

Region 9 Assembly Report 2011

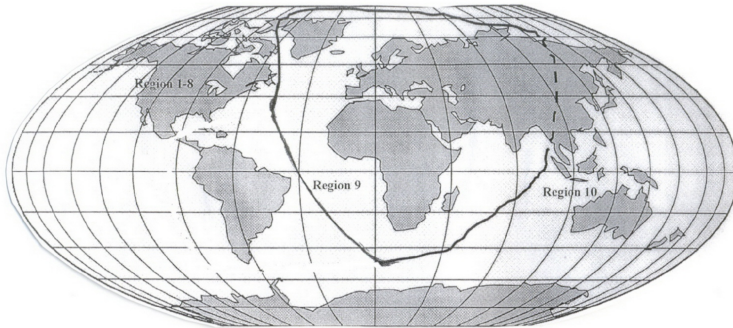
Assembly 23-25 November 2011, La Foresta, Valbeek, Belgium

Introduction

It was a privilege to be allowed to represent the Intergroup at this year's Region 9 Assembly.

The Assembly took place at La Foresta, a monastery in the countryside of Belgium, about a 40 minute bus ride from Leuven.

Region 9



Region 9 is one of OA's 10 Regions. It is composed of countries and territories in Africa, Europe, Middle East and Western Asia. The area of Region 9 covers over 70 million sq Km and over 100 different countries.

The Board and Committee Structure of Region 9

The Region 9 Board comprises a Trustee and three officers:

- Trustee – Esti from Finland
- Chair – Stella from the UK
- Secretary – Karolina from Sweden
- Treasurer – Isabella from Sweden

There are also a number of Committees that serve Region 9:

- Translations Committee
- Bylaws Committee
- Public Information (PI) Committee
- 12th Step Within Committee
- Electronic Communications Committee

Composition of the Assembly

Seventeen countries from Region 9 were represented at the Assembly: Great Britain, Belgium, Israel, Slovakia, Italy, South Africa, The Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, Poland, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Greece, Ireland, France and Denmark.

There were 25 voting representatives at the Assembly, and there were 10 visitors who did not have a vote but made the effort to travel to Belgium to observe and participate in the subsequent Convention from the 25th-27th.

The Assembly

The Assembly took place over three days:

- Wednesday 23rd November (in the evening)
- Thursday 24th November (3 sessions from 9am through to 9pm)
- Friday 25th November (2 sessions from 9am through to 5pm)

Although the primary focus of the Assembly was to deal with Region 9 business, there were also three workshops:

1. 7th Tradition
2. Translations
3. How to Abstain from Compulsive Eating One Day at a Time

I will enclose details of workshops 2 and 3 later in my report.

Wednesday 23rd November

This session was primarily focused on setting the scene for the work to come:

- Adoption of the Agenda
- An overview and explanation of the processes involved in the Assembly

In addition to this foundation work, there was an informal opening where representatives were asked to share their problems and achievements from during the year.

Some of the challenges identified included: the lack of anorexia-focused literature; how to encourage people to do service and to retain people who are doing service; how to keep newcomers coming back; encouraging people to do the Steps.

It was good for me to see that the challenges brought up throughout the Region are very much the same as those we see here in the UK. It reinforced the sense that we are an International fellowship – the disease is the same no matter where you are.

The triumphs reported were impressive, primarily in the field of translation: key flyers have been translated into Hebrew: Denmark has translated a number of the flyers and created a Danish language pack for new meetings. There was also sharing on the PI work undertaken in different countries – the PI work undertaken by OAGB was well received.

Thursday 24th November

The business undertaken on Thursday 24th included:

- Adoption of the ground rules for the Assembly
- Adoption of the 2010 Assembly Minutes
- Reports and Questions arising out of the Reports

- A presentation and discussion of the 2011-2012 Budget for voting on Friday 25th November
- Committee sessions
- Endorsement of the Trustee for election at WSBC 2012
- Election of the Region 9 Board and Committee Chairs for 2011-2012
- Discussion and voting on Region 9 Assembly venues for 2012 and 2013

Budget Discussion

Although we have a prudent reserve, and we have had enough contributions that our Budget 'balances', it was pointed out that Region 9 is currently not fully self supporting. This is because our contributions to World Service are minimal, and do not realistically cover the value of the services we receive from WSO: financial assistance for delegate attendance and translation; the OA web site and the information it contains; maintenance of the Meetings List database, etc.

