



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
2 July 2020 at 11h00 am (BST) / 12h00 pm (CEST)
By Zoom video conference

Board members present:

Riana Taylor (Chair, CEO Circles UK)
Michelle Vreede (Treasurer, Reclassering, the Netherlands)
Ann Castrel (Secretary, CAW Antwerp, Belgium)
Kieran McCartan (Research and Evaluation Lead. University of the West of England / Circles South West, UK)

Voluntary Board support members:

Mechtild Höing (Avans University, the Netherlands)
Patricia Bosch (Fundacion Salud y Comunidad, Catalonia)

CirclesEurope Association Members present:

Dave Thompson (University of Sheffield, UK), Heather Curnow (Circles UK), Imants Jurevicius (Probation Service, Latvia), Jinke Veel (Reclassering, the Netherlands), Jose Porcel (CIPM, Italy), Koen Goei (Helsinki Committee, the Netherlands), Leah Warwick (Circles UK), Lisa Cuthbert (CEO PACE, Ireland), Marijke Bijlsma (Reclassering, the Netherlands), Micol Trombini (CIPM, Italy), Rosie Kitson-Boyce (UK), Stejn Mathey (the Netherlands), Ton Elizalde (CerclesCat, Catalonia).

Apologies

Annemarie Venderbosch, Audrey Alards, Ivet Lohschelder, Kasia Uzieblo, Liga Rasnaca, Liz Hickey, Louise Pitman, Roos Wisse, Stephen Hanvey, Willem van der Brugge

1. Welcome and Introductions by Kieran McCartan

- a. Kieran McCartan welcomed everyone to the meeting which was held via Zoom videoconference due to the Corona Virus/COVID-19 restrictions. He gave all members the opportunity to introduce themselves. He pointed out that representatives included a number of countries, including the Netherlands, Belgium, the UK, Latvia, Catalonia, Italy and Ireland.
- b. Apologies were noted as above.

2. Annual Financial Report by the Treasurer

- a. Michelle Vreede presented the Financial Report (attached to the minutes as Annex A).
- b. She explained the income and expenditure of the second year of the Association, which was from January to December 2019.
- c. Costs for the year came to 764.43 Euros and at the end of December 2019 there was a balance of 2110.84 Euros.

3. Annual Activity Report by the Board Chair

Riana Taylor presented the Activity Report of which the following is a transcript:

It gives me great pleasure to present the second Activity Report at the General Meeting of the CirclesEurope Association. I regret that we are not able to meet face to face, but we have all been severely affected by the COVID-19 Corona Virus and meeting via video conference is the best we can do at this stage. I trust that you, your loved ones, colleagues and associates have not been personally affected by the virus. It has indeed brought many challenges for all of us, amongst which are trying to find ways to continue to support Core Members of CoSA. Despite this, I am pleased that so many representatives could join the meeting via zoom. It is the first time we are doing the General Meeting in this way, so please bear with us if there are a few technical problems; hopefully it will be minor.

I want to start of this report by expressing my appreciation to all the members of the Association who have supported the work of the Association in the last year. I also want to say a special thank you to my colleagues who have served on the Board of the Association and I want to extend a special word of thank you to all of them for all the hard work they have put in to continue to develop the Association: Michelle Vreede, the Treasurer, Ann Castrel, the Secretary, Kieran McCartan for being the Research and Evaluation lead; and Mechtild Höing, Patricia Bosch and Audrey Alards who have given voluntary assistance to the Board.

Those of you who attended last year's General Meeting will remember how successful the mini-conference was that we arranged to coincide with the General Meeting. We wanted to do the same this year, but unfortunately due to the Corona virus we have decided to postpone the mini-conference to October – hopefully by then we would be able to arrange a face to face event, but we will keep you informed as things progress.

