



egea

Climate Policy Paper 2019/2020

SEPTEMBER 2019

Introduction

Climate change is an urgent matter which needs to be addressed worldwide. As a European-wide association of geographers who bear the knowledge about climate change and the impact it has on the Earth, we have a responsibility to act. By being included in various networks and having members all over Europe, EGEA is in a perfect position to make a change! With a more structured approach, EGEA can strive to have a positive impact on the environment and society. The following policy paper proposes actions which EGEA as an association can do to contribute to the efforts against climate change. The policy paper is to be evaluated on an annual basis by a working group devoted to climate action, hereby called the 'EGEA Climate Action' group, and the evaluation is to be presented to and approved by the General Assembly.

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Aims and objectives

EGEA is an association which supports the goals set by the Climate Agreement of Paris and the non-violent actions to prevent and revert climate change. EGEA acts as an advocate for climate action and encourages its members to participate in activities striving to reach the goals of the Agreement.

The aim of this policy paper is to provide a framework for climate action activities of EGEA. The paper presents ways to create impact, raise awareness and share knowledge on the topics of climate change and sustainability. In addition, it proposes changes within EGEA which would enable a higher climate action involvement. The objectives of the paper are divided into eight focal points which are to be addressed during the year 2019/2020:

1. Local level engagement
2. Reduction of the Association's ecological footprint
3. Structural and procedural support
4. External output
5. Dissemination
6. External cooperation
7. Climate demonstrations and petitions
8. Rules of engagement

The implementation of this policy paper falls under the responsibility of multiple bodies within EGEA, and therefore a sense of commitment is required from the whole Association. The EGEA Climate Action group shall act as a coordinating party for the implementation of the policy paper and as a project group it shall be supervised by the Vice President of EGEA. Other bodies should be included in the implementation process whenever applicable. The Board of EGEA handles all related partnership agreements, ambassador agreements, financial decisions of the Association, official statements,

online votings and other matters as described by the Statutory Base and Protocol or as decided by the General Assembly.

Internal focal points

Local level engagement

The vast network of entities has a great potential to engage actively in the local society and to raise the visibility of the Association as well as the attractiveness of geography. The policy paper proposes the following actions to raise local level engagement of entities and individuals of the Association:

- Similar to the Waste Free Week, the Association seeks to implement further incentives, such as competitions or fundraising opportunities, for entities and individuals to become involved in climate action activities on the local level.
- Encourage entities to cooperate locally with existing actors and movements.
- Implement climate action sessions to suitable events, such as Newbie Weekends or Contact Person Trainings, to disseminate sustainable practices and to equip active individuals with ideas for local engagement.

Reduction of the Association's ecological footprint

The Association aims to reduce its ecological footprint. The following actions are proposed to reach a higher level of sustainability within the Association:

- Share advice to event organisers on sustainable practices. This includes to promote the Green Book actively within the Association on the website, social media, regional meetings and e-meetings, and on different events.
- Promote travelling sustainably with an extensive PR campaign and in cooperation with event organisers.
- Encourage and support local and plant-based food at events. Especially large-scale events such as congresses should be prioritised.

- Seek to create regenerative actions (actions which generate a positive impact on climate/Earth). This includes organising sustainability activities such as planting trees or collecting waste.
- Join events/campaigns which already exist, organised by other associations related to sustainability and climate change.
- Raise awareness of climate change by organising climate events on the local level.

Structural and procedural support

EGEA needs to reinforce its existing structures and processes which relate directly on sustainability practices and climate action. The following points should be addressed in order to structurally support climate action initiatives within and beyond EGEA:

- Support EGEA Green and the EGEA Climate Action group in acquiring more active members.
- On the European level, search for sources of funding for climate action initiatives and implement it within the EGEA budget. This funding is to be used for project-based and impactful activities.
- On the European level, provide support for external cooperation by searching for partnerships and cooperation on sustainability and climate action. EGEA wishes to increasingly reach outwards by taking part in external initiatives. This should, if necessary, be enabled by an increased amount of EGEA Ambassador agreements.

External focal points

The phenomenon of climate change cannot be reversed within EGEA internally. Therefore, the Association seeks for a wider external impact and to interact with the environment. The Association aims to create an increased external impact in the ways described in this article.

