

EAC Strategy and Plan 2014-2020



European
Association
for
Counselling

**Coming of Age –
Counselling as a Profession in Europe**

**Inclusion
Competence
Recognition**

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Strategy 2014-2020 for EAC

'Coming of Age –Counselling as a Profession in Europe'. Inclusion, Competence, Recognition

Background

Between 2008 and 2013, the EAC passed through a renewal and consolidation process both on a constitutional and operating level. Since 2012 it has felt the need to focus more on the status of the Counselling Profession and the Geneva Conference and Assembly in 2012 focused on:

'Coming of Age –Counselling as a Profession in Europe'.

This strategy is the result of:

- *the feedback received from the National Associations during these two years,*
- *the thorough examination of the current situation of counselling in Europe both in relation to the local and the worldwide scene*
- *the role that EAC wants to play in relation to counselling in the coming years.*

This document has been approved by the Governing Board and presented to the General Assembly in April 2014 in Malta.

1. Introduction

Since its inception, the EAC has made it its mission to promote the counselling profession across Europe and serve as the backbone to the establishment of the necessary solid foundations for a profession to come into being in various countries. Thus, through this Strategy the EAC is embarking on an ambitious task to provide a solid vision to all the National Associations, other counselling associations and training organisations about the practice of counselling in Europe.

Whilst the EAC acknowledges and recognises the diversity of counselling practices throughout Europe, it aims to strengthen the counselling profession by embracing and accrediting all the commonalities of the practice of counselling. This endeavour aims to build on the strong historical foundation of the profession whilst incorporating and being enhanced by more recent developments.

The EAC envisages that it will become the largest counselling player within Europe and whilst serving as an essential network for all the National Associations and other Counselling Associations and organisations, it aims to build strong relationships with the international counselling community and also with other related professions.

2. Three Pillars

The 2014-2020 EAC **'Coming of Age – Counselling as a Profession in Europe'** Strategy shall be built on three pillars:

2.1 Inclusion

- to be representative of the majority of European countries around the table through the National Associations (NAs), National Coordinating Committees (NCCs), the European Wide Organisations (EWOs) and Training Organisations (TOs).
- to serve as a network for NAs, NCCs, EWOs and TOs.

2.2 Competence

- to identify, consolidate and embrace commonalities of counselling competences and practice across Europe.
- to respect the diversity of counselling practice across Europe over and above the basic principles and competences.

2.3 Recognition

- to establish recognition and accreditation mechanisms for the certification of counsellors across Europe
- to establish recognition and accreditation mechanisms for counselling courses that will be recognised for practice of counselling across Europe

3. Making the Strategy Happen

The ultimate aim of the EAC Strategy 2014-2020 shall be to enable the counselling profession to 'come of age'. Achieving such an ambitious task requires the further elaboration of the three pillars into SMART(Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, Timeframe) objectives.

3.1 Inclusion

The **Inclusion** pillar shall be achieved through the following objectives:

3.1.1 Objective 1: Membership Growth

Membership growth is the lifeline for EAC on two levels:

- a. the EAC shall become stronger and more representative of the counselling profession throughout Europe;
- b. the EAC shall serve as the main European network for counselling.

1. National Associations

During recent years, the EAC has worked hard to increase its country membership through the National Associations. It is vital for the counselling profession that the EAC embraces as many countries as possible from the fifty-one (51) nations within the European continent.

Whilst this can be considered good progress, the EAC acknowledges that more work has to follow in the coming years to bring most European countries on board. A drive shall be undertaken beginning in 2014, to contact potential NAs in order to start discussions for them to join EAC to represent their country.

On the other hand, the EAC acknowledges that there might be countries which might not have an NA that qualifies under the EAC Statutes and Operating Regulations. In such cases, the EAC shall be committing itself to help and assist these countries to set up a National Co-ordinating Committee. This would enable more countries to join.

It shall be paramount for the EAC to find the best membership modality so that it would have as many NAs/NCCs as possible as full members.

2. Individual Members

Most of the individual members come from the NAs. EAC shall be committed to discuss the needs of individual members with the NAs/NCCs to better understand how to assist them to make EAC membership more relevant.

