

# UNIFYING AND SAFEGUARDING OUR FELLOWSHIP



**23<sup>RD</sup> EUROPEAN  
SERVICE MEETING  
17<sup>TH</sup> – 19<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025**

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## European Service Meeting

# Statement of Purpose

The primary purpose of the European Service Meeting is the same as that of all AA activity – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he may be, whatever the language he speaks. The European Service meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates who come together from all parts of Europe. It can also represent an expression of the Group Conscience throughout Europe.

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

## Summary

Delegates from twenty-eight European countries gathered together at the Radisson Hotel, York, from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> October 2025 to take part in the 23<sup>rd</sup> European Service Meeting (ESM).

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

Austria	Latvia
Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	Lithuania
Bulgaria	Netherlands
Croatia	Norway
Czech Republic	Poland
Denmark	Portugal
Finland	Romania
French Speaking Europe	Russia
Germany	Slovakia
Great Britain	Slovenia
Greece	Spain
Hungary	Sweden
Iceland	Turkey
Ireland	Latvia

On Friday afternoon registration and reception took place which gave delegates a chance to meet the first timers, catch up with those they had met before, and to get settled into the hotel ready for the weekend.

The Twenty Third European Service Meeting was opened by the Chair, Moira S (Ireland), with a moment's silence. She welcomed all delegates as well as Ranjan B, the General Secretary (EIC) and the staff from Great Britain, and last but not least Patrick C - International Coordinator, from the General Service Office (GSO), United States/Canada. Following the reading of the 12 Traditions a roll call was held, and all attendees were invited to introduce themselves. A moment of silence was also held for two previous ESM delegates who sadly passed away, Regis C, French Speaking Europe, and Giovanni B, Italy. She then gave an opening address which was inspirational and uplifting, thus setting the mood for the whole of the weekend.

Following the Welcome and Opening Address was the Keynote Address, which was presented by Patrick C, International Coordinator, GSO New York. He also gave a presentation about AA World Services Translation & Licensing Publishing, which included a financial report on both the International Literature Fund and the World Service Meeting (WSM) account.

These were followed by a presentation on the 28<sup>th</sup> WSM which was given by Jony F-T (Netherlands) and Maija T (Latvia).

Ranjan B, General Secretary, EIC, gave a short talk on the ESM Fund and highlighted a surplus in the account. After being properly proposed and seconded it was agreed that the surplus of \$25,000 be transferred into the WSM Fund.

To conclude, one delegate from each of AA's national structures was then invited to share brief highlights of activities which had taken place in their country since the last ESM in 2023, which was both interesting and informative.

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). All the committee reports were approved unanimously.

Saturday evening allowed a little time for relaxation with the Sharing meeting. Presentations were given by Miguel L (Portugal) and Radoslava S (Bulgaria) on the theme: "Unifying and Safeguarding our Fellowship through Good Service Leadership". This was followed by general sharing around the room.

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

On Sunday morning business concerning the 23<sup>rd</sup> ESM was conducted. Following elections we were delighted to welcome Karolina M (Czech Republic) as Chair of the 24<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting to be held in 2027. A vote was taken and it was decided that the theme for the next ESM will be 'Unchanged Message in the Changing World'.

Sandor Á (Hungary) and Vilma K (Lithuania) will prepare a report to the 29<sup>th</sup> WSM 2026 on this 23<sup>rd</sup> ESM. They will also report back to the 24<sup>th</sup> ESM in 2027 on the 29<sup>th</sup> WSM.

The Agenda Committee for the 24<sup>th</sup> ESM will consist of the following:

Karolina M, Czech Republic	Chair of the 24 <sup>th</sup> ESM
Ranjan Bhattacharyya	General Secretary EIC
Ilze V, Latvia	Chair of the Service Committee
Jacqueline D, Belgium (Flemish Speaking)	Chair of the Recovery Committee
Jim M, Great Britain	Chair of the Unity Committee

The Agenda Committee will meet during the summer of 2026 to discuss all questions forwarded to them via the EIC. The programme of the 24<sup>th</sup> ESM will be finalised, and the agenda set.

Discussions were held on the proposal to invite members from developing structures outside of Europe to attend the ESM as observers. It was unanimously agreed that we do so for the next ESM. Following this decision, it was agreed that the Agenda Committee be tasked with developing a process to identify and invite potential observers at their meeting in 2026, which will be ready to action at the 29<sup>th</sup> WSM.

To finalise the weekend addresses were given by Karolina M (Czech Republic), Carmen P (Slovenia), Levey P (Great Britain), and Gunnar Á (Belgium - Iceland), all of whom shared their positive experiences, some recounting their memories of the weekend and others of the years leading up to this ESM.

Finally, Moira S (Ireland) our Chair, closed the 23<sup>rd</sup> ESM with an uplifting address, highlighting the importance of the minority opinion, and which looked to the future with great encouragement.

To bring the meeting to a close all delegates were invited to take turns to share the Serenity Prayer in their native language, ending with all delegates speaking the Serenity Prayer in English as one.

# **Agenda Digest of the 23<sup>rd</sup> European Service Meeting 2025**

## **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October**

Welcome and Opening Address

Twelve Traditions

Roll Call

Keynote Address

AA World Service Translation and Licensing Publishing Report

Report on the ESM Fund

World Service Meeting Report

Country Reports

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

Committee Meetings

Workshops

Presentation & discussion following Committee Reports

Questions and Answers Session

AA Sharing Meeting on the theme: *“Unifying our fellowship through good leadership”*

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

Presentation & Discussion Workshop Reports

Questions and Answers Session

24<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting

- Time and Place
- Election of Chair
- Selection of theme for 24<sup>th</sup> ESM
- Selection of (1st term) ESM Delegate to prepare ESM Report for World Service
- Meeting (WSM) 2026 and report back to the 24<sup>th</sup> ESM in 2027
- Formation of the Agenda Committee

Closing Addresses

Close of 23<sup>rd</sup> European Service Meeting 2025

Serenity Prayer in all languages

# Opening Presentations



## **WELCOME ADDRESS**

### **“ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN A CHANGING WORLD”**

#### **CHAIR – MOIRA S, IRELAND**

Good afternoon, everyone. I am Moira and I am alcoholic. It is an honor and a privilege to be your chair for this 23rd European Service Meeting. I thank you sincerely for giving me the opportunity to serve in our fellowship.

I welcome you all: ESM delegates from all over Europe, our A.A. guests from US/ Canada, and the ever-supportive staff from the General Service Office here in York who contribute to the smooth running of this meeting. And would you please take a moment with me to remember Giovanni from Italy and Regis from Belgium, our trusted servants who we lost in the last year.

I remember my first European Service Meeting – it was online four years ago. I watched the chair lead the meeting with humility and love and I thought: what a lovely thing to do, I would love to chair the European Service Meeting. So be careful what you wish for – I am delighted to be with you here again, old friends and new friends.

Our theme for this year's gathering is Unifying and Safeguarding our Fellowship. Our founders were well aware of the dangers of disunity and disharmony to the future of AA. It is no wonder then that they placed so much emphasis on UNITY. It is one of the three legacies – RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE – on our three-sided triangle. And with the 12 Traditions, we have been given clear principles that guide us in achieving and sustaining unity in our relationships with each other. In the April 1946 edition of the Grapevine, Bill W. wrote an early form of our traditions in his article “Twelve Suggested Points for A.A. Tradition”. The emphasis was on agreement and consent with each other: ‘An Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition of Relations – Twelve Points to Assure our Future’. The first Tradition ‘Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity’ reminds us of how we are a small part of a great whole and that we always need put the welfare of the fellowship first, and our own welfare closely afterwards. It asks me to have the humility and open mindedness to set aside my ego and be right sized in my group, area, intergroup, conference and European Service Meeting, so that they can work in harmony. And as I have learned from those before me, achieving harmony does not mean quieting difference. Rather, in unique AA fashion, I am invited to embrace the minority opinion, to have a minority opinion of my own without trying to force it on anyone. And that is tough for an alcoholic.

Instead, AA has given me a recovery path where I can be at peace with myself, in personal unity. I pray not to be driven by selfish desire for power or prestige but to look to the light of being an elder stateswoman who accepts change, acts with wisdom and sound judgment, is a quiet, supportive presence for my group. Rather this than be a bleeding deacon, convinced that the group can't function without me, trying to regain power all the time, full of self-pity that at worst would lead me to a drink!

So, this unity within and without is serious business. Yes, we do have free will, but we cannot do as we wish. If any action threatens our common welfare, the group can step in and draw on the traditions to bring about unity. Our common welfare, as our founders knew, is protected by these powerful safeguards.

Our structures also have safeguarding policies in place to protect our singleness of purpose whether in a meeting, taking part in telephone service, going into a prison, meeting a vulnerable adult, and even with data protection. These resources or materials are guidelines, integrated into our fellowship to help groups safeguard members. We need not tolerate unacceptable behavior at any level of our structures; our members have the right to feel secure, respected, loved and safe in meetings and whilst going about AA service or business.

The unifying principles that underscore our traditions have allowed the doors of our fellowship to remain open until today and will do into the future for the still suffering alcoholic. They work when we work them. We are still here. And many more will join our fellowship.

As our co-founder said: 'May we never forget that without permanent unity we can offer little lasting relief to those scores of thousands yet to join us in their quest for freedom'. We need two volunteers for the morning meditation meetings. Please see Sophie so that she can give you a key to get into this room for the meeting. It's a lovely thing to do I have done it myself.

And I wish you all a wonderful ESM.

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

### **“ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN A CHANGING WORLD”**

#### **PATRICK C, INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR, GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE, UNITED STATES/CANADA**

Hello friends, my name is Patrick C., and I am an alcoholic who came into the rooms of AA in June 1992. I am the newly rotated US/Canada Service Structure's, General Service Office International Desk Staff Member, following in the footsteps of Irene D. This is my first international trip in my new role, and I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in two zonal meetings, the 24th REDELA in Santa Cruz, Bolivia which I left a little early, to come here and be with you all at this 23rd European Service Meeting, in York UK. It is an honour to be among you.

I bring you greetings from the General Service Office of AA, US and Canada. I also bring you greetings from the members of my home group named, Fastbreak in New York City which meets twenty-four times a week in both in-person and virtual meetings.

The topic asked of me to consider is “Unifying and Safeguarding our Fellowship.” My first thought was who is responsible for these important principled actions? Each of us could come up with a short list such as, AA members, AA groups, and all the people who step into trusted servant roles or paid special worker positions across the world in all our service structures. In addition to the friends of AA who we are reaching out and communicating with to support and expand carrying the message of AA. An interesting perspective I am quickly gaining about our various service structures is that each is at a different stage of growth along the pathway of development. Similar to our individual sober journeys.

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 depend our lives, and the lives of those to come. In the Twelve and Twelve, p. 133, Bill W. says, "The unity of AA 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 AA 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. 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.

From the moment I walked into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous the members I met have tried to communicate the concept of unity to me. That I was welcome and that I, yes me, could be a part of this Fellowship. The issue I had with this new idea is that I was still living just fine with my old ones. I still felt like I didn't and couldn't fit in anywhere for so many personal and unique reasons.

I felt “different” than everyone else, because I hadn’t the opportunity yet to share about myself and realize that I am you, when it comes to my alcoholism.

Plus, I was very hardheaded from the beginning. Each spiritual tool that was laid at my feet required me to pick it up, examine it, debate it with my sponsor(s), and WAIT to put it into practice. Yes, I said sponsor(s) because I kept having to ask a new one for help when the current sponsor I had was tired of me saying NO to the action being suggested for me to take. These sober waiting periods led me to feel more spiritual and emotional pain until I become willing to try a new path. As usual, once I tried the pathway to sobriety, I began to experience positive results, continuous sobriety and emotional and spiritual growth. One experience I had to walk through in early recovery was the idea that I liked to feel superior to others. I fell into a crowd in the rooms of AA who like to pass judgement on others who were not “doing the program right.” I liked the thought that somehow, I was in with those who had the edge on the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. They called themselves the “God Squad.” I liked when they shared in the meetings, that I would hang on their every word as if it was better than what others were sharing. I would nod my head and certainly tried to follow their guidance. Well pride becomes before the fall. I learned the lesson we are all human beings and putting my faith in individuals in the program will lead to them faltering on their pedestals. The lesson in unity for me was that I needed to switch my beginnings of faith from individuals to the groups of drunks at the meetings I was attended.

Our worldwide service structures are in place to support twelfth step work to occur, to help us to develop better tools and be in the right channels of communication for carrying the message. In addition, to ensure that our message of recovery from alcoholism is sharable to anyone and everyone who wants it. Unity is at the heart of all these activities. We have achieved a wonderful unity of vital essentials. Bill W. wrote in September 1945 an article titled “‘Rules’ Dangerous, but Unity vital” and shared, “For example, the Twelve Steps of our program are not crammed down anyone’s throat. They are not sustained by any human authority. Yet, we powerfully unite around them because the truth they contain has saved our lives, has opened the door to a new world. Our experience tells us these universal truths work.

Another personal experience I dealt with regarding feeling a lack of unity in the rooms of AA was because I happened to be a gay man and an alcoholic. Today it seems ridiculous to me, because I am simply Patrick C., wherever I go. But back then it was a barrier I felt I could not overcome. The issue impacted me in several ways. One, I thought I would not be accepted and could not be a part of. Another was I felt like I could not relate to the other group members at all. So, I isolated myself in the rooms of AA by only attending LGBTQ+ special interest meetings. In the end, that path for me was fine because it kept me in the rooms until I was willing to face my own reasons and ideas that needed to be discarded. This led to an awakening of my world to the full Fellowship of AA and to my place and path in my own recovery journey that has led me all the way to York, UK to meet all of you and continue to expand my Fellowship.

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.

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.

Again, it is a privilege and honour to be among you. I look forward to meeting you throughout the event. Thank you so much for my sobriety and for my life.

## **AA WORLD SERVICE TRANSLATION AND LICENSING PUBLISHING REPORT**

### **PATRICK C, INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR, GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE, UNITED STATES/CANADA**

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

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

Since that time, the General Service Office of the U.S./Canada has carried out the administration of this fund. Over the years the activity levels of assisting other countries with the cost of translating, producing, and distributing literature have been very robust. To illustrate this point, when the idea of the fund was born in 1990, the Big Book was translated into about 17 languages and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions into 3 languages. Today they are translated into 74 and 52 respectively. And that's only the translation of two books! There are so many other titles and pamphlets that have been through the same process. You can imagine the hours and efforts that went into making this possible. Without this fund, we wouldn't have been able to come close to this achievement.

The General Service Office in New York has now implemented detailed guidance to apply when utilizing these funds. We have instituted new accounting procedures that allow us to account for both inflows and outflows of the fund in full detail. Based on the many activities related to the international literature assistance we provided to other structures for literature; we are certain costs have been well in excess of the funds received. Of particular note is our investment in our technology to track translation and licensing activity, which allows us to assist countries more efficiently.

Accounting and governance policies have now been implemented along with procedures that allow for detailed and transparent reporting which has been asked of us for some time. Of note is the establishment of a separate bank account dedicated specifically to the International Literature Fund. This allows for regular reconciliation of all activity within the fund and assurance of accuracy in our reporting.

We provide interim reports to each of the zonal meetings. Our oversight policy also requires that complete fund activity be reported to the AAWS Board on a quarterly basis for review and be subsequently forwarded to the Trustees International Committee of the General Service Board for their review.

Our office provides a substantial amount services relating to licensing, translation and distribution of AA literature. We have formally updated our policies, standards and processes which have greatly improved our efficiency and ability to carry out these services to structures around the world. Included is the determination that all requests related to international literature that have costs attached are drawn from the ILF.

Since the last report to the REDELA meeting in 2023, contributions to the International Literature Fund from July 2023 through June 2025 totaled \$193,813. Outflows during the same period were \$31,474 leaving a balance in the fund to \$196,996.70. The substantial contributions to the fund are extremely heartwarming and we are very grateful for the generosity of the many structures who contributed.

I also wanted to share some thoughts regarding the World Service Meeting and the World Service Meeting Fund. As most of you are aware the US/Canadian structure provides substantial financial support with planning and logistical support from several members of our staff and also providing meals, lodging and other program costs. Although there is a fee of \$2,000 per delegate to attend the WSM, the actual cost is \$5,300.

Like many of you, our structure is dealing with financial challenges. Reductions in our literature sales and revenue combined with inflation, and the demand for additional services, have posed challenges for us that make it even more critical to bring the World Service Meeting closer to being self-supporting. Our past practices of supporting all expenses for structures to attend are no longer sustainable with today's financial realities. We also recognize that inherent within the 7th Tradition is the principle of participation and each structures responsibility to do their part the best they can.

The World Service Meeting Fund was created during the 2018 World Service Meeting. Its purpose is to provide financial support to structures around the world allowing them to attend and participate. Similar to the International Literature Fund, it is administered and maintained by AAWS. Last year's meeting was the first in-person World Service Meeting since the World Service Meeting Fund was instituted. It was immensely helpful to us and to some of you here today. We are now truly and collectively helping each other. Even with the generous contributions to the WSMF, costs to our structure were \$132,000. We will include a copy of the Final financial income report for your review. Together, we have made great progress, but we still have more work to do.

Since the last report to the REDELA meeting in 2023, contributions the World Service Meeting Fund from July 2023 through June 2025 totaled \$120,703. During the same period, support provided to countries to attend the last World Service Meeting and assistance to A.A. World Services with general planning costs were \$156,917, leaving the balance in the fund to \$860. The substantial contributions to the fund are extremely heartwarming and we are very grateful for the generosity of the many structures who contributed.

Each of these funds was created to further advance the ability to carry the lifesaving message of AA around the world through our literature and sharing experience, strength and hope with one another. Upon review of each of these reports, it is clear that more support is needed at the present time for the World Service Meeting fund. This may change as time goes on but for the time being, there is enough in the International Literature Fund to sustain support requests. Specifically, you will note in the ILF report that withdrawals are substantially less than the contributions.

For this specific reporting period, a difference of \$156,000. It would be most helpful to direct your support to the World Service Meeting Fund. If your structure has not considered additional support for next year's meeting, please consider doing so.

I recognize reaching the goal of self-support is challenging but I have faith we can find a way. All of us hold an equal Seventh Tradition responsibility to both the International Literature Fund and the World Service Meeting Fund. That said, the most important aspect of the Seventh Tradition is participation. Contributions to each of these funds, no matter what amount, all hold equal spiritual value. With this in mind, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the sacrifices so many countries around the world have made to participate. They have assisted so many countries in carrying the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic.

Thank you very much.



## REPORT ON THE 28<sup>TH</sup> WORLD SERVICE MEETING 27-31 OCTOBER 2024

### THEME: “THE THREE LEGACIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: OUR GREAT RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ALCOHOLIC BEING BORN TODAY”

#### JONY F-T, NETHERLANDS AND MAIJA T, LATVIA

On October 27–31, 2023, the 28th World Service Meeting (WSM) was held in New York City, US, with the theme “The Three Legacies in the Digital Era: Our Great Responsibility to the Alcoholic Being Born Today”. This WSM marked the largest attendance in A.A. history, with 74 delegates representing 49 different countries.

The primary purpose of the World Service Meeting is the same as that of all A.A. activity: to carry the message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers, wherever in the world they may be, whatever language they may speak. 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 WSM delegates who come together every two years from all parts of the world.

Scott H., Chair of the General Service Board U.S./Canada, opened the meeting by reflecting on how the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated A.A.’s adoption of technology. He emphasized that digital tools now play a vital role in spreading the message while our Traditions — both protective and progressive — can guide us in staying true to A.A.’s purpose.

Keynote Speaker Elene S from Lithuania presented the Keynote Address and spoke to the power of the Three Legacies in helping us carry the message forward—faithfully and fearlessly—into a digital world.

Delegates from all countries presented country highlight reports and zonal reports, offering a rich global perspective of A.A.’s development and service structures.

Four committees met during the week:

- **Agenda Committee** proposed topics for the 29th WSM, including: “Steps: Into Action and Recovery”, “Traditions: Working Together in Unity”, “Concepts: Interactions for Our Emotional Sobriety”, “The Responsibility Statement”, and “Implementation of Rotation – Benefits and Challenges.” The committee also recommended the theme ‘*Guided by all 36 Principles*’ for the 29th WSM, and workshop topics on online group integration, public information, and outside influences.
- **The Literature/Publishing Committee** discussed the impact of COVID-19 on literature distribution and ordering from AAWS and AA Grapevine

- **The Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee** reviewed participation requests for the 28th WSM. Based on the current qualification guidelines, Fiji did not yet meet the participation requirements, while the request from Honduras was approved.
- **Working With others committee** explored how countries carry the message through social media, locate Class A trustees, and use audio/video for internal and external communication.

Three workshops were held:

- “Are Our Groups Really Practicing the Traditions?”
- “Seventh Tradition: Self-Supporting in the Digital Era”
- “Online Groups in the World: Here to Stay.” Delegates also gave presentations on the following topics:
  - Are Our Groups and GSOs Doing Everything We Can to Reach the Still-Suffering Alcoholic in Our Communities
  - Paths to Embrace the New
  - Home Group: Action and Service from Gratitude
  - Service: A Debt of Gratitude
  - Diversity in A.A.: Our Heritage of Inclusion
  - Country-to-Country Sponsorship

Each committee and workshop chair reported back on the discussions held within their meetings to the full meeting; after minor changes, all reports were unanimously approved.

The WSM provided room for questions and sharing about presentation topics, a daily sharing session called *What’s on Your Mind?* offered space for open discussion. In addition to the full agenda, there was also time for a visit to the General Service Office. The well-organized outing was a truly uplifting experience for all involved and this experience has a special place in our hearts.

The Site Selection Committee chose Portugal as host country for the 29th WSM, with India as alternate.

The theme of the 29th World Service Meeting will be ‘*Guided by all 36 Principles*’.

## **Final Note**

The 28th World Service Meeting in New York reminded us that the heartbeat of our Fellowship still lies in Unity, Recovery and Service — and in our willingness to adapt.

One of the clearest lessons from this gathering was the transformative potential of digital tools — not as a replacement for our Traditions, but as a way to carry them forward. Online meetings have become a vital means of connection, especially for those living in remote or sparsely populated areas without local groups, and for people with mobility challenges who might otherwise be isolated from the Fellowship.

This heartwarming event showed us that the digital era offers A.A. the opportunity to reach new — and often younger — audiences, and to carry the message of recovery further, while carefully upholding the values of anonymity and our Twelve Traditions. By using digital tools thoughtfully and inclusively, we can expand our reach without compromising A.A.'s core principles.

Though we came from 49 different countries, our shared purpose made us one Fellowship. Guided by spiritual principles and supported by modern tools, we are now more equipped than ever to carry A.A.'s timeless message to those who still suffer — wherever they may be.

# Country Reports

# AUSTRIA

## History

Switzerland (IG I I): A.A. founded 1960; first German-speaking group 1963. Since then, steady growth with national and regional service bodies.

Austria & South Tyrol (IG I 2): Founded 1960; similar development.

## Structure

IG I I: 115 in-person & 20 online meetings; national helpline; literature in 4 languages; national service conference (Chairman Versammlung); reforms ongoing.

IG I 2: 154 in-person & 16 online meetings; helpline, literature services; national service conference (Hauptausschuss).

## Services

Both intergroups: helplines, literature distribution, public information (posters, cards, websites), cooperation with prisons and hospitals where possible.

## Sobriety for Service

Sobriety time recommendations for trusted servants are outlined in the German service manual "Handbuch Dienen in A.A.", depending on the position. Local groups and intergroups apply these guidelines in practice.

## Service Conferences

Both countries hold national service conferences. Switzerland is going through some structural changes, reports first reform results at the Autumn Chair Assembly (Nov.).

## Service Manual

Both intergroups use the "Handbuch Dienen in A.A." as their service manual. IG I I is reviewing structures and may add updated local documentation. IG I 2 applies the manual in its service processes.

## Literature

IG I I: Literature in German, French, Italian, Romansh; printed & digital. IG I 2: Uses existing German core texts; no own translations.

Sponsorship leaflets are identical across German-speaking Europe.

## Finance

Main sources: group contributions, literature sales, events. Both regions are financially stable.

## **International Cooperation**

German-speaking AA (Switzerland, Austria, Germany, South Tyrol) holds annual service conference near Cologne; joint literature, meeting info, public information. Active in European working groups and EWSC.

## **Digital Presence**

Websites and online meeting lists in place. Priority: digital access with anonymity protection.

## **Key Issues**

No safeguarding guidelines yet — development needed. Ongoing service structure reform (Switzerland).

Balancing online meetings & anonymity. Recruiting and rotating trusted servants.

## **Closing**

IG11 & IG12 remain committed to supporting EWSC work and cross-border cooperation. Additional details (finance, statistics, service guidelines) available on request.

Thank you for the opportunity to report. Nikolaus

## BELGIUM (Flemish Speaking)

### Alcoholics Anonymous in Flanders – Overview

AA has a long history in our country. The first French-speaking meeting was held in Brussels in 1953, followed by the first Dutch-speaking meeting in 1954.

Today, AA is well organized and follows the same structure as in the USA. However, with only about 6 million Flemish people, our structure feels too large for our needs. It is also difficult to find candidates for all the vacant service positions. A special workgroup has been created to review and possibly reform the structure.

### Membership and Meetings

- Groups: In 2025, there are 309 physical groups and 7 online groups (a total of 316). Last year there were 314, and 10 years ago there were 364. The number of groups is slowly but steadily decreasing.
- Demographics: Members are aging, and growth is limited.
- Meetings: Every week, 427 meetings are held in Flanders. Most are in Dutch, but some are in French, Polish, or English.
- Conference: The national conference takes place every two years. In March 2025, 58 people attended, including visitors from the Netherlands and French-speaking Belgium.

### Structure

The foundation of our structure is the five provincial workgroups. Each province sends two delegates to the General Service Board (GSB).

#### National Service Committees

- Admission Committee (ADCOM): Organizes the biennial General Service Conference.
- Public Outreach Committee (COI): Informs the public and professionals about AA. It uses media, open meetings, schools, hospitals, prisons, Facebook, and—soon—podcasts.
- Distribution Centre (DC): Handles distribution of AA literature and the bi-monthly magazine 5 voor 12.
- Finance Committee (FinCom): Oversees all financial transactions. Main income comes from group contributions (2/3) and literature sales (1/3). Our finances are in good health with an average annual budget of 140 000 euro.
- Literature Committee (LitCom): Develops, updates, and translates AA literature.
- Magazine Committee: Edits 5 voor 12, supported by member contributions. A digital version is also available.

- Loners : For those who cannot attend meetings in person, participation is possible through written or digital meetings. There is also an online meeting available every day.

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

The GSB supports AA's work and ensures that the resolutions of the General Service Conference are carried out. It approves reports from the national committees before they are implemented.

- Decision-making: The GSB cannot make permanent structural changes, but in urgent cases it can decide by a two-thirds majority. These decisions must later be confirmed by the next General Service Conference.
- Composition:
  - Chairperson (Class A Trustee). At this moment it is a Class B.
  - One Class A Trustee from each province, we have 3 Class A Trustees now.
  - Two Class B Trustees per province. Some provinces have only 1 Class B trustee now.
  - Secretary
  - 7 national service representatives
- Advisory members (no voting rights) : Secretary of the Aldinea-Bel Association, one GSO employee (note: no paid employee in 2025), and four delegates (two WSM, two ESM).

### **Aldinea-Bel Association**

The Aldinea-Bel Association is a legally recognized non-profit that manages AA's corporate affairs.

- Membership: 10 AA members (two from each province) and two Class A Trustees.

At this moment we only have 7 AA members.

- Board: One Class A Trustee, three Class B Trustees, and a secretary/treasurer (an AA member). At this moment : 1 Class A Trustee, 6 AA-members (no one is Class B Trustee), and a secretary/treasurer (an AA member).
- Responsibilities: Manages the General Service Office (GSO) in Antwerp.

Previously, the GSO employed one full-time worker to answer calls, handle information requests, and coordinate services. Today, there is no paid employee—"because there's no work," according to the Aldinea-Bel board.

All tasks are handled by volunteers now.



## National Convention

The national AA convention is held every year, rotating between the provinces.

## Workgroups

Several workgroups operate independently to address urgent matters that the traditional structure could not—or chose not to—resolve.

- Internet Workgroup

Established in 1999, this was the first workgroup, created to develop the website [www.aavlaanderen.org](http://www.aavlaanderen.org). A new version of the website was launched in 2025, compatible with mobile phones: [www.aa-vlaanderen.be](http://www.aa-vlaanderen.be). We have about 17 000 visitors (on average) on our website each month.

- Convention workgroup: Responsible for the organisation of the convention which is held every year in an other province.

- Telephone and Mail Permanence Workgroup: handles all inquiries by telephone and email, which was previously done by the general service office. About 300 calls/month on average for a population of 6.8 million people in flanders. The busiest days are Mondays.

- New Media Workgroup

Formed in September 2023, this group explores whether AA should be present on various social media platforms and how to reach a younger audience. In 2025, following a unanimous decision at the conference, AA launched an official Facebook page. At a later stage, podcasts will also be developed. The role of AI in our fellowship is also investigated.

- Wellbeing Workgroup

This workgroup was created in response to several reports of inappropriate or transgressive behavior within groups. They developed a charter on how to address such issues. Cases can be reported through an email address on our website, linked to [dontlookaway.org](mailto:dontlookaway.org). The group focuses on prevention and promotes the concept of group consciousness. This workgroup is supported by our Trustee A.

- Structure Workgroup

Recently established, this workgroup is reviewing the current organizational structure, particularly how workgroups fit into the traditional framework. A second Trustee A is helping us with these matters.

## **BULGARIA**

### **Brief history of AA in Bulgaria**

AA originated in Bulgaria in 1989. Psychiatrist Dr. Toma Tomov returned from a business trip to the United States, where he became acquainted with the movement. He told about what he learned in front of a group of alcoholics, who were recovering with Dr. Sonya Toteva at that time, head of the largest state clinic for the treatment of alcoholism. The alcoholics were impressed by the story and several of the patients were eager to bring AA to Bulgaria as well. This was done with the assistance of Dr. Toteva. The first meeting was held on December 5, 1989 in the capital Sofia in one of the halls of the Psychiatric Clinic. The second AA group appeared four years later in the city of Burgas. The Twelfth Step program itself was introduced fully in 2005 by a Bulgarian — a member of AA living in Australia. The Big Book was later translated by an enthusiast close to an alcoholic, a member of an AA group.

With the mass penetration of internet, the groups in Bulgaria were increasing relatively quickly, so in 2015, there were already 16 groups in 11 cities. To date, in 2025, there are 47 groups in 24 cities.

AA Bulgaria participated for the first time in European Service Meeting (ESM) in 2017 with one delegate. Since then, our Fellowship has been presented with two delegates. AA Bulgaria's participation in the ESM is taking place for the fifth time. Last year, in 2024, AA Bulgaria attended the World Service Meeting (WSM) for the third time with two delegates.

### **Structure**

Currently, there are 47 AA groups in Bulgaria: live groups – 42 across 24 cities, English-speaking – 3 (two of which are hybrid meetings), Russian speaking - 2, and online – 5. In 2024, there were a women's meeting and a men's meeting registered. As of 2025, membership numbers 512.

AA Bulgaria is divided into 3 geographical regions - West, Central and East. After the COVID pandemic, the three largest online meetings were incorporated into the regions as groups and joined the AA structure in Bulgaria. AA meetings are held regularly at two of the major psychiatric clinics where alcoholics are treated.

### **Conference**

The First General Service Conference (GSC) was held in 2017, attended by two Trustees from AA Great Britain as observers. The General Service Conference is held once a year, usually in June. So far, they have only been held live. This year was our 8th National Conference.

In June 2024, our 7th GSC was held and a new Class B Trustee, responsible for the Prisons Service Committee was elected.

At the 8th Conference a new international delegate (1st term) and a new Class A Trustee who is a probation inspector in one of the State Prisons were elected.

The Conference consists of twelve delegates with a term of service of three years (elected from the three regions); the members of the General Service Board, a Chair of the Conference and secretaries, as well as observers from the country and abroad.

The Conference is organized by the Conference Steering Committee consisting of: the Chair of the GSC, a coordinator and a secretary, the Chairs of the four Conference committees, two members of the GSB.

The General Service Board consists of three Class B regional Trustees, two national Class B Trustees, two non-alcoholic Class A Trustees, the website moderator, and two international delegates.

The Trustees have a 4 years term of service, among them a Chair of the Board is elected. The GSB meets regularly between the Conferences, with meetings usually online due to geographical distance. Each of the Trustees is responsible for a Service Committee, which are: Literature, Finance, Public Information, Prisons, the Service Handbook, and a Treasurer.

