

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

**COTEC**

Council of Occupational Therapists  
for the European Countries



Year 2023 was the 38th operational year of the Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries, COTEC. The year was another active year for the Council. Meaningful Membership in COTEC was in focus and the work carried reflected both the newly launched organisational values and the activities our Member Associations value the most.

The annual Summary of the Profession document was published in May with updated data from 32 COTEC Member Associations.

During the 11th Annual General Assembly held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, COTEC elected a new Vice President as Naomi Hankinson finished her term in October. Naomi served as COTEC Vice President for six years 2017 - 2023. I would like to express my sincerest thanks to Naomi for her commitment during these years.

In this Annual Report, COTEC work in 2023 is presented under the four COTEC Strategic Goals on the following pages. A more detailed report will be provided on request.

I would like to thank all COTEC Member Associations, COTEC GA Representatives, the Executive Committee, members of other Committees and Working groups as well as COTEC Office Administrator for all the work done and time committed to COTEC in 2023.



**Anu Söderström**  
COTEC President

**Strategic Aim 1 - Ensure that COTEC engages with and inspires its Member Associations and their members to continue to deliver high-quality occupational therapy and occupation-based, evidence-informed, and client-centered services in existing and emerging areas of practice.**

The Working Group on Research started their work by sending out the Emerging Areas of Occupational Therapy practice - questionnaire to our Member Associations.

There were two COTEC webinars planned and moderated by the Webinar working group in 2023 and Member Associations were invited to nominate webinar speakers. COTEC Executive Committee also contributed in the planning and hosting of the OT-Europe webinar. In addition a joint webinar with ESLA, the European Speech and Language Therapy Association, was organised in March.

Member Associations' thoughts and priorities of COTEC work were evaluated through the Meaningful membership survey.

In Social Media, COTEC shared posts and publications regularly, with focus on events and publications relevant to Occupational Therapy practitioners. Social media campaigns of our partners were followed and supported. COTEC LinkedIn profile was launched.

Members of the Executive Committee met with Boards and members of AITO (Italy) in February, ZDTS (Slovenia) in October and CGCTO (Spain) in October. There were also online meetings with the Member Association from Spain. Letters of support were requested by Member Associations from Portugal, Cyprus, Sweden and Spain and these were provided by the Executive Committee. The Finnish Association of Occupational Therapists was supported in their work on updating the national code of ethics for occupational therapists.

COTEC received the following invitations from our Member Associations to send video greetings and/or give presentations at national congresses and annual meetings:

- International Week of OT students in France, virtual presentation by Lisa Wetzlmair-Kephart
- National OT Congress, AITO Italy, video message by Naomi Hankinson
- 30th Anniversary of the Slovenian OT Association ZDTS, pre-recorded presentation by Anu Söderström
- Czechia Association webinar, virtual presentation by Anu Söderström

WFOT President was invited to attend COTEC General Assembly as an observer. COTEC submitted the Regional report to WFOT in December and WFOT Newsletters were circulated to all members of the Executive Committee throughout the year.

Working group and committee work, Governance Day and General Assembly provided opportunities for networking to the COTEC GA representatives, Presidents, functionaries and other members of the COTEC Member Associations.

A working group of members of the Executive Committee started work on revising COTEC Communication guidelines. COTEC Values infographic was published in March and new promotional items were produced during the year.

**Strategic Aim 2 - Strengthen political and strategic partnerships locally, nationally, and throughout Europe to increase our presence and visibility in addressing health and societal issues working toward sustainability, and promoting an occupational perspective of life.**

Collaboration with ESLA continued and the first COTEC-ESLA Collaboration for Impact Award was awarded after the webinar where four short-listed submissions were presented. The call for application for the 2nd COTEC-ESLA Award was launched in November.

COTEC President had two on-line meetings with the President and General Secretary of Europe Regional World Physiotherapy, ER-WCPT, and future collaboration was discussed. In October COTEC President attended virtually in the European Parliament meeting Physiotherapy in Mental Health

In April COTEC joined the Pact for Skills which aims to take actions to up- and reskilling Europe's workforce. Application to be part of the working group for Harnessing Talent Platform (HTP) working group on health was successful and COTEC became a core member of the consortium. President represented COTEC in the first in-person meeting, the kick-off of the HTP work in November.

The European Public Health Week (EUPHW) was organised for the fifth time and COTEC promoted the week widely in social media and COTEC Newsletter. A COTEC-led webinar entitled "Occupational Therapists helping fight loneliness" was part of the EUPHW program and was promoted through EUPHA.

COTEC submitted the Annual update to the EU Transparency Register as requested.

COTEC communicated relevant public consultations to Member Associations and several calls were also forwarded to the Experts in the Occupational Therapy Europe Register of Experts.