So contributions from all Service Bodies within Region 9 are to be encouraged.

Endorsement of Trustee

The Assembly has to endorse any applicant for the position of Region 9 Trustee. This year there was one applicant: Esti from Finland, who is currently in post. The Assembly voted to endorse her application, so she stand for election at the WSBC in April.

Election of Board and Committee Chairs for 2011-2012

The following people were elected on to the Board of Region 9:

- Chair – Susan from Israel (to serve 2011-2013)
- Secretary – Patrick from the UK (to serve 2011-2013)
- Treasurer – Isabella from Sweden (to serve 2011-2012 as she is in the second year)

The following people were elected as Committee Chairs for 2011-2012:

- 12th Step Within – Mette from Denmark
- Translations – Irenne from Denmark
- Bylaws – Joanna from the UK
- Public Information – Siobhan from Ireland
- Electronic Communications – Karolina from Sweden

Discussion and Selection of Region 9 Assembly and Convention venues for 2012 and 2013

Poland and South Africa pitched for hosting the Assembly and Convention in 2012. Poland won the vote, so the Convention in 2012 will be in Warsaw.

Israel and South Africa volunteered to host the Assembly and Convention in 2013. Israel won the vote – it was very close with Israel only winning by 2 votes.

Committee Sessions

Everyone at the Assembly volunteered to sit on a Committee for the next year. Each Committee had a session where they shared ideas. I volunteered to sit on the Finance

Committee, partly because I have very little experience in this area and am very willing to learn!

Friday November 25th

This was the day with the most detailed work of the Assembly. The business undertaken on Friday 25th November included:

- Consent Agenda
- Bylaws Amendments Motions
- New Business Motions
- Approval and Adoption of the 2011-2012 Budget
- Allocation of Service Bodies not present at the Assembly

Consent Agenda

A Consent Agenda is where straightforward Bylaws Amendments Motions (Prefixed BL in the following) and New Business Motions (Prefixed BM in the following) are considered and voted on at the same time. If anyone would like something taken from the Consent Agenda to be discussed separately, then it is automatically taken off the Consent Agenda.

After discussion of the contents of the Consent Agenda, the following Motions were considered together: BL 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9 and BM 1, 2, 5. These required a majority to adopt. They were voted upon and **adopted**.

BL 1

Bylaws Article XII Section 1.

To clarify that we are talking about the Region 9 Assembly.

“Proposed amendments should be submitted to the Region 9 Bylaws Committee at least ninety days before the Region 9 Assembly, and are to be submitted in writing, by this committee to the Region 9 Chair at least seventy five days before The Region 9 Assembly.”

BL 2

Bylaws Article VII, Section 3b

To comply with wording used in OA.

“...In addition each candidate for the Region Board shall have where possible at least one year of current abstinence and at least two years of service beyond group level at the time of election.”...

BL 4

Bylaws Article XI Section 1

To clarify wording.

“Matters which relate to major policy affecting Overeaters Anonymous as a whole shall be referred to the Region 9 Trustee or another member of Overeaters Anonymous Inc. World Service Board of Trustees.”

BL 5

Bylaws Article IV, Section 2b

To clarify wording and include Virtual Service Board.

“Representatives from National/Language/Virtual Service Boards, who are registered with the World Service Office and who are within the geographical boundaries of Region 9. National/Language/Virtual Service Boards shall not represent Intergroups which have sent representatives to the Assembly, however if all Intergroups are represented, the National/Language/Virtual Service Board will still be entitled to one representative.”

BL 8

Bylaws Article IV, Section 2

To clarify wording regarding OA visitors attending the Region 9 Assembly.

