a permission was acquired, we got going. It was a slow process for many different reasons and when it was finally approved by A.A.W.S. we proceeded with printing, with the first published Big Book in Croatian language in 2017. Almost the same procedure happened with translating the Daily Reflections that had its first print coming out in the year of 2023. At this time, our lit rep reports having a working relationship with both the USA and UK based AA service centers, as well as a sufficient inventory of literature in both languages, offered to cover the needs of, hopefully, many newcomers to come and recover with us. Finally, we have had the opportunity to send, absorbing the costs, Croatian language Big Books to the cities of Osijek and Split, as well as to the groups or Croatian individuals in need throughout Serbia, Bosnia & Hercegovina, Germany, Austria, the USA and France so far.

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

Within last two years, the Sober in ZG's collected average came out entirely from the meeting contributions and purchased literature, with the estimate of 80% of our prudent reserve being collected from contribution and 20% from the literature. Our reserved allowed us to stipend all of the interested group fellows in attending and participating in this year's AA conference in Trogir as well as, along with help from hosts, we were able to send our group representatives to two different AA events, including this one, with a goal to help our group grow and make continuous progress.

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

We have a relatively strong relationship with AA in neighboring Slovenia. Large groups of Slovenians attend our annual convention and some Croatian AA members attend their October convention in Kranjska Gora. The country of Bosnia and Hercegovina has had only a handful of recovering alcoholics that we know of in these last 25 years, a few have come to conventions. The same is true for Serbia although their membership has been at times considerable.

Furthermore, the Osijek group maintains regular contact with the AA in Serbia and visits yearly conventions in Belgrade and Subotica. We send literature and meeting material to both countries literally whenever requested in the hopes that consistent growth ensues/continues.

Internet & Websites (if applicable)

There has been a website www.aahrvatska.com with the list of the groups and meetings established since the late '90s; however, the management of the same has been challenging and, currently, the group from Osijek is the only one in the position of doing so. The conversation about improving this area has been ongoing with hope of making this resource as updated and useful as possible.

CZECH REPUBLIC

History of Czech A.A.

Before the 1989 revolution, information about A.A. was fragmentary, as the Czech Republic was affected by the political situation that came after the Second World War. Though even before the revolution, there were two A.A. members — Loners. These were in contact with the G.S.O. in New York. In the meantime, on the other side of the world, one Czech-American felt an urge to translate the Big Book into the Czech language.

At the beginning of 1988, the first closed A.A. meetings in Prague were held in secret by the two Loners, the aforementioned Czech-American, and A.A. members from Santa Barbara. The first two chapters from the Big Book were translated. The first open meeting was held in May 1988 in a Prague psychiatric ward. It was not publicly known, and it was sponsored by the hospital management. The meetings were moderated by the friends from Santa Barbara. At the same time, members from other countries were visiting Prague meetings, which was a great help, too.

The milestone in our history was the Velvet Revolution in November 1989. In December the first official A.A. group (“Serenity Group”) was founded. In 1990 the second and the third in Prague were to follow. The first Conference was held in 1991, still supported by friends from Santa Barbara and other American A.A. members. In 1991, meetings in other Czech cities were appearing — Ostrava, Karlovy Vary, and others.

There has been great standing help by the G.S.O. New York for the Czech A.A. from the very beginning. Not only materials (literature); they also held a Conference in Prague in 1994, and helped us with solving our issues. Czech A.A. has been growing steadily ever since. In 2010 the Board of Trustees, Public Relations Committee, Literature Committee, and Handbook Committee were established. A new transparent account was set up.

Current A.A. Structure

There are currently 69 active A.A. groups in 47 cities in the Czech Republic, altogether counting approximately 900 members. Most of the groups are smaller, having one meeting per week. However, there are more meetings held during the week in bigger cities (regional capitals) — and in Prague and Brno, there are meetings on a daily basis.

There are also several online groups, mostly using the Skype platform, which started to be more active as a result of the COVID-19 crisis in the spring of 2020 (one of the positives). As they have proved to be an effective mode of communication, they have become part of the A.A. meeting structure. Actually, there is another registered Skype Czech & Slovak group called “Special Connection” and one Czech & Slovak online meeting group called “Sober Space,”

running via group email. Generally, COVID-19-related restrictions have led to the formation of a number of online meetings. Members are staying together, sticking with the Traditions, and supporting one another, feeling that now is the time to apply principles and pay attention to their common welfare, which should always come first. As a result, our Fellowship, supported by group conscience, seems to be stronger than we expected. Moreover, members got the opportunity to truly appreciate the gift of physical get-together and unique atmosphere of personal meeting.

There is no Intergroup level in the Czech Republic, so we do not have regional elections (regional delegates). However, some groups located near each other cooperate, and groups in Brno and Prague have joint business meetings. After a very promising start – publication of a very useful leaflet in all languages available for A.A. meetings in Prague – the planned follow-up joint meetings have not materialized yet.

We observe the A.A. Principles, Traditions, and Concepts. The Czech A.A. structure is based on the principle of the inverted pyramid. There are groups that elect their delegates for the General Service Conference, usually for a two-year service period. Delegates take part in the General Service Conference, where they can vote and discuss issues that come (not only) out of the groups themselves.

General Service Conference

Our G.S.C. is held annually, usually in January, and lasts three days (Friday-Sunday). We introduce committee meetings into the agenda; they work as usual (regular working meetings) and delegates can participate (as observers) in the debates. Not all the groups are represented by their delegates, but attendance is growing steadily. We are becoming more successful in cooperating with other countries. In our last 2023 GSC (after two online events in person again) we hosted foreign observers from Slovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, and Germany. Our aim is to develop sponsorship at country-to-country level, which helps us in unity and growth.

Organization of the Conference is in the hands of the Board of Trustees (G.S.B.) and the Organizational Committee. Over the past 13 years, the G.S.C. has shifted to a much higher level in the Czech Republic, with increasing numbers of responsible servants, key topics, connection with the rest of the world, and the contribution of national delegates and contacts with foreign countries. The G.S.C. approved the first Czech Service Handbook/Manual in 2019. At the same time, the Articles of Association in accordance with the Czech law and A.A. Traditions (this was discussed with an external lawyer) were also approved. The New Committee for Prisons was established and became separated from the PI Committee, as well as IT Committee (2022).

There are the following permanent committees in the Czech Republic: Public Information, Literature, Organizational, Finance, Handbook, Prisons, IT. They are the functional instruments of the General Service Board (Board of Trustees). The length of service period in these committees is four years.

Czech Service Handbook

For the first time in Czech A.A., the official handbook was approved by G.S.C., printed out for G.S.C. purposes, and then distributed to Conference delegates both in hardcopy and via email. It seems to be intensively used for service purposes already. Meanwhile, as stinging topics arose, the Handbook Committee is continuously working on updates and revisions in order to keep the handbook current and useful. The Handbook Committee meets on a regular basis and works on modifications and adjustments, which they consider important (for instance, above-mentioned Prisons Committee activity, election procedures, and substitution of international delegates, etc.). These adjustments are submitted to be discussed at the Board of Trustees meeting and approved at the G.S.C. level. It isn't always easy to find the balance between keeping the Manual up-to-date and not spending too much time debating specific, not really important details that may arise. We are learning on the go.

Board of Trustees and General Service Office

The General Service Board (the Board of Trustees) consists of seven alcoholics and two non-alcoholics, thus manifesting an open attitude towards general public. The alcoholics are still usually involved in other committees, too. The Board of Trustees cooperates closely with all the committees and is responsible for A.A.'s financial policy, publishing and spreading literature, copyright, and publishing of a magazine *The Journey* (issued four times a year, 32 pages).

The Board of Trustees meets monthly via Skype and as a rule twice a year in person — at the A.A. Convention and, of course, at the General Service Conference. Czech A.A.'s General Service Office is located in Hradec Králové (established in 2015).

This place also serves as a warehouse for our literature, together with two interim storage spaces — in Prague and in Brno. In 2019, G.S.C. approved the very first paid employee of Czech A.A., who has been working there ever since.

The position is part-time for a few hours a week, though the current employee is a great help with the office work and the mandatory book-keeping. As of 2019, A.A. also began to submit tax returns. In order to adhere to the commitment of responsibility and bearing in mind our gratitude for the huge help at A.A. beginnings in the Czech Republic, recently the Board again approved a donation to the Literature fund in the United States.

Public Information

The number of PI committee members has varied between five and twelve over time, and the committee would welcome nonalcoholic member(s) in order to be able to represent A.A. in public without the threat of breaching anonymity of A.A. members. Under normal circumstances, PI members meet on a monthly basis online, and twice a year in person. Current and former PI members started to actively attend the Czech Addictology Conference; their attendance proves what we have felt for some time already. We have become equal partners to doctors, alcohol-addiction specialists, and social workers. Even more, they admit our contribution to their jobs. Many important PI activities (including AT conference) planned a long time ago were hardly hit by COVID-19 security precautions in 2020, and we welcomed the possibility to “showcase” our meeting at the CAC in 2023 after two years' break.

Long-term cooperation with the staff of hospitals, rehabs, schools, churches, prisons, and probation services has been re-established, and we aim to develop spreading of the message at regional levels. Manuals such as “Service on the Phone,” “Creating a New Group,” “Holding Info meetings in Professional Facilities,” etc., were written and shared further with A.A. members. Thanks to the Literature Committee, the PI Handbook was translated from the English version to Czech, too. Our aim is also to extend the availability of A.A. literature (primarily Big Book) in public libraries. We began to cooperate also with media, contributing on document on A.A. (Czech radio Český rozhlas) and sharing TV spot on A.A. (Christian TV Noe); there is an intention to offer it to schools and medical facilities, which depends on the success of negotiations with relevant government bodies.

Czech A.A. website is functional, and information is kept up-to-date. Committee minutes, special meetings, invitations and other A.A. info is sent through dedicated email address to any A.A. member who is interested in what is going on in the Czech A.A. and has registered. Last but not least, new Google disc document storage was created for A.A. use.

Prisons

The Committee for Prisons is actually an offshoot of the PI Committee, approved at G.S.C. in 2019. It consists of nine 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 A.A. members, though still more are needed. A.A. meetings are regularly held already in four prisons. Other possibilities are in the process of assessment of needs and/or negotiation.

Working group for female prison in Světlá nad Sázavou was established, and consequently regular meetings have been taking place, with the aim to teach the inmates to conduct the meetings themselves. AA meetings have been established in Kuřim prison. Preparation of meetings in 2 more large facilities is under way. The Committee members are trying to launch correspondence sponsorship, following the example of Polish friends. The biggest challenge is lack of willing servants for this specific task.

Finance

The Financial Committee was established at the beginning of 2017. Its main purpose is to create a financial budget for the following fiscal year, and support the Board of Trustees in making decisions related to unexpected expenses. The very first official budget was created for the fiscal year February 2018 until January 2019. The budget is regularly approved in January at the national G.S.C.

Regarding the income, since 2016 it has been steadily higher from the literature, also due to the publishing of the retranslated Big Book with added 15 Czech stories. Obviously – due to Covid the proportion reached new peaks, but the situation is getting back to normal. Hopefully we will gain new momentum with literature once the communication and cooperation with the licensing department is back on track.

See below the annual income trends:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Seventh Tradition	40%	57%	37%	48%	54%
Literature	60%	43%	63%	52%	45%
TOTAL CR	293,730	374,951	263,887	286,863	444,714

Currency CZK. Exchange rate as of the date of the report: EUR 1 = CZK 24.

In 2017, new “collecting” bank accounts were created (nontransparent to ensure anonymity). One for the Seventh Tradition and the second account was created for A.A. events registration fees (for example, conventions). Money is transferred from those accounts to one transparent account from which all payments are made to third parties. The last account is for A.A. Literature.

Literature

2022: Review and print of 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.

AA brochures made available in pdf on AA website.

Service Manual proofread and published on our website.

Translation of Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers – waiting for independent review in the USA.

Review of new Instagram texts.

Challenges:

Forced break in the sales of Alcoholics Anonymous eBook: wooky.cz platform ceased to exist (to be hopefully resumed in August/September 2023).

Communication with GSO New York – review of the Questions and Answers on Sponsorship has been stuck there for about 2 years (just an example).

2023:

- 1) 6 brochures identified that do not sell well, and take space in the warehouse: will be distributed for free to the groups, schools, hospitals etc.
- 2) July print:
 - A.A. for the Older Alcoholic—Never Too Late
 - Young People and AA
 - This is AA
 - FAQ
- 3) Request sent to GSO NY for translation agreement:
 - AA for inmates
 - Too young
 - The Language of the Heart
- 4) Translations Licensing Connection portal – so far no access.
- 5) GSC approved purchase of 100 books Pass It On translated into Slovak (to help our Slovak friends bear the cost – hopefully pattern for the future).
- 6) Contribution to the AA World Literature Fund AA: 2023 - USD 500. (7th tradition to York USD 500).
- 7) Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers to be printed – provided we get the independent review results...

The Journey Magazine

The editorial board consists of 5 members (editor, 2 proof readers, graphic designer and communication servant). Decisions are made on the basis of group conscience.

In 2022 they succeeded to motivate the Czech AAs to higher engagement and interest in the Magazine, also thanks to the info banner displayed at AA events, regular advertising on AA website, email newsletter informing about the Magazine. The number of contributions has increased, as well as the subscription (by one third). Holiday photo contest (topic “the Journey”) has brought even more readers.

In 2023 electronic colored version (simultaneously with the printed one) was launched. The Magazine archive was transferred onto Google disk (common data storage for the Czech A.A.). Colored cover (for the as yet BW version) is under preparation. National A.A. Convention special edition was published for the first time (the Magazine has been presented at the Convention with its Creative Writing workshop). The Magazine collaborates with two external translators and a proof reading supervisor.

Relations with Other Countries

National delegates and some other members are regular attendees of foreign conventions and conferences (especially in Slovakia), and we also keep inviting members from other countries to our conventions. We feel we have good and solid relationships with friends in Poland, Slovakia, and recently also with the UK, Russia, Bulgaria, Germany, and Portugal — we are successful in deepening the relationship and cooperation with these countries.

We really appreciate continuous support by the GSO Great Britain, ensuring our attendance at the European Service Conference, and also an opportunity to participate at the WSM, which helps us to develop the A.A. Fellowship in our country.

DENMARK

Brief Historical Summary

In Spring 1950 Bill W visited Denmark. At that time there was an organisation Ring i Ring, RiR, Danish AA. After the visit, the then head of RiR, Danish AA, Poul M. received a letter from Bill W. that ends:

“As I tried to explain, the spiritual side of AA's program should not be a problem. A certain amount of honesty, tolerance, humility and the experimental assumption that there must be a Power greater than one self in cosmos, is enough to attain sobriety. And therefore an easier happier way to live.

This seems to be a minimum requirement. But if someone wants to go deeper into this spiritual solution, he should of course be supported in doing it. If you yourself could acquire this minimum standard, and make it clear for each member that he shall go as far as possible along this spiritual way, you have done your part. If you do that, I am certain, that you can travel the same road.”

In January 1955 a small group of members of RiR, Danish AA broke out forming a group that should be anonymous. They based their work on The 12 Steps, The 12 Traditions and the fact that this was a spiritual program.

Although many meetings where held in private homes after WW2 , but first in 1974 an AA meeting started up in Ryesgade 107, Copenhagen. This meeting is considered the oldest still active meeting in Denmark.

But it was not until 1989 that we had the book “Alcoholics Anonymous” translated and published in Danish.

In the late 80's more meetings started up, and especially the rehabilitating methods from Iceland came to Denmark (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 nationwide, to 100+ meetings a week. The rehabilitating centers were a private sector and not involved in the public health care system, although many governmental offices and institutions covered the expenses for their employees who needed treatment. Many of them continued their recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous. The rehabilitation centers were not in any way affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous. This mentioned to specify why the numbers of AA members increased rapidly in a rather short time. Currently we have 421 physical meetings a week nationwide and 58 online meetings. 11 of the physical meetings are English speaking. 3 Polish speaking, 2 Greenlandic speaking and 3 are Icelandic speaking meetings.

Current AA Structure

GSB: 15 trustees. The board is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 1 vice chair, 1 secretary, 1 treasurer (currently vacant) 1 Non-alcoholic (currently vacant) and 12 elected from 6 regions. Furthermore without voting rights: 2 international delegates, 2 nordic delegates (currently only one serving), 1 general service conference chair, 1 representative from each of our 4 committees and 2 reporters writing the meeting minutes.

Regions: 6 regions

Apart from smaller convents in the regions, we also have 1 national AA convent over 2 days. The 6 regions take turns in arranging "AA Denmark Convent" locally. All members of AA get an invitation, and participation is free.

Service office:

1 service office located in Copenhagen. Open with voluntary staff members every Monday from around 3 pm - 6 pm, where literature also can be bought.

Groups/meetings

Approximately 480 a week.

Sobriety time for service positions

Most positions on a national scale are recommended 5 or 3 years of sobriety. There are some positions where the recommended sobriety is 1 or 2 years.

National Public Information

The committee is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 6 elected in the regions. (currently 1 vacant).

Box 334 (Danish equivalent to Grapevine)

The committee is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 1 vice chair, 4 non-elected members. 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 (currently 3 vacant), 2 coordinators and 1 assistant. The committee is responsible for having the Danish AA telephone service open all days from 8 am – 12 pm with voluntary AA members answering the calls from their home.

The committee is also responsible for managing a 24/7 email service. The responding time for emails is within 24 hrs.

Economics Committee

The committee consists of the following: 1 chair, 2 non-elected members.

All committees in the service structure have a rotation term of 6 years for members except. Can be extended after approval by the GSB. The chair is elected for a 4 year period.

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 Committee

It currently consists of the following: 1 chair and 4 non-elected members. The committee have temporary turned into a working structure under the GSB. To be evaluated in 2024.

Literature Committee

All handling of new literature is currently referred to the secretary of the GSB.

Sobriety time for service positions

Most positions on a national scale are recommended 5 or 3 years of sobriety. There are some positions where the recommended sobriety is 1 or 2 years.

General Service Committee

Consists of 1 chairperson, 1 vice chair, 2 persons from each of the four subcommittees, all elected on The Service Conference. Also on the committee is a member from GSO and the leaving chairperson to try to maintain continuity and experience in the work.

General Service Conference

The General Service Conference is held once a year. We have 55 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 begins 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 democratic procedure as stated in the 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 committee's recommendation of the proposal.

Service Manuals

Denmark has its own Service Manual and Structural Manual.

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

Literature/Publishing Overview

- The Big Book 4th edition (€ 32,-)
- The Big Book 4th edition, paperback (€ 28,-) The Big Book pocket 4th edition (€ 17,-) The Big Book 3rd edition (€ 30,-)
- The Big Book 3rd edition, paperback (€ 26,-)
- The Big Book pocket 4th edition (€ 17,-) 12 & 12 (€ 18,-)
- 12 & 12 Greenlandic (€ 13,-)
- AA comes of age (€ 20,-) AA in Denmark (€ 9,-) Living Sober (€ 18,-) Came to Believe (€ 18,-) As Bill Sees It (€ 18,-) Daily Reflections (€ 20,-)
- Dr. Bob and the Good Old-timers (€ 17,-)
- 12 Concepts for World Service (€ 9,-) Pass it on (Will be published in 2023)
- Language of the Heart (currently in latter stages of publication.)

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

Internet and website

The Danish website can be found at the following link: <https://anonyme-alkoholikere.dk>

Economy 2022

As the Annual accounts has not yet been approved on The Danish Service Conference we are not able to go into details, but AA Denmark at the end of 2023 will have a reserve equivalent to one year's expenses, and we expect to contribute as usual to The International Literature fund and the European Service Meeting.

The surplus in 2021 was app. € 9.000 after contribution to the International Literature Fund app. € 7.500 and € 2.000 to ESM

Final report will be available late November 2023

Relations with other countries.

AA Denmark has a Nordic collaboration with Sweden, Norway and Finland. We meet twice a year. We elect 2 Nordic delegates to participate in the Nordic service meetings.

We have been greatly rewarded by the collaboration in getting inspiration from the different countries' service structure and service conferences. Our International respectively Nordic delegates usually also participate as observers in the different service conferences in other countries, and we send invitations to the other countries collaborating in the AA fellowship. This year the Danish National Service Conference takes place November 4th and 5th 2023 in Strib on the island of Fyn.

We also have collaboration with the GSB in Britain. We participated with great pleasure in the General Service Conference UK in April and are looking forward to welcome British observers here in Denmark in November.

We are so lucky to have one Nordic delegate of Greek origin, and therefore we have a close relation to AA Greece. We invited 2 delegates from Greece to our National Service Conference 2022 which they enjoyed very much (they said) and they brought some of our Danish AA experience back to Greece. Because of that, Danish AA members are regularly invited to do main shares on Greek online meetings in English translated into Greek by a Greek translator.

FINLAND

History and Structure

A.A. has been in Finland since 1948. Today we have some 600 groups. The total number of members in these groups is estimated at approximately 8,000-10,000.

The highest decision-making body in the Finnish A.A. is the Annual Great Meeting of all Finnish A.A. groups, which 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.

Structure, Activities and Finance

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 also arrange several smaller local/area events in different regions. The groups do active Twelfth Step work and cooperate closely with AI-Anon.

The General Service Office in Helsinki employs two people. Along with administration and communications and other member services the office takes care of updating the Fellowship's website to improve it becoming more user friendly. Several AA regions have their own websites, too.

The A.A. Helpline, supported by the A.A. groups, covers the whole country and receives thousands of calls yearly. AA-groups throughout the country keep up approximately 70 local helplines. We also have a monthly A.A. radio program – a direct one-hour broadcast managed by Helsinki AA region. All programs (past and present) are also available through our website.

Our financial situation is stable. The reserve covers 4-6 months of expenses. Due to the pandemic group contributions decreased about 11% and literature sales 25% in 2020 as many groups where closed. The situation has been improving during 2021.

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.

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

We publish two bulletins: *Ratkaisu* (“Grapevine”) and *AA Tiedotuksia* (“AA Information”). *Ratkaisu* is published 10 times a year with a distribution of 1,600 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.

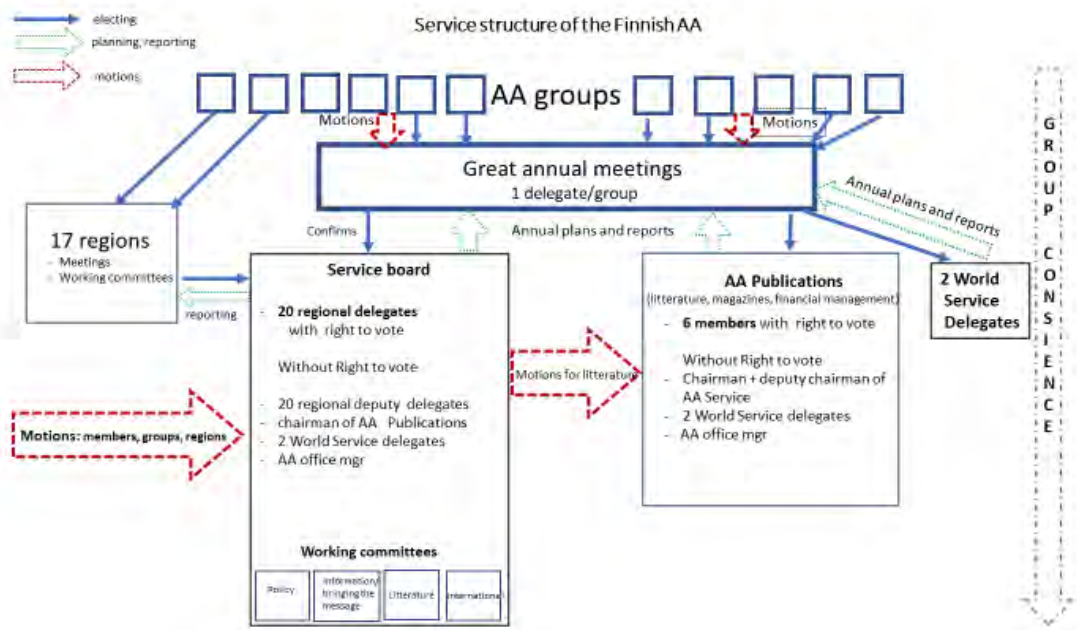
AA Tiedotuksia comes out every month in an edition of 1,700 copies. This bulletin is an internal newsletter with information on events, anniversaries and memos of Service and Publishing, Inc. meetings. Also a financial report of all incomes and expenses of the legal entity is monthly published in *AA 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.



