

# 16<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting 2011





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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 27 European countries representing 29 separate National AA Structures gathered together at the Hotel National in Frankfurt, Germany on the 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2011, to take part in the 16<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting (ESM).

The European Information Centre at York issued invitations to General Service Offices across Europe, and listed below are the countries which attended this 16<sup>th</sup> ESM. We were particularly delighted to welcome a delegate from Slovenia who was represented at the ESM for the first time.

<b>Austria</b>	<b>Belgium (Flemish Speaking)</b>
<b>Belgium (French Speaking)</b>	<b>Czech Republic</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Estonia</b>
<b>Finland</b>	<b>France</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>Great Britain</b>
<b>Greenland</b>	<b>Iceland</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Italy</b>
<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Lithuania</b>
<b>Malta</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
<b>Norway</b>	<b>Poland</b>
<b>Portugal</b>	<b>Romania</b>
<b>Russia</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>
<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Switzerland (French Speaking)</b>
<b>Switzerland (German Speaking)</b>	

On Friday afternoon registration and reception took place, this provided an ideal opportunity for the delegates to renew friendships and to meet new friends who were attending the 16<sup>th</sup> ESM for the first time.

The 16<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting was opened by the ESM Chairman - Jacek C. (Poland), who presented an opening address which was inspirational and uplifting, thus setting the mood for the whole of the weekend. Everyone was invited to introduce themselves. Jacek then went on to welcome all of the delegates, Ann Napier - The General Secretary from Great Britain, Phyllis Halliday – The General Manager from GSO New York, Mary Clare Lynch from the International Desk, and all of the ESM staff. Following the reading of AA's Twelve Traditions by Ann, the Presentation of the 21<sup>st</sup> World Service Meeting was given by Jan-Ola J. (Sweden), this was followed by the Keynote Address which was delivered by Mary Clare.

A brief report concerning the finances of the ESM was given by Ann.

Finally, one delegate from each of AA's national structures was then invited to share highlights of activities which had taken place in their country since the last ESM in 2009.

On Saturday each of the committees and workshops went into action, with delegates working together and sharing their wide and varied experience in service as it applied to each of their individual AA structures. Each committee and workshop Chair reported back on all recommendations and final outcomes to the full meeting on Saturday afternoon (Committees) and Sunday morning (Workshops).

Saturday evening allowed a little time for relaxation with the Sharing meeting. Presentations were given by Johannes Hilmarsson (Iceland) and Chantal D. (Switzerland – French speaking) on the Theme: “AA, a source of Hope”, this was followed by general sharing around the room.

On Sunday morning business concerning the 17<sup>th</sup> ESM was conducted. Following elections we were delighted to welcome Kristin L. (Norway) as Chair of the 17<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting to be held in 2013.

Sasha Ana Z. (Slovenia) is to prepare and present a report on this 16<sup>th</sup> ESM to the 22<sup>nd</sup> World Service Meeting (WSM) which will take place in 2012, she will then report back on the 22<sup>nd</sup> WSM to the 17<sup>th</sup> ESM in 2013.

The Agenda Committee for the 17<sup>th</sup> ESM will consist of the following:

Kristin L.	Chairman of 17 <sup>th</sup> ESM
Roger B.	General Secretary EIC
Penny A.	Chair – Agenda, Policy, Admissions, Finance
Ilze K.	Chair – Literature, Publishing, Media Communications
Ludwig T.	Chair – Working with Other Countries

The Agenda Committee will meet in August 2012 to discuss all questions forwarded to them via the EIC up until July 2012. The programme of the 17<sup>th</sup> ESM will be finalised and the agenda set.

To finalise the weekend closing addresses we given by Phyllis Halliday, General Manager GSO New York, who spoke with inspiration giving great encouragement to every person in the room. Phyllis was followed by Ana Vera (Spain); Jan-Ola (Sweden) and Lothar U. (Austria), all of whom recalled their feelings with positive emotion, recounting their experience over the weekend and their years leading up to this ESM.

Jacek our ESM Chairman, went on to close the 16<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting with a heartfelt address, expressing great hope as he looked forward to the future of Alcoholics Anonymous across Europe, and around the world.

Finally, the meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer.

# **Agenda Digest of the 16<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting 2011**

## **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October**

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

## **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October**

Committee Meetings  
Questions and Answers Session  
Workshops  
Presentation & discussion following Committee Reports  
AA Sharing Meeting on the theme: *'AA, a source of hope'*

## **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October**

Presentation & Discussion Workshop Reports  
Seventeenth European Service Meeting

- Time and Place
- Election of Chairman
- Election of ESM Delegate to prepare ESM Report for WSM 2012 and report back to the 17<sup>th</sup> ESM in 2013
- Formation of the Agenda Committee

Closing Addresses  
Close of Sixteenth European Service Meeting 2011



# **Opening Presentations**

## **WELCOME ADDRESS - UNITY AS OUR SAFEGUARD**

### **Chairman - Jacek C., Poland**

Good evening my friends!

My name is Jacek and I am an alcoholic. This is my third European Service Meeting, first as a chairman. I have to admit, that I'm not only powerless over alcohol but in this particular moment I'm powerless over my own fear when I'm standing in front of you in this autumn's evening. I am so grateful I can be your trusted servant. This is probably the gift from my Higher Power, for which I don't deserve.

This year's meeting subject is "Unity as our Safeguard", maybe I should change it a bit, and say that "our safeguard" means "my safeguard". Unity of The Fellowship has my own personal dimension, my own meaning. I experienced that poignant feeling many times on my A.A.'s path. Perfectly remember my very first meeting in small town near Warsaw, where everyone present welcomed me, wished me luck, gave the telephone numbers – hospitality I found there was something extraordinary for me, something I haven't experienced for my whole previous life. I remember also members' statements about "loving God as we understand Him", "Twelve Steps", "Twelve Traditions", "Big Book", "Serenity Prayer". I can say that after seventeen years everything is the same, I can hear lots of similar sentences when I attend the A.A. meetings. Perhaps with only that difference, when sometimes it seems that the above mentioned truths are understandable for me. (Really Jacek?!) Our Fellowship is united – because since my beginning in A.A. within the Fellowship, I haven't found any other Program than 12 by 12, even though I've seen a couple of breaches against Traditions or some therapeutic or psychological stuff.

The next remarkable sign of A.A.'s Unity is our literature. When I came to A.A. there was no literature officially approved by The Conference in my country and the only "underground" versions of our books existed. In 1996 we printed very first official copy of The Big Book and during the couple of years we printed practically everything we could print. When I'm looking at our books' covers, when I'm looking at their layout I can say that, the only worldwide difference is the language. The message is the same everywhere. I am proud and grateful I can study this literature whenever and wherever I want.

Lucky those of you, who celebrated worldwide A.A. anniversaries like last year's in San Antonio, Texas. I couldn't be there unfortunately, but I also experienced the feeling, when couple of thousands of recovered alcoholics holding their hands together and say The Serenity Prayer. It is always a moving and unforgettable experience when the A.A.'s unity is physically present here and now! I remember the Serenity Prayer uttered

together at the first Young People in A.A. Meeting when I had my small spiritual experience – my heart filled with Peace, Identity and the sense of Unity. To this day I'm cultivating that moment. Last time we celebrated 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Group.

In my country there is a sort of discussion between recovered alcoholics "What is better A.A. or professional Therapy?" The basis of such a discussion is wrong in general, because there is nothing to compare. There are obviously many ways to recover from alcoholism, but the way of A.A. is the way I've chosen and I have to be consistent in that choice. It is possible because Fellowship is united. BTW- I can't see any therapy that would have kept the guy like me for seventeen years. Without you I'm nothing. At first I am an alcoholic, then husband, father, employer etc. Bill W. said *"It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not"* so I'm going still use my beloved Fellowship, maybe for the rest of my life, for sure one day at a time.

Yes, what I said before is maybe an idealistic picture painted by lazy alcoholic. I have no doubts that unity means responsibility, my personal responsibility, For instance - There is no unity without communication. That's what we widely discussed here at the E.S.M. as well. Communication became something very common – I can see that as a citizen of the country that has lived behind The Iron Curtain for many Years. Now I can get in my car in Tallinn Estonia and drive to Lisbon in Portugal without any border's control. To get there to Frankfurt the only thing I have to do is buy the ticket. It is quite opposite than in case of our previous delegates from the 80's. I am fortunate I live in my country. I perfectly know that there are some countries not so far from here, yes here in Europe, which are experiencing difficulties - lack of the literature in the native languages, lack of the sound structures, small number of the groups, distance between population centers, political and freedom problems, social stigma of alcoholism etc. It is not a theory – all of this has been taken out from your country reports. No doubts it is still a lot to do, to reach the alcoholic who still suffers. That's why when I am asked to go somewhere, do something and share my experience, strength and hope I mustn't say "No I'm busy, I have to earn money blah, blah blah,"

Today, when I'm writing down these thoughts is a special day - The Tenth Anniversary of 9/11. It reminds me about the outside world, which maybe is not perfect with its threats and dangers. But for some unknown reason we alcoholics have been chosen to help the others. Let's do that together and united no matter of social, economic, religious conditions and circumstances.

There is a busy weekend ahead of us so let's enjoy the meeting. And last but not least with a little help from our friends and Higher Power I consider The Sixteenth European Service Meeting as open.  
Thank you.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS - Unity As Our Safeguard

### MARY CLARE LYNCH – G.S.O. U.S./CANADA

My name is Mary Clare and I am an alcoholic in my ninth year as a member of Staff at the General Service Office for the U.S. and Canada. It is my sincere hope that this address will make good sense and foster an appreciation of unity and good will as you share experience, strength and hope with one another during these next few days.

*Unity as our safeguard: This we owe to A.A.'s future; to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depends our lives, and the lives of those to come. In the Twelve and Twelve, p. 133, Bill W. says, "The unity of A.A. is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God."*

As I look at our Three Legacies, I see that, for me, our Steps are our spiritual pathway; our Concepts guide our organization and our Traditions express the core principles we uphold in order to be of service as a Fellowship, with unity as the foundation. I set aside time to quietly reflect upon this topic of unity as our safeguard and my thoughts ranged from acknowledging "yes, unity is our safeguard," to pondering "how do we not reflect unity?" to an excited "Ah, with unity as our safeguard, wonderful things are possible!"

In steadily working with A.A. members, groups, and the service structure in the U.S. and Canada, and now from around the world, I have seen over and over how a respect for unity informs the group conscience, and more specifically, how unity of purpose and unity of our message are our safeguard.

You know, we are very loving souls. Because we have suffered so in our alcoholism, some of us are still prone to want A.A. to be all things to all people. I hear members say, "*I don't mind if someone talks extensively about their problems with drugs or gambling or Al-anon issues in the A.A. meeting, because it's probably all the same thing and the Steps might help them.*" Or I hear, "*There are no other Twelve Step meetings here: we have no Al-Anon, we have no N.A., so why can't these people come to A.A. and share? How can we turn anyone away?*" Or, "*There is no such thing as a 'pure alcoholic' anyway; everyone also has some other problem.*" And the newest one: "*We have heard that A.A. membership is decreasing around the world, so we thought if we opened our doors to everyone perhaps that would help increase our membership.*"

Yet our unity, our singleness of purpose, is just as important today as it was 76 years ago. I don't go to my dentist for help with my taxes and I don't go to my accountant for a chipped tooth: each specialty has its own purpose. It is the same with Alcoholics Anonymous and the fellowships based on our program of recovery from alcoholism. There remains an inherent need for each twelve-step fellowship, including A.A., to focus on one thing and one thing only, so that it can do that one thing supremely well. Each twelve-step fellowship must stand alone, unaffiliated with others. It is in our organizational natures to be separate, to feel separate, and to use a separate set of recovery terms, because we each have a unique primary purpose. The focus of A.A. is on the alcoholic; we need to respect our own primary purpose and help those in our A.A. meetings to simply share in a way that keeps our identity and purpose clear.

Our co-founder Bill W. said it perfectly: *"Sobriety - freedom from alcohol - through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps, is the sole purpose of an A.A. group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities, and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make non-alcoholics into A.A. members. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics, and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost certainly collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone."* There we see Bill making a direct link between unity of purpose and service.

Alcoholics Anonymous has been a success story to the degree that there has been unity to our message. Not uniformity, but *unity*, and that unity is defined by members world-wide carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic; with telling what we were like, what happened to us and what we are like now; with sharing with the newcomer the tools of recovery that we use to stay sober; with imparting hope and encouragement to our peers and offering to newer members a sense of obligation to carry this message and pass it on; with sharing how we strive for unity and the actions we take to keep A.A. whole; and finally, it has to do with communicating about the vital importance and role of individual service in Alcoholics Anonymous.

My observation is that cultural distinctions challenge us in terms of carrying the A.A. message, with some alcoholics being made to feel that they are not welcome in our groups. No nation is immune from these challenges — we all experience growing pains in this area. I met recently with a woman who has been sober through Alcoholics Anonymous for several years and she founded several A.A. groups for women in her country because women, due to strong cultural influences, are not welcome as equal persons at A.A. meetings there. There is a tremendous challenge in her homeland to reach the still suffering women alcoholics who do not know that A.A. is there to help them. We explored the possibility of utilizing radio

announcements about Alcoholics Anonymous, since most of the women have a radio on at home while they are working.

In another corner of the world, young people are told by the service structure that there is not a place for the official organization of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous, that it is not A.A. Our experience though, is that Bill W. welcomed the Young People in A.A. as an integral part of our movement -- In a letter dated May 9, 1960 Bill wrote the following to Gene M.:

*"Please know that I deeply regret having to say that I can't possibly be with you on the occasion of the Third International Conference of Young People in A.A. So with this letter I wish to send the meeting my warmest congratulations and my high confidence for its success. For us old timers the coming of so many younger members into A.A. is one of the deepest satisfaction that we can ever have. To think that so many are to be spared that extra ten years of unmitigated hell that so many of us passed through is something for the greatest of gratitude."*

A few years ago the Young People in A.A. gifted our archives in New York with their archives collection, and we welcome them with open arms. They are listed in our Directories along with other similar international organizations. Yes, they make noise, they scream and yell and stomp, but as Ireland joyfully saw when they hosted EURYPAA this past August, they are sober in A.A., saving other young alcoholics and inspiring us older folks as well.

In the U.S., we are not immune; we also struggle with unity in several ways. Our Hispanic meetings have very few or no women. Naturally, there are female Hispanic alcoholics, but we hear that they are not getting help and we know that they are not feeling welcome in many Hispanic A.A. groups. We are attempting to address this through our first TV PSA aimed at the Hispanic population.

Sometimes, we put learned resentments before our A.A. principles. In parts of our North and South black Americans hold their own "underground" A.A. meetings. These A.A. members are solid sober individuals and have even served our Fellowship on the national level. What a sad commentary that our Fellowship in the U.S. reflects our society to the degree that these A.A. members can best attain and maintain sobriety through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous *apart* from the rest of the Fellowship. And what a loss to our service structure! A black colleague at G.S.O. always asks us when we return from a service weekend, "Did you see anybody who looks like me?" Now that's something I notice right off when I am on these trips: how many A.A.s here look like my colleague?

We also have a fellow who wrote a book and founded an organization of more “fundamentalist” members who insist on using older literature which is not the current Conference-approved version, and because they are using the older literature and conducting their meetings as they believe A.A. was practiced in its early days, they claim to be the “authentic” Alcoholics Anonymous. These groups have emerged out of fear the A.A. message is being diluted. The groups that are formed, based on this fear are rigid – if you don’t practice A.A. their way you are first off less “sober” than they are; secondly, they do not allow you to participate in their A.A. meetings unless you have converted over to their approach and adhere to their strict guidelines on everything from how to share to what to wear.

Perhaps some of you can relate to these situations and know of others which can be seen as challenges to unity in our Fellowship, not threats but certain challenges. And how do we meet these challenges? As Bill said, *“My own observation is that time, patience and persuasion wear down these controversial situations.”* Also, *“. . .the course of progress is somewhere down the middle...all of the influences, good and bad, are needed as spurs to progress...”*

Our hope in good outcomes is not misplaced, because we are dealing with Alcoholics Anonymous, a program of recovery from alcoholism that is successfully working around the world – all around the world. It is a program that is inherently self-corrective, and universal: carried from place to place by we who are so deeply thankful that the only way we can possibly give thanks is to carry the message to the next suffering alcoholic. The world has never seen anything like it!

Now, to come to my final thought, in the face of our diversity and challenges, why did I say in the beginning an excited *“Ah, with unity as our safeguard, wonderful things are possible!”*?

Well, I can be optimistic precisely because unity is our safeguard. It is the adhesive that lovingly binds us to one another with one purpose and one message. And with unity comes strength and the impetus toward a disposition to do service, to do for others (no matter who they are) what was done for us.

Bill and the early pioneers were committed to A.A. unity, even as they saw A.A. as a spiritual society always in a state of becoming – never something completed. 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. For a movement like A.A., there is a difference between our history offering a context from which we can proceed, and, alternatively, our history being as concrete, holding us in place. 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. unity. 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, male or female, young or old, of our culture or of another, of our race or of another, within our national borders or outside of them.

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.

With Unity as your safeguard, the nations of Europe have come to Frankfurt;

With Unity as your safeguard, be inspired to move forward *together* in service;

With Unity as your safeguard, make the Fellowship flourish, even in these contentious political and economic times;

With Unity as your safeguard, share from the heart, always remembering why you are here;

With Unity as your safeguard, challenge what needs to be challenged!

Unity is your safeguard: Our lives, and the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it.



# **Presentation of The 21st World Service Meeting**

Theme: Sponsorship: Our Responsibility

## **Jan-Ola J., Sweden – World Service Delegate**

Statement of WSM purpose say that ... "The primary purpose of WSM is the same as that of all A.A. Activity – to carry the message to alcoholics who suffers, wherever in the world he/she may be, whatever language he/she speaks. The world service meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together every two years from all parts of the world. It can also represent an expression of the group conscience worldwide.

The meeting is held alternately in New York and every other time in any other country that is determined at the meeting in New York.

In advance of the WSM delegates send in a written report describing the structure and development in their own country. The report shall include the following key elements: literature, finance, number of groups, general structure, the sponsoring of other countries, website, etc..

The theme of WSM in 2010 was "Sponsorship: Our Responsibility". 55 delegates from 34 countries participated in this meeting. The main language is English with simultaneous translation in Spanish.

The WSM was chaired by Jose Alfredo Linares Hernes from Mexico. Vice-President was Phyllis Halliday from New York. Coordinator was Warren Stafford also from New York office.

The meeting always begins with registration and then a Red Ball meeting. Most people may deem a chance to share the joy and their expectations for the WSM.

AA, as evidenced in these days a thriving activity that are all over the globe in a gigantic network. This is achieved despite differences in language, culture, politics and a very diverse geography.

World Service Meeting has four standing committees:

- Agenda
- Literature / Media
- Policy/Admissions/Finance
- Working with other organizations / outsider

All the delegates were informed in advance about which committees they will work to give a chance to be as well prepared as possible.

The Agenda committee proposed topics and program for the next WSM. The theme for the next meeting will be '*Revolution: The Heartbeat of AA*'. Following topics for next WSM were recommended:

- ***Problems other than alcohol at AA meetings – how are groups dealing with that matter***
- ***AA groups departing from AA traditions – what can be done?***
- ***How do we overcome apathy and generate enthusiasm in service work.***

The Literature/Media committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure.

The Policy/Admissions/Finance committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure.

The Working with other organizations/outside committee shared experience of their ongoing Public Information efforts.

The reports from the different countries spread out over all days with approximately 10 presentations each day.

#### **Workshop I.**

*AA's Twelve Traditions and the group anonymity - AA groups exercising group autonomy and developing new style - What can be done*  
Chairman of this Workshop was Deena Mood Liar from South Africa.

#### **Workshop II.**

*General Service Board Procedures.*

Chairman of this Workshop was Jan-Ola Johnsson from Sweden.

#### **Workshop III.**

*AA members working in the field of alcoholism - What is the experience?*  
Chairman of this workshop was John Loty from Australia.

Then, unfortunately, all the documentation for this WSM was stuck in the Mexican customs and was released out on Wednesday afternoon, was on many occasions some confusion. However, it must be emphasized that the desire for cooperation and consensus could overcome even the biggest problem.

## **Presentations.**

The presentations held are a very important part of the meeting.

### **Women in AA**

- How better to reach the female alcoholic* - Svetlana S Russia
- How better to retain women in AA* - Sheila D UK
- Female participation in the service structure* - Celi Maria S Brazil

### **Seventh Tradition**

- Material Support for the spiritual* - Steve T Australia
- Collective poverty* - Deena M. South Africa
- Responsibility and transparency* - Cipriano S Venezuela

### **Sponsorship**

- Member to Member* - Lothar U German-speaking
- Europe*
- Group to group* - Luc van G Flemish-speaking
- EU*
- Country to country* - Elfrido Q Mexico

### **AA and the Internet**

- Anonymity on the Internet* - Ib Baden J Denmark
- Seventh Tradition on the Internet* - Manuel Elias C Peru

### **AA General Service Trustees**

- The role of the elected* -
- James N New Zealand*
- The role of non-alcoholics trustees* - Charham Kunnel G India
- The role of all elected at large* - Jo-Anne L Canada

### **The preservation of AA's identity**

- Protecting AA's Trademarks* - Johnny L Trinidad
- The use and abuse of the circle o triangle* - Kuniko I Japan
- Preservation of our identity when we*
- Cooperate with other organizations* - Andrew F Malta

In addition, presentations were held from the different continents. I gave the presentation from the European meeting in Frankfurt 2009.