“ a OA Visitors from Region 9 who already have a representative attending the Assembly from their service body will not be given a voice or a vote.”

b The Region 9 Assembly is open to OA visitors from inside and outside Region 9.”...

BL 9

Bylaws Article XII, Section 2

“Bylaw amendments, including items raised during the Assembly by a Committee, which have not been submitted to the Region Chair seventy-five days before the Assembly and which are considered to be of an emergency nature by the Region 9 Board and the Bylaws Committee Chair may be voted on at the Assembly.”

BM 1

Policies and Procedures

To adopt into the Region 9 Policies and Procedures Manual the document circulated at 2010 Region 9 Assembly entitled “Overeaters Anonymous Region 9 – Assembly Procedures and Suggestions.”

BM 2

Policies and Procedures IV Region 9 Translations

To strike and insert:

“TRANSLATION GUIDELINES

The Translation guidelines submitted by the R9 Translations committee in 1999 and updated in 2002 and approved in 2005 have now been rescinded and R9 will now refer to the document “OA GUIDELINES – TRANSLATION GUIDELINES FOR OA LITERATURE” which is available on the www.oa.org website for the worldwide fellowship of OA.”

BM 5

Policies and Procedures Article V Finance and Budget

To insert:

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR DELEGATES TO
REGION 9 ASSEMBLY

Financial assistance be granted to delegates travelling to Region 9 Assemblies. Draft claim form approved. (1985b)

That the mailings to all member groups and Intergroups as in article 5(ii) of the Bylaws, shall include applications for assistance. This application form will also be posted on the R9 website. Completed application forms will be submitted to the R9 Treasurer at least 4 months prior to the date of the Assembly.

It is requested that the service bodies attach to the application form for assistance – the latest financial summary of the service body and that they give details of any funding for attendance at Region 9 Assembly from elsewhere. The Region 9 Board are authorized to consider (by email) those applications (2008e)

The Assembly resolves that priority for financial assistance for Regional representatives travelling to the R9 Assembly will be given to those IGs and NSBs with the greatest distance to travel and secondly to those attending their first Assembly. (1996h)

The Board is authorized to make a decision on transferring up to EUR 2400.00 (GBP 1700.00) from Service to Delegate Assistance, 3 months before the next Assembly, whenever that takes place. (2007a)

Payment of this assistance will be at the Assembly itself.

Bylaws Amendments Motions

The following Bylaws Amendments Motions were considered:

BL 6

The Board moved that:

Region 9 OA Bylaws, Article IV, – MEMBERSHIP OF REGION 9 ASSEMBLY, Section 3 Qualifications.

Region 9 OA Bylaws, Article VII – COMPOSITION OF REGION 9 BOARD, Section 3 Qualifications.

Requires that the representatives to R9 have 6 months consecutive abstinence. To introduce abstinence requirements for the R9 Representatives and in turn strengthen the abstinence requirement for the R9 Board.

Amended – 1 year instead of 6 months. Majority needed. Voting: the motion for the amendment was lost.

Motion required two-thirds vote to adopt. Motion BL6 as originally stated was **adopted**.

BL 7

The Bylaws Committee moved that:

Region 9 OA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 3d – Composition of Region 9 Board

Amend bylaws to the effect that no member will be disqualified to serve on Region 9 Board because they have already served for eight years. To allow qualified members to serve additional terms on the Region 9 Board if they wish to.

Amendment – move to strike four (4) and to insert eight (8). Voting by majority. The amendment was carried.

Discussion took place regarding the true meaning of the existing wording of the Bylaw.

Clarification that the original meaning did not require that members be disqualified from serving after eight year's service – therefore the motion was **withdrawn**.

BM 3

The Region 9 Treasurer moved that:

Region 9 Policies and Procedures Article V Finance and Budget

Title of the Section – Financial Assistance for Delegates to Region 9 Assembly.

Proposed New Wording:

“The Assembly resolves that priority for financial assistance for Regional representatives travelling to the R) Assembly will be given to those IGs and NSBs that cannot afford to fund a delegate on their own, to those with the greatest distance to travel and secondly to those attending their first Assembly. (1996h).”

