



SIETAREUROPA

# FEEDBACK

## on the Vision 2025

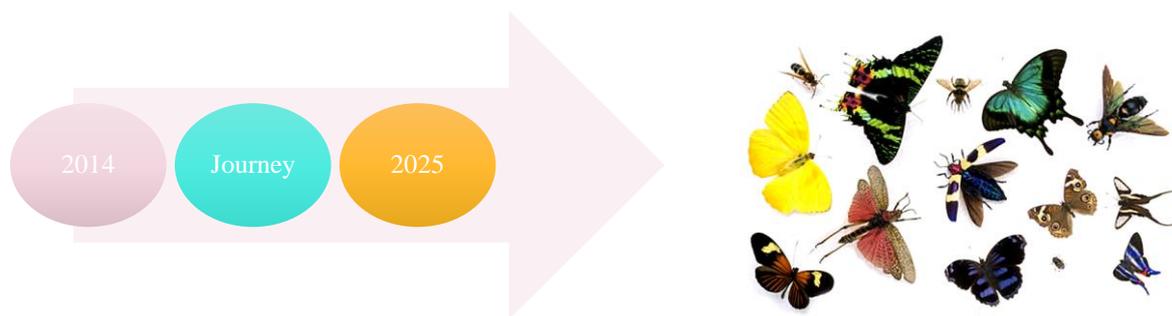
DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Strategy Report to Support the  
Creation of a Strategic Vision for SIETAR Europa

By

The SIETAR Europa Steering Committee

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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*“It is said that the present is pregnant with the future.” Voltaire (1694 - 1778)*

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In October 2013, a working committee on the Finance and Development Committee was set up to assess, review and prepare a report and recommendations to the SE Board for a viable strategy for SIETAR, working towards a vision for 2025. To this end, the SIETAR Europa Steering Group was established and sought to solicit views from its stakeholders by preparing a consultative document that was sent out in November 2014 and asking for feedback on six key questions. This report sets out to summarise that feedback.

The SIETAR EUROPA VISION 2025 Discussion Document elicited 14 responses from SIETAR branches and individual members across Western and Central Europe plus US. Responses were both general and specific in answer to the six key questions set out in the DISCUSSION DOCUMENT.

Comments varied from extremely concise to broad statements of intent, but answered the questions. Several submissions raised issues that did not necessarily address the specific questions asked, but were important in understanding how some members might feel. Others mentioned that this was not the first time of addressing the issue of a strategy, which highlighted the fact that this consultation is not only needed BUT A LASTING RESOLUTION NEEDS TO BE DETERMINED.

This report gives a brief summary for all statements within the six question format. Some remarks have been incorporated into a GENERAL COMMENTS section as they were broader expressions of opinion. However, the full feedback is contained in the Appendix to this document.

This report concludes that several emerging themes are surfacing and recommends that two of these, namely the pursuit of certification and the summer school, be progressed/investigated further whilst the others should be considered as future actions of the Board – see the section on Conclusions and Recommendations on page eight. It is also recommended that the original Vision Document 2025 should be rewritten in the light of this feedback.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT AND THE SIX KEY QUESTIONS

The SIETAR community was asked to consider whether the way SIETAR Europa is structured in terms of its organisation, governance and finance should be revisited because its current business model is experienced as being neither viable nor sustainable. Also, SIETAR membership across the whole initiative is dwindling. Readers of the report were reminded to remember that SIETAR Europa is ‘owned’ by the National SIETARS so any view of the SEU future should be tailored to strengthening members and the SIETAR national organisations. Feedback was asked on the following specific questions:

1. What does SIETAR Europa need to be and to do to be relevant in 2025?
2. How should the relationship between SIETAR Europa and its constituent organizations be structured?
3. How can SIETAR Europa create a credible and recognizable brand?
4. How will SIETAR Europe help to up-skill its members?
5. How should SIETAR Europa make money and secure a stable income stream?
6. Is there any idea or section of the foregoing document with which you disagree

## THE SUMMARISED FEEDBACK

The following sections give a summary of the points made by the fourteen submissions. A full rendition of the statements in the six question format has been compiled in the appendix. Remarks that did not pertain to the specific questions have been incorporated into Q6 and General Comments.

### 1. WHAT DOES SIETAR EUROPA NEED TO BE AND DO TO BE RELEVANT IN 2025?

The organisation would have paid full-time staff, engage with cultural competence, set standards and offer ‘training certification’. It will embrace diversity and must be much more open and appealing to the younger generations, especially in terms of its leadership. The use of technology: good website, e-learning, resource and service offerings, membership services and other innovations are all called for...even a ‘one-stop shop’ for those looking for intercultural services and information.

There were many aspirational comments about the development and evolution of a pluralistic organisation, built on improved theory and professional practice. However, highlighted was the need to ‘clarify our identity’ and define our purpose. Quoting SNL: these are questions that require deep-thinking on our part before throwing ourselves into a race for the future.

Recognised was the issue that members opinions about SEU tend to fall into two camps. The older generation of SIETAR members prefer to stick to an ‘umbrella’ concept of the organisation – a gathering of interculturalists. The new, younger generation are more in favour of a new professional-style organisation.

### 2. HOW SHOULD THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SIETAR EUROPA AND ITS CONSTITUENT ORGANISITIONS BE CONSTRUCTED?

Comments were made about the structure of SEU to be consolidated to make a more stable managerial composition as a new wheel is invented every one or two years. A

suggestion was made that the mandate of the President and Board be extended in order for projects to be completed.

Two distinct frameworks were envisaged as the working model:

1. Independent national SIETARS that adhere to SEU standard operational guidelines where SEU is financially independent – not depending solely on contributions from national SIETARS and congresses.
2. A centralised SIETAR with national SIETARS becoming Chapters rather than autonomous national identities. This could lead to greater consolidation that may eventually lead to a SIETAR Global that would have more clout in international affairs, etc. and with such consolidation, the organisation could afford to have full-time paid executive and staff that would obviate the need for volunteer boards to reinvent the wheel. Also, creating Chapters would allow for specialist Chapters and special interest groups to open – e.g. SIETAR medical, corporate training, women’s studies, etc. This could make the organisation more appealing to a wider audience.

