

COTEC

Council of Occupational Therapists
for the European Countries



Newsletter

June 2017

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Editorial



Eva Denysiuk

COTEC Vice President Finance

It now has been a year since I took office as VP finance in Galway which makes this editorial a fine opportunity to reflect on my first 365 days with COTEC Executive Committee with you.

Besides getting into 'crunching some numbers' and handling financial business it has been exciting to get to know our members and partners. Some I already met face to face, for example at our last interim meeting and symposium in Spain. Others I had digital conversations with (via email, Twitter,...) but no matter the channel it made once more clear to me that collaboration and exchange enriches you personally, as an organisation and as a profession.

It is great to see how collaboration is happening on all levels right now in European Occupational Therapy so the whole can become more than the sum of its parts.

In this regard I want to acknowledge the effort and (voluntary) work that went into these collaborations; especially by our members and the experts from our register who feed us with much needed information.

It is our common vision to make Occupational Therapy visible and valued in Europe that brings us together and lets us grow as a profession.

As a last remark let me tell you we did grow last year. If you've taken a look at the summary of the profession yet you'll see the trend. I certainly have, preparing and sending out membership fee invoices over the last weeks...

So with this sense of accomplishment I wish you a great summer & look forward collaborating with you!

For the Executive Committee, *Eva Denysiuk*

COTEC-WFOT Symposium in Madrid, Spain

The last interim meeting was held from 9-11 June in Madrid. The reason for going to Madrid was that COTEC wanted to organise a symposium where representatives of occupational therapy from all autonomous regions of Spain got together to strengthen collaboration on national level and make a strong voice for occupational therapy in Spain.

Introduction

During the first joint COTEC-ENOTHE congress in Galway in 2016 WFOT president Marilyn Pattison and COTEC president Stephanie Saenger were informed by C. Labrador of **Asociación Profesional Española de Terapeutas Ocupacionales (APETO)** about the legal changes for (regional) associations of occupational therapy in Spain. COTEC Executive Committee discussed with WFOT the need for a strong voice and a good representation of occupational therapy nationally and internationally. Further investigation showed that most regional associations had become legal entities (colegios) that represent occupational therapy in their respective autonomous regions. According to the legislative framework it is necessary for professions to form legal entities in order to collaborate closely with the local government in areas like regulations for the occupational therapy profession, how to exert occupational therapy, and labour conditions for occupational therapists. These **colegios profesional** formed a council, **Consejo General de Colegios Profesionales de Terapeutas Ocupacionales de España** to represent their interests on a national level. As **APETO** has been representing the interests of Spanish OT's nationally and internationally for 50 years and is not a legal entity the need was felt to hold a symposium, bringing together all stakeholders and establishing a common dialogue. COTEC contacted and invited the organisations and the **World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT)**.



The participants in the Symposium

Symposium

The Symposium was scheduled on 10 June alongside a COTEC interim meeting to save travel and accommodation costs for the COTEC Executive Committee. There were 27 Spanish representatives. Besides the WFOT vice president finance Samantha Shann, four delegates of **APETO**, almost every **Colegio** with one or two representatives as well as the provisory president of the **Consejo**. Furthermore, representatives of the Spanish occupational therapy research network **SOCINTO** and University programs for occupational therapy **CNDEUSTO** joined the meeting as observers. Stephanie Saenger welcomed everybody and held a presentation titled "A strong voice for OT in Europe". She illustrated how COTEC strengthens networks on a European level through collaboration with others, to make OT more visible, valued, accessible and available, and how COTEC depends on input from its member organisations. Her presentation was followed by Samantha Shann who highlighted the long lasting relationship WFOT has with APETO. Afterwards Carlos Rodríguez, the new representative from APETO to COTEC GA, presented the 50 years history and achievements of APETO. He was followed by Pablo A. Cantero Garlito, president of COPTOEX and provisory president of the Consejo, whose presentation was about the formation and achievements of the council of legal professional OT associations in Spain. Following the presentations Anne Lawson-Porter chaired a guided discussion with the themes organisation, cooperation, communication and representation of occupational therapy in Spain. There was a lively discussion and it became clear that all stakeholders in Spain are passionate about the profession. The conclusion was that all Spanish organisations should try to explore ways to work together and make one strong voice for occupational therapy in Spain. An important issue was how occupational therapy will be represented in future at national and international level and membership of COTEC and WFOT were discussed. A late lunch concluded the Symposium, which was felt to be a good start to open the discussion amongst stakeholders and will have to be continued in Spain, to ensure that occupational therapy has a strong position in national and international policy debates.