Closing speech was given by Jose Linares from Mexico and then ended the meeting over five days with serenity prayer in all present languages.



# Country Reports

## **AUSTRIA**

### **General Structure**

Within the German speaking AA so far there were 12 Inter-groups, Austria and South Tyrol being one of the actual eleven ones. According to the civil law in Austria AA is organized by the legal association, called "AA Interessengemeinschaft e.V.", which is a non profit organisation. Twice a year the Intergroup- AA Austria and South Tyrol meeting takes place, in spring it lasts 2 days, in autumn 1 day. The Business - meetings of our regions usually meet twice to four times a year. In most regions there are Chairman-meetings similar to the structure in German - speaking Switzerland.

### **Number of Groups**

At the moment there are 158 AA-groups with approximately 1300 members in Austria. Special feature: One group in Vienna has 11 meetings (Every day there are one or two meetings at the same place during the whole week, but each meeting has its own services). Since more than two years there exists a group especially for young people in Vienna, another Viennese group has "depression" as a focal point. There are English speaking and Polish speaking meetings in Vienna as well.

### **Finance**

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

After some recent reminders for more donations by the GSO the contributions of the groups increased. The financial situation of AA in Austria and South Tyrol seems to be stable; seldom there are groups that don't pass the money on, usually for a "good" reason.

### **Services**

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

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

In 2010 the GSAA Convention took place in Hannover, in 2011 in Karlsruhe, both Germany. Austrian and South Tyrolean AA members, members of Al-Anon and Alateen usually love to attend those Conventions. In Karlsruhe the theme was "Alcoholism is a family disease".

### **Literature**

AA Austria/South Tyrol uses the German literature. At the moment in the GSAA there are two different opinions about adapting our literature to a language that is up to date: part of the groups are for a revision (referring to the concepts!), another bigger part is against the reworking, mainly with the argument that the present literature is good enough, so we don't need a "new" one.... Actually the GSAA's group conscience at the GSC 2006 decided to stop any overhauling of literature. That meant no new translations, corrections or advancements, not even the flyers for public relation were supposed to be overworked. The GSC 2007 again decided on the complete stop of revision of literature, but installed a committee, which should have worked out new attitudes concerning literature. The last GSC 2011 constituted another literature team to start working right now, especially with the pamphlets. The whole literature situation is one of many that lead to conflicts and excitement throughout the GSAA. Consequently entrusted servants in the Board meetings are losing their serenity and objectivity. More than one friend resigned from his service after careful consideration.

At the last Board meeting the group conscience decided to confront the next GSC with the revision of literature, outmoded literature is an enormous disadvantage in passing on the AA-message.

### **Sponsoring of other countries**

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

The number of groups who have an "Ants' box" or "Beatles' hat" for collecting money for sponsorship in other countries is growing. This sponsorship money goes directly to the International Funds in NYC. Generally the other sponsoring tasks are left to GSAA with the office in Germany.

### **Relationship to other countries**

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

## **Public Relations**

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

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

Last fall we had a big information meeting in Vienna, celebrating 75 years AA worldwide and 50 years AA in Austria. Non-Alcoholics, among them Dr. Lothar Schmidt, tried to carry the AA message to our invited guests, professionals and reporters. It seemed to be a big success, many newspapers referred to "a way of dealing with alcohol addiction".

## **Internet**

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

## **AA-Magazines**

The general German magazine "DACH" is the magazine for GSAA. "DACH" means roof – the common roof for AA in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and South Tyrol. The name "DACH" is built of the initial letters of GSAA: D for Deutschland (=Germany), A for Austria, CH for Switzerland. From Austria/South Tyrol 2 friends are working for DACH, many friends from Austria and South Tyrol send in their contributions to this "meeting in print".

## **Future**

Because of the severe troubles in GSAA Austria/South Tyrol is looking into the possibility to part from GSAA maybe similar to the way German speaking Switzerland did.



## **BELGIUM**

### **Flemish speaking Region**

#### **Structure**

The basic elements of our structure are the AA members gathered in the 316 groups spread over the 5 provinces of the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium.

The five provincial workgroups are the pivot of our structure. Each province sends two delegates to the GSB.

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

#### **National Service Committees**

**Admission committee:** This committee is responsible for the organisation of the General Service Conference and also for the general oversight of the operations of the service committee inside Flemish AA.

**Public Information:** Since “carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic” is always our main objective, it is evident that this service occupies an important place within our structure. The main task is to provide information about our recovery program to the public and to those 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, it is necessary that PI workers are well informed about AA Traditions. These matters are discussed on a regular basis.

**Distribution Centre:** Provides the groups with AA literature and is responsible for the distribution of our monthly magazine “Five to Twelve.”

**Finance Committee:** Keeps an eye on the financial needs of our fellowship. It is the place where money and spirituality need to be divided in the correct proportions. It encourages the groups to understand the need to support our GSO and our community as a whole.

The money comes mainly from the group contributions, the sale of literature, our yearly convention and other events. According to the financial reports of the last years, we notice that a substantial decrease has occurred in supporting our fellowship. For this reason all the service structures will need to strengthen their efforts to make clear the spiritual meaning and the importance of the Seventh Tradition.

**Literature Committee:** The committee is responsible for the translation, developing and the update of our literature. As a result of good work done by our AA members, we are now able to offer a selection of 30 titles of AA Conference-approved literature. The most recent translations were "The best of Bill" and "A message to teenagers". The translation of "Dr Bob and the Good Oldtimers" is in progress. There is an active participation from AA Netherlands. The printing is done by outside printers.

**Five to Twelve Magazine:** The publication of our magazine is handled by the Managing Editor, who is an AA member. He is assisted by the Editorial Board. The magazine publishes 10 issues a year with a circulation of some 2100 copies per issue.

**Loners:** The Loners Committee is a hard-working team of AA-members. The members of the Loners Group receive AA-meetings in print, and current information every two months. At the moment we have 47 Loners, 48 Loner Sponsors and 4 Loner Groups.

### **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 IS implemented. The GSB has not the right to make structural changes, but in urgent cases the GSB has the right to make a decision on the issue, by a 2/3 majority. These decisions are valid until the following General Service Conference, which may arrive at a different decision.

The board is composed of a chairman, who is a class A (non-alcoholic) trustee; three class A (non-alcoholic) trustees, from the different provinces; ten class B (alcoholic) trustees; the secretary and one representative of each of the seven national services.

Six other members participate in a advisory capacity – these are the Secretary of the non-profit association "Aldinea-Bel", the GSO employee, two WSM and two ESM delegates.

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

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

The association is composed of 4 Class A trustees, 10 AA members (2 delegates from each province)

Three Class A trustees together with one Class B trustee and the secretary of Aldinea-Bel (alcoholic) FORM the board of directors.

### **The General Service Office**

The GSO of the Flemish AA is located in Berchem (Antwerp). The GSO coordinates the central offices of our fellowship and is mainly an

administrative unit providing services to the groups, the provincial workgroups and the fellowship as a whole. There is one salaried non-alcoholic staff member. The office is open on weekdays from 10.00 am till 03.00 p.m. During off-hours and in the weekends a telephone service operates.

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

### **The General Service Conference**

Our 18th General Service Conference was held in 2011; the theme was: "Service: gratitude in action."

The following points are worthy of note: Reports of the ESM, WSM and national services were presented. The delegates representing Flemish AA were divided in six committees, each committee assisted, if possible, by a trustee. Two observers of Great-Britain, two from the Netherlands and two from French-speaking Belgium attended the conference of 2011.

After ratification by the GSB a printed final report of the conference goes to all groups.

The 19th Conference is scheduled for April 2011 and the theme will be: "Rotation: The heartbeat of AA."

### **The National Convention**

The aim of our yearly National Convention is to have a "get-together" feeling for all AA-members, THEIR family and their friends. There is always a spontaneous expression of happy sobriety and thankfulness. This year our convention took place in Brabant with the theme "Freedom to choose". There was also special attention for the 75th anniversary of AA.

The next convention (52 the) is scheduled for May 2013 in Antwerp with the theme; "*and then ....?*".

### **Participation**

We are invited and usually send delegates or observers to: The WSM (2), the ESM (2) and the General Service Conferences of Great-Britain (2), Germany (1), French-speaking Belgium (2) and the Netherlands (2).

Reports are sent and discussed by our General Service Board.

### **The Website**

We created AN Internet workgroup, whose job it is to examine the possibilities of the Internet for the Flemish AA.

Our current website is undergoing a face-lift, the workgroup has redesigned the site.

The site displays times and venues of meetings and a list of AA related events. It also provides price lists and order forms for our literature.

We plan to make full and effective use of all modern information, communication and technological tools, to better reach and help the still-suffering alcoholic.

Address: <http://www.aavlaanderen.org/>

### **Closing Remarks**

We are aware that the main purpose of any conference is always to improve the structure of our fellowship and the possibilities of helping the still-suffering alcoholic; to ensure that our important Traditions and voted resolutions are respected. However, our most important aim is to stay sober so that we can help other alcoholics to obtain sobriety, always keeping in mind the Responsibility Declaration (Toronto 1965): "I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always be there. And for that: I am responsible."

I hope that all AA members will always carry this knowledge in their hearts.

## **BELGIUM**

### **French & German speaking regions**

#### **Structure**

The new structure with 4 regions instead of 8 is now accepted by almost everyone. There now are 218 groups (200 groups at end 2009/2010). In 2009 and 2010 a workshop existed at trustee level regarding regulations of internal procedures (réglement d'ordre intérieur).

#### **Literature**

We are working on a new edition of "Dr. Bob and the old-timers" – we are trying to reactivate the translating service by volunteers – at present we are working on a new remix of the pamphlet "Working with the medicals"

#### **Finances**

Financial revenues in 2009 were about 102.692,51 € and in 2010 they've been at the level of 108.215,12 €.

Financial expenses in 2009 were about 110.612,00 € and in 2010 they've been at the level of 110.720,94 €.

#### **Conference Themes**

Our conferences take place each year -

In 2010 the theme was: "75 years and over"

The 2011 edition will be: consider its commitments and assume...

#### **Congress Themes**

2010: 75 years of AA... The congress was held in Seraing near Liège

2011: theme: "Sur la bonne route" – "On the right road" will be held in Braine l'Alleud, south-east of Brussels on 8 of October

#### **Website**

Reshuffled as usual...see: [www.alcoliquesanonymes.be](http://www.alcoliquesanonymes.be)

#### **Public Information**

We encounter lots of problems even if the "job" is well done...

In 2009 the president and the secretary of the Public information service resigns both, from autumn 2009 'till spring 2010 there hasn't been a P.I. committee formed, although the regional delegates continues to meet regularly and assure their "jobs".

There hasn't been a trustee nominated to P.I. and even if the GSO trustee often assists at the meetings, he can't do or see everything.

In 2010 the newly elected president also resigned (due to his moving to live in France) {after one meeting}, so the P.I. committee is again an orphan and has to wait until autumn 2010 to elect a new president.

There are attempts made to approach the committee of justice & health to form one structure (committee of external affairs) under the authority of a Class A trustee.

### **Onlien Groups**

A forum exists called SSV (Sobriété, Sérénité, Vigilance {sobriety, serenity, vigilance}) which manages 4 "online groups" these are recognized by AA WS but not by the local structures (either in France, nor in Belgium – I don't know how it is managed in Switzerland)

### **Survey**

Next survey is in 2012 (last one has been in 2007 – you'll have to wait 5 years...)

### **Partage Magazine**

The number of subscriptions is decreasing every year. Often our readers have changed their method of search for information and now more and more use the World Wide Web.

We are trying to approach other European GSOs to exchange our local "Grapevine {Partage}" with them; in this way we can share our experience and get some work for our voluntary translators. (Maybe we can discuss this in Frankfurt in October).

### **Miscellaneous**

See below

### **Future Prospects**

Intensify the communication and cooperation within French speaking Europe, we created a non-official gathering at the local French, Swiss and Belgian conferences for the ESM & WSM delegates and other trustees to share experiences and to simplify (or improve) our contacts...

We are trying to involve the class A trustee in the structure (we now have two class A's, one has been elected as vice president of the GSB, and the other one will try the "external affairs", P.I., justice & health. (Wait and see...)

## **CZECH REPUBLIC**

The AA Fellowship in Czech Republic continues to build and expand its recently established service structure.

### **Groups and membership**

In the Czech Republic we have 48 AA groups in the 34 cities. This year's survey shows that our membership is about 480 members. Most of the groups have only one meeting per week and 5-10 members. Groups in larger cities have meetings every day and more than 50 members. Some intergroup organisations are getting started in various regions around the country.

### **General Service Conference**

The Conference is held two times per year. The delegates from the groups are GSR and members of the Conference themselves simultaneously. Each group has the right to send two voting delegates to the Conference. The Conference ascertains the group conscious at a national level and its decisions are final.

### **The Board of Trustees**

Between Conferences authority and responsibility are vested in the Board of Trustees, which has 7 members usually from different parts of country and most of them are involved in the service Committees, such as the Literature Committee, the Public Information Committee etc. Another tool for Boards services is GSO. All of the trusted servants in every area of service in the Czech Republic are AA members. We haven't any non-alcoholic trustee at this time.

### **GSO**

The new General Service Office is still growing and maturing. We have new address and we are trying to gather accessible archives. We have storage of the literature in the different place, but members of the office are responsible for it and they serve in distributing it to the groups. We have 24-hour mobile phone number and e-mail contact for whole country.

### **Finance**

As of 2009 we have a new transparent bank account for whole Fellowship. Everyone can check income and expenditure on the bank's website. Our budget is composed of the following: about 40% are donations from groups' seventh tradition and about 60% are from AA literature sales. Only about 10% groups have so far been able or willing to participate in the donations.

## **Literature**

The Literature Committee and other volunteers are working on the new translations of the pamphlets such as Young people and AA, AA for the woman, Memo to an inmate who may be an alcoholic, The AA group, etc. and on proof reading and correction of already translated pamphlets to be printed with financial help from GSO New York.

## **Magazine**

Our magazine "Cesta" is published quarterly in circulation 500 issues. The magazine is self-supported with prospect to help increase our budget from sales in time. Members can share their experience, strength and hope through this magazine to help others and carry our message of recovery. Older issues are provided free for use in the treatment facilities and public places for spreading the message.

## **Public Information**

We see enormous progress in public information work with professionals, especially in the treatment facilities where we did not have access before. Now we have AA meetings right in the wards and we can gather regular PI meetings for patients and staff.

Our cooperation with the clergy and correctional facilities is also improving, but we still have long way in it and we need enough volunteers.

We have started informational meetings at secondary schools. Principals are mostly welcoming, because the alcohol and drug problems at schools are of great concern.

## **Conventions, workshops, steps meetings, etc.**

For better presentation and spreading of the Twelve Step recovery program some groups gather steps workshops and small events about it. Also we try to involve more people in the service via these sessions.

The best opportunity for approaching our members with the Steps is the Czech National Convention which we hold every year at a different location. Usually about 200 people attend.

## **Communications**

Thanks to our friends in nearby countries we are able to stay in touch with them and their Fellowships and that is essential for us right now. We are really grateful for the invitation and covering attendance of our delegate at General Service Conference of the Great Britain and now at the ESM. Also we have good and solid relationship with friends in Poland and Slovakia. We also have an opportunity to help AA Fellowship in Bulgaria, we invited them to our Convention and financially covered their accommodation fees.



## **DENMARK**

### **General**

In the past 3 -4 years our service structure has been discussed and finally it was revised at our Conference in 2010. It has been our aim to improve the democratic process from groups to conference, and the years to come will show if we have succeeded. We are until now, very satisfied with the process as well as the result.

Our service structure is regarded as a very important tool in our efforts to stick together.

### **Meetings and groups**

Currently (August 2011), there are 461 meetings at our meeting list, which is the same number of groups that we reported in 2009. This is a little bit surprising, since treatment facilities recommend patients to go to AA meetings – and there have, caused by the financial crisis, been a decline in numbers of treatment facilities in Denmark. We regard this among others as a sign of AA being in good health in Denmark.

9 meetings are held in English, in three different cities. Six meetings are in Icelandic language, in two different cities. 3 meetings are in Greenlandic language, in two different cities, one meeting is in Polish language. There are two Danish speaking meetings in Spain and one in Thailand. The number of meetings in foreign language has increased since 2009.

There are 2 meetings on the internet in Danish language. There are no distinguishing between meetings and groups.

### **Regions**

AA Denmark is divided into six regions.

The groups elect Group Service Representatives (GSR) to meet at Region Service Meetings. The regions nominate one trustee each to the General Service Board (GSB). Service Conference 2011 recommended two trustees from each region to GSB in the future. The regions also appoint a number of delegates to the General Service Conference, regulated by the number of groups in the Region.

All Regions has created a Service Manual. The Regions build up their service structure like the one for AA National. Furthermore the Regions have strengthened the public information service throughout the country. They cooperate through the national public information committee. Several Regions have succeeded in finding a non alcoholic friend to serve locally.

Still it seems in some regions a little hard to have new people to step up. In others there seem to be quite a good representation from the groups.

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

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

Currently there are no non-alcoholic members in the GSB. Service Conference 2011 recommended GSB to work with this issue.

A representative for each of the permanent committees also attends parts of the board meetings. The board meets every three months at our General Service Office in Copenhagen.

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

### **General Service Conference**

The Danish General Service Conference is held each year in April. The 2011 conference had participants, of 87 whom 62 were voting delegates. Guests from Finland, Norway and Greenland were present. The past 7 years, the conference has taken place in the same location on the island Funen in middle of Denmark, from Saturday morning till Sunday afternoon.

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

Other members of the conference are: One representative from each of the standing committees, members of the General Service Board, International delegates (ESM, WSM and Nordic) Chairman of the conference, representatives from the national service office.

Beside our usually four working committees at our conference we have workshops too.

Since the year of 2010 we have had a conference committee consisting of a Chairman and Vice-chairman elected at the former years conference, chairmen and secretaries from the 4 committees for the conference to come and a member of GSB. They are responsible for planning and evaluating conferences.

Since 2011 General Service Conferences have a theme – This year's theme was: Action leading to changes!

Like the British we manage to write and distribute the conference report before the Conference is over.

### **General Service Office**

The current General Service Office (GSO) situated in Copenhagen was opened in May 1999. The office is open every Monday from 4.30 am to 6.00 am.

Literature sales, production and AA Data do their work from the GSO. Many Committees and the Copenhagen Region hold their meetings at our GSO. There are no paid workers in GSO.

### **Working Committees and Service Units**

A large number of AA-members are doing voluntary work in the following working committees and service units. Actually all work is done only by non paid AA-members. Chairmen are appointed by the committees and approved by GSB. The rotation period is four years.

The standing committees are:

Literature Translation and narration of audiobooks

Box 334 (membership magazine)

Telephone Service and E-mail help line

Finance

Service Manual and Service Structure Manual

National public information

IT

Conference

Experience committee

The Service Units are:

Literature Sales

Production (Photocopying)

AA Data (updating meeting lists, conference administration, home page etc.)

Administration including book-keeping

Finance

Group contributions are made to the treasurers of the 6 regions. The regions pay contributions to the treasurer of the General Service Board. The group contributions have increased in the last years, but still they do not cover all of the GSO expenses. The shortfall is covered by the proceeds of our literature sales. The last year we have registered a fall in the turnover from literature sales. This is probably caused due to the fall in number of treatment facilities in Denmark whom therefore buy less literature. In 2010 we raised a significant amount by a special collection in the groups. It is possible that this will be done again.

Approximately 60% of our expenses are covered by group contributions and 40% from surplus literature sales. All committees are requested to make up a budget for the year. This year we expect an extraordinary expense caused by problems with the leasing of a photocopier. Some years ago our service office leased a photocopier for a period of 6 years. There were several disagreements with the firm where we leased the machine which led to a trial which we lost. In order of that we have considerable expenses to lawyers etc.

### **Literature**

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

The book "AA comes of age" is just published in Danish.

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

### **Public relations**

Denmark is in the process of strengthening the total information effort. As many activities as possible are to be carried through at the regional level, but in order to co-ordinate the effort and make it more efficient, the national Committee is comprised of one member from each of the six regions.

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

We have established an Internet answering service based on our experiences from the telephone service. This E – mail help line is a success. Everyone gets an answer within 24 hours. We have made a manual of frequently asked questions – which is a big help for the advisers answering the e-mails.

### **Internet**

Several years ago AA Denmark established a web site: [www.anonyme-alkoholikere.dk](http://www.anonyme-alkoholikere.dk) , which is still being improved. It is possible to order literature on the web site. All regions also have their own web sites hosted by AA Denmark.

A standing committee (IT) is working on policies for using the electronic Medias. Only conventions and meetings officially held by AA Denmark can be present in the online calendar.

There are two e-mail meetings in our meeting list. The Big Book is available online.