Motion required a majority to adopt. BM 3 was **adopted**

BM 4

The Secretary moved that:

Policies and Procedures VI Website Maintaining Anonymity

Move to Amend the P & P regarding anonymity on the website, if personal information is on Region 9 material or on an events flyer it is up to the service body to change the contact information before sending it to the EC Committee Chair for uploading.

Motion required majority to adopt. BM4 was **lost**.

BL 3 Substitute Business Motion

Substitute motion of Bylaw Amendment BL 3.

The Bylaw Chair moved to amend:

Article III, Section 1 as follows:

“The Definition of a Group

The points that define an Overeaters Anonymous Group are listed in OA Inc Bylaws, Subpart B Article V, Section I Overeaters Anonymous Groups.

a These points shall define an Overeaters Anonymous group:

1 As a Group, they meet to practice the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous guided by the Twelve Concepts of OA Service.

2 All who have the desire to stop eating compulsively are welcome in the group.

3 No member is required to practice any actions in order to remain a member or to have a voice (share at a meeting)

4 As a Group they have no affiliation other than Overeaters Anonymous

5 It has affiliated as an Overeaters Anonymous group by registering with the World Service Office.

b Virtual Groups (groups which replicate face-to-face meetings through electronic media) may be an Overeaters Anonymous group if they:

- 1) Otherwise meet the definition of Overeaters Anonymous groups
- 2) Are fully interactive, and
- 3) Meet in real time.”

Required two thirds majority, the motion was **adopted**.

New Emergency Business Motion

Submitted by the Finance Committee

To strike and amend the Policies and Procedures V Finance and Budget.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR TRANSLATION/PRINTING

To strike part b and amend c into b.

The effect of this motion is to remove the “loan” element of any Financial Assistance given to a Service Body by Region 9 for translation. The rationale was to encourage applications.

Required two thirds majority. The substitute motion was **adopted**.

Approval and Adoption of 2011-2012 Budget

The Budget (the original suggested version with alterations included that had been suggested by the finance committee and assembly) was presented by the finance committee.

Motion required majority to adopt. The Budget as presented was **adopted**

The Approved budget can be found at the end of this report.

Liaison with Service Bodies not presented at the Assembly – allocation and adoption of service bodies

The result of the Liaison with Service Bodies not represented last year was addressed by Susan – the 12th Step Within Chair. Four representatives were present this year that would not have attended if we would not have done this liaison last year.

Each representative and Board Member picked one or more countries which they will try to contact during the year. The representatives will contact the country/countries they chose and report to the 12th step within Committee.

My Experience of the Assembly

I found these sessions, although long and very detailed, were a great example of Higher Power working through the Assembly. There was no rancour, even though sometimes the discussion evoked powerful emotions. There was a genuine sense of everything being exactly the way it should be, no matter what the outcome.

It was great to hear the opinions of those OA members who did not have English as a first language. I gained a powerful sense of the commitment shown by those who are dedicated to carrying the message in their own country in their own language.

The Hungarian delegate talked about her challenges in establishing meetings in her country, and expressed her gratitude at being given financial assistance by Region 9 to attend the Assembly.

One of the Danish representatives talked about the amount of time she devoted to translating key pamphlets into Danish.

A representative from Greece also talked about her experience in translating materials.

I found all of these shares to be particularly inspiring and moving.

In addition, I was elected to be Secretary for Region 9 for the next two years. In the few weeks since the Assembly I have had email contact with members from Dubai, Hungary, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, South Africa, Greece and Germany. Although the work is challenging, it is amazing to be in such daily contact and to be of service to the Region.

Many thanks to the Intergroup for electing me to be your Region 9 Representative this year.

I am sad to have to resign from the post now that I have been elected Region 9 Secretary, but I am excited for my successor, who will be in Poland with me in 2012.

Translations Workshop

Esti, our Trustee, held this Workshop on translations.