COTEC Executive Committee Interim Meeting 2017

The 2nd Interim meeting of the year took place in Madrid, Spain, June 9-11.

Main topics on the agenda were the membership and members' issues, financial issues such as banking items, COTEC representation and cooperation with other organisations, and professional issues. The Action plan 2018 and the agenda for the General Assembly 2017 were finalised.

The next COTEC Executive Committee face-to-face Interim meeting will take place in Vienna, Austria, the days prior and after the GA weekend, September 29th and October 2nd. Skype meetings continue to be held monthly.



The venue is ready for the meeting

Occupational Therapy Europe (OT-EU)



There has been one face to face meeting in March this year and a couple of SKYPE meetings aimed at coordinating the continued development of the OT-EU one strong voice for occupational therapy in Europe.

There is ongoing investigation of what is required to establish OT-EU as a legal entity which means that it would be easier to gain entry onto EU Commission Transparency Register as a registered organisation (like COTEC already is). This is taking a little longer than anticipated but progress is being made.

Discussions also continue regarding the feasibility, both in terms of costs and function, of a shared office to manage the business of COTEC, ENOTHE and OT-EU ultimately.

Real progress has at last been made on the development of the research leg of OT-EU – ROTOS, Research in Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science. This followed on from the Research workshop in Galway last year and brought together one representative each from

COTEC and ENOTHE and three members of the workshop group. There has been one SKYPE meeting and one very successful face to face meeting at the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) in June. The RCOT hosted the meeting free of charge for which we are very grateful.

The outcome of those meetings is that there is now clear agreement on how ROTOS relates to OT-EU and the OT-EU coordinating group. The Terms of Reference for ROTOS and its activities were drafted and agreement was reached about the number and roles required on the ROTOS Board. Funding options were also explored and a suggestion to support the initial development of ROTOS was proposed. These draft proposals will be presented to the COTEC GA and ENOTHE GA at their meetings in the Autumn.

It was agreed that ROTOS would attend the Occupational Science Europe Conference in September 2017 to present the proposed ROTOS structure and to consult on the extent to which the occupational therapy and occupational science evidence agenda can support the further development of a strong, visible and valued voice for occupational therapy in Europe.



News from COTEC Member Associations

In every COTEC Newsletter issue there are short news from a number of COTEC Member associations included.

Four associations have sent in their news to this June 2017 issue.



In their News article the [Belgian Federation for Occupational Therapists, FNBE-NBFE](#), describes the current reform-projects concerning Public Health governance, ideology and organization which will affect the way occupational therapists work in the future.

[The Czech Association of Occupational Therapists](#) announces the annual OT conference to be held in October 2017.

[Ergoterapeutene, Norway](#), writes about the growth and increased visibility of the profession.

[The Danish Association of Occupational Therapists, ETF](#), announces the first professor of occupational therapy in Denmark.



Hans Jonsson
Photo: Carsten Bundgaard/ Etf

Congratulations to our colleagues in the UK



The COTEC Executive Committee congratulates the College of Occupational Therapists in the UK which achieved Royal status in February and is now

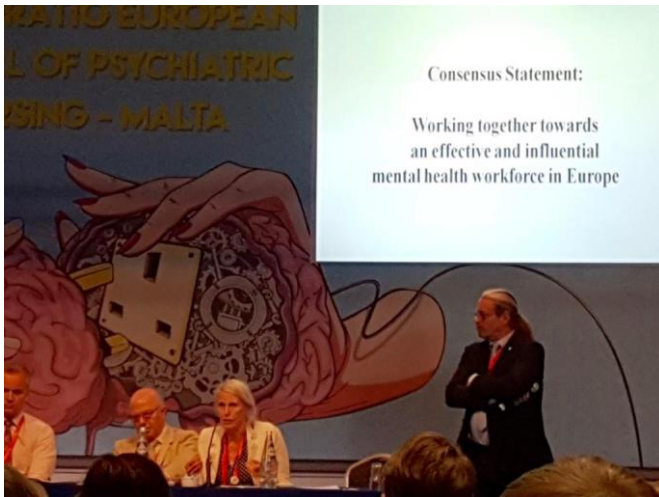
"Royal College of Occupational Therapists".