### **General Service Office**

We still do not have a General Service Office, but we have a postal address to which the correspondence of AA Bulgaria is sent. AA Bulgaria operates the so-called "virtual office". Two trusted servants answer calls on the national telephone. Three people serve on a schedule and respond to inquiries on AA Bulgaria's e-mail, received from still-suffering alcoholics and non-alcoholics, as well as from various institutions throughout the country. It also maintains correspondence with the international AA community, the European Service Office and the World Service Office of AA. A website officer monitors the registration of new groups, as well as updating changes in the data of existing groups, regularly updating the database.

At the 7th General Service Conference, a proposal was received to create a General Service Office, but due to financial difficulties this proposal was postponed for now. However, the Conference voted and confirmed the creation of the warehouse for the books and literature of AA Bulgaria. Currently premises for warehousing are already rented based on contract.

### **National Telephone Number**

In 2022 the national number of AA in Bulgaria was activated. The number is published on the AA materials, located on our website, as well as on the world website of AA — aa.org. We are currently taking our first steps and experience in this service, looking for the most fruitful way for the message to reach the suffering alcoholic.

After two online seminars with the participation of AA members from Poland with experience, it was decided to rotate the phone between AA members in Bulgaria with appropriate experience in sobriety and service. The telephone line receives an average of about 12-18 calls per week. Anyone who calls for help on this number is pointed to contacts with the local groups in their region and are provided with the necessary assistance.

## **Literature**

At the 5th Conference, a new Trustee was elected.

Since then, several pamphlets have been translated and licensed for translation by the World Service Office (see the Service Handbook section). License for translation and distribution of the brochure "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" was received from World Service Office in June 2024. At the 7th General Service Conference, the Literature Committee proposed for approval minor changes of the text in three Steps, as well as two of the Traditions and the changes were accepted.

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous was supplied to several local community centers, and several books were sent to the local AA group in Cyprus under their request.

In January 2025 on the website of AA Bulgaria was published the first newsletter "AA Service News".

At the 8th Conference was renewed the idea for preparation of the newspaper "Grozdov sok" which hasn't been published for few years. The vacant positions for editor, secretary, printing, distribution and other servants required to issue of the newspaper were also announced.

This year's Conference approved the translation and publication of the AA GB brochure "AA as a Resource for Employers", which will support the planned national seminar for employers. In June 2025, we received a license from the GSO of AA Great Britain.

## **Finances**

The National Treasurer operates 3 bank accounts. These are as follows: Literature, 7th Tradition and National Convention.

During the period 2023-2025, there has been an increase of contributions from the sale of literature and also via the 7th Tradition contributions. Despite this increase of contributions there is still a financial shortfall in AA Bulgaria's finances.

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

At the 6th Conference for the first time "Gratitude Week" was approved (the week including June 10, 2023) so that everyone then has the opportunity to contribute additionally.

At the last two Conferences, contributions to the International Literature Fund and the World Service Meeting Fund were confirmed.

## **Public Information**

In 2023, the Trustee chairing the Public Information Committee submitted his application to withdraw from that service and this position is still vacant. From that point on, service in this area remained the responsibility of the Regions.

Since 2023, two seminar were held for doctors and professionals working in healthcare facilities for treatment of alcoholics.

### **Prison service**

In 2023, Trustee Class A vacated their position due to personal reasons.

At the 7th General Service Conference, a new Trustee Class B was elected, who chairs the Prisons Committee. Currently the Committee prepares the 6th Annual Prisons Seminar. AA meetings are held in prisons as follows: 8 maximum security prisons for men and the only prison in the country for women, 7 open type prisons.

### **Service Handbook**

For the period July 2023 – June 2025 the Committee for development and updating of the Service Handbook of AA Bulgaria actively worked on the following materials:

1. Editing, additions and updating of texts in the AA Service Handbook adopted by the 5th General Service Conference in 2022. The Committee members restructured the entire content of the Handbook and shaped each structural unit into separate parts (sections) with necessary additions.

- The Group - types of meetings, members serving within the group, money of the group, personal conduct;
- The Region - the officers in the region and who has a vote in the regional assembly, the region's money;
- The General Service Conference - composition of the committee to organize and conduct it, service responsibilities of its members; chairing and operation of the various committees during the Conference;
- The National Convention - organizing committee, guidelines for preparation and conduct; funding; report; connection between AA and AI-Anon and cooperation during the National Convention.

2. Translation of Bill W. articles "Twelve Concepts for World Service." This document was licensed for translation and distribution by the World Service Office in September 2023.

3. Translation of the booklet "The Group...Where It All Begins" - AA USA/Canada edition (updated 2019 version). License for translation and distribution was received from World Service Office in June 2024.

4. Translation of the booklet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" - AA USA/Canada edition (updated version 2021). License for translation and distribution was received in June 2024.

5. Translation of the booklet "The Hat...where AA money and spirituality mix" - AA GB edition. License for translation and distribution was received from the General Service Office in York in February 2024.

In 2025 the Service Handbook was reviewed by professional editor and was published on the website of AA Bulgaria.

6. A draft of brochure “Safeguarding and Personal Conduct” which was submitted to the 8th General Service Conference and will be voted for approval at the 9th GSC.

### **Website**

The domain of AA Bulgaria is - [www.aa-bg.info](http://www.aa-bg.info). The new site was built on an open source platform (WordPress) in order to use the easy and intuitive content management system, which allows people without technical knowledge to train to work with it and maintain the content of the site. A contact form and a “Do you have a problem with alcohol?” test was created, which was quite well used by users of the site. There is a contact form on the site that automatically directs the letters received to the national mail of AA Bulgaria.

Three videos aimed at young people, doctors, and the general public have been published on the AA Bulgaria website, for which we have a licensing agreement between AA Great Britain and AA Bulgaria signed in July 2024. The copyright for these videos belongs to Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain Ltd. The videos have Bulgarian subtitles, which were provided by the website staff.

### **National Convention**

Traditionally, the National Convention is held at the end of the summer on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. This may be AA's most anticipated event in the country, with many A.A. members from the country joining foreign AA members living in Bulgaria, as well as friends from abroad. This year, the 18th consecutive Convention is taking place at the end of August.

### **Relationships with others countries**

The Bulgarian AA maintains warm and fraternal relations with AA Great Britain, AA Poland, AA the Czech Republic. It is also open to establish such relationships with fraternities from other countries. As, traditionally, AA Bulgaria received invitation and sent observer to the 53rd AA Conference in Poland. The official email receives invitations to the national conventions of different countries. This year's international observers at the Conference were from AA USA/Canada (the international coordinator of the GSO of USA/Canada, one of the Trustees and the international delegate), AA Poland with their international delegate and an observer from Latvia, who shared their valuable experience.

In 2024, a Class B Trustee from AA Great Britain and a Class A Trustee from Poland participated and shared their experience at the Prisons seminar.

We are grateful to the Trustees and people who serve in Probation and Criminal Justice and Employers Sub-committees of AA Great Britain for their sponsorship and shared experience through Zoom meetings, invitations to participate in workshops and the provision of service materials.

And last but not least, we express our gratitude to the General Secretary of AA Great Britain for the shared experience and guidance on the AA Safeguarding Policy.

## CROATIA

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

Our Sober in Zagreb group had its first AA meeting over coffee in 1996 by two visiting Americans at the time, who are still sober and pillar members of our group. By 1998, our first mtg room was secured, and we maintained membership of 3 to 5 members in slow growth for the first 5 years. Since then, we moved through three locations and opened 4 weekly meetings over the period of 25 years. Our membership grew and reached up to 10-15 members at our peak 10 years ago. However, in the last 7 years we've experienced the largest increase in the percentage of members attending the meetings, which prompted us to add three more meetings weekly. Now we have six regular meetings each week with a steady number of attending members. Influx of new members is at its highest and it continues to grow, which is absolutely amazing to watch, take part in and share now with you. Today, we count 15 to 20 at our well-attended meetings. We are actively integrating AA traditions into our meetings propagated through our (relatively) newly established Service Committee, making an effort to evolve in the principles of service, rotation, meeting formats, etc. Along with this expansion, we increased our participation with the CER and the UK AA.

Along with Zagreb, there are also long-standing AA recovery groups in the cities of Zaprrešić, Osijek and Split. Nearby to Zagreb and well connected with the Zagreb group, the Zaprrešić group has also seen an uptake in attendance, inspiring them to add one additional weekly meeting, expanding from one weekly meeting to two. The city of Osijek, in the east and our only online meeting, peaked at 40 members at one point.

Development of AA on Croatian Adriatic coast - The first message of AA came to Split in the late 1990s, when the first AA group was founded and marked the beginning of the Fellowship's presence on the Dalmatian coast.

Building on the dedication of those early members who carried the message one meeting at a time, The Promises Group was founded in 2023 as a bridge between local and visiting members, an English-speaking homegroup rooted in the AA Traditions and open to anyone seeking recovery. As Split is one of Croatia's most visited and vibrant cities, The Promises group welcomes people from all over the world. Many visitors return to us year after year, and each meeting feels like a meeting of old and new friends, united by the same desire to stay sober and to help others do the same. The Promises group holds four open meetings every week in English (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday), and when needed, gladly shift to Croatian so everyone can feel included.

Alongside The Promises Group, there are now two Croatian-speaking groups in Split: The Beginners Group, which meets on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and a new Croatian-speaking group, which started as part of The Promises Group and from June continued independently, and now meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Together, these three groups make sure that AA meetings are available in Split every day of the week. The Promises Group has 11 members, with about five steady members who regularly attend and help carry the message. During the summer months, meetings often grow to around 13 participants, creating a lively and international atmosphere filled with shared experience, strength, and hope.

This summer we were especially proud to celebrate three members' first-year anniversaries filled with moments that reminded us how recovery continues to deepen within our small but committed fellowship. The Promises group is self-supporting, following 7th Tradition, has a Treasurer and meets monthly for a Business Meeting guided by group conscience and the Twelve Traditions. Service roles, including meeting chairs, rotate monthly, allowing members to share in responsibility and keep the spirit of service alive at the heart of what we do. As the group has been growing in service General Service Representative (GSR) and Alternate GSR were elected, with requirement of one year continuous sobriety, and actively participate in the formation Croatian Intergroup, ensuring that group stays connected and contributes to the wider AA service structure.

Finally, we are continuing our tradition of a yearly international AA convention, having had the 22nd Croatian convention in June this year.

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

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

Also, we are currently in process of creating our Intergroup and we held three meetings so far with attendance from four different group representatives, including groups from Zagreb, Osijek, and Split. We are moving towards uniting all of the groups and creating the structure that will bring the AA message to many more in need.

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

The idea of AA in Croatia for the most part is still a foreign idea. The medical/recovery community in the country has their own long established post rehab treatment program to which most treated alcoholics are referred. However, the AA Zagreb group has made significant progress this year in establishing a regular monthly meeting in one of the hospitals that has an addiction treatment and rehabilitation program. Communication and relationship with the medical faculty has improved dramatically, bringing more awareness of AA among the alcoholics seeking treatment, as well as among the medical staff. We see an increasing number of people joining AA after finishing their treatment in hospitals. PI is service offered in Zagreb and we do reach out to suffering alcoholics through PI posters and handouts, and advertise in a popular Catholic publication annually.

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

At this time, we recognize the following service positions: meeting chairs (with rotating at 3 months and requiring at least 3 months of recovery), group treasurer (requirement of 1 year of recovery) and literature representative (1 year recovery requirement).



In an effort to connect the Croatian groups and maintain a steady contact with other groups abroad, we have a Group Service Representative and GSR alternate, both positions requiring 2 years of continuous sobriety and eager involvement with the groups.

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

Aside from our group attending the ESM in 2023, we had a representative attending the Fifty-Seventh General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous - Great Britain, held 14 – 16 August 2023 in York. During the same, the representative was in an observer capacity as a member of the committee, participating in all of the meetings and events. Additionally, we have been invited to York 3 previous times, the most recently attended by one of our fellows via Zoom. Finally, the Sober in Zagreb group has also hosted CER assemblies in 2015, and in September 2023.

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

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

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

There is a long list of AA literature translated into Croatian language, dating in the late '90s with the first printing of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and Living Sober publications. In the year 2012, the idea came out for the Big Book translation and as permission was acquired, we got going. It was a slow process for many different reasons and when it was finally approved by A.A.W.S. we proceeded with printing, with the first published Big Book in Croatian language in 2017. Almost the same procedure happened with translating the Daily Reflections that had its first print coming out in the year of 2023. At this time, our lit rep reports having a working relationship with both the USA and UK based AA service centers, as well as a sufficient inventory of literature in both languages, offered to cover the needs of, hopefully, many newcomers to come and recover with us. Finally, we have had the opportunity to send, absorbing the costs, Croatian language Big Books to the cities of Osijek and Split, as well as to the groups or Croatian individuals in need throughout Serbia, Bosnia & Hercegovina, Germany, Austria, the USA and France so far. We are currently preparing a translation of 12 Steps and 12 Traditions for review by A.A.W.S.

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

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

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

We have a relatively strong relationship with AA in neighboring Slovenia. Large groups of Slovenians attend our annual convention and some Croatian AA members attend their October convention in Kranjska Gora. The country of Bosnia and Hercegovina has had only a handful of recovering alcoholics that we know of in these last 25 years, a few have come to conventions. The same is true for Serbia although their membership has been at times considerable. Furthermore, the Osijek group maintains regular contact with the AA in Serbia and visits yearly conventions in Belgrade and Subotica. We send literature and meeting material to both countries literally whenever requested in the hopes that consistent growth ensues/continues. We have several members actively attending online international meetings, maintaining good relationships with AA members worldwide.

**Internet & Websites (if applicable)**

There has been a website [www.aahrvatska.com](http://www.aahrvatska.com) with the list of the groups and meetings established since the late '90s; however, the management of the same has been challenging and, currently, the group from Osijek is the only one in the position of doing so. The conversation about improving this area has been ongoing with hope of making this resource as updated and useful as possible. In the interim, the Osijek group expanded their individual website to service all Croatian AA groups which want to be represented, available at <https://aahrvatska.org/>.

## CZECH REPUBLIC

### Current AA Structure

There are currently 72 AA groups in the Czech Republic. Out of these, 69 groups hold traditional in-person meetings and 3 groups operate exclusively online.

The 69 in-person groups meet in 48 different places and hold 78 meetings each week. Most of the groups are smaller, having one meeting per week. However, there are more meetings held during the week in bigger cities (regional capitals) — and in Prague and Brno, there are meetings on a daily basis.

The 3 online groups include two that run on Discord, where members can participate in different threads on various topics, including a text channel that serves as a permanent, ongoing meeting. These Discord groups host 15 online meetings per week (one-hour text-based sessions held daily). The third group, *Triezvy priestor* (The Sober Space), is a traditional email-based conference shared with members in Slovakia.

In the Czech Republic, each AA group elects a General Service Representative, usually for a two-year service period. These representatives meet once a year at the General Service Conference, which is the main forum for collective decision-making at the national level. The Conference elects the General Service Board (*Rada důvěrníků*), which then carries out the decisions, manages finances, and coordinates the work of its commissions. An intergroup structure has not yet been established; instead, groups in larger cities cooperate closely with each other in an informal way, particularly in organizing shared activities and maintaining local services.

### General Service Conference

Our G.S.C. is held annually, usually in January, and lasts for three days (Friday–Sunday). Most of the work of the Conference takes place in the system of committees, which study the individual questions on the agenda and formulate their conclusions or recommendations for the General Service Board, indicating what direction to take or what issues to focus on.

In 2025, the Conference was attended by a total of 71 participants, of whom 50 had the right to vote: 38 delegates from 27 groups and 12 members of the General Service Board, its committees, the office, and the magazine *Cesta* (The Journey). The remaining

21 participants were additional committee members, observers from groups, and two international observers from Slovenia and Poland.

We would like to support more groups in sending their delegates to the Conference. To make participation easier, we offer financial support for delegates' attendance. At the beginning of next year, we also plan to launch a communication channel for all delegates. This will ensure that every group has the opportunity to stay linked with other service bodies, contribute its own experience, and receive guidance from others — even if it is not physically represented at the Conference.

## **General Service Board**

The General Service Board (the Board of Trustees) consists of seven alcoholics and two nonalcoholics, thus manifesting an open attitude towards the general public. It cooperates closely with all six of its committees and is responsible for AA's financial policy, publishing and distributing literature, copyright matters, and the publication of the magazine *Cesta* (The Journey; issued four times a year, 32 pages).

The Board of Trustees meets monthly via Google Meets. In addition, it holds two open meetings each year — one at the national convention and one at the General Service Conference — where anyone can come and learn more about the Board's activities. The individual committees meet on their own schedules, which may differ from one another. While the committees operate with a good degree of independence, this year we decided that each committee should include at least one member of the Board of Trustees, so that we can maintain closer connection and work together more effectively.

## **General Service Office**

Czech AA's General Service Office was established in 2015 in Hradec Králové, also serving as a warehouse for our literature. Since 2019, the office has employed Czech AA's first part-time staff member, who provides valuable support with administrative work and mandatory bookkeeping.

In 2025, recognizing the need for stronger coordination and organization, the Board elected a Secretary, a member of the Board responsible for the operation of the Office. The Office has taken many steps toward becoming the administrative backbone for the Board and its committees, as well as a reliable partner for the whole Fellowship.

Before the end of this year, we plan to relocate the Office from Hradec Králové to Brno, where the AA community is larger. Afterwards, we will be looking for a new part-time employee to take care of the daily running of the Office.

## **Literature**

In 2025, the Literature Committee focused on developing several new publications to support AA members and inform the wider public. Among the materials currently in production are three brochures: *The AA Group – Where It All Begins*, *Self-Support*, and *To Employers*. The last of these is being finalized as part of a broader effort to cooperate with professionals.

Two new books are also in preparation. The first is *Language of the Heart*, a translation of a widely appreciated AA publication. The second is a new book of Czech AA stories, which will feature selected personal accounts originally published in our quarterly magazine *Cesta*. The title of this collection has not yet been finalized.

## **PI Committee (KKV)**

This year, the PI Committee (Komise pro kontakt s veřejností – KKV) began new outreach efforts directed at employers — a sector that has so far received little attention in the field of addiction and alcoholism in The Czech Republic. These efforts aim to raise awareness about alcoholism in the workplace and the possibilities of support through AA.

At the same time, the Committee initiated cooperation with representatives of the national government. Discussions are currently underway regarding AA's potential involvement in school-based prevention programs, where we would contribute by sharing experience and information in an appropriate and responsible manner.

### **Prisons Committee**

This is a relatively new service in the Czech Republic, but it is steadily growing. AA meetings are currently held in six men's prisons and one women's prison, with discussions ongoing with two additional facilities.

In 2025, correspondence sponsorship was launched in the women's prison, and we are also planning to introduce in-person sponsorship there. One men's prison already offers both forms of sponsorship.

We are aware of at least one man who, after serving a three-year sentence and attending our meetings there, now regularly attends meetings and maintains his sobriety.

### **Cesta Magazine**

Our national magazine Cesta (The Journey) continues to be published four times a year, each issue consisting of 32 pages. In 2025, no special convention issue was released — instead, coverage of the national convention was included in the regular edition.

The editorial team is currently preparing a special issue for incarcerated members, featuring selected articles and stories that reflect the AA message in a way that is accessible and relevant for people in correctional facilities.

## DENMARK

### **Brief Historical Summary:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the late 80's more meetings started up, and especially the rehabilitating methods from Iceland came to Denmark (in Denmark called the Minnesota-model). This gave the fellowship a huge boost in numbers. In the space of a few years the fellowship went from 25 meetings a week nationwide, to 100+ meetings a week. The rehabilitating centers were a private sector and not involved in the public health care system, although many governmental offices and institutions covered the expenses for their employees who needed treatment. Many of them continued their recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous. The rehabilitation centers were not in any way affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous. This mentioned to specify why the numbers of AA members increased rapidly in a rather short time. Currently we have 421 physical meetings a week nationwide and 58 online meetings. 11 of the physical meetings are English speaking. 3 Polish speaking,

2 Greenlandic speaking and 3 are Icelandic speaking meetings.

### **Current AA Structure:**

GSB: 15 trustees. The board is constituted of the following: 1 chair (currently vacant), 1 vice chair, 1 secretary, 1 treasurer (currently vacant) 1 Non-alcoholic (currently vacant) and 12 elected from 6 regions. Furthermore without voting rights: 1 international delegates (1 currently vacant), 2 Nordic delegates (currently only one serving),

1 general service conference chair, 1 representative from each of our 4 committees and 2 reporters writing the meeting minutes.

Regions: 6 regions.

Apart from smaller convents in the regions, we also have 1 national AA convent over 2 days.

The 6 regions take turns in arranging "AA Denmark Convent" locally. All members of AA get an invitation, and participation is free. This year the convention will be held by region Copenhagen.

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

Groups/meetings: Approximately 480 a week.

### **Other Service:**

Sobriety time for service positions:

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

### **National Public Information Group:**

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

They do a great work with information meetings in schools and elsewhere.

Once a year, members of NPI participate in a meeting in the Danish island: Bornholm called "Folkemødet" (means The People's Meeting). Here are a lot of different interest groups, NGOs, politicians and people from different cultural establishments meet and give speeches over a week in June.

### **Box 334 (Danish equivalent to Grapevine):**

The committee is constituted of the following: 1 chair, 1 vice chair, 4 non-elected members. a magazine published to AA members from AA members 6 times a year.

### **Telephone and Email:**

The committee is constituted of the following: 1 chair,

6 elected in the regions, 2 coordinators and 1 assistant. The committee is responsible for having the Danish AA telephone service open all days from 8 am – 12 pm with voluntary AA members answering the calls from their home.

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

### **Economics Committee**

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

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

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

#### **Service Manual Committee:**

It currently consists of the following: 1 chair and 4 non-elected members. The committee have temporarily turned into a working structure under the GSB.

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

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

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

#### **General Service Committee GSO:**

Consists of 1 chairperson (current unavailable), 1 vice chair, 1 secretary and 1 accountant (current unavailable)

#### **General Service Conference:**

The General Service Conference is held once a year. We have 55 delegates. Also participating are the GSB and one representative for each of the committees under the GSB. The conference is a 2 days conference. First day the delegates are split into 4 committees, working with different proposals from the national fellowship.

Second day begins with an hour for the regions to discuss the outcome of the proposals in the different committees. After this the conference continues, where all of the proposals and the committee decisions are read out loud, for the conference to take a vote on. We follow the democratic procedure as stated in the structure of US and Canada. For a proposal to go through it needs 2/3 majority and a representative for the minority can be heard before we take a new vote. If it is still 2/3 majority the proposal is for the GSB to follow through. If it is between 2/3 and 1/2 majority it is a recommendation to the GSB. Under 1/2 majority and it is cast aside by the conference and the GSB need not do anymore on the proposal.

We do not vote on the proposal, but on the committee's recommendation of the proposal.

#### **Service Manuals:**

Denmark has its own Service Manual and Structural Manual.

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

The Structural Manual is updated and approved by the General Service Board after each meeting (5 times a year).



**Literature/Publishing Overview:**

The Big Book 4th edition (€ 32,-)

The Big Book 4th edition, paperback (€ 28,-)

The Big Book pocket 4th edition (€ 17,-)

The Big Book 3rd edition (€ 30,-)

The Big Book 3rd edition, paperback (€ 26,-)

The Big Book pocket 4th edition (€ 17,-)

I2 & I2 (€ 18,-)

I2 & I2 Greenlandic (€ 13,-)

AA comes of age (€ 20,-)

AA in Denmark (€ 9,-)

Living Sober (€ 18,-)

Came to Believe (€ 18,-)

As Bill Sees It (€ 18,-)

Daily Reflections (€ 20,-)

Dr. Bob and the Good Old-timers (€ 17,-)

I2 Concepts for World Service (€ 9,-)

Pass it on

Language of the Heart (currently in latter stages of publication.)

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

**Internet and website:**

The Danish website can be found at the following link:

<https://anonyme-alkoholikere.dk>

**Economy 2024:**

This showed a minus of 40000 Dkr. (5500Eur).

**Relations with other countries.**

AA Denmark has a Nordic collaboration with Sweden, Norway and Finland. We meet twice a year. We elect 2 Nordic delegates ( currently 1 vacant) to participate in the Nordic service meetings.

We have been greatly rewarded by the collaboration in getting inspiration from the different countries' service structure and service conferences. Our International respectively Nordic delegates usually also participate as observers in the different service conferences in other countries, and we send invitations to the other countries collaborating in the AA fellowship.

The Danish National Service Conference 2025 will take place at November 1st and 2nd 2025, in Strib on the island of Fyn.

We also have collaboration with the GSB in Britain. We participated with great pleasure in the General Service Conference UK in April 2025 and are looking forward to welcome British observers here in Denmark.

Finally, we participated with great pleasure in the World Service Meeting in New York, US in October 2024.

### **Internet meetings.**

We have integrated the internet group meetings in our structure and organization in 2025.

# FINLAND

## History and structure

AA has been in Finland since 1948. Today we have some 570 groups and the total number of members in these groups is estimated at approximately 5, 000-5, 500.

The highest decision- making body in Finnish A.A. is the Annual Great Meeting of all Finnish A.A. groups, which elects and /or accepts the trusted servants and delegates to the A.A. Fellowship as well approves the annual reports, plans and budget. The Annual Great Meeting is arranged along with the national A.A. spring convention. Between 600- 1,000 members gather each year at these conventions. Every A.A. group in the country is entitled to send one delegate to the Great Meeting and each group can also propose motions to the Annual Meeting.

## Structure, Activities and Finance

The Finnish A.A. is divided into 17 regions, of which 15 are regional and two of them - the Swedish-speaking in Finland and the Finnish-speaking in Sweden - non-regional. In Finland 6% of the population speak Swedish as their mother tongue and there are six Swedish speaking groups in Finland. In former times Finns went to Sweden to find work there and there arose a need for Finnish speaking A.A. society in Sweden, which today, is fading out mostly because of age and the children of these immigrants already speak Swedish and go to Swedish speaking groups.

The General Service Office in Helsinki (the capital of Finland) employs two people. Along with administration and communications and member services the office takes care of Fellowship` s website to improve it. Several A.A. regions have their own websites too.

The A.A. Helpline supported by the A.A. groups covers the whole country and receives thousands of calls every year. A.A. groups in the whole country keep up approximately 75 local helplines. We also have a monthly A.A. radio program - a direct one-hour broadcast managed by Helsinki A.A. region. All programs (past and present) are also available through our website. Now in October (2025) the first podcast came out. It can be followed by loading the Spotify app. The podcast is made and managed by A.A. members and the equipment needed is owned by the A.A.Office.

## Finnish A.A. Service

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

In addition to A.A. Service and its committees we have independent committees, for ex. Prison, A.A. Helpline, YPAA.q

## **Publications**

The Finnish A.A. Publishing, Inc. is the legal entity and consists of six trustees who serve three-year terms. Meetings are held every other month. Group representatives select the trustees at the Annual Great Meeting. The main task of the corporation is to monitor and support the office and staff, and take care of legal affairs, contracts, finance, public relations, and publishing activities, such as copyrights and printing of A.A. literature.

We publish two bulletins: Ratkaisu ("Grapevine") and AA Tiedotuksia ("A.A. Information"). Ratkaisu is published 6 times a year with a distribution of 1,600 copies and it has articles and stories about alcoholism, written by both alcoholics and others. Among the others, the President of the Republic of Finland and the Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland have kindly given input in the bulletin.

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

published in A.A. Tiedotuksia bulletin thus allowing continuous control by A.A. members.

## **International Activities**

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

Both delegates take part in the WSM and the ESM. They cooperate closely with Scandinavian countries for ex. by taking part as visitors in the Service Conferences held in other Scandinavian countries and have nowadays 5 online meetings among themselves every year.

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

## FRENCH SPEAKING EUROPE - EUROPEAN FRANCOPHONIE AA FRENCH-SPEAKING EUROPE

The purpose of this report is to present the recent activities, shared initiatives, and key challenges of the French-speaking Europe region (France, French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland, and French/German-speaking Belgium) in the spirit of unity and service, for sharing at the 2025 European Service Meeting.

### Cooperation Between Countries

As the delegate representing these three countries, I would like to begin by emphasizing that this region, established at the request of AA World Services (AAWS) in New York, through its linguistic unity, allows for close collaboration, especially in the sharing of AA literature, service documents, and resources such as public information (PI) materials. Although AA terminology may vary slightly from one country to another, our common ground far outweighs our differences.

Over the years, cooperation among the three service structures has grown stronger. As outlined in Appendix I: *Map : Joint Initiatives of the French-speaking European Countries*, we have set up regular shared service meetings (CEFE – Carrefour Européenne Francophone d’Echanges) that meets during the 3 conferences and twice between the conferences. There is also a French-speaking European Service Forum (FFES) — a service-focused gathering that brings together trusted servants from the three countries to discuss common issues, challenges, and goals, and to exchange ideas.

Every six years, the countries take turns electing a shared International Delegate for a four-year term. I should have been serving alongside Régis from Belgium, who sadly passed away earlier this year. I am honoured to be “sponsored” in this service role by Marie-Paule from Switzerland, while I live in France. It has also been agreed that the same delegates will represent our French-speaking region at both the European and World Service Meetings.

In addition, the three service structures may respond to requests for assistance from French-speaking African countries — either through the International Delegate or other channels — to support the development of AA where our shared language and literature can help carry the message. These requests often involve help finding local meetings, providing literature or brochures, and organizing joint information sessions. We work together to identify reliable contacts, explore the best ways to support isolated members and groups, and ensure that all help offered respects our Traditions and avoids creating dependency. This initiative reflects our shared commitment to inclusive service and to carrying the AA message to underserved regions.

## Literature / Publications

Although each of the three countries has its own literature catalogue, they all source their printed and digital materials through a shared association for French-speaking Europe based in Belgium, called Éditions AA French-speaking Europeans (abbreviated as *Éditions AAFE*).

This association:

- Is recognized by AAWS as a separate entity and not a General Service Office and is independent from the GSOs of each country. To clearly distinguish Éditions AAFE from the Belgian GSO, AAWS in New York has assigned it its own *NewSuit* identity code. This makes it clear that Éditions AAFE and the Belgian GSO are entirely separate entities, even though they share the same building.
- Requests and signs licenses from AAWS and AA Grapevine for printing in Europe on behalf of all three countries.
- Publishes and prints literature specific to the three French-speaking European countries — approved by their respective General Service Conferences — in both paper and digital formats.
- Purchases AA literature from AAWS and AA Grapevine.

Pooling resources in this way reduces shipping costs by avoiding multiple transportation and customs charges from the USA or Canada — costs that would be significantly higher if each country ordered independently. Éditions AAFE is a non-profit and sells literature only to French-speaking Belgium, French-speaking Switzerland, and France, with prices set to follow both AA Traditions and applicable legal requirements.

All three countries use the French-language version of the **AA Service Manual**. In addition, each has produced a supplementary manual tailored to its own legal and organizational realities, while staying aligned with the original text.

Each of the three countries holds its own **General Service Conference**, usually in March or April. These events are attended not only by the country's own trusted servants, but also by the International Delegate and two representatives from each of the other two countries. This fosters stronger regional unity and exchange of experience.

## List of Sponsorship-Related Literature in our three structures

- *Questions and Answers on Sponsorship*
- *Living Sober* – p. 11: *Getting a Sponsor*
- *One-on-One (Sponsorship in Action)*
- *Best of* – p. 59: *Learning to Sponsor*
- *AA for Alcoholics with Mental Illness*
- *The AA Service Manual* – p. 16: *Service Sponsorship*
- *The “Share” magazine* – Testimonies from Sponsors and Sponsees

**Comparative Table – Suggested Sobriety Lengths for Service Positions**

Service Position	France	Belgium	Switzerland
Group Secretary	6 months	6 months	6 months
Group Treasurer	6 months	6 months	6 months
Literature (Group)	6 months	6 months	6 months
Meeting Moderator		1 year	
GSR (Group Service Representative)	1 year (2 years recommended)	2 years	1 year
Intergroup Service Representative	2 years (recommended)		2 years
Regional (Area) Chair	3–5 years		
Area Treasurer	Decided regionally		
Area Secretary	Decided regionally		
Area Delegate to national committees	Not specified		
Area Conference Delegate	3 years (effectively ~4 years)	2 years	
District Representative to Region (RDR)	4–5 years		
Member of ASBL		5 years	
Board Trustee	10 years suggested	7 years	
National Committee Member	4 years minimum	2 years	
European or International Delegate	4 years minimum	5 years	5 years
Member of General Service Board			5 years

## Collective of European French-speaking countries

Joint delegates for ESM and AAWSM





## a) SWITZERLAND - AASRI French and Italian-speaking Switzerland

<https://aasri.ch>

### **Brief History**

A French-speaking AA group began meeting in Geneva around 1956, following spontaneous gatherings of alcoholics who had heard about Alcoholics Anonymous.