There were many ‘service-related’ comments concerning what SEU should provide: creating space for exchange and cooperation; Erasmus plus; City Breaks; initiate international contracts; infographics; give assistance, advice and support to nationals; offer support and guidance on best practices to nationals in a more formalised way than at present; rules; good MMS.

Aspirational comments around sharing were also made.

### 3. HOW CAN SIETAR EUROPA CREATE A CREDIBLE AND RECOGNIZABLE BRAND?

Comments around identity suggested that the first step is to focus on who we are and what we do. Many comments were made concerning the use of technology to promote ourselves. We are recommended to develop a clear brand management strategy along with a communications strategy.

We should focus on becoming a communications hub for things intercultural and create visibility. We need to improve and transform existing professional theoretical and practical foundations. SEU ‘should make a name for itself’ and create a brand for its superior intercultural standards, benchmarks and pool of experts.

We should partner with higher education establishments, creating accreditation programmes and partnering with corporate institutions become an international NGO promoting interculturalism. Get grants to pursue our work.

#### 4. HOW WILL SIETAR EUROPA HELP TO UP-SKILL ITS MEMBERS?

SEU has to be credible to its members, yet comments suggest that ‘we have no satisfactory answers for why someone should belong to SIETAR’.

Cultural competence certification was proposed in answers to various questions up till now. For this question the idea of a SIETAR summer school giving accreditation was introduced. The whole concept of CPD (continuing professional development) was flagged as essential – concrete initiatives for CPD along with establishing accurate standards and goals for professional cultural competence. More learning events and more frequent ones were suggested; substance; resources; dare to share concept. More use of technology to enable this.

SEU should learn lessons from and could follow the model of The International Coaching Federation. SEU is encouraged to set up a paid-for mentoring scheme for its members. Encourage and support multi-dimensional and inter/intra-disciplinary research and approaches to our field; qualitative research; new concepts and foundations.

In order to strengthen the brand, and people’s awareness of interculturalism, the view was held that members should be allowed to use the SIETAR logo on all their marketing material: giving them and SEU more credibility.

Again, the ‘plea for stronger branding of the profession, for lobbying and participating in public debate’.

Dissenters to the idea of certification and a summer school felt that SEU would position itself as direct competitors to the SEU stakeholders/membership and would open a ‘Pandora’s Box’.

#### 5. HOW SHOULD SIETAR EUROPA MAKE MONEY AND SECURE A STABLE INCOME STREAM?

It was suggested that most of the time the SEU Board is ‘dominated by fears of spending what it has rather than motivated by the challenge of acquiring what it needs to do what it wants to do’. And, this discussion is the beginning of a long journey towards a mission and strategy that suits the majority of members of SEU.

The overwhelming view was that we need to chase for more members! However, many comments highlighted that the getting of new members would only happen with an improved offering of services from SIETAR. Generally, it was thought we should raise fees and offer more. Along with this train of thought was that SEU should command a better contribution from its nationals by providing an enhanced service.

Further thoughts on income streams included: professional fund-raiser; global sponsor...tap into CSR efforts; corporate and institutional memberships; applying for public funds and grants; aligning with UN and other international goals/agendas so we can be seen to be credible and to apply for funds. Our congresses should be more ambitious and more frequent so to proactively seek external funding from international bodies.

Many saw that we have a missed opportunity: we are encouraged to work in partnership with our pool of experts to create publications, reports, and services that can be sold through the SEU website, along with other partner projects.

There was a strong feeling that SEU should not become an 'enterprise'. This message was sent based upon the language used within the document that assumed that was an intention. There was, also, some thought that SEU should not apply for funds and grants but only support members' efforts to do so.

## 6. IS THERE ANY IDEA OR SECTION OF THE FOREGOING (DISCUSSION) DOCUMENT WITH WHICH YOU DISAGREE?

This section provides many varied comments and draws opinions that can be better-placed here from submissions that did not specifically engage with the theme of ideas for the future but voiced opinions about what was not wanted. Indeed, there was a fair amount of misunderstanding and misinterpretation surrounding the vision document thinking that it was about transforming the SEU 'society' into a commercial entity...with much resistance. This seems to have stemmed from a misdirection caused by the language used therein. Although the report was commended for its research and background, the density and length made it rather inaccessible to non-native English speakers.

Readers of this report are recommended to view the original statements in the appendix to appreciate the range of views and depth of feelings. This includes more views expressed about SEU not being in competition with its members.

Apart from the above, SEU was asked to appeal better to Gen Y and Gen Z. Change is wanted at all levels. Accreditation was viewed as impossible by one person, difficult by another. Greater representation of Research and Education was called for. Again a view was expressed that SIETAR should reach out to more public bodies to make ourselves more visible by engaging with civil societies, UNESCO, etc.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

We need a better identity model for us to proceed with any real strategy or commitment on the part of the wider membership. The sense of membership or belonging to SIETAR Europa in an active and ‘feelingful’ way seems to be missing.

Recent work by SEU – appointing an executive officer, a good looking website, Linked in, webinars, etc. – are all seen in a positive light.

## CONCLUSIONS

Recalling the issue that members opinions about SEU tend to fall into two camps (the older generation of SIETAR members preferring to stick to an ‘umbrella’ concept of the organisation – a gathering of interculturalists while the new, younger generation are more in favour of a new professional-style organisation) it could be concluded that, as we are looking ten years into the future of this organisation, we should start to build the organisation that the younger generations wish to see.

In this respect, this report concludes that several themes and ideas for projects have arisen. Although thought of as being difficult, there was an overwhelming expression that the idea of creating a framework of standards for an intercultural competence certification should be pursued. We were advised to look at The International Coaching Federation as a possible model for both a certification and an organisational model. The NSA & PSA (the National Speakers Association and Professional Speaking Association) were also recommended as possible models.

The idea of a regular summer school in Europe was also a popular theme. Many comments alluded to wanting more regular substantive learning opportunities to increase cultural competence. Some wanted the summer school to award a form of accreditation. A call was made for a mentorship programme, quite probably paid-for. Also, encouragement of more research into theoretical perspectives, practitioner best practice and more ambitious/high-level congresses were suggested.

The use of technology to drive membership, to increase brand awareness, to add value through member services, as an online learning resource and also as an income stream for SEU was raised often. Comments also mentioned that SEU should work in partnership with its members to create services/products to make this happen. Allowing members to use the SIETAR logo as a means of adding credibility to them (and create greater awareness of SIETAR leading to a stronger branding of the profession) was another idea put forward.