Moreover, the EAC shall carry out a drive to attract individual members from countries that are not members or are outside Europe. The EAC shall not restrict itself to membership within Europe but also outside of Europe so that such contribution will enrich the counselling profession both in and outside Europe.

3. Training Organisations & Courses

The EAC reconstituted the Professional Training Standards and Accreditation Committee (PTSAC) at the beginning of 2014. It envisages that this multi-national committee shall review the training standards and also align the process of setting standards and accrediting Training Organisations and their Courses. The EAC has set a clear agenda for PTSAC on two levels:

- a. To review the training standards and define the main competences that a counsellor shall have to be accredited as a counsellor
- b. To accredit Training Courses within member Training Organisations.

4. Way Forward

Overall, the EAC shall ensure that it will elevate the benefits of the membership for all the types of memberships according to the Statutes and Operating Regulations to attract the greatest possible number of organisations (of any type). On the other hand, the EAC shall always safeguard the principles by which it was founded and shall always embrace new members that reach the required standards as established within the Statutes and the Operating Regulations.

3.1.2 Objective 2: Consolidation of the Communication between Governing Board & Administrative Structure

The EAC shall work to consolidate continuous communication between the Governing Board and administrative structure. Part of such consolidation is the representation of the National Associations Representative on the Executive Committee. Such measure shall ensure that communication with Governing Board is more frequent whilst the NA Representative (see Appendix 2 for the full Role Description) shall bring the concerns of the GB to the EC. However, the EAC shall not restrict itself to communicating through the NA Representative alone, but will seek to use other means to communicate with its members.

3.1.3 Objective 3: Collaboration between European countries

The EAC has the privilege to be an umbrella organisation for various European associations and organisations. It shall use this pivotal position to encourage projects and other initiatives between member countries and individuals. Such initiatives shall strengthen counselling practices through Europe whilst providing added value to members within the EAC. Thus, it shall be the aim of the EAC to encourage:

1. Exchanges between students and counsellors of different countries to visit and experience other cultures
2. Exchanges between members of the National Associations/National Co-ordinating Committees/European-wide Organisations
3. Research between members of National Associations/National Co-ordinating Committees/European-wide Organisations
4. Other projects that might arise between National Associations/National Co-ordinating Committees/European-wide Organisations

From such exchanges and projects, the EAC shall not only benefit indirectly through the product of such activities, but also directly by developing a European network of resources for counsellors. This shall be indirectly supportive to all counsellors across Europe.

3.1.4 Objective 4: International Relations

The EAC is at the moment a member of one worldwide organisation. It shall set goals to establish vertical and horizontal relationships with other worldwide or regional associations in order to solidify its position both within the European context and also on the International platform.

Discussions shall be held with the International Association for Counselling (IAC), the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP) and other International or European Associations in the counselling field to explore possible collaborations.

3.1.5 Objective 5: Financial Consolidation

The EAC shall explore means of generating continuous revenue to support the ever growing increase of activities during future years. The EAC has through the voluntary service of the members of the Executive Committee invested strongly in these last 6 years in order to remain sustainable. The main income of the EAC is based on the memberships. Whilst it acknowledges an increase in members, such revenue is still a fragile basis as it depends entirely on the number of individual members from the National Associations. Thus, the EAC shall embark on:

1. A plan to review its membership structure fees
2. Explore new ways to create revenue that is continuous through the provision of services both to National Associations and Training Organisations
3. Explore new ways to use its pivotal position in Europe to increase added value to members by developing a marketing strategy.

3.1.6 Objective 6: The full implementation of the Statutes and Operating Regulations

The Statutes and the Operating Regulations approved in Geneva in 2012 are still in the process of being implemented. The Executive Committee of the EAC envisages that it shall be able to conduct their full implementation by the end of 2015.

The changes in the Statutes and the Operating Regulations have brought a radical change in how the EAC is managed. Since their approval in Geneva in 2012, the Executive Committee has worked hard to create the foundation for a solid administrative structure. During the last year with limited resources, the Executive Committee managed to:

1. Enable a number of new National Associations to come to the table;
2. Recruit the General Secretary;
3. Revamp the website;
4. Reconstituted the PTSAC and actively started operations;
5. Consolidate the Administration procedures through the implementation of the Operating Regulations.