All meeting agendas and minutes from GSB are published on the website.

### **Relations with other countries**

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

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

On recommendation from AA Iceland we have started to cooperate with AA Groups in Greenland. Every year we invite observers from Greenland to our conference.

We are still following the progress in Greenland closely and assist with all experience we can. We offer our help but listen humbly to follow what they think is the most pressing area to cope with.

### **Final Remarks**

AA Denmark has come of age and our structure has been functioning well. But we still feel that a decisive factor for a wholesome and constant development of our Fellowship in Denmark is to seek inspiration from and comparing notes with other countries having achieved greater experience than us.

## **ESTONIA**

### **Structure**

Today in Estonia there are 21 AA groups, the oldest of them has been in action for 20 years. In the beginning of 2011 there were 251 members in Estonian AA. But our serving structure is only 2 years old.

Most of our groups were founded before our service structure was created. Groups were quite isolated and contacts with others were limited: just organizing summer holidays etc. Such situation continued until 2008. The result: our groups are very independent.

Founding the service structure seemed for some members too innovative.

In April 2008 most of Estonian AA groups were participating in establishing event of General Service Conference. Same day GSB was established too and registered as legal person.

As we did not have any clear imagination at first, we asked for help from the neighbouring countries (Finland, Latvia, Lithuania). Lithuania was most helpful, they helped us to start the process of publishing AA literature in Estonia.

At the moment we have Conference, General Service Board, and this year General Service Office was opened. There is no regional level in our structure. We have no employees. Three Trustees Service Committees are acting – more or less.

### **Literature**

The biggest success we have gained is in publishing literature. Publishing the book *"Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions"* in 2010 was the biggest highlight – until then we had only *"The Big Book"*, this was published as pocket paperback 15 years ago. For now we have some pamphlets, and in 2011 next book: *"Daily Reflections"* was published, also *"Living Sober"* is almost ready for printing at the moment.

### **Finance**

Our financial situation is quite complicated. Income from selling the books and donations from the groups are in balance almost fifty-fifty.

### **Service and General Information**

Spreading information to the public about the ideas of AA is getting better but there is daily, a lot of things to do. We have cross country information cell phone and good-working website.

After long-lasting isolation years it is great to have good contacts with neighbours.

Most close contacts we have with Finnish AA. We are collaborating with them on the level of carrying the message. 2009 the Delegate of Estonian AA for the first time was participating in Europe Service Meeting and on 2010 our delegate was participating in the World Service Meeting.

## **FINLAND**

### **Introduction**

The 7<sup>th</sup> decade of AA in Finland has been started. We had our Annual Meeting in April of 2011 in Joensuu, as well as summer Convention in July. The summer Convention is not deciding any official issues, but is important happening to meet other alcoholics from around the country. Actually such happenings have taken place three times a year, in all seasons, but nowadays arrangements have become more complicated, because of the price levels of conference centers and decreasing number of participants.

### **Structure and Service activities**

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

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

### **Bulletins/Internet**

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

Translated literature is sold appr. 2500 pcs per Year.

Our web pages are under modifying, as well as the National AA group directory in Internet.

The web-address is: [www.aa.fi](http://www.aa.fi) and e-mail address is [aa@suomenaa.fi](mailto:aa@suomenaa.fi). Contacts can be made in English as well.

### **Group activities/carrying the message**

We have over 700 groups in Finnish A.A., 48 groups in institutions and 55 abroad. The groups are mainly Finnish speaking, partly Swedish speaking and a few English speaking groups. Groups organize mainly 4 National



conventions yearly. Representatives from public institutions and media are invited to get information of A.A. and alcoholism. The Annual Meeting of the Finnish A.A. groups takes place every year during the Spring Convention.

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

The Finnish A.A. Fellowship and other countries

The Annual Meeting of the Finnish A.A. groups chooses the World Service Meeting Delegates, who serve 2 years as a first term and 2 years as a second term delegate. The both delegates take part in the World Service and European Service meetings. They report of these meetings to the Finnish A.A.

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

Last year we started more intensive cooperation with AA in Estonia, by inviting some of their servants to attend our Service meeting. Since then we have been in touch with them, in order to improve and assist them to carry the message. The main target group are Russians, living in Estonia, but speaking only Russian. Multilingual team, having members from both countries, have been established this year, starting to meet regularly.

Finland also sponsored the representative of Estonia to participate WSM in Mexico last year.

## **Conclusion**

The theme of this year in Finland is "Pass it on" which reminds us to carry the Message that everyone, everywhere could stop suffering and follow us to start new life, free of alcohol.

## FRANCE

Alcoholics Anonymous France accounts 22 regions, 5 territories, and 587 groups

### General Service Board

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

### General Service Office

The GSO, located in Paris, consists at present of Office Manager, two Secretaries. The GSO assists the GSB in the implementation of the decisions taken at the Conference.

Activities:

Put premises in correspondence and settled the situation of the staff

The English speaking groups are now administratively managed by the GSO

Handles the literature orders

Publishes and dispatches the JSG (GSO News) and the reviews "Partage" (Share) sold by subscription in both Belgium and France

Organizes the annual conference

### Conference

In April 2011 the 40th General Service Conference gathered 75 voting members (55 delegate), 6 non-voting guests and 22 technical staff members under the theme "A different society, a continuous AA program"

The next 2012 Conference will take place on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>. The theme on the agenda will be "The inventory"

As decided in the past Conferences we organize since two years now, the French-speaking European Crossroads exchange with Switzerland, Belgium and France. This meeting takes place during our Conferences. It gathers two members from each country and the World and European delegates of these countries.

Up to now we have been working on the following items:  
the harmonization of our literature  
which partnership does exist between the health professionals and the groups in our respective countries

### **Finances**

Year 2010 ended with the positive result of +12 300€ thanks to the very positive results of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Congress. (+28KE)

The literature sales are even comparing to last year. The contributions increase globally 10% while the overheads keep on decreasing.

### **Literature and Files**

The various exchanges with European countries lead us to wonder about the mean of a common catalogue guide between Belgium, Switzerland and France.

Literature still contributes to a third part of the AA French budget. The literature stand on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary congress allowed lots of people discover the new books.

During the last Conference we have launched a Literature stand to allow the participants discover and buy the new AA literature

### **National Telephone**

The use of the 0820-326 883 number tends to extend and becomes generalize.

The different regions are winding wise organized to fill in the national telephone nightshift. Concerning the daytime service, there is in Paris a committee open 7 to 7. However each region is free to organize locally its own daytime service.

### **Internet & Websites**

The official AA France site is: [www.alcooliques-anonymes.fr](http://www.alcooliques-anonymes.fr)

Another official Web AA France site (inside Web AA site) is devoted to AA members, there we can find the reports of the different meetings of the committees and various documents for AA members.

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

There is a third official website devoted to the Congress.

The new AA France's email is: [bsg@aafrance.fr](mailto:bsg@aafrance.fr)

### **Structure & General Policy**

Since the conference of 2008 we adopted the new administrative organization: "The Union of Alcoholics Anonymous France", with new status consists of associations of services. Now the status consists of associations of services. Now most of the groups and regions have join has the new organization. Nothing changes in our internal and spiritual

functioning, based on our program which includes the Steps, the Traditions, the Concepts and the Service Manual. The structure & general policy office thinking at this moment about the opportunity to reduce the number of delegate for theses raisons: reduce the cost of our conference and redefine the distribution of the delegates by region for a better one representativeness

### **Health**

We develop and maintain the presence of AA in structure of care. Informing all the healthcare professionals of the existence of AA, and bring them good knowledge of our movement. We are at present in the meetings of the national institutions of Health, and participate in quite other regional or national actions. We inform about the actions in service of care in the hospital environment as: emergency services, Gynecology, etc. We are at present involved in the National Congress by the holding of stands and meetings. This office resumes (reprend) a part of the activity of the business and social workers office this year

### **Justice**

The office justice continue her actions in "closed environment" (prison, houses of detention) and intensify her presence in "opened environment". He also resumes (reprends) a part of the activity of the business and social workers office.

### **Business & Social Workers**

For reasons of savings and lack of servant, it has decided to reorganize this service. The health and the justice offices are going to divide up the actions which led this office.

### **Media**

The main part of the activities of the service position concerns the relations with all the journalists: press, TV, Internet, AND RADIO. We answer all their requests such as: Information, sharing, participation in forums. We suggest them speaking about the association and publishing articles on our existence and our role in the transmission of the message to the alcoholics. The National Office organizes meetings with the officers' media of regions to help them to set up relationships with the regional media.

On the occasion of AA France's Fiftieth anniversary the office realized a movie ON THE beginning of AA in France with testimonies OF PIONEERS, made a brochure "50 years of hope and actions "AND a statistical study on the number of friends in France.

### **European Delegate**

Further to the ESM 2007, the French Conference decided to invite every year a European delegate from another country to our French Conference. This year James from Belgium participated to our

Conference, his presence, his experience and his sharing WAS particularly appreciated.

### **World Delegate**

Belgium, France and Switzerland are gathered at the world level "European French-speaking EUROPE" and have two world service delegates: a French delegate, and alternately (every 4 years) a Belgian or Swiss delegate. At present France has delegate.

### **Congress**

The 50th Congress was held in Paris in November, 2010 under the subject: "50 years of hope and actions ". It was a great experience. It was a very beautiful experience. We welcomed 1700 friends during the congress. A Round Table gathered hundred of healthcare professionals, and the media widely broadcasted this information. We were very afraid because the rent of the room, as Paris was very important, but the result was very positive, beyond our expectations.

## **GERMANY**

### **General Structure**

A.A. Germany is a part of the unified structure of A.A.-German-speaking countries (GSAA).

The ten Intergroups of Germany and the Intergroup of Austria und South Tyrol are bound together by the legal entity of the "AA-Interest-Association e.V." which is registered Association for public welfare according to the German Civil Law. The General Service Office (GSO) and thereby the official seat of GSAA is located in Dingolfing/Bavaria since the end of November 22007. The Intergroups are based on a different number of Regional Groups. The Regional Service Meetings are hold 4-13 and the Intergroup Service Meetings 3-4 times a year.

In this year the first steps are done, to change the structure on the basis of the Structure U.S./Canada.

### **Number of Groups**

At the moment there are around 2.850 groups registered at the GSO in Dingolfing. In Germany there are about 2.500. At around 100 of them are located at correctional facilities. A.A.-contact-offices exist in about 40 larger cities in Germany.

### **General Service Conference**

The General Service Conference (GSC) of the GSAA is composed of 72 delegates coming from the 12 Intergroups, the 30 members of the General Service Board (GSB), the ESM- and WSM delegates and guests who had been invites by the Conference Team.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> GSC was dedicates to the motto "Sponsorship is our responsibility". Motto of the 32<sup>nd</sup> GSC "Courage to change things".

### **General Service Board**

According to the Service Manual the General Service Board consists of up to 30 members. The Speaker of the Board, the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the "AA-Interest-Association E.V." the General Manager and the Secretary of the GSO, up to four Class-A-Trustees beside the Chairperson of the Association who always needs to be a non-alcoholic trustee, 12 Class-B-Trustees elected by the 12 Intergroups, four Referees for Finances, Public Information, Literature, Internet/New Media, the Editor of the AA-D.A.C.H-Magazine and the Speaker of the editorial staff, the European- and World-Service-Meeting delegates and the Chairperson of the GSC-Team.

The last Service Meetings have shown, that it will be necessary, to change the structure in Germany. There are a lot of Problems. One of them is the illness of the General Manager since the beginning of 2011.

### **Conventions**

In 2011 the GSAA Convention took place at Karlsruhe in Germany. It was a very harmonious, loving and successful event. About 2500 AA members

attended plus about 900 Alanon and Alateens. The Theme was "Alcoholism is a family disease".

The next Convention in 2012 will take place in Oldenburg. It is the 5<sup>th</sup> Convention in this town in the north of Germany.

Finance

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

The financial situation of AA in Germany seems to be stable but still there are some groups that don't pass the money on.

### **Services**

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

### **Literature**

The situation of monthly magazine "A.A.-D.A.C.H" is the same than the last years. It is necessary to motivate more members to write for it about their experiences in A.A.

The quarterly communication paper "AA-Intern-422" is more than before used as a forum of critical appreciating remarks on the different controversial matters within the GSAA; this is a good tool for open discussions. The literature team of GSAA is working now to translate the A.A. Service Manual U.S./Canada and some brochures for young people in AA.

### **Internet**

The Internet is a very popular way of approaching A.S. The Website of GSAA [www.anonyme-alholiker.de](http://www.anonyme-alholiker.de) receives more and more people and is regularly updated.

## **GREAT BRITAIN**

### **Groups Intergroups and Regional Assemblies**

At present we have 4,699 registered Groups in Great Britain (GB), 473 in English speaking Continental Europe and 4,226 in England, Scotland and Wales. We have 119 Intergroups and 16 Regional Assemblies of which 9 are in England, 5 in Scotland, and 1 each in Wales and Continental European Region.

### **General Service Conference**

We had our Forty Sixth General Service Conference in April this year, the theme was Gratitude in Action. The Chair, elected at the end of Conference last year, was from our North East Region. Those attending:

95 Delegates from the 16 Regions

20 General Service Board members

10 observers from the following countries, Belgium (Flemish Speaking) Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic and two delegates from USA.

6 members of staff from our Service Office

A lot of the work at Conference is done in Committees which discuss questions sent in by members of the GB Fellowship. The responses from the 6 Committees are then voted on by the whole Conference. A two thirds majority in favour makes the decision binding on the General Service Board to take action, a simple majority is a recommendation.

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

GSO in York provides the links between Groups, Intergroups, Regions, the General Service Board and the General Service Conference while acting as the European Service Centre. GSO responds to enquiries worldwide, co-operating with service structures in other countries for mutual benefit. The staff of GSO and the two satellite offices (Northern in Glasgow, Scotland and Southern in London) provide services that maintain these communication links.

### **General Service Board**

Our General Service Board at present consists of 13 out of a possible 16 Alcoholic Trustees, one from each of our 16 Regions. We currently have 4 Non-Alcoholic Trustees (NATs). Our Executive Committee consists of Chair, Vice Chair, Honorary Treasurer and General Secretary. The General Secretary is also General Secretary of the General Service Office in York and our Northern and Southern Service Offices. We hold 4 full Board Meetings a year plus an annual workshop in July. At the workshop we look at how effectively the Board is serving the Fellowship of Great Britain as a whole.

### **Sponsorship**

We sent two delegates to the World Service Meeting in October 2010. We continue to sponsor the Sub-Sahara African Service Meetings in South



Africa equally with the USA/Canada. Our Chair of the Board and General Secretary attended the meeting in June 2011 to share the experience of AAGB. We also provided the accommodation for observers to our Conference.

### **Finance**

At the time of writing, contributions from the Fellowship have risen. The Honorary Treasurer held a meeting in York at the end of last year with the Regional Treasurers. The message was communicated throughout AAGB that GSO and the GSB were doing everything they could to cut costs. GSO review expenditure including the cost of printing literature, on a regular basis. Sub Committees of the GSB had reduced expenses by holding telephone conference meetings and reviewing numbers serving on the committees. In order to continue to provide a high level of service to the Fellowship and carry our message of recovery effectively, more incoming funds were needed. The Fellowship response has been an increase in contributions.

### **AA Service News (AASN), Share and Roundabout**

AASN is our service magazine which provides a forum for sharing good practice and experience. Articles are welcomed from all levels within the Fellowship. Sub-committees publish their Terms of Reference in the magazine and the outcomes of committee discussions at Conference appear in the summer edition. The magazine has recently been re-designed which has been well received within the Fellowship. All registered groups receive 3 copies.

Share and Roundabout are our 'meeting between meetings' magazines which contain personal shares and useful information for the AA member. Roundabout is the Scottish magazine and Share is for members south of the border.

### **Archives**

Archives now have a presence on the website and a project on group histories being undertaken is nearing completion. Conference requested a book on the history of the service structure of AAGB and the first draft of this has been sent to the Literature Committee for proof reading and submission to Conference for approval.

### **Armed Services**

One of the roles of the Armed Services Sub Committee has been to raise the profile of this service discipline. It has been progressively successful with a growing number of Regional and Intergroup Liaison Officer posts now being filled. AA displays and presentations continue to take place at Armed Services establishments and literature is sent out on request.

### **Electronic Communications (The Web)**

AAGB's new website has been launched and continues to be developed to meet our needs. The old website had grown 'organically' and the transition has taken a lot of hard work and discussion with the service provider. There has been much debate amongst the Fellowship and useful feedback has been provided. The new design and interface are now more attractive and readily accessible which has resulted in a general raising of the profile via search engine optimisation, thus increasing the opportunity of carrying the message.

### **Employment**

The Fellowship continues to be represented at Conferences and Exhibitions. Presentations are given when requested to employers – one notable success being an invitation by the company responsible for Health and Safety at the Olympic site in Stratford, London. Employment Liaison Officers work with Trade Unions, the Trade Union Congress, the Federation of Small Businesses, pharmaceutical companies and employment agencies.

### **Health**

Amongst the aims identified by the Health sub-committee and the Regional Health Liaison Officers last year were:

To exploit the potential of the new AA website

To offer our availability to present at conferences dealing with alcohol issues

To develop links with the Department of Health

We continue to work for a better understanding of what we can offer at government level. However, the most important health liaison work is carried out at a local level often by knocking on doors and building personal relationships with health practitioners.

### **Literature**

The Literature Committee reviews and updates literature on a regular basis as well as responding to the decisions of Conference. At Conference 2011 several pieces of updated literature were approved as well as new leaflets explaining the role and function of Conference and how to submit a question to Conference, both of which had been asked for by Conference 2010. Conference 2011 recommended that a 'Hints and Suggestions' pamphlet be put together to give guidance to members using social networking sites.

### **National Conventions**

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

## **Prisons**

AAGB holds meetings in prisons in England, Scotland and Wales through the work of Region and Intergroup Liaison officers working with local members. We also have a Prison Postal Service. GSO holds a database of members willing to correspond with prisoners. The Board Trustee with responsibility for Prisons liaises with the Prison Service at senior level to discuss issues around access to prisons.

## **Probation/Criminal Justice Service**

Working with the Probation service in England and Wales and the Criminal Justice Service in Scotland, local liaison officers carry the message supported by the sub-committee which produces appropriate literature and maintains a presence on the website.

## **Public Information (PI)**

The focus in recent years has been on encouraging individual group members to get involved in PI work. During the Government's National Alcohol Awareness Week posters are displayed throughout the country and libraries and other public places display copies of AA books, leaflet and posters.

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

## **Telephones**

Our stated objective is to maintain a telephone system which enables the suffering alcoholic access to a local contact. On the mainland we have a national telephone number but local numbers are used in areas where this is not practical. We continually review the costs and the effectiveness of the service.

## **GREENLAND**

### **Literature**

There is very limited AA material in Greenland written in Greenlandic. Luckily, most Greenlanders understand, most are fluent, in Danish and thereby have access to relatively extensive materials in Danish. However, there are a number of unofficial translations of AA literature. A lot more work is needed to be done in that matter.

### **Finance**

Groups support themselves financially. However, in many towns meeting accommodations are provided by public authorities or by the Greenlandic Church. Most groups do not have financial capacity to have their own house.

### **Number of Groups**

To my personal knowledge there are groups in most Greenlandic towns (There are 18 towns in Greenland) and to certain extend in smaller communities. So, 30 at very most.

### **General structure**

Groups operate independent of each other since Greenlandic towns are so far from each other and only transportation means are boats and airplanes. Exchange of information is mostly informal through acquaintances.

### **Internet**

AA Greenland has got its own web pages (currently down for some reason). Different materials, both in Greenlandic and Danish, can be downloaded from the page.

### **International relations**

AA Greenland has relatively close cooperation with AA Denmark. And to my knowledge, AA International has given financial assistance for translation of 12 Steps and 12 Traditions

### **Services**

Since there are only few major hospitals and prisons in Greenland, any service is informal based on personal interest. However, in Qaqortoq, where I am from, group has been contacted by prison authorities to confirm meeting hours etc.

## **ICELAND**

### **Structure**

There are over 300 Icelandic AA meetings held in Iceland every week and the population are only 300 thousand. It refers to Reykjavik and surroundings and all other places around Iceland. All alcoholics are welcome to any AA meeting whatever language they speak.

There are also several English speaking meetings held in Reykjavik. We have also once a week Russian and Deutsch meeting in Reykjavik.

The last years there has been more stability in the associations, more peace and unity has come to A.A. in Iceland. After big growth for many years, we noticed more and more of young people joining the A.A. and we can easily see two or three generations now in A.A.. This change calls for different approaches. Voluntary A.A. takes meetings to hospitals, treatment facilities and prisons.

### **Intergroups**

It's new but some A.A. members use the internet to have communications but that's every members responsibility to do so but not through the A.A. website. Some A.A. member USES the skype or other things on internet (Facebook for example).

### **Areas or Regions**

We have been encouraging people to create regional committees in the country. Two A.A. members went to Egilsstaðir to try to establish a regional committee and it's still in progress. The problem is to go around the regions of Iceland, especially in the winter it is difficult due to incapacitation and the distance is long for our measure based on the road. This network would be useful and we're working on it. We have a function web members in the General Service Board oversees.