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

Over time, the structure evolved into **AASRI** (*Alcoholics Anonymous Suisse Romande et Italienne*), serving French- and Italian-speaking communities in Switzerland.

### **Current Scope of AASRI**

AASRI officially recognises **50 groups** (including 2 online groups):

- 43 French-speaking groups
- 5 Italian-speaking groups
- 1 Spanish-speaking group
- 1 bilingual group

### **Current Structure of AASRI**

The General Service Council (Conseil des Services Généraux – CSG) is composed of:

A Class A (non-alcoholic) Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Treasurer, a Secretary and 3 Territorial Administrators

Service offices for Literature, Public Information, and Conference Organisation are also part of the CSG.

The General Service Office has no paid staff and relies entirely on member volunteers.

The CSG meets four times a year and organises an annual General Service Conference, usually held in March. As a smaller structure, Switzerland includes Group Representatives in its conference voting.

### **Other Services**

AASRI carries the AA message through:

- Awareness campaigns in schools, workplaces, and healthcare settings
- Participation in alcoholism intervention and prevention networks

### **Financial Overview**

In Switzerland, **80–85%** of annual income comes from group and intergroup contributions.

Major expenses include:

- Public Information and Institutions service operations
- Annual conference costs
- Helpline expenses

The 2024 budget and 2025 projections show a stable and balanced financial situation, managed prudently in accordance with the 7th Tradition.

## b) BELGIUM – CSGAA

<https://alcoholiquesanonymes.be>

### **Brief History**

The first AA group in Belgium was founded in Brussels in 1953. At first, there was no language distinction, but the predominance of French soon led to the creation of two separate service structures: one French-speaking (including the small German-speaking community) and one Dutch-speaking (known in Belgium as Flemish).

The French-speaking structure became an Intergroup in 1959, opened a national office in Brussels in 1970, and in 1973 formed the General Service Conference and the General Service Council (CSGAA), adopted a legal structure, and held its first National Conference.

### **Structure**

Belgium has two parallel and independent AA service structures:

- **French/German-speaking** (CSGAA – covered in this report)
- **Dutch-speaking** (*Flemish*)

Each has its own General Service Office (GSO) and service activities.

The French/German-speaking GSO employs two part-time staff members.

The General Service Council consists of one Class A (non-alcoholic) trustee and ten Class B (alcoholic) trustees.

### **Current Scope**

As of today, the French/German-speaking structure has **192 registered groups**:

- 7 online groups
- 4 hybrid groups (online + in-person)
- 181 in-person groups, including:
  - 26 hospital groups
  - 4 German-language groups
  - 4 Polish-language groups
  - 1 bilingual French–Portuguese group (in Luxembourg)

### **Other Services: Prisons, Hospitals, Public Information, etc.**

The Belgian structure has a dedicated Institutions work group for: Public Information/Health and Justice interventions:

- AA members visit inmates in **14 prisons**.
- Some groups hold information meetings in hospitals and medical centres.
- The fellowship is regularly invited to set up information stands or give presentations in schools, companies, medical centres, social service agencies, and local government offices.

## **Financial Overview**

Over the last 12–18 months, AA Belgium has faced a growing budget deficit, with expenses regularly exceeding income, particularly in early 2025. Even though there was a notable spike in contributions in March 2025, the overall trend has remained negative, as reported by the treasurer.

This situation is due to rising operational costs—particularly for literature production, service travel, and awareness campaigns—while revenue from group contributions and literature sales has not kept pace.

The treasurer stressed the importance of reminding groups of the importance of self-support (7th Tradition), noting that it is often neither explained in meetings nor discussed at all service levels. The treasurer also encouraged prudent management of resources going forward.

This financial reality highlights the need for vigilance and, if necessary, new strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of AA Belgium.

## c) FRANCE - UAA

<https://alcooliques-anonymes.fr>

### **Brief History**

The first Alcoholics Anonymous group in France was founded in Paris in 1960, following a series of influential articles by Joseph Kessel in *France Soir* that sparked nationwide interest. By 1963, AA in France had around 200 members across several major cities. The first General Service Conference was held in Paris in 1971. By 1985, there were 271 groups and approximately 3,000 members.

### **Current Structure**

The General Service Office (Bureau des Services Généraux – BSG) is in Paris. It employs two full-time non-alcoholic staff members and coordinates the activities of 21 regional committees. A new “Online Groups” Region will be up and running before the next General Service Conference.

The General Service Council currently includes:

- 4 Class A (non-alcoholic) trustees
- 7 Class B (alcoholic) trustees
  - 2 General Service Administrators
  - 5 Territorial Administrators

### **Current Scope**

Today, AA France counts approximately 572 groups, including:

- 471 French-speaking groups
- 44 English-speaking groups
- 4 Polish-speaking groups
- 1 Russian-speaking group
- 1 Spanish-speaking group
- 11 active prison groups
- 40 actives online (video) groups

## Financial Overview – France

Expenses (% of total)		2024	2025	Revenue Sources (% of total)		2024	2025
GSO Operations		27.64%	41.05%	Literature Sales		26.85%	32.51%
Literature		14.19%	21.39%	Group Contributions		69.33%	67.49%
Conference		4.18%	13.32%				
Office Operations		3.77%	3.40%				
Salaries		32.44%	16.25%				
Payroll Taxes		11.11%	7.27%				

The 2024 budget and 2025 projections show a stable, balanced financial situation, managed prudently in line with the 7th Tradition. Literature prices are set to avoid profit, ensuring self-support without surplus.

## Other Services

AA France has several national committees:

- **Justice Committee** – Coordinates prison outreach (11 active groups)
- **Health Committee** – Works with hospitals (groups, visits, information sessions); receives up to 30 requests per month. Younger generations of healthcare professionals are showing greater openness to AA's spiritual dimension.
- **Publications & Archives Committee** – Manages publication requests, editing, digitization, and archiving.
- **Public Information Committee** – Manages public awareness campaigns, social media, and press relations.
- **Helpline Committee** – Operates the national telephone support line (daytime and evenings until 2:00 a.m.).
- **Digital Team** – Supports integration of online groups into the service structure, general online support and updating and maintenance of the website.
- **Structure & Policy Committee**
- **Finance Committee**
- **National Committee for Relations with Businesses and Social Services**

Some committees are grouped into “clusters/service workgroups” for efficiency and collaboration.

## GERMANY

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

This year, a large survey ((it should be representative) is running in Germany to obtain current figures about our meetings and participants. At present, there are around 1.650 face-to-face meetings in Germany and 254 online meetings. We have 12 regions (Austria and Switzerland included) and one online region is in progress. Our General Service Office is located in Berlin. Our chairman is (always) a non-alcoholic. Our Managing Director may or may not be an alcoholic.

For further information please visit AA WIKI

[https://wiki.anonyme-alkoholiker.de/index.php/AA-Umfrage\\_2025](https://wiki.anonyme-alkoholiker.de/index.php/AA-Umfrage_2025)

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

Intergroups and groups organize information meetings in prison and hospital. Public information is mainly given by the person in service/charge of public relations (he/she is a member of the General Service Board). The General Service Office in Berlin handles all inquiries from the public.

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

Recommended sobriety times for service positions are given in the Service Manual (see below)

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

Takes place every year in mid-March from Friday to Sunday in a hotel near Cologne: <https://www.genohotel-forsbach.de/en>. The design is similar to the Agenda of the European Service Meeting.

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

Yes, we do have our own Service Manual which is available in German here

<https://www.anonyme-alkoholiker.de/dienstmaterialien/HB%20Dienen%20in%20AA.pdf>

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

<https://shop-aa.de/>

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

In 2024, the annual budget was approx. EUR 350,000. One-third of the income comes from literature sales, around one-third from the monthly journal and the rest from the groups. Our managing director, Andrea, will be happy to provide detailed information about our annually expenses.

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

We do have contacts to our neighbours nearby (mainly German speaking areas) in Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg. In big cities like Frankfurt, Munich and Berlin, there are Polish and Russian speaking and often English speaking meetings. In our General Service Board, there is always one Austrian member. In our General Service Conference, there is one delegate from Switzerland and one from Austria.

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

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

## **GREAT BRITAIN**

In the past year I had the opportunity to attend the Hungarian National Convention where I was asked to hold a workshop on the benefits of setting up a service structure. AA has been around in Hungary for over 30 years, yet they don't have a service structure set up above the group level. They have never had a Conference. I continue to work with them in setting up a service structure similar to the one in GB. It was very fortunate that representatives from Slovakia and Serbia were also there, who shared their experience on setting up similar service structures and Conference.

### **Reports from various sub-committees of AA General Service Board- GB:**

#### **First Response On line Sub Committee (FROS C)**

FROSC is responsible for the administration of our two online services: Chat Now and the Online Response Service (ORS) which are live chat and email services. We have been working to attracting more members to join the services by attending the Northern National and Southern National Conventions, a forum in North East Region, and by holding an online workshop in June 2025.

We have updated training guidelines for Chat Now and ORS, including guidance on responding to enquiries from minors and any safeguarding issues. We have streamlined the application process and introduced a new job description and application form. All current responders have now undertaken DBS checks, and we continue to screen chats and emails to ensure that we fulfil our safeguarding and best practice responsibilities.

In the past, the two services have operated independently of each other, and the subcommittee has made great progress in bringing them together to simplify all our procedures and enable each service to share experiences and learn from each other.

Our Chat Now and ORS responders continue to carry out vital service work in being the hand of AA when a still-suffering alcoholic reaches out for help.

#### **Young People**

The Young People's Sub Committee held roadshows in Glasgow in May 2024 and Birmingham in 2025 which covered a range of topics including the history of the YPLO role, sponsoring into service, the use of social media and the role of Conference.

We held an online safeguarding workshop in April 2025, which included positive and useful discussion on the various safeguarding issues that may arise when working with young people in AA.

The subcommittee are currently working on a newsletter to share experience of the work being done in the YP discipline, as well as producing podcasts to carry the message of recovery to young people.

This year marks 10 years since the YPLO role was introduced into the AAGB structure, and it continues to be a vibrant and enthusiastic service discipline.



## **AA Service News**

AA Service News is the General Service Board's service information and update newsletter that is produced quarterly and provided to the Fellowship at no cost. It is sent out quarterly to over 4000 groups in print, and up to 2000 members digitally, as well as intergroups and regions. AA Service News is also available on the AAGB website and back issues can be found in the website Document Library. It includes:

## **PI & Ecomms Report**

### **AAGB Website:**

- AAGB Website launched 13th May 2024 - Link to website
- o 2.78 Million User Sessions
- o 77.5% of traffic from search engines
- o 0.5 million direct visits
- o 8.9 Million Page Views
- o Meeting Finder is the most popular page
- o Over 80% of visitors using a mobile device

### **Website Developments -**

- o SEO optimisation
- o Geofencing for the Meeting Finder to improve accuracy
- o Improved payment options for the AA Shop
- o Meeting/Group registration process improved
- o Improved user journey for Newcomers
- o Content management

### **PI Newsletter:**

The PI Newsletter has been revamped and is now published on a quarterly basis – January, April, July, October

Distributed to approximately 500 persons via email including the following Intergroup and Region service posts

- Chair
- Secretary
- Employment Liaison Officers

- Health Liaison Officers
- PI Liaison Officers
- Young Persons Liaison Officers

As well as Health, Employment, PI Ecomms and Young Persons Subcommittee members

### **Collaborative Public Information and Ecomms Sub -Committee**

Intergroups and Regions have separate service disciplines for Public Information and Electronic Communications, and this is reflected in the service structure and the Service Handbooks.

However, the General Service Board has merged to two disciplines into one collaborative Sub Committee – the PI & Ecomms Sub Committee. As Bill W is quoted as saying “A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer”.

Public Information underpins nearly every service activity and electronic communication and/or digital services are a component of nearly every service initiative, so it seemed logical for the two service disciplines to merge and co-operate.

Regional Service meetings are held annually where RPILO's and RECLO's get together to share, support, learn and enthuse. The session work very well.

### **Alcoholics Anonymous' Anonymous Ad Campaign**

A National ad campaign, facilitated by JC Decaux in Great Britain, was launched in the first week of July and created quite a stir. A series of messages were designed by a digital marketing agency (The Raised Eyebrow Society) where the letter 'A' only appeared twice in representing the initials of Alcoholics Anonymous. An example message is “You Are not Alone”. Although we didn't get truly national coverage, a selection of messages were presented on digital media displays in several cities, triggering enquires from interested parties in England and Scotland and as far afield as Scandinavia. The second, and much longer, advertising period was run from Boxing Day 2024 to the end of January 2025 and an even bigger response was reflected in a significant increase in traffic to the AAGB website. Another couple of image examples in banner format follow:

ALWAYS HERE

TAKE ACTION

## **PI Liaison Officer Starter Pack**

The PI & Ecomms working group has developed a service pack, for new liaison officers. The Starter Pack will be presented at the annual Regional Liaison Officers meeting and and be made available for general use.

The components of the Pack include

### **For Ecomms:**

Welcome Letter – an introduction to the role of Electronic Communications Officer with references and links to resources which support the role i.e. Microsites, File Store

### **For Public Information: PI Service Page**

Guidance document for PI activity

Call Crib sheet – suggested actions when making a call Contact letter – template introduction letter

We have also updated both service landing pages on the AA GB website, including links to available resources.

## **Service Communication Tool**

Workplace (by Meta) has been used as a communication tool by some service groups over the past few years. The platform is being decommissioned by Meta and will only be available as

a 'Read Only' service from the 1st September 2025. The platform will be shut down in August 2026.

PI & Ecomms SC has been evaluating alternatives, and an extended trial of an alternative tool is planned to start in September 2025.

## **Inclusivity Committee**

Inclusivity Committee: At the beginning of the year the Board set up the Diversity Group which with discussion morphed into the Inclusivity Committee (IC) which is Trustee led. The IC decided that it should create working groups (WG) to explore different aspects of what Inclusivity means/does for us in AA. The committee create 3 WG so far and there is room for many more, if needed. The Race2 Day WG. Which was the initial starting point for the IC, which came out of a conference question. One of the Projects the Race2Day WG are working on, is called the 'History Project'. The aim of this is to gather stories from 'People of Colour' members who have been in the fellowship a long time to those that are new in. To be published in all our media outlets even including our new revamped website. We also have the

LGBTQIA+ WG, which came about from Conference 2024 asking the IC to help in rewriting the 'LGBT Voices' Pamphlet. The Accessibility WG has the biggest scope as this encompasses the widest amount of the fellowship, from older people to members with Long- term mental health conditions, Motor or Mobility issues like wheelchair users,

Hearing difficulties to the need of sign language. These are but a few of the demographic the Accessibility WG will be taking a considered look at.

### **Heath Subcommittee Report**

The Sub Committee continues to support Regional Health Liaison Officers to build on the 2023 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) quality standard for treating people with Alcohol Use Disorders. The NICE quality standard applies only in England and Wales. However here (owing to machinery of government changes) it applies to ‘offender health’, that is people and managers in the criminal justice system) – which has opened doors to cooperation with His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), and indirectly led to the creation of the Drug and Alcohol Expert Recovery Panel (DAREP)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/681\\_9d2b2024398c2d4f0ab87/darep-terms-reference.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/681_9d2b2024398c2d4f0ab87/darep-terms-reference.pdf).

In Scotland, RHLOs have been invited to join a Scottish Government consultation to develop a new Alcohol Strategy.

We have written up internal notes about the NICE guidance for members doing service in Health and Criminal Justice in England and Wales.

We’re currently refreshing and rebuilding health resources on the website. Published resources will appear on the Health Service page or in the Health section of the new Document Library. Internal resources and templates will be in the Health Filestore.

The Annual Health Meeting with Regional Health Liaison Officers (HLOs) and a hybrid Seminar take place this September. We’re really pleased that Sarah V is coming to both and presenting at the Seminar.

### **Employment Sub Committee Report**

The Employment Subcommittee (SC) has many ongoing targets that we are aiming to complete. One of which is to attract members into services in Regions & Intergroups that haven’t had positions filled in a while. Some of the ways we are trying is personal fellowship contacts as well as writing articles in the AASN. The wonderful thing about Employment is that you’re not starting from scratch there is an easy-to-follow guide on our webpage, that you can adapt to suit your audience and your speaking style.

We use the ‘Blue Light Video’ for Employment presentations which can be found on the media section of the website, this was conference approved in 2024. The SC has reviewed & updated the website material as well as a new Professional leaflet for Employers. The SC is currently working on updating the PowerPoint Presentation using the Family look style guide.

We consistently meet with national employers and when those presentations occur, we always endeavour to include the local ELO’s & RELO’s in these presentations. We are currently helping other AA Fellowships from around the world in setting up their own Employment service structures, such as the Kenyan Intergroup and Bulgarian fellowship.

The SC committee hold online workshops as well as seminars. Their aims are to share best practices and be a place for ELO'S & RELO'S as well as the SC members, Trustee and NAT to come together demonstrating that no is alone in this service.

### **Probation/Community Justice Services**

Probation / Community Justice Service in Great Britain operates through liaison officers (LO's), recent figures show that approx. 850 Alcoholics Anonymous Groups in GB now offer the 'chit' system this is up from approx. 550 two years ago. Service work locally is taking place with enthusiastic members encouraging cooperation with the professional community. The GSB Subcommittee has a generic contact email address to provide a central point for members and outside agencies to contact the Sub Committee.

mailto:Infoprobation.sc @aamail.org

We have successfully run our second annual national online workshop attracting over sixty members interested in Probation service. Guidance has been produced for the fellowship and professionals on the Chit system and placed on our website as well as producing a new revised leaflet for professionals which was approved at Conference 2024. Recently we gave a presentation to the Kenyan Intergroup to aid them in developing their service structure incorporating reaching those who have a desire to stop drinking and are involved with the Kenyan justice system.

Current cooperation with HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) for their Approved Premises to increase awareness and reinvigorate connections on a local and national basis is expanding. Cooperation with HM Courts and Tribunal service (HMCTS) is ongoing. Service at local courts is on an ongoing basis and being developed along with initiatives cooperating with Social work services and Police forces to signpost people to Alcoholics Anonymous.

We are continuing to review our Liaison officers pack and have a leaflet going to Conference 2026 aimed at alcoholics who may find themselves in a Police custody suite.

### **Roundabout**

It is of major important to raise awareness of the Roundabout magazine with convention attendees, to obtain articles and interviews and shares from them, as well as encouraging new subscriptions to the Scottish magazine. It is also a way of attracting people into Service and all this is done by the members of the subcommittee with the aid of banners and making available back copies of the magazine.

Roundabout and Share magazine continue to work closely together to ensure that the meeting in print reaches as many people as possible.

### **Literature Subcommittee Report**

Conference 2025 approved all changes and additions to the AA Service and Structure handbooks.

## Literature revisions

Conference 2025 approved all revisions to current leaflets.

- 'A brief guide to AA' – revision
- 'Alcoholics Anonymous as a Resource for Employers' - revision

New pamphlets:

- 'AA in Prisons' - new leaflet
- 'AA and Mental Health' - new pamphlet

The Literature Sub Committee has no vacancies at present and is working on items as requested by Conference 2025 along with any literature items due for review.

Literature subcommittee also has updated its 'Literature Design Guide', for use by the committee, and has also updated its AAGB web page.

## **British Big Book Report**

At Conference 2024 the Fellowship asked, through Committee 5, Question 2: 'Would Conference discuss and consider the viability of creating an additional version of the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) incorporating stories from AAGB (including CER).'

Conference 2024 voted with two thirds plus majority for the creation of an additional version of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Committee 5 listed the general requirements as:

1. Retain existing content: The Preamble

The Forewords

The Doctors Opinion The first 164 pages The Appendices

Stories of the Pioneers of AA

2. Incorporate new content:

Personal stories from Great Britain and English-Speaking Continental Europe, thereby providing us with a Big Book for AAGB that contains new, relevant and inclusive stories, making it contemporary to our Fellowship.

The British Big Book (B3) project Working Group has been set up to deliver this and meets monthly online. A call for stories from the fellowship was published in AA Service News and the deadline has now passed. Over 100 stories have been submitted and the working group is reviewing them.

The aim is to deliver the British Big Book to Conference for approval, no later than 2027.

## **Survey Report**

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous has conducted a survey of the Fellowship every five years since 1972. The intention of these surveys is to learn more about the Fellowship in GB and Continental Europe Region (CER) so that AA's message of recovery may be disseminated more effectively to the still suffering alcoholic, thus helping us to fulfil our primary purpose.

The Survey Sub Committee was established as a separate subcommittee tasked to deliver the 2020 Survey. Previously the Survey was delivered by the PI Subcommittee. Due to Covid and lockdown, the 2020 survey was delivered online for the first time. The decision to continue the survey online has been agreed using what was learned in 2020 to improve the content and

method of communication to the Fellowship and increase engagement. The results of the 2020 survey were reported to Conference 2021, and the committee produced an infographic leaflet for the fellowship and to be used as a public information outreach tool.

The Survey Sub Committee have launched both the group and member survey for 2025. All results will be analysed, and the final results will be reported to Conference 2026.

## **Share Magazine**

It has been a good, productive year for Share magazine.

In the past twelve months we have had three meetings online and one Annual Share Liaison Officers meeting at GSO.

At the annual meeting we were joined by two visitors from Roundabout, our sister magazine in Scotland, to discuss the need within our structure for a 'Share Liaison Officers Coordinator', something akin to Roundabout's 'Link Officer', and what that role might look like. As it is a new position, we felt that the person who takes it on will be instrumental in shaping it. An advert has been placed in AASN but so far, we have not had any applicants.

In the meantime, some of our Region and Intergroup officers have been busy putting together starter packs that are helpful to officers new to service on Share magazine at group, intergroup and region levels.

In June we had a bumper sized issue of the magazine that had four extra pages. This was to encourage members to celebrate the 90th anniversary year, by sending in short

pieces expressing their gratitude for what AA has done for them. We had no trouble filling up the extra space and it was a beautiful issue.

Share and Roundabout both submitted artwork for a combined bookmark with Share on one side and Roundabout on the other. It is intended that one of these will be placed into all copies of the Big Book that are sent out from GSO.

One of our Editorial Readers designed a colourful new pop-up banner for conventions etc. It had its first outing at The London Convention 2025, where Share had a stand for the whole weekend.

# GREECE

## History

The presence of Alcoholics Anonymous in Greece traces back to the late 1970s, when the earliest meetings were formed primarily on American military bases. These early meetings served U.S. servicemen stationed in Greece but were also accessible to other English-speaking alcoholics in the area.

Greek-speaking groups were first established in Athens in 1981, and Greek- language meetings gradually spread throughout the country. Research conducted in the mid-2000s confirmed that A.A. meetings in Greece initially operated in English before the appearance of native Greek groups. The studies also document the gradual institutionalization of the fellowship during the 1980s and 1990s, including the proliferation of groups, formation of intergroup structures, and development of literature translation and distribution activities.

By the 2000s and 2010s, Greek A.A. had developed a formal service structure— intergroup representation, a General Service Office (G.S.O.), and committees for bibliography, translation, and public information—partly to comply with Greek legal requirements for organizations that publish and distribute literature. The Greek G.S.O. now coordinates literature translation and distribution (including Greek editions of the Big Book and other recovery titles), maintains meeting lists and a national website, and participates in continental and international A.A. meetings and networks.

More recent developments include the growth of online meetings (especially important for remote areas and during/after the COVID-19 pandemic), increased participation in Europe-level service meetings, and efforts to professionalize website and public-information work while keeping the fellowship's self- supporting tradition.

## General A.A. Structure

A.A. groups in Greece are represented in the Greek Intergroup by elected representatives. The Intergroup consists of five members of the Greek General Service Office (G.S.O.) together with group representatives, and it is open to all A.A.members. It meets six times a year.

In compliance with Greek legislation, since A.A. prints and distributes books and pamphlets, a legal entity was established 15 years ago: the “Association for the

Co-ordination of the A.A. Group Activities”, a non-profit organization. Its goals are:

1. To achieve sobriety through abstinence from alcohol based on the Traditions, Steps, and A.A. literature.
2. To coordinate the work of A.A. groups in Greece.
3. To present A.A. to mental health professionals, correctional institutions, and social groups.
4. To promote A.A. in the mass media in accordance with its Traditions.



Every two years, elections are held for a five-member Board of Trustees, which includes the Chairperson/Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer, and a member responsible for Bibliography. These trusted servants must fulfill sobriety and service requirements (ranging from one to three years).

The G.S.O. and Intergroup also create temporary service committees, such as:

- Pan-Hellenic Public Information Committee: organizes outreach activities and communication with authorities, schools, and universities.
- Greek Convention Committee: organizes the annual Greek A.A. Convention every October.
- Bibliography Committee: oversees translation, printing, and distribution of literature.
- Translation and Licensing Committee: ensures accurate translation and editing of A.A. texts into Greek.

The G.S.O. and Intergroup alternate their six annual meetings, with participation possible online (Zoom/Skype).

### **A.A. Groups in Greece**

Currently, there are:

- 26 Greek-speaking groups
- 19 English-speaking groups
- 1 Russian-speaking group

In Attica, there are 10 Greek-speaking and 3 English-speaking groups. Other groups operate across Greece, in cities such as Thessaloniki, Corfu, Patra, Rhodes, and many islands.

Online groups also exist to support members in areas without physical meetings. Several “loners” (isolated members) participate from across Greece. During the summer, English-speaking meetings are held in tourist destinations such as Corfu, Chania, Rhodes, Zakynthos, and others.

Groups exchange experience and support through Intergroup.

### **Bibliography and Pamphlets Books (Greek editions):**

- Alcoholics Anonymous, 3rd Greek edition, 2010 (with four Greek stories), ISBN 978-0-916856-98-4
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12+12), 1st Greek edition, 2000, ISBN 1-893007-02-2
- Living Sober, 2nd Greek edition, 2002 (newly translated), ISBN 978-1-893007-29-1
- As Bill Sees It, 1st Greek edition, 2011, ISBN 978-0-916856-81-6
- Dr. Bob and the Oldtimers, 1st Greek edition, 2016, ISBN 0-916856-07-0
- Forming True Partnerships

- Twelve Concepts
- Daily Reflections

Currently under translation: Pass It On.

**Pamphlets (Greek editions):**

- My Chance to Live
- A Newcomer Asks
- Is A.A. for You?
- Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Region
- Understanding Anonymity
- 44 Questions
- Inside A.A.
- Public Information Guide
- What is A.A.? What Does A.A. Do?
- A Message to the Young
- A.A. as a Resource for Health Care Professionals

**English editions available in Greece:**

- Big Book (hardcover, softcover, and pocket size)
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12+12)
- Daily Reflections
- Living Sober
- Came to Believe
- A.A. in Prison

**Other foreign-language editions:**

- Big Book in Spanish, French, and Italian
- 12+12 in Spanish and Italian

Local groups may also print their own leaflets (e.g., Athens group has published Who We Are and Members' Stories).

The Bibliography service manages translation, printing, distribution, and stock.

## **Finances**

A.A. in Greece is self-supporting through member contributions. Each group manages its own treasury and may contribute to the central G.S.O. treasury.

The central treasury covers:

- Translation and publishing of literature
- Financial support for groups when needed
- Organization of conventions
- Office expenses

Funds are managed by an elected treasurer, with an assistant and an external accountant.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, financial difficulties have arisen due to reduced contributions from physical groups.

## **Other Services**

In 2024, Greek A.A. decided to hold its first Service Conference to adopt a formal service structure, inspired by European Service Meetings (ESM) and World Service Meetings (WSM).

The Service Conference Committee includes three committees: Recovery, Unity, and Service. Each presents topics on A.A.'s functioning and structure, based on traditions, past experiences, and the Service Manual (2018-2020).

Delegates are elected by groups. The first Service Conference will take place online (via Zoom) on October 18-20, 2024.

Extensive discussions were held about how such a Service Conference should be conducted. Preparatory materials will also be presented at the Annual Greek Convention in October 2025, to encourage broader participation in service.

Additionally, after government support for addiction programs was withdrawn,

A.A. collaborated with a former service provider, giving them meeting lists to share with callers to their helpline.

## **Relationships with Other Countries**

Greek A.A. maintains close ties with the G.S.O. in the United States and actively exchanges experience internationally.

Greece participates in the annual International Convention each May, hosting visitors from many countries. In recent years, Greece has also joined the European Service Meeting (ESM) and the Europe Intergroup Meeting.

## **Internet and Website**

For over 17 years, A.A. Greece has maintained a website: [www.aa-greece.gr](http://www.aa-greece.gr). It contains information on A.A., literature, meeting lists, announcements, and links.

Website updates were previously handled by trusted servants but are now managed by an external professional. Efforts are underway to involve more A.A. members with web expertise to refresh and modernize the site.

### **Conclusion**

A.A. in Greece is experiencing a new beginning in Services. With renewed commitment, unity, and dedication to its primary purpose, A.A. Greece is working to strengthen its service structure and carry its message more effectively to alcohol

# HUNGARY

## A brief history of A.A. in Hungary

Hungary is a medium-sized country in Europe. After World War II, it came under Soviet occupation. The ideological orientation of the country did not allow a "Higher Power according to our own understanding" to gain ground in people's minds; even if they can use it to step on the path of sobriety.

This perception thus prevented the strengthening of the AA initiatives of the late '60s and then the early '70s.

In the second half of the 1980s, a fellow of ours named László received a book from a dedicated doctor called Alcoholics Anonymous to try to overcome his active alcoholism with the help of what was written in it. At the beginning of 1988, a sober alcoholic German friend named Helmuth took Laszlo with him to Germany and showed him how A.A. works, so that he could gain practical experience in addition to learning the spirit of A.A.

The first A.A. meeting in Hungary was held on June 6, 1988 with 2-3 people. After that, Bill. K. - an English sober alcoholic visiting Hungary at the time - announced to the GSO the formation of the Hungarian A.A. Bill did a lot for the launch of A.A. in Hungary; humility, sober thinking, but also technical things related to the operation of A.A.

As a result of the changes in world politics, the ideological pressure on the country was significantly eased, so several rural groups were formed as early as 1988 and then in 1989.

In 1990, Catherine M. - who became known as Kati among alcoholics in Hungary. On his initiative, several articles were published in a popular journal - Nők Lapja - about A.A. As a result, the news began to spread that the A.A. was also operating in Hungary. Perhaps partly as a result of this, several of our sober alcoholic compatriots living abroad visited home.

A.A. began to gain momentum in Hungary, but primarily in the capital. In Southern Transdanubia, in the early '90s, hospital therapy was started in a small town; the Minnesota model, which uses A.A.'s 12-step program to treat alcoholics. This had a smaller impact on the national level, but in Southern Transdanubia - primarily in Pécs - several groups were formed from alcoholics who had sobered up during therapy.

In the autumn of 1993, from a donation provided by Kati, an apartment in Budapest became the property of five of our companions, who rented it out to A.A. for a symbolic amount for the purpose of a service office. The telephone service operated here, the members of the committee could also do their work here, but several meetings were held daily in this apartment.

The apartment was finally sold by the owners in 2002, the "Hársfa" Foundation was founded, and a business premises were purchased in its name in Rózsa Street.

After several years of controversy and several moves within the community, the business premises became the location of the Central Service Office of A.A. in Hungary. The telephone service operates here, and printed literature is also stored here.

A.A. uses the premises on the basis of a lease agreement.

## **Organizational structure and operation of A.A. in Hungary**

According to the current meeting list, there are 150-160 A.A groups, and 160-170 meetings are held weekly in the country. Of course, there is no exact data on the number of members, but it can be estimated at 1500 – 1800 people.

Unfortunately, the distribution of the groups within the country is not even, there are smaller or larger "white spots". There are many groups in Budapest - but 20% of the country's population also lives in and around Budapest - as well as in Southern Transdanubia, where the aforementioned hospital therapy may also have something to do with it.

It must also be said that we have a significant amount of work to do in the Tisza region and in the northern part of Transdanubia. In each part of the country, there is a larger, contiguous area without an A.A. group.

In their own areas, the groups organize the transmission of messages in those institutions where the institution itself allows it. These are usually hospitals and addictive caregivers. We are also trying to reach prisons; There were times when this worked in one or two places, but in some cases it is prevented by state measures.

In addition to electing the ministers necessary for their smooth operation, the groups elect one delegate as a domestic group, regardless of the number of members of the group, who represents the group's opinion in the Assembly of Delegates, conveys the decisions of the group, and informs the group of the proposals and decisions of the Assembly of Delegates.

According to the recommendation, the delegate must have at least 3 years of sobriety and his mandate is for 2 years.