The commitment of the team in creating the evidence to support Royal status cannot be underestimated and the achievement of it surely places the Occupational Therapy profession well in its continued goal to ensure that its contribution to health, social care and societal issues is better understood and recognized.

We share your pride in this significant event for the profession.

HORATIO FESTIVAL and Consensus Statement

Following the meetings with Staff groups working in Mental Health that were initiated by WHO-Europe, the president of Horatio Martin Ward invited all presidents involved to speak at the fourth Horatio Festival for psychiatric nurses in Malta in May 11-14. The theme of the conference was: Working in Partnership and had the **Consensus statement: Working together towards an effective and influential mental health workforce in Europe**, which was published in May as one of the highlights.



The consensus statement, which was mentioned in earlier newsletters can be found on the COTEC website.

President Stephanie Saenger delivered a keynote speech titled *“How do you do? Best practices of collaboration, partnerships and integrated care in Occupational Therapy and Mental Health”* and participated in a panel discussion about the Consensus Statement.

Panel discussion: Tor Levin Hofgaard (EFPA), Prof. Wolfgang Gaebel (EPA), Stephanie Saenger (COTEC), Martin Ward (Horatio)

To have enough (evidence based) examples of best practices she sent out a call to all members of the COTEC Expert Register Mental Health group, which some have answered. There were examples from Czech Republic, UK, The Netherlands, Ireland and a European project. The presentation explained the core concepts of Occupational Therapy which were illustrated by examples in Mental Health and about cooperation in interprofessional teams. It was clear the audience had varied ideas what Occupational Therapy was, which was of course based on the experiences in their country. The president participated in many workshops and it was clear the psychiatric nurses and occupational therapists can benefit from each other's knowledge and experience.

COTEC made a (digital) poster together with the Maltese Association for Occupational Therapists and the Occupational Therapy Department of Mental Health hospital in Malta, to show how we cooperate together on different levels for better MH services.

The Maltese Occupational Therapists were actively involved with a stand, a banner, workshops and a poster of service users.

Many occupational therapists were participating which was a good way to promote the profession to the psychiatric nurses.

During the festival the relationships with the European organisations were strengthened in an informal way and will be formally followed up in the near future.

The full report is available [here](#). For more information:

Horatio: <http://www.horatio-web.eu>

Horatio festival: <http://www.horatio-web.eu/index.php/events/iiii-european-festival-of-psychiatric-nursing-malta-2017>

MAOT: <http://www.maotwebsite.com>

Consensus document: <http://www.coteceurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/MH-A-multi-disciplinary-consensus-on-Mental-Health-in-Europe-April-2017.pdf>

Alliances: <http://www.coteceurope.eu/resources/>



Informal dinner statement group:

Marin Ward (Horatio), Prof Michel Probst (IOPTMH), Stephanie Saenger (COTEC), Prof Wolfgang Gaebel and his wife, Matt Muyen (WHO consultant), Tor Levin Hofgaard (EFPA)

High Level Meetings in Malta

Alongside the Horatio Festival in Malta, the Maltese Association for occupational Therapists MAOT arranged several meetings with policy makers in Malta and members of the European parliament.

The meetings had the aim to strengthen the position of occupational therapy in Malta by for instance explaining the trends in occupational therapy in Europe and to find support for the profession on European level.

Meetings were held with Commissioner of Mental Health Dr. John M. Cachia, four directors of the Ministry of Health and the Chief Medical Officer and with MEP Miriam Dalli and MEP Roberta Metsola.