Latest news of A.A. in Finland 2023

- The Finnish A.A. has been divided into two groups as there was a debate about the service structure - this happened 1997. Last summer however, the Finnish A.A. could unite again as those groups which had separated came back to the Finnish A.A.
- A new translation of the Big Book came out this year and when the financing recourses allow, the next investment will be to get the Big Book into audiobook. Especially the young people are asking for this. It has been noticed, that e-books, contrary to the expectations, don't diminish sales of the printed books.
- There's a project going on to get A.A. info into Finnish Foreign Affairs web-sites. On these sites the Finnish citizens can find info about all kind of problems they have travelling/being/living abroad (problems about passports, cars, marriage, divorce, acknowledge paternity, questions about property, last will and testament, getting sick abroad, etc.), but there's no link to the problems with alcohol. We think it would be time to face alcoholism as a sickness among others and to seek help for it should be within easy reach of everyone.
- There are anew arranged meetings between the Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Danmark and Finland). The delegates of the named countries meet four times a year and each country heads a meeting a year.

FRENCH SPEAKING EUROPE - EUROPEAN FRANCOPHONIE

AA FRENCH-SPEAKING EUROPE

European Francophonie

The European Francophonie is made up of 3 French-speaking countries of Europe: Belgium, France, and Switzerland

Harmonization scheme for the European and World Delegate Service Position

Started in 2021, the international delegation for the profit of the European Francophonie, which includes French and Germanophone-speaking Belgium, France, French and Italian-speaking Switzerland, brought together two services: the World delegate and the European delegate, as is the practice in many countries.

As planned, Belgium elected a first term delegate, Régis C. from 2023 to 2026 to join the second term delegate: Marie-Paule M., from Switzerland from 2021 to 2024. France will elect its delegate from 2025 to 2028 until it is again the turn of Switzerland.

The principle is to have two “international delegates” to represent our three countries at the European Service Meeting and the World Service Meeting. This implies that a country will not have a delegate for a period of 2 years.

	2021-2022	2023-2024	2025-2026	2027-2028	2029-2030	2031-2032	2033-2034
Country A Switzerland	A	A		A	A		A
Country B Belgium		B	B		B	B	
Country C France			C	C		C	C

This service is for four years, with a first term of two years and a second term of two years. One term involves a European service meeting, a World service meeting and participation at the yearly Conference of all 3 countries. In this way, the “second term” delegate can sponsor of the “first-term” delegate.

Situation due to the Covid rules

All three countries are freed of the restrictions that had been put in place due to the COVID situation. Things have returned to normal. Many of the online groups started during the pandemic continue to exist.

a) FRANCE

History of the development of AA France

France's history with Alcoholics Anonymous goes back long before the first French-speaking group was formed in 1960. It was in France that Bill W met the drink while serving as a soldier in World War I. The first English-language AA meeting was held in Paris on April 21, 1950, when six alcoholics met. In June 1950 Bill and his wife, Lois attended this meeting.

The first French-speaking group was created in Paris, following articles by Joseph Kessel on alcoholics anonymous in the United States. Joseph Kessel was the first (non-alcoholic) president of the General Service Conference Board (GSB).

Alcoholics anonymous groups have also been established in Martinique, Guadeloupe, Reunion Island and French Polynesia. AA contacts are also present in New Caledonia.

Current AA Structure

Number of groups

There are currently 554 groups in AA France and in the overseas regions (Polynesia, Reunion, West Indies, French Guiana, and New Caledonia - there are 12 groups in the Overseas Territories).

- in-person meetings
 - 456 groups holding meetings in FRENCH
 - 46 groups holding meetings in ENGLISH
 - 3 groups holding meetings in POLISH
 - 1 group holding a meeting in SPANISH
 - 11 groups holding meetings in prison

- online meetings
 - 34 groups holding meetings in FRENCH
 - 2 groups holding meetings in SPANISH
 - 1 group holding meeting a in ENGLISH

Presently, France has 22 regions included in 5 territories and 1 overseas territory. It is divided into those 5 geographical territories mainly for the use of interregional activities, especially the Service Forum and the National Annual Convention.

- 1) « Centre-Paris-Ile de France »
- 2) « Territoire Nord-Est »
- 3) « Territoire Sud-Est »
- 4) « Territoire Nord-Ouest »
- 5) « Territoire Sud-Ouest »
- 6) « Territoire et départements d'Outre-mer »

GSO General Service Office

Located at 29, rue Campo Formio, 75013 Paris, France
French GSO has 2 non-alcoholic full-time employees.

General Service Conference

The General Service Conference is usually held in March or April for 2 days. Belgium and Switzerland are invited to participate. The CEFE (European Francophone exchange forum), regrouping the 3 countries, takes place the evening before the beginning of the Conference. Members of the AA Editions AAFE - ASBL for the European Francophonie - are invited to participate at the meeting of the CEFE.

The next conference will take place from the 19th to the 21st of April 2024 in Paris.
The theme will be “The 4th tradition.”

A recommendation was made at the conference in 2023 to no longer hold workshops. The recommendation was turned down, so the themes of the 4 workshops will be:

1. Autonomy and independence
2. Autonomy and respect.
3. Autonomy and responsibility.
4. Group conscience

General Service Board

It is composed of twelve members and meets 4 times a year.

- 4 Class A (non-alcoholic) trustees - including the chairman of the Union of Alcoholic Anonymous (UAA)
- 8 Class B (alcoholic) Trustees including 3 attached to General Service and 5 to territorial Service

This last year was difficult for the GSB because some of the administrative positions were not filled and gave a lot of work to the people on the board.

National Service Committees

In France, there are 7 service committees. They are grouped into 4 areas:

- finance, structure, and general policy
- publications and archives
- collaboration with professionals (justice, health, social services, businesses and communities)
- communication (offices, internet, social networks, and media).

Themes addressed by the General Service Conference and by the different committees.

Conference 2022 and 2023

Both Conferences were again held in-person as usual in Paris.

In 2022 The theme of the conference was “Evolving without denying ourselves “.

In 2023 the theme was: “The AA spirit”.

FINANCE Committee

- 1) French AA did better with the budget than projected. It ended with an excess of over 40,000 Euros both years which were then moved to the prudent reserve.
- 2) A question was asked at the last Conference, “if the conference could ask the General Service Board to provide a national online account so that friends attending an online meeting could still be able to easily participate in the Seventh Tradition at any time during the meeting”?

After a study to collect contributions not coming from the usual circuit (group, district, region, AA union) the national treasurer has not found a satisfactory solution to date. The GSB gave the following answer based on the principles: In accordance with the 4th tradition, it is up to the groups, including online groups, to set up their own modality of payments. In keeping with the 7th tradition, to avoid any outside support, contributions may only come from AA members.

It did not seem obvious to the committee that the immediacy of payments should be linked to spiritual quality. Consequently, the committee had no solution to propose.

- 3) "The General Services Board updated the donation and legacy ceilings from AA members, to align them with the amounts set out in the 2021-2023 service manual, under the heading "Contribution limits." It sets at €5,000 (Euro) the maximum per year for an individual donation and €10,000 (Euro) for a one-off legacy made on the estate of a deceased member. This resolution cancels and replaces all previous resolutions on this subject."

STRUCTURE AND GENERAL POLICY and AGENDA Committee

- 1) Following the merger of the AA regions based on the current administrative division, a new breakdown of the number of delegates has been adopted as follows:

Fewer than 10 groups: 1 delegate

10 to 19 groups: 2 delegates

20 to 29 groups: 3 delegates

30 to 45 groups: 4 delegates

46 to 60 groups: 5 delegates

61 to 75 groups: 6 delegates

76 to 90 groups: 7 delegates

groups and more: 8 delegates

- 2) The following question was asked to this committee.: “In order to put an end to any future polemics or insinuations concerning this or that AA group, can the conference remind us of the criteria necessary to obtain the status of group member of the Association Alcoholic Anonymous?”

The answers brought forward the principles of the program: “The conference is not authorized to issue the criteria required to qualify as a group. The conference will never act as a government, even though it serves Alcoholics Anonymous, and will always remain, in the image of the association it serves, democratic in action and thought (Service Manual).”

And from “The group... where it all starts: “What is an AA group? The full version of the third tradition makes it clear: "We must admit into our ranks all those who suffer from alcoholism. Therefore, we cannot exclude anyone who wishes to recover. What's more, A.A. membership is not conditional on any monetary contribution or compliance with any rule. As soon as two or three alcoholics get together for their sobriety, they can consider themselves an AA group, provided that as a group they are not associated with any organization."

PUBLICATIONS & ARCHIVES National Committee

This committee is working on a new project: the production of an AA brochure specifically for the armed forces (army, police, gendarmerie, firefighters, customs officers, etc.). It will feature testimonials from members of the armed forces of French-speaking Europe, that will be adapted to their needs and constraints. A dozen testimonies have come in so far.

COMMUNICATION Committee

Telephone permanence

Changes were introduced during the Night shift of the permanence as of Monday July 11, 2022, for an 8-month trial period. The trial period was conclusive and the 2023 conference accepted to continue with the Night Permanence.

- What's new?
- Telephone answering time: 8 pm - 2 am

Automatic voice message response from 2am to 8am instead of 9am.

- What doesn't change?
- Weekly schedule with regional rotation
- Permanence at home on the fixed number (without answering machine)
- Line transfer operated by the correspondent (confidential access)
- Follow-up sheets to be filled in each night by the staff member
- Weekly summary to be completed by correspondents and forwarded to CNP

One-day summary of the telephone permanence

8am – 9am	9am – 12pm	12pm – 16pm	16pm -20pm	20pm- 2am	2am – 8am
Region	Region	Region	Region	Region	Vocal message
IGPB / Sauton region					
1 telephone line	4 telephone line	4 telephone line	4 telephone line	1 telephone line	Answering machine
Transfer to morning line		Lunch line	Afternoon line	Night line	
Day time permanence				Night time permanence	

Here is the text of the message that was recorded and is delivered from the night of July 11 when calling between 2 am and 8 am.

There is a solution to your alcohol problem. Alcoholics Anonymous is based on mutual help between alcoholics.

Our hotline will resume this morning at 8 am. You can find out more about our association and our meetings on our website www.alcooliquesanonymes.fr. You can contact us by e-mail via this site. You can also join a meeting immediately online at www.aa-quebec.org. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Public relation

For a couple of years, AA France worked on a new communication national campaign which was approved at the 2022 conference, presented at the 2023 conference, and publicly presented to the media by class A members in June 2023.

To develop this campaign, intense consultation was carried out with the "D'une Idée L'autre" agency.

The results are:



- A new poster in A4 and A5 formats based on the need to rejuvenate the public image
- A contact card (5th tradition card), in business card format, in a folded version for professionals and a simple version for the general public
- The production of or roll up by regions and intergroups
- Adaptation of the national website to harmonize all our communications. The adaptation also aims to bring the website into line with the specific constraints of cell phones and tablets.
- The website and social networks are graphically in harmony with the new poster, and access to the most-visited pages has been improved.
- Digitized matrices for insertion in e-mails to professionals will also be available from BSG.
- A simultaneous launch of this campaign on all media, print and web.

COLLABORATION WITH PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Health - Justice - Social services – Communities Committee

Numerous public information's actions take place in all regions in diverse settings, but the different levels of the structure are not informed of those actions. This is a pity. It accentuates the lack of servants, as it prevents groups from pooling their resources. Sharing experience across the structure can help other groups, and even inspire them.

It's more delicate to do public information about AA in companies than in hospitals or prisons.

Call for applications for national services

- 2 Class A Administrators
- General Services administrator for the national treasurer's department
- 1 administrator for the national Health committee
- 1 administrator for the national Permanence committee
- 1 administrator for the national Public Relations committee
- 1 South-west Territory Administrator
- Switzerland – AA French and Italian speaking - AASRI

b) SWITZERLAND (FRENCH SPEAKING)

History of the Development of AA Switzerland

Switzerland is divided into four parts with four national languages (French, German, Italian and Romansh). In all of Switzerland, there are more than 200 groups.

In 1955, after reading Dr. Norman Vincent Peale's book "The Power of Positive Thinking" in which the AA phenomenon is described, a woman living in Geneva gathered documentation on the subject. In 1956, under the impetus of the same person, a few alcoholics got together to form the first AA group in Switzerland. The "Léman" group in Geneva.

Number of Groups

There are currently 51 groups in the French and Italian-speaking Switzerland (AASRI). The numbers are going down even though many new groups have open in one region of Switzerland.

45 groups are in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. 6 groups are in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland.

There is as well a "seasonal" trilingual group (French, English and German) that meets in Zermatt during the holiday seasons.

- in-person meetings
 - 45 groups holding meetings in FRENCH (French part of Switzerland)
 - 5 group holding meetings in ITALIAN (Italian part of Switzerland)
 - 1 group holding a meeting in ENGLISH (Italian part of Switzerland)
- online meetings
 - 3 groups holding meetings in FRENCH

The English-speaking community is also very active in Switzerland. There are 26 English-speaking meetings.

- in-person meetings
 - 11 groups holding meetings in ENGLISH
 - 1 group holding a meeting in SPANISH
- online meetings
 - 11 groups holding meetings in ENGLISH
- hybrid meetings
 - 4 groups holding hybrid meetings in ENGLISH with some people in the room and the others online

A French-speaking international online meeting "les Pépites du Gros Livre" was started in 2021 to study the Big Book. It brings French-speaking people together, from various countries in the world such as Switzerland, France, Canada and America.

Current AA Structure

AASRI is divided into three territories which cover 5 regions. They are represented at the General Service Board by trustees who are 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

Presently, the General Service Board (GSB) is composed of the 12 trustees.

- 2 class A - non-alcoholic trustees, one of them being the president.
- 6 class B - alcoholic trustees which include the vice-president, the secretary, the treasurer and 3 territorial administrators.
- 1 International Delegate representing the European French-speaking region which includes French-speaking Belgium, France and French and Italian-speaking Switzerland.
- 3 trustees for the Conference office, the Literature office, and the Public Information office.

The General Service Board meets 4 times a year and carries out the affairs of AASRI as a whole and execute the decisions of the Conference. It manages the day-to-day business of AASRI between Conferences.

At the moment, the secretary position and one class A position are vacant at the GSB. As of yet, no one has shown interest for these positions.

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

Public Information

Each of the 5 Intergroup public information committee 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 each action tends to be harmonized in order to act in unity. Various actions, like advertising on cantonal or federal levels are managed at the level of the General Service Board.

All 5 regions have been active again for public information meeting in clinics, for doctors' training in psychiatry, health-related schools, high schools, school of nursing, staff members and patients in nursing homes, treatment centers for addictions and alcoholism, media and 2 people shared their stories during a mass.

A poster campaign took place throughout the coastline, as well as distribution of the brochures "Voici les AA" (Here's AA).

For the time being, negotiations are continuing with the prison authorities. One prison is showing interest in opening their doors to AA.

Literature was out to them, in agreement with the prison social workers, to stock libraries.

Projects waiting to take place are:

- To distribute, on request and with a quick explanation, in various medical and psychiatric practices a few brochures entitled "Voici les AA"(Here's AA), which could be placed on display racks.
- To advertise in public transport where advertising remains affordable.
- To send drafted letters about AA to home care, health professional schools, schools and nursing homes.
- To advertise in a cinema to promote the visibility of the new group. The choice of the poster to be shown on the big screen is the yellow "Problèmes d'alcool" (Alcohol problems), without voices, for the duration of 5 to 7 seconds. This poster is a joint project with the English-speaking AA of Switzerland.



Phone line

The AA phone line is a free number that people can call 24/24 hours 7/7 days: 0848-848-846. The different regions share this service. A working committee continues to review and improve the functioning of the telephone helpline.

General Service 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 rights) and one substitute (without voting rights).

In 2022 and 2023 took place in person to the delight of participants.

The next conference will take place from the 9th to the 11th of March 2023 in St-Maurice.
The theme of the conference will be « Today I have a choice ».

Themes addressed by the General Service Conference and by the different committees

1) Presentation of the new AA website – it was created by a company made up of “apprentice” enthusiasts which brought a lot of freshness to the site. The new website has also a new address: <https://aasri.ch>



2) Workshop's themes:

- Back to the literature: how can literature be used and presented more widely in AA meetings? It's not so much a question of "returning to the literature" as of "revealing the literature". It's not a question of doing more, but of taking better care of what we do.
- Certificate of attendance at AA meetings for administrative departments (medical, social, justice, etc.) – A standardized form will be posted on the AA website accessible for downloading and to be used by participants of AA groups who volunteer to sign the form upon demand.
- How to present the A.A. method when questioned by professionals and the media? The Public Information Committee was mandated, in collaboration with Class A members, to raise awareness among healthcare professionals of the benefits of A.A., whose work is complementary to their own.

3) Call for applications: Positions to be filled as soon as possible

- Member class A – still opened
- Territorial Administrator region VS-TI – one person came forward and will do one year as interim until he can be elected at the next conference
- Secretariat – still opened

4) European Francophone Forum - The feedback from those who attended the European Francophone Forum was unanimously positive. Many people from all three countries attended. It was also geographically convenient.

The CEFE (Carrefour Européen Francophone d'Échange) suggests that an appeal be made to conferences of Switzerland, France, and Belgium to renew the Forum and find organizers to continue the momentum.

It is proposed that this forum be held every 2 years and that the organizers commit to organizing two forums in order to pass on their experience to newcomers who join this organization.

5) Divers: all 3 countries responded positively to the invitation of the AA Poland that the international delegate participate at their 2023 conference.

Literature Office

- 1) The transition to the new invoices with the QR code for payment (imposed by La Poste, where the literature office has its account) went smoothly.
- 2) In average the sale of the literature has been stable for the last 5 years.
- 3) Representation of French-speaking Switzerland and participation to the meetings of the French-speaking Publishing company AAFE.

Finance

- 1) The financial situation of AASRI is excellent.
- 2) The sobriety dollars (people contributing the number of years of sobriety they have) is being donated to the World Service Meeting Fund.
- 3) A big thank you for the generous 7th tradition contributions.

Further AASRI meetings

AA Belgium Conference: March 17-19, 2023 in Heer-sur-Meuse
AA France Conference: April 28-30, 2023 in Orsay
Crêt-Bérard Convention: May 6 and 7, 2023
BEFRIJUNE Convention: August 26, 2023 in Romont
Belgian AA Convention: October 28, 2023 in Spa Francorchamps
Valais Convention: October 20-22, 2023 in St-Maurice
AA France Convention: November 25-26 in Arras
Delémont 2024 Convention: February 10-11, 2024
AASRI 2024 Conference: March 9-10, 2024 in St-Maurice;
AASRI 2025 conference: March 8-9, 2025

C) BELGIUM – AA FRENCH SPEAKING (“AABEFR”)

History of the development of AA Belgium

AA Belgium is divided into three linguistic zones:

- **AA Belgique Francophone** (French speaking), represented by the current delegates.
- **German-speaking Belgium** (very small zone including a population of 90.000 with 4 different groups, administratively related to AA Belgium and French-Speaking Europe - AABEFR without formal district structure)
- **Dutch speaking** (AA Vlaanderen) (not connected to French-Speaking Europe)

The first AA group opened in Brussels in October 1953 after Jean L. read the book “Alcoholics Anonymous” at the C.N.A. (National Committee against Alcoholism). Their founders are Jean & Louis.

Current AA Structure

Number of groups

There are currently 188 groups in AA BE FR.

- 185 in-person groups
 - 4 groups holding meetings in GERMAN
 - 1 group holding meetings in ENGLISH
 - 4 groups holding meetings in POLISH
 - 2 groups holding meetings in mixed mode (online and presential)
- 3 purely online groups (in French)

GSO General Service Office

Located at 42b, rue des Pieds d’Alouette – B-5100 Namur

Belgian GSO has one 4/5 time employee, and a part-time freelance contractor as accountant.

General Service Conference

The General Service Conference is usually held in March or April for 2 days. France and Switzerland are invited to participate. The CEFE (European Francophone exchange forum), regrouping the 3 countries, takes place the evening of the second day of the Conference.

Members of the Editions - ASBL for the European Francophonie - are invited to participate at the meeting of the CEFE.

The next conference will take place from the 15th to the 17st of March 2024 in Heer-sur-Meuse (Massembre).

The theme will be “Let’s dare transparency.”

For the last years, the Belgian Conference has worked a lot on the re-establishment of the official “AA Service Manual” among our structure and has issued a complementary publication (“Complément du Manuel des Services”) to integrate local specificities for the members. This manual is published separately and distributed the same way as the classic literature by our GSO.

General Service Board

It is composed of twelve members:

- 1 Class A (non-alcoholic) administrator
- 9 Class B (alcoholic) Trustees including 1 president, 4 attached to General Service and 4 to territorial Service

The GSB meets 6 times a year. (Three times in physical meetings, three times in Zoom)

International delegates are now permanent invitees to any board meeting.

As for other services, the GSB had to face 2 vacant seats recently, since a regional administrator has finished his term without being replaced, and another one has resigned to insure another strategic role.

The telecom situation of the movement (discussed further) has brought a lot of additional work in the past months, as extraordinary board meetings had to be set up to face quick decisions about the choice of a new telecom provider.

National Service Committees

In Belgium, service committees are grouped into main areas, for which there is a specific administrator to coordinate all activities:

- External affairs
 - Telephone Permanence
 - Public Information
 - Social Media
 - Press workgroup
 - “Youngsters” workgroup
 - Justice / prisons
 - Health / hospital and medical relations
- Internal Affairs
 - Conference and National Congress workgroups
 - Literature and publications
- General Service Office
 - Administrative management
 - Digital workgroup
 - Documents Archives
 - Isolated people contacts
- Finances
- “General Politics Coordination Committee”, which is dealing with all the above committees. *A recommendation from the 2023 Conference has been issued to investigate on the actual accuracy of the existence of this entity.*
- 4 Regional committees, grouping local “Districts”, for which each AA group is linked

Since the COVID period, organizational matters have moved quite faster than usual in some committees, especially dealing with Medias and Social Medias.

A new “Press” workgroup has been created in 2020, gathering AA members in which some were or are press professionals, and who are now in charge of relationships with press media (mainly newspapers, television and radio) and who actually establish all forms of contacts between AA Belgium and medias, helping ALL other workgroups whenever media interactions are required.

On the national website are now aggregated ALL publications in order to establish a permanently up to date portfolio of media relays for Alcoholic Anonymous in French speaking Belgium.

Another workgroup was created since the COVID crisis: the “Digital” workgroup. Its AA members have first gathered and published information about online meetings (which were not existing in Belgium before March 2020), and then has taken over the management of our national websites (internet and intranet), domain name administration, and now are involved into any decision regarding digital projects.

Telecom and Internet

Telephony

In the last few months, GSO had to face something like a “crisis” situation regarding their historic telecom provider. This company has been in charge for the last 20 years of managing telephony services, including the national telephone permanence 24/7 based on a homemade software solution. The provider has decided to cut off the contract since the offered customized solution had become unmanageable and costly for them, without providing any alternative.

GSO had to find another global solution very quickly to maintain service continuity and a new global solution has been chosen, approved and the contract has been concluded in May 2023.

AA Belgium is now in a “transitory” situation with a completely new structure, where two AA members have been chosen and trained to perform the administration and coordination of the new software solution. Since the adopted solution is functioning very differently from the historical one, a complete redesign of the human “telephone permanence” taskforce is currently put in place in a more “globalized” and “national” way, rather than based on regional organization. This implies a lot of changes needing to be put in place quite fast, which is not usual for any initiative among AA movement.

Lessons learned from the COVID period (especially in technological fields) allowed the movement to do this anyway in a satisfying timeframe, and the new telecom solution will be officially launched on August 31st 2023, insuring a proper continuity of service, and drastically reducing the cost of operations, which was also a very decisive argument in the case study.