The main decision-making body of the A.A. community in Hungary is the Assembly of Delegates. The Assembly of Delegates holds its quarterly meetings, listens to the reports of the officials of the Committee Service on the past quarter, and makes decisions on matters within its sphere of scope.

The most important of these are the acceptance of the ministers' accounts; determining the location of the National Meetings based on the applications of the groups applying for the meeting; election of new members to the Board Service; hearing and accepting the report of the President of the Association; making decisions about the translation and printing of literature; deciding whether to participate in international conferences.

The Assembly of Delegates usually makes its decisions by a simple majority, with an open vote.

It is a negative thing about the operation of the Assembly of Delegates that in many cases the delegates of the groups do not participate in the meeting of the Assembly of Delegates, thus endangering its operability. The exact reasons for this have not yet been clearly clarified, but indifference and refusal to serve may play a significant role in it.

Any A.A. member can participate in the delegates' meeting, but only the elected delegates have the right to vote.

Between the two sessions of the Assembly of Delegates, the Committee Service is responsible for the operation. Its task is to implement the decisions of the Assembly of Delegates, to monitor matters affecting the Community - to discuss them and, if necessary, to submit them to the Assembly of Delegates for decision. An extraordinary Assembly of Delegates may also be convened, if this is unavoidable due to the urgency of the matter in question.

Its members are elected by the Assembly of Delegates based on the proposals of the groups. He or she may ask a member to perform a task, but the recommendation of the invited member's domestic group is also required in this case.

The Committee Service consists of 9 elected members, who are responsible for specific tasks - office service, literature, international relations, intergroup relations, telephone service, media, finance, message transmission, archive materials. In addition to performing their own tasks - where this is possible due to the nature of the task and there is a demand for it - they help the work of the groups.

The Committee Service holds its meetings monthly. Anyone can participate in this meeting, but only elected members of the Committee Service can vote when necessary.

## **Literature**

Initially, the Hungarian-language A.A. literature was written partly in the United States and partly in Western Europe. These books and pamphlets entered the country in the cars of sober alcoholics visiting our country, usually with some Hungarian connections.

Our self-published books and pamphlets were published in the first years of the 2000s.

Today, 9 books and 24 pamphlets are available in Hungarian. Of these, the book Alcoholics Anonymous and 13 pamphlets can be displayed and read on the website of our community.

In 2023, we fulfilled an old idea. The first "Service Manual" has been completed, which was written by Hungarian A.A. members, and specifically deals with the operation and tasks of the A.A. community in Hungary. We primarily used the British A.A. Service Manual as a model.

In 2024, we published another book, written by our members. We published a book titled "They Succeeded", which contains 46 Hungarian life stories.

In 2025, an old dream of ours has come true; we published the Big Book, which already contains Hungarian life stories.

## **Foreign relations**

He has developed a good relationship with GSO, which is based in New York. Their help and permissions were and are constantly needed for the publication of literature derived from translation.

Over the past few years, we have been in contact with the British GSO in York.

The international contact person will be responsible for keeping this relationship alive.

We also tried to establish official - between organizations - with the neighboring countries, but here the relationship remains at the level of personal acquaintances, so we still have to work on this.

### **Our tasks**

We must increase the awareness of AA in our country. Today, there are a lot of people, even in the health care sector, who have never heard of AA. To increase awareness, we need to improve our relationship with the media, and we need to learn and introduce methods that can get the information that there is help to many people.

We have to carry out a structural transformation in the Hungarian A.A. It seems that this will be suitable for ensuring the functioning and decision-making capacity of the highest decision-making body - the Assembly of Delegates - continuously. In addition, it will enable the integration of the already established intergroups and the regional organization established in a part of the country years ago into the organizational structure of the Hungarian community.

This integration can be the guarantee that the current structural rupture does not lead to the complete disintegration of the unity.



## ICELAND

### Structure

Every week more than 385 A.A. meetings are held in Iceland, a country with a population of only three hundred thousand. All alcoholics are welcome at any A.A. meeting, whatever language they may speak.

There are also four English-speaking meetings held in Reykjavik. We also have several Russian- and Polish- and one German-speaking meetings in Reykjavik.

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

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

### Internet

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

### Intergroups

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

### General Service Board

The National Service Board (NSB) is made up of ten trustees of whom seven are A.A. members and three are nonalcoholic trustees. The NSB has monthly meetings in the winter time. The board runs the National Service Office for A.A. in Iceland, and organizes the Annual National Service Meeting. Furthermore, the board is responsible for an Open Celebration Meeting on Good Friday every year to commemorate the arrival of A.A. in Iceland on that day in 1954. Some 1,000 people participate in that meeting. For the past few years the meeting has been translated into sign language.

### General Service Office

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

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

## **Finances**

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

## **Literature**

Several items of A.A. Conference-approved literature, books and brochures have been published in Icelandic and we also have the Big Book and Twelve and Twelve on CD. Then we also have Dr. Bob and the good old timers, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age. We have been working on revising the Icelandic version of the Big Book which we hope will be ready soon. The process have taken little longer time. This year we are finishing the work on the pamphlet Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.

We also have a pocket-size edition of the Big Book.

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

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

## **Conference & Conventions**

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

## **Contact Information and Websites,**

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

## IRELAND

### Historical Summary

Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland is approaching its 80th birthday. It was introduced to Ireland in 1946 by Irishman Conor F. He had immigrated to America in 1929, found sobriety there in 1943, and on a return visit to Ireland in 1946, he carried the AA message to another Irish alcoholic Richard P, a patient in St Patricks Hospital, Dublin. Together they found four or five more sufferers and started meeting in one of their homes. They held the first AA Irish closed meeting in Dublin on the 18th of November 1946. Two years later in 1948, groups were started in Bundoran, Belfast and Limerick. By the time of Bill and Lois W's landmark visit in 1950 to Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Limerick, six groups were already established. Within another six years, there were approximately 650 members in 15 groups. Today we have more than 900 groups with an estimated membership of 15,000 alcoholics holding more than 100,000 meetings annually.

The first meeting of the All-Ireland National Intergroup Committee was held in Dublin in 1968. At its second meeting in Newry, County Down, it was renamed the General Service Conference of Ireland. At the third meeting of the General Service Conference of Ireland in 1969, it was decided to set up a General Service Office. In 1970 premises were leased in Dublin and our first GSO was opened. In 1975 we established a Central Services Office in Belfast, which was run by Ulster Intergroup until 2023. This was ostensibly a clearing house for literature and 12 Step calls in the province of Ulster.

### Structure and General Service Conference

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

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

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

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

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

The seven trustees form the General Service Board which, on behalf of the Fellowship in Ireland, runs the GSO in Dublin. The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous meets once per year with the GSCDs, Intergroup Secretaries and WSDs to exchange views and discuss any issues relating to their Provincial Intergroups (Conference, 1988). All Conference of Ireland decisions come by way of motions from the groups or through board recommendations. The GSB has now produced a Strategic Plan for 2020–2023 with a vision of providing clear and effective guidance to the fellowship.

### **Conference Sub Committees**

At the 2021 General Service Conference of Ireland four subcommittees were formed to deal with pertinent concerns amongst members: Literature, Young Peoples Liaison Officer, Service, and Digital/Online Meetings. Each subcommittee met over a period of six months and brought proposals back to a Special Meeting of Conference where they were passed. In summary:

- Relevant Literature and pamphlets will be amalgamated into a pack to help GSRs
- A Young Person's Liaison Officer post will be created for first time in Ireland. The YPLO subcommittee will continue to meet to provide parameters and guidelines for the post.
- Guidelines for Digital Online Meetings and an updated Meeting Format to include online meetings will be published in the Green Service Handbook.
- In the Green Service Handbook emphasis will be placed on retired Conference Delegates to return to their home groups to serve as officers.

In March 2023 General Service Conference a fifth sub committee was then formed. This 5th subcommittee had the remit of updating the constitution of AA Ireland and to report back to conference for ratification of the document. At March 2025 conference 4 changes were agreed to both service handbook and constitution. It is now available online on the AA Ireland website.

## **Other Services**

A Public Information kit was assembled by a Conference sub-committee and is now available to PI committees throughout the country. It is proving to be a valuable resource in providing information about AA to areas such as Social Services, Police, Education, Hospitals and Company Human Resource Departments. It also inspires and informs members interested in P.I. Business cards with phone numbers of the various area/intergroup telephone services have been provided and are available to the Fellowship. The board has also placed A.A. in telephone directories, with these numbers featured in the main sections of the directories and not just the emergency and yellow pages sections.

Our DVD The Road Back continues to be widely used by Public Information Committees and has been translated into several languages. It is also available online on our website and has Irish Sign Language and subtitled versions.

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

The first All-Ireland Convention was held in Dublin in 1958. The Convention rotates yearly among the four intergroups. The last All-Ireland Convention was held in April 2024 and was a physical event as opposed to 2021 ( during the pandemic ) which was conducted virtually. There are normally about 15 area Conventions held around Ireland during the year. Many Areas and Groups also hold gratitude days throughout the year, some of which are still online.

There has been much discussion about encouraging members into service, the importance of member-to-member sponsorship and the benefits of service. To address this, at the March 2021 Conference sub committees were formed to look at literature and pricing, appointing Young People's Liaison Officers, online and digital meetings, and service. It was agreed at the September Conference 2021 that the latter three committees continue to work towards making proposals to future Conferences for improvements within the Fellowship in Ireland. The national P.I committee became proactive in 2024 and has held a number of highly successful events throughout the country.

Face to face hospital and prison meetings are slowly returning to normal with the added benefit of virtual meetings in some prisons.

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

Periods vary depending on the position within the structure. E.g., Trustees require 10 years as do conference delegates and world service delegates which drops to 3 years for intergroup positions. All areas are familiar with the fact that all these positions require a working knowledge of steps, traditions and concepts. Non-alcoholic Trustees may serve two – four-year terms only whereas an alcoholic Trustee serves a maximum of one, four year term. WSD and conference delegates also serve only one – four-year term. Intergroup secretary may only serve a two-year term. Nobody should be active at conference for more than ten years.

## **Service Manual**

A service handbook for Ireland is the service manual detailing sobriety terms and other requirements for positions throughout the service structure. Changes can be made to the handbook by motions to conference. The process starts when a motion from a group goes to area then to intergroup and finally to conference for discussion and decision. An extensive update of the Service Handbook for Ireland was undertaken in 2021 and is ongoing to reflect the changes within the Fellowship. A new Group Financial Guidelines and Record Book has been approved as an aid to service.

## **Finance**

Through the generosity of our members following the Seventh Tradition, Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland is financially secure with a Prudent Reserve. We are 85% self-supporting from member contributions; the remainder comes from the sale of literature and convention surpluses.

The Audited Accounts up to 2021 indicate clearly that although there was a dip during the initial period of the lockdown, there has been a balancing out. In addition, as Area, Intergroup, Conference and Board meetings were held virtually for almost two years, expenses for travel and sundries have been considerably reduced. Many groups have set up online banking facilities to allow for members' contributions, which are then passed through the service structure. Contributions can also be made directly to the GSO.

## **Literature**

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

The Board publishes our magazine The Road Back every two months. It is called 'a meeting in print' because it contains stories of recovery written by members of the Fellowship. The Road Back was first published in April 1949, and it is the longest continuously published A.A. magazine in Europe with distribution worldwide. A News Sheet is also published bimonthly and is intended as an aid to service and to give information on AA events in Ireland and elsewhere.

It contains articles on the Traditions, the history of AA and items relevant to service in the Fellowship in Ireland. Its author is appointed from within AA membership by the General Service Board. Since July 2021 it has been incorporated in The Road Back.

### **Internet and websites**

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

In the wake of the global pandemic in 2020, physical meetings were suspended temporarily. Groups all over Ireland responded by starting online meetings, which provided a vital connection for the maintenance of members' sobriety as well as for the many newcomers. The General Service Office of Ireland responded to these changes, and both physical and online meeting details are still available on the official A.A. website. Although there has been a return to physical meetings, some groups have also continued with online meetings and some Area and Intergroup meetings as well as Conference business meetings can still being held virtually.

### **Relations with other countries**

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

## ITALY

### Brief Historical Summary

Alcoholics Anonymous in Italy dates back to 10 May 1972, when an English-speaking group began meeting in Rome. This group met in a room made available to AA by the Anglican-Episcopal church in Via Napoli. On that evening, Carlo C. knocked on the group's door and was welcomed by Mia, a bilingual Belgian woman married to an Italian who attended the English-speaking group.

Shortly afterwards, the Italian-language group was formed, and on November 9th of that same year, an article entitled 'Non bere, parla' (Don't drink, speak) was published in the Rome-based newspaper *Il Messaggero*. In 1974, Carlo Còccioli, an Italian writer who had taken the problem of alcoholism to heart, formed a group in Florence. He wrote a book entitled *Uomini in fuga* (Men on the Run), which is still very successful in Italy today.

The first group opened in Milan in 1976, and together with those in Rome and Florence, they formed the first nucleus of an Intergroup. Thanks to public information initiatives, other groups were formed in Italy. During this period, the first edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* was translated from English into Italian and published in 1980. AA Italy became part of the European and worldwide General Services in the same year.

In 1980, an information bulletin was produced, which, in 1981, took the form of a newsletter called 'Insieme in AA' (Together in AA), a name it still has today. In 1984, the first conference was held in Rimini to approve the status and define the role of the delegates. Out of 119 groups, 111 secretaries attended the conference.

The following year, the first National Convention took place in Rimini, where the 50th anniversary of the birth of AA was also celebrated. Groups of Al-Anon family members participated in the convention, too. Rimini has remained the traditional venue for both the conference and the national convention ever since. This year, the event will take place on 12–14 September.

The first non-alcoholic trustee, physician Allaman Allamani, joined the General Services Board in 1997. Since then, the Board has always included at least one non-alcoholic trustee. There are various language meetings across Italy, including English, Polish, Russian and Spanish. Although not all of these are part of the Italian AA structure, we are working on this as we move forward, and we are confident that, in the future, there will be an opportunity to bring all our groups together under one structure.

### Current AA Structure in Italy

AA Italy's structure comprises a General Services Board with 10 trustees, two of whom are non-alcoholic, and a General Services Office with one employee. There are also four Macro-Areas, each coordinated by a trustee and comprising several Areas. These 16 Areas correspond to Italy's administrative regions, except for Abruzzo and Molise, which constitute a single Area. There are also around 400 groups, each meeting one to three times a week, with some very large groups holding multiple meetings, up to seven days a week. The structure of AA Italy also includes seven online groups and four meetings in prisons.



## Other Services

One of the most vital services organised in AA is meetings in rehabilitation centres across the country. This is crucial for raising awareness among patients of the existence of AA groups across our territory. It is particularly important when patients have completed the programme in these structures and are ready to return to society, as they can access support from Alcoholics Anonymous if needed.

Another new and important activity is the opening of an AA meeting in a military prison. This gives individuals the opportunity to come together, discuss their experiences with addiction, and find the support and resources they need to help them on their journey towards recovery.

There was also an intensive amount of Public Information activities this year:

- Social Media platforms
- Television and radio campaigns
- Numerous newspaper articles

### COMUNICARE IL SOCIALE

19/01/2015 - 17/01/2015 - 17/01/2015 - 17/01/2015



#### Il "Cerchio in cui le promesse si avverano". L'iniziativa dei gruppi A.A.

11 gennaio 2015

Il "Cerchio in cui le promesse si avverano" è un punto di riferimento per tutti coloro che desiderano uscire dalla spirale dell'alcolismo, ma vedere come cambiano le proprie abitudini.

A.A. ha sempre promosso l'idea di un "Cerchio in cui le promesse si avverano" e lo ha fatto con successo. L'iniziativa dei gruppi A.A. è un punto di riferimento per tutti coloro che desiderano uscire dalla spirale dell'alcolismo, ma vedere come cambiano le proprie abitudini.

### Alcolisti Anonimi Italia

CAMBIARE LE VECCHIE ABITUDINI

Quando abbiamo smesso di bere, per molti... Altro...



13

Mi piace

Condividi



### LA SICILIA

LA SICILIA

#### Catania, una seduta in cerchio con gli Alcolisti Anonimi: il faticoso cammino per abbandonare la bottiglia

Viale Angelo, 100, Palermo, 10 gennaio 2015. L'iniziativa dei gruppi A.A. è un punto di riferimento per tutti coloro che desiderano uscire dalla spirale dell'alcolismo, ma vedere come cambiano le proprie abitudini.

11/01/2015 - 17/01/2015 - 17/01/2015 - 17/01/2015



Prima della serata c'è stata una breve introduzione del presidente del gruppo A.A. di Catania. Il faticoso cammino per abbandonare la bottiglia è un punto di riferimento per tutti coloro che desiderano uscire dalla spirale dell'alcolismo, ma vedere come cambiano le proprie abitudini.

## Training credits for professionals

A major announcement is that AA Italy has been approved to hold events offering training credits to professionals from a many different backgrounds. A variety of events have been organised over the last year, with an ever-increasing number of professionals participating. This gives our association the opportunity to maintain constant contact with a wide range of addiction experts. Another positive aspect of this initiative is that it protects us from isolation in an ever-changing and expanding world.

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

Starting with the group, the secretary must have at least one year of sobriety, but if this is not possible, each group is autonomous in deciding how much sobriety is needed. The General Service Representative (GSR) is appointed for two years and must have a good knowledge of the Traditions.

For the other roles (alternate GSR, alternate secretary, treasurer, literature representative, and Insieme in AA magazine representative), one year of sobriety is sufficient.

The Zone acts as an intermediary between groups and the Area. Its role is to facilitate connections between groups and encourage their spiritual development. Zone Coordinators are required to have four years of continuous sobriety, while Alternate Coordinators are required to have two. This service lasts for three years.

As previously mentioned, the area coincides with the administrative regions of Italy, except for Abruzzo and Molise, which are united in the same area. Therefore, there are 19 Areas out of 20 Regions. Service time for all Area servants is three years. Five years of sobriety are required for coordinators and delegates, and three years for others.

All trustees of the General Services Board must have been sober for at least eight years, and their term lasts four years. Non-alcoholic trustees cannot exceed one third of the total number of trustees. The board currently has two non-alcoholic trustee whose term is three years and can be renewed once. Trustees are elected by the Conference, while the National Secretary is elected by the GSO board of trustees.

## **General Service Conference**

The General Services Conference traditionally meets in Rimini for three days in April each year. During this time, it evaluates and votes on the trustees' reports on activities carried out in the previous year. The Conference Committees evaluate and study the proposals and queries received in depth; they then draw up a final report, which is brought to the attention of the assembly and put to the vote. Any Conference decisions made with a two-thirds majority are binding on the General Services Board.

## **Service Manual**

Alcoholics Anonymous in Italy has a service manual that outlines the structure of AA services and provides suggestions for carrying out these services in the best possible way. The Service Manual is periodically reviewed by the Conference, who update it if necessary. Alongside the Service Manual, AA Italy has also published a volume containing guidelines on public information, zones, reimbursements for servants, and the use of the hotline number. Some of these guidelines have been translated into English for this European Service Meeting and can be used for committee discussions.

## **Literature/Publishing Overview**

All of our literature is printed in Italian, including books and pamphlets authorised by AA World Services, Inc. An audio version does not yet exist. Literature is sold through groups, zones or areas, and directly from our General Service Office (GSO). AA Italy has started work on creating an online shop on our website.

This would make our literature available to a much wider range of members, as well as to the wider world. We would really appreciate any suggestions from countries that already have this platform set up.

## **Finance Overview**

The 2024 budget, which was presented and approved by the 2025 General Services Conference in April, shows total costs of approximately €703,650 and total revenues of €773,380, resulting in an operating surplus of €69,000. It should be noted that AA Italy maintains a prudent reserve of

€100,000. Overall the current financial state in Italy solid and in line with previous years.

## **Relations with other countries**

With regard to our relations with other countries, we are delighted to announce that we are in constant contact with international trustees, delegates and members from all over the world, and we regularly communicate with the General Service Office of AA. Our international delegate's participation in the World Service Meeting in New York last October provided an invaluable opportunity to strengthen relations with other international delegates and meet GSO staff in person. We are extremely grateful for the invaluable service they provide to AA on a global scale.

We reach out to each international delegate from other countries to encourage them to get in touch with us in the future. This would give us all an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences, and help us to stay connected even after the European Service Meeting has ended.



## **Internet & Websites**

AA Italy has an official website: <https://alcolistianonimiitalia.it/> and we are delighted to announce that, as of March this year, Alcoholics Anonymous Italy is also active on the following social media platforms:

<https://www.facebook.com/alcolistianonimiaps>

<https://www.instagram.com/alcolistianonimiaps/>

[tiktok.com/@alcolistianonimiaps](https://www.tiktok.com/@alcolistianonimiaps)

<https://www.youtube.com/@alcolistianonimiaps>

## LATVIA

### The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Latvia

This year, the AA fellowship in Latvia is celebrating its 37th anniversary. The movement began on November 8, 1988, after a narcologist brought two of his patients together for the very first meeting. Initially, meetings were held in a treatment facility and in private apartments. A year later, a second AA group was founded outside of Riga, with a Russian-speaking group followed the year after. Throughout the 1990s, alcoholics joined the Latvian AA fellowship from three different rehabilitation centers or found the group on their own, all with the shared desire to stop drinking.

The first convention of representatives from several Latvian AA groups was held in 1991, but the service structure developed slowly. By the late 1990s, these group representative meetings, which were a precursor to the General Service Conference (GSC), began addressing more significant issues.

Already in the early 1990s, information about the Latvian AA was published in a US booklet on international meetings. Since 2001 the fellowship has been participating in the European service structures. Since 2008 Latvian delegates have participated in the World Service Meeting in New York. Historically, Latvian AA has established its closest links and ties with neighboring Lithuania, as well as Poland.

Initially, the literature available in Latvian was a booklet 44 Questions published in the US (now Frequently Asked Questions about AA), as well as a summary of the Twelve Steps created by the narcologist who initiated Latvian AA. The first book was the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, translated from Russian. In 1998, a Literature Working Group was formed as the first Latvian service committee. Its primary task was to translate the book Alcoholics Anonymous, which was eventually published in Latvian in 2004.

Latvian translations of AA literature currently available include the books Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Living Sober, Daily Reflections, Came to Believe, and Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers. Many pamphlets are also available, including The A.A. Member—Medications and Other Drugs, which was added in 2025. Looking ahead, it is planned to publish the pamphlet A.A. for the Older Alcoholic and the book As Bill Sees It. Additionally, it is planned to release an updated version of the Alcoholics Anonymous translation. This new edition will be a significant step forward, as it has been decided to include personal stories, something the previous version lacked. The plan is to feature 19 stories from the US and Canada (from the 4th edition of the Big Book), along with 24 from local AA members. The selection process for these stories is ongoing.

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

Since 2002, the main informative source about Latvian AA is this website <https://aa.org.lv/>. In 2023, the website's structure, content and technical solutions were completely redesigned.

At the end of 2022, Latvia introduced an AA group register. According to the register, there are currently 63 groups in Latvia, which has finally reached pre-pandemic levels. Of these, 21 groups are in the capital, Riga; 37 groups are in other cities and towns throughout Latvia; 5 are online groups; and 2 are hybrid-format groups (face-to-face and online). 40 groups are Latvian-speaking, 11 Russian-speaking, 11 bilingual (Latvian/Russian), 1 English (online only). The total number of Latvian AA members is estimated to be around 500.

The Latvian General Service Conference (GSC) is held every spring. Until 2024, General Service Representatives (GSRs) were elected directly from AA groups. Following a Conference decision in 2024, a one-year experiment was conducted in 2025, which switched to a regional delegate nomination system. The Conference recognized the experiment as a success and decided to make the new structure permanent. Consequently, the Conference now consists of 12 regional delegates (four from each of Latvia's three developed regions) and six other delegates: the international delegate (serving a second term), the Conference secretary, the chair of the Board of Trustees, one Class A trustee, the editor of the Latvian AA magazine *Vinoga*, and the GSO manager.

Following the 2021 Conference, which initiated a service restructuring process, a General Service Board was elected, consisting of nine trustees. The Board currently has nine members: seven alcoholics and two non-alcoholic Class A trustees. The trustees are responsible for chairing various committees and working groups. These include Finance, Literature, Public Information, Prisons & Treatment, First Contact (telephone hotline and email), Administrative (Agenda), and Office Functions Coordination committees. Separately, a Development Working Group is focused primarily on creating the AA Service Manual. The manual is currently in its draft stage.

General Service Office (GSO) opened in Riga in 2000. The GSO had one paid part-time employee from 2017 to 2025. However, due to a lack of funding, the Board of Trustees eliminated the position in 2024. As of April 2025, the newly created Office Functions Coordination committee now ensures the continuity of the GSO's functions. GSO prepares and distributes a selection of Latvian AA news, called *AA Vēstis*, monthly.

According to the 2024 Audit Commission report, the GSO's main income sources were 54% from group and individual contributions and 27% from literature sales. In 2024, income from literature sales increased by 20% compared to 2023, and by 128% in 2023 compared to 2022, largely thanks to the creation of an easy-to-use online store on the Latvian AA website: <https://aa.org.lv/>. Individual and group contributions, however, decreased by 11% in 2024 compared to 2023.

The first activities of the Baltic Service Meeting (BSM) began in 2023. The purpose of the BSM is to encourage the exchange of service experience between the AA structures in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The first online seminar was held in 2024 and focused on public information, while the second, held in 2025, was dedicated to the challenges of translating and publishing AA literature.

# LITHUANIA

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

- A.A. Fellowship in Lithuania was established on 30 June 1988 (first meeting of A.A. in Lithuania).
- The First General Service Conference took place on 13-16 June 1991, establishing the General Service in Lithuania.
- In 1993 there were 8 A.A. groups, we had 3 translated A.A. books.
- In 1994 A.A. General Service Office was opened.
- In 1995 A.A. General Service Board was established.
- In 1997 first Lithuanian delegate at the ESM.
- In 1998 there were 46 A.A. groups, 5 translated A.A. books.
- In 2004 first Lithuanian delegate at the WSM in New York.
- In 2008 new A.A. Service Structure with 7 regions was approved. General Service Conference now has delegates from the regions instead of representatives from each group. In 2008 there were 128 A.A. groups in Lithuania and 10 Lithuanian-speaking groups in foreign countries.
- In 2022 Lithuanian General Service Conference recommended to make changes in our Service structure creating three regions, and introducing seven intergroups (formerly named regions). The General Service Board is also reorganised.
- In June 2023 A.A. in Lithuania celebrated its 35th anniversary. The event was held at our annual A.A. summer camp. More than 1.000 participants arrived from Lithuania and neighbouring countries.
- In 2024 our G.S.O had to move to another town because the landlord terminated our lease agreement.
- In 2025 A.A. Lithuania welcomes our first class A non-alcoholic trustee.
- In 2025 A.A. Lithuania has 10 Lithuanian language books, 1 CD audiobook and 22 brochures and leaflets in publishing (including A.A. Service manual which is thoroughly updated and rewritten at the moment). In 2024 with the permission of A.A.W.S. we printed a limited amount of russian language Big Book and 12x12.
- There are around 140 A.A. groups in Lithuania (population 2.9 million) and 18 Lithuanian speaking groups in foreign countries. There are 33 online meetings and 43 open A.A. meetings per week.

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

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

We have three regions consisting of seven intergroups. Each of the three regions has 8 delegates at the Conference and each intergroup elects a different number of delegates according to the number of A.A. groups belonging to that intergroup. We have one Conference delegate elected by Lithuanian AA groups abroad.

The General Service Board consists of six class B trustees, two from each of the regions and since this year we finally have one non-alcoholic class A trustee. The board holds quarterly meetings at our General service office.

A.A. in Lithuania hires two employees – the manager of the General service office and a part time accountant.

Lithuanian A.A. Service structure is described in the Service Manual. At the moment the Service manual is being rewritten and will hopefully be approved by our Conference in 2026.

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

Our intergroups take care that A.A. meetings are held regularly in hospitals, detox-centers, addiction disease centers, psychiatric wards and prisons. We collaborate with the police, probation/criminal justice services, prisons, the army, and other various social services. Both local groups and intergroups invite members of professional communities to their events and open A.A. meetings. One of the major events is our „Thanksgiving day“ (Founders day) held at the beginning of June each year – we hold a separate meeting for the professional communities in the middle of the week to make it more convenient for professionals to attend. We get invitations to share the A.A. message with students at universities. As of 2023 we have a PI committee at our Board of Trustees that is working on national AA helpline, and other PI activities nationwide.

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

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

### **General Service Conference**

Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference takes a very important place in our A.A. Service structure. This year the time of the Conference was moved to early spring instead of November. The Conference takes place over the weekend for two days. Voting members are: Board of trustees, eight delegates from each of the three regions, a representative of Lithuanian-speaking groups abroad, editor of A.A. magazine, manager of the General service office and two ESM/WSM delegates. We usually invite guests to the Conference, usually from our neighbouring countries. Lithuanian A.A. Service Conference work is assigned to four committees (Finance, Internal, Public Information and Literature/Publishing).



The Service conference makes decisions to be implemented by our Board of trustees and the Service office and also issues recommendations for A.A. Lithuania as a whole, those recommendations are to be taken into consideration by all A.A. groups in our country.

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

Our first Service manual was printed in 2008. It was compiled from other English language Service manuals available (Ireland, UK, US/Canada). Over the years it underwent a few minor updates, but we started to notice that as our structure is evolving, we find many things missing in the Manual. In 2022 the Conference approved of the idea to rewrite our Service manual – from the top of our Service triangle, right down to the bottom. A new Service manual committee was formed and it is now working non-stop (meeting almost every Sunday) for almost three years already. The committee is reporting back to the Conference every year. At the moment a draft of the new Service manual is presented to all the groups in Lithuania for review. After the committee gets all the feedback and makes the last corrections it will be presented to our Conference and hopefully approved the next year. We are looking at other countries' experience and service manuals (Poland, US/Canada, UK, Ireland, South Africa etc.), but we are also very conscious that the new Service manual must meet the needs of the Lithuanian A.A. service structure.

### **Literature/Publishing Overview**

A.A. Service Office in Lithuania publishes General Service Conference approved A.A. literature. We have two editions of the Big Book in publishing: in 2022 we printed our third edition of Alcoholics Anonymous updated with new stories of Lithuanian A.A. members; in 2024 we printed Alcoholics Anonymous 4th edition with translated US/Canada member stories. In total we have published 22 pamphlets/brochures and following books: Alcoholics Anonymous with local A.A. member stories (1991/2006/2022), Alcoholics Anonymous with US/Canada member stories (2024), Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (1992/2007), Living Sober (1993), Daily Reflections (1994/2008), Came to believe (1996/2010), As Bill Sees It (1999/2008), A.A. Comes of Age (2011), Twelve Concepts for World Services (2015). We also have an audio CD of Alcoholics Anonymous (2008).

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

New brochures are being translated and published regularly, e.g. „Women in A.A.“, „Behind the Walls: A Message of Hope“ and „Faith Leaders Ask About A.A.“ were published recently. Also previously translated brochures are being revised for changes made by the A.A.W.S.

Our periodicals are: quarterly magazine „Penktas kampas“ (The Fifth Corner) and a G.S.O./G.S.B. newsletter „Aušra“ („Dawn“, by the name of first A.A. group in Lithuania). Some intergroups have their own newsletters.

All literature is on sale in our General Service Office, Lithuanian A.A. website (e-bookstore), some books can be found in major bookstores and online bookstores. The book Alcoholics Anonymous is available as a pdf and audio on our website.

Our intergroups have literature representatives, A.A. literature is distributed to local A.A. groups and members by intergroups.

### **Finance Overview**

Due to the 2020-2023 pandemic lockdowns A.A. Lithuania experienced a financial decline. In 2024 and 2025 both 7th Tradition income and literature sales have picked up and our financial situation has stabilized. Today we have sufficient funds and a healthy reserve to support our G.S.O. and to cover other expenses: A.A. literature publishing, donations to international A.A. funds etc.

The Fellowship in Lithuania is self supporting through the 7th Tradition and literature sales. The percentage of income from the 7th Tradition and literature is 53 and 47 percent respectively.

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

We keep in touch with A.A. in Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Estonia, Ukraine, UK, Ireland, U.S./Canada and other countries. We always exchange invitations to our Conferences with our neighbouring countries. After the last ESM Latvian and Lithuanian international delegates decided to start an informal Baltic Service Meeting (a place to share our experience on various A.A. service topics), Estonian A.A. members were invited. We also hold Zoom sharing sessions and workshops with other countries. ESM mailing list helps us feel as a part of European A.A. community. Possibility to attend the WSM gets us involved in the worldwide family of A.A.