Many statements alluded to the wish for SEU to be a professional organisation, even a global one, which had the power to lobby or be known for its expertise on all things intercultural. There seems to be a wish for SIETAR to engage with international NGOs such as the UN, UNESCO and civil societies in general, and at the very least to align itself with the values and international goals that have been set. Although caution was

given about not racing into the future, many comments acknowledged that we need to define our proper identity once and for all.

As an organisational structure, two models were suggested: (a) continuation of the status quo but with a better financial structure; (b) one suggesting greater consolidation whereby SEU would be the main organisation that has regional Chapters, or even specialist/ specific interest group chapters (e.g. training, medical, education) and perhaps leading to a SIETAR Global in the future. However, the overarching theme was that SEU should provide enhanced services, give better value-for-money and be able to charge a higher rate fee. Whatever the model, most views seem to agree that SEU should give advice, share best practice and set operating standards/guidelines for other SIETARS.

Ideas about SEU organising city breaks, international contracts and turn-taking as the SEU lead for a specified period were ideas also put forward. Strong views were expressed that SEU should NOT become a commercial enterprise or a competitive business to its members by some.

Further work needs to be carried out by the Board in shaping the real aims/goals and identity of SIETAR (and/or SEU) and its optimal structure, culture and financial framework to support its aims. It has to decide its interpretation of ‘a more professional organisation’ and what shape this takes. Looking at the International Coaching Federation and the NSA/PSA could be a valuable first step.

The Board will also need to set the agenda for change, appeal to the younger generation and create greater awareness within civil societies of the SIETAR initiative.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above, the board is recommended:

- (a) to further investigate two emergent but strong themes: cultural competence certification and the SIETAR Europa Summer School.

In line with the above, it further recommends that the Board seeks to

- (b) establish two independent and autonomous bodies, under the auspices of SEU, with the mandate to consult widely and to bring forward specific recommendations relating to the substance and form of the summer school and certification in cultural competence.
- (c) Rewrite the original Vision Document 2025 in a shorter more focused way, incorporating the feedback expressed.

## APPENDIX: DETAILED COMMENTS

### RESPONDENTS

SIETAR Poland, SIETAR Netherlands, SIETAR Switzerland, SIETAR Italy, SIETAR Germany, SIETAR France, SIETAR UK.

Monica Armour, Carlos Gonzales-Carrasco, Vanessa Shaw, George Simons, Sabine Wagner, Francien Wieringa.

### QUESTION 1:

#### What does SIETAR Europa need to be and do to be relevant in 2025?

- Structured with paid full-time staff to run organization/operations
- Fresh technology face with modern website and web resources
- Standardisation rules for new and existing chapters
- Diversity in leadership (i.e. not just male and 45+)
- Standardised training certification
- Visible online with an online directory
- Focus on tech plus mobile technology. An app would be ideal.
- The purpose of SIETAR Europa is to serve its members (individual and organizational) and the diverse areas of work and life in which they participate, where intercultural skills are needed - and - to support their fields of primary professional association in becoming increasingly intercultural and pluralistic.
- Promote the development and evolution of boundaryless and borderless qualitative practices of human co-existence, based self-mutual respect and understanding.
- Encourage the pursuing of human enrichment of the; self, relationships, organizations, culture and communities as a whole.
- Be an open community, which transcends; age, gender, ethnocentric, racial, cultural, religious, ideological, or political considerations aiming at the pursuing of continuous and sustainable evolution of qualitative human co-existence and co-habiting at all levels.
- Use our diverse membership (not just national and ethnic, but various professions and organizations) to develop clear definitions of cultural competence as they affected myriad fields that our members are involved in. The dream and vision is not just a one-time statement but involves the establishment of an ongoing planning and consultation process that we can use our current as well as future technological communication methods and tools to achieve.
- Become a lobby for the intercultural concerns that our members are able to meet. There is no reason why SIETAR could not become a kind of “one stop shop” for those looking for intercultural services and information. Despite the

decades of our SIETARs' existence, we are frequently faced with a blank stare when we mention SIETAR to those who may have cultural concerns for themselves and their organizations. This means allowing our members in a qualified way to use the SIETAR membership as a cachet for their work.

- We notice that in general most members of the older generation SIETAR members prefer to stick to the umbrella concept (a gathering of interculturalists) and the new generation Sietar members are more in favour of a new professional organisation-style.
- As the SNL (SIETAR Nederland) board we realise that both sides [in the approach directly above this point] includes valuable elements that should be cherished. That is why we want to combine elements of both concepts in a potential new strategy of SNL and SEU. We furthermore will continue to motivate our members to meet each other half way, so that we can soon settle for a combined new strategy for SNL and SEU.
- To be relevant in 2025, we will need to clarify our identity: an association of professionals upholding a field (but which one?) or a larger association that brings together those who want to dig deeper into defining 'intercultural': What is it? What is its purpose? How to improve both in theory and in practice? This list is not exhaustive and most certainly needs to be discussed thoroughly and completed. These are questions that require deep-thinking on our part before throwing ourselves into a race for the future. We cannot talk about a 'brand' for SIETAR, if we do not have answers to these questions and a firm sense of who we are together.
- SIETAR Europa by 2025 should ideally be an international nongovernmental organization (NGO) with a permanent secretariat located preferably near the headquarters of other international organizations or NGOs (for the purpose of facilitating synergies, lobbying and fundraising).
- Since national SIETARs are currently being formed in Asia, Latin America, Middle East, the new SE name in 2025 should reflect these changes and thus might be called SIETAR Global/International. In this case, it would be important to coordinate and include SIETAR USA.
- SEU should be an expert organisation in the intercultural field (being a member of SEU is prestigious).
- Welcome, embrace, include and add to its foundations outstanding contributions made by other professionals coming from diverse disciplines, backgrounds, experiences and exposures, who expresses interest and commitment to be part of SIETAR's EUROPA community.
- Create a connection point and representative for intercultural concerns, renewing our connections with the EC and other international groups by involvement, voice, and representation. Why is there not a Belgian SIETAR though there have been many members there at times? As far as I know EU-EC representation once existed to some degree but has disappeared. We should have both representatives as well as an active committee both actively aware of and responding to public concerns and NGO challenges.

