



# Strategic Plan of EGEA

2020-2023

# Introduction

Over the years, EGEA has grown from a small European association to a pan-European network with entities present in most European countries. It thrives on young motivated people who bring in new and innovative ideas which lead to an association as it is now.

To ensure that EGEA will improve in quality and evolve structurally on the long term, a three year strategic plan is made. Herewith, a general outline is set out for the future leaders of EGEA to ensure and follow up on structural changes and improvements that surpass individual leaderships.

However, the strategic plan is merely a guideline for improvements of the next leaders of EGEA and is meant to highlight certain topics that are important to EGEA. It is meant to be a base for annual policy papers written by the Board of EGEA (BoE) and Regional Teams (RTs) which lay out how the association will develop and what it will focus on in the upcoming year.

This strategic plan is built around three main topics: **sustainability**, **professionalisation** and **external relations**. These have been identified as current and relevant topics in which EGEA can grow further and realise more of its potential. Each of them is divided into three subtopics. In this division it is important to see the strategic plan as a whole, zooming in from a larger to a smaller level. Each topic is then described from three perspectives answering the questions “What” (**the topic**), “Why” (**the reasons**) and “How” (**the objectives**).

In addition, the topics of the strategic plan are connected to the Sustainable Development Goals to contextualise these aims in a wider context.

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In these boxes you can find additional information which is connected to the text of the Plan. This includes wider context of described topics, specific examples or other supplementary materials.

*Note: The names of bodies and projects reflect the current state of affairs and can change in the following years.*



# 1. Sustainability

Sustainability is ever more present in our society, and for us as geographers it is a key topic. As the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explain, sustainability is an extremely complex and interdisciplinary concept. For EGEA, it entails the permanent character of things, how they can be made in a long-lasting way. It is about the environmental impact we cause by traveling across the continent as well as about ensuring the existence of the Association over a longer period. Moreover, sustainability means building a stronger association with active member entities and diversifying and strengthening the financial basis.

The Sustainable Development Goals are the successor of the Millennium Goals, and formulate 17 highly connected global issues we face in realising a sustainable world. Throughout the Strategic Plan they will be connected to the different subtopics by means of their official icons created by UN. You can find more information about the SDGs [here](#).

## Knowledge transfer & human resources



### WHAT

Knowledge transfer in EGEA means passing on skills, knowledge and passion from one generation of EGEAns to the next one. For us, knowledge transfer goes hand in hand with human resources: the people and the skills they have, that's what makes EGEA. It is also highly linked with internal communication, which is covered in Chapter 2.

### WHY

EGEA is built by young geographers voluntarily committing their time to the Association. To strengthen this (in a way to be sustainable throughout the time) attention is needed on how to include newbies and engage them to become the leaders of tomorrow. In this process of integration and personal development, knowledge transfer is crucial. With an average EGEA life span of 3-5 years, continuity of knowledge, ideas and commitments can be difficult.

## HOW

- Improving the **quality & effectiveness of the transition processes** for different teams and position on all levels by creating guidelines/trainings.
- Contact Person (CP) Trainings should have a higher outreach and effectiveness.

Having online CP Trainings is a good practice as well as spreading the four (or more) CP Trainings throughout the year; and promoting them in all regions to make them cross-regional. This will improve cooperation and exchange among regions and give more options for CPs to attend them.

- A good **document & digital data management** is key for knowledge transfer and can better engage EGEAns and improve vertical communication. This can happen through podcasts, improving & updating manuals, public cross-body meetings, knowledge databases etc.
- EGEA should be seen as **“an incubator for life.”** With this it is meant that EGEA prepares young adults for their future career, complementary to what people learn at university, by giving everyone chances to develop themselves as a project or team member or leader, as well as by connecting young adults to exchange ideas, beliefs and views on different topics.
- Spreading motivation and engagement through sharing inspiring personal stories (e.g. through the campaign “My EGEA Life”) as well as through informal networking on events and exchanges.
- Implementing and evaluating **the Human Resource Strategy** to professionalise the approach to personal development and make it more coherent.
- Strengthening **the number and the activities of entities and individuals** through e.g. effective top-down promotion or other incentives as contents.

