



IAC-Europe

European branch of International Association for Counselling



IAC-Europe: Summary and Participation Framework

IAC-Europe is the European branch of the International Association for Counselling (IAC), one of seven IAC world regions.

Its mission is to strengthen cooperation, standards, recognition, and professional identity for counsellors and counselling associations across Europe.

With active participation from Spain, Ireland, Malta, the United Kingdom, Russia, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, and Ukraine—and with Belgium and Germany endorsing and supporting the initiative—combined with €60,000 in new EU Erasmus+ funding for counselling standards work, IAC-Europe is moving into a vibrant new stage of growth since its first meetings in 2022 and official establishment in July 2025.

PARTICIPATION & ELIGIBILITY

Participation is open to all national counselling associations, and organizations that are working toward the establishment of a counselling association in their country.

Participation in IAC-Europe requires association/organizational membership of IAC at Level 2 (Consulting Status). Associations not yet members are warmly encouraged to apply. Affordability will not be a barrier to participation. There are no additional regional fees for participation in IAC-Europe. Participation is included within IAC organizational membership.

IAC-Europe is a regional branch of IAC and operates under IAC's global governance framework. It has delegated autonomy and responsibility for regional activities, coordination, and initiatives, while remaining aligned with IAC's global mission and policies.

Committee meetings take place approximately every two months.

REGIONAL PRINCIPLES

- Collective action to strengthen the profession for the benefit of clients.
- Full respect for national association autonomy.
- Promotion of regional autonomy.
- Equality: Every association may appoint representatives to IAC-Europe.
- Inclusivity and accommodation of diversity.
- Affordability will not be a barrier to participation.
- Strong inter-association cooperation and problem-solving.

REGIONAL AIMS

- Achieving legal recognition for counselling across Europe.
- Agreeing Europe-wide counselling standards.
- Supporting national association goals.
- Advocacy with European, regional, and United Nations bodies.
- Supporting the development of counselling in countries where it is emerging.

ENVIRONMENTAL & TECHNICAL FACTORS

- Unified representation is essential—EU bodies, funders, governments, and UN agencies prefer working with a single coordinated profession.
- Inclusion of both EU and non-EU European countries.
- Strategic use of IAC’s formal relationships with United Nations agencies (WHO, UNESCO, ILO).
- Engagement with the European Union, Commission and Parliament.
- Sharing information on national counselling regulatory approaches.
- Leveraging IAC’s global infrastructure, governance, and communications systems.
- Teamwork on standards and competency frameworks.
- Advocacy for increased national mental-health budgets.

STRUCTURE AND WORKING GROUPS

IAC-Europe has an Executive Committee and working groups of its choosing.

Common regional working groups include Standards, Education, Advocacy, Outreach, and Research.

The Executive Committee is made up of those nominated from country associations to serve on it.

Most meetings occur online, with at least one annual in-person meeting.

PARTICIPATION OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS / ORGANIZATIONS

Most major European counselling associations are already involved. All other associations are warmly invited to participate.

Representation: Each association may nominate an official representative to participate in IAC-Europe meetings and communications.

Languages: IAC-Europe meetings are conducted in English, with written materials available in English and, where possible, translated summaries.

VOTING AND DECISION-MAKING MODEL

In countries with one IAC member association:

- That association becomes the voting association.

In countries with multiple IAC member associations:

- Associations are asked to coordinate among themselves and select the voting association. This may be done by rotation, consensus, or any mutually acceptable method.

Voting occurs on regional governance matters (e.g., election of officers, adoption of standards, major policy positions). Most decisions are reached by consensus whenever possible.

Non-voting associations remain full participants:

- They may attend as observers.
- They may have speaking rights (to be finalized).
- They may join working groups and influence direction.

Regional decisions are advisory and do not supersede national regulatory frameworks or the autonomy of national associations. No association is excluded, ensuring fairness, inclusivity, and equal access to IAC-Europe's work.

WHY SHOULD ASSOCIATIONS TAKE PART?

Participation in IAC-Europe offers substantial benefits:

- Influence the development of European-wide counselling standards.
- Strengthen your association's advocacy capacity at EU and UN levels.
- Associations will be invited to participate in EU-funded collaborative projects

coordinated through IAC-Europe.

- Support national legal recognition efforts through collective action.
 - Build partnerships and networks with leading counselling bodies.
 - Shape the future of counselling in Europe during a time of major growth and investment.
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- Ensure your association's voice is represented in regional and global dialogues.

IAC-Europe is a collaborative, supportive, and future-focused professional community. Every association has something to contribute—and something to gain.

ABOUT IAC

Founded in 1966, the International Association for Counselling (IAC) is the world body for the counselling profession. Its vision: "A world where counselling is available to all." IAC advances humanitarian goals, human rights, professional standards, and international cooperation. More information: www.iac-irtac.org

CONTACT

For IAC-Europe participation enquiries: iaceuropecommittee@gmail.com

For IAC membership enquiries: ceo@iac-irtac.org
