



**Policy Paper
2022/2023**

Content

Introduction	2
Contributors.....	2
Acronyms	3
Structure & Internal communication	4
Restructuring of EGEA's regions	4
Assessing the success of the Boards restructuring	4
Internal Communication	4
Entity matters.....	5
Regional matters.....	5
Teams, Projects & Working groups	6
Activities	7
Congresses	7
Online Events	7
Administrative Events.....	7
Post-covid live events	8
Finances.....	9
EGEA 2.0.....	9
Finding new Partners.....	9
PR & External communication.....	10
EGEA Partners	10
Social Media Strategy	10
Awareness.....	11
Our impact.....	11
Inclusion.....	11
Code of Conduct (CoC)	12
Mental Health.....	12



Introduction

This policy paper reflects the topics that will be the focus of the elected Board of EGEA and Regional Contact Persons for 2022/2023. It highlights the goals that we will try and achieve throughout the year. In general, we will try and stabilise the organisation after it has re-started and re-shaped this year. As some of the effects that covid had on EGEA only now start to really show, we will aim to further change the organisation to be more resilient. We want to tackle this main focus point on various levels, such as financial stability, inclusion, communication, structural change and many more.

Contributors

Board of EGEA 2022/2023

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Acronyms

AC - Annual Congress

BoE - Board of EGEA

COC - Code of Conduct

EGEA - European Geography Association

EGEAⁿ - A person who is part of EGEA

GA - General Assembly

OSM - Operational Strategy Meeting

SOSM - Summer Operational Strategy Meeting

Structure & Internal communication

Restructuring of EGEA's regions

During the following EGEA year, the process of regional restructuring is planned to start after having been discussed for many years now. The aim of it is to **balance the distribution of entities per region** and therefore ease the pressure on the few active entities in the smaller regions. In addition, this will help ensure that important regional activities such as congresses, Newbie Weekends and CP-Trainings will be organised every year. We aim to **create a working group** to finalise a structure of **3 healthy Regions in EGEA** that are balanced in number of active Entities and that try to include remotely located entities as best as possible. The outcome of this working group will be a major discussion point at Winter OSM 2022 before leading to a proposal during a GA in 2023.

Assessing the success of the Boards restructuring

This year is the **first time the board will have 6 board members**, with the previous EPRA role becoming two separate roles; events advisor and PR advisor. As it is the first time the Board of EGEA has had 6 members, there will be **evaluations** throughout the year to assess the success of this new role and determine its overall impact on the performance of the Board.

Internal Communication

Following the success of last year, we aim to continue the **clear, concise and frequent communication between the BoE and all members**. We shall maintain the practice of publishing minutes from meetings, but the implementation of an additional document, which shall contain a summation of the meeting's main points, shall also be published. This additional document aims to help **make the minutes easily digestible and understandable for a greater number of EGEAns**. The priority for these documents is that they are easily accessible, which shall be achieved using our website and EGEA's various forms of social media. Additionally, we shall encourage and assist our Regional teams and Teams, Projects, and Working groups in maintaining their open communication and transparency with our members too.

Entity matters

Over the past year EGEA has experienced increased activity from our entities after the long hiatus caused by COVID-19. **Newbies were able to go to events and gain new experiences, learning what EGEA is all about** and hopefully seeing why we should keep it going and active. Unfortunately, there are entities which did not maintain an active status and will be discharged. But that should not give us any reason to doubt or fear the future. Even though **the past years were hard on most entities**, they still managed to acquire motivated Newbies to keep the spirit alive. To maintain this trend, we need to ensure the **knowledge transfer between experienced EGEAns and newbies** continues. We can strengthen this by ensuring good communication between all levels of EGEAs structure too. Most Newbies have only been able to experience what EGEA is in post-COVID times and may lack a certain state of administrative knowledge regarding organisational structures. We can restore and develop this with good internal communication and the **regularly updated CP manual** in addition to the **Newbie Booklet**. These can assist when there is need for specific information and structures and they will be edited and improved in collaboration with the Regional Teams, the Secretary and the Inclusion Team.

Regional matters

Similarly to the three earlier years, regions should maintain interregional cooperation especially in various online events. We aim to encourage entities to host **live interregional CP Trainings and Newbie Weekends** during the times when safe travel in Europe is possible. This will enable EGEA to have important annual events spread out evenly to each region and therefore also increase the possibilities for entities to stay active within their region.