I will now share with you the key activities of the last year which is from June 2019 to June 2020:

- a. Following the success of the first General Meeting and mini-conference, the newly elected Board held an Away Day in September 2019 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to plan its strategy and key priorities for the following year. The Board also held regular meetings throughout the year.
- b. Three Board sub-groups were constituted (Quality Assurance, Governance and Membership; Service Development the Knowledge-sharing, Evaluation and Research sub-group). Members were contacted to ask for participants to join the sub-groups. Due to capacity issues, it was agreed to temporarily combine the work of the Quality, Assurance, Governance and Membership and the Service Development Sub-groups, but this will be reviewed once capacity improves.
- c. The Quality Assurance, Governance and Membership sub-group completed key pieces of work, including:
 - A self-assessment checklist for member Circles Providers to enable them to complete an annual self-assessment to reflect the quality of their Circles provision. This checklist incorporated the principles of the Definitions and Standards document which was compiled in 2013 for Circles4EU and which contained the key principles of Circles provision for European Circles Providers. This self-assessment reflects those principles that encompass the

minimum standards that Providers of Circles in Europe should adhere to. The checklist will be launched to members within the next period.

- Considered the Intellectual Property Rights of the European Circles model and devised a membership agreement as well as an approach to the use of the European Circles Handbook.
 - Created a Frequently Asked Questions document which will be placed on the CirclesEurope website. This will aid prospective Circles Providers and other key stakeholders to access core information on Circles provision.
 - Approached countries which has an interest in Circles provision or who has provided Circles in the past to become members of the Association.
- d. The Knowledge-sharing, Evaluation and Research sub-group compiled a questionnaire for members to assess the impact that the COVID-19 Corona virus had on Circles provision in the various countries. It was agreed to share this questionnaire with non-European Circles Providers. Once the results become available, a report will be compiled which will be shared with all members.

We are still looking for members to volunteer to operate in these sub-groups as significant work needs to be done in the next year, so please get in touch if you would like to get involved in the work.

- e. Members of the Board participated at the NL-Atsa conference in Antwerp, Belgium in February 2020 where the Association was promoted, including through a poster presentation.
- f. The Board developed an approach to dealing with organisations that enquire about Circles provision and who potentially may want to become Circles providers including the use of the European Circles Handbook, sharing of materials and receiving of payment for consultancy support, training and development.
- g. Members of the Board contributed to the preparation of a European Action Grant proposal for a European Circles project which was led by Avans University. The proposal was submitted in April 2020 and focused on the following objectives:
- To develop a frame work for the COSA model in different jurisdictions.
 - To develop strategies for quality assurance, accountability and sustainability
 - To develop strategies for model integrity

The outcome of the application is expected to be known by December 2020.

- h. Regular Newsletters were produced and provided to members to share information, good practice and communication on the work of CirclesEurope.

- i. The CirclesEurope website was maintained and transferred to another Provider to make it easier to keep it updated and develop further.
- j. Work was also done to simplify the Paypal system through which membership fees and donations are received.
- k. The Association Finances were managed well and regular reports were provided to the Board.
- l. Work started on planning the Association's General Meeting and Mini-conference for 2020, but both events had to be postponed as a result of the COVID-19 Corona virus which affected the global world. As a result it was decided to conduct the General Meeting via a zoom video conference in early July 2020 and to postpone the mini-conference to October 2020 in the hope that the virus will be sufficiently under control to allow a face to face event.

However, we should celebrate that we have the technology available today to enable us to meet and see each other virtually. This virus is out of our control and we are all doing the best we can. Let us all continue to work together over the next period and hope that the Corona virus will be overcome, so we can go back to doing our important work with those Core Members who so badly need their face to face Circles meetings and through which we continue to keep our communities safe and prevent further victims of sexual abuse.

There were no questions or comments on the Activity Report.

4. Policy Plan of the Association presented by the Board Chair

Riana Taylor presented the Policy Plan of the Association and asked for it to be formally approved which was agreed unanimously. The Policy Plan is attached to the minutes as Annex B.

There were no questions or comments on the Policy Plan.

5. Any Other Business

None. The meeting was closed at 13h00 pm.

