

ERYICA GREEN POLICY

Approved at 78th Governing Board Meeting on 15 September 2020

The European Youth Information and Counselling Agency a.s.b.l. (hereinafter abbreviated as ERYICA) is committed to promoting sustainable development in the youth information sector across Europe and applying it to the work that we do as a network. ERYICA wishes to become a sustainable organisation and reduce the environmental impact of our operations.

The purpose of this document is to set out concrete areas and targets that we will commit to over the coming years, as well as measures that we will keep on taking to reduce our negative impact on the environment. This is a dynamic document and will change as new technologies and climate science evolve and influence the way our organisation functions.

The policy is divided into different areas where the ERYICA Secretariat and Governing Board will work to reduce our carbon footprint as far as possible. Each area is followed by concrete targets and milestones, which will be reassessed on a yearly basis and monitored by designated members of staff and the Governing Board throughout the year.

Awareness on the Climate Emergency

ERYICA commits to raising awareness on the climate emergency in a positive and inspiring way, and contributing to the spread of reliable information on this topic in cooperation with our members, partners and stakeholders. We aim to counter the 'disinfodemic' (pollution of the information ecosystem) that is rampant relating to this subject by enhancing the **Green Media and Information Literacy** skills of youth information workers and young people and by encouraging young people to reflect critically about any information on the climate emergency that reaches them through different sources. We also commit to monitoring the situation and staying up-to-date with different climate movements, initiatives and advances in policy developments and scientific knowledge. ERYICA will also promote greener youth programmes and policies at different levels.

Targets 2020/2021:

- European Youth Information Day Campaign 2020: **Climate Changes, Truth Does Not | Stay Informed, Check for Yourself**;
- Launching the **Greening Youth Information Services Guide** in cooperation with Eurodesk, 5 June 2020;
- Promoting the **Golden Principles of Youth Information Services** and good practices from the ERYICA network on 'Green Youth Information and Counselling';
- Launching the ERYICA Green Policy;
- Encouraging our members to include the development of this policy in the review of our Strategy and in future strategies;
- Ensuring that environmental sustainability and green practices are part of our core documents and policies (e.g. Statutes, Standing Orders, Staff rules, Director's handbook, Rules for event organisation, Travel policy, Charter, etc.) ;
- Exploring further cooperation for projects and initiatives on this topic, listening to young people's concerns and engaging them;
- Continuing to lobby to ensure that European programmes become greener through inserting green incentives, supporting green choices, favouring quality over quantity, raising awareness of and acting for environmental sustainability (see further examples on page 56 of the Greening Youth Information Services Guide);
- Supporting online meetings and events;
- Acknowledging the efforts of green organisations in the network by providing for example a Green YI information award;
- Greening the European Youth Information Charter including sustainability aspects;
- Ensuring that the Youth Ambassadors framework includes sustainability aspects in their future mandate;
- Sharing information about how young people and youth professionals can get involved in advocacy, and offering space for discussion, debate and co-creation; and
- Introducing a 'green' module to the ERYICA training curricula.

Planning/ attending activities, meetings, trainings and events

ERYICA plans many events throughout the year in various locations across Europe, such as our General Assembly, Governing Board Meetings, training events, conferences, Working Group Meetings, project meetings, etc. We are also invited to numerous external events. These meetings are really important, as they are often the most time-efficient and effective ways of exchanging ideas, networking and making progress with various projects and initiatives. Nonetheless, they can leave a significant environmental footprint by consuming energy, water and other natural resources, generating waste, causing air pollution, indirectly contributing to soil and water pollution, and to climate change through greenhouse gas emissions. It is important to have digital alternatives in place, as the COVID-19 pandemic showed us. However, we acknowledge that face-to-face meetings cannot always be replaced with digital alternatives (which can also leave a carbon footprint). We will therefore try to ensure that we combine both face-to-face and digital events. Some steps that ERYICA has already taken include transferring some of our face-to-face trainings and meetings to an online environment through our eLearning courses.