### **General Service Board**

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

### **General Service Office**

The National Service Office is based in Reykjavík and has a staff of one A.A. member as full-timer. Trustees from the National Service Board also do some voluntary work at the office. The office has been 90% financed by the A.A. groups and 10% by the publishing committee, but for the last four years it has been financed 100% by the A.A. groups. The office is

open all weekdays from 11am to 4pm and there is a volunteers-operated 24-hour emergency telephone service.

### **Finances**

Contributions from A.A. groups covered the cost to 100% and we retain one year's expenditure. It has been that way for the last four years. Because of financial crisis which has hit the country very hard, we expect that some changes may occur, therefore we are ready to meet less contributions and welcome more people that are in need, or desperate because of the situation.

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

Now we use a new service manual for Iceland.

### **Conference & Conventions**

Information on Telephone Service, Websites, Literature – new or reworked, other disciplines where applicable.

The National AA office in Iceland is at Tjarnagata 20, open on working days from 11-12 and 13-16.

Tel +354 551 2010 and e-mail [aa@aa.is](mailto:aa@aa.is)

At this time we only have an Icelandic version, we are currently working on the English version.

Literature-new or reworked, other disciplines where applicable.

## **IRELAND**

## **Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland**

Keeping the bottle away from the Alcoholic was the only alcohol treatment in Ireland until the arrival of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1946. It was only through AA and its revolutionary programme of recovery that the way was opened to any real hope for the alcoholic. AA dispelled the illusion that alcoholism was curable, or that an alcoholic could be kept away from a relapse by a long period of confinement. The AA programme showed that the right approach to the disease of alcoholism was to help keep the alcoholic away from the bottle by his own consent. AA showed that alcoholism was a spiritual and mental disease, as well as a physical one. The medical profession in Ireland was slow to accept the AA programme as a method of recovery and it was well into the 1950s before the programme was recognised as a legitimate means to help recovery from alcoholism. Until the arrival of AA, chronic alcoholics had been kept in psychiatric hospitals or private hospitals for extended periods in the vain hope that the urge to drink would somehow disappear. In spite of almost complete failure down the years, this was the only known treatment for alcoholism.

In 1946, Conor F., an Irish emigrant and a recovering alcoholic himself, came home on holiday. He immediately saw the need for AA in Ireland and, encouraged by his wife, became determined to start a group before returning to the United States. One morning, at breakfast in his hotel, he struck up a conversation with a lady called Eva Jennings, who directed him to St Patrick's Psychiatric Hospital to Dr. Moore who had heard of AA through the Readers Digest. Dr. Moore had a patient called Richard P., who was a chronic alcoholic. Moore said that if Conor could help Richard, then he would believe in the AA programme "100%". Under escort, Richard travelled to Conor's hotel and the two men immediately recognised their common problem. This is acknowledged as the first AA meeting in Ireland. Richard was soon released from hospital, and they gathered four or five other inveterate drinkers and met in the home of one of them. Soon after, they held the first Public AA Meeting in Ireland. The Irish Countrywomen's Association lent them space in the "Country Shop" in Dublin and meetings continued to be held there until the shop closed in 1978.

## **Public Information**

AA in Ireland has always taken a keen interest in public information and is very active in getting the AA message 'out there'. There are regular PI meetings held throughout the country and requests from outside organisations and schools etc. are always met with enthusiasm.

During the last year there have been advertisements taken in the following publications: Garda (Police) Review, Online Phone Book, An Siochain Magazine, and phone book entries, in the Northern Ireland Chemist and Medical Review and the Belfast Telegraph.

As result of a press release on our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary there was an editorial published in the Newsletter and Agenda NI and in the Belfast Telegraph. We have also had numerous radio interviews during the year. The PI committees continue to publicize the AA message, while explaining what AA does and does not do.

We are at present updating the AA website with better public information in mind and this work will soon be completed.

In addition, a new Public Information DVD is in production. This will be approximately 15 minutes long and will include 'sound bites' suitable for TV or online viewing. This will be available in the autumn.

### **Sponsorship**

Many new members do not have any sponsor, often not even being aware of what sponsorship is and how to avail of it. We, as members, are surely to blame for this and it is our responsibility to rectify this problem. There is also some ongoing concern about the difficulty of getting new members involved in service and we are currently looking at ways to improve service participation. It is hoped that a greater effort will be made by those already in service to sponsor new members into service by emphasising the benefits of service to individual recovery. This, in my opinion, is the responsibility of individual groups and their members, bearing in mind that each group is autonomous.

### **Finance**

There is a fall in tabletop contributions within the Fellowship in Ireland at the present moment. This could be due to the recession, and possibly to groups holding cash unnecessarily and having too high a prudent reserve. At one Intergroup (Region) a committee has been formed to investigate ways to maximise value for money, looking to our service providers etc. for savings. If contributions continue to drop we are prepared to look at our ongoing financial situation.

It has been the practice since the mid 1990s to make an annual contribution to the International Literature Fund and the European Service Fund. In 2010, €75,000 and €10,000 respectively were contributed to the ILF and ESF. If the present trend in tabletop contributions continues, these contributions will have to be revisited as the accounts indicate a deficit of €54,848 based on the income for 2010. Although shown in our accounts for 2010, these contributions to the ILF and ESF were monies available in our surplus fund from previous years and did not cause a debit situation in the overall finances.

### **Literature**



Sales of literature have dropped slightly but this is not seen as a cause for concern. In the twelve months ended October 31, 2010 sales were €107,010 compared with €118,739 for the previous twelve months. Sales of the Road Back, our meeting in print, have increased from €6350 to €7340 this year.

### **AA and Electronic Communications**

With help from AA Guidelines and from the General Service Office, New York, the Board is looking into the whole area of electronic communications. The purpose of this is to improve our communications generally and to provide practical help for AA members, Groups and Intergroups who wish to use electronic communications in their service work. The guidelines are not intended to be a technical manual but rather to outline the broad picture for members in using these communication methods. It includes experience on using email and producing web sites. There is also information available on the web site [www.aaservice.org.uk](http://www.aaservice.org.uk).

It was said at the WSM in Mexico city that the Internet was the way forward for the younger members, bearing in mind that Tradition Twelve be maintained at all times. We must also remember that when we access the Internet from our own computers we should be concerned about the security and anonymity of other members, particularly their email addresses and web sites. There are hackers who can access confidential information on the Internet. It was reported that all members of the WSM in Mexico had their email addresses accessed by hackers and spammers from the Philippines following the distribution of a chain mail prayer. It is so important that we be aware of these possible threats. It would be wise to check out [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com) before engaging or sending emails to multiple fellowship recipients.

Before finishing, we would like to express our deep gratitude to the European Committee for giving us the opportunity to be part of this important occasion, which represents no less than the group conscience of Europe, and for giving us the benefit of your experience, strength and hope in carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous the still-suffering alcoholic, wherever he or she may be found. AA in Ireland continues to grow and deliver the message of hope. With our representatives, our service volunteers, our Board and all our members, we are confident that the AA message will continue to be carried to those who need it and that the future of our fellowship is in good hands. Thank you all for helping us to keep each other sober. We close now with gratitude in our hearts.

We have included a short excerpt from chapter 12, 'A Vision for You', as a reminder of what our Fellowship is about.

*"For most normal folks, drinking means conviviality, companionship and colourful imagination. It means release from care, boredom and worry. It is joyous intimacy with friends and the feeling that life is good. But not so with us in those last days of heavy drinking. The old pleasures were gone. They were but memories. Never could we recapture the great moments of the past. There was an incessant yearning to enjoy life as we once did and a heart breaking obsession that some new miracle of control would enable us to do it. There was always one more attempt – and one more failure.*

*The less people tolerated us, the more we withdrew from society, from life itself. As we become subjects of King Alcohol, shivering denizens of this mad realm, the chilling vapour that is loneliness settled down. It thickened, ever becoming blacker. Some of us sought out sordid places, hoping to find understanding, companionship and approval. Momentarily we did – then would come oblivion and the awful awakening to face the hideous Four Horsemen – Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair. Unhappy drinkers who read this page will understand".*

## **ITALY**

### **General Structure**

A.A. Italy, established in 1972, has in 2011 an estimated number of 460 Groups, which is quite the same as the last years: 60% are located in the North, 30% in the Centre, and a 10% in the South.

A.A. in Italy is composed of 19 areas, which correspond to our regions. Each Area can elect up to a maximum of 3 delegates to the Conference. Each Area includes from 3 to 10 zones (districts) which may include about 5 - 15 Groups each.

Presently the GSB is composed of twelve members, four of which are the macro-regions trustees (2 for the Northern, 1 FOR CENTRAL AND 1 for Southern), FIVE trustees are responsible for the committees: Internal, External, Literature, Administrative and International; ONE is the National Secretary and two ARE NON-alcoholics trustees (Class A).

### **The Internal Committee**

The Committee is responsible for the Conference, the National Convention, the Southern Convention, the Service Seminars, the meeting of the trustees with the Area Coordinators in order to take note of the real needs of individual areas.

It has also tried to solve the two problems of internal telephony, the debt of approximately 35,000.00 euros with Telecom and the situation of individual servants' telephone cards with a software management control of individual cards. The results were: maximum control of the individual phone cards and full guarantee on any possible damage or loss (as in the past) and lower operating costs. It is also foreseen the realisation of a phone book of the entire internal network of the fellowship.

National telephone Helpline was moved from personal management at GSO to a mechanized system working 24 hours to 24 hours, to reduce costs and cope with the lack of servants.

The new procedure came into operation since February 1, 2011 will improve this service, involving all our Association and in particular the areas which will be called to active cooperation.

The Committee worked to improve the forwarding of mail and packages, to reorganise the General Service Office and update the data base.

The "Notiziario" (Service News) as of November 2010 became a monthly and is emailed to all groups.

A national calendar of meetings (Convention, Seminars, Assemblies, Birthdays etc...) has been prepared.

The General Service Board, on the proposal of the Internal Committee, shall constitute a working group to review the Service Manual and scheduled a special session of the 2012 AA Italy Conference to approve the changes to the Manual.

### **The External Committee and P.I.**

It makes sure that A.A. is present on the media (radio / TV, national newspapers, weekly and monthly, nationally and locally). The media showed great interest in alcoholism, especially of youth and of women. There are good relations and cooperation with all major religious institutions existing in Italy and also with THE NATIONAL Institute of Health and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The main activities are:

- to promote knowledge of and consultation of the Committee by the areas and groups;
- to support the establishment of the External Committees in the Areas;
- to create a data base of contacts with the outside world with the contribution of areas;
- to liaise with the media through the creation of press conferences to be held in conjunction with special occasions PI;
- to provide for and update the section of the website of AA Italy dedicated to P.I.
- to implement the Guidelines out dimensioned to reality. of A.A. Italy and available on the website A.A. Outside in the section reserved for the Committee;
- Prepare letters of the Association, available online at AA Outside in the section reserved

for the Committee;

We have sponsored two DVDs for P.I., one for use by AA and the other for external relationship and have prepared a new poster and a brochure at low-cost for PI.

We found that the general public still has little knowledge of what AA does. In the future, the Committee intends to improve external relations with existing and new sectors: the labour market (unions, companies, etc ...) - associations of the medical world (psychologists, psychiatrists, etc. ...) and social world (social workers, community treatment, etc ...), as well as State administrations (the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministries of Interior and Justice to establish relationships with the judiciary and penal institutions), allowing us to create the best conditions to convey the message by promoting AA for what it actually does, and presenting it with a unique image across the country.

### **Correctional facilities**

Since many years A.A. members are sponsoring Groups inside Correctional facilities. The prisons have their own rules that we must respect, as well as trying to stay within the limits of our Traditions.

Therefore it will be important to arrange some meetings with the A.A. doing service in prisons to share the different experiences and to start to build a national committee dedicated to this service. During next years the "Guidelines for services in the Correctional Facilities" will be issued.

### **Finance**

During 2010 there was a decrease in contributions from groups, perhaps due to the misconception that having succeeded to pay almost all debts, we had no need for contributions.

In 2011 we have purchased a new accounting program, much simpler, which should allow us to do the job more quickly. A better arrangement of the offices should be considered.

The old debt with Telecom, due to the difficult economic situation caused by the huge theft, has been paid off. From January 2010 Areas are charged 100% for their cards traffic covered. We also asked those who have an excessive use the phone AA, 100% of the invoiced expenses, but here things are complicated, because if some AA had the willingness to pay the debt, other friends have not shown any willingness to pay.

We believe it is important to reconstruct the prudent reserve which should serve to ensure the functioning of the Association for a whole year.

### **Literature**

The Fundamental Objectives of the Committee are:

Realization of a different and more challenging relationship between AA members and our literature; better sharing of knowledge and AA program; Areas of Involvement in Literature selling.

Furthermore the Committee has decided to focus more on the sponsorship of texts in order to discounts on higher sales. In this sense we modified our participation to the Convention, using this time to raise awareness of important texts of our literature; The Literature desk began to be more a point of encounter between alcoholics to deepen the knowledge of the literature than a store where you buy and sell.

We have prepared two DVDs to get the Service Manual and Literature and a text on sponsorship has been made.

Areas have been involved in the dissemination and sale of Literature.

We tried to talk with the Servants of the Areas and Zones, to emphasize the spiritual importance of the creation of a representative in the individual groups of Literature, The number of these servants of the Group is significantly increasing. - We have provided aid to the areas for the realization of seminars, participation, directly and this has proved a very effective tool for the sponsorship of Literature. The regional seminars are also, we believe, an important way to provide better and continuous information.

### **Internet and Web site**

The main issues of AA Italy website ([www.alcolisti-anonimi.it](http://www.alcolisti-anonimi.it)) are: The Big Book online, sponsorship and the Catalogue of literature, "Where to find a meeting" and the list of Groups, a multimedia archive of Public Information, the AA video spot, links to AA Fellowships in the world, AA Magazine "Together" and information on the Italian convention.

It is continuously updated, adding new sections and downloadable documents. The goal is to make the site more interactive with those who visit, and make downloadable online for free the most immediate consultation to find groups and meetings.

### **Conclusions**

The National Convention of Rimini (16th to 18th September 2011) has as its topic "The Group".

The topic of the XXVII CONFERENCE TO be held IN APRIL 2012 in Rimini will be "UNITY, Recovery and Service in the Group".

## **LATVIA**

Latvia is the country near Baltic Sea, our neighbours are Lithuania, Estonia and Russia. So the development of AA in Latvia as like as in neighbour countries started when Soviet Union broke down. First AA meeting took place in November 1988, so this year AA Latvia celebrates his 23th anniversary.

### **Structure**

Today we have about 40 AA groups in Latvia. Some groups are large and contain 20 and more members, especially in capital Riga. But there are also small groups with 3 to 10 members. Some groups in small towns or villages experience difficulties with anonymity in local society, impossibility to attract more than 2 alcoholics willing to restore sanity etc.

Due to relatively small number of inhabitants of the state and not large amount of groups we haven't officially formed a region or intergroup system. However, it happens in unofficial and natural way: older and bigger groups help newer and smaller. For example, if a new group in small village have only some members, than alcoholics from neighbour city are attending these meetings on relatively regular basis to carry a message and share experience.

We have three languages in AA Latvia. There is 1 English speaking group in Riga, some groups holding meetings in Russian, and the biggest number are Latvian speaking. There are also some bilingual Latvian – Russian groups.

### **General Service Board and General Service Office**

General Service Board is elected by General Service Conference. Members of the Board form committees to work in several directions, but the primary purpose is to carry a message about possibility to stop drinking. Main directions are: literature (translations, book orderings from New York and Moscow, editing and printing), AA newspaper in Latvian and Russian, organisation of AA Anniversary in November and summer camp in August, planning of AA finances and budget, contacts with society and collaboration with professionals.

We have an infrastructure for Service Office (office room, office equipment) and a head of Office who works on the service basis, without salary. This year we are happy that our Office Manager is ex-head of Service Board, with excellent understanding of Twelve Traditions and situation in Latvian AA. However, the head of the Office isn't working alone, there are members of the Service Board and AA members, who also do their service work to ensure functions of the Office (e.g. informative telephone line 24/7, web site [aa@aa.org.lv](mailto:aa@aa.org.lv))

## **Finances**

Through the world financial crisis our fellowship learnt to minimize expenses where possible and to hold in respect every smallest offering devoted for common purpose.

Our income consists of group offerings, individual offerings, „pluses” from anniversary celebrations and a sale of books. Members of Latvian fellowship don't enjoy an idea of events with payment (e.g. „AA dances with entry price”) or paid services (e.g. widespread selling of souvenirs with AA symbols). They say: “AA is not a business. No one have to pay about being a member of AA”. Maybe this aspect of local mode of thinking isn't so good for financial situation in Latvian AA.

This year we had one “special financial event” – first time summer camp was profitable.

Our main expenses are: Office rent, professional book-keeping, printing, purchasing and translation of literature.

## **Conference and Conventions**

This year it was decided to transform a system of Service Conference work. Previous year's conferences were held twice a year, one day each time. This year delegates met only once, but for two days intensive work, out of city. Work was carefully organized by Service Board, meetings were held not only all together but also in committees. After this widespread opinion was formed, that two days work was a) more intensive and productive, b) more inspiring and emotionally uplifting.

## **Information on Telephone Service, Website, and Literature**

Our telephone service is working well thanks to AA members who take responsibility on the organisation of the process and answering to calls. Website needs “reforms” in order to be better structured and more informative. Work with literature is in progress. Now we have our first AA book printed in Latvia: “Came to Believe”. “12 and 12”, “Alcoholics Anonymous”, “Living Sober” and brochures has been bought from New York.

## **This year “plus” in AA Latvia**

The institute of sponsoring among AA members has become more and more widespread. Some years ago it was something exclusive to have or to be sponsor. Now it is nearly “standard”.

## **This year “minus” in AA Latvia**

There has been no growth in the number of AA groups. Through sponsoring we get a lot of quality in sobriety. But we need more quantity – through our primary purpose and 12<sup>th</sup> Step.



## **LITHUANIA**

### **Structure**

The first AA meeting was held in Lithuania in June 1988. This year we celebrated our 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary. There are totally 123 AA groups operating in Lithuania and 11 Lithuanian groups in England, Ireland, Sweden and USA now. From the Lithuanian groups 7 of them meet in Russian language and 1 meets in English. We also have 6 prison groups. Lithuania is divided into 7 regions. Each has its own service structure. Our General Service Board consists of 7 trustees: one from each region, the chairman of the Board of Trustees and our office manager. All of them have the vote.

In spring of 2009 Lithuanian Alcoholics Anonymous Fellowship as a legal unit was reregistered into Lithuanian Alcoholics Anonymous Service Board of Trustees (LAAT Patikėtinių Taryba). This was done with the purpose that legal registration would correspond with the fundamental imperatives of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tradition of AA and the essential principles of anonymity and membership.

### **Service**

The first new-format Conference was held in autumn of 2008. Conference is once a year and it consists of our Board of Trustees, 5 delegates from each region, our ESM and WSM delegates plus a servant from a Service Office. Everyone has the vote. The Conference work is divided into Committees (Finance, Internal, Public Information and Literature/Publishing). They prepare recommendations for the Board of Trustees sharing the weight of responsibility enabling to work out decisions brought up by groups a year ago. During these Conferences we vote on issues relative to Lithuanian AA as a whole. We also choose topics of discussion based on most often received questions to General Service Office. Recent topics have been how to prevent the watering down of our Programs principles. Based on a feed back during the following Conference most groups report a positive effect from suggestions shared during the Service Conference.

Our General Service Office has moved from our capital Vilnius in 2009 and now it is located in small town Birštonas. We maintain the General Service Office with two paid employees - our office manager and our accountant.

### **Finance**

There are no significant changes in this sector. 1/3 of all the expenditure necessary for keeping the office up comes from sale of the books. The rest of the funding comes from the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition. The groups' donations to the regions increased obviously due to stronger activities of the groups. After the launch of new format conference it took a very important place in the Service Structure.

**Literature**

In spring of 2009 the Board of Trustees revived publishing the issue "Aušra" which had been stopped in 2003 and today we still publish it. In "Aušra" members share their service experience with all the AAs in Lithuania. Meanwhile, it is published an additional 500 copies.

We have 6 books and 14 brochures translated into Lithuanian. Some of our early translations have been retranslated or edited to improve their quality. Our Big Book is also available on C.D. by the voice imparted. Service Reference Book was published in 2008.

I'm happy to announce that one more book - "AA Comes of Age" - is now translated.

## **MALTA**

Malta with a population of 406, 771 in Year 2010 is approximately 457 square kilometres. The state is comprised of 3 islands which are in descending order; Malta (approximately 390 square kilometres), Gozo and Comino. The Islands are located some 290 kilometres north of the African Continent and about 100 kilometres from Sicily. The largest city is the capital of Valletta. This was defined by Sir Walter Scott as a City 'built by gentlemen for gentlemen'. The official languages are Maltese and English, the latter being the official business language.

### **Structure**

Our supporting framework is our sobriety as a whole and we are striving for the optimum we can give to ourselves and to other suffering alcoholics. Meeting friends with the same malady of alcoholism is the essential strata of our recovery. We hold meetings every day extended throughout Malta. We have also a bilingual open meeting on Saturday for which I serve as secretary. The attendance, as in all meetings is good and altogether we have 17 meetings, 3 of which are held in our sister island of Gozo.