Communication throughout different levels of EGEA is largely based on mutual respect and friendship. **Live meetings at regional congresses have been a motivating aspect for CPs to maintain active communication with the Regional Teams, and thus the Board of EGEA**, therefore the RCPs should prioritise live regional meetings. The RCPs would like to continue making the **e-meetings more interactive and fun** to motivate the CPs in staying in close contact and being actively involved. Unofficial communication and relaxed as well as interactive meetings can make it easier for entity representatives to honestly share how their entity is doing.

Teams, Projects & Working groups

Over the last few years, there have been changes made to the structure of the Teams, Projects and Working groups (TP&Ws) and this is ongoing. Therefore, the changes made will be **evaluated with the TP&Ws** during the year and discussed if there needs to be more changes. Secondly, regarding the TP&Ws, we aim to improve their communication and efficiency by assessing which ones share similar responsibilities and topics and encouraging relevant groups to cooperate; including with the BoE and RCP's. To improve the communication within the TP&Ws, there will be **regular meetings** to update each other. Additionally, we shall continue to improve the **TP&Ws visibility** within EGEA, as well as to externals and aim to make their work more appealing to volunteers.

Activities

Congresses

The process of **organising a congress should be easily understandable** to all those who wish to be organisers. We would like to introduce a few **different methodologies** for creating and making a strategy for this. Last year's main focus was on one specific method, but this year we would like to show the organisers different options so that each team can go through and implement one that works best for them, while also having access to support along the way.

Online Events

Online activities showed us they have great potential, as they are very **easy to organise** without many problematic factors, such as funding or finding an accommodation. We can further use this flexibility and make them a **solid alternative to real life events** if necessary.

During the pandemic we could see that some online activities worked well, but others were less successful. For example, online events can sometimes be dominated by premade friendship groups which could feel difficult for a newbie to join in with. For it not to be so overwhelming we could **team up with an Inclusion Team** and figure out a way for the newbies to actually get to know each other better in a smaller group, so they'll be more confident in participating in other events. On the other hand, keeping online events or a hybrid version of them might be **useful for people who cannot join real life events** themselves. This might be especially useful for **administrative events**, for instance Regional Meetings or General Assemblies.

Administrative Events

Traditionally, EGEA's Organisation and Strategy Meetings (OSM's) are held in Winter (WOSM) and Summer (SOSM) and this year shall be the same. The WOSM will be held at the end of November/beginning of December and the SOSM at the end of June/beginning of July. **The WOSM is used to propose new ideas**, topics and changes which can be worked on over the year and reviewed at the SOSM. It is critical that both of these events have **clear outputs** through tangible aims and **goals which can be achieved within a**

set timeframe. Equally, these events require a host, so encouraging entities to facilitate these events is important to their success and the task of finding a willing entity will be undertaken with plenty of time.

Post-covid live events

After covid, there are key topics that need to be considered. We need basic **covid guidelines**, such as testing before events and having the necessary precautions in place to allow sick people to self isolate. We could also **focus on smaller events (or online events) during the autumn/winter season** so it's more likely to take place, even with possible covid restrictions. Additionally, organisers should make sure that in case of restriction changes they **have a strategy in place which protects them from losing too much money**; such as a refundable deposit for the accommodation as it is the most expensive part of any event.

Finances

EGEA 2.0

The aim of EGEA 2.0 is to **secure long term financial stability in EGEA**, to make sure the organisation is **resilient against future incidents**. To achieve that goal, we will try and find new long term financial partners. In order to be attractive to potential new Partners, the EGEA 2.0 working group will work on the branding of EGEA and the external visibility, as well as how we approach new potential sponsors and partners. As EGEA 2.0 combines financial topics and PR, work will be conducted by the Finance Team in close cooperation with the Board of EGEA to **create a clear vision for future branding and fundraising**.

Finding new Partners

Since our Association is no longer eligible for Erasmus+ grants, financial diversification is more necessary than ever. This year we will focus on finding more long term partners and sponsors that would help us financially, resulting in a greater number of possibilities for our members. The Board intends to collaborate closely with the **Finance Team** on this since they already have a document with a list of potential sponsors. Together with the Finance Team we would like to create **a document to present to the future partners** and keep it up to date. The Board also intends to communicate with **EGEA Alumni**, as they might have direct connections to relevant organisations. All of the potential partnerships will be announced before their conclusion, so that EGEANs can voice any concerns they may have.