We commit to following the tips provided in the Greening Youth Information Services Guide:

1. *Meeting and event location* - Cutting down on unnecessary travel, combining meetings and events and organising them online when possible, selecting a location with care, choosing a venue that is easily accessible.
2. *Transportation* - Encouraging the use of transport that uses low emission technologies, such as trains and buses. When travelling by plane, compensating by using a carbon offset programme.
3. *Paper* - Printing documents only when necessary. Using projectors to display information, exploring apps to share the agenda and other event documentation, deleting data stored in the cloud once they are no longer needed.
4. *Green meals* - Using caterers and venues that source local, organic, and fair trade products, making vegetarian the default offer or lower the number of meat dishes, being mindful of food waste, providing jugs of water rather than bottles.
5. *Waste* - avoiding plastic. Selecting materials that are easily reusable.
6. *Communication and promotional materials* - opting for eco-friendly, durable, recycled, reusable and recyclable promotional items that participants will have a use for and enjoy, recycling badges and lanyards, signages and promotional material.

We will always bear in mind that we often have to adapt to the reality of the country where the event is hosted, knowing that our members and stakeholders may not have access, or limited access, to eco-friendly affordable options when hosting or attending our events.

Targets 2020/2021:

- June 2020 - Buying a Zoom account to ensure high quality online meetings to replace some physical meetings when possible;
- Paper and plastic-free events;
- Meat-free meals, where possible;
- Green catering companies, if they fit the budget;
- Organising online events and meetings when possible;
- Choosing cities that are available to the majority of participants by train, and if participants are coming from too far away, direct flights when possible;
- Organising at least 2 Governing Board Meetings per year in Brussels, which has more direct flight options and allows more participants to travel by train;
- Where flying is unavoidable, offsetting the carbon footprint;
- Staff members and ERYICA members will be encouraged to calculate their carbon footprint using one of the following apps: [Eco Footprint](#), [Carbon Footprint](#) and [Water Footprint](#);
- Representation of the network - where the ERYICA network should be represented, involve Governing Board members and member organisations who are located closer to the event (i.e. if an event is happening in Croatia, a member can attend who is close enough to go by train or car; if an event is happening in Madrid, a member living in Spain can attend) where possible. This would reduce the carbon footprint of the Secretariat and the Governing Board, and ensure the involvement of the members at different events throughout the year;
- Developing the eLearning course on service design in youth information;
- Continuing the Training of Trainers programme through eLearning and face-to-face;
- Developing a blended learning YIntro course; and
- Promoting eLearning courses and the use of the DOYIT platform by our members.

Greening the ERYICA office

It's really important to integrate green policies in our everyday lives at the office. We will be following the [Greening Youth Information Services Guide](#) in the office as far as we can, which advises that:

1. *Kitchen/shared areas* - Filling the office with plants to recycle the air, committing to eliminate bottled water and unnecessary packaging.
2. *Waste and recycling* - Sorting waste, recycling and encouraging colleagues to use real mugs, glasses, cutlery and dishes instead of disposables.
3. *Energy* - Using natural light as much as possible. Switching off the lights and turning off electronic equipment when they are not in use. Turning down the heating and air conditioning and closing the windows when they are on.
4. *Transportation* - Encouraging travel with environmentally friendly alternatives.
5. *Paper/printing* - Printing only when necessary, double-sided and in black and white. Using recycled paper and reusing single-sided print paper.
6. *Digital use and IT equipment* - Reducing digital pollution by being conscious of the number of emails sent and received. Unsubscribing to unwanted newsletters and emails, and cleaning inbox on a regular basis.
7. *Procurement policy* - Favouring companies who use green products, hold eco-labels or offer green services for e.g. cleaning, gadgets, printing or office material.
8. *Human resources and training* - Communicating the results of our collective work and encouraging colleagues to continue their engagement.

Targets 2020/2021:

- March 2020 - Purchasing a new coffee machine that uses grounded coffee and no capsules;
- March 2020 - The staff uses the online platform Slack to reduce the number of emails sent and thus the carbon footprint of our internal communication;
- Amending the ERYICA Staff Rules and Instructions in order to ensure that environmental sustainability issues and green practices are encouraged;
- All staff members will be informed about reducing their digital footprint in the working environment (unsubscribing to emails, sending unnecessary emails etc.);
- Reducing printing and photocopying;
- Adding a message to the office emails under the signature to remind users and receivers to print only when necessary;
- Switching off electronic equipment (e.g. printer, wifi router, fridge) when not in use;
- 100% purchase of sustainable promotional items; and
- Green publications.