### **Internet & Websites**

A.A. Service Office location: Vytauto g. 33, Prienai, LT-59124, Lithuania

Mobile +370 683 67786

e-mail: [info@aalietuvoje.org](mailto:info@aalietuvoje.org)

Website: [www.aalietuvoje.org](http://www.aalietuvoje.org)

# NETHERLANDS

## History

Alcoholics Anonymous was introduced in the Netherlands in 1948 by Dr. H.J. Krauweel, who played a pivotal role in bringing the message and establishing the first group. In 1954, AA Netherlands began publishing its own magazine *De Boei*. The first national meeting was held in 1955, which later evolved into the present General Service Conference (ADC) and General Service Board (ADR).

The structure was further consolidated with the creation of supporting foundations, including the AA Working Groups and Publicity Foundation (1969), and the AA/Big Book Foundation (1982), which oversaw the first Dutch edition of the *Big Book*. In 1983, the General Service Office (ADB) was formally established in Amsterdam.

## Structure

AA Netherlands is organized into six regions: North, East, Central, South, Northwest, and Southwest. All regions have active groups. Currently, the North, Central, and Northwest regions have fully functioning regional boards, the South, East and Southwest have an incomplete board.

The Board handles daily coordination of the service structure and acts as the legal board of the two foundations. The Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer serve as the statutory directors of both foundations. The board ensures decisions are carried out and oversees finances. The Board preferably consists of six members (chair, secretary, treasurer, each with a deputy), appointed for three years, with the possibility of a second term of three additional years. The Board meets a minimum of four times a year and makes its decisions by majority. The chair represents the General Service Board, the secretary manages meetings, correspondence and is responsible for the office in Rotterdam, while the treasurer oversees finances and reporting.

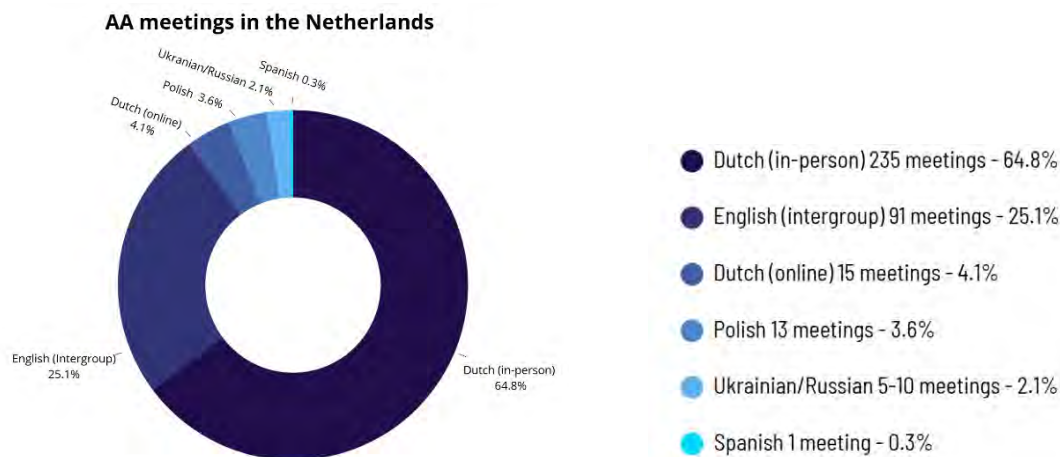
The General Service Board (GSB) is the executive body of AA Netherlands, implementing Conference decisions. The GSB is composed of regional trustees, committee coordinators, General Service Office coordinator, delegates, and the daily board. The GSB meets quarterly to implement decisions of the General Service Conference and to respond to requests from groups and committees. The GSB coordinates national service work and safeguards Traditions and Concepts.

One year the ADC is held as a one-day event, the next year as a two-day event. We aim to organize a one-day national conference every year, but last year we did not manage to organize it.

The General Service Office in the Netherlands serves as the center of administration, information and literature distribution for AA. Volunteers handle incoming questions by phone,

Email, and post, and provide information about AA. They usually serve one or two days per week, ensuring all service and literature needs are met.

After some years of turmoil, AA Netherlands is now looking ahead. We are reviewing our key documents such as the Service Manual, statutes, and conference report. Our aim is to bring everything in line and make a fresh start, with hope for a stronger and more unified Fellowship. Extra attention will be given to improving communication between the Daily Board, the General Service Board, the regions, and especially the groups, in order to build mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation. The goal is to strengthen the regions with shared knowledge and experience, and to create opportunities for volunteers to grow from service roles at the group and regional level into national service.



## Committees and other Services

**Finance:** The Finance Committee reviews the proposed budgets of all committees, subcommittees, and services. It further advises the General Service Board on all financial matters. There is one delegate per region. The foundation's income at this moment is mainly generated by the sale of literature and less from contributions from AA groups. In the previous years there has been a significant decrease ( $\pm 60\%$ ) in 7th tradition contributions. In 2024 we've seen an increase in contributions.

**Literature:** The Literature committee is responsible for translation, development, and updates of all AA literature. The most recent new publication was in 2023: the *Illustrated Twelve Traditions* with coloured illustrations.

Since Corona, literature orders have increased significantly. In 2024, sales included: *Big Book* 4,300; *Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* 2,300; *Daily Reflections* 600; *Sober Living* 500; *As Bill Sees It* 250; *One on One Sponsorship* 180.

**AA Telephone Helpline:** The national helpline is currently available daily from 08:00 to 23:00, including Monday nights.

**Public Information:** The National Committee for Public Information oversees all requests for assistance and information from organizations outside AA and offers information to the public media.

They are very active in their efforts towards the press and other media.

Schools, universities, clinics and correctional facilities are inviting AA speakers more often. Contacts that AA has established to reach the suffering alcoholic within correctional facilities are very promising.

**Hospitals and Institutions:** Weekly information sessions and AA meetings are organized in various correctional facilities throughout the Netherlands.

## Website & App

Our website is redesigned and updated. The website provides clear information for anyone seeking help, as well as details for each AA group. The site includes a webshop, a summary of the AA program, and an up-to-date agenda of events. Visitors can also order literature and find links to Al-Anon, Alateen, and English-speaking AA in the Netherlands. In addition, developers are working on a mobile AA app where members can easily locate meetings. AA Netherlands does not use social media such as Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube.

## Finance Overview

Maximum annual donation: € 3,000 per member

- Surplus income at group level is donated to the region.
- Surplus income at region level is donated to AA Netherlands.

Legacies:

- AA members may leave a legacy up to € 5,000 to AA Netherlands.
- Larger amounts, or any amounts from non-AA members, are not accepted.

Literature sales:

- No income is generated from sales to non-AA members or entities (e.g. bookstores).
- Sales to AA members and entities are generally the largest source of income.

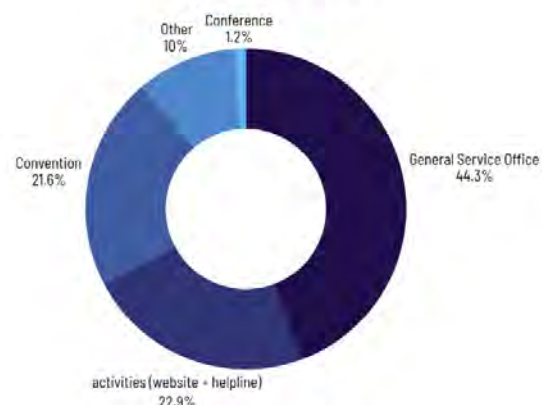
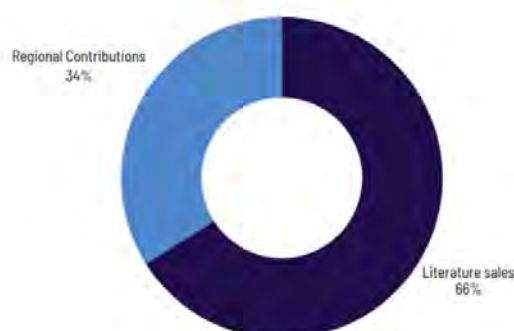
Annual Convention:

- The annual convention occasionally generates income.

# Financial Overview 2024

## Income

## Expenses



### **Contacts With Other Countries**

Intergroup English-speaking AA flourishes in the Netherlands and holds its own yearly convention. The National Dutch AA Convention is held each year in the beginning of October. Both conventions attract a considerable number of visitors from abroad.

Currently, there is no official cooperation between the Netherlands and Belgium. However, there is good contact between the delegates.

## NORWAY

### Structure

Norway has about 5 million inhabitants. That translates to about 14 inhabitants per square kilometers, or 36 inhabitants per square mile. There are currently 175 home groups, plus six groups abroad, with a total of 2000 members. This makes for great distances between A.A. groups in some areas, and from time to time, difficulties in getting the service structure to work properly. Particularly it is a problem to maintain the structure in the northern part of the country.

The country is divided into five regions, each region made up of three or more districts, for a total of twenty-one. Each district elects, one or in case of the largest region, three district representatives. These representatives are the link between the group representatives (GSR) and national A.A., which consists of our General Service Office and our General Service Board with five standing committees. They are also delegates to our yearly Service Conference, where they represent a two-thirds majority of the votes.

Our General Service Board consists of six alcoholics elected by the regions, and three non-alcoholics elected by the board.

The Norwegian GSO has one full part employee and volunteers when needed. Our national magazine is called *Boks 205* and is published bimonthly with a circulation of 700.

Delegates to our Service Conference are district representatives, GSB members, the GSO employee and the editor of *Boks 205*. We also invite as observers our friends from Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden, and the Nordic delegate participate at their national Conferences as well.

Financially we have a current budget of NOK 2,0 mill. (\$196,800USD). Roughly half our income derives from Seventh Tradition self-support and half from literature sales.

We have a good working relationship with Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden, and the Nordic delegates meets on zoom regularly. To take part at each countries Service Conference and The National AA meeting is probably a more predictive way to go, to maintain the good relation and cooperation between our neighboring countries.

The International delegate also participates in the World Service Meeting.

### Current Main Topics

The main internal focus of the past few years has been to improve the understanding of Service and Unity, both in the groups, in our districts and at a national level, and thereby motivate more members to commit to service. We have held several seminars for the groups on this topic.

We continue with our seminar for new delegates and deputy-delegates, with the aim of improving their understanding, especially of the Concepts and the importance of our service Conference. This is still very well received and are now our regular routine. We also have an orientation program for members of the GSB, both alcoholic and nonalcoholic, to shorten the integration process.

To improve the understanding of the Fellowship as a whole, we try to provide information more effectively about what is happening on a national level. We have been working to integrate the GSR as an important role in this topic, to bring information flow through our conference structure. We also encourage local seminars and help to organize them.

To make A.A. better known, it is important that we work efficiently and direct our efforts to areas where we as a Fellowship can benefit the most. Here, the help of our nonalcoholic members is very important.

### **Communication and Literature**

Technically, we are well equipped both to inform and communicate. Our national service phone, which is operated by local groups on a rotating basis from region to region, one year each. This is working satisfactorily; it is a popular service to carry out. It is a committee under the IT committee in the GSB, that is responsible for ensuring the practical implementation of this.

We have translated most of the relevant, approved literature. Most of the literature has been recently updated and given a modern layout. We have a “new” Big Book Translation (from the 4 edition) that was ready and on sale on our web shop in July 2024. We hope that our Service Manual will be ready by spring 2026, we are translating from the last A.A. Service Manual edition 2021-2023.

We are discussing how to best inform and make our literature available. We are also discussing how, and to what extent, we will provide downloads from the internet, and how we can utilize the internet better internally. Our delegates for the most part now get their information through e-mail.

### **Miscellaneous**

We are continuously working to improve our efficiency and especially to improve the knowledge and understanding of our service principles, the Twelve Concepts, throughout the service structure. We have dedicated members and a positive atmosphere of cooperation.

On the local level, public information work is done by groups and Intergroups with the assistance of our GSO and national PI committee.



## POLAND

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

Here is the list of selected “ THE FIRST” events in A.A. structure in Poland

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

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

15.10.1983 –The first intergroup started in Poznan.

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

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

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

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

23.03.1985 – A.A. Poland's first National Service Conference was held in Czestochowa.

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

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

01.08.1986 - The first edition of Poland’s A.A. national bulletin “Zdrój” was published.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

49 GSC made a decision to change the time of the conference from autumn to spring.

16.08 – 18.08.2024 The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was held in Poznan.

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

The main purpose of A.A. in Poland is the same as that of each A.A. group in the world – to carry the message to still-suffering alcoholics.

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

### **General Service Conference**

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

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

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

This year we started Inventory of our Conference to be completed in 2028.

The Conference we answered for earlier prepared questions.

We have a new Inventory Committee which working for all year round to prepare and determine the Inventory activities during the AA Conference.

### **General Service Board**

The Board of Trustees is made up of 14 alcoholics, 5 nonalcoholic members, and 2 national delegates serving as the European Service Meeting and World Service Meeting delegates representing Poland.

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

### **General Service Office**

The General Service Office is a registered foundation providing effective and efficient legal, financial, and administrative services for the whole Polish-speaking A.A. Fellowship.

Its functions also cover the publication and distribution of A.A. literature, the coordination of national conferences, workshops, and other A.A. events. Finally, after many years GSO has moved to the modern office.

## **Service**

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

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

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

For over 30 years we have been carrying the A.A. message into correctional facilities and prisons.

We have young people from AA named Polypaa.

In 2022 was born a new idea to participate in a well-known rock music festival – Polandrock, attended by 1 mln people of each age. Still we participate in this event. There were our members who represented AA, talked with people, answered questions, and held meetings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other forms of country-to-country sponsorship carrying the A.A. message worldwide have been applied for years to help jumpstart and develop A.A. in other Central and Eastern European countries, including but not limited to organizing workshops on Steps, Traditions, Concepts, and Spirituality as well as seminars on Conference Charter and Service Manuals, public information, and 12th Step Group.

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

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

## **Finance**

The A.A. structure in Poland is self-supporting with 37% of the costs of the G.S.O. activities coming from members' contributions and 57% covered from literature sales. 6% of contributions were dedicated to the 50 years anniversary convention, which held in 2024 in the city of Poznan. The sales of literature slowly riced. The percentage of contributions compared to 2021 is almost at the same level, but the amount of money is higher.

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

## **Literature**

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

12 x12 has been corrected to the most similar language connected to the IV edition of Alcoholics Anonymous and was printed. New pamphlets: "To Employer", and "Practical Advice for Distributors" were approved by the Conference.

We have a new position concerning Safety in AA. We've started talking about accessibility in AA. A new pamphlet on this topic was printed, and "Alcoholics Anonymous" for older and visually disabled persons was published in a bigger format.

Our bulletin "Zdrój" and a service bulletin "Skrytka 2/4/3" are published bi-monthly. A special bulletin for professionals "Wieści z AA" is emailed every quarter to over 700 persons. A new bulletin for inmates in prisons and jails "Nadzieja" is edited every quarter.

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

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

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

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

A Public Information Guideline for members serving in the public information field was created and posted on our website, also a guideline regarding “Accessibility to AA” was published.

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

This year, at the request of GSO US/Canada, we started publishing literature in Russian language.

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

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

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

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

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

## PORTUGAL

The “formal” AA service structure in Portugal has now 26 years.

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

### Structure

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

The face-to-face are 69 Portuguese-speaking, 13 English-speaking, 2 Russian-speaking and 1 German-speaking.

The online groups are 8 Portuguese-speaking groups and 2 English-speaking.

Since the last ESM we had two General Service Conferences, 2024 and 2025, with some significant issues being discussed and decided to implement.

By decision of the 26th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Portugal, held in June 2022, a Working Group was established in 2023 to analyze the current Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous in Portugal and propose its possible adaptation. This Working Group was presented to the 27th General Service Conference, beginning its work on April 12, 2023. After discussion and several changes over time, a proposal to change the structure was approved in April of this year at the 29th General Service Conference, to take effect immediately, albeit on a two-year trial basis.

The changes affect Groups, Areas, and the GSO, in an attempt to address the ongoing staff shortage at different levels of the Structure. In Groups, the suggested times of continued sobriety and length of service were changed; the number of Areas was reduced, with a new geographic distribution, maintaining the Online Area, and there are now two Delegates per Area; At the GSO level, a third Class A Trustee is appointed, preferably from the Justice Department. Reducing the number of Areas allows for a reduction in the number of staff members in all Committees.

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

All groups are linked to the AA service structure via their GSR.

### Other Services

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

When events are held, the GSO establishes a Working Group responsible for selecting the best facilities for the annual National Service Forum and General Service Conference meetings, as well as for the biennial National Conventions.

Regarding National Service Forums and Conventions, all arrangements, such as registration, room reservations, invitations, agendas, and pamphlets, are the responsibility of this Working Group.

The 2024 and 2025 National Service Forums were hybrid events, providing Portuguese members residing outside of Portugal and others who, for whatever reason, were unable to physically attend the event, the opportunity to contribute and participate in all the reflections, enriching the Group Conscience.

In 2024, we held our second International Convention, which took place concurrently with the 10th National Convention, from October 4 to 6, 2024, in Braga, northern Portugal.

### **Answering Service**

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

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

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

We also have a Service to Loners or Isolated Members to where the newcomers who don't have a face-to-face meeting near their residence and are not able to attend an online meeting are forwarded.

### **Literature and Publications**

This Committee is responsible for publishing our quarterly publications: *Partilhar* magazine and *Os Três Legados* bulletin. Since 2024 these have become one single publication: *Partilhar* magazine.

The books and pamphlets are also their responsibility. Most of such items are authorized translations from the English versions of AAWS Literature.

This Committee completed the translation into European Portuguese of the Grapevine book "A Linguagem do Coração" (The Language of the Heart), which was presented at the II International Convention of AA Portugal, which took place from October 4th to 6th, 2024, in Braga, in the North of Portugal.

The Committee also translated the Brochures "The AA Member – Medications and Other Drugs" and "Problems Other Than Alcohol".

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

This Committee responds to all the invitations for members sharing or lectures in schools, universities, polytechnics, college and police and army academies, which occur on an average of twice a month.

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

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

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

This Committee is composed by five AA members who are, or were, the PI coordinators of some Area, one Coordinator plus one General Service Board Trustee. This Committee meets twice a month.

## **Internet and Websites**

This Committee keeps working on turning our website ([www.aaportugal.org](http://www.aaportugal.org)) more appealing, with the upload of videos and media contents, and improving its facilities, such as the online shop, the diffusion of all AA events and the constant updating of meetings information. It also studies the possibility of creating a new website.

The visits to the Portuguese AA website have been around 7500 monthly visits for a while. New ways of IP through internet keeps being discussed.

This Committee is also responsible for maintaining all the GSO computer and electric hardware, as well as keeping the computer archives safe.

## **General Service Conference**

The General Service Conference meets for three days, on the weekend before Easter. Actually, the General Service Conference is also the yearly Assembly for the non-profit association which is compulsory to exist according to Portuguese law.

The General Secretary is responsible for compiling the Conference Agenda contents, which are mainly the General Service Board activities and accounts reports, the Areas reports, the General Service Board Budget and 8 theme questions.

In June of the year before, the Agenda Committee asks all the groups to send suggestions of the questions to be discussed by the Conference. In September, the Agenda Committee meets to select the 8 questions that represent the majorly concerned subjects and again asks all the groups to answer to what are by that time called the pre-Agenda questions.

It's the Delegates task to sum up the groups answers and send their report to the GSO until the end of December.



The Agenda is distributed to all the Conference servants in February, usually at the National Service Forum.

The Conference has two Committees, each one taking care of discussing four of the questions, plus the Nominations Committee that only is formed when there are candidates for being Trustee for a Region, and the Agenda Committee which chooses the themes for next year National Forum and General Service Conference.

### **Finance**

Almost all groups contribute regularly to the GSO. Last year budget was again entirely funded solely by group contributions—nothing from literature sales. This allows us to print “The Language of the Heart”, reprint “Living Sober”, “The Big Book - Alcoholics Anonymous” and other Brochures without tapping into the reserve fund.

### **Relations with other countries**

We continue to participate in all European Service Meeting and in the World Service Meeting; thus, we feel that those are good and correct ways of sharing experiences and to continue to grow in Unity.

At the last World Service Meeting, it was announced that Portugal will host the next World Service Meeting in 2026, which is a great Honor.

We believe that, on this European Service Meeting we will learn a lot, once more!

## ROMANIA

### **Brief history**

The first data about alcoholism was first published in a brochure by a Psychiatrist Dr. Alexandru Obregia, in 1927, who understood that alcoholism is a huge problem for the country. He said that Sweden and Norway warned other countries about this issue in 1950-1956, and that we should take action, because the collective trauma of the first world war almost doubled the number of bars opened in Bucharest, from 688 before the war to 1081 just after.

Unfortunately no actual structure developed after his research and data that he published along with the ministry of health of the time, the problem only got worse during communism regime, when people being oppressed, started drinking heavily especially in the smaller towns and villages, where they would make their own alcohol, like wine, and home made vodka.

The communist regime had a “solution” for the people that they saw being drunk on the streets or in bars. Go to work the next day, or go to prison. This were the solutions, that never resolved anything, only added to the frustration and we had a rise in domestic violence, and other such problems.

The first AA group is opened in Romania in 1991, in Timisoara, followed by another one in 1993, and another in 1994 in different cities.

### **Structure**

At this point we have over 60 active groups that are governed by three Intergroups that focus on the three big historically established areas of the country. We recently managed to change the board members in the statute, and unlock the bank accounts for AA Romania, because two of the initial members have passed away, and the association nearly got lost. But with the help of a lawyer, we managed to open a case, and a judge granted us access to the statute and we were able to change the members to some that are alive.

### **International outreach**

We keep a close relationship with AA Moldova that are our friends now, they come to our conferences and we love having them. They are growing nicely, the members are very committed to following the program to the letter.

### **Literature**

We are constantly translating books, and printing whatever we can afford, but the request for books isn't what it was a while back, everyone is finding internet more helpful right now.

At our services conference in May, called adaptability and flexibility in AA services we discussed the problem and we decided to invest in the website up to 3000 euros, and that would empty our bank accounts.

We also have a magazine coming out once a year but in very few copies as we don't have budget for it.

## **Finances**

We support our mission from the group contributions, and the very little literature sales. We are aware we don't have a big chance of changing things at the moment, because of the non existing online infrastructure, that would enable us the collection from online groups, but we hope that in the future, we will see some benefic changes. We are committed to working on this urgently.

## **Working with others**

We are making ourselves available to hospitals, prisons, and recovery centers, yet they don't use us efficiently at this time, because they don't believe or promote this method of recovery. They call us as a last resort, or they call us in like entertainment for the beneficiaries.

## **Conclusion**

To use the words of our friend that came from the US in 1996 to support AA Romania, who said at a conference that we as a country are 30 years behind others, and we should see this as an opportunity and work on prevention, maybe we can prevent some of the issues big countries face right now.

Although our government started investing in recovery and prevention programs, they don't know what they are doing, and so the problem persists. But hopefully in the near future we will have a say in the infrastructure that they are planning to develop. We are there, and we are opened to discussions.

I can say that we are not giving up and we are not complacent with the situation, and we are working and we are walking in every door that opens for us.

Thank you for having us, it's an honor to be here, representing our humble community.

### **A brief history of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia.**

The origins of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia are rooted in the Soviet past. The idea to bring the message of Alcoholics Anonymous across the ocean to the Soviet Union came to one woman, an AA member from California. On her initiative, the committee "Creating a sober world" was created, the activities of which made it possible to sow the seeds of Alcoholics Anonymous on Soviet soil.

The first open meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous were held in April 1986 in Kyiv, Moscow and Leningrad. The meetings were approved by the government of the USSR.

The new movement called "Alcoholics Anonymous" aroused interest among the public and professionals in the field of combating alcoholism. The AA movement was supported by Soviet doctors, psychiatrists-narcologists, psychologists. It could not do without the support of journalists. And the alcoholics themselves accepted the ideas of AA. So the impossible became possible. The AA message began to spread, which led to the creation of the first AA groups in Russia and other union republics of the USSR.

Since 1987, the chronology of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia has been kept. Then the first Moscow AA group "Moscow Beginners" was formed and began its activities. On August 16, 1987, the group was officially registered with the General Service Office of AA USA and Canada.

The year 1989 in the history of AA in Russia was marked by the birth of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" in Russian. The official translation of the book was completed by November 1989. In December 1989, the first 100 copies arrived in the Soviet Union with participants in the "Creating a Sober World" program. Soon, thanks to the assistance of the AAWS corporation, we began to receive large batches of AA literature in Russian. Parcels with literature came from Germany and Austria. Along with the book "Alcoholics Anonymous", we also received other literature: the book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", the book "Living Sober", brochures "44 Questions", "Youth and AA", "Women in AA", several booklets and the brochure "Meet AA".

On November 16, 1990, the Moscow Voluntary Society of Alcoholics Anonymous "Rus" was registered. Initially created to serve AA groups in Moscow, the society soon expanded its activities to other cities in Russia, becoming the first national Service Office of AA in Russia. However, having failed to re-register in a timely manner in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, the voluntary society AA "Rus" was automatically liquidated. In connection with this, there was a need to create a new organization with official legal status to serve AA groups throughout Russia. It was planned to register an autonomous non-profit organization of the Russian Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, but this attempt failed.

On December 15-16, 1990, the First All-Union Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous of the USSR was held. The history of these meetings, unfortunately, ceased with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

On April 13, 1991, the First General Service Conference of AA in Russia was held in Moscow. Initially, conferences in Russia were held every six months. In April 1993, the delegates of the V Conference decided to hold it annually. Up to and including 1995, the Conferences were held in various cities of Russia. Since 1996, the annual General Service Conferences of AA have been constantly held in Moscow or the Moscow region.

On December 14, 1991, the First Forum of Alcoholics Anonymous of Russia was organized and held in Moscow.

In 2000, the XXII General Service Conference of AA decided to create and register a legal entity. As a result, on March 7, 2001, the Alcoholics Anonymous Service Foundation was created and registered, which operates and services AA groups in Russia to this day.

In 2009, the book "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age" was published in Russian. Thanks to this book, the AA symbol, our "triangle in a circle", has acquired a special meaning for us. In "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age" on page 49 it is written: "The main legacy of the first 20 years of the existence of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous were the covenants of Recovery, Unity and Service. Following the first covenant, we recovered from alcoholism, the second - we strove for unity and the third - our community serves the main goal - to convey the ideas of AA to all who need it and are waiting for it." We began to clearly understand that we must always remain true to our main goal. We are united by a common problem, a common solution and a common goal. That is why all the sides of the triangle are equal, and the circle is our protection, our common ideal - a Loving God, as we understand Him.

But not all AA members liked this. Especially those who had their own idea of the AA program. They did not want to accept and carefully study what was written in this historical book. So some AA members neglected the spiritual rule of AA "Principles above personalities" and began to carry their message, instead of carrying the message of AA - our message. Thus, the internal conflict in AA Russia began gradually and led to the disintegration of the group consciousness in two.

In 2011, the book "The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service" was translated and published. This book opened the doors to the world of the Third Testament of AA. But, unfortunately, it was negatively received by many AA members. By that time, Russian AA had developed its own specific system of conducting business in the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, in which groups participated in the most minimal way. Therefore, a new look at the structure of AA service, where the highest authority and responsibility belong to AA groups, did not appeal to some members of the Russian AA Service Board that was operating at that time.

AA experience convincingly shows us that if we do not practice the Steps in our personal lives, we risk starting to drink again and, possibly, dying. If we do not follow the Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous loses its only purpose and ability to continue to be a spiritual organization. If we ignore the Concepts, there is a danger that a few will decide for the many what is best for AA. This is what happened in our country. A few began to decide for the many. An uninformed group conscience is easy to control.

The unwillingness to follow the Traditions and Concepts led to a division in the AA group conscience in Russia in 2011. Therefore, in 2012, two separate AA General Service Conferences were convened in Russia. In October 2012, the second AA office in the country was established and registered - the Alcoholics Anonymous Movement Support Foundation "Unity".

Since then, two AA service structures have been functioning in the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia, and two annual AA General Service Conferences are held in Russia. Today, about 13,000 alcoholics are recovering in the Fellowship of AA in Russia. Only 13 thousand people out of more than five million people suffering from alcoholism in our country. We realize that the internal conflict in the Fellowship does not make us attractive either to suffering alcoholics or to our friends in the public. After the division of the group conscience of the AA Fellowship in Russia, the question of creating a single AA service structure was raised repeatedly. We recognize this problem and do not close our eyes to it. At each AA General Service Conference in Russia, held in May, this pressing issue is raised. However, it was not possible to reunite again into one Conference structure, and a compromise solution has not been found to this day.

The AA service structure in Russia is a vitally important system of interaction, uniting individual AA groups into a single whole so that Alcoholics Anonymous can continue to live and fulfill its mission.

AA groups organize committees and services at the regional level, guided by the Fifth Tradition of AA. The forms of cooperation and service at the local level are varied. The autonomy of each AA group is recognized and valued in our Fellowship.

In turn, we, as the General Service Board of AA in Russia, support the desire of AA members in the regions to independently determine the methods of organizing their work, based on local needs and opportunities.

In different regions, these structures have different names and forms - from AA District Committees to AA Intergroups. In those regions where local service committees have not yet been formed, representatives of individual AA groups maintain direct contact with the Conference. This allows each group, regardless of its location, to participate in all-Russian service.

Today, more than 400 AA groups receive support and service within the structure of our Conference. At the same time, not all groups take an active part in the annual session of the AA General Service Conference. This is a challenge facing the entire Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia. A survey conducted in 2023 showed that issues of all-Russian service do not always find a lively response among AA members. Groups, first of all, are focused on their own development and on carrying the message of recovery in their region.

Every year in May, the AA General Service Conference is held. The only reason why the Conference continues to meet every year is to try to find new ways and improve the existing ways to continue to carry the AA message to the suffering alcoholic. We have no other goal. And there cannot be.

*The annual Conference session is attended by delegates (usually 17-19 representatives of AA groups and regional structures), members of the AA General Service Board (currently the Board consists of 6 people), as well as employees of the AA Service Foundation: the director and editor-in-chief of the AA Russia magazine "Dyuzhina". Sometimes, if necessary, we invite the chief accountant to participate in the Conference session with an advisory vote.*

Also, members of the AA Service Foundation Board of Trustees participate in the work of the Conference. The Board of Trustees is a body that ensures compliance with laws and proper management of the Foundation, as provided for by the legislation of the Russian Federation. Currently, the Board of Trustees consists of three people: one is an AA member, a recovering alcoholic, and two are non-alcoholics, representatives of the public and professionals in the field of combating alcoholism. At the annual session of the Conference, only one trustee has the right to vote - the chairman of the Board of Trustees, the rest of the trustees participate with the right of an advisory vote.

Our Conference is always open. Therefore, we invite representatives of the international AA Fellowship and representatives of parallel communities to participate as observers. On behalf of the Board, we send official invitations to participate in the annual session of the Conference. We invited representatives of the AA Fellowship of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, a representative of the Al-Anon Fellowship of Russia to participate in the XXXVI session of the Conference. An international observer from Bishkek from the AA Fellowship of Kyrgyzstan – a representative of the Public Foundation “Alcoholics Anonymous Service Foundation in the Kyrgyz Republic” – took an active part in the events of the XXXVI AA General Service Conference in Russia. It is important for us to exchange friendly experience in conveying AA ideas with other countries. The Annual Conference organizes its work through a system of committees. Conference committees are created as needed to solve specific problems. Responsibility for the work of these committees lies with the delegates of the Conference, who voluntarily take on this service. Often, committees create initiative groups to solve specific issues that require a more thorough approach, attention and time. The committees inform about this in their reports, which they present during the work of the regular session of the Conference. In addition to delegates, Conference volunteers and other AA members who have expressed a desire to serve in a certain area participate in the work of the committees. The composition of the committees is formed and updated during the annual session of the Conference in May. Each committee continues its work throughout the year. The officers of the committees are elected during the first (during the Conference session) or the following meeting.

The duties of the officers in the committees are distributed according to the Regulations approved by the Conference.

There are five committees in the structure of the Conference:

- Conference Committee on the Agenda
- Conference Committee on the Statutory Documents and Conference Report
- Conference Committee on the Development of the AA Service Structure
- Conference Committee on the Archive
- Conference Committee on Information Technology

## **General Service Board of AA in Russia.**

The Board is responsible for the proper conduct of the affairs of the general service of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia. The Board takes close care of everything that happens inside and outside AA that may affect the general welfare, growth and development of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia.

In its activities, the Board is the executor of the decisions of the General Service Conference of AA (hereinafter referred to as the Conference). It is accountable to the Conference, but has the exclusive right to make management decisions and act in the absence of the Conference itself during the intersessional period.

The Board organizes and supports special types of service for all of AA that cannot be carried out (and should not be carried out) by individual AA groups or AA service structures.