- Be proactive in consulting on and tracking and publishing local SIETAR activities in a promotional calendar, reducing conflicts of scheduling particularly of conferences and congresses that have plagued us in recent years. That there should be a plethora of events is not a problem but an asset. Unfortunately, for example, there have been four major events within the space of about a month this fall, all of which I found interesting, but only one of which I could attend.
- To be relevant in 2025, SIETAR needs to be a global professional organization that has a clear focus on the unique contribution of intercultural communication to the tactical management of domestic and international cultural differences in social services, education, and corporations; to the strategic goal of generating value from cultural diversity; and to the social justice goal of creating a climate of respect for cultural diversity in all aspects of our collective lives.
- SEU should be an organization with great visibility, which is widely consulted on topics like migration policies, international conflicts etc
- SEU should present in the media (has a spokesperson)
- SEU should create and maintain partnerships with other organizations and institutions which are active in the intercultural field
- SEU should set standards of intercultural training in Europe (e.g. through recognition of achievements and certification of trainers)
- SEU should have its own Programme Committee
- SEU should support development of research in the intercultural field and organizes high-level conferences

## **QUESTION 2:**

**How should the relationship between SIETAR Europa and its constituent organizations be structured?**

- Advise on the rules of Chapters.
- Reinvigorate, and if necessary restructure the SIETAR Europa Board and its functions to provide more concrete services to its individual and group membership, “something for their money,”
- Become a truly deliberative body representative of the European SIETARs, soliciting and understanding local policy in order to support it as well as offering new insights. Currently reports are received briefly from the local SIETARs as matters of information only.
- Bottom up consultation processes need to be strengthened so that Board discussions and decisions are not as top down (and too often ignored) locally.

- SIETAR Europa should contribute to creating a link among the national SIETARs in Europe and serve as a European representative in the worldwide SIETAR network.
- To encourage the active engagement of participating SIETARs. The chief officers of each of the national or regional SIETARs should attend key events.
- SIETAR Europa spends considerable time and efforts to organize committees that will organize a Congress every two years. In fact, this may be a very worthy task and all that the general public is really seeking. To many, SIETAR Europa is best placed to manage this task. Has that question been asked? This first attempt at a real discussion about what SIETAR local groups expect or hope to achieve by having SIETAR Europa in place is commendable. However, the question has not been asked explicitly enough in the present document.
- In the past, Congresses were organized in association with the national SIETAR where the congress was to be held. This no longer seems to really be the case. What has happened to that practice? It benefitted not only SIETAR Europa but also the national SIETAR by allowing them to organize an event that their resources alone could never finance and to draw much more widespread attendance.
- To become a more professional and productive organization, the organizational structure of SE should be consolidated through a more stable managerial composition. Having an executive officer already is a good step in this direction. The mandate of the president and the board should be extended in order to finish started key projects or reforms. Presently, there is a lack of a proper turnover and a new wheel is reinvented every one or two years with the election of a new executive board.
- National SIETARs should maintain their independence but adhere to SIETAR Europa's standard operational guidelines. SIETAR Europa should be financially independent - not depending solely on the congress or on contributions from national SIETARS.
- To facilitate external communication, it might be useful for SE to setup a clear organizational structure with focal persons having clearly outlined roles.
- It is only natural that due to inherent cultural differences, the national SIETARs will have organizational and structural differences, thus solidifying their independence from SIETAR Europa. Constituent organizations should be granted the freedom to achieve their full potential while maintaining close ties with SIETAR Europa.
- National organizations can ask SEU for assistance, support or advice.
- It could be that the relationship of SIETAR EU to its constituent national and sub-national members is indeed part of the problem of declining membership. Despite the excellent guidelines on the website, local SIETARs are a mix of relatively competent and relevant organizations to relatively amateur and personal fiefdoms. Why not centralize SIETAR and make the national organizations chapters rather than mostly autonomous national entities? The advantage would be that SIETAR EU could establish professional standards for

the chapters (but not for the members) that would make the whole organization meet the branding goal mentioned in Q.3.

- The best direction for SIETAR to go is towards greater consolidation. The national organizations should become chapters in, at the least, large regional entities (e.g. Europa, Americas, Middle East, Oceania/Asia, Africa). Eventually we should reconsolidate into SIETAR Global, when we would then be able to exercise even more clout than the original SIETAR International that had UN NGO status. With such consolidation, we could afford to have a full-time paid executive and staff that would obviate the need for volunteer boards to reinvent the wheel.
- SEU should be transparent and approachable to individual members – with the MMS working well and possibility of getting involved in work of different committees
- SEU should be the main organisation and have Chapters, this would allow special interest chapters to form and appeal to more people (corporate training, medical, educationalists, researchers, etc)...then we have bigger membership.
- SEU should link national organizations through creating space for mutual exchange and cooperation, e.g. using the potential of Erasmus + (mobility, study trips to other countries).
- SEU should organize City Breaks
- SEU should initiate international contacts, e.g. tandems (two national organizations meet regularly to exchange experience and knowledge within a certain period of time such as half year through organizing teleconferences, webinars or f2f meetings).
- SEU should have an interesting and appealing infographic on the website where you can find all national SIETARs and links to their websites.
- SEU should have one leading national organization for a specified period of time (half year or one year) - within this time the leading national SIETAR should organise an event for all SEU members.

### **QUESTION 3:**

#### **How can SIETAR Europa create a credible and recognizable brand?**

- Standardise online resources, website structures and management
- Style guide for logos, colours etc.
- Tech support person who is full time and runs the various SIETAR chapters and websites, paid by SIETAR Europa but each Chapter must make a contribution.
- Promote and encourage; innovation, exploration, creativity, discoveries and new advancements in; sciences, arts, technologies, socio-linguistics/communications/media, eco-sustainability, and boundary and borderless cultural and personal experiences to continuously and permanently

improve and transform existing professional theoretical and practical foundations.