Through team effort the Executive Committee managed to create continuity in the everyday operations. However the expansion of the EAC requires huge effort from the persons working within the Executive Committee and administrative roles.

The EAC administration shall be more proactive in keeping continuous contact with the NAs/NCCs/EWOs. This is because it considers such communication to be vital for the strengthening of the EAC. In order to achieve such objective, the EAC shall continue to consolidate the administrative team with the sole purpose of being more effective and efficient.

Thus, the EAC shall take a number of administrative decisions by consolidating the Administrative structure by the following measures:

3.1.7 Objective 7: Marketing of the EAC

The EAC shall devise a marketing strategy with two main aims:

1. The consolidation of the counselling profession by promoting more awareness of the profession;
 2. Ensuring the sustainability of the EAC.
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3.2 Competence

3.2.1 Objective 8: Setting the Standards across Europe

During the last one and half years, EAC has worked hard to reconstitute the PTSAC which will have an important role within EAC:

1. revising the training standards and competences of counsellors,
2. creating an accreditation process for training courses and individual counsellors,
3. assisting the Executive Committee in the application process of the organisation members.

The GB approved the Terms and Conditions of this Committee in September 2013. The PTSAC is a multi-national and is comprised of a number of experts in the field. It will work closely with National Associations within a consultative process to achieve this aim. To support the aims of the PTSAC and make this consultative process possible, the EAC shall apply for EU Funding through the National Associations (see Appendix 5). The ultimate aim is to have a recognised European system to accredit counsellors across Europe that will be recognised by the National Authorities in European countries.

The EAC considers this project crucial both for the counselling profession and for the development of the Association.

3.3 Recognition

The EAC throughout its existence has worked hard to promote the standardisation and accreditation of the counselling profession. This pillar will be based upon the success of the PTSAC with the full support of the EAC EC.

3.3.1 Objective 9: European Wide Accreditation System for Individuals Practising Counselling

Accreditation of individual practising counsellors is being conducted through the recognition of the NA/NCCs. However, the consolidation of this process through a full-blown framework independent of the existing systems of recognition shall enable individuals to be recognised on a European Level through a European Certificate of Counselling. Such accreditation shall facilitate the mobility of counsellors across Europe.

3.3.2 Objective 10: Recognition of Training Organisations and Accreditation of Training Courses across Europe

The Accreditation of Training Courses shall enable students who successfully complete accredited courses to be automatically across Europe. The EAC aims to add value to the qualifications of Training Organisations that join EAC and decide to accredit their courses.

3.3.3 Objective 11: Evidence Based Counselling Practice

The EAC shall assist members and promote initiatives on evidence-based research in counselling. Such initiatives help in the continuous development of counselling, through better understanding of new techniques and the consolidation of existing practices. This will also add value to membership.

4. Conclusion-Way Forward

4.1 Projects 2014-2020

The EAC shall explore ideas to encourage and motivate members to create and collaborate on projects. Whilst this enhances the membership benefits and the Counselling Profession, the EAC shall benefit from the outcome of these projects. All projects endorsed by the EAC shall be published on the website. These can vary from:

1. Research based activities
2. Exchanges
3. Training activities
4. Development of Counselling Tools
5. Other activities

4.2 Action Plan 2014-2020

According to the above strategy, the EAC shall set an action plan for the coming 6 years in object of consolidating the EAC position on the counselling profession and EAC's own financial sustainability.