External output

To have a wider external impact as an association of geographers, EGEA wishes to increasingly produce output on the topics of sustainability and climate change. The activities to create external impact are implemented in cooperation of the EGEA Climate Action group, EGEA Green, Scientific Committee, Impact of EGEA Group, and different event organisers. The following ways of producing output are proposed:

- Raising awareness of climate change and producing educational material through scientific workshops, events and projects. The Association works to improve the position of geography as an educational subject and advocates the inclusion of climate awareness and knowledge within the curriculum. The activities shall be coordinated by the EGEA Climate Action group and implemented in cooperation with related committees and events.
- Support, promote and disseminate externally the scientific output (e.g. thesis, scientific articles) of individuals within the Association.
- Gathering the information and promoting interactions with the local community/actors through reports, articles, posts, and templates, that entities/individuals can distribute.
- Create easily accessible social media content such as short videos which promote sustainability practices and climate action activities.
- EGEA works to implement trainings/workshops/seminars on sustainability and climate change where not only individuals of the Association are invited but also students, partners, guest speakers, and local decision makers.
- Congress organisers are encouraged to include relevant topics in their programme and results should be disseminated externally.

Dissemination

To reach a higher visibility and impact, the actions described in this policy paper require a dissemination plan. The plan shall be further developed by the EGEA Climate Action group, and other related bodies of EGEA, such as the Communication and Media Committee.

The outreach potential of the Association shall be actively made use of to disseminate knowledge and awareness. This includes making more efficient use of the individuals as well as the network of EGEA. The dissemination shall be coordinated and executed by the EGEA Climate Action group, the European Geographer, Communication and Media Committee as well as EGEA Green. Below, the potential ways of distributing the content of our actions are listed:

- Online activities such as panel discussions and webinars shall be included to pursue a higher outreach.
- To reach people outside of the network, a new EGEA Climate Action page shall be installed where the actions of EGEA are shared with the world.
- Gathering tangible output and distributing it via the European Geographer, EGEA Newsletter, the public website and social media channels.
- Content shall be included in the Annual Report and (when applicable) in reports of congresses and other events. The distribution of these EGEA reports should be increasingly wide-spread, including partners, universities and other stakeholders.

External cooperation

EGEA seeks to cooperate with different actors involved in climate action, while itself remaining non-partisan, and acting based on scientific knowledge. Different bodies of the Association, entities as well as individuals are encouraged to search for collaboration opportunities. The following examples of potentially fruitful external cooperation initiatives are presented:

- In the German speaking part of Europe, thousands of scientists signed a statement supporting the movement against climate change (Scientists for Future). The policy paper proposes to collaborate with other student organisations to create a similar statement.
- EGEA can launch collaborative projects on reforestation, waste management and sustainability together with suitable and interested partners.

- The Association seeks to establish new partnerships and networks directly involved with climate action. Cooperation with universities and their different climate research programs is encouraged.

The Association seeks to promote *trustworthy* climate/environmental actions and to distinguish them from the '*greenwashing*' of multinational enterprises.

Climate demonstrations and petitions

As an official statement, *EGEA supports the goals set by the Climate Agreement of Paris and the non-violent actions to prevent and revert climate change*. Non-violent climate demonstrations are deemed suitable to deliver a message about the topic and to spark change in the society. Therefore, the Association encourages its individuals to participate in a non-political manner in order to:

- Raise awareness about climate change and send a powerful message united as geographers.
- Express that EGEA cares about climate action as an association and wishes to be recognised as an impactful, responsible, and trustworthy actor against climate change.

In accordance with this policy paper, EGEA encourages individuals to sign petitions, while as an association remaining non-partisan. EGEA can create petitions in accordance with this policy paper and the vision, mission and values. All petitions are conducted with a non-partisan status and must be approved by the members (entities) of the Association beforehand by an online-voting. The online voting shall be conducted according to Statutory Base, Article 10.

Rules of engagement

While participating in climate action activities (e.g. demonstrations), individuals who carry the logo of EGEA or in other ways publicly represent EGEA must:

- Act peacefully and respectfully (i.e. according to the laws of the respective country)
- Follow the Code of Conduct described in Appendix E

Depending on the individual case, the reaction to inappropriate behavior/actions falls under the Code of Conduct part III described in Appendix E.

EGEA dissociates itself from any illegal, violent and discriminatory actions and as an association remains non-partisan. Every individual is seen as responsible for their own actions. However, EGEA has trust in its individuals and encourages them to take actively part in climate action activities such as demonstrations.