Issues that were discussed were the transition from hospital care to community care and the role of occupational therapy, the number and recruiting process of occupational therapists, and multi- and interdisciplinary work.

The meetings with the MEP's resulted in their commitment to support of COTEC's work on European level, which will be followed up in due course.

President Stephanie Saenger was again impressed by the excellent networking skills and efforts of MAOT to promote and strengthen the profession.

On all meetings members of MAOT and leading professionals were present.



Shawn Abela, MAOT PR, Demis Cachia, MAOT President, Mrs. Miriam Dalli, MEP, Cynthia Scerri, Professional lead OT Malta, Stephanie Saenger, President of COTEC

For detailed reports you can contact
stephanie.saenger@coteceurope.eu



Mr Shawn Meilak, Assistant Director Allied Health Mr. Clarence Pace, Director General Health, Stephanie Saenger, President of COTEC, Mr. Ray Attard Previ, Director Allied Health, Cynthia Scerri, Professional lead OT, Dr Denis Vella Baldacchino, Chief Medical Officer, Antoinette Laferla, Advanced Allied Health Practitioner OT, Maria Daniela Farrugia, Lead OT in MH



Stephanie Saenger, President of COTEC, Maria Daniela Farrugia, Former COTEC EXCIE Member, Mrs. Roberta Metsola, MEP

European Brain Council “Brain: Time Matters”

Final Conference of the EBC research project: The value of treatment for brain disorders June 22, Brussels



Annick van Gils and Manuela Messmer-Wullen

COTEC was represented in this and previous meetings of the EBC VOT 2015-2017 research project by Daphne Kos and Annick Van Gils. At this meeting the completion of the EBC VOT 2015-2017 research project was marked with the launch of the policy White Paper. The White Paper highlights unmet needs, new research developments, benefits of seamless care, and builds on key results from case studies and consultants with experts.

The meeting focused on:

- Addressing the burden of diseases and issues in the current health care system, the health services delivery and care pathways design;
- Proposing evidence-based and cost-effective solutions to achieve high value for patients.

The common key message was “**time=brain**” – the earlier you diagnose and treat, the better the outcome. Costs for society are lower when an efficient treatment is provided. Although the focus was mainly on medical treatment, there was some attention for patient-centered care and shared decision making.

The engagement of COTEC in this final conference was mainly to give the occupational therapy’s frame of reference (and rehabilitation in general) a voice. This was effectuated in an interesting conversation with Manuela Messmer-Wullen, board member of SAFE (Stroke Alliance for Europe) and EFNA (European Federation of Neurological Associations), both patient organizations in stroke/neurological diseases. She represents the voice of the patient in European Organizations and Annick and Manuela talked about the benefits of a possible involvement of COTEC in patient organizations and vice versa.

More information : <http://www.braincouncil.eu/activities/news/press-release-value-of-treatment-for-brain-disorders-in-europe/>

For the full report see [here](#)!

1st International Scientific Conference on Occupational Therapy – Bacau, Romania

“Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacau, Faculty of Movement, Sport and Health Sciences, Department of Physical and Occupational Therapy, in collaboration with “Angel Kanchev” University of Russe, Romanian Professional Association of Occupational Therapists and the Association of Bulgarian Ergotherapists (ABET) have undertaken the venture of organising the 1st International OT Conference – Present State and Future Prospects. The conference was held on the 16th and 17th of June 2017 in Bacau, Romania.

The audience of the event consists of more than 150 specialists from partner universities such as “Angel Kanchev” University in Bulgaria, University of Pitesti, “1 Decembrie 1918” Alba Iulia University, as well as from the centres of the General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC) Bacau, Bacau Penitentiary, NGOs, Bacau Emergency County Hospital and Moinești Municipal Emergency Hospital.

During the opening ceremony the organising committee received a lot of international congratulations from WFOT and ENOTHE, a special video from the COTEC Executive Committee and in person from Elitsa Velikova.



