

Electronic Communications Guidelines for Continental European Region (approved on 7 December 2008, Costa Del Sol Spain)

A. Statement of Purpose

The current conference-approved guideline No. 19, *AA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS* April 2005 states, “*The group conscience of the local area will determine the specific contents.*” and “*The needs and experience of people in your own area, will affect what you decide to do.*”

1. To carry the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers, to professionals and the general public and to members of the fellowship by providing a resource for information about A.A. on the Internet and for locating A.A. meetings in Europe.
2. To serve as a communications tool within CER Region by providing information about region activities and events.
3. To further general service participation within the fellowship by serving as an exchange of information about opportunities for involvement in region activities.
4. To facilitate our primary purpose at all times in a way that is consistent with our responsibilities as a Region within Great Britain and European General Service Conference structure.

Region guidelines urge us to:

- “*...promote communication and co-operation between neighbouring Intergroups, thus implementing our tradition of Unity...*”
- “*...ensure that the Region recognises areas that are sparsely served by the Fellowship do not remain in "no-man's land" but become part of that Region's responsibility.*”
- “*...to increase opportunity for members to participate in our Third Legacy of Service. To enable members with particular experience to serve a wider area.*”

Given our unique geographical and cultural spread as a Region, the website can be a powerful tool in fulfilling these aims.

B. URL registration and ownership

1. Two domain names shall be registered, owned and maintained by CER: "aa-europe.net" and "aa-europe.org."
2. When a user enters <http://www.aa-europe.net/org> into a browser, the user shall be brought to the CER home page.
3. The administrative contact shall be the **RECLLO**.
4. The technical contact shall be the Electronic Communications Assistant.
5. As a result of this registration, the CER Electronics Communication Committee and Webmaster shall have direct control over the technical access to the website.

C. Cost of the Site

In the spirit of self-support, the website shall be financed and maintained:

1. By contributions from the AA groups and AA entities within the Region.
2. By operating within guidelines established and reviewed by the Region Committee.
3. The Region will be responsible for paying any fees associated with the website within the Region body-approved budget.

D. Site Content

The spirit of A.A. principles and traditions will be followed at all times. The website shall contain information that supports its purpose, including the following:

1. A home page displaying the name of the website as well as clearly identified connections to the other sections of the website.
2. The A.A. Preamble will be prominently shown on the home page of the website.
3. An email form for requests/questions to be forwarded to the Web Response Team via the “inter” address.
4. Anonymous e-mail contacts for trusted servants will be available, including Region Officers, Delegates and Webmaster.
5. A directory listing limited to the Continental European Region service area, as defined by the Region group conscience, with a separate listing for information outside the CER service area. CER, of necessity, vastly exceeds Conference’s geographical definition of a Region, and in this spirit we are willing to offer the hand of fellowship to other AAs who otherwise would be completely isolated.
6. A list of A.A. events within or connected to the Region as provided to the Webmaster. AA events from areas outside Europe’s boundaries may be posted on a separate area. Instructions for posting included in area.
7. There will be no endorsement of or affiliation with non-A.A. entities. Accordingly, the website shall limit external links to the following:
 - a. Links to all AA General Service Offices (GSO) including internal links, Host Nation GSO websites, and the AA Grapevine may be made with no qualification or reservation.
 - b. Other AA service committees located within Continental European Region i.e. Group and Intergroup sites may be made with no qualification or reservation.
8. The CER Newsletter *Arena* in .pdf format available for download.
9. CER History supplied by Archivist.
10. A Service area listing Region and GSB meeting dates and locations.
11. The Website Guidelines on the “service” area as a .pdf file.
12. Autonomy will be respected. Home Groups and Intergroups will decide for themselves what information they do, or do not, want given on the website, including email addresses and phone numbers, as well as the extent of their participation in the Region website activity;
13. Copyrights shall be respected and registered trademarks, when used, should be acknowledged as such, i.e. Alcoholics Anonymous®, AA® and The Big Book® are registered trademarks of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., The Grapevine® and AA Grapevine® are registered trademarks of The AA Grapevine, Inc.

E. Anonymity

The Internet is a publicly accessible medium, and requires the safeguards of our anonymity tradition, “*ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*” However, we must seek always to find a spiritual balance. By offering a first name and telephone number, or an

individual email address, for publication as a meeting contact, a member is not seeking to promote him/herself but is offering a service. This is not a breach of Tradition 12. Virtually all AA Intergroup sites publish a contact phone number, as does CER for the benefit of Intergroups. They also supply Intergroup email addresses. Where possible, this is a preferable contact method.

But many parts of our Region do not have developed service structures, are sparsely served by the Fellowship and in danger of remaining in "no-man's land." They are the ones who most need our support. Their local needs, experience and wishes should decide how their contact details are displayed. Experience has been sought from those other AA websites in Europe who do publish personal phone numbers, and none has reported any abuse or inappropriate use of this information. Our experience has shown that the CER directory is almost unique: the vast majority of its users don't speak the local language, don't know the local geography and have great difficulty in making sense of written addresses. A direct contact, such as a phone number, published with permission, can be invaluable in making the hand of AA available to those who need it.