- Realizing that we are no longer “the only game in town” suggests identifying, connecting with and clarifying relationships with other intercultural organizations. Many of our members belong to plural organizations and can easily assist in this process. We have the potential of becoming a communications hub for this. Recently I counted 16 academic disciplines which claim to have the lowdown on culture, and they are often siloed, even in the same faculty, sometimes competitive and rarely speaking to each other. There would be mutual benefit in our being part of the connectivity that would draw on all of these resources. We should have For example, an academic committee to work at, examine and respond this to this.
- Establishing and maintaining relations with educational and corporate organizations is paramount. SE should make a name for itself and create a brand for its superior intercultural standards, benchmarks and pool of experts, leverage the fact that interculturalism is being researched and studied in various disciplines to SIETAR’s advantage, instead of viewing it as competition. Getting support from government grants and initiatives and gaining the interest and relevance of corporate sponsors would help SE in becoming more visible.
- As an international NGO, SIETAR Europa can focus on promoting interculturalism worldwide, lobbying for intercultural concerns and become a resource of expertise on cross cultural issues.
- To strengthen its brand and to enhance its recognition throughout Europe and worldwide, SE should set up a coherent communication and brand management strategy. Connecting with higher education establishments, creating accreditation programs and partnering with the corporate institutions are also excellent ideas for creating a credible and recognizable brand.
- SEU should hire a professional PR team / agency to create a recognizable brand.
- It would be great for SIETAR to be a recognizable brand. But SIETAR should not itself be a product or offer products. Rather SIETAR should be the brand of intercultural theory and practice; intercultural, not cross-cultural, or multicultural, or simply cultural. SIETAR is suffering from its trying to represent everything “cultural” to everyone. Now, according to the report, it is sliding toward offering nothing to nobody. **The road back to relevance is not to become more intellectually inclusive – it is to become more intellectually focused.** The credibility of members will be served by belonging to an organization with a clear, credible perspective. Insofar as members might wish SIETAR to represent their unique focus, the “brand” will be recognizable because it stands for something special about approaching culture, not everything vaguely related to culture. The special perspective is intercultural communication, the original idea and impetus for SIETAR 40 years ago.
- SEU should have a consistent communication strategy.
- SEU should clearly specify who we are and what we have to offer to the world (be very specific), e.g particular activities which we want to promote.

- For certain, this is a surprising question. First off, are we a brand?? And if we are (or want to be), should we not be thinking in terms of SIETAR and not SIETAR Europa which then means as opposed to SIETAR USA and SIETAR-France and SIETAR Austria or India or Japan or Argentina... Shouldn't SIETAR Europa be working towards the construction of the European identity? Are we separate from and unconcerned by this issue?

#### **QUESTION 4:**

##### **How will SIETAR Europa help to up-skill its members?**

- Summer Training seminar, TOIT like programs, with relationship with a standardized training that leads to a certification.
- Explore what we can learn from ICF and similar organizations and how they function.
- Use multi-dimensional and inter/intra-disciplinary approaches to develop open-ended knowledge foundations in our search for professional excellence in; new learning's, new knowledge, new socio-linguistics, new thinking and new practices in human interactions and co-habiting.
- Apply open ended; knowledge, skills, expertise and wisdom to seek and pursue practices of mutually agreed; common grounds, common purposes, common interests, common needs, common practices and acknowledgement and recognition of each other; by creating a positive environment to secure qualitative and sustainable human co-existence and co-habiting practices.
- Pursue and support qualitative research in the developing of new; foundations, concepts, definitions, skills, competences, and leading to new qualitative; mindset, socio-linguistics and thinking and professional practices.
- Critically expose and break dominant power-ego linguistics and communication practices, which perpetuates; cognitive, confirmation, ethnocentrism, linguistics biases, complex of superiority and ethnocentric-individual arrogance and egotism
- Provide our membership with opportunities, and connections to resources and tools for achieving these levels of cultural competence, viz., establishing concrete initiatives for ongoing continuing education programs, for example: expanding contact with other professionals and organizations via online tools, webinars, focus on local and regional events, courses; coaching, mentorship, and sharing as well as peer evaluation. At the Budapest Congress a group emerged called "dare to share" as an alternative to the rather closed and competitive attitude that dominated at the time. (This does not seem to have changed to a great degree.) Sharing, mutual support, and orientation as well as engagement and empowerment of new members needs to be universal concerns. Cultural challenges, as we can see on a daily basis, are almost infinite. There is no danger that interculturalists will run out of work at any point in the near future if in fact they provide relevant insight, information and assistance to the people they work for and with, whether governmental, NGO, commercial, or academic. The current vision document which appeared as representative of the London think-

tank meeting is largely a business plan with a commercial perspective, certainly an important dimension, but one that is likely to not fully represent and even at points exclude the diverse professions and sectors that we both have and want in SIETAR.

- We should continue to organise professional and interesting meetings on topics related to intercultural communication, but should also remain open and responsive to all persons who are interested in the topics we tackle (you don't have to be certified before joining) during our events. Yet the plea for stronger branding of the profession, for lobbying and participating in the public debate, and the introduction of a licence and/ or certification for the intercultural related professions should be also supported and shared among our members.
- Follow the lead of other professional organizations, collaborate with EC and EU ventures, be a lobby for the profession and its members to governments, organizations and corporations. However, it has to be credible to its members first. Currently, we have no satisfactory answers for why someone should belong to SIETAR.
- Allow and encourage the members to use SIETAR's name and logo as a cachet for their work, their business cards, their websites, and the like.
- Establish some accurate standards and goals for professional cultural competence. There is a lot of literature on this, so that should not be a difficult task. The real challenge would be having a task group to assess how various forms of education, programs (both academic and commercial) actually achieve the learning in competence goals.
- Pool the resources and efforts of local SIETARs: the congress, centralizing information on local events for developing skills; a learning skills focused review; a website that displays our activities.
- To up-skill its members, SE could establish a standard certification and summer school programs. These programs should however be well co-ordinated with other SIETAR training partners/institutions in order not to be perceived as competitors. Cooperation with advisory institutions such as the International Coach Federation can be enhanced. In addition, investment can be made into e-learning and mobile technologies. Further learning could be offered to SE members through various in-house face-to-face.
- SEU should organise trainings and conferences more often than bi-annually.
- SIETAR should at least maintain a database of theories, concepts, application strategies, and methodology than can be accessed by members. It should maintain a complete bibliography of intercultural (not "cultural") materials, ideally with annotation. (Members could volunteer to provide annotations, either of their own or of others' publications.) While this function is performed to some degree by member entities (e.g. ICI in SIETAR USA), I think that those organizations would be happy to have that function taken over by an international federation of SIETARs.
- SIETAR should absolutely not offer professional development courses. Members already offer these courses, ranging from simple instrument

qualification courses to more complex post-graduate education. By entering this arena, SIETAR would be opening Pandora's Box. One evil that would certainly escape is direct competition with the membership, already mentioned. The other is the implication that SIETAR professional training would somehow be more "central" to the field than training offered by others. Who would be deciding this? A current board? A current president? Or would someone be gathering best practices from the members and using that to guide the curriculum, thus heaping the insult of unauthorized use to the injury of unwanted competition. SIETAR has mostly restricted itself to pre-conference workshops for paid professional development, which is why Pandora's Box has mostly remained closed.