### **GSB and the Service Office**

We have recently elected a new G.S.O comprising of five members and we are pleased to say this is really a new board because it was extremely difficult to find new fellows which were willing to offer service in this capacity. It is not because our fellows do not want to step up for service but are somewhat afraid that they would not be suitable for that particular service. As a matter of fact, when manual work is called for, they are more than happy to give their utmost. Through these members whose service is invaluable, our Valletta Head Office has been transformed into a decent building quaint and rustic in design. They also go out of their way to welcome new members and organize meetings and social events. The recent renovation of our Valletta Rooms successfully initiated a one day work shop/seminar. On a final note, we have decided that the committee will comprise a chairman, secretary, cashier, a librarian and another member doing ancillary work. This Committee will do service for two years.

### **Finance**

Every group is autonomous in finances but we keep financial data at the head office always with the pecuniary help of all the secretaries in the groups. We have always paid our creditors promptly and we believe that we will continue in this trend. Obviously the more we have the better for Malta A.A, so as to invest in literature, printing and other things that go with the attraction of our fellowship in different spheres and circles. We organize socials in local hotels where we hold an open meeting and then socialize through a culinary event.

## **Conventions**

We are pleased to announce the 6<sup>th</sup> international convention which will be held at the Golden Tulip - Vivaldi Hotel - St. Julians from the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2011. This was a success last year and it was quite interesting to meet fellows from other countries mingling with our fellowship locally. It was well organized with all those who attended praising the work of the Maltese. We hope to continue in this surface of solid structure.

## **Literature**

The big book has now translated into the Maltese language whilst the Twelve and Twelve and Daily Reflections are up for approval. These will be of beneficial support to the Maltese, who prefer the Maltese language for reading.

## **Public Information**

We have also strived to share our message with local councils, schools, band clubs and other social strata, but we were slightly disappointed that the response was quite anaemic. We continue to strive and not lose hope as when we mention alcohol, they are still slightly sceptical. We consider it important to attend radio and television shows without divulging our identity as members of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is generally done through characterizations. This has been done but not as frequently as we would have wished mainly because we are not asked to take part by these local stations.

## **Communications**

Our telephone help line offers service on 24 hours a day basis. We give this service a priority to help more members who are in need of help but we think that people in need do not use this service as much as we would like them to. We now have a website which in this day and age is critical to reach out to those who want to join the fellowship. It was created very professionally by a qualified person and there is all the necessary data that one needs. It is really self-explanatory and very simple since our Tradition Three explicitly states that we accept everyone in our fellowship if he/she has a desire to stop drinking.

## **General**

All meetings are conducted by a secretary and we rarely have disputes between ourselves. We think that we are passing the message to everyone who is in need or is interested and by doing service we are helping our own sobriety whilst helping others. Unity plays a very important factor in Malta A.A. The cashiers also contribute to service by their attention to finances. The fellowship will strive to work through honesty and humility to achieve its ultimate goal of enlisting other members. This we can say is on every member's agenda.

We must obviously thank all the personnel at York and thank you for the prompt assistance that you so freely give us and the New York fellows who

also attend to our difficulties and their kind cooperation given at any time. With your help and other divisions abroad, we can surely progress in the fellowship, strive for a better understanding between us and may the fellowship prosper throughout the world over.

## **NETHERLANDS**

### **General**

AA Netherlands has a present number of groups of 214 with membership of approximately 3650 people.

There are also 42 English-speaking groups and in Amsterdam there is a Polish- and a Spanish speaking group.

The English-speaking groups affiliate themselves with York. There is a good interaction between the various communities.

### **Structure**

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

In 2010 an Extraordinary General Service Conference was held in order to discuss problems as unity and an old substantial legacy. The outcome of this Extraordinary General Service Board was very satisfactory, also thanks to the help of our Dutch-speaking friends from Belgium.

The General Service Board meets every three months to carry out the decisions of the General Service Conference. The Board is composed is composed of selected members of each region: preferably the regional chairmen and coordinators of various committees and services.

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

The efficient functioning of various service functions continues to be an ongoing problem. E.g. the Adcom (preparing the agenda for the General Service Conference) had to be nominated out of members of the General Service Board due to lack of volunteers and fulfilled its duties very successfully by the way.

For 2012 this problem seems to be solved.

## **Committees and other services.**

### **Finance**

The Finance Committee reviews the proposed budgets of all commissions, sub-commissions and services. It further advises the General Service Board on all financial matters. It is composed of one delegate per region. In 2009/2010 it carried out an extensive research and advice towards the General Service Conference about the large legacy, received by the AA Netherlands in the past and how to behave in such cases. In 2010 the budget is negative but acceptable.

### **Literature**

The Literature Committee is responsible for translating, developing and updating of all AA literature in book and pamphlets form. It insures conformity with AA's three legacies. Due to circumstance the Literature Committee only consisted of one person in the beginning of 2010, but fortunately new members applied and the Literature Committee could restart with three members.

End of 2010 a distribution of tasks has been made and some older projects were restarted like:

The Dutch Folder "Sponsorship".

The spoken version of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous".

Translation of "The Language of the Heart".

"Alcoholics Anonymous" – fourth edition with new experience stories.

The Dutch Edition of "Sober Life".

Contacts with the Dutch speaking part of Belgium.

For 2011 the above projects have been carried out with success and are ongoing.

### **Committee for Public Information**

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

There is a positive atmosphere developing between AA and a growing number of professional organizations, which are offering help in case of alcohol abuse. Many of those organizations have based their programs on the AA's 12-steps.

The Committee for Public Information have visited in March 2010 the Belgian national day of the Committee for Public Information for AA, Al-Anon and Alateen.

In November 2010 the year concluded with the national manifestation, on the occasion of 75 years AA-worldwide, taking the national Belgian day as

an example with several non-AA speakers. Both events have been considered to have proved to be very successful.

For 2011 the Committee for Public Information has applied for a budget to produce a Dutch informational film.

### **De Boei**

Despite various efforts, unfortunately the Dutch version of the “Grapevine” did not come to life again. Since April 2009 “De Boei” had to stop its activities.

### **AA Telephone Helpline**

There is a telephone number available on a twenty-four hours basis.

A new manual has been written for the new Bob-Belsystem. Also a new protocol is being studied for the volunteers, who are working for the AA-Telephone Helpline.

### **AA and the Internet**

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

Relevant information is provided for each AA-group.

A summary of the AA program is provided and links to the National Committee for Public Information is available. AA literature can be ordered via the website.

There is an updated agenda for all known coming events.

Links are provided for Al-Anon, Alateen, English-speaking AA in the Netherlands as well as to local AA-websites in the Netherlands.

An on-line AA helpline (AIA) was admitted as a separate AA group.

### **Contacts with other countries**

There is a close, traditional contact between Dutch AA and Dutch-speaking Belgian AA. This includes an exchange and representation on each country's General Service Conference. English-speaking AA flourishes in the Netherlands, including its own yearly convention.

The National Dutch-AA convention is held each year around the beginning of October.

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



## **NORWAY**

Norway is situated in the northern part of Europe. The size is about 324 000 square kilometres, with a coastline of over 21 000 km (i.e. more than half way around the world). To populate this area, we are a bit less than 5 million people, or about 14 inhabitants per square kilometre.

Although AA came to Norway as early as 1947, as the second country in Europe, we are relatively few AA members, about 2000 members in about 170 groups. The percentage of women has increased the last two decades, and now amounts to about 30%.

Even if the spirit is good in AA Norway, we still don't grow as much as we want. Compared to the other Scandinavian countries, are lagging behind.

### **General Structure**

Norway adopted our present the AA service structure in 1975. We are divided into 5 regions, with the principal purpose of nominating trustees to the General Service Board. The regions are divided into 20 districts.

The groups in each district elect one District representatives (DR) for every eight group, to represent as delegates at the annual General Service Conference, which is held in Oslo, usually in March. The DRs constitutes a two-thirds majority. Also participating are members of the General Service Board (GSB), the general manager of the General Service Office & volunteers, plus the editor of our magazine Boks 205. In addition representatives from the other Nordic countries are invited as observers.

### **The General Service Board**

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

The 3 Class A trustees are very qualified people within sociology, medical and police. They may be re-elected. We are very lucky to have them.

### **General Service Office**

The Norwegian general service office is located in Oslo. For the time being we employ one person in a 70 % position. In addition, we have a number of volunteers filling in, and the office is functioning well. From January 2010 the Service Office is allocated in the middle of Oslo, which has shown to be a good solution.

## **Finance**

The Budget for 2011 is NOK 1 870 000, approx USD 335 000. Our income is equally divided between contributions from groups and members, and sales of our literature.

Relations with other countries (including any country sponsorship)  
Norway AA cooperates with our northern neighbours. We also attend in the European Service meeting and the World Service Meeting.

## **Literature**

Sixteen books and 42 pamphlets have been translated into Norwegian, from the most relevant titles approved by the Conference. We have published new audio versions of the *Big Book* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, which are very popular. Our magazine, *Boks 205*, with a print-run of 800 copies, has maintained a very high standard and continues to be very popular among our members. In addition to this, we are now going through all the literature to follow up on revisions & new material from the GSO, and improve on our routines.

## **Internet & Websites**

In June 2008 we published our new web-site: [www.anonymealkoholikere.no](http://www.anonymealkoholikere.no) The use of many new media requires care, especially in relation to anonymity. We have therefore translated the GSO's "Guidelines – Internet" to Norwegian and a national adapted version was recommended on our Service Conference 2010.

To ensure that we use Internet as a powerful tool to reach the still suffering alcoholic, and at the same time protect our traditions, the ICT committee at the Board now lead an interdisciplinary sub-committee how to best utilize and coordinate our efforts. We also include members from one "young" group, which use the Internet very much, to join this sub-committee with their knowledge of the new media (for instance Twitter, Facebook etc.)

AA in Norway also has a national telephone service, operated by the groups on a rotation.

## **Membership survey**

In 2007 we performed our first ever proper national survey in Norway. It was performed by the other dear non-alcoholic in the board, professor of sociology, Kari Moxnes, and it has given us useful information. Separate reports have been published; e.g. "Who is the AA member", and "The consequences of drinking", followed by articles in the media. This autumn we publish a Norwegian fact file, based on information from this survey.

**Knowledge Bank**

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

**Other services**

The Intergrups around the country is doing services i.e. in treatment centres, prisons, schools and other.

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

**Miscellaneous**

The main focus in Norway now is the work we have started to review our Strategy & plans from 2001. To ensure ownership of new plans we have decided to focus on internal education this year. New district representatives and deputy representatives are offered two days workshop to be more confident in their service. In addition to that a one day seminar is being developed and offered to the members, the main topic is responsibility – understanding of service, service structure and other key factors which characterises countries that succeed with growth.

Through these actions we hope to improve on knowledge and understanding in our fellowship, and thereby achieve a better informed group consciousness.

We are also intensifying our work towards central official institutions with the help of our Class A Trustees, to make AA better known.

## **POLAND**

### **Structure**

The main purpose of the whole structure of the Fellowship of AA in Poland is the same, as that of each group AA in the world –to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholics wherever they could be and whoever they could be. As of the year 2010 the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Poland consists of about 2100 groups, about 160 of which hold their meetings in correctional facilities, 61 Intergroups and 13 Regions. Each Intergroup can choose the Region they wish to join.

### **General Service Conference**

Each Region sends four delegates to the General Service Conference (the delegates rotate after two years of service). The General Manager of BSK (General Service Office), editor-in-chief of Zdrój bulletin, the employees of the office involved in working with the Committees are also voting members of the General Service Conference. In addition, two delegates from the Conference of Polish-speaking Groups in Europe participate in the GSC. Altogether, the Conference has 77 delegates. The Conference takes place annually in a place near Warsaw. The delegates work in four standing committees: Agenda, Finance, Literature, and Public Information and Cooperation with Others. For the last three years, at our GSC we have been organizing special international panels for mainly, but not limited to, the post-soviet countries.

### **General Service Board**

The Board of Trustees is made up of 13 alcoholics, 2 trustee-at-large National delegates and two non-alcoholic members. The most recent basic change in the procedure of electing the members to the Board is that each Region elects two candidates and sends them to the Board's Nominating Committee. The Board's Nominating Committee chooses the proper candidates and recommends them to the General Service Conference. The Board of Trustees offers recommendations and suggestions, and sets questions to the Committees of the General Service Conference. The main purpose of service of the Trustees is to inspire all service members in the AA Fellowship in Poland to improve the methods of carrying the AA message and protect the spiritual values, which result from the AA Traditions.

### **Service**

Service starts at the group level. Groups have a chairperson, a treasurer, often a literature representative, a GSR, and sometimes a welcoming committee. Each group has its GSR who serves in the Intergroup. The Regional Conference elects from among its members four delegates to the General Service Conference. The Intergroup's responsibilities include carrying the AA message in the area of the groups which form the Intergroup, most often to hospitals, correctional and treatment facilities.

The Regions run contact offices, telephone and on-line service; they provide public information. We have very good relationships especially with the Correctional Facilities Management; there is no prison in Poland without an A.A. Group; we organize workshops for Correctional Facilities officers; we share our experience in this matter with other countries.

Once a year, each time in a different town, a convention and Zdrój Bulletin Holiday takes place.

We are preparing the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Fellowship, which will be celebrated in 2014 in Warsaw.

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

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

Thanks to the reports from WSM and ESM, our General Service Conference works to adapt the Conference work to the principles of work of WSM and ESM. The lack of a Service Manual is a problem to understand the 12 Concepts. Advanced work to produce that publication is now in progress.

We hope it could be published in the nearest future.

## **Finance**

The Fellowship of AA in Poland is self-supporting thanks to contributions (60-20-10-10 Plan), Birthday Plan and the sales of AA literature. The Groups are suggested to send 40% of their basket money to the Intergroup, the Intergroups send a quarter of their money to the Region, and a quarter to the General Service Office. It covers more or less 40 % of the costs of the activities of the General Service Office in Poland. The remaining 60% of the office's activities is covered from the income from the literature sales. That ratio improved a bit, but still it seems to be not sufficient and there are lots of efforts to change the Groups' awareness in this matter.

## **Literature**

BSK AA publishes General Service Conference approved AA literature. So far there have been published: *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Living Sober*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, *Came to Believe*, *As Bill Sees It*, *Daily Reflections*, *Pass It On*, and *Dr. Bob*

*And The Good Old-timers.* Twenty five pamphlets have also been published. Our bulletin, *Zdrój*, with a circulation of about 3200 copies, and 'Skrytka 2/4/3', with a circulation of 1,600 copies, are published bi-monthly. A special bulletin for professionals "About AA" is distributed via e-mail, but a decision has been made to publish it also in a printed form. For a couple of years we have had a full translation of the reports from the European Service Meeting and the World Service Meeting. We also published the second edition of the Big Book with personal stories of recovery on Twelve Steps of AA members from Poland as well as our own AA pamphlet informing about the AA Program of Recovery in print and on CD's. Our service structure issued the guidelines with the procedure of publishing our own literature – there are some titles which have just been published (one of them is a reprint of the famous article about AA published in one of the leading newspapers more than twenty years ago "Sickness or Sin". Our last issue of Conference Approved Literature in Polish is "The Best of Bill". Now we're working with Grapevine to approve our translation of "The Language of The Heart"

### **Internet & Helpline**

Our GSO maintains an official AA website at the domain [www.aa.org.pl](http://www.aa.org.pl). We observe a constantly increasing number of visitors; we also maintain on-line contact and an information service served by our volunteers. In October 2005 we launched a special on-line service for people seeking information on AA – we call it "On-line Duty". There are efforts to increase the applications of the Internet in carrying the AA message and in improving the internal communication within the Fellowship.

There are many tools available, like Trustees' Forum and Chat etc. Recently, regional information services have been set up, which contain meetings lists and other important information about the Regions.

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

and buy AA literature. The website address: [www.aa.org.pl](http://www.aa.org.pl)

Poland has its own country-wide infoline 0 801 03 32 42. The Regions have started to maintain this helpline and now we are building an army of volunteers wishing to work in this area of service.

A special Committee was formed, many workshops were organized on the topic "How to Carry The Message via National Infoline"

## **PORTUGAL**

### **Structure**

The Portuguese AA is very small, with only 75 Portuguese speaking Groups and 10 English or German speaking Groups. They are located mainly along the Atlantic coast and around the capital, Lisbon (30 Groups). We are organised in 3 Regions (North, Centre and South) and 12 Areas, including one Area for the Islands of Azores and Madeira.

These Areas take decisions in Assemblies of GSRs and work through an Area committee and its workgroups. Each Area sends one Delegate to the GSC, independently of its dimension or location.

The Conference is composed of one delegate from each Area, the Trustees of the General Service Board (2 alcoholic and 2 non-alcoholic trustees and 1 chairman working in the GSO, and 3 regional liaison trustees), one secretary and one coordinator elected between former delegates. It meets ordinarily once a year.

As chief service arm of the GSC, the Board currently runs the GSO/Finances and coordinates 6 committees - Public information and Institutions, Literature, Publications/magazines, Hotline, Website, Events.

In the last two or three years, our Portuguese community had to deal with several internal problems, which led to a situation currently trying to be (slowly) solved. But we are still facing several serious difficulties:

- some conflict and disunion;
- lack of confidence in the structure, mainly in the current Board, which aggravates the usual difficulty in finding new servers and in contributing for the necessary actions to be taken;
- a Board which members were all elected at the same time (2010 - XIII GSC), so facing the work without normal continuity from the past;
- all the Board and, in particular, the GSO committees not working as hard as we would wish.

In short, we are trying to "put our house in order" at all levels and in every committee, beginning at the beginning:

### **Literature and Publications**

As there was an incompatibility between the software used by the typography and our own, any new printing accumulated errors. Some books and publications were almost sold out, so we decided to revise all the literature in the typography software.

In addition, some other actions were taken, e. g. creating a literature database, trying to sell more books... We hope we'll be able to resume as soon as possible the translation to Portuguese of still missing literature.

About our magazine "Partilhar" (Share) and our bulletin "Os Três Legados" (The Three Legacies), we were able to increase their subscriptions in 25% since last year. And - something very important for us too - the number of written texts received raised considerably, which means that we no more need to worry every three months about what to publish...

### **Finance**

The crises, outside and inside the AA, are not helping to develop the activities we would need - and like - to implement at all levels - Groups, Areas and GSO/GSB. Alongside the lack of trustee servants, the lack of money is conditioning our capacity to carry the message. Something happened mid February that got the situation even worse: the Board found out that our former Chairwoman was taking AA funds to her own profit (around 15% of our annual budget).

Nevertheless, we feel that things are improving, slowly, and the past is getting past. We have faith that, soon, with our own inventories - at all those levels -, we'll be able to overcome the present difficulties.

### **National telephone service and Web**

Two committees answer the alcoholics' requests for help and the public requests for information: the hotline "National Telephone Service" (+351 217 162 969) and the site in the Web ([www.aaportugal.org](http://www.aaportugal.org)).

The first one works now from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm, 7 days a week. Currently receives around 150 calls a month, average that is dropping with the rising of the visits to the website (2500 a month). The website was deeply renewed this year, but lots still have to be done.

### **Public information and Institutions**

This is maybe where we can feel more strongly the lack of servers. We make regular visits to hospitals, prisons and alcoholics treatment/detoxification centres, and we answer to requests from institutions, schools, etc., to share our experience, strength and hope in the 12 steps program, but we aren't really organising actions of our own.

### **Some other information**

We maintain contacts with several isolated members in other countries and we are currently helping Angola AA.

The process of changing Portuguese AA into a "Public Utility Institution" took a new direction. We would be forced to become a "Social Solidarity Institution", so we are currently reviewing if that won't interfere with our



principles and will represent an added value for the AA. Therefore, we asked for the help / feeling of a group of elder members.

Meanwhile, after a long thoughtfulness, we decided to sign a letter of engagement with a state body charged of alcoholics and drug addicts. This letter only engages us to receive all the alcoholics the institution will send us, which is exactly what we are here for.

**About Conference.** In 2010 it was decided to hold a regular Conference every two years, and then a mid-term one just to adopt the balance and the budget and to discuss urgent matters. This year - 2011 - the XIV Conference was a mid-term one. Next one, the XV, will take place in Easter 2012 under the theme "Comunicação e Participação – A Chave da Unidade e Serviço" (Communication & Participation - A Key for Unity and Service). The theme of the second workgroup will be "Praticar os Princípios de AA – O Caminho para a Unidade" (Practising AA Principles - The Way for Unity). Last Conference was a

We organise annually a national congress called "Fórum Nacional de Serviço" (National Service Forum), and the next one will take place in February 2012 under the theme "Recuperação e Serviço no Grupo Base" (Recovering & Serving in my Home Group).

## ROMANIA

### General information

The Romanian AA fellowship presently has 35 groups with 450-500 active members. Most of the groups are located in the big cities, but we also have 2 groups in the countryside. The recovery program is based on the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and the development of the Fellowship are assured, at all levels, by following the 12 Traditions of AA. There are still some deviations in the case of some groups, which are working beyond the limits suggested by Traditions 6 and 7. These deviations were the subject of many controversies within the fellowship, relative to Tradition 4, but still not affect AA as a whole.