Annex A



Financial Report January – December 2019

Income

Membership fees 2019	390	
Receivables 2019		
Contributions third parties	2460,24	
Received membership fees 2018	25	
Total income		2875,24

Expenses

Bank costs 2019	134,23	
Travel costs	418,45	
Website costs	211,75	
Payable costs 2019		
Total expenses		764,43

Result

Result Jan -dec 2019	2110,81
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Income:

Membership fees 2019:

We received payments from our full members, associate members and individual members.

We also received a subsidy from the Duth Probation/Department of Justice for travel costs and meetings.

Expenses:

In 2019 we managed to keep the travel costs to a minimum of 418 euros. These were mostly spent on speakers for the CirclesEurope conference in June 2019.

Update 2020

In the first period of 2020 we had no travel costs because we combined board meetings and sub-group meetings with attendance at a conference in Antwerp. Because of COVID 19 we weren't able to meet face to face and that made us work through video calls. It is now much easier to make donations because we installed a donate button on our website which came into effect in May 2020. Since then, people have donated 20 euros.

Signed by the Board of CirclesEurope

Date 2-07-2020

Riana Taylor

Kieran MC Cartan

Ann Castrel

Michelle Vreede

Annex B



Policy Plan 2020/2021
Version: Draft (22/06/2020)

Introduction

The CirclesEurope Association (abbreviated CirclesEurope) is a non-profit private association, registered in Utrecht, the Netherlands. CirclesEurope has the goal to support current Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA or Circles) Providers in Europe as well as further develop provision in jurisdictions where CoSA are not currently in operation.

Background and history of the development of CoSA

CoSA is a unique approach to rehabilitate medium to high risk people who have convictions for sexual offences or who cause sexual harm to others. The approach started in 1994 in Canada when the Reverend Harry Nigh and a small number of volunteers from his congregation in the town of Hamilton (Ontario, Canada), offered support and protection to a lifelong recidivist child sex offender, known as Charlie Taylor. The efforts by these volunteers who became known as 'Charlie's Angels', created a better way of ensuring the protection of children as they supported Charlie and assisted him to live an offence free life until his death. This approach became known as Circles of Support and Accountability. From Canada it was successfully adapted and introduced in England and Wales in the early 2000s and from there expanded its scope beyond the borders well into the rest of Europe.

A Circle consists of 4-6 carefully selected and fully trained volunteers from the community who meet with the individual who has caused sexual harm (the Core Member), in order to support them in their transition into mainstream society. People who commit sexual offences tend to experience a high level of social isolation due to the stigma attached to sexual abuse,

which research has indicated to be a strong factor in further sexual reoffending. A Circle helps to reduce this isolation and encourages the Core Member to address his or her sexually abusive behaviour. The aim is to help the core member to lead a life without reoffending and thereby minimise the number of victims. The volunteers provide both emotional support, practical guidance and support the core-member in his/her ongoing risk-management. They encourage him/her to take responsibility for his/her own actions.

This inner circle of volunteers works in partnership with an outer circle of professionals who are engaged in the core member's rehabilitation process. A circle coordinator (an experienced professional) mentors and supervises the volunteers and facilitates the information exchange between the inner and outer circles (Höing & Alards, 2012).

Background to the development of the CirclesEurope Association

The CoSA model, as developed in England and Wales, was implemented in the Netherlands in 2009. It involved the transfer of Circles knowledge from England and Wales to a different national context after the necessary adaptations were made. This collaboration led to the EU-funded '*Circles, Together for Safety*' project. Against this background, a European CoSA model and implementation guide were created and new CoSA projects were launched in the Netherlands and Belgium.

This experience made it possible to start a new EU-funded project called Circles4EU through which Bulgaria, Latvia, France, Catalonia, Hungary and Ireland joined the already existing network. This project ended in 2015 mainly due to lack of funding. The former Circles4EU members looked for a possibility to salvage the work previously done and further develop the method. During this period, a group of five former project partners analysed the needs and possibilities. This resulted in the initiative being resurrected which led to the registration of the CirclesEurope Association in Utrecht, the Netherlands on 15 June 2018.