- SEU should develop a certification programme for trainers.
- SEU should create space for exchange and cooperation of academics and educators (e.g. joint publishing).
- SEU should create more space for members to be active and involved in work of different committees.

#### **QUESTION 5:**

**How should SIETAR Europa make money and secure a stable income stream?**

- Membership fees
- Congress
- Affiliate marketing (online marketing strategy).
- Online platform with resources, access to this is by a fee
- Mentoring program - pay to be a mentee (benefit of learning) pay to be a mentor and have a mentee who can be a virtual assistant  
- Note: when I was new in the field, I would have gladly paid 100-200€ for a mentorship program. If the program is made quite rigorous I would have paid more, as having a personal coach is even more expensive. Now that I'm established, I would gladly pay 500€ for a mentee who can help me with admin support and more than happy to teach them everything I know, could be setup as a certain agreed-to work period . Almost every freelance trainer I know needs some help. Almost every young person in our field wants to know how to learn more
- Summer Training program
- In one way or another, SIETAR Europa should stay dependant, financially and in terms of policy, on the national SIETARs within its 'territory'. SIETAR Europa needs to ask itself what it could contribute to the national SIETARs that support it. One suggestion is that SIETAR Europa could undertake projects at the European level (securing financing from the European Commission, for example) or facilitating further the creation of new SIETARs.
- Proactively engage in finding new members where there are no national or regional SIETARs to belong to and proactively assisting them to create local

groups planned activities where possible.

- Assist local SIETARs with ongoing recruitment. Membership in most SIETAR organizations has been static or declining in the last few years. SIETAR UK, for example, seems to have declined to the point where it would not even qualify to become a SIETAR under existing policy.
- Re-examine its financial structure. De facto, SIETAR is one of the least expensive independent professional organizations in terms of membership fees that I know of. With declining membership, its support from local SIETARs is necessarily shrinking and local resistance the annual tax is growing as locals question what benefits they are receiving in return. SEU finances are strongly dependent on the success of SIETAR Europa Congresses, the lion's share of the board's concern and time is how to make them successful, and frequently their success is hindered by lack of successful use of lead time for planning and acquisition of significant sponsors. Partnership and stronger collaboration for local host SIETARs as used to occur could be helpful if the board wishes to continue with doing this. Central sponsorship of congresses as far as I know was not part of the initial mandate of the SEU Board but grew in response to a concern for finances. This also implies creating a true budgeting process. This means timely planning what the organization intends to do, assessing what it will cost, and then determining the means for acquiring financial resources and support to make it happen. Currently budgets are approved largely ex post facto and our spreadsheets of activity and balances, leaving the organization in a position where it is dominated by fears of spending what it has rather than motivated by the challenge of acquiring what it needs to do what it wants to do. The budgeting process is part of a strategic vision and plan and is there to make it happen, not to limit it.
- A large number of the SNL members do not want SIETAR NL or EU to become an enterprise, as it will at the end become a competitor for its own members. This opinion was formed due to the fact of extensive use of Business Economics words and concepts in the strategic document, and the phrase formulated in question 5 "how should SEU make money". Yet applications of these concepts are very helpful for *not for profit* organisations as well. So SEU should never develop itself into a competitor for its own members, but could maybe develop itself into the type of organisation that would be able to apply for EU-funds to cover the more professional appearance and actions of SEU. At this stage we see this discussion as the beginning of a long journey towards a mission and strategy that suits the majority of the members of SIETAR EU.
- Really concentrate on more corporate company memberships and ask them for more money yearly, offering a constant visibility as reward on the SIETAR Europa website, for example. As well as in the congress catalogue? If the money goes to the organization- not the congress it is easier as well for tax reasons and not really an "economic activity" that they pay for.
- As membership continues to shrink in most local areas, so will the income assessed for SIETAR Europa. Membership fees in SIETAR are among the lowest of any professional organization. However, dues cannot be raised unless there are services provided for members. In addition, there is a desperate need to be actively engaged in seeking and encouraging membership. Achieving some of the goals mentioned above would certainly help boost membership and

engagement with financial income.

- Seek collaborative projects with other organizations that would assume some costs.
- Regular and ambitious congresses, make access to documentation, literature, resources... paying to non-members. Sell the webinars, books, digital articles...
- Apart from members' contributions, SIETAR should be proactive in seeking external funding from organizations such as EU, UN and World Bank.
- In order to be in a stronger position to get external funds for intercultural projects especially from multilateral and regional organizations such as UN, EU, World Bank etc., SIETAR Europa should be seeking to align with UN cultural and development priorities.
- SE can further generate income through internal sales and fundraising, such as publications, conferences, professional presentations videos/DVDs from congresses and other gadgets/accessories. For instance, anthologies on various cross cultural topics written by SE experts could be published.
- Furthermore, a way to make financial revenues from tapping into the knowledge pool of the SE experts would be through partnering with various corporations/educational institutions and offering them SIETAR's know-how and established benchmarks (e.g., intercultural trainings, education resources, etc.).
- SIETAR needs to be supported entirely by its membership, through both dues and conference fees. To generate more membership fees there could be institutional memberships at relatively high dues, so that important (and often profitable) intercultural groups could support an organization that represents their professional identity. SIETAR going after grants directly is competitive with the membership. Instead, SIETAR should support members' grant applications through general credibility and perhaps a website representation of intercultural theory and concepts that could be referenced in grant applications.
- SEU should hire a professional fundraiser
- SEU should use the potential of CSR in big companies and corporations that could be interested in supporting various activities in the intercultural field.
- SEU should find a global sponsor.

