

Statement of nominee – Eva Denysiuk

I have been interested in political occupational therapy quite from the start of my training and began to really get into the European aspect of it when starting my studies (European Public Health). It was an interdisciplinary study with fellow students from all over Europe. I quickly recognized that the different healthcare systems in Europe give a range of opportunities but also pose obstacles to the work of healthcare providers in general. What struck me most was the fact that even in this setting of health-related study, occupational therapy and its capacities were often not familiar. On the other hand I saw great interest in what occupational therapy had to contribute. When I had the chance to speak at the European Health Literacy Conference last year, participants were asking questions about our approach to client-centered practice which gave opportunity to introduce our views and values on the topic.

As health literacy is a main field of professional interest for me, I was delighted to see that the European Patients Forum (EPF) included it in their “Patients prescribe E⁵” campaign and COTEC was supporting them very actively. I believe teaming up with patients organization is an important factor as it displays how we, as occupational therapists think and work in practice: client-centered.

From my personal experience I also believe that other stakeholders will be very open to what we have to offer and that there are a lot of networking opportunities, be it EPF or the European Public Health Alliance. In this regard I believe it also important to lobby for our cause at the European level but also make clear to members of the national associations that lobbying is not a negative thing per se and that one, united voice will make us all more recognized as professionals.

Another aspect which motivates me to work with COTEC also relates to my personal situation. I live in the Euregio, the triangle of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. I work in two countries, Germany and the Netherlands, which makes differences between the professional training and recognition of the profession even more obvious to me. I think COTECs mission to strengthen qualification standards and pushing education and professional development is more important than ever. When we are able to harmonize education and continual professional development we will be able to speak with one voice and get heard in the political and scientific discourse. As a German this is of course especially pressing to me but I believe this is an issue in more member organizations and I am eager to learn and do something about it.

I work small part-time positions, both in Germany and the Netherlands. Therefore I feel I have time to give to a cause I believe in, which is why I apply for this position. I think my personal European experience and my formal education enable me to contribute to COTECs work in a meaningful way and I would be very happy to be appointed to the Executive Committee.