## Inclusion



### WHAT

As part of our Mission, Vision and Values, inclusion is substantial for the Association with the aim to welcome people from any economic, social, religious or cultural background. Besides social inclusion, this topic also relates to how different entities are included in EGEA Europe and how even people without an entity might find a place in the Association.

### WHY

An inclusive society starts with giving equal opportunities to people from all kinds of backgrounds. A background should not define anyone's future, and as we see EGEA as "an incubator for life," the Association can be a place to give people from less opportune backgrounds an equal chance to participate in, contribute to and learn from EGEA. Secondly, inclusion of entities and individuals will contribute to a more sustainable association.

### HOW

- Increasing the **outreach of the Support Fund (SF)** can enable opportunities for all EGEAns.

For example, a campaign with people who applied for the SF can be made to address the issue that financial distress is common and nothing to be ashamed of and that everyone can apply even when they need.

- Evaluating the way of how entities '**pay a membership fee**' to EGEA and possibly come up with a new, fair and more efficient system.
- Fostering a general **inclusive mentality** and **embracing cultural diversity** within EGEA by organising cross-cultural debates/talks/presentations.
- Further defining and implementing **political non-involvement**.
- Implementation and evaluation of **Code of Conduct** and its evolution.

- Connecting with interested **local groups outside of Europe** and with **interested individuals** without an entity.
- Being inclusive and open for **disabled people** (materials, information, assistance).

Involving active EGEAns into running the Association by having an easy tool (SPOC i.e. “single point of contact”) to get involved into the structures of EGEA, for example by having an “I want to be active” button on the website or a position in charge.

## Environmental awareness



### WHAT

During the previous years, environmental awareness and sustainability was more and more included in the organisation of many events. Several committees and working groups, such as EGEA Green and The Climate Action Group were born to help EGEA to be more environmentally sustainable and raise awareness about climate change. However, EGEA as an association can have a bigger impact in raising awareness about the phenomenon of and the need to reduce our environmental footprint.

### WHY

Since the environment is one of the main focuses of geography, it is also important to EGEA. In addition, climate change is one of the largest challenges for the next generations. Therefore, it is important to think about us, the next generations and our and their future. It is important to start acting now to mitigate possible consequences of the phenomenon.

### HOW

- Continuing and further developing **activities and projects of EGEA Green**, such as the Green Book and Entity Ranking List points for green events
- Evaluating potential in the future of the **Climate Action working group** and the **Climate Policy Paper**.

- Using targeted **promotional campaigns and activities** in cooperation with partner organisations to raise awareness beyond EGEA.
- Including more sustainability in events, projects and bodies of EGEA.
- Supporting **thematic programme** on congresses and other events.
- Supporting and promoting **local sustainable events and activities** by entities such as clean ups campaigns, tree planting actions, flea markets etc.
- Actively using **the Sustainable Development Goals** as a framework for interdisciplinary sustainability and as a framework to increase our external impact.

## 2. Professionalisation

EGEA understands professionalisation as a constant process. This process allows the Association to grow; it strengthens its external impact and widens opportunities for individuals. Other European student associations represent the main inspiration for EGEA. Significant improvements in structure and operation can be achieved by a tight cooperation and exchange of good practices.

A key aspect of professionalisation is to be a part of a strong network of partners and sponsors. This network allows us to meet enthusiasm, dedication and values of our members with real world problems, market demand and conscious citizenship. This can be achieved by a tight cooperation with external actors: universities, companies, NGOs, research institutes, associations, policymakers and local authorities.

### Internal communication

#### WHAT

Internal communication refers to the processes or tools that are responsible for the information flow and collaboration among individuals. This includes both vertical communication (from coordinators to team members) as well as horizontal communication (among members). An effective flow of information has therefore





a significant impact on teamwork, productivity, transparency and knowledge transfer, which ultimately bring the members' engagement. In EGEA we believe in communication that is based on friendship. This brings an atmosphere of respect and inclusion, which goes hand in hand with our Vision, Mission and Values.