Mission and strategy

The establishment of an association to oversee the quality, service development and research and evaluation of CoSA in Europe will strengthen the approach to rehabilitate people who engage in sexually harmful behaviour, prevent new victims, involve the community in keeping their communities safe and offer people with convictions for sexual offences and sexual harm causers a realistic and safe chance of reintegration into the community.

Our mission

The mission of the CirclesEurope Association entails the support, development and promotion of Circles of Support and Accountability Services across Europe according to the commonly agreed Circles model and with the intention of overseeing similar developments elsewhere.

The CirclesEurope Association wants to achieve its mission by means of the following objectives:

- A. To provide and share guidance and advice to members according to the agreed framework for the development and strengthening of the Circles model.
- B. To coordinate the provision of information, guidance and advice on the establishment of Circles in response to approaches from other countries outside Europe, applying the agreed framework.
- C. To protect the intellectual property rights of materials, developed by more than one member for use by other members.
- D. To assist and support evaluation and research for the enhancement of the Circles service, quality and reputation, at national, European and international levels.

- E. To secure funding through a variety of streams, for the promotion of national and international exchange of knowledge and expertise regarding the Circles method and to facilitate ever-wider provision of Circles.
- F. To engage and cooperate with other relevant professional associations and agencies to mutual benefit.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis

Strengths:

- CirclesEurope is based on an already existing network of CoSA projects and providers in the Netherlands, Belgium, England and Wales, Bulgaria, Latvia, France, Catalonia, Hungary and Ireland (www.circles4.eu). The network partners expressed the wish to meet through a collaborative platform to exchange knowledge and good practice in order to improve the quality of CoSA provision (Geerts, 2018).
- CoSA's objectives (preventing sexual offences by improving their reintegration through social inclusion and social control) serve a strong social purpose.
- The CoSA method has proved to be an extremely effective way of reducing recidivism and is widely acknowledged in academic circles and forensic care (Clarke et al 2015, Duwe, 2018).

Weaknesses:

- CirclesEurope is a young organisation, a start-up with limited financial means, resources and capacity.
- The number of CoSA projects and providers is limited. There are few members available for board or leadership positions.

Opportunities:

- There is significant dedication and willingness in the existing network to make an active effort to develop and progress the CirclesEurope Association (Geerts, 2018).
- There is also goodwill on the part of the silent majority among the community, who stands behind these goals and CoSA's approach to the issue (Höing et al. 2017).
- A large number of volunteers are active in CoSA provision, and can act as ambassadors.

Threats:

- The lack of a strong financial basis could jeopardise important goals such as quality control. Some of the network's objectives may hence not be implemented (such as creating a quality framework and developing the service model).
- CirclesEurope sets a high quality standard for CoSA provision as Core Members represent a medium or high risk of harm. CoSA projects or providers flouting the quality guidelines may entail reputational risks and may discredit the Association.

Current situation of the CirclesEurope Association

CirclesEurope was registered as an association on 15 June 2018 and the official launch took place at the CEP *Re-framing Sexual Abuse, Practical Directions Conference* in Riga, Latvia, on 22nd and 23rd November 2018. An interim Board led the process of establishing the Association and oversaw the election of the first permanent Board which was announced at the first General Meeting of the Association which took place on 14 June 2019 in Den Bosch, the Netherlands and was kindly hosted by Avans University (the Research group 'Balanceren tussen dwang en drang' of the Expert Safety Centre ('Expertisecentrum Veiligheid')). The members of the current Board can be seen on page 7.

The General Meeting was followed by a mini-conference where speakers from the Netherlands, Catalonia and England delivered a series of interesting presentations on a variety of approaches to the CoSA model.

Since then the Board has continued to develop the Association and communicate with members. A summary of the key activities and successes of the last year will be provided below. Funding for the Association has remained the most pressing challenge and the Board is grateful for the donations that have been received from supporters. The membership fees have been kept low but are essential to ensure the continuation of the Association.