Jesmond Friggieri

EAC General Secretary

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Objectives	Target	Responsibility
Inclusion		
Objective 1: Membership Growth Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contact non-member countries and invite to become members b. Exploring with National Associations to increase involvement of members of the Association c. Accrediting Training Organisations and Training Courses 	2014-2020 2016 2017	General Secretary and the Executive Committee Professional Training Standards and Accreditation Committee (PTSAC)
Objective 2: Consolidation of the Communication between GB & Administrative Structure: Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The representation of NAs on the Executive Committee b. 6 monthly Bulletins 	2014 2014	Executive Committee
Objective 3: Collaboration between European Countries Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Exchanges between students and counsellors of different countries to visit and experience cultures b. Exchanges between members of the National Associations c. Research between members of National Associations d. Other projects that might arise between National Associations. 	2020 2020 2020 2020	Executive Committee and Governing Board
Objective 4: Building stronger International Relations Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Becoming a member of the International Association for Counselling b. Building stronger and more collaborative links with European Associations c. Building relations with National Associations outside Europe with at least three countries 	2015 2015	Executive Committee and Governing Board
Objective 5: Consolidation of Finances Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Membership modalities that the Operating Regulations permit the EC to implement without conducting any changes to the Statutes or the Operating Regulations (see Appendix 3); b. Giving incentives to those who are first time members by giving them one-time offers; c. Increase the benefits of the membership for instance through developing a members section on the website; d. Creating the post of Membership Secretary to take care of and follow up members and review that these are satisfied. e. Reviewing the present budget in the context of this strategy and to have minimum income per year to ensure sustainability of the EAC. 	2015 2015 2015 2014 2014	
Objective 6: The full implementation of the Statutes and Operating	2015	Executive

<p>Regulations : The Consolidation of the Administrative Structure Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recruitment of a Communications Officer b. An allowance paid to Committee Members on Executive Committee or at least the President and the General Secretary c. The Executive Committee to meet at least 4 to 5 times a year in addition to any Skype meetings to ensure such continuity and focus on certain projects d. To motivate EAC members to participate in EU funded projects to increase the collaboration between them with the support of the EAC. e. The Executive Committee shall be fully recruited and functional to ensure continuity and consistency. 	<p>2014 2015 2015 2014 2015</p>	<p>Committee</p>
<p>Objective 7: Marketing of EAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue developing and updating the website b. Making the website as a centre of communication between members of the EAC c. Developing the members' section in the website as a centre of exchange 	<p>2016 2016 2015</p>	<p>Executive Committee & Webmaster</p>
<p>Competence</p>		
<p>Objective 8: Setting the Standards across Europe Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Setting up the PTSAC b. Applying for EU Funds for such c. Review of the Training Standards d. Setting up the competences through EU funded project e. Setting up the accreditation process for Training Organisations and Training Courses across Europe f. Creation of the European Certificate for Counselling 	<p>2014 2015 2015 2015-2016 2016 2017</p>	<p>Executive Committee and PTSAC</p>
<p>Recognition</p>		
<p>Objective 9: European Wide Accreditation System for Individuals Practising Counselling</p>	<p>2017</p>	
<p>Objective 10: Recognition and accreditation according to the Standards and Competences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Subcontracting Training Organisations for upgrading to the European Certificate b. Working with National Associations to make the European Certificate of Counselling recognised in their home country as an accredited certificate with the country Qualifications Authority or the equivalent as European Qualifications Framework 	<p>2017</p>	
<p>Objective 11: Evidence Based Counselling Practice Recognition of Training Organisations and Training Courses Across Europe Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create opportunities for research across countries b. Publication of research on the website by members 	<p>2016 2016</p>	<p>Executive Committee and PTSAC</p>

Appendix 2: Role of the NA Representative

The NAs/EWOs/NCCs Representative shall:

- Attend the EC meetings;
- Represent all the other NAs /EWOs/NCCs on the Executive Committee;
- Deal with difficulties that NAs/EWOs/NCCs want to bring up to the Executive Committee;
- Keep other NAs/EWOs/NCCs representatives updated with what is happening in the Executive Committee;
- Discuss issues with other NAs/EWOs/NCCs representatives if they are of urgent nature and cannot wait for the Governing Board;
- Have a broad view of the whole spectrum of the NAs/NCCs/EWOs needs and expectations;
- Link the EC with the Governing Body where necessary.