Internet

After important issues during the COVID crisis with AABEFR’s historical web services provider (with was taken over by another company without proper notice), and following the creation of the “Digital” national workgroup (in which several AA members are themselves active IT professionals), the Conference delegated powers to the Digital workgroup to take over the management of our websites and internet services, which are now all managed INTERNALLY for free by AA Members. This led to very substantial budget savings (around 10.000 euros a year) and now allows a quite satisfying reactivity and proactivity for digital projects.

Here are some “success stories” led by the Digital workgroup.

- Taking over and managing the national website (<https://alcooliquesanonymes.be>) in May 2022
- Adding new dynamic functionalities (group search, media publications, etc)
- Creation of a completely new secure INTRANET site for AA members providing dynamic interactions, national event calendar, national administrative database for GSO, mail mass distribution, chat interactions, documentation database, etc). The new intranet site was launched in December 2022 and deal now with around 250 registered AA members and twice the same number of occasional AA members using more anonymized access, all perfectly GDPR – qu’est-ce que c’est? compliant.

Social Media

- AABEFR Facebook page has now reached around 1500 followers
- An Instagram account has been officially launched in January 2023, reaching around 150 followers
- Regular collaborations are being put in place with France and Switzerland social media, and all entities have full confidence on developing long time proactive collaborations

There is currently a team of 5 AA members who administer the Facebook and Instagram pages. Among their tasks is also the response to the page’s Instant Messaging (through Messenger). It’s been observed that nowadays, a significant part of our audience is more familiar with online messaging than telephone calls, and so the crew tries to answer our visitors directly, providing information, advice and comfort to the visitor, the same way as the telephone permanence does. Desperate call for help occur more frequently than ever, and a significant number of success stories have been reported of people suffering from alcohol problem having attended online and physical meeting directly after a conversation by Messenger. In the same logic as “Zoom babies” were born as AA after attending purely online meetings, Belgium has now some “Facebook AA Babies” born in abstinence after a first get-in-touch through online messaging, which is extremely satisfactory for “message transmission” and totally justifies the integration of such tools inside our movement.

Online groups

At peak time during the COVID situation, AABEFR held up to 60 online meetings per week. With the return to normal situation after COVID, the number of such meetings has of course decreased, but the practice is now strongly installed. Our members have adopted the principle that the online meetings were a perfect complement to the solutions that were already existing and were not meant to REPLACE the physical meetings.

In August 2023:

- Three purely ONLINE groups exist in French speaking Belgium and are fully registered to the GSO, which is now trying to find a proper for them in the national structure
- Rather than creating a fully new structure for such a small territory, the online groups are now advised to affiliate to a usual local district of their choice to have proper representative doing service in the national structure
- Two physical groups are currently holding some MIXED meetings (presential and online at the same time)

- Some physical groups still hold online meetings at a different schedule than the physical meetings
- The “online meeting calendar” page on the national website is still by far the most frequently visited page of the site, draining still around 50% of the global traffic to itself.

Themes addressed by the General Service Conference and by the different committees

- The global workshop was focused on reformulating the texts in the specific complement of AA Service Manual for AABEFR. However, since it was quite long and we had to fight to keep the attention of the whole audience, a suggestion was made to review the process of holding such workshops during the next conference. The principle of common workshops is maintained at least until next year.

Finances and structure

- Commission recommends the publishing and distribution of “Financing inside AA” (“Le financement” chez les AA”) in Belgium, so that members have a better understanding of the usage of money collected by members
- Commission recommends that the founders of new groups respect more thoroughly some proper duration of continuous abstinence.

Media / Public Information / Digital

- Commission recommends considering new forms of digital exchanges (instant messaging specifically) to be considered and treated the same way as telephone permanence does
- Commission recommends a proper exchange of information between telephone permanence committee members and digital communication workgroups to rationalize and unify the way all information is distributed inside the movement

CEFE

- CEFE wishes that the next European forum should be organized in 2025, and a team of organizers should be designated with representatives of our 3 countries

National Congress

Belgium’s next national congress will be held on Saturday October 28th 2023 in Spa-Francorchamps, in the same place as Formula 1 races and other car racing events are made. Of course the main theme for the congress will be very opportunely: “24 hours”

Relations with other countries

Most of the time, the relationships with other countries are not managed by each of our countries’ GSO’s but by the international delegates who act as intermediary with international entities.

A singular and quite recent exception is to be noted. France’s GSO has forwarded a request from someone located in a Belgian monastery in order to obtain a significant amount of AA literature in the purpose of creating groups and spreading the message for an isolated population in the region of East Congo (RDC) close to the Rwandan border. For the occasion, since we disposed of people who could directly bring literature items by plane as luggage,

AABEFR has for once used its reserved budget to collect around 30 kg of mainstream AA literature in French which was brought back without additional transport fee to Congo.

Literature

The AA Editions AAFE – ASBL (publishing company)

Collaboration between the French-speaking Europe and the AA Editions AAFE - ASBL (non-profit publishing company) for French-speaking Europe

A new Board of Directors was voted in at the last General Assembly of the Editions. It is made up of members of the three countries that make up French-speaking Europe. They each send two members. The international delegates participate as permanent guests.

Belgium hosts the AA Editions AAFE that prints the AA literature for Belgium, France and Switzerland. It is a separate entity from AA French-speaking Belgium.

In order to reduce costs and avoid travel, video conferences have been set up. They clarify certain points, make decisions, and move forward between two physical meetings.

Copyrights

In the past copyrights for printing were granted to the GSB of AA Belgium which then used to transfer them to the AA Editions AAFE (Publishing company) which produce them and distribute them to the three countries of French-speaking Europe (exclusively).

Now that the AA Editions AAFE (French-speaking publishing company) was granted its own identification number by AA WSO, the copyrights go directly to the Publishing company. So far only one book's license was renewed under this new way of functioning.

The agreements made with other AA editors depend on the copyright holders. The Grapevine society incorporated in the United States, translate its own materiel in French, as for example: "The Best of Bill" and "The Language of the Heart." It does not grant any copyright to AA Editions AAFE. The Editions buy directly from them. AA WSO grants copyright fairly easily but it might take some time. They also translate the AA literature in French themselves. AA WSO manages all the sales of the French digital literature which they have translated. York – England grant copyrights when they are requested.

"Partage" magazine

The Partage magazine is still struggling with not enough subscriptions and not enough articles being sent by AA members to be published, even though a call for articles about miscellaneous sharing of members' experiences, in the service of AA, was launched and publicity was made.

New products

The Editions AAFE printed a new booklet called "le dico de la modération" (the moderation dico - dictionary) that was created by the literature committee of the Belgium GSB.

This booklet, of 44 pages, offers over eighty topics for meetings. There are references for twenty-two moderation topics. Each reference is introduced by a short explanation of the proposed itinerary.

The references proposed are coming from 18 different AA approved books and pamphlets. It can be ordered through the French-speaking Publishing company – AAFE.

Financial Situation at the Editions

1) 2023 sales price list:

There will be no price adjustments to those applied in 2022. AA Editions AAFE – ASBL reserve itself the right to modify and increase prices according to possible changes in purchase prices from AA WSO and/or printer.

2) The Editions AAFE have been able to pay back the money borrowed from the CSG of French-speaking Europe to pay a few months' rent during the pandemic.

Reminder of the Place of the Editions in the 3 Conferences

The management of AA Editions AAFE - ASBL should not be dependent on any one Conference, as there could be a contradiction with one country blocking the others. They need to focus on their sole objective, which is to offer quality literature, in the respect of AA traditions, to alcoholics who are still suffering.

Since the 3 countries, are now represented on the Boards of the Editions (2 trustees per country), General Services are therefore informed of what is happening at the Editions by their representatives. The CEFE can express wishes addressed to the Editions or resolutions common to the 3 countries.

The collaboration with the Editions is a good proof that the harmonization between the three countries works. The Editions have done everything possible to provide all three countries with all the literature.

GERMANY

Preliminary remark

In order to keep my report as short as possible, I will only address those changes in the German AA community that have occurred since my last report for ESM 2021.

Brief Historical Summary

After the end of the Corona pandemic, life in the German AA community largely normalized again. As of 07/31/2023, the German AA community comprised about 2,150 groups. Of these, 1864 are f2f groups and 285 are online groups.

The flow of donations (7th tradition) also returned to normal, as the regional and intergroup meetings are also taking place again and the principle of the overflowing hat is working again at these levels as well. To save money, our GSB decided to hold two of its three annual meetings online.

Normally, our GSC is held annually. However, due to the consequences of the Corona pandemic, only one GSC was held during the reporting period. For details, see below under the heading General Service Conference.

During the reporting period, we were again able to perform two German-speaking conventions, each with over 2,000 visitors, in Berlin in 2022 and in Munich in 2023.

Current A.A. Structure

For general information, see 20th European Service Meeting Final Report 2019 pp. 52 and 53, for regional structure of our Intergrups and Regions see map below.

Now, after the end of the Corona pandemic, group attrition subsided. Not all of the f2f groups we had before the Corona pandemic still exist. The number of online groups that formed during the Corona pandemic also decreased a little bit. The exact group numbers have already been mentioned above. On a positive note, however, the group shrinkage ended and the number of our groups is currently stagnating at around 2,150.

In the my last report I mentioned that driven by an investigation into how the three countries in German-speaking Europe can improve their collaboration, we will have to adapt the number of delegates and committees, boards and services to the reduced number of groups. The first proposals for this project were available at our 41. GSC 2023, where they were discussed in detail. For details, see below under the heading General Service Conference.

Anonyme Alkoholiker Deutschland Intergruppen und Regionen

sb-internet@anonyme-alkoholiker.de
Stand: 24.05.2022



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

After the end of the Corona pandemic, we were able to resume our services in prisons and mental health facilities. Now, after a forced break of up to three years, the information meetings are being held again as before. Also, schools are increasingly inviting us back to report to the higher classes about how it was, what happened and how we are today.

On 12/1/2007, our GSO started working at the Unterweilnbach site, a small hamlet in Lower Bavaria. Before that, our GSO was located in Munich for many years. Seven years later, in October 2014, our community came to the realization that it was not a good idea to move the GSO to the vicinity of the residence of our then managing director, i.e. away from the state capital Munich to the Lower Bavarian province, even if this could significantly reduce the rental costs.

After nine years of searching and heated discussions about the right location, visits to various properties, Corona pandemic-related forced pauses on search and postponed relocation after donations collapsed during the Corona pandemic, we have finally agreed on a new location, found a suitable property there and rented it. The move of our GSO will take place between November 2023 and January 2024. From then on, our GSO will be based in the German capital Berlin.

Sobriety time required for service positions

For details, see 20th European Service Meeting Final Report 2019 page 53, please.

General Service Conference

Usually, our GSC is held in the spring. However, as the last GSC could only be held in autumn 2021 due to Corona pandemic issues the GSC in spring 2022 was cancelled. Therefore, during the reporting period, there was only one GSC in spring 2023.

The main topic, to which much time was devoted, was the adaptation of the service structure in German-speaking Europe. At our last GSC in spring 2023, a working group set up by our GSB therefore presented its findings and proposals in this regard.

This working group proposes to dissolve the current GSB, which consists of members from all nations of German-speaking Europe, and to replace it by so-called national service committees. While these regional service committees can be implemented relatively easily in the Intergroups Austria/South Tyrol and German-speaking Switzerland, the concept of how the services are to be reorganized according to the new concept was missing for the implementation in Germany.

Therefore, there were minority objections to this otherwise well thought-out proposal on our GSC in 2023. I.e., the vote on the dissolution of our current GSB and its new implementation in the form of three national service committees was postponed.

Also, in future, the GSC should only deal with topics that concern all countries of German-speaking Europe, while purely German topics should no longer be dealt with on the GSC.

Service Manual

For our current Service Manual please have a look at the 20th European Service Meeting Final Report 2019 page 54.

The upcoming change of the service structure in German-speaking Europe requires a new General Service Manual that takes into account the changed structure through adapted service descriptions. A draft version of this new General Service Manual was presented on the GSC.

Literature/Publishing Overview

Changes and additions since 2021:

- 6 books and 8 brochures revised, partly new layout and reprinted
- 1 new brochure (Jack Alexander article)
- 3 new ebooks: 12 steps and 12 traditions, As Bill sees it, Living sober
- Big Book –audio book additionally available on YouTube now
- Language of the hard, newly translated, AAWS license pending
- AA DACH Magazine now available in new layout and for color print

Implementation of an AA wiki that includes descriptions of our services and structure, as well as service materials. Anyone can read and anyone who performs a service for AA and has a corresponding service e-mail address is authorized to write. Have a look at <https://wiki.anonyme-alkoholiker.de>

Finance Overview

For the approximate percentage of annual income from contributions/literature sales and expenses before the Corona pandemic see 20th European Service Meeting Final Report 2019 page 54, please.

In Germany our non-profit registered association “Anonyme Alkoholiker Interessengemeinschaft e.V.” acts as our legal entity. But, for reasons, this association is not allowed to transfer monetary amounts as donations to foreign accounts. Therefore, the Intergroup Austria/South Tyrol donates €6,000 annually to the AAWS Literary Fund in New York on behalf of the entire German-speaking AA in Europe.

Between 2018 and 2020, our liquid funds decreased by a third. To end of 2021, we actually expected a further reduction to half of the liquid funds in comparison to 2018.

But in 2022, the first year after the Corona pandemic, our revenue miraculously increased to over €300,000. That is more than the annual average during the last 15 years! Spurred on by this positive result, we resumed planning and preparations for the move of our GSO, but at the same time left it at only one face-to-face meeting and two online meetings of our GSB to save money.

Relations with other countries

In general, most of our relations with other countries are based on the use of the same language, namely German. Therefore, the most relations we do have with Austria, South Tyrol and German- speaking Switzerland.

Currently Austria/South Tyrol and German-speaking Switzerland are represented by two trustees at our GSB.

In addition, we asked a delegate from Ireland to tell us about her experience on integrating online groups into the national AA structure during our GSC 2023. She gave her presentation online.

Furthermore, we received invitations to the GSC 2023 in Poland and in Czech Republic. At both we participated as observers.

This resulted in an interesting exchange with the team that coordinates AA's ministry in prisons in Poland. Therefore, we invited the chair of this team to our annual three-day exchange on AA's ministry in German prisons.

Internet & Websites

Website:

<https://www.anonyme-alkoholiker.de> (slightly reworked and improved)

Webshop:

<https://shop-aa.de> (books, brochures, CDs, service manuals, magazines, posters)

Wiki (new):

<https://wiki.anonyme-alkoholiker.de> (service and structure description)

GREAT BRITAIN

Groups, Intergroups (IGs) and Regional Assemblies

Although it changes frequently, at the end of August 2023. There are currently 4191 physical and 319 online groups registered with Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain (AAGB), and 818 physical, hybrid and online English-speaking meetings in Continental European Region (CER).

Each AA group is represented at its local Intergroup (IG) by a Group Service Representative. IGs in turn are represented at their regional assemblies by Region Representatives (Region Reps). IGs and regions are geographically arranged, and there are 115 IGs at present, and sixteen regional assemblies. Of the regional assemblies, nine are in England, five are in Scotland, one is in Wales and one is the CER.

IGs and regions have Liaison Officers who serve in the following disciplines: Public Information and Electronic Communications (PI & EComms), Employment, Prisons, Health, Probation / Criminal Justice Services, Telephones, *Share* or *Roundabout* magazine, Archives, Armed Services, Young People and First Response comprising Chat Now (instant messaging) and the Online Response Service (ORS). These liaison activities, along with others such as Finance and Literature, are reported upon below.

General Service Conference 2023

The Fifty-Seventh General Service Conference (GSC) was held in April this year in York. Whilst most delegates attended in person in York the GSC was also fully accessible online. The theme was 'I am Responsible'. Eighty-seven delegates from sixteen regions, of which one joined on line, and 23 members of the General Service Board (GSB) attended.

Shirley S - Conference Chair (South East Region), Ranjan B, the General Secretary and 7 members of staff from the General Service Office attended. Also in attendance were 12 Observers from: Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, Portugal and USA. The total attendance was 131.

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
- six Conference Committees Chairpersons' reports detailing the deliberations and recommendations on the elected 'Questions for Conference' which had originated from the grassroots of the Fellowship

The recommendations were voted upon by the full GSC on the Sunday morning.

The voting system employed by the GSC is as follows:

- i. A two-thirds majority in favour of the recommendation makes it binding upon the General Service Board to take action.
- ii. A simple majority is just a recommendation to the General Service Board to take action if the people, time, and finances are available.

General Service Office

GSO in York provides a focal point for the Fellowship which links individual members, groups, IGs, regions, the GSB and the GSC. Acting as the European Service Centre, GSO responds to enquiries worldwide, co-operating with service structures within other countries for mutual benefit. GSO staff and the two satellite offices (the Northern Service Office (NSO) in Glasgow and the Southern Service Office (SSO) in London, provide services that maintain these communication links.

General Service Board

The GSB consists of a trustee from each of the sixteen regions, and Non-Alcoholic Trustees (NATs). Trustees occupying the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer, along with the General Secretary, form the Executive Committee.

The General Secretary is responsible for GSO in York and the NSO and SSO. Currently there are five serving NATs. They are able to relate to the general public about AA without having concerns of personal anonymity.

Four Board meetings are held each a year, plus an annual workshop in July when the GSB reflect upon their personal effectiveness, their relationship with the Board, and Board effectiveness in serving the Fellowship of Great Britain as a whole. This year, during their annual workshop, the GSB held a Question-and-Answer session with members of the executives from the 16 regional assemblies. Common to all was the need to attract members into service.

Each trustee, including NATs, has specific responsibilities and works within the disciplines, and these are reported on below: -

a) Sponsoring Other Countries

As in previous years, to assist in the development of AA in other countries, we have contributed to the International Literature Fund and provided financial assistance from our Development Fund.

Sponsorship of the Sub-Sahara African Service Meetings in South Africa continues, shared equally with USA / Canada. The General Secretary, Ranjan, and Barbara O, General Service Board Trustee from the South Midlands Region, attended the Sub-Sahara Africa Service Meeting in September 2021, which was held online.

AAGB also provides the accommodation for observers to our annual Conference.

b) Finance

The Fellowship's finances have remained in a stable position in spite of Covid. 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.

This year Finance held a seminar for Fellowship Treasurers across the AAGB structure.

Four key themes were discussed:

- primary purpose and role of the treasurer
- banking
- insurance
- prudent reserves and budgets

Projects

c) AAGB 75th Anniversary

AAGB held a 75th anniversary Convention in the City of Leeds from the 10th till the 12 June 2022. With the country just starting to come out of the Covid restrictions, we were delighted to have over 3,000 members attend.

The weekend was based around Unity, Service and Recovery. All who attended enjoyed a weekend of meeting new and old friends whilst taking part in carrying our message to the still suffering Alcoholic.

In the years leading up to the event, our committee engaged with all our Regions across AAGB and Continental Europe to help with the planning. With 'Service' as a focus, we selected all meeting chairs and speakers from members who are active within our service structure.

Our committee worked with all regional archivists to create an historical walkway that contained their regions history, together with a written history which went into our new AAGB book. All GSB Sub Committees worked with the convention committee with a great attitude of what could they bring to the event.

A few examples of this were:

- an AAGB Archives exhibition held at Leeds Museum
- a Young Peoples workshop
- attendance of the Governor of Wakefield prison as one of our guest speakers
- the first showing of our new AA history video
- sub-committee rooms for all disciplines
- early bird's meetings run by the local intergroup

Throw into the mix - fun runs, dances and singalongs and you can understand why we say this was a weekend of Unity, Service and Recovery!

d) People of Colour Working Group

Conference 2021 Committee 6 Question 1 was asked to 'consider and make recommendations on ways to reach out to problem drinkers in black, Asian and minority ethnic communities' as AA GB is predominantly white.

The resulting action, amongst other initiatives such as literature in different language was the establishment the People of Colour Working Group in May 2022 which:

- comprises a core group of 4 people from minority ethnic groups and two trustees
- is fulfilling Conference recommendations
- talks unashamedly about colour and race
- Understands that engaging different communities into AA is a long- term issue, as it will need the whole of the Fellowship to make itself more open minded and accessible

So far, the People of Colour Working Group has:

- Run two virtual international conventions to discuss race in the Fellowship. A third is planned for 2023
- Run a workshop at the London Convention summer 2023
- Started a new meeting in Glasgow for black and Asian members
- Provided 'Gateway' online meetings for Punjabi members with the aim of encouraging them into the wider Fellowship

It intends to:

- Present to Conference a locally produced leaflet on stories from black and Asian members, with the hope that Conference will nationally adopt the leaflet
- Attend other national conference to spread the message

AA Publications - AA Service News, Share, Roundabout and Handbooks

e) AA Service News

AA Service News (AASN) is the GSB's principal medium for demonstrating active service across the Fellowship, the benefits of such service, and outcomes to the still suffering alcoholic. It successfully meets our primary purpose in carrying the message. It is published quarterly, and articles are sought from members of the Fellowship on their service experience.

Issues of AASN contain:

- questions for Conference and also Conference Recommendations.
- articles written for and by the Fellowship
- GSB meeting Bullet Points
- news and details about Parliamentary events in England, Scotland, and Wales, National Conventions and other notable service events are published throughout the year via
- sub-committee vacancy notices
- Seventh Tradition and In Memoriam contributions
- Concept or Tradition from the relevant checklist

During the pandemic AASN was posted digitally to all subscribers. It was also available on the AAGB website. This continued post pandemic for about 18 months. During 2022, AASN took on a new identity being produced in full colour and via the new AAGB 'Family Look' (branding guidelines) and publishing software. This broadened the scope and attractiveness of the magazine. In 2023 AASN reverted back to print, with both paper and digital copies available to all who had registered to receive AASN. It has proven a very positive move, as more members read about and participate in active service. The number of copies of AASN being offered to subscribers can be increased if requested.

Share and Roundabout Magazines

Share and *Roundabout* are our Fellowship's '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.

f) Share

Share magazine has been going through a few changes in the past year. It was very exciting to see the new 'family look' (new branding guidelines following recommendations from Conference 2019 C2, Q1) reach our pages and everyone agreed that it was a welcome transformation. Apart from a couple of teething problems, like getting the font the right size, it all went really smoothly thanks to the hard work of all involved.

We had a bit of a surge in article submissions following the Fellowship 75th Anniversary celebration in Leeds. The *Share* VIP room was very busy with people curious to meet the team and discover how our 'meeting between meetings' operates. We also managed to fill all vacancies in the *Share* team as a result of the interest generated. So, after a period with no Assistant Editor in post, and our team, particularly the editor Agnes taking up the extra slack, we can now report that our new Assistant editor, Bridget, is settling in very well and things are running smoothly.

g) Roundabout Magazine

The Roundabout Sub Committee are working hard to produce a sharing caring monthly magazine. We have an Editor, a Secretary, a Link officer and 2 Proof Readers. We have information pages on conventions and gatherings and on group amendments or new and reopened groups. Our magazine is produced, every month. At present we are receiving more and more subscriptions.

Roundabout is produced in the new AAGB 'family look', which enable s AA to be visible and uniform. The magazine is varied, using photo's, cartoons and AA 'one liners' e.g. 'No one is too stupid to get this programme but there are many too clever!'. AA sayings are also used, The Serenity Prayer, I am Responsible and The Declaration of Unity among others.

h) Handbooks

The AAGB Handbooks have undergone a major facelift, making them lighter, easier to read and digest. They are now spiral bound, include pictures, follow the AA family look and include a of Glossary of Terms

Carrying the Message Digitally

i) AAGB Website - PI & EComms

Conference 2022 requested an updated website. In 2022 the GSB created a Project Team comprising of staff from GSO and the PI & EComms Sub Committee with the task of providing a brand new, and easy to use website.

Work started on this exciting project straight away. A top-notch web development agency, with a proven track record of working with small organisations in the charitable and public sectors, was selected from a carefully curated short list of candidates. Castlegate IT has proven to be extremely knowledgeable and responsive to the needs of the Fellowship and has worked very closely and collaboratively with the Project Team.