#### **Executive Committee representation in networks**

- Member of Health First Europe Executive Board (Anu Söderström)
- European Speech and Language Therapy Association, ESLA, joint meetings with the Board (Ann-Marie Morrissey, Anu Söderström)
- Virtual meetings with the Chair of Europe Region of World Physiotherapy (Anu Söderström)
- EU Health Policy Platform Mental health on all policies webinar (Naomi Hankinson)
- European Public Health Association, EUPHA, Public Health Week: COTEC webinar (moderated by Anneliis Aavik)
- Europe Region of World Physiotherapy Physiotherapy in Mental Health hybrid event at the European parliament (Anu Söderström)
- ENOTHE Annual meeting (Anu Söderström)
- European Public Health Congress (Ann-Marie Morrissey)
- Harnessing Talent Platform meeting (Anu Söderström)

### **Consultations, Endorsements and Memberships**

- Regional Membership in WFOT
- Subscription/Membership at EU Health Policy Platform
- BeWell Project
- EU Public consultations:
  - European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning – evaluation
  - A Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health
- Endorsement of European Life After Stroke Forum, ELASF
- Core member of the Harnessing Talent Platform

**Strategic Aim 3 - Maintain a sustainable organisation demonstrating the benefits of access to opportunities to contribute to the European agenda for COTEC Members and to support their members' individual professional growth.**

The 11th COTEC General Assembly was held in person in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on October 21st. The Governance Day took place the day before. Agenda and papers were circulated to Members in a timely manner.

COTEC Members were all in turn invited to share news on COTEC Newsletters and 20 Member Associations submitted their National News. Members were followed on social media.

The Executive Committee met monthly at Zoom meetings and there were two Interim meetings in February and April in addition to face-to-face meeting adjoined to the General Assembly in October.

An independent Electoral Committee elected in 2022 led the Elections at the General Assembly and a new Electoral Committee was elected at the 2023 GA.

An external auditor and the elected Auditing Committee audited COTEC Financial books in collaboration with the Vice President Finance. A new bookkeeping software was introduced and our cloud storage and file sharing options were appraised.

Work on updating the Communication guidelines started and the Rules of Procedures were updated.

VP Administration has kept contact with potential new Member Associations.

In 2023 the following COTEC Working groups/ Committees were active:

- COTEC Fellowship Committee
- Working group on COTEC webinars
- Working group on Practitioner Congress support
- Working group on Research - emerging areas of occupational therapy practice

**Strategic Aim 4 - Contribute actively to Occupational Therapy Europe and take responsibility that practitioners' voice continues to be heard and enacted.**

COTEC President and Vice President were members of the Occupational Therapy Europe Executive. The Executive had on-line meetings every other month and once met face-to-face. President acted as the Treasurer of Occupational Therapy Europe and Vice President Naomi Hankinson was a member of the Board of ROTOS. A short report on OT-Europe activities was presented by OT-Europe Chair at COTEC Governance Day.

Ann-Marie Morrissey is the COTEC representative in the Scientific Committee of the Occupational Therapy Europe 2024 Congress and Office Administrator Shawn Abela supported the Congress Committees in preparations of the Abstract reviewing process.

Throughout the year there were new nominations to the OT-Europe Register of Experts. COTEC also invited Experts in several expert areas to contribute when preparing COTEC responses to public consultations. OT-Europe Register of Experts and the nomination process was promoted within COTEC networks.

The Executive Committee contributed to the planning of the OT-Europe webinar and ensured that practitioner and professional association point of views were implemented. Members of the Executive Committee collaborated with members of ENOTHE and ROTOS Boards regarding the use of social media within OT-Europe and its branches.

Both President and Office Administrator had a significant role in the induction of the OT-Europe Office Administrator.

## **Appendix - COTEC Committees and Working Groups**

### **COTEC Executive Committee in 2023:**

- President - Anu Söderström
- Vice President - Naomi Hankinson (until Oct 21st)
- Vice President - Yara Peterko (elected Oct 21st)
- Vice President Finance - Lisa Wetzlmair-Kephart
- Vice President Administration - Ann-Marie Morrissey
- Member - Sarah Kufner
- Member - Anneliis Aavik

### **COTEC Fellowship Committee 2023**

- Karin Bishop, RCOT
- Naomi Hankinson, COTEC
- Birthe Hücke, DVE
- Petra Schwab, Ergotherapie Austria
- Anu Söderström, COTEC

### **Working Group on COTEC Webinars 2023**

- Anneliis Aavik, COTEC
- Ana Reveashizvili, GEOTA
- Elisabete Roldão, APTO
- Laura Varo Pecos, APTO
- Marinela Rata, PAOTR
- Theo Bogeas, PSE

### **Working Group on Congress Participation Fund 2023**

- Lisa Wetzlmair-Kephart, COTEC
- Eva Denysiuk, DVE
- Marinela Rata, PAOTR
- Stephanie Johnson, US
- Tiska Ikking, Ergotherapie Nederland

### **Working Group on Research - Emerging areas of Occupational Therapy practice 2023**

- Ann-Marie Morrissey, COTEC
- Lea Suc, ZDTS
- Ana Reveashizvili, GEOTA
- Andrea Handschuh, Ergotherapie Austria
- Elisabete Roldão, APTO
- Katarina Galof, ZDTS
- Kirsi Wikman, TOI
- Mariliis Pold, Estonia
- Marinela Rata, PAOTR
- Vania Prates Afonso, APTO

**Auditors 2023**

- Karin Bishop, RCOT
- Theo Bogeas, PSE
- Maria Steier, EVS-ASE (Deputy)

**Electoral Committee 2023**

- Theo van der Bom, Ergotherapie Nederland
- Milan Kecman, Društvo Radnih Terapeuta Srbije
- Petra Schwab, Ergotherapie Austria