Elitsa Velikova, giving a short speech on behalf of COTEC

The program included plenary presentations, 4 workshops coordinated by professors from the University of Oulu, Finland, University of Rotterdam and “Al. I. Cuza” University of Iasi, as well as specialists in sensory integration from the United States. A total of 10 occupational therapists employed in DGASPC centres for children, young people and adults, graduates of “Vasile Alecsandri” University in Bacau presented their achievements in the last 5 years in the section “Occupational Therapy in Social Services”.

On Saturday specialists from the Neuromotor Recovery Centre “Nicolae Robănescu” in Bucharest and from the Emergency Hospital in Bacau raised attention to the paediatric realities in the presentations in the section “Occupational Therapy in the Health System”. Specialis

from Moinești Municipal Emergency Hospital support the need to complete the team in the rheumatology services, with the occupational therapist.

The presence of the occupational therapist within the multidisciplinary team was felt as a necessity in the process of reforming and deinstitutionalisation of the social services meant to protect the child and the disabled, at a national and local level, a process involving, among other things, family and socio-professional reintegration. In this context, the occupational therapist can through its activity facilitate the full participation of people in difficulty in the social life, creating equal opportunities for participation in society.



The international guests together with the organizing group

Bonds within the COTEC Community



President Stephanie Saenger was very pleased to meet with former COTEC president and delegate of Norway Mette Kolsrud, Toril Laberg and their former colleagues. The group consisting of 13 Norwegian occupational therapists visited Amsterdam.

Another meeting with two former COTEC delegates was in Malta, where Stephanie met with Maria Daniela Farrugia and former MAOT president Stephanie Hercegovac-Vella.



It was a real pleasure to talk about old times and discuss the current situation in COTEC and occupational therapy. The meetings show the bonds in the European OT- community are strong and friendships are formed and cherished for years.

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COTEC Secretarial News

5th COTEC General Assembly 2017

The 5th COTEC General Assembly will be held in Vienna, Austria, October 1st, 2017. Agenda and papers will be circulated two months prior the meeting.

COTEC Governance day will be held September 30th, 2017 and the Executive Committee will prepare a program for this. Program and papers will be circulated no later than three weeks before the Governance day.

A pre-registration for the General Assembly weekend is recommended and the link to the registration form has been sent to all Members. All enquiries and requests concerning the GA should be addressed to VP Administration Anu Söderström.

COTEC Summary of Profession

The annually compiled document was published in April and can be downloaded on COTEC website <http://www.coteceurope.eu/updates/summary-of-the-profession/>

COTEC Newsletter

Since the June 2016 issue the Newsletter has included news from COTEC Member associations. A group of Members will be asked to submit news to each issue and all 30 Members will be given space in one Newsletter every year. Members who will be asked to contribute to the September Newsletter will be contacted with instructions soon.

For any other comments or feedback related to the Newsletter, please contact Executive Committee Member Elitsa Velikova, elitsa.velikova@coteceurope.eu

COTEC Executive Committee meetings

The Executive Committee has a Skype meeting every month. The next Skype meetings are scheduled for Thursday, July 13th and Thursday, August 10th and Thursday September 14th 2017. For agenda items and other issues or proposals please contact anu.soderstrom@coteceurope.eu. The meetings are scheduled to start at 18:00 CET all the above mentioned dates.

COTEC Executive Committee next face-to-face meeting will take place in Vienna the days prior and after the GA weekend, September 29th and October 2nd.

Minutes of the June Interim meeting are uploaded in the *Members only* section of COTEC website.

Member association contact information

In order to ensure smooth communication within COTEC it is essential that we have up to date email addresses on COTEC contact list. Any changes in the Member association contact information are asked to be updated to VP Administration Anu Söderström.



COTEC on social media

COTEC facebook page has nearly 1000 likes, please join us on <https://www.facebook.com/COTECEurope/>

The twitter account @COTECEurope is used actively to promote the work of COTEC and to show the occupational therapy perspective on health & social issues by citing and or retweeting appropriate tweets of other organisations.

@COTECEurope only follows organisations and no persons, with the exception of Members of European Parliament or other political influential persons.

The number of followers is growing and reached up to 1200 on June 29.

Follow us on Twitter and make occupational therapy visible, valued, accessible and available in Europe!



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Wishes all a great summer!

