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Editorial



*Anu Söderström
COTEC Vice President
Administration*

Spring is the season when the geographical diversity of Europe is most visible: fruit trees are blooming in the south whilst northern Europe still has snow on the ground. It is also "the time of plans and projects", says Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina and this seems to be true with organisations, too. Certain organisational tasks have been keeping the Executive Committee busy in the first quarter of the year – preparing the annual and financial reports of the previous year, maintaining the COTEC Register of Experts, contacting the Members about the Summary of Profession data submission along with already preparing the Annual Action plan for next year. Parallel to the annual routines the work to reach the strategic goals set in the Strategic Plan 2017-2020 for the four year period is continuing.

Occupational Therapy Europe, OT-EU, is the collaboration between occupational therapists in practice, education and research to promote and develop the delivery of occupational therapy services in Europe. The OT-EU coordinating group has had its first face-to-face meeting of the year and you can read about the OT-EU developments in this Newsletter.

Cooperation with other organisations has become more regular and COTEC has in the first months of 2017 already had representation at high level events - European Brain Council Plenary meeting and Joint Action on Chronic Diseases final meeting to mention a couple. Later in the spring COTEC President Stephanie Saenger will be an invited Key note speaker at the 4th Horatio Festival of Psychiatric Nursing.

It is also very important to meet with COTEC Member Associations and get to know the local challenges and opportunities of the profession. The Executive Committee strives to plan Interim meetings so that meetings with Members are also enabled. A very good example is the recent Baltic workshop in Tallinn which was organised in conjunction with the Interim meeting. The Executive Committee had a great opportunity to meet with three COTEC Members and learn about the OT professional bodies in the Baltic region. The next Interim meeting will be held in Madrid, Spain and Spanish colleagues have been invited to a symposium.

The planning and organising of COTEC meetings – General Assemblies and Interim meetings – in collaboration with COTEC Member associations has been one of most pleasant of my tasks as VP Administration. It has been a pleasure to work with the staff and board members of the associations and I feel privileged having had the opportunity to meet so many people in the European OT community during my years in COTEC.

I would like wish you all an enjoyable spring with a quote from Anna Karenina

"But that's the whole aim of civilization: to make everything a source of enjoyment."

Anu Söderström
COTEC Vice President Administration



Workshop „Making the national OT association an effective organisation“

In September 2016, the COTEC executive committee received an e mail from the Estonian Association asking for advice about some of the challenges in running an association in a small country with few qualified professional occupational therapists.

Estonia is a small country with a compact community of OTs. The Estonian Association of Occupational Therapists has about 80 members. The tasks and activities of the Association are related to member services (mailing list, website, forums, courses, events etc.), being a negotiation partner, coordinating qualification certification process and so on. To manage all the tasks more effectively, we realised more and more that we needed to prioritise. From those discussions arose the idea of asking an outside view that might support the "triage".

Recognising that other associations might face similar challenges, COTEC Executive Committee proposed the idea of a workshop with a more regional approach in supporting the association and the idea of creating a workshop for the Baltic region was proposed.

The workshop, planned and facilitated by members of the Executive Committee, took place on 11 February in Tallinn. The participants were representatives of the OT associations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (board members from each association and one representative of the OT program(s) in the country).



Estonia



Latvia



Lithuania

All the associations had prepared a short SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) and PEST (political, economic, social and technological) presentation outlining the current challenges for their countries and Associations. Member engagement posed a particular challenge and technology was a developing strength.

The workshop focused on core business and the effective running of a professional organisation. Themes and topics covered were: creating the right infrastructure, building for sustainability and building relationships with education providers.

By the end of the day all three associations had proposed a time frame for short, medium and long term goals concerning their most important and urgent issues.

The action plan for the Estonian Association is taking shape and we value the input from COTEC Executive Committee in helping to work out a useful method to prioritise tasks and activities which will help both now and in the future.

The workshop also contributed to COTEC meeting one of its key strategic objectives of supporting national associations in their continued development.

Mariliis Pöld, Estonian Association of Occupational Therapy
Anne Lawson-Porter, COTEC Vice President



COTEC Baltic workshop

COTEC Executive Committee Interim meeting 2017

The 1st Interim meeting of the year took place in Tallinn, Estonia, 10-12 February.