### Structure

The General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous from Romania works on a legal status since 2008. Because of the small number of AA members in Romania, we do not have committees. There is only a board which consists of seven members with specific tasks. All the board members were elected by the National Conference and are all alcoholics. Conference in 2010 proposed the first establishment of non-alcoholic trustee positions, but so far not taken any decision in this regard. Representation at the conference is of one member with the right of vote for each group. In 2009 the first regional structure was established in Moldova (Eastside), followed last year by Transylvania (North side). Bucharest has a service structure for many years and it works successfully.

In general there is a positive attitude towards the existence and the work of service structure, but also some opposition. We have discussion about to complete our guidelines; currently have one approved by the National Conference, translated and adapted from that of friends in Belgium, but it was proposed to be expanded it by the British model. Of course, a guideline adapted to a small fellowship with small needs.

### Literature

Currently we have enough of the basic literature (*Alcoholics Anonymous, 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, Living sober*) thanks to the help offered by the international community. Besides these books, there are some brochures, especially for those concerned about AA, newcomers and doctors. In 2010 we managed to translate, edit and print the first book with license and Romanian ISBN; *Came to believe ...* This year, at the National Conference, we had the second licensed translation which was also printed in Romania; *As Bill Sees It*.

Although we want to have a greater number of titles published, the translation work is slow because there are just very few members willing to be involved in this work.

The AA Fellowship from Romania has a magazine called *Noi înșine* which means *Ourselves*. The magazine is printed two to three times a year at major national meetings and we also have a subscription to *Grapevine* magazine.

### **Public information**

Our public information work is not sufficiently developed in Romania. There is little interest from the press, television and other media to the AA recovery method. This year we decided to distribute, for the first time, pocket calendars and posters to make better known the AA movement in Romania. Posters editing was done with the suggestions made by our fellow alcoholics from Great Britain and Belgium.

In 2010 we established a national telephone number where everyone can get general information about AA and contact addresses for groups, in the country or abroad.

Another way of public information was a book donation; *Alcoholics Anonymous* in English and Romanian. This donation was made to some public libraries in Romania, at the initiative and financial support of EURYPAA 2009.

### **Cooperation with professionals**

This work is unfortunately poorly represented. There are very few AA groups in hospitals and prisons, in Romania. We hope to improve, in the future, our cooperation with professionals. This summer, the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Romania and the Prisons Department has decided to formalize and expand the cooperation with AA in Romania. The decision was motivated by the dramatic increase of serious crimes committed because of alcohol abuse and by some European Union directives. Now, we expect to establish a procedure by which the groups can have access in prisons, to spread the AA message and support the establishment of AA groups among prisoners. To improve our communication with professionals, we invite representatives of medicine, justice, clergy, social assistance and media, to our events.

### **Internet**

The Romanian AA fellowship has a national website [www.alcooliciianonimi.ro](http://www.alcooliciianonimi.ro), containing various information, addresses and contacts, events, etc. Since 2010 we have, in addition, two regional sites to support the work of carrying the AA message.

Information about AA can be also found on the e-mail address: [info@alcooliciianonimi.ro](mailto:info@alcooliciianonimi.ro). Since 2009 we have an online group. Although at beginning the idea was enthusiastically received, in the last year the posts have become increasingly rare and now the group is used more for communication of important information or events, inside the Fellowship.

Information about Romanian AA could be also found on *Continental European Region* website, where is a phone number of an English speaker contact person.

### **Finance**

The contributions for GSO fund are coming from donations of groups or members at national meetings and conferences as well as diverting 2% of income tax, according to a law currently existing in Romania. Another source of money is the sale of literature, which is pretty good. In 2009 we succeeded, for the first time, to send a donation of 635 \$ to the International Literature Fund and in 2010 we sent 750 \$.

### **Relations with other countries**

AA in Romania do not currently benefit from sponsorship in the true sense. We are however supported by an AA group from Belgium, called *Friends for Romania* which offered us, for many years, a valuable assistance in the development and growth of our fellowship.

In recent years, the number of participants from other countries to various events organized by our fellowship is increasing. Sharing experience on these occasions helped us much and we are very grateful to all who have supported us and still support us.

Also, with the best of our abilities, some AA members from our fellowship have participated on AA events in neighbouring countries and some other European countries.

A milestone in our history was Romania's first participation in ESM in 2009 and after that the participation of a Romanian observer at the Service Conference in Poland in 2010. We have all the reports from ESM and WSM in recent years and we use them to improve the work of our service structure.

## **RUSSIA**

AA movement in Russia started in about the end of the eighties. In autumn of 1989 in Moscow first Intergroup was founded, which united four AA groups in the beginning. Constituent Conference founded service structure for Russian AA groups on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April, 1991. Nowadays more than 360 groups in almost 160 cities and towns of Russia are working and being served by the Russian Board, also Russian-speaking groups abroad are being helped by literature and information materials. Total number of AA members in Russia is approximately estimated about 10000 people. In Moscow there are 45 groups (15 groups in Moscow region); in St Petersburg, second biggest city, there are 34 groups. 2004-2008 new groups appeared in Siberia, Altai Region, in Kamchatka, Sakhalin, in Kursk and Yakutsk, in the south of Russia (Northern Caucasus) etc.

### **AA Service Structure**

AA Russia Service Meetings are being held yearly in the first half of April in Moscow. Participants of the Meeting are: AA groups delegates, where there are still no local service bodies, delegates from local AA Service Committees, Centres or Intergroups, AA Russia Service Board members (PCO AA), director of AA Russia Service Office, AA magazine "Dyuzhina" Chief Editor and delegates from Russian AA to international AA Service Meetings. The meeting with a number of participants forms its Committees to work out recommendations on main AA service directions, elects Chairman (leader) for the next meeting and delegates for international meetings. "AA Fellowship in Russia Service Handbook" is published, which reflects the meeting's decisions and in which the Charter and Meeting Statement are included.

In March of 2001 "Service Fund of Alcoholics Anonymous" was registered according to the meeting decision, through which AA Russia acts according to the state legislation and runs the financial affairs. Members of AA Russia Service Board act at the same time as members of the Fund Management Board. As some statements of the Fund's Charter (because of Russian Legislation requirements) do not comply with Traditions and Principles of AA service organisation, the Meeting and the Board avoid using them in their operation.

In 2011 AA PCO (Russian Service Board) consists of 11 AA members, two of them are from Moscow region, the rest are from other regions. The term of authority of each Board member is two years; Board member can be elected only for two terms. Required continuous sobriety period for the Board members candidates is 5 years. Non-alcoholics cannot be elected to be the Board Members. The Board Meetings are held monthly.

Local AA Service Centres have been founded (intergroups, committees, boards), that work in Russia: in Barnaul («Altai» and West Siberia), in Irkutsk

('Baikal'; 'WS and Far East'), Kazan, Magnitogorsk, Mineralnye Vody («KMB»), Moscow (Moscow and Moscow Region), Petrozavodsk (Karelia), Rostov-on-Don, Severo-Kavkazsky Service Committee, Omsk, Samara, St'Petersburg (S.Pt and region), etc. But not all the service Committees and local AA service structures are registered in AA Russia Service Office. There are no AA groups in country-side of Russia at the moment.

### **Finance**

In 2010 total yearly income was 63.2% from AA literature sale and 28.8% - AA groups and members donations. AA office also sells souvenirs as tokens, post-cards, etc. (9%). Annual turnover was 3 237 403 rubles. or about 108 000 USA dollars. In AA Russia office there are four paid employees: General Director, Chief Accountant, Publishing Director and Secretary. Finance service has been founded in the office, where the volunteers work. Literature expenses are 24.3% from total expenses. General expenses for Russian AA Groups service is 33.3%.

Finance Committee is operating within AA Russia Service Board.

### **Literature**

At the moment Russian AA only publishes the AA literature for which there is permission from GSO. 9 books, 32 brochures and 13 booklets; total – 54 items. In 2008-2009 following books have been published, which hadn't been published before in Russia: "Doctor Bob and Good Oldies", "How Bill sees it", "AA Service Manual with Twelve organizational Principles of Worldwide AA Service" (USA/Canada) and "AA comes of Age". "AA Russia Groups Directory" is published regularly.

AA magazine "Dyuzhina" is being issued regularly last years (4 issues per year). Periodical magazine "Dyuzhina" is registered in States bodies as the magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous of Russia. The magazine is not fully self-paid and being donated by the Fund when issued.

### **Work in medical and correctional facilities**

Many groups and local service Centres in different cities co-operate with local narcological clinics and conduct meetings in there. The AA Russia Office hasn't up to the end organized the registration of groups, working in medical facilities. AA groups work in correctional facilities in three cities: St Petersburg, Ekaterinburg and Chita.

### **Public Informing about AA**

The work of this Committee considerably improved in the last years. Regularly, usually in connection with some events or anniversaries press-conferences are held in AA at the Independent press-centre in Moscow, announcements about AA are given in different newspapers; telephone number of AA office is included into all big directories of Moscow and is given to all informational services of Moscow. Interviews on radio and

television are given, 'Open' information & presentation AA meetings are held, professionals are supplied with literature about AA. The "Manual on informing the public about AA" and "Manual on work in medical institutions" have a good demand among AA members. Service Centres and many groups cooperate with local radio, television and press in order to carry our ideas.

### **International cooperation**

From 1991 Russian AA takes part in AA Service Meeting of Europe. Exception was in 2003. In 1998, 2000 and 2008 delegates from Russia participated in AA World Service Meeting, and in 2001, 2005 and 2007 Russia was represented at AA Asia and Oceania Service Meeting (one delegate in each Meeting). In 2002 two delegates presented Russia at the 1<sup>st</sup> AA Eastern Europe Service Meeting in Warsaw (Poland). Unfortunately, because of not developed AA Russia service system, the participation of our delegates in these meetings was fully or partially paid by other countries. According to the opinion of the majority of the last Conference delegates and members of the Board it is necessary to stop this practice in the future, so the appropriate decision should be taken.

At the moment we keep connections and cooperate with many countries. We have main support, as always, from the oldest AA Fellowship – GSO in New York. Because of the decision in recent years of A.A. World Service (A.A.W.S) to stop publishing AA literature in Russian, and entrust the responsibility to the Russian AA, we supply Russian language literature to AA groups in Belarus, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Moldova, USA, Ukraine, Finland, Sweden, Baltic republics "Russian Germans" in Germany.

### **Forums and Seminars conducting**

The Board conducts all-Russian annual Forum in the beginning of December. Slogan, topic, city of the forum is defined by the Meeting or the Board. The Forum is very popular. For the last several years local service centres started to conduct their Forums. For example such Forums are held successfully and became annual in Petrozavodsk, Rostov-on-Don, Ivanovo, Kazan, Moscow, Samara, St Petersburg, at Baikal and Altai.

From time to time at local requests the Board organizes seminars for local AA groups where experienced AA members from Moscow and other cities act as speakers.

Annually for the last years at local initiatives "Forums on wheels" are held, when several automobiles with AA members go a certain route, chosen beforehand, carrying AA ideas and working on AA program experience in cities and towns, where AA already exists or not. Several Forums are held annually for today: "Forum on Wheels" (Central), "Northern Horseshoe", "Southern Ring" and "Forum on Wheels" (Altai).

## **SLOVAKIA**

### **Structure of AA in Slovakia**

The Beginning of AA in Slovakia comes back to the year 1990, when the first AA group was established in Bratislava. In the present time 35 AA groups operate in Slovakia. They are spread all over the country. The estimated number of AA members in Slovakia is about 450 – 500 members. From the territorial point of view there are six main Inter-groups in Slovakia: Nitrianská, Trenčianská, Bratislavská, Popradská, Banskobystrická a Košická.

On April 10, 2010 the first Annual Conference of AA in Slovakia was held, where the board of trustees was elected and four commissions (administrative, financial, literary and commission for public relations) were formed as well. The elementary documents as Charter of conference, Guideline for working with AA services, and changed AA articles adapted in Home Office of Slovakia were approved during this conference. On April 16, 2011 the second Conference of AA in Slovakia took place in Trenčín.

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

Since 2009 AA Slovakia has had 2 elected delegates in the European AA Service Meeting in Frankfurt.

### **Ministry of AA**

Ministry of AA is organized through local groups which elect their chairman, a treasurer, a member responsible for literature, and two representatives for Conference of AA that always takes place in April.

We try to follow the principle of rotation in electing people responsible for different ministries within AA group or Inter-group.

Inter-group in cooperation with selected groups regularly organizes The National AA Convention during the third week of September. On September 18-20, 2010 there was the 13<sup>th</sup> National AA Congress held in the East Slovakian Region, Drienica – Lysá, where we celebrated twenty years from the beginning of AA in Slovakia. About 280 people from Slovakia and other countries attended this assembly. This year there will be the 14<sup>th</sup> National AA Congress held in Jahodná 16-18 September, 2011.

Besides congress, International AA Meeting focused on AA Steps and Traditions is organized each year during the first weekend of February. In 2010, the 6<sup>th</sup> International Meeting attended by AA members from Poland,



the Czech Republic, and Slovakia was held. This year in the 7<sup>th</sup> International AA Meeting we have started to focus on AA service and sponsorship. In order to deepen the work on AA Steps, we organize similar meetings in Trenčín, Levoča, and Nitra.

### **Finances**

Till August 20, 2011 we had 6957.81 Euro at disposal on our bank account. From the petty cash we pay our yearly rent – 95 Euro, internet costs – 200 Euro a year, post and other expenses – 350,- Euro a year. Annual contributions of AA groups for the AA work are about 900 Euro, income from our activities is about 350 Euro, and income from literature is about 640 Euro. Because of low expenses of our national Office we are able to cover its expenses from our incomes. From the income from the literature we print AA books and pamphlets.

### **Literature**

At the present time our National Office distributes the following publications: *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Living Sober*, *Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions*. In 2011, we received the copyright on the books *As Bill Sees It*, *Daily Reflections* and in August 2011 they were published.

We translated the following AA pamphlets: *This is AA*, *Is AA For You?*, *AA as a Resource for Health Care Professionals*, *Where Do I Go From Here?*. Provided that the groups will purchase these informational pamphlets we believe that this system will allow us to collect financial means for reprinting the materials.

### **International Relations**

AA Slovakia cooperates closely with AA Poland. Not only do we participate on AA activities in our countries, we also have prepared some activities in cooperation, e.g. Meetings with AA Traditions and Steps. We also have broad contacts with AA in the Czech Republic. We have good contacts with AA in Hungary, Romania, Austria, and Germany, namely in the area of mutual participation in organized activities. We are grateful to AA individuals from the US who helped us to spread AA in our country. In 2010, international meetings attended by AA members from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria were held with the aim to support the AA groups in Bulgaria.

### **Public Relations**

As for our public relations, we have two kinds of relations, those with treatment centers and those aiming at improving public awareness. We work with treatment centers through our members and their participation in AA meetings in these facilities. We have groups in Pezinok, Trenčín, Predná Hora, Hronovce.

As for AA public awareness, we have broadcasted some programs in cooperation with the Slovak National Radio (Radio Lumen ) which caused much interest in AA. Other media, e.g. local newspapers and Christian periodicals have published information about AA as well.

Most information about AA is distributed by means of brochures and leaflets as well as through our website where we always find many responses.

At present we are preparing an informational brochure about AA under the title *Alcoholics anonymous – information for the public* and publication *Twenty years of AA in Slovakia*.

### **Internet**

Our website ([www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk](http://www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk)) is available for all our members as well as for the public. Each visitor can get acquainted with information about AA, with the brochure *44 Questions* and with some testimonies taken from our magazine *Prameň*. There is a permanently updated directory of AA groups and the program of upcoming events in Slovakia and the surrounding countries. There are links for websites of AA in other EU countries – Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Croatia, and Hungary as well as for Al-Anon website. People can also register on our website and take part directly on online meetings about particular Steps and AA Traditions as well as other topics. They can also suggest a new topic and share their story. Today there are 307 registered users in this group.

Within our Internet space we also have a group called “Sober space“ this is an independent Internet AA group that was established in 2006. Today it has had over 300 Slovak and Czech speaking members from all over the world. It is a good solution for all of those who do not have an AA group in their towns or for those alcoholics whose health does not allow them to take part in real (live) meetings.

### **Magazine**

Since April 2002 we have been publishing our magazine *PRAMEŇ* quarterly. The magazine brings testimonies of members of AA groups about their sobriety and their experience with the 12 Steps and traditions programs. An important part of the magazine is the part bringing information about AA meetings and events and about possibilities of buying relevant literature. The magazine is published in 300 copies and is distributed to treatment houses and libraries. It is self-supported and financed by Money gained from its sales. The members of the editorial Office do the work free (without money) and are not paid for their editorial activities.

## **SLOVENIA**

In Slovenia first AA group was established on November 6<sup>th</sup> 1989, in Ljubljana. Now there are 47 groups with approximately 500 members in our country. Each group has a chairman and a treasurer, bigger groups also literature man, and a delegate (GSR), elected for two years period.

### **General Service Conference**

Once a year delegates of all groups come together and form a General Service Conference, which discusses a yearly program and every second year elects half of the GSB members.

### **General Service Board**

General Service Board consists of First President (non-alcoholic), Second President and the deputy, secretary and the deputy and three committee presidents (finances, public relations, and literature) and deputies.

### **General Service Office**

General Service Office form members of GSB, which function also as administrative workers of the Board.

### **Financial Committee**

AA in Slovenia is organised according to Slovenian legislation as a Society with its own by-laws and bank account. Financial source are exclusively contributions of AA members and literature and we do not accept any outside contributions.

### **Committee for Public Relations**

Collaboration with media: notes about AA in newspapers, occasional TV shows, monthly broadcast of one hour. PCP with Medical school (yearly informative meeting for doctors specialising in psychiatry), Faculty for Social Work, Centres for Social Work, one AA group in penitentiary.

### **Committee for publications**

So far four books were translated and published: *Alcoholics Anonymous* – complete size and abridged pocket size, *Twelve & Twelve*, *Living Sober*, & *Daily Reflections*, plus 10 pamphlets. All translations were licensed by AAWS. Occasionally we also publish a Slovenian magazine named Koraak. Frequency of publication of AA literature is not limited by translators (who are AA members) but on the amount of money available on our bank account.

### **Contacts for still suffering alcoholics**

All information is available on automatic telephone responder 01 4338 225. There is also web page [www.aa-drustvo.si](http://www.aa-drustvo.si) with relevant information and list of meetings in Slovenia and e-mail [aa.slo@amis.net](mailto:aa.slo@amis.net).

## **SPAIN**

### **Structure**

Nowadays AA's structure in Spain is formed by 24 areas divided in 4 regional areas and more than 552 groups (12 of which are inside correctional institutions) and about 9,000 members.

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

The 4 Regional Service Forums continue to be held, they contributed to the good functioning of the Areas and allow the work of the General Service Board not to be strange to the groups or areas.

### **General Service Board**

Two delegates of the General Service Board attended the World Service Meeting Conference (October 17th to the 21st 2010 in Mexico D.F.). In addition the General Service Board has been present in various Official Organizations: the Department of Health, the General Secretary of Prisons, with whom a cooperation agreement has being signed, the General Council for drug additions, and the General Council of the Judicial Power.

Our General Service Board president attended the IV International Forum on alcoholism as a guest of the Mexican Central services.

We were invited by the Office of the General Service of France to attend and participate in its 39<sup>th</sup> Conference on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2010.

General Service Board has participated in several medical congresses and national conferences on topics related to alcoholism and Alcoholics Anonymous was introduced by the Professor Dr. Llorca academic of the Royal Academy of medicine and Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Salamanca, as a candidate for the II International Foundation Juan José López Ibor award.

### **Finances**

Almost the totality of the approved amount budgeted for the Conference was covered thanks to the commitment and responsibility of our members, Groups, and Areas with their regular contributions.

Our Prudent Reserve Fund is gradually growing according to the plan established in the year 2009.

In the last General Service Conference a budget was approved that intends to endow us again, in a time limit of 5 or 6 years, of a Prudent Fund of Reserve, giving us security for specific situations of budgetary lag.

It seems that the communication, the debate and the discussions in the Conference, Areas and Groups, has contributed to stabilizing this situation. Although to the 31<sup>st</sup> of July we still carried a negative balance in the contributions with regard to them budgeted.

### **Conferences and Conventions**

The XXXII Conference with topic "Alcoholics Anonymous, 75 years in action" took place in the month of April.

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alcoholics Anonymous foundation took place in Mérida, in order to increase the presence of the community in the Autonomous Region of Extremadura.

Our IX National Convention was held in Benidorm (Alicante) from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of October coinciding with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alcoholics Anonymous foundation.

### **Web Site**

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

We have actualized the Members and Groups surveys and included the results in our publications.

### **Literature**

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

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

### **Committees**

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

## **SWEDEN**

AA Sweden was founded in 1956. Today we have about 460 groups; there are also English, Finnish, Icelandic, Latvia, Polish, Russian and Spanish speaking meetings.

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

The trustees of the Board and the international delegates are elected by the Service Conference.