We identified early on that the primary purpose of the website is to carry the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic. The help freely provided by Alcoholics Anonymous to members of the Fellowship and professionals were key considerations.

Usability, simple navigation and improved accessibility have been key objectives throughout the project, together with the Conference approved 'family look', has been applied to every page and feature. With a new look Meeting Finder and shop, improved search facility for the site and document library - all built on a modern Wordpress framework - the updated site will be flexible and configurable. It will meet the needs of the still suffering alcoholic, as well as members of the wider Fellowship, for now and in years to come. We hope to launch the new website before the end of 2023.

j) First Response Online

A new Sub Committee has been formed to cover our two online services - Chat Now (a live chat feature) and the Online Response Service (an email service). We work closely with the Telephones Sub Committee to share experience and best practice.

Increasing numbers of still suffering alcoholics are reaching out for help using these online services, and we are working to increase the number of responders through:

- holding a First Response Workshop in Glasgow, with more planned for 2024
- giving presentations at regions to let people know about Chat Now and the Online Response services,
- encouraging members to become responders

Further Disciplines and Work of AAGB

k) Public Information

The Fellowship produced the film Gratitude in Action, and is available at <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/search.do?kw=gratitude+in+action>

In 2022, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) approached AA to ask for help in them making a documentary on Alcoholics Anonymous. The BBC were using 'deep fake technology' which combined the faces of two people, so a person could speak to a camera but still be anonymous.

With agreement from certain meetings, AA opened its doors and filming took place. Deep fake technology was used in face on meetings. This meant the viewer got to see an AA's face on for the first time and hear their story, whilst at the same time the anonymity of the AA taking part was fully preserved.

Subsequent to the film, AA received many calls for help from the general public.

The AA Family Look

Following a recommendation from Conference 2019, AAGB was asked to improve its public image as portrayed by its literature with respect to our primary purpose. As such AAGB had adopted a set of Branding Guidelines. These are being deployed across all new literature, other literature as when it is updated, the new website, and for example power-point slides. The new guidelines are available on the website for use by the AAGB Fellowship

l) Health Sub Committee

The health discipline was very badly affected by the Covid pandemic in two ways:

1. Groups carrying out visits and meetings in hospital were no longer (quite rightly) permitted
2. that the whole of the health service was focused on Covid, that alcohol issues, along with others, took a back seat.

It appears that for the Fellowship to get back to where it was in hospitals, prior to the pandemic, is taking a while but members of the fellowship are slowly re-establishing contacts.

On a more positive note, the advent of the use of online platforms helped the growth of “Open meeting Workshops” and over the last two years, the number of these online information events for trainee doctors and nurses has grown. Whilst we are not directly carrying out our primary purpose to the still sick and suffering alcoholic, we are making inroads into informing those who will come into contact with them.

NICE Quality Alcohol Guidance strongly recommends AA 12-Step Facilitation (AA/TSF) Programmes

We have had fantastic news for the health discipline, the wider AA fellowship and the still suffering alcoholic.

NICE (The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) Guidance provides ‘best practice’ recommendations to National policy makers in England and Wales, such as Health and Social Care practitioners, Service providers, Commissioners, and most importantly, adults seeking help for an alcohol-use disorder.

The NICE Guidance, published on 6 July 2023, now strongly endorses AA 12-Step Facilitation Programmes. The NICE Quality standard [QS11] Published: 24 August 2011 Last updated: 06 July 2023 on Alcohol-use disorders: diagnosis and management is available at <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs11>

This NICE Quality Standard will facilitate interactions between AA members, especially in health and related service roles, and health and social care practitioners, and should have a major impact, both within and outside the fellowship, in the years to come.

m) Prisons

This year Prisons Sub Committee held a Zonal meeting in Bristol where any member involved in Prison or Probation service and within a day's travel, were invited. The aim being to reach those who may not be in regular contact with the wider AA probation service and to share experience of more localised service work. It was a day full of useful information and a way of getting to know others and their work in Prisons / Probation.

We were asked to give a presentation to the Midlands Region which was well received and held a Seminar in York in July which included presentations on the:

- prison postal service
- Scottish prison service
- vetting or clearance/ procedures

We also attended the Scottish National Convention where we answered questions on prison sponsorship, and held a Regional Liaison Officers meeting in York. We will be proceeding to work together to establish better communication within the Prison discipline

n) Probation/Criminal Justice Social Work

Probation / Criminal Justice Services in Great Britain has been making progress with the 'chit' system where approximately 550 Alcoholics Anonymous Groups in GB offer it. Local service work is delivered by enthusiastic members, encouraging cooperation with the professional community. A generic contact email address is available as a central point for members and outside agencies to contact the Sub Committee Infoprobation.sc@aamail.org

We have provided roadshows, presentations at forums, zonal meetings, seminars to both members and professionals. We have recently reviewed and updated Fellowship information on the website, as well as producing a new revised leaflet for professionals for Conference in 2024.

Current projects include:

- cooperating with HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) for their Approved Premises, to increase and reinvigorate connections on a local and national basis
- raising awareness across HMPPS of AA services, with an initial cooperative project taking place in Eastern England
- providing information to HM Courts and Tribunal service (HMCTS) as a signpost to aid Court users towards AA.
- service at the Glasgow Alcohol Court and other GB courts on an ongoing basis
- working with Police custody suites to signpost people to AA

o) Archives

The Borthwick Institute in York provides an archivist to work two and half days a week on the AA archives. Their current priority will be to catalogue the digital information that we have accumulated over the last 20 years or so.

The archives display at the 75th Anniversary Convention in Leeds 2022, consisted of a range of pop-up banners displaying various aspects of AA and its history. This collection of banners has been, and will be reused, numerous times at different AA and public events, and have been well received.

p) Armed Services

There has been a slow but steady increase in the number the Armed Service Liaison Officers posts being filled since Covid. The opportunities to engage with the Armed Services through health fairs and other such events has started to increase.

We have re-established contact with a Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the Ministry of Defence who would like to include:

- AA in documents for defence clinicians
- re-invigorate thinking within Defence relating to the value of AA.

q) National Telephones

The National Telephone Sub Committee (NTSC) Terms of Reference, is presenting a proposal for the introduction of a 'Cluster & Hub' system in the UK telecoms landscape. The purpose of this system is to address the challenges posed by the 0800 (UK wide freephone) number, which has encountered various issues since the escalation of mobile phones. These challenges include:

- call routing problems
- lost messages on personal answering machines
- nuisance callers
- responders not logging off
- mechanical failures
- delayed response times

The NTSC has also been working on safeguarding and training guidelines for responders and 12th stepper, along with a General Data Protection Document (GDPR) document to help the fellowship understand how we store responders' and callers' information.

r) Young People

The sub-committee have held a number of Roadshows in the past couple of years, which have generated a lot of enthusiasm for the service, and resulted in new Young People's meetings being set up. This has further resulted in more members engaging in service across the AA structure. We have another event planned in Glasgow in May 2024.

The service as a whole is very enthusiastic and a lot of work is being done to help carry the message of recovery to younger people. A new podcast has been started by the sub-committee, called 'They Stopped in Time'. So far, 2 episodes have been recorded and they are available on the usual podcast platforms.

s) Literature

Literature Sub Committee is a 'behind the scenes' Sub Committee and is kept very busy! It revises and creates AAGB literature based on recommendations from the GSC.

Last year, Literature produced a new leaflet 'Sponsored into Service' which was accepted at Conference. Following a recommendation from Conference, Literature revised the Handbooks with them becoming 'gender neutral'. Other revisions included Chapter 6 on Health, the sections on Conventions, Regional Assemblies, and the GSB. Other short items were also revised. It also produced two 'table toppers'. One on Safeguarding and the other on Medical Advice.

This year Literature is preparing a new pamphlet on Mental Health. It also working on the following items which, hopefully, will be ready to go to Conference 2024; Employment leaflet, Probation and Criminal Justice leaflet, DOES ANYONE LOOK LIKE ME IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS? a new Chapter for the Service Handbook on AA Publications – *Share, Roundabout, AASN*, and Diary and Calendar, revision on the Structure Handbook's Introductory chapter, new Health Leaflet, Executive Summary for the Service Handbook and A Brief Guide to AA.

t) Parliamentary Events

The Fellowship also carries its message to parliamentarians and professionals through running parliamentary events which are sponsored by politicians in the English, Welsh and Scottish parliaments.

- The next presentation to the Welsh Assembly, (Senydd) will take place on the 14 November 2023. Andy who chairs this committee is a veteran and has used his links to encourage participation of the Veterans Commissioner for Wales, The Royal British Legion and all Armed Forces Liaisons and Champions within each of the unitary authorities have been invited.
- The Scottish Parliament event will be on 4th October 2023, The theme is Alcoholics Anonymous Awareness, and we have four confirmed AA speakers and along with one of our Non-Alcoholic Trustees. An address from our Sponsoring MSP will be followed by our speakers and a question-and-answer session. The AA committee decided a more structured approach would benefit the event and has agreed terms of rotation and record keeping
- For England the event took place on 12 May this year. Through the work of the Parliamentary Event Sub Committee, AA held the 19th Annual Presentation and Reception of Alcoholics Anonymous at Portcullis House in Westminster. The aim of this event is to help professionals and Parliamentarians get a better understanding of AA, who we are and how we can help the still suffering alcoholic.
- The question-and-answer session made it clear that the speakers had sparked a real interest, as did the conversations afterwards. The turnout of invited attendees was good this year. Such contacts would be people or organisations that we already have some kind of contact or relationship with, and we can ask if they could liaise with us to invite their colleagues and professional peers, who may not know much about AA, to come along

Each of the events are supported by GSO and the NSO.

u) Conventions

We have four National Conventions in Great Britain: the Northern, Southern, Scottish and Welsh 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. They must be self-supporting.

- Thankfully, post-pandemic, volunteers came forward to do service on the **Northern National Convention** committee to keep this popular convention alive. The Northern National was held for the first time, post-covid, in 2022 and was a great success with just over 800 members of AA and AI-Anon attending. The second, held in 2023, had just under 1, 000 attendees. The convention is always held at the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool.

- **The Welsh Convention** held a hold a one-day online version in June 2021. It held its first face-to-face convention at the Metropole Hotel Llandrindnod Wells on the 2/4 June 2023. Given that the convention was run on a small committee, it was a success with 163 attendees from a wide geographical area. There were tabletop shares held, A step 3 and 11 workshop, A Chat now presentation, Marathon meetings, and a room was available for Alanon. A Welsh speaker's platform with a simultaneous translation into English was held on the Saturday afternoon.
- **Southern National Convention**
 The Southern National Convention struggled to find a suitable home in the past couple of years. With no on-site accommodation and few catering options, the venue for the 2022 event was not ideal and there was little interest from the Fellowship for the 2023 event, so it was cancelled. All the energies of the Committee are now focussed on finding a better venue for 2024 which could also become a longer-term home for the Convention. Exciting news is anticipated by year end.
- **Scottish Convention**
 The 2022, after initial challenges due to Covid 19 restrictions, the 65th Scottish National Convention went ahead and was a sell-out with a maximum capacity of 350. The convention took its regular form of meetings being hosted by each Region, with a Young Persons and Old timers meeting, the Saturday night meeting was open including an AI Anon speaker and rounded off with a sobriety countdown. AI – Anon also had their own meeting room and meetings were well attended.

HUNGARY

Brief Historical Summary

K. László wanted to put an end to his heavy drinking and visited his treating doctor, who lent him a book called Alcoholics Anonymous.

In 1988, László met a German sober alcoholic, Helmuth, who took him to meetings in Germany to gain experience.

After that, the first assembly was held in Budapest on June 6, 1988. At first only two or three people went, but on one occasion an Englishman, Bill, came in looking for a meeting in Budapest. He hasn't had a drink in over 21 years. Bill played a decisive role in the start of AA in Hungary.

We learned a lot from him, apart from technical things, above all humility and modesty. He was the one who announced the establishment of the Fellowship in Hungary at the American GSO.

More and more of our comrades who went abroad visited home and shared their experiences in AA. Our members contacted a famous Hungarian writer who wrote an article about AA. As our news reached more and more of our friends living in Hungary or abroad, the Hungarian AA continued to expand. Groups were formed one after the other not only in the capital, but also in the countryside. According to the 1997 list, there were 11 groups in the capital and 23 in the countryside.

In 1993, Kati agreed with the GSO to establish a permanent central office.
Some timeline:

1969: Midge M., a staff member of GSO New York, travels to Budapest and organizes Hungary's first known open AA meeting

1972: A small group was formed in Budapest, but AA was not firmly established until the end of the 80-s

1988: the first AA meeting in Hungary with 2-3 people, the arrival of Bill K., who announces the establishment of Hungarian AA to the GSO

1990: The first Big Book in Hungarian with the permission of the GSO, translation, printing in the USA, arrival in Hungary in details

1991: Creation of a Service Office

1992: A newspaper called Meeting is launched for alcoholic members

1994: the first "election meeting", the purpose of which is to set up the Service Committee.

We receive from Germany the thin edition of The Big Book in Hungarian

1998: The first traditional National Meeting in Budapest based on German experience

2001: Launch of the AA website

2010: Start of an internet mailing group

2012: starting an online meeting with fellow Hungarians living abroad and with the participation of Hungarian fellows across the border

2014: more than 100 rural and almost 30 Budapest groups operate

2023: in Hungary 157 registered group operate

Current A.A. Structure

Today we reached approximately 40 group meetings a week in Budapest and further 140 meetings in the countryside.

In Hungary 157 groups are registered. These groups have their own delegate or representative who are sent by the groups to the service forums 4 times in a year.

The service forum is held in Budapest, organized by the Service Committee. The Service Committee has 9 members who are elected for 2 years. The members of the Service Committee meet once in a month in the Central Office in Budapest.

Other Services

Since its inception, AA has sought to cooperate with professionals. We are constantly looking for opportunities to make the exchange of ideas with professionals more intensive and wide-ranging, and we are happy to receive their comments and suggestions. More and more groups are trying to get in touch with local hospitals and other institutions that treat alcoholics. Unfortunately, even today, we often appreciate that few people understand our responsibility. That is why we think that it is important and useful at the beginning if we regularly report on our activities to the contact person at the given institution.

We are in contact also to prisons. There are more rules to obey,

stricter conditions must be met than in the case of visits to health institutions, e.g. in the case of prisons, it happens that only the same AA members can go to carry the messages to prisoners for years. It is important to see how we can help alcoholics within the penitentiary and also after their release. When the inmate is released from the closed institution, it is important to arrange for AA members to welcome the newcomer, perhaps to accompany him to the local AA group. Our experience shows that the first hours are the most critical for the released convict.

We value the role of the media and we use the opportunity to carry the message through talk shows, radio, newspaper, but we prioritize the observance of anonymity even more.

Also school institutes also regularly ask us to hold lectures with the aim of prevention.

Sobriety time required for service positions

in the groups in case of some services like the representative/delegate it is recommended that they have a longer sobriety of up to 3 years. The same applies to the secretary. In case of other services is the sobriety less important.

in the Service Committee it is also recommended to have 3 years sobriety. Unfortunately, we are often faced with the fact that there are not enough applicants for the services, so we do not set this as a condition, and we are also happy to take those members who have serious determination, but sometimes only have 1-2 years of sobriety.

General Service Convention

The service forums are held 4 times in a year in Budapest, organized by the Service Committee. The members of the Service Committee meet once in a month in the Central Office also in Budapest.

The Service Committee takes care of the issues arising between two service forums, implements the forum's decisions and assignments. During their meetings, the members of the Service Committee also discuss issues that do not belong to the service, but they affect the Fellowship. The Service Committee cannot make a decision affecting the entire Fellowship.

The Service Committee can also convene an extraordinary service forum if appropriate.

Service Manual

We have our own first Service Manual since January 2023. It can be found on our website as well in a pdf format, but it is printed as a book and given to all groups in Hungary.

Literature/Publishing Overview

We have following books in Hungarian:

- The Big Book
- As Bill sees it
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
- Living sober
- Came to believe
- Daily reflections
- Pass It On
- AA Comes of Age
- Dr Bob and the Good Old Timers

We have further AA Unity And Service, but no CD-s or DVD-s.

Finance Overview

The Hungarian AA is financially stable. Financing a national meeting or other events, workshops, committee does not cause financial problems. In 2023 the approximate percentage of annual income from contributions was 40 %, from literature approximate 60%.

Relations with other countries

In the last few years, the Polish connection has been growing stronger. The friendship is nurtured by several companions from both sides. We learn a lot from our Polish friends, we visit them at conventions, and learn more and more how they are working, how they carry the message.

IRELAND

Historical Summary

In 2021 Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland celebrated our 75th anniversary. Alcoholics Anonymous was introduced to Ireland in 1946 by Irishman Conor F. He had immigrated to America in 1929, found sobriety there in 1943, and on a return visit to Ireland in 1946, he carried the AA message to another Irish alcoholic Richard P, a patient in St Patricks Hospital, Dublin. Together they found four or five more sufferers and started meeting in one of their homes. They held the first AA Irish closed meeting in Dublin on the 18th of November 1946. Two years later in 1948, groups were started in Bundoran, Belfast and Limerick. By the time of Bill and Lois W's landmark visit in 1950 to Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Limerick, six groups were already established. Within another six years, there were approximately 650 members in 15 groups. Today we have more than 900 groups with an estimated membership of 15,000 alcoholics holding more than 100,000 meetings annually.

The first meeting of the All-Ireland National Intergroup Committee was held in Dublin in 1968. At its second meeting in Newry, County Down, it was renamed the General Service Conference of Ireland. 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. In 1975 we established a Central Services Office in Belfast, which is run by Ulster Intergroup with one full time employee. This is ostensibly a clearing house for literature and 12 Step calls in Ulster. This has subsequently closed in 2023.

Structure and General Service Conference

This service structure begins with the A.A. groups. The groups send two General Service Representatives to a local Area Committee. Each Area Committee then sends four representatives to their Provincial Intergroup (Leinster, Connaught, Munster and Ulster). Each Intergroup in turn sends four elected Group Service Conference Delegates and the Intergroup Secretary to the General Service Conference of Ireland. Sobriety time required for service positions is clearly detailed in our General Service Handbook (see next section on Literature). The General Service Conference of Ireland therefore consists of seven Trustees (four alcoholics and three non-alcoholics), the 16 Conference Delegates, the four Intergroup Secretaries, the two World Service Delegates who serve at European and World Service Meetings, and a Secretary to the Board. Following a Conference decision in 2021, a new service position of Young People's Liaison Officer will be added to each Intergroup in due course. Area Committees and Intergroups also elect coordinators for Public Information, Hospitals and Prisons, and each of these vital servants work with sub committees.

Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland comprises two separate although closely connected organisations: (1) The Fellowship of A.A. comprising Groups, Areas, Provincial Intergroups and the General Service Conference (A.A.) and (2) The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG (GSBAA). The Fellowship of A.A. is what is known as an unincorporated body and as such it is not subject to Company Law or Charity Law. The Fellowship of A.A. is run in accordance with this handbook and in accordance with custom and practice built up over decades with its constituent parts being guided by their Group Conscience.

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland CLG on the other hand is both a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital and a registered charity, so the company is subject to both Company Law and Charity Law. The Company operates in accordance with its Constitution and the seven Directors of the company are both Company Directors and Charity Trustees with specific legal responsibilities imposed on them by the Companies Act 2014 and Charities Act 2009 respectively.

The company provides a range of services to the Fellowship including:

- Publication of *The Road Back* Magazine and the AA News Sheet
- Literature Publications
- Maintenance of AA's National Archives
- Management of national Public Information activities
- Management of the funds of the Fellowship that are not retained at Group, Area or Provincial Intergroup level for their own use
- Operation of the General Service Office (GSO)
- Management of the AA Website

The seven trustees form the General Service Board which, on behalf of the Fellowship in Ireland, runs the GSO in Dublin. The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous meets once per year with the GSCDs, Intergroup Secretaries and WSDs to exchange views and discuss any issues relating to their Provincial Intergroups (Conference, 1988).

All Conference of Ireland decisions come by way of motions from the groups or through board recommendations. The GSB has a Strategic Plan for 2020–2023 with a vision of providing clear and effective guidance to the fellowship.

Conference Sub Committees

There has been much discussion about encouraging members into service, the importance of member-to-member sponsorship and the benefits of service. At the 2021 General Service Conference of Ireland four subcommittees were formed to deal with pertinent concerns amongst members: Literature, Young Peoples Liaison Officer, Service, and Digital/Online Meetings. Each subcommittee met over a period of six months and brought proposals back to a Special Meeting of Conference where they were passed. In summary:

- Relevant **Literature** and pamphlets will be amalgamated into a pack to help GSRs
- A **Young Person's Liaison Officer** post will be created for first time in Ireland. The YPLO subcommittee will continue to meet to provide parameters and guidelines for the post.
- **Guidelines for Digital Online Meetings** and an updated **Meeting Format** to include online meetings will be published in the Green Service Handbook.
- In March 2023 General Service Conference a fifth sub-committee was then formed. This 5th subcommittee has the remit of **Updating the Constitution of AA Ireland** and to report back to conference for ratification of the document.

The committees continue to work towards making proposals for Conference for improvements within the Fellowship in Ireland. In the Green Service Handbook emphasis is now placed on retired Conference Delegates returning to their home groups to serve as officers.

Other Services

A **Public Information Kit** was assembled by a Conference sub-committee and is now available to PI committees throughout the country. It is proving to be a valuable resource in providing information about AA to areas such as Social Services, Police, Education, Hospitals and Company Human Resource Departments. It also inspires and informs members interested in PI. Business cards with phone numbers of the various area/intergroup telephone services have been provided and are available to the Fellowship. The board has also placed A.A. numbers in telephone directories, with these numbers featured in the main sections of the directories and not just the emergency and yellow pages sections. Our film *The Road Back* continues to be widely used by Public Information Committees and has been translated into several languages. It is also available online on our website and has Irish Sign Language and subtitled versions.

A great amount of **Archival Material** was donated to the GSB in 1980 and was made available to be seen in the GSO. A mobile archives display started in 1988 so that members around the country could more easily view the archives. During 2005, an archival company was engaged to review the archives and to put it into a database. The emphasis on archives remains on maintenance and the board is very grateful to everyone concerned and especially the many area committees who cooperate by sending in their minutes, which are preserved for posterity in digital form. The archives are available for visitors by appointment.

The first **All-Ireland Convention** was held in Dublin in 1958. The Convention rotates yearly among the four Intergroups. The last All-Ireland Convention with the theme **THERE IS A SOLUTION** was held in person in April 2023. There are normally about fifteen Area Conventions held around Ireland during the year and many Areas and Groups also hold gratitude days throughout the year.

Hospital and Prison Meetings are organised at Intergroup or Area level by Conveners with sub-committees. Face to face meetings have slowly returned to normal post pandemic with the added benefit now of virtual meetings in some prisons.

Sobriety time required for service positions.

Periods vary depending on the position within the structure. Trustees, Conference Delegates and World Service Delegates require ten years of sobriety. Three years sobriety is required for Intergroup positions such as Prison, PI or Hospital Convener. All these positions require a working knowledge of the Steps, Traditions and Concepts. Non-alcoholic Trustees may serve two to four-year terms, while Alcoholic Trustees serve one term of four years. World Service and Conference Delegates serve a four-year term, while Intergroup and Area positions are for two-year terms. No member should be active at Conference for more than ten years.

Literature

Through the GSO a wide range of AA literature is available in English. The *Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book* and the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* are also available from GSO in Chinese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, French, Korean, Latvian and Lithuanian. A hard copy of the *Directory of Meetings in Ireland* for use within the Fellowship is produced and revised regularly. It includes meeting times, locations, contact names and phone numbers.

The Board publishes our magazine *The Road Back* every two months. It is called 'a meeting in print' because it contains stories of recovery written by members of the Fellowship. *The Road Back* was first published in April 1949, and it is the longest continuously published A.A. magazine in Europe with distribution worldwide. A News Sheet is also published bimonthly and is intended as an aid to service and to give information on AA events in Ireland and elsewhere. It contains articles on the Traditions, the history of AA and items relevant to service in the Fellowship in Ireland. Its author is appointed from within AA membership by the General Service Board. Since July 2021 it has been incorporated into *The Road Back*.