Review of the last year (June 2019 to June 2020)

The following is a summary of the key activities and achievements of the Association of the last year:

1. Following the success of the first General Meeting and mini-conference, the newly elected Board held an Away Day in September 2019 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to plan its strategy and key priorities for the following year. The Board also held regular meetings throughout the year.
2. Three Board sub-groups were constituted (Quality Assurance, Governance and Membership; Service Development the Knowledge-sharing, Evaluation and Research sub-group). Members were contacted to ask for participants to join the sub-groups. Due to capacity issues, it was agreed to temporarily combine the work of the Quality, Assurance, Governance and Membership and the Service Development Sub-groups, but this will be reviewed once capacity improves.
3. The Quality Assurance, Governance and Membership sub-group completed key pieces of work, including:
 - A self-assessment checklist for member Circles Providers to enable them to complete an annual self-assessment to reflect the quality of their Circles provision. This checklist incorporated the principles of the Definitions and Standards document which was compiled in 2013 for Circles4EU and which contained the key principles of Circles provision for European Circles Providers. This self-assessment reflects those principles that encompass the minimum standards that Providers of Circles in Europe should adhere to. The checklist will be launched to members within the next period.
 - Considered the Intellectual Property Rights of the European Circles model and devised a membership agreement as well as an approach to the use of the European Circles Handbook.

- Created a Frequently Asked Questions document which will be placed on the CirclesEurope website. This will aid prospective Circles Providers and other key stakeholders to access core information on Circles provision.
 - Approached countries which has an interest in Circles provision or who has provided Circles in the past to become members of the Association.
4. The Knowledge-sharing, Evaluation and Research sub-group compiled a questionnaire for members to assess the impact that the COVID-19 Corona virus had on Circles provision in the various countries. It was agreed to share this questionnaire with non-European Circles Providers. Once the results become available, a report will be compiled which will be shared with all members.
 5. Members of the Board participated at the NL-Atsa conference in Antwerp, Belgium in February 2020 where the Association was promoted, including through a poster presentation.
 6. The Board developed an approach to dealing with organisations that enquire about Circles provision and who potentially may want to become Circles providers including the use of the European Circles Handbook, sharing of materials and receiving of payment for consultancy support, training and development.
 7. Members of the Board contributed to the preparation of a European Action Grant proposal for a European Circles project which was led by Avans University. The proposal was submitted in April 2020 and focused on the following objectives:
 - To develop a frame work for the COSA model in different jurisdictions.
 - To develop strategies for quality assurance, accountability and sustainability
 - To develop strategies for model integrity

The outcome of the application is expected to be known by December 2020.
 8. Regular Newsletters were produced and provided to members to share information, good practice and communication on the work of CirclesEurope.
 9. The CirclesEurope website was maintained and transferred to another Provider to make it easier to keep it updated and develop further.
 10. Work was also done to simplify the Paypal system through which membership fees and donations are received.
 11. The Association Finances were managed well and regular reports were provided to the Board.
 12. Work started on planning the Association's General Meeting and Mini-conference for 2020, but both events had to be postponed as a result of the COVID-19 Corona virus which affected the global world. As a result it was decided to conduct the General Meeting via a zoom video conference in early July 2020 and to postpone the mini-conference to October 2020 in the hope that the virus will be sufficiently under control to allow a face to face event.

Year Action Plan (2020/21)

This Policy Plan is valid for one year (1 June 2020 to 30 June 2021).