Anonymity will be preserved and protected. The names of individuals, individual phone numbers, postal and e-mail addresses will not be displayed on the website **without permission.**

1. The above-mentioned details must be supplied directly to the CER Electronics Communication Committee with a request for publication, and may not be simply acquired from existing printed directories.
2. If a designated Intergroup officer requests by written email the publication of meeting details which contain personal contact details, it will be assumed that permission to do so has been obtained. Likewise if the Intergroup or service committee maintains its own website on which personal contact details are already displayed, it will be assumed that CER has permission to republish this information which is already in the public domain.
3. Where no Intergroup structure exists and CER's contact is with individual groups, personal contact details may only be published if supplied by email with a request to publish them. All such requests will be filed in the administrative section of the website.

In the case of AA materials such as flyers, announcements and service reports which contain personal contact details display will be limited to materials provided by other AA entities and will also be limited to display in .pdf format only. It will not be the ECC's responsibility to edit these materials

F. Roles and responsibilities

• **CER Region Electronic Communications Liaison Officer (RECLO)**

The RECLO should have at least 3 years of sobriety, experience of Intergroup service and a strong understanding of the Traditions and Concepts for Service. Given that the Internet is a public medium the RECLO should have as good a practical understanding of the Traditions as a PI Officer.

The term of office shall be three years.

The primary responsibility of the RECLO is to ensure that accurate information is available at regional level regarding electronic communications and its potential impact on the Fellowship. The RECLO will have direct e-mail access to the General Service Board Electronic Communications Sub Committee. S/he will need to acquire the knowledge to answer questions that relate to the way in which our Fellowship uses the new communications media, and to help CER get the best use of the communications technology available.

The RECLO should be familiar with contents, features and facilities of the AA UK website, <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk> and the CER website, <http://www.aa-europe.net> so that the RECLO will be able to advise Region of the most appropriate usage of features of the UK site and effectively represent and understand CER's special needs (dictated by its geographical size and variety of cultures). The RECLO should be aware of and maintain contact with other AA websites set up to serve the English-speaking AA membership in Continental Europe.

The RECLO shall serve as the Chair of the **Electronics Communication** Committee and shall represent that committee at Region meetings. The RECLO shall also represent Region at GSO liaison meetings and Electronic workshops.

The RECLO shall be responsible for reviewing all Electronic Communications:

- Domain passwords and registration
- ORT requests and responses correspondance
- Website update requests and ECC responses to requests
- AA copyright information

The RECLO may be consulted on Electronic Communications matters relating to the Region.

The RECLO shall help assure that guidelines are updated in order to keep up with changing technology and new services made available via CER's website as well as keeping the Traditions.

1. RECLO - Submit a written website report and attend Region meetings. (taken from Webmaster responsibilities)

• **Webmaster**

The webmaster is an elected trusted servant chosen by the ECC (majority). The webmaster is a technical position, and the webmaster should have at least two-years of sobriety, a familiarity with the Twelve Traditions and Concepts for Service, as well as the technical skills involved in updating and maintaining a web site.

The webmaster should serve a one-year term but (because of the required technical expertise) may be chosen for additional term(s) up to a total of 6 years. The Webmaster is not obligated to attend Region meetings, but is expected to participate in ECC meetings.

The primary responsibilities of the webmaster are :

4. Maintain the website including updating information and implementing changes in the presentation of information posted on the website in a timely manner.
5. Ensure that any AA copyright material is indicated appropriately.
6. Advise the ECC and the Region of the feasibility (and potential problems where they arise) of using particular software or including interactive mechanisms on the site.
7. Assist in finding cost-effective price for services provided for the website.
8. Shall serve as a member of the ECC and participate in ECC meetings and correspondence
9. Prepare quarterly report which shall include number of updates to the web site, number of hits / visitors to the web site and a comprehensive overview of the Region's web activity to be presented at Region meetings.

• **Electronic Communications Assistant**

The Electronic Communications Assistant is elected as a trusted servant and will be responsible for the administrative management of the site in collaboration with the Webmaster and the Electronic Communications Committee. The Assistant should serve a three-year term but (because of the required technical expertise) be able to stand for re-election after said three-year term however, their total term may not exceed 6 years.

The Electronic Communications Assistant shall have three years of sobriety, a strong understanding of the Traditions and Concepts for Service as well as an understanding of website maintenance. The Electronic Communications Assistant shall provide technical backup to the Webmaster when needed.