Finance

Through the generosity of our members following the Seventh Tradition, Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland is financially secure with a Prudent Reserve. We are 85% self-supporting from member contributions; the remainder comes from the sale of literature and convention surpluses. The Audited Accounts up to 2021 indicate clearly that although there was a dip during the initial period of the lockdown, there has been a balancing out. In addition, as Area, Intergroup, Conference and Board meetings were held virtually for almost two years, expenses for travel and sundries have been considerably reduced. Many groups have set up online banking facilities to allow for members' contributions, which are then passed through the service structure. Contributions can also be made directly to the GSO.

Relations with other countries

Two delegates are chosen at conference each year to attend the GB conference in York where they are afforded an opportunity to talk about the Irish structure and bring back ideas and suggestions for discussion at the next conference in Ireland. In return two GB delegates attend conference in Ireland every year. Ideas and suggestions are freely discussed and often adopted.

Internet and websites

The GSB operates the only official A.A. website in Ireland, which is for the use of members as well as serving as an aid to public information. Our freshly updated site displays times and venues for group meetings and includes maps giving the location of groups. The site includes many new features, including an online payment system which is particularly availed of by members all over the country in the evolving and everchanging situation of the pandemic. Group information can be updated online, which also has been very useful in recent times. Also displayed is a calendar of events from around the country and an online shop with price lists and order forms for literature available from GSO. Minutes from Conference meetings are made available in a members area and links to all officially required information, including a list of directors, annual accounts and company reports are included on the homepage. This all ensures that there is transparency at the level of service in the fellowship and publicly. There is an area for professionals in correctional or treatment facilities and healthcare fields and our film *The Road Back* is freely available to view and download.

In the wake of the global pandemic in 2020, physical meetings were suspended temporarily. Groups all over Ireland responded by starting online meetings, which provided a vital connection for the maintenance of members' sobriety as well as for the many newcomers.

The General Service Office of Ireland responded to these changes, and both physical and online meeting details are available on the official A.A. website. Although there has been a return to physical meetings, some groups have also continued with online meetings and some Area and Intergroup meetings as well as Conference business meetings are still being held virtually.

ITALY

Brief Historical Summary

The date of birth of Alcoholics Anonymous Italy dates back to 10 May 1972 in Rome, where an English-speaking group already existed, and met in a room made available to AA by the Anglican-Episcopal church in via Napoli. It was Carlo C. who knocked on the door of the group that evening of 10 May and was welcomed by Mia, of Belgian nationality and bilingual, wife of an Italian who attended the English-speaking group.

After a short time, the Italian language group was formed and on November 9 of that same year an article was published in the newspaper *Il Messaggero*, of Rome, entitled “*Non bere, parla*” (Don't drink, speak). In 1974 a group was also formed in Florence on the initiative of Carlo Còccioli, an Italian writer who had taken the problem of alcoholism to heart, so much so that he wrote a book entitled “*Uomini in fuga*” (Running Away Men), which was and continues to be very successful.

In 1976 was born the first group in Milan and, together with those in Rome and Florence, gave birth to the first nucleus of an Intergroup. Thanks to Public Information initiatives, other groups were formed in Italy, until the first edition of the Alcoholics Anonymous book was published in 1980. In the same year AA Italy became part of the European and worldwide General Services.

Also in 1980, an information bulletin was born which in 1981 took the form of a newsletter under the name of “*Insieme in AA*” (Together in AA), a name it continues to have today. In 1984, with the groups growing in number, in Rimini was held the Conference which approved the Statute and defined the role of the Delegates. The Conference was attended by 111 secretaries out of a total of 119 groups.

The following year, the first National Convention took place in Rimini, which also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the birth of AA. Groups of AI-Anon family members also participated in the Convention. Rimini has remained the traditional venue for both the Conference and the National Convention.

The first non-alcoholic trustee, the physician Allaman Allamani, joined the General Services Board in 1997, and since then the Board has had at least one non-alcoholic trustee on its members.

The Covid epidemic of 2020 arrived suddenly and prevented the meetings of the groups (which in the meantime had reached around 450) in presence. But immediate measures were taken and groups were formed on Whatsapp, telephone groups and online groups on the Zoom and Skype. Even after the end of the pandemic, many groups remained online and a Committee of the General Services Board is currently studying how to include them in the service structure of AA Italy.

Current AA Structure

The structure of AA Italy is made up of: a General Services Board, with eleven trustees, one of whom is non-alcoholic; a General Services Office with an employee; four macro-Areas, coordinated by four trustees, each of which includes several Areas; 19 Areas which correspond to the administrative Regions of Italy, except for Abruzzo and Molise which constitute a single Area; about 450 groups, each of which meets one to three times a week; some very large groups have multiple meetings, up to seven days a week. The online groups are not yet included in the structure of AA Italy.

Other Services

AA Italy performs service in four prisons, where groups are set up with the guidance of AAs of neighboring groups; it also operates in hospitals, clinics and schools.

These activities are coordinated by the Areas. Wide-ranging public information activities, i.e. aimed at the general public, are mainly coordinated by the Areas.

Sobriety time required for service positions

Starting with the group, the appointments last for one year, except for the General Service Representative (GSR) whose appointment lasts for two years. For the secretary and the GSR, two years of sobriety and a good knowledge of the Traditions are suggested. For the other servants (deputy GSR, deputy secretary, treasurer, representative of literature and the magazine *Insieme in AA*) one year of sobriety.

The Zone is an intermediate level between the groups and the Area, with the task of facilitating the connection between groups and stimulating their spiritual growth. The Zone Coordinator should have four years of continuous sobriety while Deputy Coordinators are required two years. The assignments last for three years.

The Area, as already mentioned, coincides with the administrative Region of the Italian Republic, except for the Regions of Abruzzo and Molise, united in the same Area. The Areas are therefore 19 out of 20 Regions. The assignments of all Area servants are for three years. Five years of sobriety are required for the coordinator and delegates; three years for others.

Alcoholic trustees of the General Services Board are required to have eight years of continuous sobriety and their term is four years. As for non-alcoholic trustees, they cannot exceed one third of the total trustees. The Council currently has a non-alcoholic trustee, whose term is for three years and can be renewed once. Trustees are elected by the Conference; the National Secretary is elected by the Council among the trustees in office.

General Service Conference

The General Services Conference traditionally meets once a year in April in the city of Rimini for three days: Friday, Saturday, Sunday. It evaluates and votes on the reports of the trustees on the activities carried out in the previous year. The Committees of the Conference evaluate and study in depth the proposals and questions received at the Conference; draw up a report which is brought to the attention of the plenary assembly and voted on. Decisions of the Conference made with a two-thirds majority are binding on the General Services Council.

Service Manual

Alcoholics Anonymous Italy has a Service Manual which indicates the structure of the service in AA and the suggestions for fulfilling the service in the best way. The Service Manual is periodically examined by the Conference and possibly updated. Together with the Service Manual, AA Italy has also published a volume with the Guidelines for External Relations, the Zone, reimbursements for servants and the use of the toll-free number.

Literature/Publishing Overview

Alcoholics Anonymous Italy does not have Literature in audio or video form, nor does it have it in digital form. All Literature is printed and includes all the books and most of the pamphlets produced by the AA World Services. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of AA Italy, an edition of the Big Book with a yellow and red dust jacket was published, as a reminder of the first edition of 1939. Also in 2023, a new edition with a blue hard cover and without a dust jacket was published. The edition is always the third in Italian.

To encourage sponsorship, the Literature Committee of the GSB has drafted a book with Steps, Traditions and Concepts in the form of questions and answers; "Il Compagno di Viaggio" (The Travel Companion). The book was approved by the General Service Conference in 2019. Furthermore, the same Committee has decided to add a preface to the Italian version of the brochure "Questions and answers on sponsorship", for which we have verified with the GSO that there is no need for their authorisation.

Finance Overview

The 2022 budget, presented and approved by the 2023 General Services Conference, shows a total of costs of approximately 611,000 euros, and a total of revenues of 646,000 euros, for an operating surplus of 35,000 euros. It should be noted that AA Italia maintains a Prudent Reserve of 100,000 euros.

Relations with other countries

As regards relations with other countries, AA Italy had a difficult period as the General Service Board was without a trustee in charge of International Relations (Euromondiale) for a year. Relations with the General Service Office, New York, are regular, but relations with other European countries need to be developed.

One idea to consider for next year is to invite (at their own expense) to the Rimini National Convention, in September 2024, the European members of AA who are studying the Italian language, to allow them - at the same time - to practice the language, make new friends and share experience, strength and hope.

Internet & Websites

AA Italy has a national website which is very much visited. In fact, many requests for help come from people who have visited the AA Italian website. On the other hand, there are no initiatives concerning the presence on social networks, for which the modalities and procedures are still being studied very carefully. The Internet has given us a great help during the Covid pandemic and has served to allow the development of online groups, for which the inclusion in the AA service structure will be decided during the next Conference.

LATVIA

This autumn, the Alcoholics Anonymous in Latvia is celebrating its 35th anniversary. AA in Latvia started as an initiative of a narcologist when two of his patients met at the first meeting on November 8th 1988. At the beginning, meetings were held in a treatment institution and in apartments, a second AA group was founded outside the capital Riga a year later, and a first Russian-speaking group a year after that. In the 1990s alcoholics, desiring to stop drinking, joined the Latvian AA from three rehabilitation institutions or found AA individually.

The first convention of several Latvian AA groups' representatives was held in 1991, but the structure of the service developed slowly. In the late 1990s, major issues began to be addressed in group representative meetings, a precursor to the General Service Conference.

Already in the early 1990s, information about the Latvian AA was published in a USA booklet on international meetings. Since 2001 Latvian AA has been participating in the European service structures. Since 2008 Latvian delegates have participated in the General Service Conference in New York. The closest links and ties of Latvian AA have historically been established with the neighbouring country of Lithuania, as well as Poland.

Initially, the literature available in Latvian was a booklet *44 Questions* published in the USA (now *Frequently Asked Questions about AA*), as well as a Twelve Steps' summary made by the narcologist who initiated Latvian AA. The first book was the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, translated from Russian. In 1998, a Literature Working Group was formed as the first Latvian Service Committee to translate the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, which was published in Latvian in 2004.

Nowadays there is a wide variety of AA literature translated into Latvian: *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, *Daily Reflections*, *Came to Believe*, *Living Sober*, *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, *The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated*, *The Twelve Traditions Illustrated*, and a large number of pamphlets.

The Latvian AA magazine *Vīnoga*, an equivalent of *The AA Grapevine*, has been published since 1997. It has changed format several times over the years and since 2021 the magazine is fully digital and can be found <https://www.aavinoga.org/> (articles available in Latvian and Russian); since 2022 some articles are also recorded and published in audio format at <https://soundcloud.com/aa-v-noga>.

Since 2000, the General Service Office has been opened in Riga to support groups, sell literature, collect and disseminate information and to do other important tasks. Since 2017 Latvian AA employs a half-time paid office manager, an alcoholic. Since 2002, the main informative source about Latvian AA is this website <https://aa.org.lv/>.

At the end of 2022, the AA group register was introduced in Latvia. According to the register there are currently 53 groups in Latvia – 21 of them located in the capital Riga, but there are AA groups in 25 different cities and towns in Latvia. There are 4 online groups and 2 groups in hybrid format (face-to-face and online). 35 groups are Latvian-speaking, 9 Russian-speaking, 1 English, 7 bilingual (Latvian/Russian) and 1 bilingual (Latvian/English).

The *Covid-19* pandemic and restrictions related to it have been a challenge for Latvian AA groups (in comparison, there were more than 60 groups in Latvia in 2018). At the same time, as in other parts of the world, the restrictions of the pandemic have contributed to the development of online groups. Quite a lot of Latvian AA members attend international online meetings, making it even more difficult to determine the number of people who consider themselves to be members of Alcoholics Anonymous, but the total number of Latvian AA members is estimated to be around 500.

The Latvian General Service Conference is held every year. General Service Representatives are elected directly from the groups, voting rights are also granted to the Board of Trustees, the Conference Chair, the Office Manager and the Editor of the Latvian AA magazine *Vinoga*. A slow process is underway to move to a regional system, which will tentatively consist of three regions that will delegate their representatives to the Conference. Two regions have been established, and the region of Riga is in the creation process (an intergroup is currently in its early stages).

The Board of Trustees, with 9 members (one of them a Class A (non-alcoholic) trustee), reports directly to the General Service Conference. The Trustees chair committees and working groups. At the moment there are seven committees and working groups: the Financial committee, the Public Information committee, the Prisons and treatment committee, the Literature committee, the First contact committee, the Nomination committee and the Development working group. The Latvian AA Service Manual is in the draft stage.

In 2023 the General Service Conference approved the establishment and constitution of the association *Board of Trustees of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous*. The amendments to the constitution take into account the principle of separation of the traditional powers of the Conference and the legal powers of the Council. Legal responsibility is assumed by the members of the Board of Trustees, who become members of the Board of the association.

The GSO also decided this year to establish a standing Conference Committee, whose primary purpose is to work throughout the year on statewide initiatives to realize AA's core purpose.

According to the Audit Commission report, main income positions in 2022 are: 76% of the GSO income consisted of group contributions; 6% individual contributions and 15.4 % from the literature.

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 first General Service Conference was held. First statute approved.
- In 1993 there were 8 A.A. groups, we had 3 translated A.A. books.
- In 1994 A.A. Service Office was opened.
- In 1995 A.A. Service Board was established.
- In 1998 there were 46 A.A. groups, 5 translated A.A. books.
- In 2008 new A.A. Service Structure with 7 regions was approved. In 2008 A.A. counted 128 groups in Lithuania, 10 Lithuanian-speaking groups in foreign countries.
- In 2022 Lithuanian Service Conference recommended to make changes in our Service structure creating three regions, and introducing seven intergroups (formerly named regions). There will be less delegates at the Conference and less trustees.
- In June 2023 A.A. in Lithuania celebrated its 35th anniversary. The event was held at our annual A.A. summer camp. More than 1.000 participants arrived from Lithuania and neighboring countries.
- In 2023 A.A. Lithuania has 9 books, 1 CD audiobook and 21 brochures and leaflets in publishing (including A.A. service manual which is thoroughly updated and rewritten at the moment). There are 140 A.A. groups in Lithuania and 18 Lithuanian speaking groups in foreign countries, plus there are several groups that hold meetings online.

Current A.A. Structure

In 2022 our General service conference recommended making changes in our Service structure and rewriting the Service manual. Changes being effective from the start of 2023 with a transitional period of 4 years. Below is a description of the new service structure.

We have three regions consisting of seven intergroups (formerly named regions). Each of the three regions has 8 delegates at the Conference and each intergroup elects a different number of delegates according to the number of A.A. groups belonging to that intergroup.

The General Service Board consists of six class B trustees, two from each of the region and we are looking for 2 class A trustees. The board holds quarterly meetings at our General service office. A.A. in Lithuania hires two employees – the manager of the General service office and an accountant.

Lithuanian A.A. Service structure is described in the Service Manual. At the moment the Service manual is being rewritten and will hopefully be approved by our Conference in 2024.

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

Our intergroups take care that A.A. meetings are held regularly in hospitals, detox-centers, addiction disease centers, psychiatric wards and prisons. We collaborate with the police, probation/criminal justice services, prisons, the army corps, and other various social services. Both local groups and intergroups invite members of professional communities to their events and open A.A. meetings. One of the major events being our „Thanksgiving day“ (Founders day) held at the beginning of June each year – we hold a separate meeting for the professional communities in the middle of the week that is becoming more and more popular with our non-alcoholic friends.

In 2022 our Service conference felt the need for a country wide Public information strategy as most of the PI work is done by groups and intergroups and very little is done nation wide. A committee was formed by the Board of trustees and the PI strategy is to be presented at our 2023 Service conference.

Sobriety time required for service positions

Different service entities have different sobriety requirements. A.A. groups usually require at least six months or one year of sobriety to lead a meeting and maybe some more sobriety to become a treasurer or secretary of the group. Intergroups have no official sobriety requirement, but usually only experienced members are elected to positions with more responsibility. At the moment there is a three year sobriety requirement for a Service conference delegate and a five year sobriety requirement for a trustee, but this will most probably change as our Service manual will be rewritten.

General Service Conference

Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference takes a very important place in the A.A. Service structure. Usually Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference is held each year in November, for two days. Voting members are: Board of Trustees, eight delegates from each region, representative of Lithuanian-speaking groups abroad, editor of A.A. magazine, manager of the General service office and two ESM and WSM delegates. We usually invite guests to the conference, usually from our neighbour countries. Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference work is assigned to four committees (Finance, Internal, Public Information and Literature/Publishing). The Service conference makes decisions to be implemented by our Board of trustees and the Service office and also issues recommendations for A.A. Lithuania as a whole, those recommendations are to be taken into consideration by all A.A. groups in our country.

Literature/Publishing Overview

A.A. Service Office in Lithuania publishes General Service Conference approved A.A. literature. The third edition of Alcoholics Anonymous, updated with stories of Lithuanian A.A. members, was published in June 2022. So far there have been published and distributed 18 A.A. copyright pamphlets/brochures and following books: Alcoholics Anonymous (1991/2006/2022), 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).

2018 m. on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of A.A. in Lithuania the book AA Lietuvoje 1988–2018 (Anonymous Alcoholics in Lithuania 1988–2018. Thirty years of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Lithuania) was published.

New brochures are being translated and published regularly, e.g. The Twelve Traditions Illustrated and Speaking at Non A.A. Meetings were published recently. Also previously translated brochures are being revised for changes made by the A.A.W.S.

Currently the fourth edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous is being prepared (translation of all original stories).

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, Lithuanian A.A. website (e-bookstore), some books can be found in major bookstores and online bookstores. The book Alcoholics Anonymous can be read and downloaded as a pdf on our website. Our intergroups have their own literature representatives, A.A. literature is distributed to local A.A. groups and members by intergroups.

Finance Overview

The financial situation is slightly better than in the COVID period. Income has gone up since 2021, but also the expenses have risen. Incomes from sale of the books and incomes from 7th tradition in recent years became near 60/40 percentage of annual income. The Fellowship is still able to support our Service office by means of 7th Tradition donations from intergroups and by literature sales, but our treasury balance is delicate at the moment, it has not returned to pre-COVID levels.

Relations with other countries (country to country co-operation, how does this work?) We keep in touch with A.A. in Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Poland, England, Ireland, U.S., Canada and other countries. ESM mailing list help to feel a part of European A.A. community. We are very grateful to A.A. fellows from Portugal for connecting with us via ZOOM and answering our questions about Public information services in their country. A special thank you to A.A. Poland and Latvian A.A. for sharing their experience about various general service subjects.

Internet & Websites

A.A. Service Office location: J. Basanavičiaus square 16, Birštonas city, LT-59211 Lithuania.

Phone +370 319 45141

Mobile +370 683 67786

e-mail: info@aalietuvoje.org

Website: www.aalietuvoje.org

THE NETHERLANDS

History and Membership

AA was introduced in The Netherlands in 1948. At present it is hard to say how many groups there are. We're dealing with an immense growth of online meetings (groups) in the Netherlands due to the Coronavirus outbreak. There used to be approximately 203 groups, with 2,000 members. We believe we currently have around 350 groups and we suspect that at least 80 of these groups exist with only a zoom address. The number of active members is unknown. There are also over 50 English-speaking groups. Our capitals Amsterdam and The Hague also have Polish-speaking and Spanish-speaking groups. The English-speaking groups are affiliated with York, England. Interaction between these communities is very positive.

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 Concepts. We have six AA regions, each with five delegates for the General Service Conference, and one delegate for the General Service Board. Every year we organize a one-day Conference.

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 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 what we refer to as the Executive Committee, which consists of minimal three, 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 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, in the Netherlands AA consists of two foundations: the AA groups and publicity. Currently this construction is being looked at by an ad hoc National Advice Committee in order to evaluate and ensure the compatibility between legal issues, AA Traditions and Concepts.

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. There is one delegate per region. The foundation's income is generated by the AA groups, as well as the sale of literature. In 2021 the overall budget was slightly positive, but acceptable. In 2022 the overall budget looks to be positive and even more than expected due to the growth of our groups.

Literature: The Literature Committee is responsible for translating, developing, and updating all AA literature in the form of books and brochures. The committee is currently working on a new translation of the Big Book, including the original stories. This will be a special edition for our 75th anniversary. We expect it to be ready around the Christmas holidays. The Dutch translation of the brochure, 'Where Money and Spirituality Mix', has been edited and is available free of charge for all group treasurers in the Netherlands.

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

Dutch AA cooperates with a growing number of professional organizations concerned with alcohol abuse. Many such organizations have based their programs on AA's Twelve Steps. However, negative experiences have also occurred as the commercial interests of treatment facilities sometimes conflict with AA interests. This is one of the reasons why we are developing an Image plan. This plan is needed since the current reputation of AA in the Netherlands is not powerful enough to reach more suffering alcoholics. Especially in professional health care (doctors, hospitals and so on) many people are not familiar with the effectiveness of AA. Broader support in the community should create better access for the suffering alcoholics (800,000 alcohol dependants in the Netherlands) and offer aid. The main objective of AA is to reach the still suffering alcoholics and to help them. We believe greater familiarity with AA will help still suffering alcoholics to find AA.

Schools, universities, clinics and correctional facilities are inviting AA speakers more often. Contacts that AA has established to reach the suffering alcoholic within correctional facilities are very promising. The National Committee for Public Information has established a close cooperation with the English-speaking PI in the Netherlands.

De Boei / 5 voor Twaalf

Dutch AA has its own version of the Grapevine, Postbus (P.O. Box) 2633, to provide the same objective: a meeting-in-print by and for AA members. We also adopted the 5 voor Twaalf magazine from Flanders, so that Dutch AA members can subscribe and contribute articles to this magazine.

AA Telephone Helpline

A national telephone number is available on a twenty-four hour basis, though it has been short of staff. A number of groups have their own answering service to aid people from their local community.

Internet

Our current website is undergoing a facelift and we are redesigning our Webshop. The website complies with all guidelines published by AA World Services in New York. It includes a complete overview for anyone seeking help. It is approved by the GSC, has an integrated online store and is more interactive.

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 upcoming events. Links are provided to AI-Anon, Alateen and English-speaking AA in the Netherlands.

Contacts With Other Countries

Traditionally there used to be a close contact between Dutch AA and Dutch-speaking Belgian AA although in the last few years this has not been the case. We are trying to restore this relationship. English-speaking AA flourishes in the Netherlands and holds its own yearly convention. The National Dutch AA Convention is held each year in the beginning of October. Both conventions attract a considerable number of visitors from abroad.

Dutch AA hopes to send one delegate to the ESM and WSM as part of a combined Dutch/Flemish delegation again in the future. If it is not possible to establish a better relationship with the Flemish/Belgian AA, we would like to send 2 Dutch delegates until we have restored our relationship.

NORWAY

Norway have 5,49 million inhabitants. We currently have 180 groups, 1 group abroad, 2 online groups, 1 Russian group, 2 English groups and 4 Polish groups. The total of members are about 2000. In some parts of our country there is a long distance between the groups and the habitants, this cost us some difficulties for our service structure.

Historical Summary

The first group of Alcoholicos Anonymous was established in Norway in 1947 in Oslo, the capital of Norway. One year later a new group was established in Bergen in the western part of the country. Norway was the second country in Norway to introduce the AA-program to a suffering alcoholic.

From the start in 1947/48 to the middle of the fifties there were an enormous increase in members and groups, from 2-3 groups with 200 members until 50 groups with approximately 2000 members. The visit of Bill W. and his wife Lois in May 1950 was of course a great inspiration for AA in Norway to growth and resulted in many new groups in most parts of the country. The establishment of AA-clinics also increased the members in the AA-groups.

The growth in the fifties and the sixties is history by now. The numbers of members are still the same today although the numbers of groups has increased.

Due to de pandemic situation from 2019 until 2021, all of the groups went through lockdown in some period. Many groups started digital meetings and the result of that is that we today can assist at meetings anywhere in Norway and Internationals meetings when we want.