The key objective of this year is to further develop the CirclesEurope Association to enable an increase in membership and encourage more Circles Providers and Circles provision in Europe. The key activities for the next period can be set out as follows:

Activities

The following specific activities which underpins the objectives of the Association will be focused on in 2020/21:

<i>Key objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Time frame</i>
Grow Circles provision and enable more Circles Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the European Action Grant application is successful, communicate with current and prospective partners, support Avans University in project implementation and contribute to the project structures.	Application awarded: Dec 2020; project is progressed from December 2020 onwards
Maintain and develop the CirclesEurope Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the work of the Association• Encourage an increase in membership• Continue to maintain the members database and ensure that information processing and sharing meets all GDPR requirements• Explore areas of funding and sponsorship and create a budget plan for 2020/21• Support the implementation of the European project (if grant application is successful)	Continuous
Maintain and develop the CirclesEurope Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyse the findings of the COVID-19 Corona virus survey to determine the impact on CoSA provision, produce a report and disseminate the findings to members as well as those international Circles Providers that are not members of CirclesEurope.• Consider the implications of the findings for current CoSA provision.	August 2020 – October 2020

Board to meet its governance obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board to meet regularly; continue to access an affordable telephone conference facility to be used by the Board and sub-groups to enable regular meetings and work sessions • Continue to lead the sub-groups and ensure the sub-groups are sufficiently resourced to fulfil their terms of reference • Produce required finance reports • Produce annual accounts to be presented at the General Meeting • Arrange independent audit of accounts before the next General Meeting 	Continuous General Meeting June 2021
Communicate, promote and develop the Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to inform members of progress of the Association through quarterly Newsletters and other appropriate forms of communication. • Maintain and develop the CirclesEurope website • Continue to promote the Association and CoSA provision through social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook) 	Continuous Newsletters every 3 months
Communicate, promote and develop the Association	<p>Prepare and organise General meeting and mini-conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and arrange venue and catering, draft General Meeting agenda and send to members • Ensure Chair and Treasurers' report are prepared and delivered at General Meeting • Determine conference theme, speakers, consider funding available for travel and subsistence, invite speakers • Complete logistical arrangements for General Meeting and mini-conference 	January to June 2021 (Date of General Meeting and mini-conference: June 2021)
Develop the CirclesEurope network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with supporters of CoSA (inside and outside Europe) • Develop additional support and liaise with relevant organisations that link to CoSA or may complement CoSA provision 	Continuous

Running costs of the Association

The Board of the Association is extremely grateful to the Dutch Probation Service for an unrestricted grant of 2,000 euros which was received in 2020. Due to the COVID-19 Corona virus the expenditure of the Board from March to June 2020 was low as there were no face to face meetings and the mini-conference was deferred to October 2020. The Board is also very grateful for the donations which has been received in addition to the annual membership fees.

In the following year, the remaining Dutch Probation grant, donations and membership contributions will be used to:

- Hosting and maintenance of the website
- Payment of bank fees
- Organising the CirclesEurope General meeting and mini-conference, including providing travel costs for mini-conference speakers
- Providing travel support for Board members
- Cost of video and telephone conferencing and travel expenses of Board Chair sponsored by Circles UK

MINIMUM RUNNING COST: £2,000

Potential sponsors will be contacted through companies, professional organisations, philanthropic institutions, stakeholders already involved in COSA projects, core members and their families as well as public institutions such as churches and universities.

In the future, we hope to be awarded grants to foster the collaboration with our members and work towards our objectives by means of training sessions, peer audits, new research projects and by income generation through new CoSA initiatives.

Registration detail of the Association

CirclesEuropeAssociation

Vivaldiplantsoen 100,

3533 JE Utrecht, NL.

info@circleseurope.eu

www.circles4.eu

KvK-number:71898190.

RSIN or tax number: 858894592.

Bank account/IBAN: NL73 RABO 0332 4136 67

There is no CBF accreditation. The Association does not have any capital at the moment.

The Board

The Board of the Association is unremunerated. There is no other salaried staff working for the Association. The intention is to mainly work with volunteers and sub-committees in the future.

The current board members are:

1. Ms Riana **Taylor**, Chair
2. Mrs Ann **Castrel**, Secretary
3. Mrs Michelle **Vreede**, Treasurer
4. Mr Kieran **McCartan**, lead for Research and Evaluation
5. Audrey Andrea Johanna Antonia Fransisca **Alards**, voluntary member
6. Mrs Mechtild Alwine **Höing**, voluntary member
7. Ms Patricia **Bosch**, voluntary member