The responsibilities of Electronic Communications Assistant include:

10. In conjunction with the RECLO, compile and maintain a contact list for meetings posted on the website to be passed on to future trusted servants.
11. Ensure that the information provided on the website is – as far as possible - accurate and consistent with information provided by the Groups, Intergroups and Region. A yearly email sent to contacts requesting updates would be advisable.
12. Compile and maintain an operations manual so that a smooth transition can be achieved in the event of accident, illness or rotation out of service. A copy of this manual (containing all data needed to access the site) should be in the RECLO's possession.
13. Arrange for domain registration and web hosting on annual basis ensuring appropriate renewal dates are met. Forward all expenses incurred by the website to the CER Treasurer for payment.
14. Maintain and update web site and email administration.
15. Shall serve as a member of the ECC and participate in ECC meetings and correspondence.

a) Electronic Communications Committee (ECC)

CER shall have an Electronic Communications Committee, which shall have direct oversight of the website. The committee shall be a Standing Committee of CER.

16. As trusted servants, the Electronic Communications Committee shall be authorized to make changes to the website, as they deem necessary. Should irreconcilable disputes arise

within the ECC, the RECLO shall bring these matters before the Region body to be resolved.

17. The Electronic Communications Committee shall include the RECLO as committee chair, Region Vice-chair, the PI Officer, a member of the ORT, one volunteer (who has at least 1 year sobriety), the Webmaster, and the Electronic Communications Assistant. The committee may request the addition of other members for their technical or specialist knowledge provided they have at least one year of sobriety. All nominations must seek the Region's subsequent approval. The members of the Committee are expected to attend meetings and maintain prompt communication with other members.
18. Committee members need not have technical knowledge, but should be comfortable communicating by email and should be familiar with the content and working of the site.
19. Committee members should have access to the site's correspondence by being included on the official Committee group-email. At least one committee member should be an active member of the Web Response Team.
20. Members should also be familiar with AA's Traditions, Service Manuals and Concepts.
21. The Electronic Communications Committee shall have full technical access to the website, including file transfer privileges and website e-mail. Unilateral actions taken regarding the website, without prior approval of the entire ECC may result in the removal of the ECC member's access.
22. If the ECC wishes to place new content on the website beyond the standing content listed in Site Content, they must present a housekeeping motion to the Region body. The ECC may make updates to the standing content listed in Site Content without presenting those updates to the Region body. The Region body may request the removal of content. Requests for removal of material should also be presented as housekeeping motions.
23. Ensure that any AA copyright material is acknowledged appropriately on the CER website.
24. Ensure that the CER web site operates within the Traditions and Concepts.
25. ECC members shall meet in person if it is deemed necessary when as a group and shall obtain prior approval from the CER Treasurer for related expenses. Whenever possible, ECC meetings will be combined with Region meetings.

a) Online Response Team

Team members are free to offer their own experience strength and hope in responding, particularly to 12-step requests. They will offer AA solutions to all enquirers and not endorse outside bodies or agencies, but always in Bill's spirit of being "friendly with our friends." Where people contact the site about matters outside AA's scope, they will explain this to the correspondent but endeavour to point them in an appropriate direction, if possible.

The "inter" address should be reserved solely for communications to do with the work of the website, and not for re-circulating other material (however inspirational).

1. An application for membership can be requested from the ORT, the Electronic Communications Committee, Webmaster, Electronic Communications Assistant or RECLO. Completed applications can be submitted to the co-coordinator and the ECC for approval, and new members will be sponsored into service and added to the group email.

2. A team member should be nominated by the Electronic Communications Committee as co-coordinator, to retain an overview and ensure that all messages receive an appropriate answer. This post should be for the normal three-year term.
3. Potential members should have a minimum of 3 years sobriety and experience with Intergroup service.
4. The co-coordinator and the ECC will develop and maintain guides for the ORT.

G. Passwords and Domain Management

The CER web site passwords are known solely by: Region Chair, RECCLO, Webmaster, Electronic Communications Assistant, the ECC, and the UK General Service Office webmaster. Passwords cannot be distributed outside of this group, and will be changed on an annual basis or upon rotation of one of the above positions or as necessary to prevent web site disruption. Passwords may only be changed by consensus of the ECC and must be distributed to all parties above.

Passwords include those for :

1. Domain name registration (Network Solutions)
2. Site administration (Plesk Panel)
3. Hosting (FTP)
4. Webmail

H. Conclusion

These are intended as **Guidelines**, not rules and regulations engraved on tablets of stone. They have been prepared with the existing wisdom of AA's accumulated service material in mind. They seek to represent the spirit of that material, to enable us to fulfill our responsibilities as a Region, our Primary Purpose and our Responsibility Declaration. They are not the final authority on CER's website. As in all AA ***"there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as he may express himself through our group conscience."***

The website is the product of our Region group conscience, expressed through meetings of the Regional Assembly. This has delegated responsibility for technical matters **to an elected Webmaster and Electronic Communications Assistant**, and for the content and display of the site to an elected committee, chaired by the RECCLO. As defined in our 10th Concept for World Service, these responsibilities will be fulfilled through an equal service authority, but will remain responsive to the group conscience of the Region as a whole. RECCLO will report regularly to Region on the continuing functioning of the site.