

Continental European Region - ARCHIVES

(Region 15 in the Service Structure of A.A. Great Britain)

The Legacy of Continental European Region C.E.R.

HOW IT BEGAN



The beginnings of Region 15

AA was brought to Europe after World War II. by

- a) American servicemen stationed in Germany and elsewhere in Continental Europe
- b) American, British, and Irish travelers and AA members employed in western Europe
- c) AA members working on seagoing vessels for long periods (=Internationalists)

They were active in carrying the AA message.

The **very first AA group in Europe** started in Ireland in **1946** when Connor F. (Irish) travelled to Ireland for a visit and found it necessary to carry the message.

1947 AA groups were started in **Rome** (Italy) and **Paris** (France),
London (England) first stirrings
Norway, and **Sweden**.

1948 AA groups in **Bremen, Frankfurt, Sembach, Wiesbaden, Stuttgart** and **Munich** (West Germany) were started.
*At that time, most of the AA meetings on the Army and Air Force bases held in **Chapels** were **secret** because to be an alcoholic or drunk in AA meant that you could be bounced out of the Services or degraded.*
Helsinki (Finland) gets the message

1949 **Edinburgh and Glasgow** (Scotland) first known groups are founded.
AA groups are also started in **Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Haarlem, The Hague**, and other **Dutch** cities (Holland-Netherlands)

1950 **Copenhagen** (Denmark) "**Ring I Ring Danish A.A.**" is founded.

1952 **First European Annual Roundup/Convention in Wiesbaden (Germany)**

Later the Roundup was held in the US Air Force High School Auditorium and it

continued to be held there for years to come. AA members came from various countries such as Finland, Belgium, Spain, Holland, and England.

1953 On 1st November 1953 the first and formal **open AA meeting in Germany** took place at the “**Hotel Leopold**” in **Munich**.

Brussels (Belgium) is introduced to the “BIG BOOK” and groups start assembling in other cities and towns in Flanders and Wallonia.

The above mentioned groups in all the European countries

*a) were **Loner** groups*

*b) were listed in the **International Directory** and*

*c) registered with GSO New York - “**Alcoholic Foundation**” and since **1954** “**General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous**”*

1970 *English-speaking groups had been formed in all major cities all over Western Continental Europe.*

*The need arose to unite these groups into a Central office – an **Intergroup**.*

1971 *A member from Sembach had extended an invitation to all existing groups in Germany to send a representative to attend a special closed meeting of AA in order to discuss and form a Central Service Office to serve the Canadian-American Forces AA groups in Western Germany.*

26th November 1971 *22 people met in a chapel at Sembach Air Base, outside of Kaiserslautern, West Germany.*

Every group in West Germany was represented.

The first Intergroup meeting in Europe was conducted.

*The **Intergroup** was divided into **6 Areas**.*

Each Area was asked to elect its own secretary.

The Area secretaries represented the Areas at the Intergroup – meeting.

The meetings were to be held every 2 month.

1973 ***Intergroup** had **9 Areas**.*

Each year the Intergroup held a Roundup/Convention and AA members from all over Continental Europe were encouraged to attend. They came. They came from Holland, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland. The AA message was carried back to the respective countries. More and more English speaking groups in Continental Europe joined Intergroup.

By the late 70's

the hundreds of groups in West Germany were joined by groups all over Europe:

*From **Reykjavik** to **Rome**, and from **Helsinki** to **Paris**.*

1980 *The Intergroup grew and had **12 Areas**.*

With this growth the Intergroup felt it was time that the extra-territorial Service Structure in Continental Europe has a say in the whole of AA by becoming a part of Conference Structure.

Intergroup wrote to GSO New York and the answer was: “... purpose of becoming a part of the Service Structure is mainly communications and it seems to us that your day to day dealings are mainly with the **European** community, for which the London office (now YORK) functions as a communication coordinator.”

At the same time **GSO Great Britain** sent **Intergroup** an invitation to attend Conference in Manchester in April 1980. At Manchester, Conference invited **Intergroup** to become a part of the GSO Service Structure in Great Britain as a Region.

The **Intergroup** sent **2 voting members** each year to Conference in Manchester.

1985 Finland, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Italy, France, and Switzerland were part of the Intergroup – now called **INTERGROUP CONTINENTAL EUROPE**.

The Intergroup had expanded to 15 Areas.

August 1985

The General Secretary from GSO was invited to attend a meeting of the English Speaking Intergroup in Europe which was held in

Nuremberg, Germany on 3rd and 4th August.

This meeting had been called specifically to discuss the existing service structure in Europe which, due largely to problems of communication, had not been functioning to well.

Jack shared how it works in Great Britain and suggested that Intergroup become a Region in the service structure of GSO Great Britain with 3 Inter-groups.

1986 **Intergroup** Meeting in Lahr (Germany)

A motion was made and seconded that we become a Region in the Service Structure of Great Britain. A formal request to become a Region was sent to GSO York (UK).

1988 European English Speaking Groups have formed a Region comprising 3 Inter-groups:

Intergroup I Northern Europe:

Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and Northwest Germany

Intergroup II Central Europe:

mainly Central Germany

Intergroup III West and Southern Europe:

Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and Southern Germany

1994 New Intergroups are formed:

Rheinland-Pfalz,

Scanelux,

Triborders,

Hessen,

Rhein-Neckar,

Bavaria,

*Franconia,
Berlin*

1995

At the General Service Conference in York, England, Intergroup Continental Europe is accepted as the fifteenth Region in the Service structure of Great Britain.

NOW Continental European Region

2001

**CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION
receives full approval as a REGION in the Service Structure of GSC Great Britain.**