



First International COSA Conference

The European COSA Network

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Presentation - Overview

- Definition and intentions of the European COSA Network
- The Code of Governance of the European COSA Network
- Experience of the Network's operation and functioning in Circles4EU
- Next steps for the European COSA Network; challenges and opportunities



COSA in Europe



'Go' Criteria

- *The problem of sexual violence is acknowledged by the government.*
- *There is chance to find sustained financial support for Circle projects.*
- *There is basic professional expertise available in sex offender treatment.*
- *There is structured risk assessment available to future Circle Projects, and future circle staff members will be competent to apply structured risk assessment by themselves.*
- *There are legal possibilities for mandated supervision of sex offenders.*
- *There are professional institutions that are involved in sex offender rehabilitation.*
- *The future Circles Project organization will have a legal status and will be involved in the local network of sex offender aftercare.*
- *There is willingness to comply to the basic quality standards of Circles (the code of practice)*
- *There is willingness to cooperate with other Circle Projects in the Circles4EU Network.*
- *There is likely engagement of citizens in some form of non-paid activities for community development or community justice.*



DEFINITION AND INTENTIONS



European COSA Network Definition and intentions

(following the project "Circles Europe: Together for Safety" going forward to "Circles4EU")

- ❑ To make close cooperation between started and starting Circles countries
- ❑ To unify values, standards and processes, shared principles of competence, practice and quality assurance, for high model fidelity
- ❑ To extend the Circles concept to become a Euro-wide practice by sharing of quality standards, access to experience and expertise
- ❑ To act as a force to attract and support new Circles initiatives for further spread of Circles following Circles4EU
- ❑ To keep track of different national COSA initiatives and ensure success of the method is maintained. A centre for certification and quality control



CODE OF GOVERNANCE



The European COSA Network Code of Governance

A Code of Governance was created early in the life of the Circles4EU Project to:

*“ensure a proper and robust accountability for a pan-Europe programme of the European Circles Network **and** to be able to reassure as many Circle members, and potential funders, throughout Europe, that proper safeguards, through a balanced 'constitution' are in place”*



A step on the way...The Governance Code of the Circles4EU Network included the following :

- ❑ Aims and Objectives
- ❑ Organisational Structure
- ❑ Membership
- ❑ Activities of the Network
- ❑ Testing of the Network Structure

See Circles4EU Website for full information!



The Aims and Objectives

- ❑ To agree on COSA values, standards and principles
- ❑ To support ongoing development of the Circles model
- ❑ To disseminate best practice, research, other information
- ❑ To monitor compliance with COSA standards
- ❑ To protect the name of COSA (by ensuring model fidelity)
- ❑ To support national organisations in the setting up of Circles
- ❑ To provide training for new-starter countries
- ❑ To engage in European awareness-raising and advocacy



The Organisational Structure

- ❑ A governing board with an elected Board (Chair/President (rotating), Secretary, Treasurer)
- ❑ An annual general meeting (AGM)
- ❑ Network meetings held every 6 months (Skype, video/teleconference)
- ❑ Committees for specific key areas (research, model/training developments , compliance, European awareness raising and political support)
- ❑ Service User representation (Professionals, Volunteers, Victims, previous Core Members)



Membership

- ❑ National organisations (e.g. Circles UK & Circles NL)
Universities / Academic organisations
Professional (i.e. criminal justice) organisations
- ❑ Individual Circles projects allowed, if there is no national organisation in a country
- ❑ More than one member organisation per country is allowed. Consultation with existing members of the same country to take place in this case
- ❑ Membership fees charged to help run the network after funding from Daphne finished. Fees to be tiered, proportional.



Activities

Additional activities of the Circles4EU network include the following:

- ❑ Management of Circles4EU website
- ❑ Conferences
- ❑ Management of the research database



Testing of the network structure

- ❑ The structure of the Circles4EU Network was to be piloted during the two-year programme period
- ❑ Amendments to be made to the structure, at the end of the two-year period, based upon learning and experience,



OPERATING EXPERIENCE



Network Mechanisms (1)

- ✓ **Study and Accountability Seminars x3**
Development of Best Practices (Implementation issues and solutions). Development of Quality assurance and control (Audits - planning, execution learning from experience)
- ✓ **Liaison Officer visits to Orienting Countries**
Desktop reviews & national stakeholder events; mentoring, advocacy for Circles adoption planning
- ✓ **1st and 2nd Conferences.** Principles and processes for European Circles delivery defined, research developments made/shared, to support effective delivery
- ✓ **Establishment of a research team** to coordinate research and establish a common knowledge database



Network Mechanisms 2

- ✓ **Practical support** and ad hoc advice, Cross fertilisation (Liaison Officer, Project Partners)
- ✓ **Circles4EU Website** built. European Network section
- ✓ **Best Practices Blog** European network members input and access information on best COSA practices
- ✓ **European Handbook** key guidance for network members towards adoption, implementation, maintenance of Circles.
- ✓ **Dissemination** sharing presentations, forums for promoting and engaging significant others
- ✓ **European Register of Accredited COSA Advisors** access to policy/practice/research expertise for those wishing to implement COSA



Next steps for the European COSA Network



Next Steps (1)

- **Review learning and experience** from 2 years of the Network running
 - decide and action any immediate improvements
- **Sustainability and Exit Strategy** a Circles4EU deliverable
 - determine how will the Network contribute to this (NB end of Conference partner meeting on planning for Circles sustainability in Europe)
- Meeting the challenges of operating the Network outside the framework of Circles4EU:
 - **Structures** fit for purpose and deliverable: Governing Board, Elections, Committee structure, network Meetings, User representation?



Next Steps (2)

- Meeting the challenges of operating the Network outside the framework of Circles4EU:
 - **Approach** to balance fluidity/responsivity and control. What level of control over the development and delivery of COSA is required to secure the model but not restrict expansion/fossilise development
 - **Staffing** hereon volunteer versus employed positions. Critical roles & advances via the Network so far by project funded personnel
 - **Securing funding** sufficient to meet the Network running costs
 - **Making connections/Outreach.** European Network to 'partner' with CEP SOSIG. C4EU Partners to reach out to neighbouring countries



Thank you for your attention!

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