The service structure of the Board includes:

- 10 Board Committees and 2 active services.
- The Service Foundation of Alcoholics Anonymous (including the editorial board of the AA Russia magazine "Dyuzhina").

The Board carries out its operational responsibilities through the work of its Committees and related services. Today, ten Board Committees and two AA services operate on a permanent basis:

- Board Conference Committee
- Board Literature Committee
- Board Personnel Committee
- Board Finance Committee
- Board Public Information Committee
- Board Committee for Interaction with Correctional Institutions
- Board Committee for Organizing AA Seminars, Forums and Conventions
- Board International Committee
- Board Archive Committee
- Board Committee for the AA Russian Journal "Dyuzhina"
- AA Information Bulletin Service
- Conference Information Service

The Alcoholics Anonymous Service Foundation (abbreviated as AASF) is a service of the AA General Service Board. In the legal field of the state, the Foundation is a socially oriented non-profit organization and operates on the basis of the Charter.



The Foundation was created by decision of AA groups in 2000 and continues to serve AA groups today for the sake of the alcoholic who is looking for a way to us. Today, more than 400 AA groups in Russia receive services from AASF. Every year, on average, more than 20 new AA groups are registered with AASF. It is gratifying to note that groups have begun to open in the provinces - in district municipal centers, settlements and even in villages. Previously, the growth in the number of groups was noted mainly in megalopolises and large cities of Russia. Although Russia ranks first in the world in terms of the length of its territory, covering literally all directions of the world, from west to east and from north to south, the number of AA groups is small compared to other, even small countries. But still, the AA message is spreading, although not as quickly as we would like. New AA groups are opening in all corners of the country. There are groups in autonomous districts and republics of Russia. Even in distant Chukotka there are AA groups. When registering a new AA group, the Foundation sends a set of basic AA literature for holding meetings and a certificate of registration of the group in the AASF to the postal address of the group representative free of charge.

The AA Service Foundation provides the following services to AA groups:

- publishes AA literature in Russian and ensures its availability to members and groups of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia.
- publishes and distributes the magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous of Russia "Dyuzhina".
- issues the Information Bulletin of Alcoholics Anonymous in electronic form and other AA service materials for AA groups and service structures in Russia
- ensures the distribution of AA literature in correctional institutions in different regions of Russia
- acts as a coordinator in the Correspondence Service with alcoholics serving sentences in correctional institutions, ensuring the uninterrupted operation of "P.O. Box 33" and communication with AA members who participate in this type of activity.
- assists AA groups in establishing relations with the public and the professional community in the regions of the Russian Federation:
  - issues powers of attorney to AA members and prepares official letters to various institutions, organizations and authorities at the request of AA groups;
  - provides the statutory documents of the AASF ;
  - concludes various contracts and agreements; issues powers of attorney to representatives of AA groups for public relations;
  - fills out letters of thanks (on their own forms or on forms sent by groups) according to the information provided.
- provides assistance to single AA members in regions of the country where there are no AA groups yet
- answers questions and requests from AA members and groups on issues of AA services and the activities of the AASF, provides information about the Fellowship of Alcoholics

Anonymous as a whole, if necessary, connects AA groups with specialized AA Committees and Services in the structure of the Conference.

- shares the experience of AA groups in various aspects of AA activities, accumulated in the AA Service Foundation over the years of its work.
- informs AA groups about the events of the AA Fellowship in Russia and around the world through a representative of the AA group, if the group so desires and provides contact information/e-mail address
- ensures the operation of the Alcoholics Anonymous information site (<https://aarus.ru>), posts on the site all the necessary and up-to-date information about the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Russia for AA members, for alcoholics seeking help and for professionals.
- posts on the site information about AA groups and the schedule of AA group meetings in the regions of the country in agreement with each individual AA group.
- provides assistance in informing the AA Fellowship of Russia about AA group events and anniversaries.
- provides services within the framework of regional servicing of AA groups and structures in the regions of Russia, which includes - concluding contracts for social advertising, social and paid lease of premises for AA meetings and registration of hotline numbers and domains of local Alcoholics Anonymous sites for the Alcoholics Anonymous Service Foundation.

## **Finance**

The activities of the AA Service Foundation are carried out through voluntary donations from AA groups and members and the sale of Alcoholics Anonymous literature (income-generating activities). The Foundation has no other sources of financing.

The financial activities of the AA Service Foundation are open to members of the Fellowship. Quarterly, semi-annual and annual financial reports are promptly published on the website. The full financial report is presented at the annual session of the Conference and is included in the Final Conference Report. AA members may ask questions about the reporting throughout the year and receive answers to them. In addition, the reporting is required to be sent to the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, which monitors the activities of the Foundation in accordance with the law.

In previous years, AA in Russia was deeply ignorant of the practical significance of the Seventh Tradition in the Third Testament of AA, self-sufficiency at all levels of service and the responsibility of groups for the services they create. Understanding of the need for a national AA Service Office, its importance, first of all, for the groups themselves, was very limited. This was reflected in modest donations from groups and individual members to the AA Service Foundation. It is gratifying to see that the current generation of AA in Russia shows greater interest in the activities and financial support of AA services. Thanks to seminars on the Tradition of self-sufficiency, held both at AA events and online, donations to the AASF have increased significantly. Groups are also willing to support specific projects. More and more groups strive to be informed and rely on the AA Traditions. A number of seminars on the Seventh Tradition of AA were held during 2024-2025, including:

"Regional Service of AA Groups", "Our 7th AA Tradition", "The Contribution of the Seventh Tradition to Carrying the AA Message", "Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous" and "Where Spirituality and Money Intertwine" and others. In addition, seminars are regularly organized on general issues and the significance of the AA Traditions.

Thanks to the joint efforts of the Board and Conference delegates to explain the essence and importance of the Seventh Tradition, we have seen a positive change in the awareness of AA members and groups of its significance for the general welfare of the Fellowship. The responsibility of AA groups for the welfare of the Foundation is increasing.

Donations from AA groups and members cover 65% of the total expenses necessary for the operation of the Foundation. Income from the sale of AA literature covers 35% of the total expenses.

Voluntary donations from AA members and groups are received by the AA:

- for statutory activities (29% of the total amount of donations received)
- for targeted items with a specific purpose of payment (12% of receipts)
- within the framework of regional services for Alcoholics Anonymous groups (24% of receipts)

Donations for statutory activities are used to pay for the following expenses:

- rent of the Foundation office premises
- utility bills
- communication services (telephone, mail, Internet)
- website maintenance
- software (for financial, accounting and other reporting of the Foundation)
- household and office supplies
- salaries of Foundation employees (salaries and insurance premiums)
- audit
- bank services
- taxes
- unforeseen expenses

Voluntary donations for targeted items are intended to provide/pay for specific types of AA services within the framework of the designated purpose. The purpose is clearly stated in the name of the target donation item itself. According to the legislation of the Russian Federation, money from target donation items cannot be spent on purposes other than the one that is defined. The following target donation items are currently relevant:

- for organizing AA events (for example, covering the costs of holding the AA Convention in Russia)

- for literature for correctional institutions ("pink can"). This item covers expenses, including the cost of AA literature and the cost of its delivery to correctional institutions in the regions of Russia.
- for literature/magazine "Dyuzhina". Donations received for this item help cover part of the costs of publishing the magazine - to pay for the work of the editor-in-chief. The remaining costs (printing services, delivery, payment for the work of a layout designer, typesetter) are covered by voluntary donations "for statutory activities".
- for organizing the Conference on General Service of AA in Russia. (delegate/volunteer fee).

A separate type of donations are donations received within the framework of regional service of Alcoholics Anonymous groups. "Regional service" is not a specific term, but a type of statutory activity within the framework of which the AA Service Foundation provides targeted services.

Regional service of AA groups and structures in the regions of Russia includes the AA Foundation's assistance in concluding contracts for social advertising, social and paid lease of premises for holding AA group meetings, and registration of the group's telephone number for a legal entity.

Regional service of AA groups is carried out by a responsible person - this is a full-time employee of the AA Foundation, the regional service manager. His responsibilities include, in particular, overseeing lease agreements for premises and related contracts for the provision of housing and communal services (water, heating, electricity, etc.), as well as interaction with AA groups on these issues. In order to inform AA groups in detail about how this type of service is provided, a "Memo on the responsibility of the AA group when the AA Service Foundation concludes lease/free use agreements for the group's premises" was specially developed. The memo was received in printed form by the participants of the XXXV Conference on General Service of AA in Russia, and in electronic form it was sent to representatives of AA groups acting under the power of attorney of the AASF and directly involved in issues of paying the group's fees for the use of premises and housing and communal services.

Proceeds (income) from the sale of literature are used to:

- cover the necessary expenses for conducting statutory activities. Voluntary donations from AA groups in Russia, as in other countries, do not cover all the expenses necessary for conducting AA service activities. Therefore, part of the expenses is paid for by income-generating activities (35%).
- for the publication/republication of AA literature.
- for the formation of the AASF Reserve Foundation. The reserve fund is formed from the proceeds of the sale of the following books: "The A.A. Service Manual with the Twelve Principles of World Service Organization"; "The A.A. Traditions Study Workbook"; "The A.A. Service Principles Study Workbook" and the book "Casting Off a Stone."

## **Literature**

The Alcoholics Anonymous Service Foundation publishes literature recommended by the AA General Service Conference. The catalog of literature published by the Foundation is available on the website <https://aarus.ru>

As always, the Big Book - "Alcoholics Anonymous" - remains the most popular and favorite book among AA members and groups. To meet the diverse needs of the Fellowship, the Foundation offers it in various formats: with stories, without stories, pocket version of the book, in hard and soft covers. Anniversary editions of the Big Book are also invariably popular.

The AAFO catalog also includes the following books: "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", "Living Sober", "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age", "AA Service Manual with the Twelve Concepts of the AA World Service Organization", "The Language of the Heart", "Dr. Bob and the Glorious Veterans", "Daily Reflections", "Come to Believe", "As Bill Sees It". In addition to the main AA books, the AAFO also publishes others: "Throwing Down a Stone", "AA Service Principles Workbook", "AA Traditions Workbook". These books are published by decision of the Conference in response to numerous requests from AA members. The remarkable book "City of Recovery" is in great demand, especially among alcoholics in correctional institutions. It includes the book "New Glasses". Unfortunately, some publications previously published by the Foundation are currently out of stock. In particular, the "Golden Book of Happiness", which enjoyed great interest, is now unavailable.

The Foundation offers a wide selection of brochures and booklets, both known in the world AA Fellowship and recommended by the AA General Service Conference in Russia. These printed publications are vital for AA groups to conduct events, establish connections and cooperation with the professional community and the public. They are also useful for those who are just getting acquainted with AA. The brochure "Basic Information about AA in Russia" is in demand in public organizations and is a valuable resource for AA groups when conducting presentations and round tables. The brochure has proven useful not only for AA groups in Russia. The Director of the AA Service Foundation of Kazakhstan asked for an electronic version of this brochure for adaptation and use in AA Kazakhstan. The Board considered this request, and the electronic version of the brochure was sent to Kazakhstan.

For those who come to AA for the first time, the Foundation publishes thematic postcards. Group members can indicate their contact phone numbers to support a newcomer on the path to sobriety in difficult times.

## **New projects**

Thanks to the active work of the committees, new projects aimed at expanding the possibilities of delivering the AA message are developed and implemented by the Conference by decision of the Conference. Conference delegates actively participate in the implementation of these projects. And the discussion of issues related to new initiatives often causes the most lively discussions at the Conference sessions.

In the period between the XXXV and XXXVI sessions of the General Service Conference of AA in Russia, the project of the booklet "The Contribution of Your Seventh Tradition to Carrying the AA Message Outside Your Home Group" was completed. In the near future, the booklet will be published and distributed. We hope that it will be of significant assistance in the activities of Alcoholics Anonymous. The booklet "Your Delegate" has also been approved for publication.

The committees are currently working on new projects: the booklet "Message to Teens" in an updated format, the brochure "AA Anonymity on the Internet", the brochure "New to AA Today" and the booklet "About Groups and Clubs in the AA Fellowship in the Language of the Ordinary Person". Members of the AA Fellowship in Russia are eagerly awaiting the publication of the book "Pass It On" in Russian. The translation of the book is complete. The Board has repeatedly contacted Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (A.A.W.S.) with a request to enter into a dialogue to agree on issues related to the publication of AA literature in Russian. We need to determine our future policy in publishing activities in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation and the principles of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of AA Service. We are appealing to representatives of A.A.W.S. and personally to the President of A.A.W.S. Bob Wilcox with a request to hold an online meeting to discuss these issues and reach mutual understanding. Despite repeated requests, no response has yet been received from A.A.W.S. We hope for a positive response and the opportunity for dialogue.

We strive to improve the effectiveness of AA group service in Russia. In our activities, we also rely on the recommendations in the "AA Service Manual together with the Twelve Concepts of AA World Service Organization". Currently, only the 2010 edition is available in Russian. At the XXXVI session of the Conference in Russia, delegates recommended that the Board resolve the issue of translating the 2024 edition of the "AA Service Manual" into Russian. The participants of the Conference are extremely interested in receiving an updated edition of the "Manual" in Russian in order to move and develop in step with world trends in AA service. We hope for mutual understanding and support of Alcoholics Anonymous World Service, Inc. in this matter as well.

### **AA Magazine of Russia "Dyuzhina"**

The magazine "Dyuzhina" is the official periodical of the Russian AA Fellowship and is an "AA meeting in print". Just like an AA group for an alcoholic, the magazine is a place where you can gain strength, share experiences, and find lost hope. "Dyuzhina" is a publication where every AA member can tell their personal story and be heard.

"Dyuzhina" is a registered publication in the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media. The charter of "Dyuzhina" was adopted at a general meeting of journalists on April 21, 2010 and approved by the Board.

The AA magazine "Dyuzhina" has its own interesting history. In August 1991, the first magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous was published with a simple and modest name "Alcoholic".

The release of the first issue of the magazine in August was not accidental. In August 1987, the New York General Service Office (GSO) registered the first AA group in the USSR, which was located in Moscow – the “Moscow Beginners” group. That is why August was chosen for the release of the first edition of the AA magazine in our country. Later, “Alcoholic” was renamed “Dyuzhina”.

Over the 30 years of its life, the magazine has gone through a difficult path. The people who published it changed, and the appearance of the magazine itself changed. There was no clear concept for the magazine. Until 2009, the magazine was printed in black and white with a color cover. There were years when “Dyuzhina” was not published at all. Thanks to caring AA members who were able to preserve the idea and the magazine itself, carried it through time to this day, the magazine began to be published on a regular basis and acquired a colorful, attractive appearance, became interesting and informative.

“We are trying to preserve the spirit of love and tolerance that traditionally permeates most AA publications. What is important to us is, first of all, a person who, knowing nothing about AA, picks up the magazine and gets hope for healing,” writes the editor-in-chief of “Dyuzhina” in one of the reports on the work of the magazine's editorial board. And these words do not diverge from deeds. The modern colorful and bright magazine “Dyuzhina” does not leave indifferent our non-alcoholic friends who deal with alcoholism problems at a professional level. At events to inform the public about AA, the first thing that the participants' eyes fall on from the entire range of handouts is “Dyuzhina”, it is the first to be picked up, leafed through and taken away. There were times when the magazine was published quarterly. Unfortunately, at present the magazine is released annually. In the age of active development of information technology and the Internet, the demand for the magazine has significantly decreased. But it continues to be published and always gets to its destination. The most important thing is that it gets into the hands of those who are on their way to us. In this sense, “Dyuzhina” is a true guide.

The magazine is presented in the literature catalog on the website <https://aarus.ru>. The issues of the magazine that are no longer available in print are available on the website for free reading. The magazine is available in libraries in Russia and libraries of specialized institutions to which free access is limited.

The A.A. Newsletter is a dynamic communication tool used by our Fellowship to consistently and systematically convey relevant information to all levels of the A.A. service structure. It is published to facilitate the sharing of experiences in service and in carrying the A.A. message. Periodic publications distributed throughout the Fellowship serve as an effective means of keeping members, groups, and service structures informed about important issues and current topics. The Newsletter promotes a sense of belonging, unity, and facilitates the sharing of experiences essential to the growth and prosperity of A.A. The effectiveness of the Newsletter is determined by its clarity, simplicity, and reader-friendliness, as well as by the method of distribution chosen to ensure optimum readability. The Newsletter is popular not only within the A.A. Fellowship, but also generates interest in the public. Collecting, creating and formatting the Newsletter materials, making it attractive and targeted, contributes to the formation of a more informed and dynamic group consciousness of the Fellowship. This process requires certain human resources and skills.

In addition, the Newsletter is published four times a year and serves as an important means of ensuring transparency and openness within the Fellowship.

The electronic version of the Newsletter is published on the website (direct link - <https://aarus.ru/infobyulleten>).

Each issue of the newsletter is unique, as are the stories of our members. The cover, the number of pages, the topics and even the mood change. One thing remains unchanged: the lovingly printed pages remain faithful to one simple imperative idea - when one alcoholic talks to another alcoholic. A conversation across cities and time in the language of the heart.

## **International Relations**

The AA Service Foundation also contributes to the worldwide service of Alcoholics Anonymous. In its activities at the international level, the Foundation:

- shares accumulated experience in serving AA groups with foreign AA Offices and other service structures; maintains correspondence, sends and receives congratulations on significant dates in AA and other holidays.
- provides support to Russian-speaking AA members and groups in other countries; answers questions, provides information and necessary AA service materials;
- provides AA literature in Russian upon request to AA in other countries;
- provides assistance in the formation and development of the AA service structure in other countries upon request.
- facilitates the establishment of connections between AA members and groups in other countries and the AA Committees and Services operating in the Russian structure of the Conference.

In the last four years, the International Board Committee has been operating in our AA service structure. The main tasks of this committee in Russia correspond to the tasks of similar committees in other countries: promoting the spread of AA in countries where it does not exist or is small, and supporting the development of the AA service structure where it is absent (mainly in the neighboring countries).

The committee closely cooperates with the Regional Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous of the CIS and Baltic countries. At joint meetings, delegates and representatives of AA service structures exchange experiences in spreading AA ideas, as well as experience in supporting countries where AA is just beginning to develop.

For more detailed information, please contact the International Committee of the AA General Service Board. E-mail for communication - [k.k@aarus.ru](mailto:k.k@aarus.ru). In the subject line of the letter write - to the International Committee of the Board.

Our contacts:

- A.A. General Service Board in Russia – [soo@aarus.ru](mailto:soo@aarus.ru)
- Joint postal service of the Board Committees – [k.k@aarus.ru](mailto:k.k@aarus.ru)
- Joint postal service of the Conference Committees – [kpd@aarus.ru](mailto:kpd@aarus.ru)



- A.A. Service Foundation – [office@aarus.ru](mailto:office@aarus.ru)

Address: 129345, Russia, Moscow, Taininskaya St., 8, room 6.

Phones:

+7 (499) 185–40–00

+7 916 009–57–70

- Information website – <https://aarus.ru>
- Information about A.A. groups in Russia – <https://aarus.ru/groups-aa-russia>

May God grant that we all carry out the entrusted service with gratitude and always remember the reason for which we gather. Remember those who are not with us today; about those who are in relapse; about those who will never be with us because they died from this terrible disease. Remember why we are here and who we ultimately serve.

With you in gratitude to God and in service to the Fellowship of A.A.

### **BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY**

The AA movement in Russia began in the late 1980s. The first meeting in Moscow was registered with the G.S.O. U.S./Canada in 1987. As on August 2025, around 1200 groups are registered in the General Service Office in Russia (hereinafter referred to as the GSO). Most group meetings are held in large cities, but the geographic presence of AA is expanding to small towns and rural areas. Some of them hold their meetings every day. About 50 groups hold online meetings (Zoom, Telegram). An AA group for people with hearing problems and AA group for combatants have been registered.

### **STRUCTURE**

The AA Russia General Service Conference (GSC) is held annually in Moscow in early April and lasts for four days. Participants of the Conference with voting rights are:

- a) Delegates (GSDs) from AA groups, registered with the GSO, where there are no local AA Service Committees;
- b) Delegates (GSDs) from AA Delegate Districts;
- c) members of the AA Russia General Service Board (GSB);
- d) Executive Director of the GSO (Executive Director of the Fund “Unity”);
- e) Russian Delegates to International AA Service Meetings;
- f) editor-in-chief of the AA magazine.

Observers are welcome at the Conference.

The AA Russia General Service Board includes the following Committees:

- Public Information Committee;
- Finance Committee;
- International Committee;
- Committee for Work with Treatment Settings;
- Committee for Work with Correctional Facilities;
- Committee for the Russian AA Conference;
- Committee for the Russian AA Forum;
- Charter Committee;
- Literary Committee;
- Archive Committee;
- Committee for the AA Russia Magazine;
- Information Technology Committee.

The General Service Conference (GSC) currently serves 35 Delegate Districts, including the Delegate District of the Russian-language Internet and one Region “Eastern Siberia and the Far East”.

The 36th meeting of the GSC Russia was held April 03-06, 2025 under the motto “AA Unity is Everyone's Responsibility”. The Conference meeting was attended by 67 voting AA members, of which 53 were delegates (GSDs) representing 992 AA groups, 10 members of the GSB, 2 international delegates, Executive Director of the GSO AA Russia and the editor-in-chief of the AA magazine "JAAR".

At the Conference meeting, more than sixty issues were discussed and a number of important decisions were made.

## **KEY UPDATES**

- A decision has been made to conduct a legal and financial analysis of the possibility of distributing AA literature in regions/districts at a unified price, including delivery to local AA offices;
- A decision has been made to include the AA Russia Nationwide Telephone Helpline number 800 234 9920 in AA literature. The helpline operates 24/7 across all time zones;
- The work has been completed on the Russian retranslation of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The previous translation dates back to 1989;
- Work is underway to add a new section to the website (in the “About AA” tab): “FOR PROFESSIONALS,” “FOR MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES,” on <https://aarussia.ru/>, following the example of such sections on <https://www.aa.org>;
- Work has been carried out to create a Correspondence Service at the AA Russia GSO;
- The Russian AA General Service Board was elected to consist of 9 members.
- The next 37th meeting of the General Service Conference, under the motto “Service – Gratitude in Action,” will take place in Moscow, April 2–5, 2026.

## FINANCES

Russian AA GSO Budget 2024-2025

Expenses – RUB 18 928 823.

Income – RUB 18 928 823, including:

*Group donations – RUB 5 260 023.*

*Literature sales – RUB 11 220 000.*

*Conference fees – RUB 2 000 000.*

*Return from AA Forum – RUB 448 800.*

## LITERATURE

In addition to the main popular editions of the AA Fellowship literature, the following in Russian have been published in recent years:

- “12 Traditions Illustrated + Traditions Checklist from the AA Grapevine “.
- Brochures: “My group is my fortress. Safety in AA “, “Handbook for Those Going to Treatment Settings”, “Handbook for Those Going to Correctional Facilities”, “Let’s Be Friendly with Our Friends”, “Women’s Stories” from the series “AA about Itself”, “Speaking at Meetings Outside AA”, “Women in AA”, “The AA Member — Medications and Other Drugs”, “AA for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues - and their sponsors”.

An information leaflet has been developed for groups about working with the 7th Tradition, as well as a postcard for a newcomer with large margins.

The translation of the book “Pass It On” has been completed, the final text is being edited.

The Big Book “Alcoholics Anonymous” is being translated into Bashkir, Yakut and Tuvan languages.

Work is underway to coordinate licenses and printing of AA literature with AAWS.

AA Russia website - [aarussia.ru](http://aarussia.ru) - contains information for Russian-speaking groups outside Russia about the possibility of paying for literature and sending donations to the GSO account.

An online store has been opened on the website [aarussia.ru](http://aarussia.ru)

Twice a year the Russian-language magazine of AA Russia “JAAR” is published with the supplements: “Women’s Stories” and “Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow”. Regular sections of the magazine include: AA News, 12 Traditions, Crossroads of Opinions, Group/meeting/experience, My History, Book Reviews, AA Archive. Work on the second issue of the appendix to the JAAR, “And in war, as in war...”, has been completed;



## PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS

Information AA products (stands, booklets, business cards) are placed in hospitals, specialized medical organizations, rehabilitation centers, pharmacies of various forms of ownership, police precincts.

Members of the Russian AA Fellowship participated in the following events:

- May 14–16, 2025 – the anniversary of the Forum «The Nation’s Health – the Foundation of Russia’s Prosperity», where a video presentation was delivered in cooperation with the AI-Anon.
- April 11–13, 2025 – the 7th International Practical Conference «Psychology of Addiction: Contemporary Challenges».
- April 21, 2025 – the Scientific and Practical Conference «A Multidisciplinary Approach to Providing Addiction Treatment at the Present Stage».

As a result of a meeting with the staff of the Unified Support Center for Participants of the Special Military Operation and their families, options for further cooperation were identified.

A response was received from the Society of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, confirming their readiness for collaboration.

On April 4, 2025 during the GSC, a workshop was held on the topic Experience of Cooperation with Institutions for the Homeless in the Moscow Delegate District.

A new group has been established in St. Petersburg for participants with combat experience. Meetings are conducted in person with simultaneous online access.

Gradually, more and more prisoners are receiving AA message in Russia. Local service structure committees provide the 12th Step opportunities for those suffering in correctional facilities, as well as AA books and brochures.

## AA EVENTS

Traditionally, the AA Russia Fellowship holds large annual holidays dedicated to the founding dates of AA in its regions. Local AA Forums are held in many cities of Russia, “August Meetings” are held in Moscow, and “White Nights” are held in St. Petersburg.

In addition to large celebrations, AA holds mobile round tables to spread the AA message. Clergymen, doctors, representatives of law enforcement agencies and administration, social workers, etc. are invited to such events.

The 35th All-Russian AA Forum was held in Saratov in December 2024. The next AA Russia Forum is scheduled for 2025 in Yekaterinburg.



## COOPERATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

GSO Russia is in contact with AA structures in Moldova, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan, Estonia, Great Britain. We remain in constant contact with GSO in New York.

The international delegate from Russia, Andrei M., participated in the WSM in 2024 in New York and in the International Convention in 2025 in Vancouver. The “Final Report of the 28th World Service Meeting” has been translated into Russian.

A team of translators (English and Spanish) has been formed to carry out the translation of documents, announcements, and other materials received by the International Committee of the Russian AA.

Since its establishment, the team has translated into Russian the following materials: the newsletter about the 16th AOSM, the AOSM Welcome Pack, the program guide of the International Convention held in Vancouver on July 3–6, 2025, and the Guidelines for European Service Meeting.

Speaker meetings on AA service structure have been organized with invited speakers from different countries.

# SLOVAKIA

## Brief Summary

Slovakia, officially “the Slovak Republic”, is located in Central Europe, bordering with Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Hungary. Its population is 5.3 million, the capital city is Bratislava and the official language is Slovak. In 2025, the Slovak AA is celebrating its 34th anniversary.

## Current AA Structure

In 2025 we have 55 registered groups in 33 cities with approximately 500 members across 8 regions. There is one Ladies and one Gentlemen group, both located in the capital city. Apart from the meetings conducted in Slovak we have one English, one Hungarian and one Russian-speaking group. Groups can choose to participate in their local area intergroup.

The fellowship is registered as a “*civic association*” with the Slovak Ministry of Interior under its legal name “Združenie pre služby Anonymným alkoholikom v Slovenskej republike” (Association for Services to AA in the Slovak Republic). The *civic association* is required by law to create a *general assembly* and this function is performed by our annual General Service Conference. The *civic association* has three statutory representatives, who are members of the General Service Board at the same time.

Most of our groups have a formally elected group secretary, a treasurer, and a General Service Representative (GSR). Those clustered in an intergroup also have an intergroup delegate. The GSRs often serve as the group’s delegates to the General Service Conference.

## Other Services

We have regular AA and information meetings in 6 hospitals, 3 prisons and 3 rehabilitation centres. Our Public Relations Committee has been organizing and attending conventions and conferences of psychologists, doctors and other professionals, conducting interviews in media. The Bratislava-Trnava Intergroup co-ordinates activities of its member groups to organize local workshops, events and meetings.

Carrying this Message is the most important service. Sponsorship is on the rise but mostly concentrated in more populated metropolitan areas. Throughout the year, groups with more experience in the Twelve Steps conduct *Step-study workshops* at different locations of Slovakia. This helps us spread the word about the program of recovery; promote sponsorship and involvement in service. Some members use online technologies to sponsor newcomers in remote locations until more sponsors become available there. In the last 18 months online sponsorship has grown dramatically and has become an important tool for working with others in the ongoing pandemic crisis.

We established cross-country co-operation including sponsorship between groups, members and service structures, mainly with Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the UK, Denmark and the USA. We have been blessed to be able to participate in the European Service Meetings which have been a tremendous source of information and experience.



Our upcoming plans include organizing Service and Traditions workshops because we see some room for improvement in understanding and, more importantly, practising these within our Fellowship.

### **General Service Board (GSB) and Sobriety Time**

The General Service Board currently consists of 22 members:

- 1 Class A trustee (*non-alcoholic*)
- 8 Class B trustees (*sobriety time required: at least 6 years*)
- 1 Chairperson (*6 years*)
- 1 Deputy Chairperson
- 1 General Service Office Administrator (*4 years*)
- 1 Treasurer (*4 years*)
- 2 ESM/WSM Delegates (*4 years*)
- 1 “Prameň” (Water Spring) magazine representative (*4 years*)
- 6 Committee Chairpersons (*usually 3 years*)

There are six permanent Committees: Literature, Organizational, Service Manual, Public Relations, Online Communication, and Financial.

The GSB member nominations, elections and their service responsibilities are guided by the Conference-approved Service Manual. The GSB oversees our General Service Office, located in the city of Nitra, Western Slovakia. The Office is managed by the Conference-elected GSO Administrator.

### **General Service Conference (GSC)**

Each year, generally in April, we hold our *General Service Conference* in a city approved by the previous conference. In 2025 it was held in city of Nitra located in Western Slovakia.

The GSC is made up of one delegate from each group (*sobriety time: at least 3 years*) willing to participate in the GSC and members of the General Service Board. Standing committee-chairs participate as well. International and local AA observers are encouraged to attend and they are regularly invited to our GSC.

Our AA members attended some GSCs in other countries, which proved to be an invaluable source of experience. During the past General Service Conferences we dedicated great amount of time to present, explain and amend our Service Manual.

### **Service Manual**

We use “*The Service Manual AA Slovakia*” approved by the GSC. Its overall composition resulted from work of the Service Manual Committee a couple of years ago. We took experience from other countries’ service manuals as a starting point and customized the information to better fit our local needs. The material also includes „The AA Charter „and „The Statutes of the Association *Združenie pre služby Anonymným alkoholikom v Slovenskej*

*republike*". Every single amendment to the Service Manual proposed by the Service Manual Committee has to be approved by the GS Conference.

At the previous GSCs we focused on presenting, explaining and amending our Service Manual, which has proven to be a very useful asset to our fellowship.

## **Literature**

AA Slovakia distributes numerous General Service Conference approved literature in the Slovak language.

*The Books:*

- Alcoholic Anonymous (3rd edition excluding personal stories except Doctor Bob's Nightmare)
- Living Sober
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions,
- Daily Reflections (a reprint published in April 2021)
- As Bill sees it
- Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age
- Experience Strength & Hope.
- Pass it on.

*The pamphlets:* The AA group...Where it all begins, Is AA for you?, AA as a Resource for the Healthcare Professional, A Newcomer Asks, 44 Questions, Many Paths to Spirituality and others.

*The magazine:* Since April 2002 we have been publishing our magazine "PRAMENŇ" (Water Spring): It is being issued quarterly with about 300 copies per issue. The magazine provides personal stories of AA members about their experience, strength and hope, articles from guests, features about the 12 Steps and 12 traditions. Furthermore, there is information about AA groups, AA events and AA literature. Copies are distributed to treatment centres, libraries and AA groups. The magazine is self-supported.

## **Finance Overview**

Our service structure is made up of AA volunteers with no paid positions. Our costs are mainly those for the GSO space rental, printing and publishing costs, PR-related costs and for organizing conventions. Our major source of financing comes from the sale of literature (60-65%) and also from group/intergroup member contributions (35-40%).

Note: Some groups associated in one specific Intergroup had decided not to contribute funds to the GSO but rather keep their funds at their local Intergroup level. They had also decided not to participate in any nationwide activities. This was mainly due to personal disagreements between some members within our Fellowship. We are making efforts to explain the importance of applying all of our Traditions at conventions and meetings and through articles published in our magazine.

## **Relations with other countries**

AA Slovakia has very close and warm relationship with our fellows in the Czech Republic as there is no language barrier. We attend each other's events (conventions, 12-Steps seminars and workshops).