Assisting the General Service Board are:

- the Association Alcoholic Anonymous in Sweden
- the General Service Office

The following committees:

- Economy committee
- Information committee
- Literature committee
- Nomination committee
- Policy committee

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

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

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

### **Literature/Publishing**

"Language of the heart" has been translated into Swedish.

"The Big Book", "12 Steps & 12 Traditions" and "Living Sober" has been published in audiobook format.

The approved AA-literature today consists of eleven translated books and also one book edited by Swedish AA. There are 40 booklets and pamphlets, decals, shades, cds and dvds in Swedish.

The magazine "Bulletinen – *A meeting between the meetings*" is published with six copies a year. We also have an excellent Newsletter "Servicebladet", where all important news is published i.e from the Service Conference, GSB and GSO.

### **Information**

The Swedish website, [www.aa.se](http://www.aa.se) has been increased and is an important link in the network of carrying the message. The meeting-list is available. During the last year about 1500 orders of AA-literature have been made via the webshop, i.e 70 % of the total orders.

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

### **Finances**

AA in Sweden is still not self-supporting. Approximately 60 % of our income comes from the sales of literature. Sweden has attributed to the International Literature fund almost each year. In 2010 Sweden has paid SEK 50.000. AA in Sweden has also paid the full fee for two delegates to the World Service Meetings hoping that by doing so it will make it possible for new countries in AA to participate in this very important event.

### **Working with other countries**

Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden are taking turns in hosting the annual Nordic Meeting (NM). We are working on getting also Greenland, The Faroe Islands and SAPMI to join us.

### **Events during 2010/2011**

On November 06, 2010 the General Service Board, all the members of the committees, international delegates, Association Alcoholic Anonymous and representatives from GSO, had a Service meeting, where AA in Sweden in the future, the economy and the Twelve Concepts were thoroughly discussed.

The Service Conference 2010 was held April 9-11 and the theme was "Service – gratitude in action". Participating in this conference were 21 delegates, seven trustees, one member of the Association Alcoholics Anonymous, one representative from "Bulletinen" Magazine and two international delegates. There were also invited guests from Denmark, Norge (Norway) and Finland.

The Service Conference 2011 was held April 8-10 and the theme was "Recovery has no borders". Participating in this conference were 20

delegates, six trustees, one employee from GSO, one member of the Association Alcoholics Anonymous, one representative from "Bulletinen" Magazine and two International delegates. There were also invited guests from Denmark and Finland.

Due to the economy of AA in Sweden in the beginning and middle of 2010 we could only send one World Service Delegate to participate at the World Service Meeting in Mexico, 17 - 21 October 2010.

One of the World Service Delegate and one employee from GSO visited AA Romania, 8 – 10 October 2010 at their Service Conference and Norge (Norway) 1 – 2 October 2010 at the Nordic Delegate meeting.

The Nordic Delegate visited Norge (Norway) at their Service Conference in March 2010 and 2011; Finland at the Nordic Meeting June 2010 and at their Service Conference April 2011 and SAPMI AA information meeting in Norge (Norway).



## **SWITZERLAND**

### **German Speaking Region**

#### **History**

AA Switzerland was established in 1963. Initial meetings at that time were reported in Basle, Lucerne and Zurich. These first meetings were supported by German friends, particularly friends from the Karlsruhe group. In two years AA Switzerland will celebrate its 50th anniversary and preliminaries are ongoing.

#### **Structure**

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

The GSO of Switzerland, established in 1996, is operated by one person on a 50 % part-time basis. The office is located in Zurich. The GSO regularly organises the meeting of both the General Service Board (GSB) and the General Service Conference (GSC), which usually takes place twice a year, i.e. in spring and fall. The GSO performs commercial tasks and facilitates flow of information or correspondence to other GSOs and between delegates and committee members.

The team for Public Information recently created a leporello flyer, focusing on young people. A lot of campaigns providing information about AA are held regionally in specialised clinics, hospitals and in nursery schools. AA was also part of a campaign that was organized by the Swiss Health Authorities. This campaign was held during one week, end of May 2011 under the title "Dialog Woche Alkohol" (Dialogue Week Alcohol). The contribution of AA consisted mainly of holding "open meetings" and of some public places activities (like providing people with an apple and an information flyer).

#### **Membership and Groups**

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

#### **Literature**

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

Switzerland edits its own monthly magazine "Irgendwo AA" (Somewhere AA) including a Newsletter "AA Weltweit" (AA world-wide). The newsletters mainly report about European and International themes of AA.

### **Finance**

The balance sheet shows a solid financial situation of AA Switzerland.

### **Latest news**

In the last two reports we informed about the ongoing modifications concerning the integration of the German speaking part of Switzerland into the German speaking area, taking account of the different legal and tax basis in the two countries Germany and Switzerland. The conclusions were reported 2 years ago. In summary:

Switzerland keeps its own legal unit/association "AA-Schweiz" and abandoned its membership to the German association "Anonyme Alkoholiker Interessengemeinschaft e.v".

Switzerland keeps its own GSO and will be informed by the German GSO in the same manner (GSC, GSB; etc.) as the other Intergroups of the German speaking area of Europe.

Switzerland participates in the GSC with the speaker of the (Swiss) Intergroup and two (instead of six) delegates and in the GSB with the speaker of the Intergroup.

Switzerland continues to get the literature from the German GSO.

Switzerland maintains its own structure for public relations and its own Homepage (with Links to the Website of the German speaking area of Europe).

## **SWITZERLAND**

### **French and Italian speaking region**

#### **Literature**

We have been successful in selling literature during our conventions. One alone has generated 800.00 Sfr.

The recently formed CEFE (Carrefour Européen Francophone d'Echange) is particularly efficient as far as literature is concerned in publication, sale and distribution, and may give a face-lift for the sale of new brochures aiming at new-comers and transmission of our message through Public Information.

#### **Finance**

It had been overlooked for the last few years to finance the ESM. This was due to a mis-communication within the GSO. I believe this has been corrected now.

The financial status of AASRI is well balanced, though we see a slight decrease in funds coming from the groups.

#### **Number of groups**

There are 58 groups with a large majority located in the French speaking area.

#### **General Structure**

AASRI is divided in 3 territories.

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

There are no major changes in our structures except the fact that the European delegate has now the right to vote at the annual conference.

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

In 2010, there were 45 groups represented out of 55 and 51 in 2011.

In 2010, the workshop topics were:

- Our conference: does the annual conference help recovery, how to bring the conference up within the groups?
- Welcome of newcomers and recovery sponsorship
- Attraction and service

In 2011, the workshop topics were:

- AASRI Structures: The role of the Inter-groups president
- Public Information: Internet
- Passing on the message to physically challenged persons+
- GSOs: What is necessary for it to work

At our 2012 Annual conference, we will have a workshop dedicated to the theme "AA and the young people". Meanwhile, we are preparing this topic through a group of volunteers (2 members of the GSOs + any AA member in our territory interested by this subject).

The CEFE will debate on possibly having a common internet site and have a common speech within the French speaking area of Europe as far as AA is concerned.

### **Public Information**

We are losing contact with some institutions practicing "Alcohol-Control".

Our national day without alcohol is the 18th of November.

Each region manages its own public information. However, we have one common Public Information for AASRI and for 2010-2011; we have registered short radio spots. Each territory delegate is responsible for finding regional radio agreeing to broadcast it.

We are currently re-vamping the interface of our internet site.

Additionally, we are adding all the resolutions and recommendations taken during our annual conference for the last five years to be consulted by any AA member.

We have also printed 3000 business-type cards to be distributed during each public information.

We regularly visit institutions (Health, professional schools) and thus, our message to the alcoholic still suffering is well spread in our region.

External Relations (Jails, Hospitals and countries sponsorship)

We have started a relationship and the set-up of groups in Madagascar.

One of our friends has translated the daily thoughts into Malagasy. This translation will be sent and reviewed by the GSOs in New York.

Two members of our GSOs have participated to the French annual conference.

Our delegate has been impressed by the fact that France is well advanced with the usage of internet and we could benefit from their experience to improve our site.

We have also participated to the Al-Anon yearly convention where several AA meetings are held.

**Prisons:**

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

# **Committees & Workshops**



## Agenda / Policy / Admissions / Finance Committee

Chairman: **Henrik R.** Denmark

Luc F.	Belgium (Flemish)	Tony D.	Ireland
Henrik R.	Denmark	Ad S	Netherlands
Marc B.	FSE France	Bjorn J. K.	Norway
Juha P.	Finland	Piotr H.	Poland
Hannalore P.	Germany	Jarmila K.	Slovakia
Penny A.	Great Britain	Jan-Ola J.	Sweden
Johannes H.	Iceland	Martin S.	Switzerland (German)

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

1. Do all delegates provide a complete translated full report of the ESM to the General Service Board of his/her country, and how is the report presented in your country?

**Only a few countries have a complete translated full report of the ESM.**

**Most countries prepare summaries and report back to their GSBs and GSCs.**

**Some countries produce newsletters for a wider audience.**

2. Have any of the findings of the ESM been implemented in your country?

**Some delegates shared lack of sufficient information on that topic from the past delegates.**

**New structures particularly benefit from the ESM and WSM experience, but not only them.**

**Also, other structures find it beneficial to learn of other countries' experience and compare it to their own situation.**

**The ESM was felt an invaluable source of contacts. The ESM themes are used for local GSCs and conventions.**

**The experience shared at the ESM is a source for improvements in other countries' structures.**



3. Consider whether the Agenda Committee should review the themes of each of the three standing committees of the ESM to broaden the topics available for discussion.

**The delegates expressed an opinion that for the time being the Agenda Committee should not review the themes.**

**However, with the increasing number of countries participating in the ESM, the Committee may consider an option of a fourth committee and workshop, for example to discuss PI issues and other relevant matters.**

4. More countries participate in the ESM. In these circumstances would it be beneficial to make ESM longer which would give time for seminars, presentations, workshops etc. When answering this question please consider the financial implications.

**The general opinion was that we should not extend the ESM. Instead, we could try to make it more efficient, e.g. by providing guidelines how to 'prepare' service highlights from country reports.**

**If extended, the Committee believed that the number of available delegates would decrease.**

**Also, newer structures might be discouraged from participation by higher costs.**

5. At the moment the cost to each delegate of attending the ESM is based on the cost of the accommodation and meals charged for by the hotel only, there is no registration fee (such as that used by the WSM). Should ESM levy a registration fee based on the costs mentioned above plus an additional percentage to go towards the ESM Fund? This would help towards self-support and would guarantee the ESM's continued help for those countries who financially couldn't otherwise attend.

**The Committee do not recommend that there should be a registration fee.**

**Countries who can afford it should be encouraged to support the ESM Fund on a voluntary basis. More information is needed about the ESM Fund. Therefore, we recommend that the Agenda Committee should review the Guidelines for the ESM before the next ESM regarding the ESM Fund.**

6. Suggest a theme for the 17<sup>th</sup> ESM.

**The theme for the next ESM is: '*Carry Our Message Through Service*'.**

7. Elect a Chairman & Alternate for the Agenda, Policy, Admissions & Finance Committee 17<sup>th</sup> ESM.

**Chair – Penny A, Great Britain**

**Alternate – Ad S, Netherlands**

## Literature / Publishing & Media Communications Committee

Chairman: **Vanni S.** Italy

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Helle V.	Denmark	Robert V. B.	Malta
Gudrun F E.	Iceland	Tomasz L.	Poland
Jim D.	Ireland	Manuel M. de M.	Portugal
Vanni S.	Italy	Dorel S.	Romania
Ilze K.	Latvia	Mikhail Y.	Russian Federation
Ramunas P.	Lithuania	Sasha Ana Z.	Slovenia
Kristin L.	Norway	Ana M V.	Spain

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

1. There are various other associations throughout Europe committed to the problems of alcoholics, these associations sometimes request to make a link from our Internet site to theirs, this is not permitted by AA in some countries. How do the other countries feel about this issue?

**No country but one has links to outside organisations or associations, many have links to Al-Anon.**

2. Share experience of the sale of non-AA approved literature and publications being sold at AA's conventions.

**Most countries only sell conference approved literature, at conventions, many allow Al-Anon to present their literature at different tables/area.**

3. Would it be useful if your country learned about new literature and DVDs produced by other countries. If so, how could this be achieved?

**All the countries are interested to know about old and new literature, CD, audio-books, films and other material in other countries. They want to be up to date regarding all the material in other countries. It is proposed to create a catalogue on database containing all main details of all literature and other presentations of European fellowships.**

4. Who manages your website and who decides on the content?

**All countries have a website. The technical work is supported by an AA or a paid webmaster. Anyhow, all the content is under the control of the GSB and in some cases also approved by GSC and/or sometimes by general service committees.**

5. Is the literature in your country sold only to AA members or do you sell to other bodies, such as treatment centres, hospitals, professionals, book stores etc.

**Every country sells to whoever wants AA literature. Some countries are giving literature as a gift to hospitals, treatment centres, jails, professionals,..., others sell it to them. Few countries are also selling to bookstores.**

6. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 17<sup>th</sup> ESM Literature/Publishing and Media Communications Committee.

**Ilze Kikere, Latvia, was elected as chair, Sasha Ana Zupancic, Slovenia, as alternate.**

### ***Proposal***

***The committee proposes for the next ESM Literature Committee these topics:***

- a) How to improve the participation in AA of young people with literature and the new media, bearing in mind internet security and our traditions.***
- b) How can we better share literature, audio-books, CDs, DVDs, presentations,... for internal and external use.***

## Working With Other Countries Committee

Chairman: **James V.** Belgium (Flemish Speaking)

Alternate: **Chantal D.** Switzerland (FSE)

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Lothar U.	Austria	Kelly B.	Greenland
James V.	Belgium (Flemish)	Raimonds L.	Latvia
Jürgen M.	Belgium (French)	Piju Z.	Malta
Ludwig T.	Czech Republic	Vitor M.	Portugal
Toivo T.	Estonia	Pavol G.	Slovakia
Matti L.	Finland	Angel G.	Spain
Jim T.	Great Britain	Reine J.	Sweden
		Chantal D.	Switzerland (FSE)

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

1. Can you describe a typical AA meeting in your country, how long does it last and what literature is used?

**Two kinds of meeting, sharing and discussion meeting.**

**Starting with the Preamble & Serenity Prayer. Most meetings last for 1 ½ to 2 hours.**

**Literature used: Big Book, 12x12 & Daily Reflections. They all use AA literature.**

**Most people are attending one meeting a week.**

**A few countries ask before the meeting starts, from member to member how their week has gone.**

**Most meetings finish with the Serenity Prayer.**

2. In what other languages do you hold AA meetings in your country, does this highlight any issues?

**All countries have meetings in different languages, English the most popular. No problems.**

3. How does your country use the experience of former WSM and ESM delegates to:

a) benefit the existing structure?

**Most countries bring a brief report to the General Service Board. Other countries have a translation of the full final report.**

**Most general members of AA are not interested in the reports. The people in service are the ones that are interested.**

b) develop links with other countries?

**After the ESM in 2009 there was a mail group started, this was one of the best ideas ever. All delegates were now connected with each other and in the last two years every country could ask as many questions as they liked. In that way we can learn a lot from each other.**

4. Does your country have any part of the structure which co-ordinates "international issues"?

**French speaking Belgium, French speaking Switzerland and France are working together to unify the literature and sharing experience.**

**Austria, German speaking Switzerland and Germany co-ordinate on literature.**

5. Does your country contribute, in one or another way, to spread, to enlarge, to translate or to share the AA literature with other countries?

**Most countries are contributing to the International Fund, to spread, to enlarge, to translate or to share the AA literature with other countries.**

6. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 17<sup>th</sup> ESM Working With Other Countries Committee.

**Chair – Ludwig T, Czech Republic**

**Alternate – Reine J, Sweden**

## Workshop: "How to Raise the Awareness of the Concepts in our Countries"

Chairman: **Tomasz Ł.** Poland

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Lothar U.	Austria	Vanni S.	Italy
Jürgen M.	Belgium (French)	Robert V. B.	Malta
Henrik R.	Denmark	Bjorn J. K.	Norway
Matti L.	Finland	Ad S.	Netherlands
Hannalore P.	Germany	Tomasz L.	Poland
Johannes H.	Iceland	Reine J.	Sweden
Jim D.	Ireland	Chantal D.	Switzerland (FSE)

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

1. Discuss the importance of the knowledge of the Concepts at group level. What is the relevance of the Concepts at Group, Intergroup, Regional and General Service Board level?

**It was felt that the Concepts are of vital importance throughout our structure. The knowledge of the concepts is rather poor, especially at group level. In some countries the Concepts are discussed in the group, it is where this knowledge is necessary as it has direct impact on the service structure as a whole. Every level of our structure needs the Concepts to guide their everyday activities.**

2. What kind of seminars, workshops, sharing meetings does your country organize on the Concepts?

**Special meetings, workshops or seminars on the Concepts are not extremely popular.**

**Some countries hold regular weekend seminars in the Intergroups. Other countries organise or used to organise seminars and workshops. In addition, in some countries there are workshops held during conventions and other events.**

**In one country there are regular workshops on the Concepts for the trustees before the GSB meetings.**

3. Does your country have the Concepts in print, if yes, in what form?

**Most countries have the Concepts in the long and short forms. Also, some countries have the '12 Concepts Illustrated'.**

4. Would it be useful to invite experienced members from other countries to clarify the meaning of the Concepts?

**The opinions of the delegates varied very much. Some delegates felt that such people may arise interest in the Concepts.**

**On the other hand, the delegates mentioned some potential disadvantages, such as language problems, differences in structures between individual countries or lack of interest in the Concepts themselves.**

5. Taking into consideration the spirit of Concept XI, how do we encourage former prison inmates to do service work in prisons?

**According to individual countries' regulations, former prison inmates may take a few years before they are available to do service work in prisons. Yet, they can be very helpful as a source of useful information how to handle matters in prisons, which does not require their physical presence there.**

**Hence, regarding the spirit of Concept XI, the delegates felt that it is the trustees' responsibility to encourage former prison inmates to get them involved in service.**

6. Select a theme for the 17<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting Workshop

**The theme decided on was '*How to Attract and Retain Young People in AA*'.**

7. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 17<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting Workshop

**Chairman – Bjorn K, Norway**

**Alternate – Robert VB, Malta**



## Workshop “Awareness, Education & Information”

Chairman: **Kristin L.** Norway

Alternate: **Pavol G.** Slovakia

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Luc F.	Belgium (Flemish)	Piju Z.	Malta
Marc B.	FSE France	Kristin L.	Norway
Penny A.	Great Britain	Victor M.	Portugal
Kelly B.	Greenland	Pavol G.	Slovakia
Gudrun F E.	Iceland	Angel G.	Spain
Tony D.	Ireland	Jan-Ola J.	Sweden
Ilze K.	Latvia	Martin S.	Switzerland (German)

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

1. How does your country prepare its members with reference to speaking at information meetings, prison work, school information, detox institutions etc..?

**Most countries have guidelines (even CDs, books and other material) for Public Information work. Some have workshops and seminars, some have special meetings, all of them practice service sponsoring and they all share experience as thoroughly as possible.**

2. To what extent are the groups in your country covered by insurance? Is there a general insurance for all groups, is each Group individually insured or are the groups not insured at all?

**Most countries go with the autonomy of the groups, so either the groups have individual insurances or none. In some countries, regions or intergroups are taking care of insurance packages, in one country the GSB insures all the group facilities.**

3. Share experience of AA's co-operation in matters of government alcohol policy.

**Most of the countries cooperate with their governments without affiliation. All of them try to inform about AA and our solution. They avoid discussions, but participate in campaigns and conferences, always being aware of our traditions. Some have very good experiences with their Non-Alcoholics to do this PI work and as being door openers.**

4. Do you send information on a regular basis from General Service Office/General Service Board to the groups, if so what information, message do you include in the correspondence?

**Different kinds of internal information reaches the groups by.**

- **Website**
- **Emails**
- **Snail mail (letters)**
- **Newsletters, bulletins**
- **Magazines**
- **Reports**
- **Protocols, all of it mainly on a regular basis.**

**The information reaches the groups either directly or through service structure.**

5. 'Old-Timers' Committee or Group:
- a) Does your country have a group of experienced service workers or have you had one in the past?
  - b) How about rotation?
  - c) What tasks do they deal with? (Education, Awareness and Information?)
  - d) What is the criteria to be a member of the committee?

**Most countries do not take advantage of their old-timers' experiences within their structure. Only one country uses the "policy group" of old-timers for difficult questions and matters, another country has to have one old-timer on their GSB. At conventions one county sets up a special "long-timer meeting" and also asks some of them to speak at other occasions.**

**Different countries define old-timers or long-timers differently, but they are all subject to rotation.**

6. Select a theme for the 17<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting Workshop

**The theme for the 17<sup>th</sup> ESM Workshop is 'Working with young people'**

7. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 17<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting Workshop

**Chairman – Gudrun E, Iceland**

**Alternate – Marc B, FSE France**

## **Workshop: Working with Tradition Seven – “Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions”**

Chairman: **Jim T.** Great Britain

Alternate: **Ana M V.** Spain

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James V.	Belgium (Flemish)	Piotr H.	Poland
Ludwig T.	Czech Republic	Manuel M. de M.	Portugal
Helle V.	Denmark	Dorel S.	Romania
Toivo T.	Estonia	Mikhail Y.	Russian Federation
Juha P.	Finland	Jarmila K.	Slovakia
Jim T.	Great Britain	Sasha Ana Z.	Slovenia
Raimonds L.	Latvia	Ana M V.	Spain
Ramunas P.	Lithuania		

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

1. Is the background of the Seventh Tradition clearly understood by members, groups, the services and the Fellowship as a whole?