### WHY

The key to the well-being of any organisation is transparent, effective and friendly communication. In the case of EGEA where teams are made out of people who live in different countries, online communication is a necessity. Thus, in order to make sure that the information is distributed and understood correctly and in an organised manner, it is very important to have a clear structure of how to organise our internal communication and which tools should be used in order to facilitate it.

### HOW

- **Equal access to information** for every member.
- **Independent decision** of each team for choosing the communication channels.
- Sharing short and **on point outcomes** from official meetings accessible for relevant audience.
- Continuous development and update of **manuals**, their promotion and promotion of existing **knowledge transfer materials**.
- Providing **assistance for further clarification** related to the knowledge transfer materials.
- Regular and informative **newsletter**, which targets increasing its audience.
- Continuous development of **the website** in order to provide an easier access to the content as well as a more professional appearance for its users.

## Quality of events and projects

### WHAT

When organising an event or planning a project, the organising team sets certain goals and knows how the end product should look like. But how to make sure that those goals are achieved and the final result is the desired one? How to act in case



an unexpected situation comes up and how to prevent such situations from occurring? How to make an event/project better than a previous one? All these issues are tackled by quality management, whose goal is to guarantee that a certain standard is achieved in the long run.

In EGEA, through quality management we understand providing guidance from previous event organisers, former project representatives and from official bodies to the current responsible team of an event or a project.

### WHY

The events and projects are among the main boosts of motivation for EGEAns, both for participants and the organisers. Not only the number of them is increasing, but also the quality expected is increasing. The commonly agreed standards include environmental sustainability, positive social impact and an enriching experience for participants and organisers. In order to fulfil these, more knowledge transfer and guidance between previous and future/potential organisers is needed. This will bring efficiency for organising teams as well as more motivation and confidence for potential organisers.

### HOW

- Developing **a system of support for event organisers/project coordinators** with the vital role of more experienced EGEAns. The system should include up-to-date guidelines, support, constant supervision and evaluation.

The main aim is to improve the quality of the program (scientific level, cultural exchange, sustainability), for example through categorising events and developing criteria which each event category has to fulfil.

- Integrate **the Plan-Do-Check-Act approach** in evaluation methodologies.
- Creating **a public database of reports** and outcomes of events and projects.
- Evaluating events/projects in cooperation with the responsible body/person.
- Encouraging **cooperation** between event and project organisers and official bodies.

- More efficient **promotion of opportunities** to get involved in an event or a project organisation (such as Project Pool).
- Have a body/position responsible for **the support of organisers** and supervision of the quality and knowledge transfer.

## Structure of EGEA

### WHAT

Every organisation that plans to be transparent, efficient and run long term needs a structure and so does EGEA. EGEA understands that the structure needs constant improvements and after increasing number of drawbacks and problems, it was decided to restructure the Association and improve the fluency of the management of the Association.

### WHY

Better and more coherent structure means more people involved in the life of an association, better internal communication, better transparency and accountability, higher efficiency and more equally divided responsibilities and tasks.

In the last few years EGEA grew in number of entities and involved individuals and consequently of events, activities, projects and initiatives. It means more work and responsibilities for people holding official positions, especially the Board of EGEA. The new (proposed) structure of the Association involves two major changes: lower the amount of different organisational levels to simplify the structure and to connect (or merge) bodies which have similar tasks.

### HOW

- **Gradual changes** with ongoing evaluation.
- Ideas and planned steps shall be **publicly discussed** (forum of the website, Organisation and Strategy Meetings etc.).
- Suggested changes shall be **discussed with affected bodies**.
- Continuous **monitoring and analysis** of implemented changes and **supporting affected bodies**.

It is recommended to start from changing the structure of committees and projects to re-evaluate vertical and horizontal communication and ease workload in the Board, to possibly change the amount of board members.

### 3. External appearance

External relations (including PR, visibility and recognition) are a crucial part of communication and self-presentation in a modern public life. It has been felt in EGEA in the past (especially after the Erasmus+ KA3 grant applications were rejected) that the Association is lacking public recognition and a good external presentation. EGEA has a lot of content to share and according to the Association's Vision, Mission and Values it aims to encourage curiosity, to spread inspiration, to strengthen the strategic position of Geography in Europe and to bring about a positive impact on society.