#### **QUESTION 6:**

**Is there any idea or section of the foregoing (DISCUSSION) Document with which you disagree?**

1. I just want to emphasize the importance of a fresh face, more tech-friendly approach. The organization does not appeal to Gen Y and it definitely will be obsolete for Gen Z if it does not innovate. Members in their 20's and 30's need to be actively integrated into all levels of leadership of the organization.
2. P 42 The SE statutes

“For this to happen we need to reinvigorate, and if necessary restructure, the SIETAR Europa Board and its functions to provide more concrete services to its individual and group membership, “something for their money,” page 42. This leads to the most important part. Formally this is not a task for SE at all. According to the statutes, the society SE contradicts being a commercial enterprise. Being a society means: owned by the members and in benefit for the members. Such a fundamental process of transformation does not concern only the Board, but the SIETAR society as a whole in its existence!

3. The global SIETAR name and logo - the name SIETAR and its logo is globally used, shared and known, does not have its roots in Europe and stands for being a Society, a network organisation. Transforming the whole global SIETAR organisation and using the name of SIETAR for a commercial entity will not only be an extremely time consuming operation and also budgetary quite uncertain, but it might be even impossible on legal grounds.
4. “Make sure you built the right ‘it’ before you built ‘it’ right!” Alberto Savoia (Chief Innovation Officer, Google)  
No information is provided about who the authors and contributors are, neither on the status of the document itself. It is not clear if this document has been shared and approved by the Board of SE.

The document expresses a wish to improve what SIETAR stands for as a networking society versus moving into a completely different direction.

5. The link between the problems of the organisation itself (SWOT weaknesses: lack of time, knowledge management, continuity, money) and the proposed solutions (the different options in the conclusion) is neither underpinned nor logical.
6. Being proud of SE contradicts the many remarks expressing fear of losing position like: “if we don’t somebody else will”, “other disciplines ‘stealing out territory”, etc.
7. DO NOT compete with the members versus many, many statements, options, ideas to transform SE into a commercial entity and really be competing with the members.

It’s often not clear who’s meant by ‘we’. Is it:

‘we’ as ‘interculturalists’ (as professionals) or

‘we’ as SIETAR (global) or

‘we’ as authors of this document or

‘we’ as SE or

‘we’ as the SE-Board?

Clarity on this is really important.

Not always clear is what the ‘we’ see(s) as its ‘customers’.

8. Looking at SIETAR as a group of interculturalists, who are ‘equal’ as members, versus the tendency to be ‘paternalistic’ where SE is seen as being the judge for standards, professionalism, and/or up-skilling its members.

9. Lack of money, -fear of- losses of congresses are essential parts of the SWOT analysis are not linked at all with the proposed options for the future of SE.
10. Most of the weaknesses (p. 29) point at the organisation itself (roughly: lack of time, lack of knowledge management, lack of continuity and financial uncertainty). Most options however are focusing on transforming SE into a commercial entity like a trade organisation or some other form of organisation with standards, accreditation and/or licensing. But it does not make clear that by doing so, problems concerning lack of time, knowledge management, continuity and the instable stream of income, will be solved.
11. Becoming a professional organisation or a trade association with standards and accreditation seems almost impossible given the diversity of SIETAR members (education, training and research, operating in international and in domestic areas, profit- and non-profit).
12. This diversity is one of the key strengths of the Society SE! A lot of members however do not pursue their profession as an 'interculturalist', but as a 'researcher', 'teacher' or 'trainer' with the main focus on interculturalism. Indeed it would be a challenge for interculturalists to formulate the standards for intercultural work, it would be even a bigger challenge to formulate these standards worldwide, knowing the dynamics and the diversity in the world we live in.
13. Such a complete and comprehensive plan is not simply 'connecting the dots', on the contrary, this process will be much more complex and will take a huge amount of time (and money).
14. Besides that, as mentioned in the discussion document: Who is the judge? Who will set the standards in this broad SIETAR world? What does SE expect to gain from this operation and process of transformation? And at what price?
15. Although the research and background provided are commendable, the mere density and length of the report makes it very, very difficult to comprehend for a non-native speaker. The essence of the report could have been presented in a much reduced format.
16. It seems to be more of a commercial business plan focused, in fact, on selling services, rather than on the wider picture of the many intercultural professionals from so many different fields that have traditionally made up SIETAR. Dissatisfaction with this focus lost us the researchers to IAIR. Lack of involving, mentoring and sponsoring youth in the field caused the departure of a good part of a generation in the direction of "Young SIETAR".
17. It seems exclusively devoted toward making SIETAR a business and hence excludes not only the wide varieties of intercultural professions represented within and outside of SIETAR, but excludes the concerns that many of us as interculturalists have for the quality of education, support for immigration services, intercultural social work, etc.
18. Although, freelance trainers and consultants comprise a majority within SIETAR today, we should look beyond their 'marketing and sales' concerns to consider what we really want to represent in this world today and in the future.

One of our efforts should be towards the greater representation of the two other constituents in our name, i.e. education and research. We need to reach out to new potential publics in our efforts to make ourselves more visible: civil servants, employees working in institutions that work internationally and where diversity is omnipresent (UNESCO, Ministries, associations...)

19. The present document is mute on issues of political and social justice, the promotion of multicultural expression in the many arts that our diversity gives rise to.
20. If, as on page 2, “It should be remembered that SIETAR Europa is ‘owned’ by the National SIETARS”, how could National SIETAR representatives serve “the best interests of SIETAR Europa as an independent institute where all national SIETARs are represented” as suggested in the concluding remarks. This could very well create conflicts where representatives might ignore or override the interests and opinions of their national SIETAR. **SIETAR-France would strongly oppose any proposal in this direction.**
21. The question of branding SIETAR *Europa* as separate from the SIETAR network inevitably creates competition that could not possibly be beneficial to any party (mentioned previously).
22. We need a large-scale, deep and meaningful assessment of who we are, what we are, what we want to be (and for who) and where we want to go and how which involves all the members. This would involve a complex process of getting input from stakeholders at all levels. We have members who know how to implement such processes.
23. Some of the projections appeared to be somewhat too optimistic (e.g. healthcare, political trends, transportation, etc.).
24. There are apparently recent geopolitical shifts in the relation between Russia and West due to the Ukraine crises that might diverge the initial predictions in this document.
25. We disagree that SIETAR should be a business at all – and certainly not one that is “competitive” with other organizations. Two such organizations that were named, Cultural Detective and Intercultural Communication Institute, are and have been big supporters of SIETAR – SIETAR USA (in the case of ICI) and SIETAR EU (in the case of CD). Although IDRInstitute did not make the list, we could also be considered a “competitor” in the same sense as ICI – we offer practitioner training and general certification to people who subsequently have some identification with our organization. And we also are a big supporter of SIETAR EU, having volunteered on both national and EU boards, supported special events at the last two conferences in addition to paying membership fees, encouraged people to join SIETAR, etc.
26. The idea that SIETAR should be a competitive business means that it inevitably will be in major competition with at least some of its members and in minor competition with all of them. How long will members pay to support an organization that offers the same services (such as professional development or corporate training) that are offered by those same members? The fact that I have been saying this about SIETARs of all stripes for the last 30 years doesn’t make it less true. Maybe it even is one reason why SIETAR has survived this long!