Although in the UK we do not have to worry so much about the issue of translating OA literature, here are some of the key points that were presented:

- Esti is the Chair of the Translation Committee at the Board of Trustees.
- Translation of literature is an important way of spreading the message and to raise money for the Service Body.
- Have the courage to start!
- You can start with a glossary – to capture the OA words in your language. The first things to translate could be the “12 and 12” into your language and the pamphlet “15 questions”.
- There was an explanation of the legal licences needed to proceed with translation and publication.

To the Service Bodies:

- Contact the WSO to see if there already is literature translated into your language.
- Contact the WSO to check if there will be changes to this piece of literature in the near future?
- Look at AA approved literature to see if they have literature that you can use in your language.
- Literature that is on the oa.org website can be translated without having to get permission or licensing.

Application for Funds:

- WSO have a fund to apply for funding to translate literature.
- Region 9 translations fund is to be considered as a loan and needs to be paid back in time when literature has been sold. (NB: This point was rescinded as an Emergency Business Motion during the Assembly, so from now on this is considered a grant.)
- If you need to use a professional translator and apply for funds to cover the costs – do that and check if the translator has made an accurate job so the OA language talks to the heart.
- Create a Translation Committee in your country to focus on what to translate. A goal for each country could be to translate one piece of literature each year.
- Suggestions on how to start and what to start to translate will be found in the guidelines on www.oa.org.

Questions and experiences were shared:

- Permission to translate Lifeline is not needed.
- Drafts are not for sale and should be destroyed after circulation. How to distribute drafts and new editions is suggested in the Guidelines.
- Electronic copies of literature can be sold.
- Awareness that regarding copying and spreading literature to OA friends without them buying it themselves – is not helping OA as a whole. Detailed discussion took place on this topic and it was established that some countries were unaware of the implications.

Delegates were encouraged to take this information home and spread the word!

How to abstain from compulsive eating one day at a time – Workshop

Stella took the Assembly through a workshop and Isabella and Karolina shared about their experiences of how they became abstinent and how they stay abstinent.

We then split into 6 groups and here are the answers from the different groups.

Note that where a country is mentioned in a Group response, it is the answer from the Delegate from that country in the Group and should not be taken as an answer for the whole country!

Group 1

1. HOW DO YOU MAKE YOUR MEETING A SCHOOL FOR ABSTINENCE?

- Personal example: If I'm abstinent it shows!
- Sharing about abstinence
- Speakers - get them to go into details of what their abstinence is, and what they do to achieve it
- Emphasise the importance of abstinence - resist being "touchy feely" - losing abstinence is a big deal!
- Sharing about what I can do now that I am abstinent - I can be there for my family, I am able to be more physically active. I am alive today!
- It's about attraction
- Encourage positive pitches, don't make it sound like hard work
- Point out the gifts of abstinence
- "Abstinence is the most important thing in my life without exception"

2. HOW DO GROUPS ENCOURAGE SUBSCRIPTION TO LIFELINE?

- The group subscribes to Lifeline
- Swedish version
- Encourage subscription in pitches
- Talk about what Lifeline has given you
- Share Lifeline weekly
- Take up the new initiative to translate Lifeline and then sell subscriptions locally to send the money to WSO
- Get groups to suggest to people to buy their own if they borrow the group's copy
- Some Groups "rent" lifeline to members

3. DO YOUR GROUPS GIVE OUT THE NEWCOMERS PACKET?

- In pretty much all London meetings, yes
- Suggest Groups prioritise translating this packet first to help local newcomers
- Make sure to put member's numbers on the packet and make sure members take newcomer's numbers
- Create a Newcomers Officer service position, with responsibility to make sure newcomers have the packet and that they are contacted after the meeting
- Encourage all members to call newcomers, even if they are resistant to the idea
- Love them until they learn to love themselves
- Call members who haven't been around for a while - some groups allocate members to do this - possibly make a service position of this
- Invite members for tea or coffee after the meeting - "the meeting after the meeting" - perhaps incorporate where people usually go for tea or coffee into the meeting format