**Most members understand the concept of Tradition 7 and while groups discuss this Tradition sometimes mistakes are made in the practice of it.**

2.

- a) What is the general attitude towards groups who do not make any financial contribution to AA?

**Some groups refuse to contribute towards the service structure beyond their group, but there is an awareness that there are groups that have a difficulty with their own group responsibilities but would, should their circumstances change.**

- b) In your country, what is generally understood in the term “Declining outside contributions?”

**It was the general experience that most countries do not accept outside contributions.**

- c) Can (should) AA refuse an inheritance?

**Some of the delegates from our workshop today shall be discussing the question of inheritance within their country as today it was outside their personal experience. There were others like Great Britain and Netherlands that do accept on agreed inheritances. This is a sum that has already been discussed, agreed passed by all concerned.**

- d) In your country, is there a limit imposed on the contribution of the individual members, and where is this limit documented?

**Yes, there is a contribution limit imposed on individual members in most of the countries represented in this workshop today. These limits can range from 30 Euros to £10,000. There are other countries where the limit was discussed and raised at differing times. There are some others who have not experienced a contribution limit as yet but thought it to be a helpful discussion to raise within their service structure considering what the future may bring.**

3. What problems are facing your country's AA structure with regard to Tradition Seven, and how is your country planning to solve some of these problems?

**Although the committee adhered to the chairman's request to keep comments brief it was sadly impossible to reply to all questions written given the limited time available.**

4. Tradition Seven suggests that each group has a responsibility to share in the support of AA services.

- a) What is done in your country to encourage the understanding that all services are totally dependent on the contributions of members.

**Although the committee adhered to the chairman's request to keep comments brief it was sadly impossible to reply to all questions written given the limited time available.**

- b) Does your country rely on fund-raising within the Fellowship to support services, i.e. charging registration fees for conventions or making appeals to groups for contributions, if so can such a reliance be contrary to Tradition Seven?

**Although the committee adhered to the chairman's request to keep comments brief it was sadly impossible to reply to all questions written given the limited time available.**

5. Have there been any breaches of the Seventh Tradition in your country, and if so what was the outcome?

**Although the committee adhered to the chairman's request to keep comments brief it was sadly impossible to reply to all questions written given the limited time available.**

6. Select a theme for the 17<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting Workshop.

**The majority voted for 'Utilising the Service Structure as a Way to Carry the Message Within the Fellowship' for the 2013 workshop theme.**

7. Elect a Chairman and Alternate for the 17<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting Workshop.

**Chairman – Piotr H, Poland**

**Alternate – Helle V, Denmark**



# Sharing Session & Closing Addresses

## **Sharing Session**

### **Presentations on the Theme: “Unity as Our Safeguard”**

#### **Johannes H (Iceland)**

My name is Jóhannes and I'm an alcoholic. I am happy to be here with you all to talk on the subject of the Source of Hope.

I was fourteen years old when I started drinking alcohol, which was not considered unusual among my friends in those days. I was just an uncouth youngster and got carried away with the effects of this intoxicant. The years went by and my drinking

increased slowly but surely until it became difficult for my family, knowing that I was drinking for three days straight, like I was doing back then, only 19 years old. In spite of the drinking I got through school, both high school and then technical college, managing to finish my education. After I met and married my wife, my drinking soon became quite an obstacle in our relationship. My wife and members of my family started to pressure me on the subject, that this just would not do now that I was supposed to be a responsible head of household. Then we had our first child and that was when I tried for the first time to control my drinking. I started promising not to buy more than one day's supply of alcohol at a time, and even succeeded occasionally, but quite often I ended up at some bar with guys like me, drinking and making a fool of myself.

Finally it got to the point where people were seriously starting to lean on me to do something about the problem, saying that there were individuals who had managed to quit drinking and still had great lives without alcohol. But I was totally opposed to the idea that it was possible to live without drinking, because it had become such a huge factor in my life and alcohol made it easier for me to sort out my difficulties in life. My wife became active in Al-Anon and began working on herself, and I immediately noticed a change in her attitude towards me. She started leaving brochures about AA around and tried to initiate conversations on the subject in that way. It finally got to the point where my drinking had become so difficult for me that I started to think that this had got to stop, because I was beginning to be so exhausted after my drunks, starting to have black-outs and my shaking had become noticeable.

One day after one of my bouts I asked my wife to call one of her friends to come and see me. I got a visit from a gentleman who said he'd been in AA for ten years and invited me to come with him to an AA meeting. Thus began a difficult chapter in my life. I started going to AA meetings and saw people there and listened to their stories of success in their sobriety beyond belief, at least in my opinion, and I had a hard time believing this could be true. But I became interested and started listening and started to glimpse a little spark of hope that I too, might achieve such success in my life. But that spark didn't develop into a flame because I was too far gone at that time. I went to many AA meetings but went back to drinking off and on and began to sense that I could not continue on like this if I wanted to attain the kind of success those folks in the meetings had been telling me about. That I would have to do a little bit more than just showing up at meetings and listen to them tell me what I had to do to achieve the kind of success they had.

Eventually the time came when I had the opportunity to go into rehab for help and education in an insulated environment. I went into rehab twice, both times I lost my enthusiasm for it and any hope of improvement I had disappeared. After one especially hard bender I once again was offered an opportunity to enter rehab, but this time something happened that I can only understand as an awakening of some sort. I thought, this is no way to live and thought back to what



those people in all those meetings had done to succeed, and decided I had to make some effort myself to achieve that success. So I started to read the AA book and the 12 steps and a lot of the AA literature. Finally I started to become hopeful that I could have the kind of life my friends in AA had. Although I could not always understand everything in the literature, I understood the part in Chapter 5 of the AA book where it says:

“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program...”

After that rehabilitation I started feeling better about my decision, that this was a much better life. I began to reach weeks and months of sobriety without so much as a thought of drinking, because my faith in and expectation of the program was to attain success in my new healthy normal life.

I have dedicated myself completely to the AA program and with each passing year I become more and more satisfied with the decision I made. It helps me to share my experience, strength and hope with other AA men and women, which continues to sustain my faith that this program gives help for recovery and hope.

Today I have been clean and sober for 17 years and would never wish to exchange my years of using alcohol for what I have today. It is a large part of my life to work the 12th step in AA and carry the message of hope that people can attain a better life if they quit drinking and using drugs.

**Chantal D (Switzerland – FSE)**

This theme should be highly inspirational and surprisingly, I am speechless.

I can't recall if and what I was hoping from life, for my life, I was so full of resentment !

As a child, in my family circle, I have soon found out that I couldn't trust the people around me, I was feeling rejected, because different from the others but when I look at the pictures of my past, I just see a pretty little girl so why was I different, why did I feel rejected ? And on top of it, rejected by people more in distress and culturally more disadvantaged than me. But this is something I discovered long after. As a kid, I just felt disliked.

Rejected ? Probably this hyper-sensitivity which made me suffer most of my life was already at work, but simply, at that moment, I didn't know how to handle it and have been unable for another good part of my path in this world. But not only this hyper-sensitivity.

I grew up with a aunt and an uncle who had practically “kidnapped” me from my mother, a younger sister of my uncle in fact. She didn't really fought to have me

back because in the middle of the last century, it was not easy for a young woman to have a baby outside of marriage, to be a single mother.

For those who know the French author Emile Zola, well some of his books reflects what has been my childhood: poverty, insecurity, fear and above all, loneliness. There was no hope around me, just fight for surviving.

When I encountered with alcohol, at the age of 16, I thought I had found the remedy to calm and cool down this never ending suffering, uneasiness versus the rest of the world, versus my human brothers, a remedy against shyness also.

And alcohol has continued to be my remedy until that day when, exhausted, defeated by my so called "friend", I knocked at the door of an AA local in my home town.

It's only after several weeks that I began to understand the depth of the program, that not only was I suggested to stay away from the product but also suggested to drastically change my way of behaving, thinking, etc.. and this is when by the same token I have found HOPE.

At last ! because I had found the "instructions for use", the program was showing me, giving me all this. I had the tools to help me react to the facts of life.

Gradually, today, I can say that the word hope is replaced in my mind by the word TRUST. I now have full confidence in my higher power, confidence that if I keep my mind open and aware, I will be given signs that I'm now able to see and interpret as a guides on what my HP is willing for me.

I have learnt to trust life, myself. My vision of the world has changed and my view towards it is definitely positively orientated simply because I have confidence, confidence that I can go through pitfalls the destiny might place on my way without going back to the old "me", one day at a time of course and by practicing and applying our program in my day-to-day life.

The only one HOPE that I have presently is that the still suffering alcoholics, anywhere in the world, will find the path to an AA meeting.

And I can't say how much gratitude and love I have for the Alcoholics Anonymous.

## **Closing Addresses**

### **Ana V (Spain)**

Hi, my name is Ana and I am an alcoholic. Yesterday, when Jacek told me about writing something of my experience as a second term delegate, at the same time as I expressed my willingness to do it, my thoughts were "Oh really, I shouldn't be here!" This is because two years ago I was not supposed to come, but I had to because the lady who was the second term Spanish delegate couldn't, and I took her place and, oh my God, her responsibility. It was exciting but also scary because as a matter of fact it was my first task as a trustee of the Spanish GSB and I had to play the role of having more experience whether I had the experience or not.

Then as you can see, my story is of the little poor two eyed second term delegate, and it sounds like the tale of the little country girl who went to town and entered, to find within it was all that she has ever imagined or even dreamt about but never seen before.

The first day, when the delegates were reporting the highlights, I was wondering how big AA is. Could we go over so many differences, we are too much strange people here. But after two days work I caught a little sight, something that made me feel comfortable and sure. Oh yes, we are diverse indeed, languages, cultures, structure sizes, different indeed, but the principals are still the same and we have the same purpose and will. Not based on Spanish, or Russian, or Greenlandic, or Czech message, but based only on AA as a whole message or

experience, strength and hope. And with this idea in my mind I notice how my feelings of belonging to something wider and bigger than my home group, my Intergroup, my national structure we are increasing and now two years later I'm here again, a second term delegate today.

But now to come together does not make me so afraid as it was, because I have realized that with all the different languages, cultures, structures, the level. United all of us with the safeguard and principles are the tools to make it possible and to continue the spirit. Thank you all for your passion and kindness, God bless you.

## **Lothar U (Austria)**

Hello my name is Lothar and I am an alcoholic. I am the European and world delegate of Austria and South Tyrol. And I was born in Poland and I was learning, from the first class in school, Polish, Russian and German. So later on I got out of Poland and I was living in Berlin and after my studying I was living for two and a half years in South Africa.

So I return to Germany again and I get married and we have two nice children and I started drinking, very much, I think like everyone here! I was doing this a very long time till age 46 and it was over 20 years. I couldn't stop drinking from one day to the other one, I was starting to pray to my Gods to help stop me drinking or maybe to drink a little bit less, but it doesn't work to drink less. So I come to a hospital for six weeks and I was learning something about alcohol and from this time I don't drink anymore and my way was going directly to AA.

So I was doing a lot of service and I was also last year at the WSM in Mexico and I enjoyed it very much. I am very happy now that I got the privilege of joining you this weekend here in Frankfurt on the 16<sup>th</sup> ESM and I am grateful for the opportunity to enjoy two times the European Service Meeting. I hope I can see a few of you next year in New York. Thank you.

## **Jan-Ola J (Sweden)**

Dear Friends, I am Jan-Ola from Sweden and I am an alcoholic. I am not a country girl, but I am indeed a country boy, I actually come from the middle of nowhere. I was indeed kind of nervous and insecure when I was here the first time two years ago and I was nervous indeed but I decided, due to the fact that all the others were as well, not to be nervous anymore. Because a very, very important issue is that you are among friends, there is absolutely no one that wants to kick you in the ass! It is very important to know this, and it was obvious in Mexico as well and all of us need to keep in mind that there are no stupid questions, and in this society there are no stupid answers either, which is very important to know!

I got the job to report on the event in Mexico and then report it back again, very nice work. I was left alone because of the lack of economy in Sweden, so I had to go alone to Mexico as a rookie and, if you like cold feet it was a wonderful idea. But I like to have pressure on me, it makes me work better when I have that kind of thing, and thank you very much for letting me do that.

The thing that I've learnt is the problems are very, very similar in the different countries. Some other countries are going ahead of us, they have solved their problems, normally, and some of them are coming after us and I'll tell you again that the problems are very similar. Therefore it is very important to build up this kind of relationship with different people, I think this is very nice for that.

I suppose the only thing that I can say now is that it is kind of sad to leave you, but I can live with it! No, it is sad to leave your hands and as a conclusion I would say the confusion is still the same but on a higher level! Thank you.

## **Phyllis Halliday – General Manager, GSO USA/Canada**

My name is Phyllis and I am an alcoholic. It is a great privilege to be here with you at your 16<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting and a great honor to have the opportunity to have a closing address here at your meeting. But before I begin I want to be certain that we can all celebrate Jacek and his fine work that he did with us this weekend in his role as chairman and his leadership of the committees. We've already heard from Ann and also I wanted to recognize her in her last year at the European Service Meeting and also her great support from Great Britain that have assisted so generously and so well over the years and certainly over this weekend, as well as the support that we have here with the secretaries. I would like to thank them and I would like to thank you as well because I have such gratitude and admiration for your service that you have shown us this weekend and please take that back to your individual countries because there is much work that you have done and that is so valuable and you can share with each other and so thank you from the bottom of our hearts from GSO.

Our AA literature frequently comments on unity and I'm going to be sharing many quotes in my closing on unity as I move along in my closing address. And I'll begin with a quote, the short form of the first Tradition says "Our common welfare comes first; personal recovery depends on AA unity." Unity is a critical need for us because the whole basis of AA depends on members sharing their experience with others. In the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Bill W wrote "the moment twelve Step work forms a group a discovery is made that most individuals cannot recover unless there is a group. Realization dawns on each member that he is but a part of a great whole, that no personal sacrifice is too great for preservation of the Fellowship." In whatever language we communicate, whether we share face to face or through electronic media, in whatever country, island, village or neighborhood we live, our purpose is so simple, so completely spiritual and so absolutely necessary, that each of us stay sober and carry the AA message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic. This was certainly reaffirmed by our meeting last night when we shared on AA- the source of hope.

How we work together. In 1943 Bill W wrote to an AA member and shared that "the grim fact is that we alcoholics, as people, who are slowly dying of a fatal malady must learn to work together or perish. Honesty with ourselves and others got us dry but it is tolerance that keeps us that way." Today with our estimated worldwide membership in excess of 2 million we still must continue to work together or perish. It takes more than one alcoholic to keep the flame of hope burning, it takes all of

us. Unity did not appear in a flash of light. None of our legacies, including the Steps, were achieved without trouble or difficulty; they were brought about through struggle and conflict. Time and again since the beginning of our fellowship the importance of and need for AA unity has been demonstrated.

The European Service Meeting is a powerful example of unity in action and I wanted to review just a few of the points that we covered over the weekend. We talked about Tradition Seven and the challenges of self support through our own contributions. We also covered a broad variety of communication between literature – all the translations that help us carry the message and establishing a new database looking at our structure as far as how we communicate, back and forth, up and down inside the triangle. We talked about snail mail, which we all agreed was paper! Then on into electronic and into the new digital media and the challenges we face with anonymity.

We talked about inventory of Board and Groups and Conferences and the importance of that, not only the individual but the members of the group. We also touched on country sponsorship and the importance of sponsorship, not only individually but country to country as far as visiting other groups, visiting other structures and taking that sharing and bringing it back. And how unifying that is, despite differences and the distances we must continue that sharing.

Also we talked about service committees and how we reach out to treatment centres and corrections and working in prisons and how we go about that as individuals and as groups and as committees. We also talked about concepts and the mystery of concept, the challenge of concepts, we love them in the US!

And then lastly we talked about meetings and groups and how discussions about types, sharing, discussion and what that was. We talked about inclusion in AA and are going to be addressing young people in AA at the next European Service Meeting. We also talked about Old Timers and the value of everyone, everyone that makes up our meetings as membership. And lastly we talked about the emphasis on spiritual not religious of our whole entire fellowship.

Each of us represents a national or regional fellowship united in efforts to find ways to better carry our message and to share the solutions that have evolved from our own experience. Other zonal meetings have taken place this year where these very same efforts are unfolding. We will be hosting the 22<sup>nd</sup> World Service Meeting in Rye, New York in October 2012 where we expect many delegates and many countries to attend that reaffirm our example of ruled by unity.

The life and hope of new generations joining us depends on the unity. It is our responsibility as individual members and of various countries structures to do our best to provide continuity and effectively work together to pass along the gifts of this legacy. We may not always have perfect harmony among ourselves but the

miracle of AA is that through the grace of God and the practice of AA principles in spite of any differences we can be led to a greater wholeness. If we continue to listen, to learn, to change and grow with each other the core of internal harmony will remain solid so that our primary purpose can be carried out most effectively. One thing is certain, there would be no hope for any alcoholic anywhere if the collective pulse of this lifesaving spiritual fellowship were not lighting the way with love and trust.

Perhaps the ESM is truly coming of age. It seems that when Bill wrote this letter in 1949 to an AA member it certainly is as true today as it was then. He wrote "Pioneering is done, our infancy is over. We of Alcoholics Anonymous are entering upon adult responsibilities to ourselves, to the alcoholic just coming in our doors, to the million sufferers who have not yet heard of us, unto the world in which we live. Today AA knows no boundaries, whether these be of geography, of race or creed. To be sure we've had our little troubles, our pains of growth. But these are of nothing compared to the monumental and basic unity we still enjoy in every land. All of this of course is based on a deep conviction of our common suffering, upon the sight of a united procession marching out into the light of day", and Bill continues "Next to sobriety, to life itself, this great gift of oneness is our most treasured possession. As sobriety means long life and happiness for the individual so does unity mean exactly the same thing to our society as a whole. Unified we live, disunited we shall perish".

So as we go our separate ways I am certain we will continue to place trust and faith in one another and of course with our higher power. If by example we can demonstrate the spiritual principal, that as a group as a whole we are much stronger and much more united than any single part. I thank you so much and God speed as you go home.

## **Jacek C (Poland) – Chairman of the 16<sup>th</sup> ESM**

I have the privilege to say the last words, except the last words will be the serenity prayer, said altogether. I'm a bit terrified, water, water! There was a Polish movie where a man lies on the street and we don't know what's going on with him, if he's died or something, and a lady started to shout "Water, water, water!" and suddenly this man opened one eye and said "Beer, you idiot!"



My name's Jacek and I'm an alcoholic. It's been busy but a very exciting weekend. Time passed so quickly and what started two days ago has to end very soon. You know my language is limiting me to express my feelings and my thoughts right now but let me say first, thank you for the opportunity to serve you in that specific way. Fortunately, we've all survived! In AA and in my real life I'm facing new challenges and sometimes I don't know what's going on with me and what is the plan, but I've learned not to discuss with that plan.

The 16<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting will be an unforgettable event; I'm quite sure, to all of us. All of those country reports, presentations, Q&A sessions, keynote and closing addresses, AA sharing meeting, with a topic of course, endless and emotional talks of the love, with a real mixture of experience, strength and hope... hope of a new freedom, a new happiness, and a new joyousness for the countless people who still suffer from alcoholism. We don't have to walk far from any place to see them.

Thanks to all of the delegates, especially for those who have had to fight many difficulties to get to this place. Thank you to those whose countries' structures are less developed, for their enthusiasm and hard work. Thank you to those whose structures are very well developed, for their experience and for supporting the others, for the visible and physical signs of AA love.

Sometimes people, knowing that I'm a trusted servant ask me "OK, what is the direct link between a body such as the European Service Meeting and the still suffering alcoholic?" My answer is based on my own experience. It's not about Europe but I think it shows the mechanism. A couple of years ago I heard about the International Literature Fund for the very first time. As a delegate I shared that message to the Polish Board and the Board decided to support that fund on a regular basis. Then I heard two years later that among many languages the Big Book was translated and printed in Swahili. I don't recall why I remember Swahili, but I just do. I don't know even in which African countries Swahili is spoken but I am sure the academics amongst you will tell me. I thought to myself OK, maybe thanks to our support, maybe thanks to that particular information some drunken guy or woman in some African country where Swahili is spoken read the Big Book and got sober, who knows? You never know..... that's the answer.

Last but not least, let me thank our guests from GSO New York, for the presence of experience. Also Ann, for keeping an eye on every single detail. The European Information Service Office and Angela, for everything, and the secretaries and hotel staff.

Sorry for my mistakes but I am just a living guy, a living alcoholic, I am not your normal spiritual guru. Once again, thank you very much. I would like to say about gratitude, but when I start to talk about gratitude I always see the face of my

sponsor with a bit of a sarcastic face saying "Hey, don't tell me about gratitude, show me gratitude!"

God bless all of you and safe journey home. Thank you very much.