

european geography association for students and young geographers



set up your own entity

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INTRODUCTION

This “manual” is designed as a source of inspiration for those who wish to organise an **egea** entity themselves. If you have heard of or participated in **egea** activities, and would like to participate in **egea** more, but there is no **egea** entity at your own university, you can set up your own easily. There are numerous ways in which entities are organised, all adapted to local circumstances. If you wish to set up own **egea** (european geography association for students and young geographers) entity, there are several examples you could model your entity upon. One thing is for sure, you need three to five geography students or young geographers to get started.

The goals of **egea** are to bring geography students and young geographers together to exchange geographical knowledge and to learn about each others culture. This gives you the opportunity to get to know geographers all over Europe, to make friends, and to create a network which may benefit you in your career. Being involved in **egea** is a lot of fun and gives you the opportunity to travel over Europe, and get the opportunity to really get to know the country you are in, through local **egea** contacts. Geography is as broadly interpreted by **egea** as it is taught throughout Europe. There are students involved of both human and physical geography, marine science, geology, city planning, tourism, landscape architecture, environmental studies, spatial economics, and many other geography related areas.

It is possible for established geography societies and clubs to become a member of **egea** and to organise **egea** activities alongside of their local activities. But it is not a requirement; any group of people can become an entity of **egea**, with the limit of one EGEA entity per university. There is no set structure for an **egea** entity, you have total freedom in how you arrange things. There are however several examples from which you can draw inspiration.

STRUCTURES

- The first possible form is the easiest, organise yourselves in a group with no fixed positions or tasks, this works well with a group of 5 to 10 people. This is how, for instance, **egea** Wageningen is organised.
- Closely related to this is the way EGEA Amsterdam is organised. **egea** Amsterdam is a big 17 member committee including a 3 person board, consisting of a president, vice president and a treasurer. This allows for great flexibility and there are no set tasks, except for those of the board. Everyone on the committee is free to initiate the organisation of an exchange, congress or any other activity.
- An organisational type that ensures greater continuity is the way **egea** Groningen is organised, namely as a committee of a university geography society. Ibn Battuta, the geography society for all geography students at the University of Groningen, has many committees who organise all kinds of activities, and one of these committees is the **egea** committee.
- A fourth type of organisation is the way **egea** Utrecht is organised. **egea** Utrecht consists of a board with three subcommittees. The board consists of a president, a vice-president, treasurer, commissioner for exchanges, commissioner for introductions and commissioner for promotion. The exchanges committee organises exchanges with other **egea** entities and has its own vice-commissioner and treasurer. The other nine committee members are organised in subcommittees, one for each exchange. The introductions committee introduces foreign geography students to Utrecht and the student life in Utrecht if they come to study there for several months or a full year. This committee also has its own vice-commissioner and treasurer. The promotions committee has a vice-commissioner and treasurer as well, and a subcommittee for the website. The tasks of this committee are to promote participation in **egea** activities (through the website, a magazine, monthly drinks and posters) and to find sponsors. This structure allows for a division of tasks which makes it possible to organise a lot of activities, but lessens its flexibility overall.

Of course these are only a few examples, there are many other options possible, just choose what suits you best!

SCHEDULE

Step one would be to get together and think about how active as an entity you can and want to be. This depends on the number of people in your organisation and their enthusiasm ofcourse. Easiest is to participate in activities organised by other entities. This is a good way of getting more people involved at your university. You can participate in congresses, excursions, seminars, exchanges, and ofcourse, the **egea** new years party! If you have more people involved you might want to think about organising an exchange yourself, or organise an introduction for the foreign students at your university that study geography. Then last but not least you might be interested in organising a congress, for 50 to 150 geographers from all over Europe. More about these activities below.

Step two would be to affiliate yourself with the **egea** organisation. Firstly you could email the European board about your plans, they will help you with any questions you may have (egea@geog.uu.nl - www.egea.tk). You can get your entity officially affiliated by sending one or more delegates to attend regional and most importantly, annual congresses. After your entity has attended two consecutive annual congresses, you become a full member of **egea**.

Step three would be to get started and organise activities and explore the organisation for yourself! The easiest activities to participate in are the regional and European congresses held once a year. The yearly congress is organised in September and the regional congresses in March and April. The regions of **egea** are North, East, South and West, countries can decide themselves in what region they belong. Regional congresses usually cost somewhere in the region of 30 to 50 Euro, the yearly congress is about 130, 90 or 50 €, depending on your countries human development index of the UNDP. Another activity which doesn't take a lot of organising (for the visiting entity) is the New Years party, which is a gathering of 80 geographers from all over Europe. The New Years party lasts a few days and also costs about 50 €. Other options are participating in geographical excursions organised by other entities, like climbing mountains in Slovenia, or a snow and ice seminar in Finland! An excursion could be based upon a national festivity or just for fun. Examples are Queensday in the Netherlands or Burns night in Scotland. The main goal behind this is to create an easy way for EGEA members to profit from the **egea** network without having to organise a full scale exchange. These excursions do in no way oblige participants to a return visit, and all costs are paid for by themselves. The idea is to combine the visit with an attraction, an event that is being organised already, such as a party or an excursion.

More work, but also more intense is an exchange. One group of students, preferably no more then 15, visits another group, and spends a week with them, staying in their houses, enjoying their cooking, talking about geography and culture, and making friends. Each group visits the other to complete the exchange. The hosting party pays all the food, transportation and other expenses except for drinks. The visiting party pays for their travel to the other entity.

If Erasmus / Socrates students study at your university, you can organise introductions for them. In Utrecht it involves a long weekend in which the students get to know one another, the country, the city, the university, and the Dutch geography students. Apart from that the introduction committee aims to organise activities for the foreign students all year round, like parties and excursions.

More work, but also more satisfaction if you get it all organised, is organising a congress. Regional congresses usually have about 50 people visiting from all over Europe, and the yearly congress has about a 120 people participating. These geography students expect workshops during the day concerning variable geographical subjects and an excursion day, all this combined with a lot of socialising and a party in the evening!