This is to great help for our members that are living in isolated parts of Norway.

Structure.

The group: (180)

Each group has a group Representative (GR) elected for two years by the group members. The GR represent the group at the district meetings. The sobriety time required is 2 years.

The District: (22)

The District Representative (DR) is elected by the groups in the district for a period of three years. The DR are responsible for the districts meetings and represent the district on the annual service meeting. The sobriety time required is 3 years.

The Region: (5)

The member of the general service board that represents the region and the DR`s in the region, meets to informed and discuss matters of importance. They also attend the annual region meeting for DR, GR and observers from the groups.

The region secretariat are composed by the general service board member from the region, one DR and one GR, this secretariat rotates every 3 year.

The General Service Board

The General Service board consists of three class A trustees and seven class B trustees; one of those as an alternate.

The GSB class B members are responsible for the following committees: finance, literature, public information, policy and communication within AA.

The DR's, GR's and the groups are responsible to find the right candidate to be proposed as a member of the general service Board.

The new candidates are chosen among at least two candidates from the actual region, the timeframe for trustees are five year.

GSB are responsible to carry out the decisions made by the General Service Conference which takes place once a year in April/May.

The required sobriety time for trustees class B is five year.

General Service Office

The General Service Office are located in the center of Oslo. We have one full time employed General Manager. The opening hours for our GSO are 10:00 to 14:00 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Finance

Financially we have a budget of 2,0 mill NOK. (187.400USD). more or less half of our income derives from Seventh Tradition self – support and the other half comes from literature sale.

The pandemic situation has resulted in less income both from self- support and literature. We have worked on this topic this year and can now start to see the results of our strikt economy policy.

Literature

We have translated most of the relevant, approved literature. The literature subcommittee has worked on a new translation of the Big Book the last years and are now ready to present the project. We also have a subcommittee for the policy committee, this committee works on a new translation of our Service Manual (Håndbok for AA Norge) , based on the newest Service Manual from GSO US/Canada. We also have audio-editions of the Big Book and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Boks 205, our national «Grapewine» has its own author and a print-run of 800 copies.

Telephone and Internet

We are well equipped to inform and communicate.

Our website www.anonymealkoholikere.no are continuously being updated and improved.

Our national service phone are operated by telephone committees in each region, our five regions are responsible for the phone service on a rotating basis, each region has the phone service 1 year.

Service and Information

The Intergroups, clinic services, prison services are giving service and set up meetings in hospitals, treatment centers, prison, schools and other institutions which may have interest and possibility to reach a still suffering alcoholic.

Relations to other countries.

We do now have a co-operation with the other Nordic Countries. We have 4 zoom meetings during the year and visit each others General Service Conferences.

POLAND

Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)

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 group mandates. The 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 – A.A. Poland's first National Service Conference 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 the 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 23rd World Service Meeting.
- 16-18.08.2019 - The 45th anniversary of A.A. in Poland.
- 49 GSC made a decision to change the time of the conference from autumn to spring.
- 16.08 – 18.08.2024 The 50th anniversary will be held in Poznan, we invite all of You.

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.

Poland has 3200 groups divided into 94 intergroups in 14 regions including the European Region, which comprises over 300 Polish-speaking groups in 16 countries. Part of the groups have meetings online (40) or in the hybrid formula (24).

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) the 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 made up of 14 alcoholics (one from each of the 14 regions, currently we have 3 alcoholic trusty B, and 1 national delegate position not fulfilled), 5 non-alcoholic 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 the publication and distribution of A.A. literature, the coordination of national conferences, workshops, and other A.A. events. Finally, after many years GSO has moved to the modern office.

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, sometimes a welcoming committee, and public information officers.

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 services; 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 and prisons.

Last year young people from AA known as Eurypaa met in Warsaw/Poland. In the same year in Poland was formed a similar convention named Polypaa.

In 2022 was born a new idea to participate in a well-known rock music festival – Polandrock attended by

1 mil people of each age. There were our members who represented AA, talked with people, answered questions, and held meetings.

AA co-operates with professional communities and real friends of our Fellowship.

In June 2023 class A trustee was invited and made the presentation in the Congress of Army's Polish Psychologists.

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 that could not normally afford to take part.

We were invited as observers to participate in GSCs in Great Britain, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Latvia, and Kazakhstan.

For the first time, our national delegate second term took part as an observer in the 73rd General Service Conference USA/Canada, it was a great honor for our Fellowship.

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, public information, and 12th Step Group.

A group of Poland's AA's travelled to Moldova to organize workshops and informational meetings for the professional community.

We try to be 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 37% of the costs of the G.S.O. activities coming from members' contributions and 57% covered from literature sales. 6% of contributions were dedicated to the 50 years anniversary convention, which will be held in 2024 in the city of Poznan. In the last two years, the sales of literature slowly riced. The percentage of contributions compared to 2021 is almost at the same level, but the amount of money is higher.

Workshops on self-support are held regularly at various levels of the A.A. structure including a national workshop for all AA treasurers.

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.*

The last Conference made a decision for publishing a new pamphlet for atheists and agnostics members of our fellowship titled "The word God". Also the pamphlet "Public Information Manual" has been approved. In 2022 the third edition of the AA – Service Manual was printed and distributed.

A new book dedicated to alcoholics in jails, prisons, and correctional facilities comprising original stories of Polish AA's "A.A. in Prison: Inmate to Inmate" is already in distribution.

Our bulletin "Zdrój" and a service bulletin "Skrytka 2/4/3" 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" is edited every quarter.

Our own pamphlets "Alcoholics Anonymous co-operated with professionals", and "The treasurer service commitment – practical advice" were published.

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.

12 x12 has been corrected to the most similar language connected to IV edition Alcoholics Anonymous.

Internet, Helpline and On-line Duty

Our GSO maintains an official A.A. website, which receives over 1 000 000 visits yearly and it continues to grow. Our IT trustees sub-committees finished their work on the new modern website.

Internet is also used for internal communications between A.A. services, including GSB and Conference committees' forums and chats.

GSO, GSB, and regions have started to use many internet communicators.

Our National Telephone Helpline has been operated for ten years by over 300 volunteers; last year more than 10 000 people were offered a helping hand.

Internet communication platforms such as Zoom, Go to Meeting, and Discord had become very useful tools in carrying the message, organizing workshops, and mainly AA meetings for groups that moved to the internet during the time of the pandemic. Over 300 meetings weekly are taking place on the Internet.

PORTUGAL

Report to the 22th European Service Meeting

The “formal” AA service structure in Portugal has now 22 years.

The 1st General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Portugal was held in Colares, from April 30 to May 2, 1999, subordinated to the motto "Serve United to Grow". This Conference recommended that the National Day of AA be celebrated on 19th of March (date when, in 1994, all groups in Portugal were gathered for the first time in a service meeting).

Structure

Currently we have a total of 95 groups: 85 are face-to-face and 10 are online groups.

The face-to-face are 66 Portuguese-speaking, 16 English-speaking, 2 Russian-speaking and 1 German-speaking.

The online groups are 7 Portuguese-speaking groups and 3 English-speaking.

Since the last ESM we had two General Service Conferences, 2022 and 2023, with some significant issues being discussed and decided to implement.

Portugal has now 13 Areas. On the last Conference an Area 13 was created with all the online groups. From now on, this groups will send an in-person Delegate to the General Service Conference (all the groups belonging to a specific Area, through their GSR's, elect a Delegate).

On this Conference, and for the first time, an Area that is composed mainly by English-speaking groups, Area 10, sent a Delegate that did not talk or understand Portuguese, so a permanent interpreter was provided by the Conference so that he could fully participate.

We are also glad to announce that one Area that hasn't had any AA group for a long time, Area 5, has one face-to-face group since last September.

Today, six of these Areas don't have a Conference Delegate but is expectable that 10 to 11 Delegates out of the 13 Areas will be attending the 2024 Conference, since this October some service elections will occur on those Areas without a Delegate.

The Area 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).

At this moment we have 7 Delegates and 7 Trustees, that includes the 2 non-alcoholic Trustees who are mostly available for PI actions.

Historically, the non-alcoholic Trustees have always been selected from our friends within the health community, doctors, psychotherapists, etc, but the 2022 Conference has, for the first time, elected a non-alcoholic Trustee sourced from our media friends, a journalist.

The General Service Office is directed by the General Secretary, which is one of the Head Office Trustees.

A non-alcoholic employee takes care of most of the daily duties and tasks:

accountancy, answering service calls, 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.

All groups are linked to the AA service structure via their GSR.

Since the lack of service structure servants keeps being a problematic issue to deal with, a task group was created to fully analyze our Service Structure in order to suggest possible improvements to it. This is a two-year task where a preliminary report is expected to be presented to the 2024 Conference and a final report to the 2025 one.

Other Services

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

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.

We also have a Service to Loners or Isolated Members to where the newcomers who don't have a face-to-face meeting near their residence and are not able to attend an online meeting are forwarded.

Events

The Events Committee takes care of surveying the best facilities for the yearly National Service Forum 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.

The 2023 National Service Forum was hybrid, providing those Portuguese members who live outside Portugal and some that, for some reason, were not able to physically attend the event, with the opportunity to contribute and participate on every reflection, enriching the Group Conscience.

Literature and Publications

This Committee is responsible for publishing our quarterly publications: Partilhar magazine and Os Três Legados bulletin. From 2024 on these will become one single publication: Partilhar magazine.

The books and pamphlets are also their responsibility. Most of such items are authorized translations from the English versions of AAWS Literature.

This Committee is currently working on the translation to European Portuguese of the Grapevine book “Language of the Heart”, which is expected to be concluded (printed) in 2024.

Public Information, Institutions and Cooperating with the Professional Community

This Committee responds 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.

This year, an audio Spot was produced and has been playing at RDP África, a national radio station that broadcasts to Europe and to the entire African Continent, and a video Spot has been playing at some TV stations, on the institutional reserved time.

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

The Area Committees carry most of the service in prisons (with the pandemic this service was suspended, and it is now being restored) 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 AA message to more institutions.

This Committee is composed by five AA members who are, or were, the PI coordinators of some Area, one Coordinator plus one General Service Board Trustee.

This Committee meets twice a month.

Internet and Websites

This Committee keeps working on turning our website (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 AA events and the constant updating of meetings information.

The visits to the Portuguese AA website have been around 5500 monthly visits for a while.

New ways of IP through internet keeps being discussed.

This Committee is also responsible for maintaining all the GSO computer and electric hardware, as well as keeping the computer archives safe.

General Service Conference

The General Service Conference meets for three days, on the weekend before Easter. Actually, the General Service Conference is also the yearly Assembly for the non-profit association which is compulsory to exist 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.

Finance

Almost every group is contributing on a regular basis to the GSO.

Other subjects

It has been 20 years since AA Portugal organized its first International Convention, it was held in Algarve, in 2004.

The 2023 General Service Conference decided that the second International Convention should take place along with the X National Convention, in October 2024.

We will be very happy to provide more info about this International Convention personally to you on this ESM.

Relations with other countries

We continue to participate in all European Service Meeting and in the World Service Meeting; thus, we feel that those are good and correct ways of sharing experiences and to continue to grow in Unity.

We believe that, on this European Service Meeting we will learn a lot, once more!

ROMANIA

Brief Historical Summary (national A.A. development)

AA started in Romania in 1991 with its first group, "Grupa Una", consisting of two women. However, long time before, Jan and Fran of Spokane, Washington, in 1984, secretly started Group One and put down the groundwork that evolved into today's AA Fellowship in Romania. Jan and Fran's presence in Romania remains epic, extending from hearts joined in Love and Service and a visceral, life-giving belief in the Primary Purpose of AA.

In Bucharest, two years later, during the summer of 1993, the AA Fellowship was established at the "Gheorghe Marinescu" Clinical Psychiatry Hospital. Its beginning was facilitated by Dr. Doina Constantinescu and two Americans, Patricia and Lee Robertson, whose contributions have persisted without interruption to the present day – the Fellowship has expanded over the years, with 9 groups plus an international AA group for English speakers at this moment.

There is a GSO, a GSB, 3 Intergroups (the Online Intergroup is now developing), and 3 Regions at the country level, for a total of approximately 60 groups.

Current A.A. Structure

The structure of AA Romania consists of 60 Romanian-speaking groups (1 group for women only, 5 online groups), 1 international English-speaking group and 1 Hungarian-speaking group. Each group is represented at its local Intergroup and at General Service Conference by a GSR. There are 3 Regions corresponding to 3 Intergroups geographically arranged.

The General Service Conference is held annually in May. Representatives of all groups, GSB, and observers come together to take actions that will guide the groups for the next year. GSB has 19 members including 2 class A Trustees.

Acting as a core of the AA structure, GSO unites the Fellowship at all levels, responds to inquiries, and works with its workgroups.

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

In November 2022, a National Workshop with the theme "The therapeutic chain in recovery from alcoholism" was held in Bucharest, attended by professionals from all around the country as well as members of the other 12 Steps programs.

We do not currently have any groups or collaborations in or with prisons.

A collaboration plan for 112 Emergency Service is still being developed, in which some alcohol-related ambulance calls should be terminated with the recommendation of the AA Recovery Program.

Sobriety time required for service positions.

Recommendations for GSR/GSB/GSO Manager/ESM or WSM Delegates: a minimum of 1/2/3/3 years of sobriety period.

Our AA Service Guide outlines the suggested minimum sobriety requirements and time frames for serving on various levels of the AA Structure.

General Service Conference (processes, frequency, etc.)

The General Service Conference has been held annually in May since 2016 (with a pause due to the pandemic in 2020).

The Conference sessions are divided into four Committees: a) AA Literature, Prints and Archive; b) National and International Communication; c) Finance; d) Cooperation with Professional Community.

Representatives of all groups, GSB, and observers come together to take actions that will guide the groups for the next year.

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

Since 2008, our own AA Services Guide has provided us with direction for the continuity of work in AA. A new version of the AA Services Guide was approved in 2021.

Literature/Publishing Overview (print/audio/video)

We have not yet been able to set up a process to sell AA literature outside the Fellowship. AA Romania legacy has a selection of:

- 6 translations of AAWS approved books (“Alcoholics Anonymous”, “12 Steps and 12 Traditions”, “As Bill Sees It”, “Daily Reflections”, “AA Comes at Age”)
- 2 translations of AAWS approved booklets (“Living Sober”, “Came to believe”)
- 25 (+ works in progress) pamphlets.
- “Noi Înşine” is the national journal of AA Romania Fellowship
- “Pass it on” translation is in a draft version and needs to be edited for its approval, licensing, and printing.
- A project of a new version of “Alcoholics Anonymous” translation just started last year.

Finance Overview

Most of our funding comes from the selling of literature, as well as contributions from group/intergroup members.

Our operating costs are mostly those for printing and publishing, public relations, and convention planning.

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

"The 30th Anniversary of Noi Înşine Magazine" was a landmark of 2022 in AA Romania and a good occasion to celebrate with the Moldavian Fellowship while also strengthening our relationship with them in areas of AA literature and participation at events.

Internet & Websites (if applicable)

AA Romania virtual identity consists of:

- alcooliciianonimi.ro - AA Romania website
- noiinsine.ro - “Noi Înşine”, the national journal of AA Romania
- We are also present in the Meeting Guide Mobile App
- facebook.com/alcooliciianonimiromania - AA Romania Facebook page

RUSSIA - www.rsoaa.ru

Brief historical summary

The AA movement in Russia started at the end of the 1980s. The first AA meeting in Moscow was registered in the GSO in 1987. Currently, there are 942 groups registered in Russia. These groups are not only present in large cities but have also expanded to small towns and rural areas. Some of these groups hold meetings every day. Approximately 40 groups conduct their meetings online using platforms like Zoom, Skype and Telegram.

The first AA group specifically for individuals with hearing problems has been registered in Russia.

Structure

The General Service Conference of the Russian AA Fellowship consists of 24 delegate districts. This conference takes place annually in Moscow at the beginning of April and lasts for four days.

Conference members with the right to vote are:

- Delegates from delegate districts;
- Delegates of AA groups that do not yet have local service structure;
- Members of the Russian Service Board;
- International delegates;
- Executive Director of Fund «Edinstvo»
- Chief Editor Russian AA magazine.

Observers are welcome at the Conference.

In April 2023, the 34th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia was held. It was attended by 96 individuals from various parts of Russia, with 55 of them having voting rights.

The Russian Service Board is included the following committees:

- Public Information Committee
- Financial Committee
- International Committee
- Treatment Facilities Committee
- Correctional Facilities Committee
- Bylaws Committee
- Literature Committee
- Archives Committee
- Information Technology Committee
- Conference Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous Russia
- Forum Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous Russia
- Journal Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous Russia

In 2015, the newly developed Service Manual of the Russian AA Fellowship, created by the Bylaws Committee, was adopted during the 27th General Service Conference. Over the past few years, a systematic approach has been adopted to keep the Service Manual up to date and make amendments as needed.

In 2021, it was decided to form a new committee for the development, support and

coordination of the activities of AA Russia in the online space to convey the AA message of recovery. The Committee promotes the formation and development of Russian-speaking online groups and the unification of Russian-speaking online groups into the delegate district of the General Service Conference.

It develops AA content in social networks, messengers, which corresponds to the traditions of AA with a link to the website of AA of Russia, fills and modernizes the site and etc.

In 2022, during the 33th General Service Conference was founded the Archives Committee. The purpose is to preserve the experience of the RussianAA fellowship for the next generations.

In February 2022, a positive decision was received on the registration of the combined trademark "Alcoholics Anonymous". The goal is to protect licenses for publishing literature and reduce the risk of damage to the reputation of AA in Russia.

Finances

The budget for 2023-24 staggered year for the service structure:

Expenses – RUB 11 292 000

Income – RUB 11 292 000, included

Donations – RUB 3 600 000

Literature distribution – RUB 6 732 000

Conference fees – RUB 760 000

Forum refund – RUB 200 000

Literature

The Russian Service Board and Fund «Edinstvo» supplies AA literature to individual AA meetings through the regional service structure (literature committees, intergroups etc.)

The local service structures establish the cost of literature, depending on the local conditions, but not exceeding 20% above the cost established by the Fund «Edinstvo».

In addition, we sent literature to Kazakhstan, Czech Republic, Latvia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova, as well as Germany, France and Spain. Due to the current situation, there have been challenges with logistics and delivering AA literature to different countries. This issue is being addressed by the Fund "Edinstvo" as resources allow, including coordination with GSO and AAWS.

On the website of AA Russia <http://www.aarussia.ru/> – contains information for Russian-speaking groups outside the territory of Russia about the possibility of paying for literature and transferring donations to the account Fund «Edinstvo».

The following books and booklets were published in 2021-2022.

Brochures: "A guide to going to treatment facility" and "A guide to going to penitentiary", "Let's be friends with our friends", "Women Stories" from the cycle "AA about yourself", "Non-AA Meeting Talks", "Women in AA", "AA Members on Drugs and Other Drugs", "AA for Alcoholics with Mental Disorders". Translated the brochure "AA and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic", the text has passed the expert evaluation of the copyright holder.

An information leaflet for groups about working according to the 7th tradition and a postcard for a beginner with empty fields have been developed.

Assistance was provided in printing the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" in the Tatar language – "Anonymous Alcoholictar" - at the expense of the AA of Tatarstan. The circulation is 500 copies.

The book "Alcoholics Anonymous" is being translated into Bashkir, Yakut, and Tuvan languages. The process of licensing and printing is currently being coordinated with AAWS (Alcoholics Anonymous World Services).

A rough translation into the Russian language of the book "Pass It On" has been completed.

The work to improve the current translation of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" is almost completed. The previous translation is dated 1989.

Interesting fact, but it was decided not to make an audio version of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We have got our national AA magazine called GAAR. Permanent columns of the magazine: AA News, 12 Traditions, Crossroads of Opinions, Group/meeting/experience, My story, Book review, AA Archive.

Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community

Medical institutions: Committee for Work with Treatment Facilities is in close contact with the chief Russian medical doctor specializing in substance abuse and, along with the representatives of local structures, takes part in various events related to carrying the message - such as roundtable conferences with doctors, events related to the sobriety holiday celebrations, and the conference of medical doctors specializing in substance abuse in Russia.

Exhibits with AA information are being mounted in hospitals and in a smaller scale at local medical centers. A large number of AA meetings in Russia are also taking place in substance asylums and sanitariums. Recently on the website of the ministry of health, they allowed to post information about AA.

Correctional institutions:

Gradually more and more prisoners are getting the AA message in Russia. The local service structure committees are providing Twelfth Step possibilities for AA members in correctional facilities, as well as providing books, brochures, and pamphlets. During the pandemic period, we are continuing to carry the message in treatment and correction facilities via teleconference and providing AA literature. And we continue to replenish stands and AA cards there.

Religious institutions:

Traditionally, the most contact we have is the Russian Orthodox Church, then the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church. The representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church take part in roundtable discussions, as a result of which we have AA meetings opening in church halls, and AA information is being made available there.

Social institutions:

Lately we have increased the interaction with the representatives of social services - round table discussions are being held with the representatives of those organizations, as a result of which, more AA meetings are being held on the premises of such organizations, and AA information is being made available there.

In 2021, in one of the regions of Russia, an agreement was reached with the Federal Penitentiary Service on the creation of a library on the territory of penitentiary. Conducting broadcasts on the regional radio of penitentiary of the speaker AA.

AA Events

Traditionally, the AA groups hold large annual celebrations dedicated to the birthdays of AA in their local areas. In Moscow, there are the "August meetings"; in Saint Petersburg, there are the "White Nights" meetings where friends of AA, such as priests, doctors, social workers, government are also invited. Besides the large celebrations, the AA community holds out-of-town meetings, rallies, etc., with the purpose of carrying the AA message and stopping in areas that do not have access to AA.

Local service structures organize various conventions about AA service, such as intergroups, committees, assemblies, and more. Sharing experiences with other cities contributes to the growth of the AA movement.

The 32nd AA Forum of Russian AA fellowship in December 2021 was held online for the first time in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia. The forum was held for three days. In 2022 the 33rd Forum was held in Kaliningrad in person. The next forum will take place in December 2023 in Krasnodar.

Relations with Other Countries

The Russian Service Board and Fund «Edinstvo» are in contact with the AA structures of Moldova, Belarus, Khazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Kirgizstan, Estonia and the UK. In addition, we provide some service for Russian-speaking meetings in Kishenev (Moldova), Pavlograd (Khazakhstan), Ulan-Bator (Mongolia), Mogilev (Belarus), Haifa (Israel), Stockholm (Sweden), Helsinki (Finland), New York (U.S./Canada) and London (Great Britain). We stay in constant contact with the GSO in New York.

Presentations were prepared for the AA Donetsk. Some assistance with AA materials was provided to AA Spain for the creation of a website of Russian-speaking AA living in Spain.

International delegates from Russia took part in the WSM in 2022 (Zoom) and AOSM 2023 in Fiji.

AA meetings on service are conducted with foreign speakers on Zoom. This concerns various relevant topics in AA, for example, the experience of the inventory of the group or the traditions using in the regulation of conflict situations at the group level or the service structure.

RUSSIA – www.aarus.ru

Conference and General Service Council of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia

From May 6 to May 9, 2023, the regular XXXIV session of the Conference on General AA Services in Russia was held.

The conference consisted of 25 trusted performers:

- 16 delegates from groups and service structures of Alcoholics Anonymous of Russia,
- 7 members of the General Service Council of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia (6 of them with voting rights),
- General Director of the Alcoholics Anonymous Service Foundation,
- Editor-in-chief of the magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous of Russia “Dyuzhina”.

The delegates represented at the Conference the voice of group consciousness of 49 AA groups from 19 cities of Russia, including three district committees and one AA intergroup.

The effective work of the Conference session was ensured by 18 volunteers and 2 AA members in the Protocol Service.

This year, as an experiment, the traditional order of the Conference session was slightly changed. One of the innovations is the holding on the first day of the Conference of the Big Meeting “A Fleeting Look at the Panorama of the AA Commonwealth”, at which the Conference participants got to know each other, exchanged their thoughts, aspirations, opinions, ideas and proposals for the development of the service structure of the AA Commonwealth in Russia.