We have an inspiring and flourishing relationship with AA Poland through common attendance of the AA events.

## **Internet & Website**

Our official website ( [www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk](http://www.alkoholici-anonymni.sk) ) contains mainly group and meeting information (including phone numbers) and is regularly updated. In 2018 we established a telephone helpline for people looking for assistance and advice. Currently, we have been upgrading our website to become more mobile friendly. We have also enhanced the "search-for-meeting" tools.

The pandemic crisis brought about a rise of online meetings, mostly using the Zoom and Skype software. We currently register 10 online groups which, compared to the pre-pandemic number of 2, is a significant increase in Slovak terms. The General Service Board purchased Zoom licenses to enable groups to go online. The licenses are also used for Committee and Board meetings.

One of the original two online groups is an AA e-mail group called "Sober Space" where members share their experience, strength and hope on a 24/7 basis. The group was established in 2006. At present it has more than 750 Slovak and Czech speaking members living all over the world.

The other group is the Czech-Slovak Skype group named "Special Connection" which offers daily meetings (two meetings on Wednesdays). The online groups participate in our GS Conference and represent an invaluable resource for people unable to get to a physical meeting in their area.

# SLOVENIA

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

First AA group in Slovenia was established on November 6<sup>th</sup> 1989. As the membership and number of groups grew constantly, a need for some sort of connection between groups had to be organized. An Intergroup was established with an aim to exchange experience between groups, first of all concerning new members, public relation and anonymity. Soon intergroup was too weak for growing membership and in 2002 decision was made to establish democratic organization as it is in U.S.A /Canada, adjusted for possibilities, circumstances and conditions in Slovenia.

## CURRENT AA STRUCTURE

Today there are 42 groups "IN PERSON" and 10 groups ONLINE in Slovenia with approximately 500 members. The number of all active members (participants) reduced from approximate 600. In last two years the number of young newcomers has increased.

The Conference of AA on March 21st 2015 established new/improved Organization of AA Slovenia:

**GROUPS** - Each group has a chairman, treasurer, literature man and a delegate (General Service Representative), elected for a two year period. Sobriety time required for this position is two years.

There is a group in men's prison which exists for over 15 years, a group in the women's prison was established in the past year.

**GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE** - (GSC) takes place once a year. Each group among its members elects one GSC delegate. All delegates join at the Conference, listen to Committee reports of last year and discuss the next year program. Every second year the delegates elect one third of new GSB members. Administrative and technical tasks for the Conference are done by GSO.

Six months before the regular annual Conference we have The Autumn Service Meeting (ASM). ASM is convened and led by the Conference Organizing Committee. The purpose of the ASM is for delegates to exchange experiences from AA groups and the GSB, and to form positions on the most important issues concerning AA Slovenia as a whole. It represents the expression of the group conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous Slovenia as a whole. ASM ensures that the decisions of the Conference are as coordinated, consensual, and well-considered as possible.

**GENERAL SERVICE BOARD** - (GSB) is responsible for all the activities accepted at the Conference. It consists of 9 members:

- 1/3 are non-alcoholics, who promote the management of alcoholism in various fields of the society and support the activities of AA. One of Class A is a Chairman of GSB
- 2/3 are alcoholics that are sober for at least 5 years, know well the structure of AA functioning, are able to serve with their knowledge and have the capacity to lead and connect people.

One member of class B is the secretary, 5 members of class B are also leaders of one committee. Each committee consists of three members with four years mandate. Previous, present and future leader rotate on their posts every two years. Previous delegate cooperates in committee and helps with his experience to present and future leader, but is not a member of GSB. The members of the GSB also include the first and second term international delegate, but they do not vote.

### **Committees:**

- **Finances committee** takes care of planning, disbursing and reporting to Conference about finances once a year. Last years' budget of Fellowship was 15.000€. Main incomes come from contributions (70 %) and literature (30 %).

Every year or every two years, we contribute as much as we can and as our budget allows us to, to the WSM Fund and the International Literature Fund.

- **Committee for Public Relations** collaborates with the media: notes about AA in newspapers, occasional TV shows, we have announcements in national TV station CPC with Medical School (yearly informative meeting for doctors specializing in psychiatry), Faculty for Social Work, and Centers for Social Work. An informative meeting is also organized once a year for professionals, the media, and other interested members of the public.
- **Committee for literature/publications** is comprehensive. Included are, besides three elected rotating members, several AA members with professional skills: translators, editors, editor of Slovenian AA magazine **Koraak** (Step) and webmaster for webpage.

Over the years Committee translated: Big book of Alcoholics Anonymous, 12&12, Living Sober, Daily Reflections, and As Bill Sees It, Came to believe ten pamphlets and three leaflets were translated and printed so far, all licensed by AAWS. Our magazine Koraak is printed twice a year, containing contributions of AA's. Six years ago we have published publication on our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AA aimed at professionals and interested public.

The translation group is working on Service manual, 12 Steps illustrated and 12 Tradition illustrated are in the process of licensing and publishing.

- **Committee for AA events:** From 2012 we organize International AA Convention in Gozd Martuljek - Kranjska Gora which is growing and is increasingly welcomed among members.

The convention takes place in a beautiful setting surrounded by mountains. Some members from other countries regularly attend the convention, as they are drawn to its small size and intimate atmosphere. Typically, between 100 and 130 AA members participate in the event every year.

Throughout the year, various conventions are held across Slovenia in the Slovenian language. These conventions are organized by individual groups within the regions, giving AA members many opportunities for fellowship and for experiencing a sense of unity and connectedness.



- **Committee for electronic communications:** All information for the alcoholic who is still suffering are available by telephone: +386 [69 665 478](tel:+38669665478).

There is also the web page: [www.aa-slovenia.si](http://www.aa-slovenia.si) with relevant information and the list of meetings in Slovenia.

E-mail addresses: [info@aa-slovenia.si](mailto:info@aa-slovenia.si), [international@aa-slovenia.si](mailto:international@aa-slovenia.si).

Two years ago we added Meetings App for Androids and IOS and renewed our Website.

**GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE (GSO)** is formed by the members of GSB. They function also as administrative workers of the Board. We don't have professional employees in GSO. 24hrs service for still suffering alcoholics is covered by AA servant.

**Relations with other countries** run mainly through the connections we established with our cooperation at ESM and WSM meetings. Past Delegates supply our fellowship with information and encouraging members and our structure to make international connections and ask for experience. We are especially connected with members from Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro (we meet daily by ZOOM meetings).

In the past years, we have also been invited as observers to Bulgaria, Czech Republic, and Poland Conferences. These experiences are very valuable for our Fellowship.

ONLINE MEETINGS especially make connections possible with members from other countries.

## SPAIN

### STRUCTURE

Currently, the structure in Spain is made up of 24 Areas spread over four regional zones, 585 groups, of these, 33 in penitentiary institutions that make a total of 7,898 members (approximately). The General Service Board is composed of two Class "A" Custodians and eight Class "B" Custodians, of these, four in the host city and one for each regional zone.

We maintain contact with the non-Spanish-speaking groups located in our country (English, German, Polish, Swedish, Finnish, Danish and Icelandic) to try to work together and facilitate their integration, if they wish, into the structure of Spain. We are also in contact with groups that meet in Spanish in Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Geneva, London, Brussels and Sydney.

We continue to participate in the Service Forums that are held in each of the regional zones, which are attended by Class "B" Custodians of the host city and the Custodian of the regional zone where the forum is held, which serve to bring the board and the activities of the G.S.O. closer to the groups and vice versa. facilitating the exchange of experiences between the different areas participating in this forum.

### GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

Since the last European Service Meeting we have held the XLIV and XLV General Service Conferences.

The XLIV Conference was held on March 28, 29 and 30, 2024, with the slogan "ACTION AND UNITY MAKE US STRONGER"

The XLV Conference was held on April 17, 18 and 19, 2025, with the slogan "REACHING THE ALCOHOLIC: OUR RESPONSIBILITY"

### GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

The operation of our office continues to be possible thanks to the work and dedication of the two hired employees.

The responsibility for holding Public Information in white areas where there is no establishment of groups is maintained. In addition to the activity of the groups and areas in their areas of influence, the board held the necessary activities for the commemoration of "June 10" in the towns of León and Jaén in the years 2024 and 2025

Two members of the General Service Board attended the 28th World Service Meeting held in New York on October 27-31, 2024 with the theme "The Three Legacies in the Digital Age: Our Great Responsibility to the Alcoholic Born Today"

In 2023 and 2024, we have attended different professional medical congresses, both in the field of care and in the workplace, with the presence of a stand. Institutional visits were made to official bodies and entities. Alcoholics Anonymous of Spain is integrated into the National Drug Plan, as one more resource.



## **FINANCE**

In the years 2023 and 2024, the voluntary contributions of the members and groups have fully covered the budgets approved for the annual year, the good management of the financial resources of the G.S.O. have allowed the maintenance of the Prudential Reserve Fund at levels similar to those reached in previous years. Therefore, the economic situation today is adequate to meet our needs.

We continue to contribute to the World Literature fund.

## **LITERATURE**

About 500 requests for literature are sent annually to groups, Area Committees, and individual members. Our literature since the last European Service Meeting, maintains the same levels of sales.

We continue to produce our magazines "Akron -1935" and "Sharing" with a number of subscriptions that is over 1,600 per year. We sent 430 "Akron-1935" newsletters to non-alcoholic professionals and continued to reiterate the need to increase subscriptions.

## **MEDIA**

The official website of Spain has been remodeled [www.alcoholicos-anonimos.org](http://www.alcoholicos-anonimos.org) allowing information in Spanish and English, so we observe growth in visits to our website, which allows us to quickly and personally attend to the queries made by those who are interested in our recovery program and / or their families. diverting to areas or groups to those who ask us for help.

## **SPONSORSHIP**

At present we do not sponsor any country. Delegates from Spain

## SWEDEN

### Structure

A.A. in Sweden was founded in 1956. Today we have about 470 groups; and 25 districts, there is also English-, Finnish-, Persian-, Polish- and Russian- speaking meetings, abroad there are about 20 Swedish-speaking groups, there are 15-20 online groups which are represented in the Swedish meeting list, they have their own district.

The General Service Board consists of nine trustees, six from different parts of Sweden one Class A member and two international delegates. The trustees of the board and the international delegates are elected by the Service Conference.

All trustees except for the class A member, are responsible for several districts, as a contact person between the GSB and the districts. As such we attend, if possible, in person, districts meetings, to report from the GSB, and to report back to the GSB.

Assisting the General Service Board is:

- the members of the Board of Association Alcoholics Anonymous in Sweden
- the following committees: Information, Literature, Nominations, Policy, IT, the committee for development and knowledge.
- National Hotline, Archive, Finance and Economy are no longer committees, they are administrated by the nonprofit association AA of Sweden.
- the General Service Office

The committees are composed of members with sound professional knowledge in conjunction with solid A.A. experience, which facilitates their handling of their various agendas. The person who calls the committees together is a member of the General Service Board, except for the Nomination Committee.

The Alcoholics Anonymous Association in Sweden is a registered non-profit association, founded in 2001 and represented by the General Service Board. The association runs the publishing business and is also responsible for the General Service Office. The General Service Office has two employees one 100% who is the head of the office, and the other 50% who is responsible for the economy.

For all the above assignments a clear description of the service post and the qualifications desired is provided.

A.A. in Sweden has had its current structure since 2024. At the service conference in

2021 it was determined to put together a working group, to look at our AA: s structure. This ended in a decision to remove the regions at the 2023 service conference.

At the end of that year the reorganization was completed, the new structure is now, Groups – Districts – Service Conference - GSB. The purpose with the reorganization was to shorten the communication paths, and speed up decisions, and elections.

The reorganization also includes a comprehensive review of our Service Manual, which is updated and was released at the National Service Meeting in July 2023, a new one was published at our country meeting in August 2025, AA Sweden has decided to print and update the service manual every second year, the online version is updated as often as needed.

### **Literature/Publishing**

The approved A.A. literature today consists of 12 translated books and one book published by A.A. in Sweden (AA: s history in Sweden from the beginning up to 2012). There are 20 booklets and pamphlets, in addition to decals, shades, CDs, DVDs in Swedish.

We have during the last two years published The Big Book, 12 and 12, Living Sober, and Came to Believe all as downloadable audio books, soon to be released is Daily Reflection also as an audio book, "Daily Reflections" is also published on the website.

The magazine Bulletin – "the meeting between the meetings" – is published six times a year and is economically self-supporting through subscription fees.

We also have an excellent newsletter, Service letter (Servicebladet) published four times a year, which contains service information from GSB, International delegates, The Alcoholics Anonymous Association Board in Sweden, GSO and Bulletin.

### **Information**

We have a well-functioning website ([www.aa.se](http://www.aa.se)) with meeting list which updates regularly, an event calendar for groups, district and special events to be posted. Here you also find archive of documents from all levels of central service, rapports from GSB, the Service Conference, our service newsletter etc.

There are today about 20 local information committees.

### **Finances**

A.A. in Sweden is still not self-supporting by own voluntary contributions. Approximately 50% of our income comes from the sales of literature.

A.A. Sweden has been able to contribute to the International Literature Fund (ILF)

### **Working With Other Countries**

Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden are normally taking turns in hosting the annual Nordic Meeting. With Iceland attending for the first time this year, we now have five online meetings per year. We have during 2023 started up this meeting again, they had been postponed due to the Pandemic.

### **Events during 2024-2025**

The Service Conference 2025 was held during one weekend in April,

The two World Service delegates participated as delegates in the World Service Meeting in New York 2024, One of our WSD has rotated out, and we have a new WSD from the 1:st of January 2025. Our delegates will participate in the ESM in York in October 2025.

The Swedish Country Meeting in 2024 was held in Uppsala and in 2025 it was held in Lund, the first weekend in august. At the country meeting in 2025 the representatives from all the Nordic countries were present.

## TURKEY

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

In 1988, AA members living in Turkey, as a result of their meetings with the Psychiatry Department of Ege University, started AA introductory meetings once a week at the same hospital. In the same year, AA groups were established in Istanbul and Ankara.

In 1989, the first AA Convention in Turkey was held in Ankara with 7 Turkish AA members and 11 American AA members. AA Groups began to form across Turkey.

Between 1992 and 2011, AA groups were established in Bursa, Tekirdağ, Denizli, Antalya, Mersin, Marmaris, Konya, İzmit, Istanbul, and in the TRNC (KKTC).

In 2001, the AA Turkey General Service Committee and Office were established.

In 2018, by founding the “Adsız Alkolikler Ayık Yaşam Derneği” (Alcoholics Anonymous Sober Living Association), activities such as finance, book and brochure sales, AA introductory meetings, etc. began to be carried out with legal identity as the Turkey General Service Office.

### Current A.A. Structure

As of September 2025:

28 Alcoholics Anonymous groups, 3 regional committees (Marmara, Aegean, Anatolia),

AA TURKEY GENERAL SERVICE BOARD (CONFERENCE) held twice a year

AA TURKEY GENERAL SERVICE COMMITTEE elected for 2 years

TURKEY GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE responsible for serving AA groups and sharing information and experience.

Office departments:

- Press and Publications Distribution Committee
- International Affairs Committee
- Translation and Editing Committee
- Public Relations and Social Media Committee
- Lone AA Members Committee
- Website Committee
- History and Archives Committee
- Treatment and Correctional Institutions Committee
- Strategy and Planning Committee
- Legal Board

## **OTHER SERVICES**

### **Prisons, Hospitals, Public Information, etc.**

In 2025, in cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Health, panels were organized with institutions and organizations working in alcohol addiction treatment processes, as well as with the public, about the Alcoholics Anonymous recovery program. In addition, participation in National Medical Congresses is planned by the GSO. AA groups continuously and regularly hold meetings in hospitals to inform physicians and alcohol dependents about the AA program.

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

In group services, 6 months; in regional and general services, 2 years (however, it is encouraged that AA members who have been sober for 6 months, knowledgeable and willing in the subject, receive service experience alongside experienced AA servants in general services).

### **General Service Conference**

Held twice a year.

### **Service Manual**

The approved Service Manual of Alcoholics Anonymous, and its ongoing translation, is being used as a reference in our work.

### **Literature/Publishing Overview**

We have the following three books translated and approved by the World Service Office.

1. Alcoholics Anonymous – Adsız Alkolikler
2. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions – On İki Basamak ve On İki Gelenek
3. Living Sober – Ayık Yaşamak

The following four books are under finalisation of translation and demanding approval process.

1. As Bill Sees It – Bill’in Gözüyle
2. Came to Believe – İnanmaya Başladık
3. Our Great Responsibility – Yüce Sorumluluğumuz
4. Pass It On – Mesajı Taşı

## **Finance Overview**

### **Income**

- 60% Convention income
- 30% Income from sales of books, brochures, and other materials
- 10% Donations from groups

### **Expenses**

- 50% Rent and operating expenses of the Turkey General Service Office building
- 30% Book printing expenses
- 10% Website and social media usage expenses
- 10% Public information and convention expenses

### **Relations with other countries**

Relations with other countries are currently limited at the GSO level; however, the IA Committee aims to improve this. Our International Committee members maintain connections with various international conferences, including those in Switzerland, France, and online conventions. We actively participated in the International Women's Conference, representing Turkey. Our country sponsor is the UK, who continues to support and guide us.

### **Internet & Websites**

The AA Turkey website was established in 2002 and serves both those who are newly acquainted (new comers) with AA and existing AA members. In addition to all official information, it provides free e-access to the Four Big AA Books and numerous pamphlets, as well as information about all printed publications.

The site also publishes the contact details and meeting schedules of all groups in our country, along with general announcements.

Receiving an average of 11,000 unique visitors per month, the site will be modernized within the framework of the 2025–26 vision by the Information and Website Committee, one of the subcommittees of the Turkey General Service Office organized by the new General Service Committee that began its service duty in May 2025.

The newly established Public Relations and Media Committee has just begun its work. Social media broadcasts that some local groups initiated through individual efforts in the 2020s will, within the framework of the Fourth Tradition, be transferred to centrally managed accounts. On this matter, there is consensus within AA Turkey to remain faithful to the Eleventh Tradition while serving the Fifth Tradition.

While keeping pace with the technological requirements of the age and reviewing international examples, the committee also strives to adapt to the sociological structure of our country by assessing channel usage, access, interaction, and user needs.

In parallel, it examines the ongoing discussions at AA ESO and WSO regarding social media and digital publishing and is working to develop its action plan.

The launch of audio and visual digital broadcasting services is planned for the 2025–26 winter season.

### **Safeguarding guidance/guidelines**

The translation and adaptation of the Safeguarding policy and the safety card into Turkish is currently in progress together with the new General Service Committee, its members, and the Translation Committee.

### **Sponsorship leaflets**

The Turkish translation of the sponsorship brochure approved by the World Service Office is being used.

### **Media campaigns over the last two years**

AA Turkey has made extensive use of Conventional Media throughout its history. Apart from the short-term evaluation of opportunities that may arise spontaneously in this field, there are no current plans.

The numerous national and local publications in our past (news reports, articles, interviews, announcements, etc.) will begin to be archived both physically and digitally by the "History and Archives Committee of the General Service Committee." Today, local printed publications are occasionally produced by groups.



# **Committees & Workshops**

## Service Committee

Chair: **Pascal D** Belgium (Flemish Speaking)

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Radoslava S - Bulgaria  
Mia S - Croatia  
Laura K - Finland  
Levey P - Great Britain  
Sándor Á - Hungary  
John T - Ireland  
Ilze V – Latvia

Balys K - Lithuania  
José F - Portugal  
Elena L - Romania  
Carmen P - Slovenia  
Lucia H - Spain  
Tuğçe T - Turkey

The Chair opened the meeting with the preamble. The Service Committee members introduced themselves and spoke briefly of their expectations of the meeting: to learn from each other, listen and share their experiences, both good and bad.

Delegates were invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

### **I. How is your country attracting a diversity of members into the fellowship and encouraging them into service? For example: age, gender, LGBTQIA+, cultural background, disability, etc.**

Chair explained background to the question is that AA had trouble attracting younger people and those from different backgrounds. Chair invited Levey P to show what the GB Fellowship is doing to attract minorities. Levey talked about the videos made for the GB Fellowship on the website and showed the Committee the LGBTQIA+ video.

The videos are intended to help share experiences within different communities and help AA be more inclusive, not just a bunch of middle-aged white men. He said we are happy to share the videos.

Levey explained the work is done by Sub Committees on behalf of Conference and that the inclusivity committee want to reach all minorities, including gender, race, age, ethnicity etc.

Pascal said in Belgium they felt they were inclusive, but the composition of the Fellowship wasn't as inclusive as they thought. He asked if other countries could share their experience.

Mia (Croatia) said her city of Split attracted many different people as it was a tourist destination. They have some minority representatives, but they only considered themselves to be alcoholics as they are a small group – attracting everyone, not just privileged white men.

Carmen (Slovenia) said her Fellowship is 55 groups, there are lots of newcomers, a women's group, but not special meetings for different people as there are not enough members. They are inclusive and have not found prejudice. Carmen said she hoped to get the GB video translated. They have quite a few gay men in service and that they feel welcome.

Tugce (Turkey) said that there is diversity and inclusivity – they had separate meetings for newcomers and women if needed.

Laura (Finland) said that in her country originally, the first members were from the street, but now they have members from other areas and LGBTQIA+ meeting and women's meeting in Helsinki.

Rada (Bulgaria) said they have 47 groups in Bulgaria, including one women's group and one men's group. They have had problems with improper behaviour and aggression from, for example, those who did not accept different genders / sexual orientation. It was tough, so they had to issue a personal conduct and safeguarding policy. The lesson was they had to accept everybody and realise that we are all here because we are alcoholics.

Elena (Romania) joked they were perfect in Romania – but very few women members in service, no LGBTQIA+ members to her knowledge. They are keen to attract more representative people and were interested in using the video translated to Romanian.

Levey said the videos were originally for professionals, as a route into AA. People have a pre-conception of AA so the videos were an attempt to show professionals how AA can work for anyone. They are shared at health conferences and within the professional community when they recommend AA as part of a treatment plan. Levey reminded Committee that the disease of alcoholism doesn't discriminate, so neither should we – keep the doors open and a warm welcome for everyone. A doctor can de-tox and sober up people, but the symptoms are still there. He believes that within Europe the relationship with professionals can be improved to make AA more visible.

Pascal (Belgium) said his home group in the city only had one group, which was an LGBTQIA+ group which he went to but that it was not a real functioning group. Another group was just 'old men'. Pascal decided to form his own group six years ago and the third member was from LGBTQIA+ community, he helped attract transgender, gay and other minorities. His experience is that the doors just needed to be kept open.

Carmen (Slovenia) said they have three trans members in service, and that there was originally some opposition to a women's group, but that it did prove important despite initial prejudice. There are no members who are people of colour.

Laura (Finland) said they have a 'rainbow' meeting and that some women have their own meetings. Her experience when she first joined AA was that very often she was the only female in a meeting. As she didn't come 'from the street' she did experience prejudice from other alcoholics.

Balys (Lithuania) said initially he didn't think they were doing anything, but that when he thought about it, their Fellowship had used translations of Young People videos. They don't yet have LGBTQIA+ specific material. Fourteen years ago, a Young Peoples group were formed and that they are thinking of starting a specific 'rainbow' group as they are more open to it. Balys said they considered themselves very democratic, but he does hear homophobic comments from some shares from older members. There is some education to do in the group. A women's group have now formed and have requested listing - the Chair of the Board refused to list the meeting, but it was listed when the Chair rotated out of service.

Levey (GB) told the committee about the various working groups in AAGB looking at all areas of inclusivity including accessibility. This also meant thinking about practical issues like type size and format – based on feedback from members. This can mean literature like the Plain Language Big Book which makes it easier for people to understand – we must think about being inclusive and we are open.

John (Ireland) commented that language has changed, and a lot is cultural shifts. Ireland used to be a very closed Catholic country, patriarchal and run by older men. But society has shifted a lot, although AA hasn't and he explained there are still examples for instance of homophobia from old-timers. John continued that they have learnt from AAGB to incorporate ideas like Young Peoples Liaison Officers, which initially met some resistance from local groups.

This was overcome by better communication and this year the Fellowship removed a 1989 decision that groups were not allowed to describe themselves in a meeting listing, e.g. Women's, Polish etc. He explained that they are now allowed to be listed on the basis that anyone is welcome even if it says Women's Meeting etc.

Lucia (Spain) said that AA Public Information on radio and institutions like prisons is very important to attract people in to service. New information is updated on the website, and they feel they are doing a good job attracting people from different communities.

Jose (Portugal) explained they use the website, and they are supporting formation of Young Peoples group, LGBTQIA+ group and there is a long-established women's group.

Ilze (Latvia) said in Latvia AA reflects society, which in her country divided into Latvian and Russian groups, and women / men are approximately evenly represented. There are problems with physical accessibility as many buildings are old and do not have access for disabilities. People of colour are not represented as there are not many in Latvia, and that there is not much evidence of members from the LGBTQIA+ community. In her meetings people come from different communities. They are working on radio spots which highlight different people, like working professionals, to try and move away from the stereotypical image of the street drinker.

## **2. With the advent of online meetings, how have the groups within your country created opportunities for service?**

Tugce (Turkey) said they had created new service positions such as Chairing and co-hosting in online meetings. There are new questions about representation from online meetings at Conference – what is the experience of other countries? How is this managed? Levey said GB had one member one vote so if a member holds two different positions, they still just have one vote. Discourage people having multiple service positions. This was similar in all countries.

Jose (Portugal) with the creation of online meetings there are new service positions, a greeter and someone to share texting information like the 12 Steps etc.

Mia (Croatia) said that the online meetings are well connected with other neighbouring countries like Serbia, Bosnia. Mia said she is also a member of an online US meeting. She learns a lot from both.

Carmen (Slovenia) has zoom meetings, and these have the least problems with service, there is no Treasurer as zoom members are asked to donate through physical meetings. Zoom meetings send delegates to Conference. There is a problem with service in physical meetings but not in zoom meetings.

Rada (Bulgaria) said they had 5 online meetings, and every online group could include themselves in any of the three Regions, but they do not want to include themselves, they want a separate online Region. This would mean changing the Bulgarian AA manual. Online members are kept to one person one vote. Online groups are well attended as they can take place at night or even all night. The Chair of the meetings change but it works, especially during the covid pandemic.

John (Ireland) said he understands that if a person attends an online meeting, they can choose to be based in an area / region even if regular attendees are based outside Ireland. Contributions can be sent via local meetings or GSO. Online meetings are encouraged to be part of the structure. His home meeting holds physical and online meetings which are part of the same group, sharing the same secretary.

Moiria (observer) added that her home group has online and physical components which meet at the same time. There is a once a month 'hybrid' meeting. This set up seems to work well.

Lucia (Spain) said in Spain they don't have just online groups, as all groups are run as hybrid meetings.

Laura K (Finland) says Finland has online groups since the pandemic and that they depend on physical groups. There are very few hybrid groups. People say it is easier to attend an online meeting first, however this has created a problem is that newcomers think it is all free, so it affects service and Tradition 7. So there are some people from the 'new generation' who are not aware of the structure and cost of running AA.

Balys (Lithuania) said there are not many online meetings, and that it would be a physical meeting which has an online meeting. Online meetings are not represented at their conference. But a new intergroup has formed which includes online groups with members from around the world and there is one delegate from this intergroup at conference.

Ilze (Latvia) there are 5 online groups, 2 very active in service, mainly as the founders of the meetings are still active in service since the pandemic.

There are three regions, and each online group can choose their Region, two groups have done this and they are active in service. Most who are active online are also active face to face.

Elena (Romania) said that they purchase zoom licences to help online groups but since the pandemic, there are very few online meetings. There are no online groups, just online meetings. Most people who attend online meetings are members of physical groups. Many Romanians have left Romania, and they want to create an online meeting for the Romanian community abroad so they can feel in touch. Online meetings are a solution for them; they bought zoom licences to help unify the community. This is the first goal of the online meetings, to bring loners together who do not have physical groups. The online meetings are not represented at conference.

Sandor (Hungary) explained that online meetings are a grey area, and they are trying to integrate them in the structure.

Moira (Observer) added some work is being done to unify online meetings, e.g. Ukraine have created a network of online meetings which helps unify them. They are asking meetings around the world for help to identify Ukrainians that may benefit from this.

Levey (GB) said CER had their first online meeting back in 2009, originally on skype. There is an online intergroup in CER with over 20 groups belonging, and the intergroup is represented at region by 2 representatives from each online intergroup. There are service positions like host, greeters etc. Pre-covid all GB structure meetings were held in person usually at York. Since then, all Board meetings have gone to hybrid, and GB sub committees have 2 online and 2 physical meetings each year. Levey believes that online meetings are a great opportunity.

Pascal (Belgium) explained there are 5 online meetings which were integrated from the loners' meetings who took the initiative during covid. There is one representative at the Board for online meetings. But it is not easy to encourage newcomers to do service online, much like the physical meetings.

### **3. The committee suggested the following theme for the 24<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting:**

Unity and diversity: Service without borders

**4. The committee elected the following for the 24th ESM Service Committee:**

Chair: Ilze V – Latvia

Alternate Chair: Mia S – Croatia



## Recovery Committee

Chair: **Dunja P** Croatia

Alternate: **Jony F-T** Netherlands

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Nikolaus K - Austria  
Jacqueline D - Belgium (Flanders)  
Lidiana V - Bulgaria  
Karolína M - Czech Republic  
Debbie M - French Speaking Europe  
Stamatina C - Greece  
Gunnar A - Iceland

Vilma K - Lithuania  
Grzegorz Ł - Poland  
Miguel L - Portugal  
Andrei M - Russia  
Tone D - Slovenia  
Einar B - Sweden

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

Delegates were invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

### **I. How do your groups carry the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic and to the newcomer? For instance, with meetings focused on literature/steps/traditions/concepts, or speaker meetings.**

The few very clear themes filtrated through the group discussion included but not limited to:

- Bringing message into institutions (Hospitals/Prisons/Shelters/Rehabs),
- Having a phone helpline answered 24/7 as a group effort across regions,
- Online support through website or mobile applications,
- Literature and Steps focused meetings,
- Literature available even in different languages if needed,
- Placing posters and distributing pamphlets in different public locations (public bus stations, taxi stations).
- Having a first step meeting as the newcomer comes through the door for the first time.

- Reaching out through both in and out of programme events (AA Conventions v. Music Festival).
- Some groups have position of newcomer greeters, meetings named as Beginners Meetings or Relapse prevention and Speaker Meetings focused on sharing the message to the newcomer.

The challenges are recognised in influx of new people in the programme who are in a need of an all-inclusive message that is often triggering to those groups who are not honouring the fifth tradition.

## **2. How do groups in your country carry and strengthen the message of sponsorship? What are the opportunities for growth here?**

While the autonomy of the groups was recognised and emphasized in approaching this task, the following themes emerged through Committee discussion:

- Having sponsorship pamphlets
- Sponsorship lists with names and numbers updated regularly
- Spreading the message of sponsorship through online resources
- Having meetings and conferences and workshops with a theme of sponsorship
- Meetings including the reference of sponsorship in a meeting format read by the chair of the meeting.

Finally, leading by example and attracting rather than promoting, the importance of sponsors' personal recovery was recognised as a guiding force.

The challenges were recognised in adjusting the recommendation for the same gender sponsorship within the evermore changing fluidity of our world. Also, non-English speaking countries recognised the difficulty with translating the word 'sponsor' within their native language and remaining in the spirit of the programme and its language of the heart.

## **3. The committee suggested the following theme for the 24<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting:**

“Unchanged Message in the Changing World”

**4. The committee elected the following for the 24th ESM Recovery Committee:**

Chair: Jacqueline D – Belgium (Flemish Speaking)

Alternate: Vilma K - Lithuania

## Unity Committee

Chair: **Maija T** Latvia

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Marek S - Czech Republic  
Flemming S - Denmark  
Karin B - Germany  
Jim M - Great Britain  
Sindri G - Iceland  
Tom D - Ireland  
Jody M - Italy

Julianne L - Norway  
Ada Z - Poland  
Cristian M-M - Romania  
Evgeniya M - Russia  
Marian B - Slovakia  
Mónica L - Spain  
Thomas A - Sweden

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

Delegates were invited to share any relevant experience on the topics below very briefly, followed by open discussion.

### **1. What is your country doing to unify and make available information about online and physical meetings within your structure?**

Many countries had problems in the beginning with online meetings but are now going strong, though some countries are still at the beginning of including them in their structure.

All countries have the meeting information available on their website but there are still many online groups that have not registered with their different structures.

Phone service is also still a very important information channel about both physical and online meetings.

