



Policy Paper 2017/18

BY THE BOE,
RCPS AND SD 2017/18

Introduction

This Policy Paper is written by the elected Board of EGEA, the Regional Contact Persons, as well as the Secretariat Coordinator and provides an overview of the aims which shall be achieved in the year 2017/18. This Policy Paper is written according to the structure and the goals of the Strategic Plan 2020 and is supposed to reflect these in a more practical manner.

The Policy Paper elaborates on variety of ideas which should foster the already existing processes and the structures in EGEA. Furthermore, different new ideas are also implemented here to continue the positive development of EGEA, to adapt to new trends and generally to steer our association according to our mission, vision and values.

Board of EGEA 2017/2018

David Rabensteiner - President

Pietu Niinimäki - Vice-President

Lea Rebernik - Secretary

Vít Volný - Treasurer

Anselm Eberl - Event and Public Relations Advisor

Rick de Graaf - Secretariat Coordinator

Regional Contact Persons 2017/2018

Tetiana Stadnyk - Eastern Region

Petar Božan - Euromed Region

Ksenia Simonova - North & Baltic Region

Swen Schmitz - Western Region

1. Knowledge Transfer

Communication

Transparency and *involvement* are the key elements of our communication during the year 2017/2018. These aspects will be achieved by the following concrete actions:

- To Publish and ensure access to the minutes of the Board and Regional Team meetings within one week of the meeting.
- To Encourage a two-way communication by publishing agendas before meetings on social media and providing individuals with the opportunity to share topics and ideas.
- To Publish an open call for topics to be discussed at the OSM, not only for the administrative level, but also for all members.

The goal is to enable all levels of EGEA to follow and participate in the development of the Association.

Additionally, we want to improve the *horizontal* communication flows between different administrative bodies of the Association. This area will be elaborated further on in the Policy Paper in the chapters 3, 4 and 8.

A good communication between the Board and the Regional Teams, as well as committees is also a necessity in order to enable the development of EGEA and its members.

Cooperation

Knowledge transfer, both on the internal and external level of EGEA will be developed.

INTERNAL LEVEL:

- Raise the amount and quality of cross-committee projects and projects made in cooperation of two or more administrative bodies.
- Within Regional Teams, we would like to enhance knowledge transfer between current RCPs and RCPs of the previous year as well as communication within the Regional

Teams to provide assurance of the well-organised knowledge transfer each year. This will be mainly done by having transition meetings and the transition manual.

EXTERNAL LEVEL:

- We will focus on engaging in more concrete relationships with our partners concerning knowledge transfer. A step towards this was already reached after the IFISO Spring Meeting 2017, after which the outcome was published in various booklets.
- We will also pursue to tighten and renew existing cooperation. The transfer of knowledge between our cooperating associations will be a vital part of it. This may include sharing official documents, minutes and practical examples. We want to gain, as well as spread knowledge.
- Actively attending big events of partners is one of our goals, which will ensure fluent and close communication.

REGIONAL CONGRESSES:

- The RCPs will work closely with the Regional Congress organisers, assist them to overcome possible struggles and help them set up the official programme.
- Additionally, the RCPs will promote the Support Fund and try to make sure that every entity has a representative at the congress.
- RCPs will arrange at least one CP training per region, where CPs should learn about soft skills for entity management and development. Having the first CP training in the first quarter of the EGEA year is preferred and useful.

REGIONAL LEVEL:

- RCPs will encourage the entities to organise smaller events on a local scale to raise the participant numbers in events.

Guidelines & Manuals

Currently, there are various outdated manuals and guidelines in EGEA. To improve the situation, we will:

- Update and help create internal manuals within the different bodies of the Association. A concrete goal is to have an updated transition manual in all bodies of the Association by the end of our term.
- Create EGEA-specific guidelines for leading virtual teams together with the Training Committee.

Entity organisation

RCPs would like to guide CPs how to organise their entities. By doing this we want to advise them which activities would be useful for teambuilding, which method of introducing EGEA would fit better to newbies and give advice for entity improvement. All this will help the entities to get more motivated members, who are prospective participants and event organisers at a later stage.

2. Knowledge Storage

We will ensure the storage of documents and information on position-specific Google accounts and on the EGEA web site. By doing it systematically, we want to prevent the loss of knowledge. We will make sure that documents are provided to all other relevant bodies and our successors.

Access & Visibility

We would like to enable easier access to important documents and with it enable the dissemination of knowledge. We believe that with the current structure many documents are overlooked and therefore we want to improve the access to documents and manuals by rethinking the structure of their storage on the EGEA website.

To ensure our visibility throughout the whole year, we will continue to post regular updates and announcements on the EGEA webpage and on Facebook. We plan to continue writing

BoE updates and we will also publish and ensure access to the minutes of the Board and Regional meetings within one week after the meeting. A big step towards an improvement of our visibility shall be using only the official accounts which we control.

3. Awareness

Social Awareness

EGEA is an inclusive association which is open to everyone with diverse backgrounds and we will ensure that it remains this way. That is why our aim should be an open, accepting and non-discriminatory climate that offers equal opportunities for everyone. To secure that, we must envision problems that some individuals might face when attending events, no matter if they are cultural or financial.

In practice, it means that we will try to raise the amount (and quality) of initiatives (seminars, campaigns etc.), raising social awareness like the Gender Role Seminar 2016. Together with the Fundraising Committee and RCPs, we will also ensure that the aims and possibilities of the Support Fund will be known to every member of EGEA and that the financial situation will not prevent any individual from joining congresses and other crucial EGEA events. To keep the Support Fund pot full, we want to broaden sources of income by supporting activities which aim to fundraise for it like the Support Fund Auction at AC 2017.