4. DOES YOUR GROUP USE THE NEWCOMERS MEETING GUIDELINES?

- I've not encountered a meeting that uses it
- Amend the meeting format to include some lines directed at the newcomer
- When there is a newcomer, encourage the meeting to go back to step 1 in sharing, or other newcomer related topics
- Special readings
- Encourage long timers to share about how it was before, or how it was for them as newcomers
- Get newcomers to identify themselves
- Allocate dedicated sharing time just for newcomers, preferably late in the meeting so newcomers can get a sense of what is appropriate sharing

Group 2

Question 5:

- Stick to a foodplan
- Let go of your shame
- 10th step inventory
- Surrender & Listen
- Work the steps & repeat what you learn
- Use the tools on a daily basis
- Take the "drama" out of the food
- Always be aware that this program is not a diet

Question 6:

- One member said that his group has no subscription due to language problems
- Some groups have one issue at the meeting for members to borrow
- There are OA magazines in French (Oasis) and Swedish (Oasen); that might be the reason why few member subscribe to Lifeline
- Talk about a subscription for your group at the meeting; subscribe and provide libraries and doctors with an issue
- Send out/upload Lifeline weekly

Question 7: Newcomer package

- Norway uses the newcomer package from WSO
- Groups in France, Greece, Sweden, Israel, and Spain have put together their own newcomer package.

Question 8:

- We all use a special meeting format when there is a newcomer.
- The guidelines are not actively used in the groups present

Group 3

9) If you are having a Newcomers meeting – which topics would you think are good ones to include?

- Step 1
- Abstinence
- Physical recovery
- Chapter 3 from the Big Book.

10) How do you deal with the translation and distribution of Lifeline in your language?

Translating Lifeline: only partly in Poland

11) Do your groups give out a Newcomer Packet to newcomers?

- Yes in UK
- Translated version of the package in Holland
- In Poland: only translated pamphlet "To the newcomer".

12) Does your groups use the Newcomer Meetings Guidelines? No

Group 4

13) What's the difference between a Plan of Eating and Abstinence?

Plan of eating is perceived as merely a tool which may eventually lead to abstinence when you follow the other suggestions as well.

14) How do you deal with the translation and distribution of Lifeline in your language?

In Italy it is read in English and also sometimes partly translated; people can read it in English. It was noted that the online version does not have the same feel as the paper one and is not read as often. In Italy there is not always a designated downloader available. A recent email to the intergroup in Holland has increased awareness of the importance/necessity of Lifeline.

15) Do your groups give out a Newcomer Packet to newcomers? Yes!

16) Do your groups use the Newcomer Meetings Guidelines? No, not in Holland. Yes in GB, every third Thursday of the month. In Holland the format is altered and the topic of the meeting is step 1.

Group 5

17) Do your group members all use the OA meeting format as on OA.org and if so when was the last time they reviewed the latest format and translated it?

- Belgium use suggested format and updated 3 years ago, Holland think they do as have not noticed that it has changed and the new definition of abstinence is read out.
- UK meeting represented in Group 5 needs to be updated and will be doing this as soon as return to meeting
- South Africa believe they are using the updated version.
- Slovakia used suggested format and it's translated.

18) Lifeline

Belgium don't translate but do translate the Lifeline Weekly and pass it around for no fee, Holland no subscription and not translated. Slovakia not translated. UK forward e-copy but not Lifeline.

19) Newcomer packs

- Uk - yes no charge
- Belgium and Holland - yes no charge
- South Africa yes but charge a small fee

20) Newcomer meeting guidelines

UK – have not used them but have sharing time for newcomers. Belgium and Holland read extra parts and have step one meeting every time there is a newcomer. In South Africa there are no newcomer meetings but they use guidelines, Slovakia no guidelines

Group 6

21) What pieces of literature does your group recommend to newcomers?

- Pamphlets and Welcome Back packets,
- Lifeline sampler (the book).

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- Newcomer packet after the meeting.

22) How do you deal with the translation and distribution of Lifeline in your language?

- Don't need to translate it.

23) Do your groups give out a Newcomer Packet to newcomers?

- Yes

24) Do your groups use the Newcomer Meetings Guidelines?

- Yes some use it.