## GENERAL COMMENTS

- The principal issue on this agenda is deciding exactly what SIETAR Europa is. Thus far we have identified its responsibility for SIETAR members in European countries where no local SIETAR exists though it seems we have been more reactive than active or proactive in this domain.
- We have created a Board of Directors representative of all the SIETARs, which has taken the initiative to create congresses every year and a half.
- More recently we have taken the initiative to do some webinars and social networking.
- The level of empowerment of this group is questionable as is the sense of membership or belonging to SIETAR Europa in an active and feelingful way seems to be missing.
- Yes we do provide people with a discount to SIETAR events mutually and that seems to be unappreciated dimension.
- We need a better identity model which is necessary for us to proceed with any real strategy or commitment on the part of the wider membership of those belonging to the various European SIETARs
- I am impressed by what SE has developed over the last years: organising interesting congresses, a good looking website showing global coherence, virtual working (LinkedIn, webinars), involving more and more members in specific tasks, appointing an executive officer, etc.
- SIETAR Germany:

We had a workshop about the future and the vision of Sietar with several Sietar members. They were very enthusiastic and engaged, but we did not come out with any specific feedback to the questions we discussed - just a lot of ideas, a brainstorming.

In the board we have not discussed this issue, but 3 of the board members participated in the workshop, and we will arrange another WS about this subject at the end of the summer. Many members are interested, but it is difficult to get them together, find adequate dates, etc. But as you see we are in the process!

## SUMMARY OF SWOT ANALYSES – SIETAR FRANCE

## STRENGTHS

&

## WEAKNESSES

Capacity for sharing and widening perspectives in an atmosphere of trust  
Network - dynamic  
Place to get training  
International with an international outlook  
Friendly and open  
Diversity of views, of skills, of resources  
European dimension  
Sharing or skills and resources  
Research and documentation  
Different languages > different ways of thinking  
A showcase  
Valorises expertise  
Professional opportunities  
Credibility  
Innovative & pluri-disciplinary  
Meeting place  
Transversal – a representative with a pool of experts

Requires more means (members are volunteers, possibility of skill swapping)  
Dissonances between SIETARs  
Website lacks modernity  
Lacks dynamism (re: website)  
A closed circuit with a sense of being a ‘private club’  
No visible advantages of becoming a member  
Lacks representativity  
Need for more thinking together, more theory  
SIETAR little known outside  
Financial weakness: new financial model to be found  
Identity not well-defined (Diversity of representation– social, management, infants, migrants, expatriates...)  
‘Offer’ needs to be diversified  
Need to open up to other networks  
Reticence to share  
Valued only for the contacts provided

## SIETAR ITALIA SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- Relevance in internet & linked-In
  - Strong Network
  - Theories/practices evolution (not just Hofstede)
  - Update for its members
  - Community of diverse experienced professionals
  - Forum/platform to share experiences
  - Internationality
  - Interdisciplinarity
  - Its mission: to promote interculturalism today

### Weaknesses

- Too small number of members
- Milan-centric
- Lack of strategy
- Lack of finance
- Not practical to companies and business realities
- The brand doesn't communicate enough messages
- Members' benefit???
- Only professionals: where are companies???
- Not visibility "outside"
- Lack of research projects
- Not enough interdisciplinary
- Not enough interactions and exchanges between its members
- Too bureaucratic, time consuming in the decision making process

## **Opportunities**

- Sponsor projects, events, internships
- Make it an appropriate academic circle
- Use Sietar's platform for sharing experiences and for its members' marketing
- Invite university's speakers
- Collaborate more with SIETAR EU and YOUNG SIETAR to increase international exchanges
  - Collaborate with TOEFEL (presence at the conference), ISMU, IF, International organizations,, SALTO, INCA, IEREST project, IATEFL, BESIG,...
  - Create interests/projects groups
  - Raise awareness about intercultural issues and take a public role toward interculturalism spreading
  - Offer/Involve students in projects
  - Set professionals/ethical standards
  - Offer quality training in collaboration with other professions
  - Advocacy to business, public sector, practitioners

## **Threats**

- Other local NGO similar organizations
- In Italy there is a lack of intercultural needs awareness
- Motivation/enthusiasm/people who are committed to dedicate their time go down
- Several members belong also to other professional associations that seem to offer more activities, benefits,...
- Perception of lack of credibility of cross-cultural trainers compared to other professions
  - Dominate individuals competition to community collaboration
  - Lack of ability to brand the IC identity
  - Dominate a "left wing" ideology

Below: ideas submitted by Sabine Wagner and her group...

# 2025

- \* umbrella organization
- \* brand strategy (halo?)
- \* visibility
- \* USP (knowledge, network, NGO, research, trainer agencies, think tanks)
- \* Question: Political or not?  
(→ intersect of various kinds of organizations)
- \* talent pool (disciplines move explicit, expert? specialization)
- \* multi-culture, multi-disciplinary, emergent diversity, forward-looking,
- \* inclusion, co-creation, solutions oriented (allowing, facilitating change)
- \* visionary, innovative, diverse
- \* platform for best practices, embrace the field
- \* family community ("Heimat")
- \* shrinking, but localizing world
- \* interdisciplinary openness + diversity
- \* thought leaders and change agents
- \* friendship, connect to people     ♥ ♥ ♥

Submit by Sabine Wagner and her group