(According to the EAC Statutes and Operating Regulations)

Appendix 3: Membership Formats

Proposed Membership fees

Still need to be concluded

Appendix 4: The Role Description of the Communications Officer

Reporting to: General Secretary

Job Purpose

To ensure that the EAC has effective internal and external communications processes which maintain coherence inside the organisation and raise the profile of the organisation externally in ways that project a consistent image.

Key Tasks and Responsibilities

- a. Provide advice to the General Secretary, the Executive Committee and the Governing Board on internal and external communications;
- b. Maintain the Corporate Communications Strategy which promotes the work of the EAC and increases awareness of what it does;
- c. Build strong relationships with key people in various countries in the context of counselling, in media platforms, and other key stakeholders, leading EAC's engagement with them to optimise the profile of its work;
- d. Ensure that contacts and distribution databases are properly maintained;
- e. Maintain editorial standards within the EAC to protect the organisation's brand with the support of the General Secretary;
- f. Create copy for press releases, web pages, reports, newsletter and other organisational statements;
- g. Support and publish the work of the EC, the GB and its members;
- h. With the President and the General Secretary, write, produce, publicise and distribute the bulletins and the Annual Review of the Association;
- i. Ensure that EAC's website and social media presence continue to develop so that they support the organisation's brand presence and remain beneficial to its stakeholders;
- j. Ensure that members of the EAC are continuously updated;
- k. Ensure that the benefits established by EAC for members are delivered.

Job Objectives

To be agreed annually, clarifying the emphasis to be placed on specific areas of responsibility

Skills and Competencies

Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the modus operandi of the EAC • Ability to develop a knowledge of EAC systems from a consumer standpoint, and of the issues which arise for users. • Knowledge of contracting and monitoring of out-sourced contractual services.
Relationship building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining effective working relationships with colleagues in EAC • Maintaining a network of media contacts to test opinions and push out information and proper insight about EAC

<p>Political Judgement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing what is important for the EAC • Ability to judge when comment is necessary to enhance or protect EAC’s reputation and brand, and also when not to comment • Ability to handle sensitive information given by third parties in confidence and with discretion • Getting things done through others • Managing without direct line management control
<p>Communication skills</p>	<p>Excellent command of spoken and written language: the ability to put things clearly and simply so that others can understand. Ability to write in a variety of styles to appeal to different audiences Project a professional image consistent with the organisation’s brand and standards</p>
<p>Efficiency and order</p>	<p>Ability to organise own work effectively and in an orderly way Capacity to exercise (indirect) control over other work Ability to prioritise multiple workloads and meet deadlines Efficient and orderly method of work Thinking skills Ability to give clear responses, even when under pressure Ability to think creatively about a broad picture</p>

Appendix 5: The Accreditation of the Counselling Profession across Europe

Aims of the Project

Tentatively, the aims of the Project shall be as follows:

1. Understanding the reality of counselling in a wider Europe
2. Understanding counselling as a profession in relation to other similar professions and how these can be related in modalities and outcomes
3. Setting the minimum competences of counsellors across Europe through thorough examination of the realities of counselling within Europe
4. Setting up the accreditation process according to these competences for Training Courses and Training Organisations
5. Piloting this accreditation process.

Other objectives might be included into the project in the pre-application stage.

Operational Aspect of the Project

The project shall be led by an NA as the application for such funds has to be through a country. The application Erasmus + funds of the European Union. The projects could last for two years as the funding falls under the European Union Budget 2014-2020. In order to be eligible for such a project, there needs to be at least four countries involved. Thus the EAC is inviting all those countries who are interested in participating in the project. During the project we can also invite Training Organisations that can be represented during the project.

Outcomes of this Project

The following outcomes could be some of the benefits:

1. The common understanding of counselling in Europe
2. A true dialogue on the minimum standards and competences of counsellors
3. A list of competences for accreditation of a counsellor. These could be at various levels to enhance the diversity within Europe. EAC shall endorse these competences and shall become the core tool for PTSAC for accreditation of counsellors, Training Organisations and Training Courses.
4. The increase in EAC membership and standardisation in Europe of a counsellor's core competences.
5. A coherent position for negotiation with the European Commission for recognition of the counselling profession

If such a project proves to be successful then, follow-up projects can be applied for.