The composition of the AA General Services Council was significantly updated, with 4 new members. Also during the Conference session, the Conference committees and the committees of the Council for General Services of AA and the Council for General Services of AA in Russia worked actively.

After the Conference, the following committees continue their work:

- Agenda Committee
- Archive Committee
- Committee on Statutory Documents and Report on the Conference
- Committee for the development of service structure

The following committees continue their work under the Council for the General Service of AA in Russia:

- Committee on Public Relations, Interaction with Professional Workers and religious organizations
- Conference Committee
- Committee on work with correctional institutions
- Committee for organizing seminars, forums and congresses
- Finance Committee
- Literary Committee
- International Committee
- Council Personnel Committee

In 2022, on the agenda of the XXXIII Conference on General Service of AA in Russia, the issue “On the self-dissolution of the May Conference” was discussed, which did not receive support and a recommendatory decision was made to create an initiative group on the issue of merging the two Conferences into a single Conference on General Service of AA.

Inventory of Conferences is carried out regularly.

Literature

The Alcoholics Anonymous Service Foundation continues to publish AA literature and sell it in the only legal way possible in Russia, taking into account compliance with the Traditions and Principles of AA service, despite the current situation with the license.

Literature is sent to countries such as the USA, Japan, Great Britain, Spain, Israel, Germany, Belarus, Kazakhstan, etc.

During the sessions of the Conferences, the books “The Bridge” and “Pass It On” were approved for publication, the translation of which has now been fully completed and the books are being prepared for publication.

Work is underway to translate the 2021 edition of the AA Service Manual with Twelve World Service Concepts.

To help conduct round tables and inform the population about AA, a brochure “Methodological manual for conducting a Round Table” was developed and published, and a brochure “Basic information about AA Russia” and a presentation based on it were also prepared for publication.

To inform Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia, a booklet “Why We Need a Conference” was developed and published.

The magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia, “The Dozen,” is published annually. It is actively used for work in correctional institutions, drug treatment facilities, as handouts for newcomers, and as a tool for presenting AA at round tables.

In 2021-2022, more than 1,000 units of AA magazines, brochures and books were sent to Russian correctional institutions.

Events and information

In September 2022, the “Congress of Alcoholics Anonymous” was held in Arkhangelsk. A large-scale event, which gave impetus to the development of the Fifth Tradition of AA, opened up new opportunities for cooperation with the general public, not only in the city, but also beyond its borders.

The service “for the preparation of the newsletter under the AA Committee on Literature” regularly prepares the “AA Newsletter”, which addresses topics relevant to AA and through which information is provided about events, seminars and other events.

Information, seminars and committee meetings have been organized using modern messengers.

Work continues on the website aarus.ru and information via e-mail newsletter has been established.

SLOVAKIA

Brief Summary

Slovakia, officially “the Slovak Republic”, is located in Central Europe, bordering with Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Hungary. Its population is 5.3 million, the capital city is Bratislava and the official language is Slovak. In 2020, the Slovak AA celebrated its 30th anniversary.

Current AA Structure

In 2023 we have 52 registered groups in 33 cities with approximately 450 members across 8 regions. There is one Ladies and one Gentlemen group, both located in the capital city. Apart from the meetings conducted in Slovak we have one English, one Hungarian and one Russian-speaking group. Groups can choose to participate in their local area intergroup.

The fellowship is registered as a “*civic association*” with the Slovak Ministry of Interior under its legal name “Združenie pre služby Anonymným alkoholikom v Slovenskej republike” (Association for Services to AA in the Slovak Republic). The *civic association* is required by law to create a *general assembly* and this function is performed by our annual General Service Conference. The *civic association* has three statutory representatives, who are members of the General Service Board at the same time.

Most of our groups have a formally elected group secretary, a treasurer, and a General Service Representative (GSR). Those clustered in an intergroup also have an intergroup delegate. The GSRs often serve as the group’s delegates to the General Service Conference.

Other Services

We have regular AA and information meetings in 6 hospitals, 3 prisons and 3 rehabilitation centres. Our Public Relations Committee has been organizing and attending conventions and conferences of psychologists, doctors and other professionals, conducting interviews in media. The Bratislava-Trnava Intergroup co-ordinates activities of its member groups to organize local workshops, events and meetings.

Carrying this Message is the most important service. Sponsorship is on the rise but mostly concentrated in more populated metropolitan areas. Throughout the year, groups with more experience in the Twelve Steps conduct *Step-study workshops* at different locations of Slovakia. This helps us spread the word about the program of recovery; promote sponsorship and involvement in service. Some members use online technologies to sponsor newcomers in remote locations until more sponsors become available there. In the last 18 months online sponsorship has grown dramatically and has become an important tool for working with others in the ongoing pandemic crisis.

We established cross-country co-operation including sponsorship between groups, members and service structures, mainly with Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the UK, Denmark and the USA.^[L]^[SEP] We have been blessed to be able to participate in the European Service Meetings which have been a tremendous source of information and experience.^[L]^[SEP] Our upcoming plans include organizing Service and Traditions workshops because we see some room for improvement in understanding and, more importantly, practising these within our Fellowship.

General Service Board (GSB) and Sobriety Time

The General Service Board currently consists of 22 members:

- 1 Class A trustee (*non-alcoholic*)
- 8 Class B trustees (*sobriety time required: at least 6 years*)
- 1 Chairperson (*6 years*)
- 1 Deputy Chairperson
- 1 General Service Office Administrator (*4 years*)
- 1 Treasurer (*4 years*)
- 2 ESM/WSM Delegates (*4 years*)
- 1 "Prameň" (Water Spring) magazine representative (*4 years*)
- 6 Committee Chairpersons (*usually 3 years*)

There are six permanent Committees: Literature, Organizational, Service Manual, Public Relations, Online Communication, and Financial.

The GSB member nominations, elections and their service responsibilities are guided by the Conference-approved Service Manual. The GSB oversees our General Service Office, located in the city of Nitra, Western Slovakia. The Office is managed by the Conference-elected GSO Administrator.

General Service Conference (GSC)

Each year, generally in April, we hold our *General Service Conference* in a city approved by the previous conference. In 2023 it was held in city of Nitra located in Western Slovakia.

The GSC is made up of one delegate from each group (*sobriety time: at least 3 years*) willing to participate in the GSC and members of the General Service Board. Standing committee-chairs participate as well.

International and local AA observers are encouraged to attend and they are regularly invited to our GSC.

Our AA members attended some GSCs in other countries, which proved to be an invaluable source of experience. During the past General Service Conferences we dedicated great amount of time to present, explain and amend our Service Manual.

Service Manual

We use "*The Service Manual AA Slovakia*" approved by the GSC. Its overall composition resulted from work of the Service Manual Committee a couple of years ago. We took experience from other countries' service manuals as a starting point and customized the information to better fit our local needs. The material also includes „The AA Charter „and „The Statutes of the Association *Združenie pre služby Anonymným alkoholikom v Slovenskej republike*". Every single amendment to the Service Manual proposed by the Service Manual Committee has to be approved by the GS Conference.

At the previous GSCs we focused on presenting, explaining and amending our Service Manual, which has proven to be a very useful asset to our fellowship.

Literature

AA Slovakia distributes numerous General Service Conference approved literature in the Slovak language.

The Books:

- Alcoholic Anonymous (3rd edition excluding personal stories except Doctor Bob's Nightmare)
- Living Sober
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions,
- Daily Reflections (a reprint published in April 2021)
- As Bill sees it
- Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age
- Experience Strength & Hope.

We have been finalising the first Slovak edition of "Pass It On", which should be published and printed by the end of 2021.

The pamphlets: The AA group...Where it all begins, Is AA for you?, AA as a Resource for the Healthcare Professional, A Newcomer Asks, 44 Questions, Many Paths to Spirituality and others.

The magazine: Since April 2002 we have been publishing our magazine "PRAMENŇ" (Water Spring): It is being issued quarterly with about 300 copies per issue. The magazine provides personal stories of AA members about their experience, strength and hope, articles from guests, features about the 12 Steps and 12 traditions. Furthermore, there is information about AA groups, AA events and AA literature. Copies are distributed to treatment centres, libraries and AA groups. The magazine is self-supported.

Finance Overview

Our service structure is made up of AA volunteers with no paid positions. Our costs are mainly those for the GSO space rental, printing and publishing costs, PR-related costs and for organizing conventions. Our major source of financing comes from the sale of literature (60-65%) and also from group/intergroup member contributions (35-40%).

Note: Some groups associated in one specific Intergroup had decided not to contribute funds to the GSO but rather keep their funds at their local Intergroup level. They had also decided not to participate in any nationwide activities. 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 at conventions and meetings and through articles published in our magazine.

Relations with other countries

AA Slovakia has very close and warm relationship with our fellows in the Czech Republic as there is no language barrier. We attend each other's events (conventions, 12-Steps seminars and workshops).

We have an inspiring and flourishing relationship with AA Poland through common attendance of the AA events.

Internet & Website

Our official website (www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk) contains mainly group and meeting information (including phone numbers) and is regularly updated. In 2018 we established a telephone helpline for people looking for assistance and advice. Currently, we have been upgrading our website to become more mobile friendly. We have also enhanced the “search-for-meeting” tools.

The pandemic crisis brought about a rise of online meetings, mostly using the Zoom and Skype software. We currently register 10 online groups which, compared to the pre-pandemic number of 2, is a significant increase in Slovak terms. The General Service Board purchased Zoom licenses to enable groups to go online. The licenses are also used for Committee and Board meetings.

One of the original two online groups is an AA e-mail group called “Sober Space” where members share their experience, strength and hope on a 24/7 basis. The group was established in 2006. At present it has more than 750 Slovak and Czech speaking members living all over the world.

The other group is the Czech-Slovak Skype group named “Special Connection” which offers daily meetings (two meetings on Wednesdays). The online groups participate in our GS Conference and represent an invaluable resource for people unable to get to a physical meeting in their area.

SLOVENIA

Historical Summary

First A.A. group in Slovenia was established on November 6th 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 to 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 43 groups "IN PERSON" and 7 groups ON LINE in Slovenia with approximately 500 members. The number of all active members (participants) reduced from approximate 600. In last years the number of young newcomers has increased.

The Conference of AA on March 21st 2015 established new/improved Organization of AA Slovenia: Each group (of course – groups ON LINE organize themselves differently) has a chairman, treasurer, literature man and a delegate (General Service Representative), elected for two year period. Sobriety time required for this position is two years of sobriety.

General Service Conference (GSC) takes place once a year. Each group among it 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 so 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 events*). 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.

- Finances committee takes care about planning, disbursing and reporting to Conference about finances once a year. Last year budget of Fellowship was 9,000 € Main incomes are from contributions 70% and literature 30% .
- 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 ten 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. Four years ago we have published publication on our 30th anniversary of AA aimed at professionals and interested public.
- Committee for AA events 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 with relevant information and the list of meetings in Slovenia. E-mail addresses: info@aa-slovenia.si ; international@aa-slovenia.si;

This year we add Meetings App for Androids and iOS . We have renewed our Website.

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.

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. We are related especially with members in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro (we meet daily by ZOOM meetings).

Online meetings specially make possible relations with other countries – more maybe members from other countries.

SPAIN

Structure

At present, the structure in Spain is made up of 24 Areas distributed in four regional zones, 610 groups, of these, 13 in penitentiary institutions that make a total of 9600 members (approximately). The General Service Board is composed of one Class "A" Custodian and eight Class "B" Custodians, of these, four in the host city and one for each regional zone.

We maintain contact with the non-Spanish speaking groups located in our country (English, German, Polish, Swedish, Finnish, Danish and Icelandic) to try to work together and facilitate their integration, if they wish, into the structure of Spain. Likewise, we are in contact with groups that meet in Spanish in Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Geneva, London, Brussels and Sydney.

It continues to participate in the Service Forums held in each of the regional areas, attended by Class "B" Custodians of the host city and the custodian of the regional area where the forum is held, which serve to bring the board and the activities of the G.S.O. closer to the groups and vice versa, facilitating the exchange of experiences between the different areas participating in this forum.

General Service Conference

In these last two years, two General Service Conferences have been held, returning to the face-to-face format, since in previous years it had not been possible to do so, due to the Covid-19 pandemic

The XLII Conference was held on April 15, 16 and 17, 2022, with the slogan "KEEP IT SIMPLE, RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL"

The XLIII Conference was held on April 6, 7 and 8, 2023, with the theme "THE GROUP: PRINCIPLE OF STRUCTURE"

General Service Office

The operation of our office continues to be possible thanks to the excellent work and dedication of the two hired employees.

The responsibility of holding Public Information in white areas where there is no implantation of groups is maintained. In addition to the activity of the groups and areas in their areas of influence, the board held the necessary activities for the commemoration of "June 10"

In the years 2021 and 2022, we have attended different professional congresses of medicine, both in the field of care and in the workplace, with the presence of Stand. Institutional visits to official agencies and entities were carried out. Alcoholics Anonymous of Spain is integrated into the National Drug Plan, as another resource.

Finance

In the years 2012 and 2022 the voluntary contributions of the members and the groups have fully covered the budgets approved for the annual exercise, the good management of the financial resources of the G.S.O. have allowed the maintenance of the Prudential Reserve Fund at levels similar to those reached in previous years. Therefore, the current economic situation is adequate to meet our needs.

We continue to contribute to the World Literature fund.

Literature

About 500 requests for literature are sent annually to groups, area committees, and individual members. Our literature since the last European Service Meeting, maintains the same sales levels.

We continue to produce our magazines "Akron -1935" and "Sharing" with a number of subscriptions that is above 2000 per year. We sent 430 "Akron -1935" newsletters to non-alcoholic professionals and continue to reiterate the need to increase subscriptions.

Media

The official website of Spain has been remodeled www.alcoholicos-anonimos.org allowing information in Spanish and English, so we observe growth in visits to our website, which allows us to respond quickly and personalized to the queries made by those who are interested in our recovery program and / or their relatives, diverting to the areas or groups to those who ask us for help.

Sponsorship

At present we do not sponsor any country, although we maintain a fluid relationship with Equatorial Guinea, to which we supply literature.

SWEDEN

Structure

A.A. in Sweden was founded in 1956. Today we have about 420 groups; there is also English-, Finnish-, Icelandic-, Polish-, Russian- and Spanish-speaking meetings, and abroad there are about 20 Swedish-speaking groups, and 15-20 online groups, and they are represented in the Swedish meeting list, and have their own district.

The General Service Board consists of nine 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: Information, Literature, Nominations, Policy, IT, the committee for development and knowledge, National Hotline. Archive, Finance, Economy are for the moment not active.
- 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 two employees both working 60%, there has been some changes at the General Service office, a long time employee has retired and a new has been employed.

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. At the service conference in 2021 it was determined to put together a working group, to look at our AA:s structure. The working group came up with two suggestions, which were presented at the service conference 2022, and there it was determined to go on investigating one of the two suggestions, which was to remove the regions from the Swedish structure, the decision to remove the regions was taken at the 2023 service conference. At the end of this year it is desirable that the reorganization is completed, the new structure will now be, Groups – Districts – Service Conference - GSB. The purpose with the reorganization is to shorten the communication paths, and speed up decision, and elections. The reorganization also includes a comprehensive review of our *Service Manual*, which is updated and was released at the National Service Meeting in July 2023.

Literature/Publishing

The approved A.A. literature today consists of 11 translated books and one book published by A.A. in Sweden (AA:s history in Sweden from the beginning up to 2012). There are 20 booklets and pamphlets, in addition to decals, shades, CDs, DVDs in Swedish. We have recently finished “The illustrated traditions” and “The illustrated concepts, they will be released in the fall of this year, ongoing is to translate “Treatment Committee Workbook”.

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, has been expanded and is an important link in the network of carrying the message. The new updated website is now working with the latest technology since august 2022. For the moment there are plans to publish “Daily Reflections” on the website. 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.

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. Sweden has been able to contribute to the International Literature Fund (ILF)

Working With Other Countries

Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden are normally taking turns in hosting the annual Nordic Meeting. We have during 2023 started up this meetings again since they have been postponed due to the Pandemic.

Events during 2022-2023

The Service Conference 2023 was held during one weekend in April,

The two World Service delegates participated as delegates in the World Service Meeting in New York 2022, it was a digital (zoom) conference since the world was still suffering the impacts of the pandemic. One of our WSD has rotated out, and we have a new WSD from the 1:st of January 2023. Our delegates will participate in the ESM in York in October 2023.

The Swedish Country Meeting in 2023 was held in Sundsvall, the last weekend in July.

SWITZERLAND (GERMAN SPEAKING)

Cause of some sudden resignations (due to health) important services couldn't be on duty. The next Chairman assembly will be on 28th October and there are several new candidates for the elections. There will be a change of structure in our assembly.

In August there was a great AA weekend with many friends. It was really great that so many friends also from Austria and Germany joined us.

While f2f meeting are lights are increasing, internet meetings gain more friends and therefore we try to work for a new structure to integrate them.

UKRAINE

Country Report

The first group of Alcoholics Anonymous appeared in Ukraine in 1989, so this year we are celebrating the 34th anniversary of A.A. in our country. At present there are about 129 active A.A. groups in Ukraine. They are attended by about 1,500 A.A. members. (NOTE: Some groups currently hold online AA meetings via Zoom, Skype, etc.)

There are five functioning regional service structures: Kyiv, Volyn, Western Ukraine, Poltava and Prydniprovyia. Fourteen groups in Crimea and 10 groups in Donbass, which were formerly in A.A. Ukrainian's service structure, continue to function and are listed on the website of A.A. of Russia.

On February 24, 2022, the current conflict in Ukraine began when Russian military forces entered the country from Russia and Belarus. Many Ukrainians (mostly women and children) were forced to evacuate abroad including AA ones and this is still the case. It was very difficult to hold the A.A. structure in Ukraine from the time the war started along with A.A. groups' existence. Currently, AA members attend local meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous groups, connect to online meetings, have already created and are trying to create Ukrainian-speaking groups abroad.

General Service Conference

Our 25th General Service Conference was held in Luts'k (in western Ukraine) on May 12-14, 2023 (the 24th online Conference was held on Zoom). It was the first face-to-face Conference after the war started.

Participants of the Conference included five trustees representing five A.A. regions, the international delegate to the World and European Service Meetings, delegates to each of the four Conference committees, acting chairman of the "Pravlinnia" (the committee overseeing the General Service Office), and the office worker at the General Service Office.

During the three-day Conference many important questions were dealt with and resolved and newly elected trustees and delegates assumed their service positions, while those whose terms were up rotated out.

Unfortunately, due to restrictions related to the introduction of martial law in Ukraine, foreign observers were not present at our Service Conference.

Our Class A Trustee, who was elected to the General Service Board in 2019 to assist the Board in its work, has already stepped down from her service.

The Southern Ukraine Region, comprising A.A. groups from the cities of Odessa, Mykolayiv and Kherson, sent an observer to this Conference.

General Service Board

The General Service Board of A.A. in Ukraine at present consists of six members: five Class B trustees elected at regional service conferences and one international delegate to the World and European Service Meetings. We meet monthly (more often if necessary) on Zoom, have four quarterly meetings and have one board meeting where we meet face-to-face (at the General Service Conference).

Committees

We have four active standing Conference committees: Literature, Information, Organizational and Finance.

General Service Office

At the 23rd Conference, a new chairman of Ukraine's General Service Office was elected-Olena S., from the Western region.

The office of the Ukrainian Service Center of A.A. (Ukraine's General Service Office) relocated from Kyiv to Poltava in May 2016. 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 her 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 General Service Office in New York.

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 completed the work on the collection of A.A. recovery stories of A.A. members in Ukraine. These 26 stories were published as a separate book «Starting point» in 2023.

The Literature Committee and volunteers are currently working on the translation of the book "Daily Reflections" into Ukrainian.

Work on an updated translation of 12 Steps and 12 Traditions in the Ukrainian language has also been completed.

Two brochures "Youth and AA" and "AA for Women" have been translated into Ukrainian.

The brochure "Do you think you are different?" was prepared for publication. One hundred copies of the brochure were printed.

We plan to supplement the brochure "AA and the Armed Services" with new stories of the Ukrainian military and publish it. (Several online and offline AA groups for military and war veterans have been created in Ukraine).

In 2021 AA of Ukraine also received 500 copies (the first translation) of the Big Book in Ukrainian from the GSO. We are distributing these books free of charge to our "professional friends" and rehabilitation centers. After the start of the war in Ukraine, a large part of the literature was sent from the GSO directly to the Poland AA's general service office because Poland has become a real hub for Ukrainian refugees in general and AA in particular.

Our A.A. magazine *Dzherelo* (“Wellspring”), is published twice a year and is distributed mostly among A.A. groups and A.A. members in Ukraine. The magazine is printed in Ukraine’s two most widely used languages, Ukrainian and Russian. At the 24th Conference, it was decided to publish the *Dzherelo* only in Ukrainian.

The last issue of the magazine was entirely devoted to the topic: how AA members survived the first year of the war. Their experiences of recovery and staying sober during the war.

Usually we print 200 copies of the magazine and almost break even.

We also successfully use the Translations and Licensing Web-portal to obtain literature licenses.

It was organized from the USA to Ukraine the delivery of 180 pieces of «12 x12» Book for 1\$ and 50 pieces of Big Books and 20 pieces of «12 x12» to Poland for Ukrainian AA. The Book «12x12» successfully arrived to Ukraine (90 pieces – in Lviv, 90 pieces – in Poltava).

Finances

Our projected expenses in the budget for 2023 total 367,000 UAH (approximately 9,000EUR). Projected total income from literature sales was 310,000 (7,600EUR). Projected income from the 7th Tradition was about 10-12% of the total projected income. However, due to uncertainties created by the COVID-19 crisis we may find ourselves operating at 70-90 percent of our projected budget, both with regard to income and expenses.

This year we were also able to make a contribution to the International Literature Fund.

Due to the unfavourable economic situation and the devaluation caused by the war, the Office had to raise the prices of all literature printed in Ukraine by 50 percent.

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.

Meetings, Conventions

Some A.A. conventions are managed to hold in some places of Ukraine during last year.

Our international delegate participated in the 27th World Service Meeting (Zoom) in October 2022.

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.

According to the Action Program of the National Service, an informational meeting "Chaplains and military psychologists" was held in the city of Lviv (January 2023) and “Where the spiritual meets the material” (July 2023, online), in which General Secretary UK GSO Ranjan B. took part and shared his experience.

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 attended several special outreach meetings held mainly in cities with new groups.

Public Information

Over the past two years, much work has been done to produce few audio video clips and PowerPoint presentation to inform the public about A.A. These videos are broadcast as free public service announcements on TV and radio (FM stations).

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

Now we are able to carry A.A.'s message to the prison only in Drohobych, in Western Ukraine. All other prisons are closed to A.A. for now.

But we hope that in the near future we will receive permission from the government to visit prisons again. During the lockdown, we collected and put away money for this purpose.

On August 1, 2023, we held an international seminar on carrying A.A.'s message to prisons. Several speakers with appropriate experience and representatives from different Penetration Service from Poland shared at the seminar.

Internet

A.A. Ukraine's official website (www.aa.org.ua), which has been in operation for 15 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.

Also, with the approval of the GSO, the books Alcoholics Anonymous and Sober Living, brochures, etc. are available on the website in readable and audio format.

We make use of the internet for service meetings as we continue to hold committee and General Service Board meetings on Skype.

Links to five Ukrainian online A.A. groups were published on the website of the worldwide online intergroup.

International contacts

Unfortunately, due to restrictions associated first with Covid-19 and then with the conflict, international cooperation was minimal and mainly took place online or abroad.

We interact with the A.A. service structures in Poland, the European office in the UK and the G.S.O. in New York. After the COVID-19 lockdown members of our national and regional service structures have taken part in service conferences and conventions in neighboring countries:

The Head of the General Service Board was delegated and took part in the Conference on the service of the Lithuanian A.A., which took place on November 26-27, 2022 in Birštonas.

In 2023, the Head of the G.S.O. was delegated to the 37th Conference on the Service of the A.A. of Latvia and the 51st Conference on the Service of the A.A. of Poland.