In addition to that, we are aware of the importance of our external image when dealing with our sponsors, partners and universities. Due to this, we want to raise awareness of the impact of every individual's behaviour during events and we as Board want to assure that no harming material will be published on media or distributed in any other way.

Environmental Awareness

As Geographers and modern Europeans we need to be aware of the current problems of our environment and the harm which human actions continue to cause. However, there is still potential for improvement and it is a goal of ours to highlight and discuss problems, not only

within EGEA, but also communicate it to the outside world. To achieve this, we have several outlets at our disposal:

- EGEA Green is an integral part of EGEA and the Green Book which was created by them. We wish to increase their visibility and highlight the importance of their work.
- We are in the comfortable position of having many motivated and dedicated people in our association. This enables an exchange of ideas which can be shared through various channels and extend the awareness of the environmental impact we have. We want to set up more discussions about sustainability and the green development, for example at scientific tables.
- The implementation and promotion of the Geography Awareness Week, as well as collaborating with partner associations is an important step in the right direction. We want to use what was provided to us by the BoE 2016/17 and work on ideas on how to increase the visibility and the amount of entities participating.
- Creating first steps for joint events with partner associations concerning the impact of humanity on the environment, as well as the influence of the environment on us.

European Awareness

As convinced Europeans, we of course also want to further promote a united Europe which creates friendships across borders. Throughout our network, we are already doing quite a good job to facilitate cross-cultural dialogues and acknowledging the value of cultures and traditions. To promote European awareness, this year we want to focus on:

- Promoting activities which point out the cultural diversity.
- Set up events with our partner organisations which focus on European history and awareness of borders. Specifically, we have the Iron Curtain Project in mind, which was already discussed at the Summer OSM in Vienna.
- Encouraging individuals in EGEA to write articles about EGEA and its impact on how we think of Europe.
- Promote ideas like the Europass Certificate and initiatives like the EduCitizens, which aim to create awareness about citizenship and participation.

4. Personal Development

Science

Hard skills including a broad geographical expertise are an asset of our organisation. During our term, we would like not only to raise the awareness of geographical topics, but also improve the quality and visibility of our scientific output:

- **Scientific Conference:** Increase the promotion, visibility, and therefore the amount of participants in the event and establish deeper roots in the Association. Develop the scientific content and actual output of the event together with the Scientific Committee and Activities and Events Committee.
- Raise the quality of workshops. We would like to approach this goal by providing a better reward system for workshop leaders.
- Raise the visibility of workshop output by encouraging workshop leaders to write a report for the European Geographer.

Soft skill

The significance of soft skills in EGEA has grown with the Training Committee working as a spearhead of the movement. We want to provide tools for individuals of EGEA to develop their capabilities and reach their capacity.

- Provide a better workshop leader preparation together with Congress organisers, Scientific Committee and Training Committee.
- Raise the amount of training opportunities for individuals, either by implementing internal training events or participating in training events of our partners.
- Provide a project management training for the administrative bodies.

5. Participation

An aim is to increase the popularity of participation on an administrative level. A first step may be to integrate members earlier into the deciding processes or make those more visible to everyone.

Committee Membership

Committee Membership is often the first step a member takes to gain experience for other positions. Being able to provide a good working environment and communication between the committees and the Board as well as all individuals is an achievable goal. Thus, more individuals can be reached and informed about the possibilities and the work that is being done. This again closes the circle, considering that a good communication strategy is key. A better integration of new members who join a committee later during the EGEA year (e.g. at Regional Congresses) is also a goal we want to achieve.

Organising events

We want to focus on helping entities to establish events which will be an essential part of this year. We want to make good use of all resources we have at our disposal (guidelines, manuals, personal experience), in order to provide future organisers with a good basis for organising events.

Since smaller events are a fundamental part of our association we need to make sure that they happen, by implementing a solid strategy for event organisers, concerning PR, target groups, dates to look out for, etc. Thus, people can gain experience, knowledge and develop themselves. Therefore, events are essential for people who want to go further. Also, these events help our association to grow: this is one of the easiest ways for the entity to get to know people, enhance their motivation and build up a great team while working together.

Ambassadors

At the GA 2016 in Switzerland it was decided to implement the position of an Ambassador. Within this year we want to make good use of this newly created position and thus enabling

motivated individuals to contribute to our association by staying in contact with partners and attending their events. This will increase our visibility and may create a closer connection with our partner associations. Also, it is a great opportunity for individuals to work more for EGEA, even on a short time basis and so enables them to enhance their skills and motivation for higher positions.

6. Finances

As the current Erasmus+ Framework Partnership Agreement expires this year, the Board together with the Grant Team will do their best to secure the new Erasmus+ grant. In addition, the Treasurer ensures that there will be a close connection between the Grant Team and the Board and together we will look closely for other grant possibilities and will encourage entities to do so too.

We, and more specifically the Treasurer, will work closely with Fundraising Committee towards a sustainable fundraising strategy based on diverse sources and will search actively for new sponsors for the Association. We will also promote the opportunity for individuals in EGEA and Alumni to support EGEA through the Donate Button and the Web Shop.

We aim to raise the amount of public financial updates during our term and we ensure that all important final decisions will be communicated with all individuals via BoE updates. In order to keep transparency of finances the Treasurer ensures that there will be close contact between him and FCC via monthly updates.

7. Alumni

Of course, it is also our wish to achieve a stronger network with the EGEA Alumni Association. In order to keep up our cooperation, we believe that after the Alumni conference in Szczyrk we can foster our bonds. We generally see the Alumni as very good source for vital scientific input. We think that EGEA can gain a lot from them via trainings, and therefore we want to further support the EGEA Mentoring program. In addition to that we want to involve the Alumni

into the fundraising strategy by continuing the “Friends of EGEA” initiative which was started by the Board 2016/17.