### **2. What safeguards does your country have in place to create a safe recovery space (for example: discouraging crosstalk, spiritual timekeepers, resolving disruptive presence, “bleeding deacons”)?**

Six countries have safeguarding policies/safety guidelines available to everyone via their website.

Other countries are still discussing safeguarding at service conferences, workshops and at groups.

Some countries have found the safeguarding prompts useful.

The role of secretary is important if someone is disruptive. AA is not beyond the law within the constraints of each country.

Our common welfare comes first followed by personal wellbeing.

**3. The committee suggested the following theme for the 24<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting:**

“Encouraging creativity within AA”

**4. The committee elected the following for the 24th ESM Unity Committee:**

Chair: Jim M – Great Britain

Alternate: Karin B - Germany

## Workshop: How to lead by example?

Chair: **Balys K** Lithuania

Alternate: **Carmen P** Slovenia

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Nikolaus K - Austria	Sindri G - Iceland
Jacqueline D - Belgium (Flanders)	Tom D - Ireland
Dunja P - Croatia	Ilze V - Latvia
Marek S - Czech Republic	Miguel L - Portugal
Laura K - Finland	Lucia H - Spain
Karin B - Germany	Einar B - Sweden
Stamatina C - Greece	

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

### Share experience from your country on the theme “How to lead by example”

Sindri (Iceland) said that he does the work that he would like members to do; he makes the coffee, greets newcomers, and by being a good AA mentor to others. He goes to meetings in prisons and GSO – it works if you work it.

Marek (Czech Republic) recalled when he was young, he was frustrated that the group were not carrying the message. But now he uses his experience to welcome newcomers, helps in the kitchen and does what he thinks is right. He doesn't tell anyone else what to do. He has recently been elected as the first General Secretary of his country and hopes he can be a good example.

Einar (Sweden) said that he tries to do what he says, he doesn't just talk about it – what matters is what you do, not what you say. He said that this group are here as role models, to practice what we should do, in all areas of life, not just talk about it. This includes work and home life. Einar gave the example of living by the big book and mentioned that in his opinion he is an actor, and his script is the Big Book.

Tom (Ireland) says his experience is that you must be willing to do what you tell others to do willingly. Listen with your eyes as well as your ears. The people that impress him are the 'doers' - do these things and let the miracles happen.

Tom said when he first asked someone to be his sponsor his first words were 'I think' – sponsor said don't think, do.

Lucia (Spain) said that 'service is life' for her.

Ilze (Latvia) said that she is here because she was inspired by others before her, who led by example and were accessible and approachable. They taught her to never say no to AA, the let go and let God attitude. She never knows where it will take her, but somehow, she feels if she is connected with her Higher Power than it will be OK.

Laura (Finland) said that sometimes people don't see the example of others, so you have to softly push a person and say, 'just learn it, just start'. In rotation, we can't tell people what to do; but people grow into their tasks.

Stamatina (Greece) explained that we all procrastinate starting a task; other people may think that it looks easy, but she knows that it is not. As a small country, many AA people know what she has done, and to-day is an example for others to continue in service. A service position is for two or three years, and this means leading by example, to do ones best.

Nikolaus (Austria) explained that his father told him many things, but he could not follow his advice. When he came into the rooms, people were telling him the same things but also explaining how they got it wrong as well. He then knew he could do it. Our connection is in our own defects, and we must be open to show these to others, so they can follow in the same path. If you have a sponsee and want them to do 90 meetings in 90 days, you must be prepared to do the work as well, so they have that example.

Karin (Germany) revealed her father passed away very recently and she learned a lot from him. When she was drinking, she thought why am I terrible and he is so good? Karin said that she was so happy she did her 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> step with him many years ago and told the workshop that she and her father had such a good relationship.

She always felt the old timers were like guardian angels around her, but now her father has gone, she is sitting here in the bubble of AA and happy to be in this room – everything is fine for the moment.

Carmen (Slovenia) said that the important thing for her is "What do I share at meetings and what are my relationships outside AA, at home and at work?"

When taking a sponsee, she explained some of her methods she would call 'loving roughness': "I don't wear a crown, I am humble and honest with myself and others. It is important to me to serve and be an example to newcomers. I am 14 years sober and always have served in some way – it has given me gratefulness and reminds me who I am." She told the meeting that when someone says, "Why don't we change this?" she says, "Just do it, don't wait for someone else".

Miguel (Portugal) said that he tries to be an example, to be honest, open his heart at meetings, share his defects and the things that he has changed. Try not to say no to AA. For instance, he tries to be keen to register for conventions so that he can be an example for others to do so. Miguel believes the best way of leading is by sharing.

Jacqueline (Belgium) said that a lot of good things have already been said. She said she thought that she had to lead by learning, but the real lesson came when she went outside her home group and realised it was leading by example.

Dunja (Croatia) – tries to think about it in Group context. It is important that the Group structure leads the way, for example time formats and not taking sharing time from others. Unity of the Fellowship is important and the traditions. They encourage members in early recovery to chair at meetings and help them to do this. Part of this is leading by example, using your experience: "I have a sponsor, I work the steps, I go the meetings – if I ask that of a sponsee, I should be doing it myself." Being willing to make amends is also part of leading by example, not only encouraging the minority voice but being one. Showing that it is OK to have a different view. Rather than trying to be an 'older statesman', recognise that you have both within you.

Balys (Lithuania) recalled his role models are people that not only talked well but also acted well. His small rule was that when he feels the urge to criticise, before he does, he thinks, "What is my part in it and what can I do to help it function better?" That teaches him not to criticise just for the sake of it.

General discussion – Leading by example needs a lot of work. It is important to show this in a group, and the group can also be leading by example. For instance, Ilze said her home group is the first to set up and follow guidelines, not to make the group stand out, but to help. Now everyone who is attending is invited to read the guidelines. The group is trying to be accountable and inform other group members what they are doing, so others can also use the experience.



Nikolaus said he thinks every picture has two sides. He explained that the process of getting a sponsor was, he was told, “to stick to the winners”. They had an aura, something that he wanted. Keep it simple: if you are asked for help, give.

Dunja said at a workshop at the last ESM she learnt about the group inventory. Everyone is here due to a group decision, and a well-run group is a good way to influence a newcomer. Create a group that can lead, a safe place to express emotions and opinions.

In Slovenia, Carmen said that they had a group that combined AA and other Fellowships which created arguments and threatened unity. How to stay loving and not judgmental was a test.

The theme selected for the 24th ESM Workshop is ‘Living in the Solution’.

**The committee elected the following for the 24th ESM Workshop:**

Chair: Einar B – Sweden

Alternate: Nikolaus K - Austria

## **Workshop: Opinion of the minority**

Chair:       **Ada Z**                      Poland

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Pascal D - Belgium (Flanders)	Vilma K - Lithuania
Lidiana V - Bulgaria	Jony F-T - Netherlands
Karolína M - Czech Republic	José F - Portugal
Debbie M - French Speaking Europe	Elena L - Romania
Levey P - Great Britain	Evgeniya M - Russia
John T - Ireland	Tone D - Slovenia
Maija T - Latvia	Tuğçe T - Turkey

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

### **Share experience from your country on the theme “Opinion of the minority”**

The right to dissent teaches and protects democracy in the Fellowship and strengthens respect and love for others. Minority votes can be dictated by reason and can be justified in a second vote.

According to the principles, all opinions should be expressed and heard before the vote and there should never be a lack of time for this.

All of the groups are encouraged to send questions for Conference and then they are voted on. These questions are attributed to a committee then all of the delegates vote on the proposition and any minorities opinions are encouraged after the vote.

At all levels of service minority voices can be difficult to accept because they come from misunderstanding of the traditions or concepts. Minority opinions can be an expression of personality rather than principle. Is the voice of the minority presenting any new evidence.

The minority opinion is essential and how you present it is equally important. The voice should be calm based on experience with reference to AA principles.

We should protect the opinion of the minority. It has a spiritual meaning and promotes goodwill. The Fifth Concept of AA reminds us that the true strength of our Fellowship lies not in unanimity but in a willingness to listen. This concept speaks of the 'traditional right of appeal' which ensures that minority voices are heard and every concern is carefully considered. This is not just a technical principle – it is a spiritual attitude that protects us from haste, routine and unconscious exclusion.

The theme selected for the 24th ESM Workshop is 'Social Media in AA'.

**The committee elected the following for the 24th ESM Workshop:**

Chair: Debbie M – French Speaking Europe

Alternate: John T - Ireland

## **Workshop: Service - Keeping the fellowship alive**

Chair: **Marian B** Slovakia

Alternate: **Thomas A** Sweden

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Radoslava S - Bulgaria  
Mia S - Croatia  
Flemming S - Denmark  
Jim M - Great Britain  
Sándor Á - Hungary  
Gunnar A - Iceland  
Jody M - Italy

Julianne L - Norway  
Grzegorz Ł - Poland  
Cristian M-M - Romania  
Andrei M - Russia  
Mónica L - Spain  
Thomas A - Sweden

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

### **Share experience from your country on the theme “Service - Keeping the fellowship alive”**

- No service, no AA.
- Duty to get people into service.
- Service is the key to keep not only AA members but the Fellowship of AA alive.
- Start with simple service, such as making tea/coffee. It's not about personal gain, it's about humility.
- Try not to say no to service.
- Don't lose connection with your home group.
- Important to introduce service to newcomers and share experience.
- Rotation is important to give everyone an opportunity, especially newcomers.
- Service helps to move forward, there is no such thing as standing still, we are either moving forward or backwards.

The theme selected for the 24th ESM Workshop is 'Attracting members into service'.

The committee elected the following for the 24th ESM Workshop:

Chair: Cristian M-M – Romania

Alternate: Grzegorz Ł - Poland

# Closing Addresses

## **Karolina, Czech Republic**

Karolina alcoholic. Thank you again for choosing me. I really didn't count on it, but I'm very grateful for that and honoured. And I'm going to use the same paper that I was going to use before, and there are things I didn't say.

So first of all, I love AA, for me, it's a programme that really teaches me different kind of love than I knew before, and it did save my life. It's not a cliché, even maybe it sounds like it. I made really big steps out of my comfort zone here, but in a good way, and it makes me grow. And plus, I have sobriety, and without sobriety, I wouldn't have the life that I have. So, I'm a really grateful recovering alcoholic, and it's been an honour to be here. It's such a beautiful experience, very peaceful, even though we are working the whole time. It doesn't feel like it's to me at all. It feels like I don't know fun and, yeah, let me see what I have here. This programme teaches me to be humble, but not too much, in some in a healthy way. Being able to stand here in front of everyone, finding some balance in life, and I have learned a lot. I found lots of inspiration here. I'm bringing it to our structure, and I know that what I have learned, for example, that we will need to write some guidelines for safeguarding. That was a big topic for me this time, and we can bring lots of stuff to our board of trustees as an inspiration. I've met really nice people, and I've seen people that I had met before, already, and for me, this is a very, very unifying, very connecting event, and it's unifying.

So that's the topic of this event, and it's just been beautiful. I don't know what to say. I get blank when I'm standing in front of people. So, I'm really grateful that the chair has papers that they can read from! Yes, I'm next time!

Okay, so thanks everyone again for being here and for us that we are supporting each Other. So much. Thank you.

## Levey, Great Britain

I'm Levey an alcoholic. My name is Levey, and it's an honour and a privilege to be up here and to have been able to participate with all you guys this weekend. Service has been an important part of my recovery. From the beginning, I got sober in California, and I was very fortunate that my first meeting was kind of centred towards me, and the importance of sponsorship was mentioned over and over and over at that first meeting, I was fortunate enough that I was able to get a sponsor at that first meeting, I didn't know what I was getting into when I asked this guy to be my sponsor, the person he asked me "are you willing to do anything that I ask you?" And I said yes! And then I stepped back. I said, "wait a minute. What are you going to ask me to do?" And he said, "I'm not going to ask you anything to do that I did not do to ensure my recovery." And that sponsor took me to my second meeting. And then the second meeting, I got my first service position. After the meeting, he told me to go wash cups. And I looked at him, I'm like, "are you crazy?" But I didn't dare open my mouth. In my head, I was thinking, "you know what? I have a wife, and I have three kids at home. They're the ones that do the dishes. I don't do dishes", but I didn't, I didn't dare say a word, and I stood there, and I started doing the dishes. And I did that for three weeks, and after three weeks, somebody else was put besides me to wash cups. I said, "how dare you? These are my cups." So this is basically the importance that a sponsor played in my life. And also, when that sponsor asked me to wash the dishes, 17 years sober, he went in and started to clean the bathrooms. That, to me, was leading by example.

So service became very important to me at early on in my recovery, I was elected secretary at six months sober in a meeting of about 5060 people, it was my responsibility to bring speakers for the following week, which forced me to go out to other meetings and to start networking with people, and that was also very good service.

10 years ago, I moved to Hungary, which was a drastic change for me in California, where I got sober, at my home group, there was over 30 meetings a week. Neighbouring cities had hundreds of meetings between 6am and midnight. I could pick and choose where I went. I never had to attend the same meeting twice in a week if I chose not to, and I got into Hungary, and there's three meetings a week, a membership of about 40 and an active participation of about 20 people.

I started doing online meetings, and at the online meetings, I met the then chair from Continental European region who asked me to participate with them at a medical conference. I didn't know what I was getting myself into. I participated at that conference and then brought it to my attention that Hungary has not been represented at the region for many, many years, and that I should take it back to the group to send a representative to the regional meeting. And I willingly took that back, and I made an announcement at the meeting that we should send a representative to the regional meeting and ask for volunteers.

I was volunteered, and that's where my journey in at the regional level started and I've held various positions at the regional level. I became treasurer, which was which was scary, I actually signed up or put myself forward for alternate treasurer, because up to that point, I couldn't even balance my own chequebook. I didn't know how. And there was a person that put themselves forward for treasurer, and I thought, you know what?

I'll have three years to learn the treasurer's position, and then if the group saw fit, I could step into a treasurer's position. The last minute, that person stepped back, and I was elected treasurer.

And the then current treasurer said, "don't worry, I will teach you. I will walk you through this. I will help you through everything." Unfortunately, about a week later, that lady passed away, she had just enough time to send me all the records and grant me access to the bank account. So, it's been a learning experience for me, but the members of that region never let go of my hand. What I can say is that in the three years that I was treasurer the books were balanced to the penny every month. Not only did I learn to balance the money of AA, I learned to balance my own.

I grew up here being over 40 years, and then my journey continued. You know, I had the privilege of being a conference delegate to actually see what goes on in the background. A lot of people don't get this opportunity, and they don't really understand how much work goes into Alcoholics Anonymous in the background. It's kind of like a theatre production. We go to the theatre, we see the performance, and everybody's happy and everybody claps, but they don't realise the hundreds of people that are in the background making that show exciting and good. And that's how I look at my position here, is that you know what? I want to do the work in the background. So, like somebody said earlier, they want to make sure that these rooms are open for their kids, their grandkids. And that's what this is about, for me. You know, having had the opportunity to be a conference delegate, and then being elected a trustee, which was put forward by my region. I didn't think I had a chance. God had other plans. You know, being a trustee also came with a lot of responsibility, director of a charity. In the beginning, I didn't think I deserved it. I think it was I was worthy of it. Luckily, I had some board buddies that helped me change this view, and then I had the opportunity two years ago to come here to this European Service Meeting, and I was able to talk to other people and listen to other people's struggles in their countries, the things that they're going through. After that, I had to opportunity to attend a convention in Hungary.

Hungary's had an AA for over 30 years, but they don't have a structure. Presenting our conference process at that convention helped a lot of people understand the importance of representation when big decisions are being made in Alcoholics Anonymous. I got a lot of resistance at that convention, and I told them, I'm not here to convince you of anything. I'm not trying to sell you anything. I'm just here to share my experience of what's working in Great Britain and what's working in a lot of other countries. And by the end of that convention, a few of the people that really, really resisted the change. Why change it if it's working their minds open.

They listened and they understood the importance of it. It's a slow, slow process. But nevertheless, the seed was planted. And again, they're working towards establishing a service structure, working towards establishing a conference where equal representation of the entire fellowship can be heard. And then coming here again, another great opportunity, and what was really good is the communication that was taking place via email a lot of times between the European Service meeting two years ago, and this European Service meeting, there was a lot of good questions and topics, lot of good communication. And I learned from it, I see that, you know what. There are still countries struggling.



No country has given up, you know, and that's the importance. So, I feel very, very fortunate to be able to stand up here to speak to you today. Service has enhanced my recovery, and that is a direct contribution from my sponsor. So that's why I say that sponsorship is important. I need to lead by example, the same way that my sponsor led by example, you know, so I surround my people with like-minded people. One of the things that Ranjan told me a couple years ago we're service nerds, but I love Alcoholics Anonymous. Not only did it save my life, but it gave me a life beyond my wildest dreams, if you would have told me 10 years ago how my life would change. I would have laughed at you.

And I always say that you know what, the triangle is, very important. My recovery is important. Unity and service is important, and sometimes when I complain to my sponsor about having to do this and having to do that, he always relieves me with this one sentence. He says, "Levey, don't let the life that AA gave you get in the way of your AA life."

Thank you.

## **Carmen, Slovenia**

I'm Carmen. I'm an alcoholic. While I was sitting here and listening to Levey, it suddenly occurred to me that next year, I won't sit there. This is the last time, but the tears coming to my eyes, but not because I regret that I must rotate, no, because I was aware of gratefulness, gratitude to be here.

I remember first time when I went through the door, last European Service meeting, there was empty room. These flags were already on the tables, and I was signed a team in a changing world. And, you know, before I came to here, I was stressed. Will I be okay? How will be my English? Will I impress somebody? You know, I'm an alcoholic. Will I say something stupid. You know my sponsor, she was the first term delegate, a first international delegate elected in our country. And she told me everything you know, and I knew somehow what will happen here. But you know, anyway, I was full of frightenedness, but when I step here in this room, suddenly, everything went off and tears came into my eyes.

I would like to say that service for me is the act of gratefulness, humbleness. I'm well in my whole life, with service. I was doing service one way or another, and all and again and again. I was aware how this helped my recovery and my personality changed little by little. You know, of course, doing service can be also because I'm an alcoholic, I can be humble and grateful, but it is a very thin line, you know, because I can feel very important, and, you know, my ego starts, can start to grow and maybe I can feel responsible for the things that I'm not responsible, you know, but this is really something that gave me. This is a treasure. Treasure. Service for me, is a treasure.

And also, when we were talking about leading by example, I think that I said on that meeting that I'm doing service, and I hope that newcomers can see how service can help me. How can I grow between among you? And that's not just what I say to the meetings, but what I'm doing outside meetings outside AA. So how are my relationship with my husband, he's also in AA, or with my children, or with my co-workers. So this is something important to me, and service is doing that I'm humble and willingness to do the things that I can do in AA, and it is the best test about my spiritual growth this year. I'm not alone here. I have my first term delegate with me, Tone. And I must say that I think that this is very important, that every country should have two delegates to first term and second term delegate, because when you are alone, especially for the first time, there is a lot of information. And you know, especially because this is not my language English, and you must think in English and talk in English, so it can be exhausting. And if there are two delegates, things are much easier. Well, that is my experience, and experience which I which you give me here in European Service meeting or World Service meeting, they are so precious, because I can really come back to Slovenia and say to my fellowship, what are your experiences, how the conference works, you know.

Some very important things which I heard on this European Service meeting is opinion of the minority. We have some, you know, AA friends who would always say just the opposite, what said majority and we sometimes are angry, you are slowing down the progress. But today, I think today or yesterday, I heard that this is very important, even if somebody pushes back, or maybe does not agree with everybody else.

Maybe sometimes it's okay that we don't do the next step and that we wait, that the things are settled down, and that we decide then for the right things to do so and participation of the general service, a general delegate of the groups on conferences, because we are also in Slovenia. They are a little bit, you know, what's the word in English? Not active. You know, passive. They're passive. And how to, to give them a push and acknowledgement that conference is very important, and they that they have an opportunity to say what they need, what they share all the concerns that they have in the groups.

So, I get a few good ideas from you, then what more? And of course, the main every topic of every conference, probably how to how to pass the message to still suffering alcoholics. Here is every time I get some ideas, how, what can we do more to have a lot of newcomers and that they stay in among us, not go away. Well, I'm really grateful. Also, I'm grateful that I can candidate for this for the next European Service meeting. And I'm really happy that Carolina from Czech, can be here. I really, I'm happy for you, but I also would like to say to all of you, one big thank you. And, of course, to Sophie and to the gentlemen over this machine. Moira, Ranjan and Patrick from USA. To all of you. Well, I won't be here anymore sitting in these rooms, but I will see you, all of you, I hope, in Portugal, and I'm really looking forward for that.

Thank you.

## Gunnar, Iceland

Hei, hi, my name is Gunnar. I'm an alcoholic from Iceland, the alternative guy, you heard it before. I'm so thankful to be here just now and the last year in New York on the General Service Conference. Yeah, I'm from Iceland. And it's funny to hear you say, I'm from small country. In my country, we have, I checked it out, we have around 392,000 inhabitants. So I think, yeah, this is, this is also, so maybe it's a micro country that I come from, but I did not ask for being here because of my English and just want to stay home in my comfort zone, but I always say yes to AA. So, when I was asked to come here and also to New York last year, I just said yes, and then I start checking, how can I? How can I? I needed to find out with my work how I could leave my work for these days. But of course, that worked out. And this is my first time in York. This is a wonderful place and hotel, and everything is so well organised, it's good to be here. I had been in New York the last year was my second time there. Then I was when I came there first, I was just a stopover passenger going to Pensacola Beach from Iceland. I was not in very good shape at that time. I went downtown to Manhattan that night, and that is a blackout that I will never forget, but it's wonderful to meet you all here, especially the people that I first met in New York. I have a lot of friends here, which is so good to see again. I went with Paul in New York, and now I'm here with Sindri. And, for example, in New York, we met a wonderful people from the north Nordic AA, and they invited us to be with them. And we have done since, and that is wonderful to see you every other month over the wintertime.

But this is my second sobriety. I started drinking 13 years old. 15 years old, I found out that this was not something wrong with my drinking. Three weekends, my friends just talked about me, how I was drunk, and what I did and all that. So, 21 years old, the year of 1987 I quit drinking for the first time. Went to AA meeting in Reykjavik, but that did nothing for me. At that time in Iceland, this was not talked about sponsor of steps or anything. So, 21 years old, I was a dinosaur in Iceland, but I stayed sober for 13 years, and I think I was not the most humble guy in Iceland at that time, but I started the family and company, and everything went pretty well. I just quit going to AA meeting after six months, because AA did nothing for me, and now I know that was, of course, because I was not doing AA, it is going to AA meeting. Not doing AA is just for me, like going to being in stamp club and don't collect stamps? No, it's not so much fun. Everybody is showing their stamps, and you have no one, and I just that will simply end up with, I don't like this club, and that's what I did.

But when my fall, I was in Greece on the beautiful island Creta, or Crete. I went there for a week working for a travelling agency, and I was recording on camera, and I went to a bar with a lot of people, which was going to disco, and I was just sitting in the corner of the bar, and I was not going to drink, but the guy who owned the bar, and was very lucky with this, 40/50 young people from Iceland drinking a lot. He came to me and asked, "what are you doing?" And I told him what I was doing, working for travel agency and doing some documentary about this treatment. Okay, went to the bar, came back with one glass of small beer and put it on my table and went away. And this is probably the most beautiful beer that I have ever seen in my life. I drank it, but I did not and I found the alcohol in my blood for maybe two or three minutes, and then it went away and I drink. I did not drink more that night or in that trip. But what happened was think about alcohol every day since, and the thought that was on the top in my mind was probably I'm not an alcoholic because I could drink one beer.

I showed my wife that, I told her that probably, yeah, I'm not an alcoholic. It was just some problem in problem in my youth. And so I want to try to start drinking again, and if it's go bad, no problem for me to stop drinking again.

Well after one and a half year, it was going horrible. So, I then I start drinking again, and did not go very well, and I drank for total for 10 years after this divorce and everything was horrible. But then I finally gave up and to my friend, which came to me and knew about my problem, and he, he always told me, do you want? Do you really want to stop, quit drinking, truly. And I was always trying, but it did not go very well. And it ended up with, I said, yes, but of course, I was not going to a meeting because that did not work for me. I have had already tried that. So he said, "are you going to do exactly what I say? Say you to do?" And I said, "yes, we are going to AA meeting". So, I went a meeting and to my and that is my home group today, and I they have a meeting every Sunday morning at nine o'clock in Reykjavik time. It's 10 o'clock this morning, and I have a greeting from them to you, 117 males with 10 newcomers. The best wishes to all of you.

It went very well to go through the step with this, my first sponsor, and I did not have a problem with God, or my higher force or inner power, or what I call it, the power that I need to stop drinking so but I feel it's especially a people that I am sponsoring make sometimes a problem with it and it, part of it is in Iceland it is in Icelandic language. The word for faith or belief is very similar to religion. So, people are mixing it together and think that we are talking about some religion. It is not. And luckily, I don't want to understand God or what it is. I don't need to, and I don't want to. Some people say they have to understand it if they have to believe it, but then they switch on the TV. They don't know how it works, but they just watch it and why not believe in something higher than you, even though you don't understand it. In Iceland, we have this tradition in December that we have 13 Santa Claus, which start coming to town the 12th of December. Then they come to town every, every day until, until Christmas. And of course, the children, they put their shoes in the window, and we set presents from the Santa Claus. In my youth, I suddenly found out, I'm going to give you a little time, yeah, yeah. And suddenly I found out that the Santa Claus does not exist. It was my mom who put it the present in my shoes, and after that, I had no presents from the Santa Claus when I found out. So, I will never find out who God is, because I think when I found out that he will not work for me anymore, but happy to be here. It's wonderful to spend this weekend with you, and hopefully I will see you again. I don't know when, but one day. Thank you.

## Moira, Ireland

As we come to the close, I just want to thank you all for such a wonderful European Service Meeting. Some of us have walked with each other, going right back to 2020, Julianne, for instance, which is incredible. And some of you only met at the last European Service meeting two years ago. And for some this is the first time, and you're only at the beginning of your journey, and I kind of envy you! It's an amazing journey and I am glad to be coming to the end of it. And that's the joy of our fellowship, the spirit of rotation – we get to meet so many people and then we find the humility to rotate out, as our structures don't allow us to keep coming back in here to this meeting! That's what keeps us unified.

We don't get to run this show, those of us in here, and that safeguards our future, because these European Service Meetings are constantly full of new blood, new ideas. We may think that it's the first time the idea came to the table, but people do bring some of the same ideas. However, we've got fresh blood expressing them. So many of you shared how your groups or aspects of your structures are getting stuck or have gotten stuck when people don't let go, whether that's not letting go of old ways, not letting go of power, not letting go of money, or making decisions to let go of money without consulting the fellowship.

So, our founders knew we were a self-willed bunch, and that's why these spiritual guidelines are here to protect our common welfare, because without this, our structures would collapse if we didn't listen to the principals. And I do keep thinking about how unity is within and unity is without. Unity within is my personal recovery, and without that, there cannot be outward unity to help us stay together.

All of this, despite some of the countries in this room having quite serious external political upheaval in recent decades. And we all have experienced huge societal transformations, not least in the online world. How much has that transformed our fellowship and access to our fellowship and its message? I heard such an emphasis this weekend on how we protect ourselves within the online meetings. Online safety, protection and passwords, these are all new things for us to be dealing with: a whole new understanding of the word safeguarding. But we've all embraced it, and we've all dedicated our time to the changes. It struck me time and time again over the weekend, how committed we all are to our own recoveries, and how committed we all are to our structures, our Groups, our Intergroups, our Areas, our Regions. We want this to work because it worked for us, and I love that. I'm constantly amazed, whether in my group or in a European Service Meeting or a World Service Meeting, how that commitment drives all of us – the commitment to our own personal growth and to the growth and evolution of our structures and the challenges we all face.

We listened to a very creative bunch of terms this weekend, the best of which was definitely 'bloody deacons!' I love that. I wonder if there are some languages where the nuance of the difference between bleeding and bloody isn't clear. I suppose you all get it – bloody, like bloody is practically a curse word!

And we heard other expressions such as dinosaurs, crocodiles or coffee shop AA. Just to reiterate, it's quite clear to me that these terms don't mean you're an old person, right? It was important that this was made clear over the weekend. I think that I understand these terms, whether it's dinosaur or crocodile – to mean being stuck in old ways. And what I heard from all of you, and what I know in our own structure in Ireland, is that we want the

Steps, and we want the Traditions, and we want those to be in our meetings. Because that's how we stay sober. There's a goodness in AA, and we want to grow and move and evolve. And as has been said already, without growth, we will go backwards. We might stand still, but if there's a flood or a wind one day, we'll just be pushed backwards. So that's our job.

When I came to my first World Service Meeting as part of my time as a World Service Delegate, it was run through GSO New York, but we had to go online. I think that as far as I can remember Julianne was probably the only person there from this room today, because you Julianne were an alternate delegate and I was beginning my term. And it was extraordinary. I never experienced anything like it in my life. I was in a hotel room in Cork because I was working in an essential service during the pandemic. And I remember just sitting in that hotel room with these ZOOM boxes of people from all over the world. Whilst it was sad not to be in person in New York, I had never experienced such connection in my life with people.

So, I thought, well, we'll surely be in York for the ESM next year. But then in 2021 we were online again! And, then I thought, it'll be all right we'll be physical in Japan in 2022. But it was not to be! I was on the subcommittee that voted not to go to Japan because it was a prudent, responsible thing to do as a fellowship. A lot of structures were still in a situation where quarantine was required when leaving the country, so that would have been unfair on the countries to suggest that delegates take two or three weeks off. Also, Japan was very expensive, although that is not a reason not to go to Japan in the future for a World Service meeting. However, at the time coming out of the pandemic, finances had yet to recover in some structures. And there were other geographical concerns in Japan – there was an earthquake in 2022. So, these things contributed to us making the prudent decision not to go even if we all wanted to go. And we had another lovely World Service meeting – we were very well practiced at this stage, our third time online. Can you imagine?

I said to you jokingly on Friday afternoon when we first came together for this ESM, that I wondered how God would make up for all this time spent online as a World Service Delegate! Well, I needn't have lost faith – I've been to York six times since then for lots of different reasons, and all of them connected to service or working with our fellowship. So be careful what you wish for! I don't think I ever need to come back to York again and Ranjan, you're probably sick of seeing me!

To close – the biggest growth that I've had as a World Service Delegate is in relation to our minority opinion. Sometimes, I had seen it interpreted as “I'm going to fight you tooth and nail. And how dare you all vote for that” and I had still to learn a better way of working with it. Back in 2021 at the ESM, Ranjan gave a report about how he'd found 30,000 pounds that had been sitting in an account for some time. And there was a vote for it to go to the International Literature Fund. Because we were in the pandemic which had brought about huge change, I was nervy (change makes me nervy!) and I disagreed: “It shouldn't go to the International Literature Fund – we should keep it because we might run out of money in the European Service Fund.” And I was about the only person who thought this. And I thought I was so important to have this amazing thought that I unmuted myself without putting my hand up and said “No, no, no, we're doing the wrong thing!” Yury, who was the chair, promptly muted me, and I got the message, although embarrassed! And I remember thinking that nobody would ever vote for me to be the European Service Meeting Chair after that! But instead, I learned the lesson at the GB Conference in 2022 as an Observer.

We were all just out from the pandemic and the lockdowns and it was perhaps our first big social gathering; we were raving to go. Levey was the chair of the committee that I was assigned to. In sheer excitement, I kept putting my hand up to participate rather than observe until eventually one of the trustees, Sandy, turned to me and said: “the clue is in the title, you're an observer.” I was just so happy to be there amongst us! Erik from Continental European Region was participating online and calmy expressed a minority opinion with his own sound reasoning for it. Nobody changed their vote, but he was respected for bringing this calmy to the table. And I thought, that's what soberly expressing the minority opinion looks like. So sometimes we need our principals to be mirrored to us, rather than do doing things are own self-willed way.

It has been an absolutely lovely European Service meeting. It's bittersweet. I feel sweetly relieved in this moment, because of having been switched on for the whole weekend. (Watch out Karolina!) But then the bitter side of it is that I'm not going to get to walk with you lot for the next part of your journey. Some of you are also coming to the end of this part of your journey, but there's always lots of other opportunities for service for us as we know!

What we do now at the end of our European Service meeting is we all say the Serenity Prayer in our own languages. We get into a circle, but just before we do that, I just want to thank Ranjan and I want to thank Sophie for being so steadfast and constant. Without you we wouldn't be here. Thank you warmly to the ESM Steering Committee and the Workshop Chairs. And finally thank you to the hotel and Keith for the spot-on audio-visual facilities.

Thank you everyone.