As mentioned earlier, our international delegate participated in the 27th World Service Meeting on Zoom in October 2022.

Immediately after the start of the war, we received dozens of letters and messages with words of support, prayers for us and offers of help and donations to A.A. Ukraine. Big support, assistance and help we have received from our neighboring A.A. Fellowship of Poland.

We are truly appreciative to them for this as well as are very grateful to the global A.A. Fellowship.

Committees & Workshops

Service Committee

Chair: Andris K *Latvia*

Alternate: Moira S *Ireland*

Ada Z – Poland
Andrea S – Hungary
Elena L - Romania
Giovanni B - Italy
Joanna Z - Malta

Karin F – Austria
Marie-Paule M – French Speaking Europe
Nevena B - Bulgaria
Pascal D – Belgium (Flemish Speaking)
Tatjana R - Netherlands

I. How does your country liaise with the media?

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)

We have an active P.I. committee, but currently no one to fill the role of liaising with the media. Servants often receive heavy criticism; however, they persist, and we have started a new media working group to attract younger people.

Austria

We have someone in P.I. post but it has been difficult to be effective. There is a WhatsApp group for media relations (in early stages).
A working group has been formed to encourage contact using the G.S.O. resources.

Malta

One person deals with P.I. and 2 people are working with schools. We have a website administered by one person. It's hard to maintain an active level of service and not give up the P.I. effort.

Romania

No PI committee, but we have invited the media to participate in some events. Because of the fear of breaking anonymity our members often remain hesitant in relations with the media.

Bulgaria

Have PI/media committee, but the regions do more PI work as they know local media professionals personally. We invited Polish delegates to share their experience, which was very helpful. The PI committee writes a letter to the media prior events to explain how anonymity works.

Italy

There is no special trustee to work specifically with media or PI. Regions and groups are more effective at this service. The delegate also spoke of his previous professional experience as a PI professional and how it feeds into his AA service work.

Ireland

A detailed report of how PI is done at each level of the structure, from the group to the board. The pandemic transformed the way we deal with the media. At our group, we have an open public meeting each month. Intergroup PI officers hold a crucial role in sharing experience with media relations. Strong groups often have PI officers.

3 full-time staff at the GSO who often deal with PI work, information. We made 2 short films available on the website. The 75th anniversary had a great impact on how we present the Fellowship externally and make the public aware of A.A.

The Netherlands

We are very vocal, have many strong opinions on how to do service, but we have experienced great resistance from older members, even though we do have a P.I. committee. We're active on Facebook and Instagram and thinking of starting a podcast.

Poland

We provide information about AA via TV, radio, press releases. There are PI committees in regions and intergroups. The website was developed by professional services. We will celebrate 50 years of AA in Poland next year and will use non-alcoholic trustees to liaise with the media.

French-speaking Europe

Non-alcoholic trustees are very useful when it comes to giving us a public face, we try to get an article in the press prior to large conventions. Their professional background opens a lot of doors for P.I. work, like alcohol treatment specialists, prison administrators, members of clergy.

2. How does your country involve non-alcoholics in service?

Belgium (Flemish Speaking)

No class A trustees at the moment, but we are looking for someone suitable. We want to elect someone who would reflect a more balanced representation of the Fellowship, e.g. women, younger people. The phone service is on a good level, run by a woman, active 24hr.

Austria

We have a class A trustee, who is a doctor, who's been with us for 8 years and loves A.A. He's rotating out, and our new class A trustee is the chief of the Austrian police training schools. We expect him to do a great job in that profession.

Malta

We cooperate with professionals in treatment centres, but we are a small country and a small fellowship.

Romania

We have 2 class A trustees, and other non-alcoholic friends and professionals whom we work with. Our website is a very important tool to share our mission and let the public know that we exist.

Bulgaria

We have a doctor who is a class A trustee, a true friend of A.A. We find it is difficult for non-alcoholics to understand our Traditions. It is important to be friendly and engaging with professionals, so that they get to know us and appreciate how we work.

Italy

We have 1 class A trustee who is in the field of alcohol treatment. We would like the board to consider recruiting more non-alcoholics. We have a non-alcoholic full-time staff member who has been with us for 15 years; she is the memory of A.A. in Italy. We don't recruit servants from other 12-step fellowships; the separation must be clear.

Ireland

We have 3 class A trustees, and 3 non-alcoholic full-time staff who have a deep understanding of our primary purpose. We work closely with friends outside A.A., including regular open P.I. meetings, liaising with prisons, hospitals, and treatment centres. During the pandemic we strongly advocated that the government recognise A.A. as an essential service, to recognise how important meetings were for the A.A.s.

The Netherlands

Currently no class A trustees on the board. Again, we encountered great resistance from the older members in terms of rotation. Despite this we are resourceful and work with professionals in other events, like "The Day of Recovery". We also work closely with other fellowships.

Poland

We've been carrying the A.A. message into prisons, hospitals, and recovery centres for over 30 years. We run many workshops for professionals; intergroups and regions play a big part in liaising with professionals and other non-alcoholics. We participated in a major rock music festival, which was a great success. We hope to recruit more class A trustees by taking part in such events.

Latvia

There is 1 class A trustee on the GSB, with another one hoping to be elected at the 2024 conference. It is important to realise the equality of the roles class A and class B play in service, that we all work towards the primary purpose.

French Speaking Europe

Each country has different numbers of class A trustees on their boards, and we recognise they are very important because they can explain to other professionals how A.A. works and represent us in their communities. They don't have to be anonymous when they speak to the media. We don't involve servants from other fellowships, but we do collaborate at conventions.

Composition of Boards/Service Committees				
	Class B	Class A	Rotation (cl. B)	Rotation (cl. A)
Belgium (Flemish)	6	2 positions 0 active	4 years	Undefined
Austria	3	1	4 years	Undefined
Malta	5-6 people on committee		2 years	Undefined
Romania	17	2	4 years	Undefined
Italy	10	1	4 years	3(+3)
France	8	4	4 years	Undefined
Switzerland	6	2	4 years	Undefined
Belgium (French)	9	1	4 years	Undefined
Bulgaria	7	1	4 years	Undefined
The Netherlands	8	2	4 years	4(+4) years
Poland	14	5	3 years	4 years
Latvia	8	1	4(+4) years	4(+4) years
Ireland	4 trustees 1 secretary	3	4 years	4(+4) years

3. Each committee should suggest one theme for the 23rd ESM. A vote will be taken on Sunday to choose the final theme.

“Service in the Modern Age”

4. Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 23rd ESM Service Committee.

Chair – Pascal D, Belgium (Flemish Speaking)

Alternate – Joanna Z, Malta

Recovery Committee

Chair: Daniel G Romania

Asger J – Denmark
Balys K – Lithuania
Carmen P – Slovenia
Daniel G - Romania
Dany De B – Belgium (Flemish Speaking)
Dunja P – Croatia
Izabela A - Poland

Jo F – Great Britain
Jony F-T - Netherlands
Lars D – Sweden
Laura K – Finland
Miguel L – Portugal
Augustín M - Spain
Thomas D - Ireland

1. How does your country help newcomers learn about the steps? For example – step work groups/sponsors

Countries have different approaches to welcoming newcomers. For example, we provide them with pamphlets or beginner kits and literature, take them aside, and have a one-to-one chat prior to the meeting to make them feel welcomed and aware of the importance of attending step-working meetings and regular meetings as much as possible in the beginning.

Sometimes newcomers are informed that they don't have to share at their first meeting if they don't feel comfortable. Some other meetings have dedicated time for shy sharers.

The types of meetings for newcomers vary from step-working groups, beginner meetings, sharing meetings based on step-working experience, Big Book reading meetings, 12 Steps and 12 Traditions meetings, Small Steps camps, or 36 Spiritual Principles Workshops.

For sponsorship, countries usually keep contact lists, offer temporary sponsorship for newcomers, or ask if anyone is available to sponsor during the meetings.

2. What is your country's experience of the role of social services in assisting alcoholics on the road to recovery?

Most countries have collaboration between the professional community and the AA Fellowship, with regular meetings taking place in prisons, hospitals, and rehab institutions, but the main challenge is how to reach out to those who are uninformed about AA.

When people leave treatment facilities, they are usually introduced to the AA 12-step recovery program.

Several countries have little or no Social Services support, so Public Information events are held to keep them informed. In other countries, AA is asked by universities to speak to medical or psychology students.

Workshops, to which professionals are invited, are the most popular means of getting the message into treatment facilities. There are brochures for professionals delivered to doctors, employees, clergy, etc.

Some GSBs have Class A Trustees who help spread the message to professionals while avoiding the problem of anonymity.

One country conducted a survey that questioned, "How did they hear about AA?" 50% came from family members and 50% from therapists.

To sum up the experience, some countries face resistance from the professional community, while others are close friends of the fellowship. In some of them, addiction counsellors (also alcoholics) assist in spreading the message, in others, individual members contribute significantly to maintaining relationships with professionals as a result of their efforts.

- 3. Each committee should suggest one theme for the 23rd ESM. A vote will be taken on Sunday to choose the final theme.**

“36 Spiritual Principles”

- 4. Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 23rd ESM Recovery Committee.**

Chair – Dunja P, Croatia

Alternate – Jony F-T, Netherlands

Unity Committee

Chair: Julianne L *Norway*

Alternate: Leonor P *Portugal*

Thomas A - Sweden
Elena S – Lithuania
Flemming S – Denmark
Guido H – Germany
Levey P – Great Britain
Maija T - Latvia

María G – Spain
Marian B – Slovakia
Radoslava S - Bulgaria
Regis C – French Speaking Europe
René F – Czech Republic

1. How do the members in our different countries view the idea of a gender-neutral language in our literature?

In general, it seems like in many European countries we are using a gender-neutral language and that we are now starting to be aware of how we express ourselves.

Some of the European countries have changed the preamble working from women and men to people.

Some countries commented on the cost of changing the literature.

There are also some countries that don't see that this topic is a problem.

It seems that young people have the most interest in making the change.

Our conclusion: AA meetings are a safe place for everyone. If not united – not attracting. Keep it simple.

2. How can relationships between the different fellowships support unity within the community? For example – AIAnon, ACA, NA etcetera

We understood that this is a family disease. Most of the countries have a relationship with AI-Anon though some countries have lost this due to indifferences.

Most countries have AI-Anon participation at their conventions.

People calling the AA helpline with problems other than alcohol we refer them to search for other programmes relevant to their needs online.

To summarise: for reference, please read pamphlet – Problems other than alcohol.

- 3. Each committee should suggest one theme for the 23rd ESM. A vote will be taken on Sunday to choose the final theme.**

“Unifying and Safeguarding our Fellowship”

- 4. Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 23rd ESM Unity Committee.**

Chair – Regis C, French Speaking Europe

Alternate – Maija T, Latvia

Workshop: How do you take your Group's Inventory?

Chair: Karin F *Austria*

Alternate: Asger J *Denmark*

Andrea S – Hungary

Andris K – Latvia

Balys K – Lithuania

Carmen P - Slovenia

Daniel G – Romania

Giovanni B – Italy

Izabela A - Poland

Jo F – Great Britain

Miguel L – Portugal

Radoslava S - Bulgaria

René F – Czech Republic

Augustín M – Spain

Share experience from your country on the theme “How do you take your Group's Inventory?”

Austria

- Chair gave two weeks notice of meeting
- Made sure treasurer was there to report on accounts
- Everyone invited to say how they felt
- During inventory we also filled service vacancies

Portugal

- Not every group makes inventory
- Most use 12 questions from our service manual taken from the AA group leaflet
- Suggested it is done once each year
- Each member talks about their own inventory

Italy

- The Group can use ‘The AA Group’ to take an inventory
- We also have a district inventory
- The group inventory is not frequent in our groups, but I feel it is indispensable
- Do not confuse it with a service meeting

Croatia

- Our group is having business meetings every 3 months, including a Treasurer's report
- Still need to translate the service manual

Slovenia

- Unfortunately not all groups practice group inventory, a small number do
- Recent problem of non-alcoholic attending meetings caused some problems for unity
- We are updating the ‘Blue Card’ and the service manual

Czech Republic

- Some groups are very passive
- Meetings do not take inventory at present
- Hope to take this workshop experience back to Czech Republic
- Some meeting in Prague do have service meetings and inventory
- There's a lack of people willing to serve

Denmark

- Most groups have business meetings but do not take group inventory
- Difficult to get people interested in service
- Inexperienced chairs can lead to difficulty at meetings and lack of continuity
- We have some younger people doing service work including inventory

Great Britain

- We have experienced similar problems in some meetings
- Many meetings do take an inventory, are we meeting the needs of newcomers etc
- Sometimes we discuss a Tradition at every Group Conscience
- Questions for conference can be discussed
- A lot of groups make use of WhatsApp groups for support between meetings
- Our board has a workshop/inventories

Latvia

- Taking a group inventory can be scary
- We have to really ask if we are happy with everything in the group
- I have an idea to form a group first and study our service guidelines etc, before we have a meeting

Lithuania

- Group inventory is new to Lithuania
- Some groups do it, those who do usually use The AA Group leaflet
- My home group's takes about 2 hours for group inventory, which is held annually
- Different to business meetings
- Some groups use traditions checklist and look at one a month
- There is no voting or decisions at inventory meetings
- Our group is also Regions, Board, Conference etc. Last year delegates at conference shared questions for group inventory

Bulgaria

- First time I conducted group inventory led to a very long silence
- It worked well for a time and we will try again
- We still don't have a serious group inventory

Poland

- Mostly we have monthly business meetings
- There is a problem with service
- We are preparing a conference inventory
- We concentrate on our 12 Steps and have forgotten about our service, so we don't have people to serve
- Board of trustees have regular inventory meetings

Austria

- When we re-started some groups thought they didn't need an inventory
- We take small steps, taking inventory

Other points raised in open discussion

- Noticed that it can either be all is good, or sometimes that you want to control things
- Recognise some people who are very experienced should be helped to move on
- We are going to try our conference taking an inventory. This could be done by dividing some questions to each committee.
- Sometimes some from outside your own group is the one to point out problems
- If there is a need for a group inventory it will happen, I think
- It's easy to talk about what's wrong with group, but the traditions questions can force you to look at your own actions
- My own group takes three or four meetings to look at the questions, it can take a very long time
- We talk about the meeting outside the meeting and make inventories for others! But maybe a formal inventory is more effective for a meeting.
- A group inventory can give people a chance to raise things they wouldn't normally have to courage to do

Select a theme for the 23rd ESM Workshop

“How to lead by example”

Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 23rd ESM Workshop

Chair – Balys K, Lithuania

Alternate – Carmen P, Slovenia

Workshop: Love and Tolerance is our Code

Chair: Tatjana R Netherlands

Ada Z – Poland
Elena L – Romania
Guido H – Germany
Helga T – Iceland
Julianne L - Norway
Karolina M – Czech Republic

Lars D – Sweden
Maija T – Latvia
Moirra S – Ireland
Nevena B – Bulgaria
Pascal D – Belgium (Flemish Speaking)
Régis C – French Speaking Europe

Share experience from your country on the theme “Love and Tolerance is our Code”

Pascal, Belgium – Love and tolerance is not just words it’s a practice. Big variety of people in the group, even for people who don’t speak the language, it’s the Language of the Heart. We all have one thing in common and that alcoholism.

Nevena, Bulgaria – We do have problems with groups on Facebook arguing with each other. It can be very frustrating with principles of personalities, and we need to make mistakes to learn from our mistakes.

Moirra, Ireland – Love and tolerance is about not getting into scraps. AA can sometime unite when larger society is not ready or able to do so. We have ceased fighting anything or anyone.

Guido, Germany – By participating in online meetings, especially during covid, you partially gave away your anonymity. Opinion on other members should be kept private. Personal welfare is just as important of common welfare.

Julianne, Norway – We are lucky to have small problems but we are alcoholics and discuss our differences. Never the less we always come back to our 1st Tradition – our common welfare comes first.

Ada, Poland – We know we can’t have any resentment and we remind ourselves of the Traditions. We have opinions about other members but remind ourselves of Step 10.

Lars, Sweden – Our common welfare should first. If we have different opinions, we are growing and we have to accept the outcome.

Regis, French Speaking Europe – There now not a lot of things to be against and this is tolerance.

Elena, Romania – We have conflict between young and old, but we must be tolerant over common welfare.

Tatjana, Netherlands - We are very good at pointing out problems instead of solutions. There is much to learn in AA, like how to run a meeting and practicing love and tolerance in and outside of the rooms.

Maija, Latvia - It is essential not to take any political disagreements into AA meetings and fellowship, especially in circumstances where different communities outside AA mainly are not full of love and tolerance. We must keep AA as a safe space for everyone.

Select a theme for the 23rd ESM Workshop

“Opinion of the minority”

Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 23rd ESM Workshop

Chair – Ada Z, Poland

Workshop: Keep the History Alive

Chair: Dany de B *Belgium (Flemish Speaking)*

Dunja P – Croatia
Elena S – Lithuania
Flemming S - Denmark
Joanna Z – Malta
Leonor P – Portugal
Levey P – Great Britain

María G – Spain
Marian B – Slovakia
Marie-Paule M – French Speaking Europe
Thomas A – Sweden
Thomas D - Ireland

Share experience from your country on the theme “Keep the History Alive”

There are some countries that need help to digitise archives their history.

Most countries produce a magazine and/or newsletter which includes historical articles.

Some countries have produced or are working on a book to keep the history alive.

Some countries have member access to archives online.

Conference is important to maintain the history of AA.

Producing videos could be an option in preserving history.

Select a theme for the 23rd ESM Workshop

“Service – Keeping the fellowship alive.”

Elect a Chair and Alternate for the 23rd ESM Workshop

Chair – Marian B, Slovakia

Alternate – Thomas A, Sweden

Closing Addresses

Nevena B, Bulgaria

Hi, I'm Nevena, I'm an alcoholic. I come to explain my feelings about this fantastic event, which I spent the second time with you guys.

I just remember my first time, I was quite disappointed that it was going to be online really, because I am from an eastern country I would have like to come to the UK, of course, especially York! But anyway, I did, and I remember I was so frightened. My feeling was that I am a small girl, and I don't want to be there. I don't want to show my face even. I have resentful feelings to people because I think they speak very good English and mine is not good enough. And I remember the next year I had been an observer to the Great Britain conference, I met moira and we just like grew up together! And its still the same.

I never will forget this experience, these special feelings I'll keep to the end of my life in my heart. A really, really good experience and if I hadn't been an alcoholic, I would not have that and it's a privilege to be an alcoholic. Thank you very much.

Elena L, Romania

Hello everyone, my name is Elena and I'm the second term delegate from Romania. I am very nervous, and my brain is deep frozen from this weather, so I wrote some notes.

It is a privilege for me to be here, and to share my thoughts and my sincere love for you all. Seeing myself nearly dead a few years ago because I couldn't stop drinking and seeing myself now representing my country in such important work, I don't have words to describe the feeling. My heart is full of gratitude and love for this amazing community, this great programme, thanks to which I am alive.

After I stopped drinking the first thing I did was to attend a meeting, where I discovered our solutions, and I started practicing. The second-best thing was to get involved in service. This enforced my sobriety, helping others means I help myself. It is a privilege, that God sent my way. Here at this conference, I have discovered another level of doing service. I learn a lot to return home to my country, to share everything with my fellowship. Here I understand better the language of the heart and I greet my AA family, with a ton of wonderful people.

Thank you all for your presence, for your sharing, and I recommend it from the bottom of my heart to come and do service, and together we learn to convey the message as effectively as possible so we can continue to be an outstretched hand when someone needs help. Regarding our theme for this year, "AA in a Changing World", I want to say that AA is still AA that Bill and Bob brought to us. We change, hopefully, but the steps and the traditions remain unchanged. Thank you all again, it is a wonderful ESM, thank you Sophie and Jenny for taking such good care of me. Thank you, Tobias, and Ranjan for your service. I love you all, thank you.

Jo F, Great Britain

Hi everyone, my name's Jo, and I'm an alcoholic, horribly nervous and I don't think I can follow that presentation! Everyone here is speaking a different language, but we all speak English and we all speak the same language through the fellowship it's the same, we're all alcoholics and we all understand each other, no matter what language we speak. I've just been absolutely blown away by people's tenacity. To get sober and stay sober.

I heard about regimes, I've heard about the different languages, I've heard about all the problems, and the bleeding deacons that kind of get in the way but people overcome this. People take one step after the other and they stay sober. They create the fellowship wherever they are.

For me it's been mind-blowing. I've never been to anything like this. I'd been to the online one and it wasn't the same. Here there is that unity and that friendship and that fellowship. That deep understanding we have of alcoholism and I'm just so grateful that I was taught to put up my hand when the opportunity of service comes up. Put up your hand, and I'm so glad I did because as the previous speaker said, it's been a fundamental part of my recovery. I'm so grateful to AA, the way its structured, the way it is.

If I didn't have this, I would have nothing. I would have absolutely nothing right now. I'm so grateful to everybody in this room, thank you.

Dany de B, Belgium (Flemish)

I'm Dany, I'm alcoholic representing the Dutch speaking part of Belgium, AA Flanders, second and final term for the ESM.

I will go home very happy, I have met here motivated and engaged friends and girlfriends who are working for AA day by day, everyone in his country, everyone on his own way, and also the time you can spend on it.

I am 22 years sober but I must apply I have still learn here some special things. For example, the word sponsor is more clear for me, thank you Jony, and I was pleasantly surprised to hear the stories people told us Saturday evening. Also, the committee and the workshop were very interesting, everyone had the opportunity to tell in their own words what he or she thought about the questions and thanks to the staff members we had a good summary afterwards what was told.

We all believe in AA, and we hope people who need will come to accept our help. I told in the Committee Recovery AA Flanders lives on their own, little or no cooperation of the Flemish Government, so we have to take care that people who needs us, should see that we exist and are waiting for them or do the first step so like Pascale told us yesterday that someone told him you are an alcoholic.

Pascale and I have promised our general services council in Flanders to make a good report of this ESM, a first impression will be given in November, that's no problem, but we have already spoken together and with other persons here about remarkable differences and how we going to try to get it negotiable at the right time, with the right persons without hitting a wall. Sorry for these few negative remarks but it was good for me that I could write it down. During our car and boat trip home, we have a lot of time to talk about it.

Participants of the first term, I wish you all good luck with the preparation of the second ESM, I'm convinced that you will do good work, and take care of the new persons that will come for the next ESM in 2025, hopefully again here in York.

Thank you all for everything, and hopefully we will see each other at other AA-meetings in Europe or Worldwide!

Tobias D, Denmark – 22nd ESM Chair

Dear delegates, staff, and visitors,

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for a wonderful weekend. So much happened during the course of three days. So many thoughts and discussions. So much hope and good intentions. And all of a sudden, we stand here at the end of it. On a personal note, I don't doubt that such an experience has added fuel to my spiritual fire. For that I thank each and every one of you.

Every committee that I visited yesterday were invested. Sometimes when you are working in service you come across a committee or meeting where the participants feel forced to be there and there is a certain negative energy to get this over with as quickly as possible, because we don't care much – we have more important things in our lives going on. That can really drain a room of the potential. You guys have shown here this weekend your persistency, you are invested to be here. I mean for god's sake after a twelve-hour long day of committee and workshop, you guys still had the energy to be present at our meeting last night, totally dedicated. I am in awe.

As I said in the beginning of this event no one likes to be preached or told what to do. So, when you get home from here be careful not to take on the traits of a bleeding deacon yourself. A bleeding deacon is not conformed to a certain age or sex, we can all be too persistent.

Remember to be a living testament to the spiritual principles this fellowship was founded upon. We can aspire to be like the elderly statesman that Bill W describes, and for now I am stepping down with total faith that the ESM is in good hands. You will be carrying on the message to your structures, and in two years' time to the new delegates. I can only hope you all got as much out of this weekend as I did. I have served as a delegate and now as a chair to the best of my ability, and the privilege to do so will always be part of my journey, my memory, and my gratitude to this fantastic fellowship.

Thank you are poor stock in that value, but that's all I have to repay you with. (And to be a living testament every day, I try to the best of my ability to grow into these thirty-six spiritual principles.)