Until now, external communication has not been the highest priority. Even though focus has increased recently in attracting more partners and several projects have been started to make EGEA more visible, a lot of work is still to be done. As PR can be a big asset in becoming a more professional organisation, targeted focus on this is necessary. Creating and implementing a coherent PR strategy represents a milestone on the way to make EGEA a professional association and will bring about multiple positive consequences on the Association such as recognition, popularity, higher impact and more partner-, networking- and funding opportunities.

#### Public Relations (PR) Strategy

##### WHAT

A PR strategy is a key document which forms general guidelines and strategies of external communication and targets it to the right audience at the right time and in the right form. The PR strategy would give advice on what, how, with who and when to share and promote. A coherent PR strategy would let the Association boost the value of 'the brand of EGEA' and get wider recognition as a student association in the field of Geography in Europe.

## WHY

In EGEA it has always been the responsibility of the Event and PR Advisor (EPRA) and the Communication and Media Committee (CMC) to be in charge of and to overlook the public presentation of the Association. Despite proper EPRA transition, differences appeared in different attitudes towards PR when individuals in these positions changed.

With a consistent PR strategy, these undesired differences would be minimised. Furthermore, individuals in charge would have a decision making base for their duties as well as guidelines for approaching the external presentation of EGEA.

## HOW

- Better recognition of entities on the local level by **creating guidelines, organising PR trainings and sharing good practices.**
- **Publically visible campaigns** on important topics (e.g. Theme Year).
- Analysing the current state of PR in EGEA and forming a working group **to create a PR Strategy.**

The aim of the PR Strategy is to advise on what should be shared and promoted publicly on which platforms, how the outcome of activities should be spread and how to tend the brand of EGEA.



## External impact

### WHAT

EGEA aims to create external impact on two different levels – locally and internationally. On the local level, entities impact their community by promoting geography, international cooperation and the message of EGEA. Internationally, EGEA provides



space for entities and individuals to network and share knowledge and experiences. Several international projects have been implemented in EGEA (Geography Awareness Week, scientific events, Theme Year etc.) to make this possible.

External impact is important for EGEA as a way of promoting not only geography and the Association itself but important topics as well such as sustainability, climate awareness, the importance of development and thus making a tangible difference in the society.

### WHY

With better targeted external impact EGEA will become more visible and wider recognised. This will let the Association play an important role among European student associations and make a voice of EGEAns heard. Furthermore, it will improve the Association's opportunities of funding (grants, sponsors) and support (partners, universities).

### HOW

- Encouraging entities to **report and promote impact** from events and activities
- **Sharing impact reports in a public database** and promote the database
- Organising **projects with partners and other student organisations**.
- Creating **an external news feed** by issuing press releases or professionalising the current newsletter

## Science



### WHAT

Multiple scientific and research-focussed events and activities exist within EGEA (scientific events, scientific programme of congresses, e-lectures etc.). However, for an association of thousands of individuals within almost 100 European universities, science and geography should be emphasised more. A more qualitative scientific programme will contribute to a more professional recognition of the Association.

### WHY

Curiosity and dedication to science is one of the aspects which connect EGEAns. As geography students and young professionals, we aim to share knowledge and skills,

cooperate in research and promote international networking. It is also a crucial way of creating external impact and bringing about a better future.

#### HOW

- **Incorporating scientific programmes into more events** in the way of excursions, hands-on activities, small workshops etc.

For example, exchanges can have half a day reserved for a seminar with a professor about an interesting field of research or a professionally guided excursion about local specifics. Alternatively, a completely new event concept of 'Scientific Exchange' can be introduced as an exchange with a topic and both participating entities would organise (with support of universities) seminars, lectures, excursions or hands-on activities.

- Encouraging and promoting **reporting of scientific outcome** of activities and events.
- **Cooperating with local authorities and universities** when creating a scientific programme and sharing the outcome with them.
- Organising **scientific trainings** such as Workshop Leader Bootcamp, Scientific Writing workshop.
- **Promoting science within EGEA** and rewarding successful projects.
- Supporting activities which **promote and spread science** such as the European Geographer, podcasts, social media channels or the website.