PR & External communication

EGEA Partners

The cooperation with partners will be re-evaluated and our **core Partners** will be determined. With them we will try to renew the agreements for a longer period of time and highlight the importance of mutual partnership. Our aim will be to find **new scientific Partners**, who would underline the geographical and professional side of EGEA.

Social Media Strategy

In the EGEA year 22/23 our main goal will be to **emphasise EGEA Official brand marketing** and therefore enhance its social media (SM) presence. In the present age, the social media presence of our organisation is critical to our success, especially regarding our potential sponsors, and we will work on **increasing the reach and influence through** our social media. In cooperation with other officials of EGEA, we will create a social media strategy that will serve as a base for the next generation of Public Relations Advisor.

Awareness

Our impact

EGEA will always have geography at its heart. Through our Geography **Awareness Week** and **Theme Year**, we want to **highlight topics related to geography**. In the EGEA year 2022/23 we will highlight the importance of water shortages which we are beginning to face during the summer months, starting with thematic workshop sessions at our Annual Congress. Our goal is to improve our geographical identity by talking about the different topics we deal with, such as spatial planning, GIS, Tourism and topics related to climate change. We will continue **raising awareness about climate change** as the main goal of the EGEA Climate Policy Paper and try to promote it within the organisation. Following the EGEA Green book, we will continue to reduce our carbon footprint and encourage slow and sustainable travel. Through the Science Team and their activities we want to **increase the significance of geography as a science**. We want to be an organisation that talks about various problems and crises like the war in Europe and **helps vulnerable entities and geographers in Ukraine** through support from other EGEANs. By developing communication between regions and entities we want to support our open-minded and tolerant association which thinks about the future, learns from the past and lives in the present to face all of the challenges which will be in front of us in next EGEA year.

Inclusion

EGEA is an organisation which **strives to ensure it is accessible and inclusive to all who wish to join**. We achieve this through various means such as: aiding with the financial costs of attending official events through the **Support Fund**, ensuring our members have a safe environment to express themselves and enjoy the events through the **Code of Conduct (CoC)**, and a team dedicated to all aspects of inclusion known as **'The Inclusion Team'** who meet and discuss strategies to increase inclusivity. The board will **continue its commitment to keeping EGEA as inclusive** as possible, by continuing this multifaceted and multilateral approach.

Code of Conduct (CoC)

It has been a few years now since we implemented the Code of conduct (CoC). This year we will set the focus on how it can be **involved in EGEA** even more by establishing a working group. The first thing we will work on is to encourage especially congress organisers, but in the end all event organisers, to **include dedicated time to the implementation of the CoC**. An idea would be to have an online form so people can anonymously communicate if something happened or if they were faced with any situation they want to talk about. Furthermore, there should be an assigned group of people reading the outcome and discussing what can be done and how to react to the anonymously submitted allegations (e.g. RCPs, Event organisers, CoC working group). Additionally, we came up with the idea to **organise trainings** (especially for event organisers) to debate how to deal with certain situations connected to the CoC. Last but not least, we will work on **increasing awareness on the topic of harassment of any type and solutions to prevent incidents** (also generally how to handle accusations etc. and the structure of how accusations will be processed).

Mental Health

EGEA is a safe space where people can discuss ideas, travel Europe, discover new cultures, grow as a person and, importantly, have fun. **The wellbeing of its members is a major priority for EGEA** and thus we want to ensure that EGEA can and will stay fun for its members. But since EGEA can also have a lot of work and responsibility, especially for officials like the Board of EGEA or the Regional Teams, as well as organisers of major events like the congresses, it is **important to monitor the mental health and wellbeing, especially of those key positions**. The goal is to reduce burnout, which will help those in the official positions remain happier but also help EGEA work more efficiently. We will try to **continuously raise awareness for the importance of a healthy Work-Life-EGEA-balance** and seek out opportunities to cooperate with external partners that have professional tools and knowledge to help us. A result of such a cooperation could be helpful workshops and training available to all EGEAns, and other beneficial measures that help to ensure that EGEA stays fun for everyone.