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 such as the Summary of the Profession 2017. The Action plan 2018 and the agenda for the General Assembly 2017 were drafted and will be finalised at the Interim meeting in June.

The next COTEC Executive Committee face-to-face Interim meeting will take place in Madrid, Spain, 9-11 June 2017. Skype meetings continue to be held monthly.



*COTEC Executive Committee Interim meeting in
Tallinn, from left Anne Lawson-Porter, Stephanie
Saenger, Elitsa Velikova and Patric Duletzki.
Photo by Anu Söderström.*

Occupational Therapy Europe (OT-EU)



On 8 March 2017 the OT-EU coordinating group (Presidents and Vice Presidents of COTEC and ENOTHE) met at the Hogeschool of Amsterdam for their first face to face meeting of 2017 which followed a Skype meeting in January.

On the agenda were the working procedures, strategy plan, action plan for OT-EU and the allocated money for OT-EU from the COTEC and ENOTHE budgets. The progress of the joint working, project groups, the conference in 2020 in Prague and the extension of the Register of Experts with researchers and academics were all discussed.

The possibility of a joint administrative office was raised and is to be explored in further detail due to the fact that the ENOTHE office, based at York St. John University, will probably not have its contract extended beyond May 2018.

Items to be presented to the General Assemblies of COTEC and ENOTHE were identified and prepared.

The OT-EU coordinating group will meet again in Vienna in conjunction with the COTEC General Assembly.

On behalf of the OT-EU coordinating group
Stephanie Saenger
COTEC President

The Swedish Association as part of the social debate



As result of an opinion-forming strategy, the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists recently had six articles published in the national media during a period of a couple of months.

The Swedish Association has been eager to promote the value of occupational therapy lately, as shown in news media all over Sweden. One of the articles argued that the shortage of occupational therapists is threatening the welfare system. The initiative was formed together with representatives from all the universities in Sweden which offer occupational therapist training, in the hope of receiving funds to augment the OT education.

One of the reasons behind the shortage is not only the capacity of the OT education, but also the limited opportunities for occupational therapists to have a good career which enables promotions and pay rises. This issue was addressed in a news article, published in the political newspaper Dagens Arena.

Another article was written in co-operation with the Swedish Association of Physiotherapists and the Swedish Association of Speech Therapists and emphasized the importance of enabling a school environment in which several professions interact in order to offer equal opportunities for all children, amongst where occupational therapists should play an integral role.

Furthermore, Association President Ida Kählin, wrote about occupational therapists as a self-evident part in the sick leave procedure, followed by an initiative together with representatives from the Swedish Association of Physiotherapists on how community based rehabilitation (CBR) could lessen the crisis in the emergency medical care in Sweden.

The sixth and the last article was a joint petition from the Swedish Association together with eleven other health care professions, promoting restrictions of the marketing of tobacco.



"Writing articles on relevant issues and attending as part in the social debate is an effective method of raising the awareness of the value of occupational therapy among the policymakers and other important players in society", says Ida Kählin, President of the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists, FSA

Photo by Jonas Eriksson

CHRODIS – Joint Action On Chronic Diseases and Promoting Healthy Ageing Across the Life Cycle

On 27-28 February 2017 Giedre Kavaliauskiene, President of the Lithuanian Association of Occupational Therapists represented COTEC at the conference **CHRODIS – Joint Action On Chronic Diseases and Promoting Healthy Ageing Across the Life Cycle** in Brussels, Belgium.

It was the final conference of the project which was co-financed European Commission under the 2nd EU Health Programme 2008–2013. It has brought together partners from 25 European countries who have worked since 2014 to identify, validate, exchange and disseminate good practices on chronic diseases across EU Member States and to facilitate their uptake across local, regional and national borders.

In an increasingly aging society it is essential to promote healthy lifestyles, to prevent or delay the onset and to better manage the co-occurrence of multiple conditions. EU commissioner V. Andriukaitis stressed that now a disease-oriented model is no longer valid and patient-centred care is needed with the great focus on under privileged population.

JA-CHRODIS project is planned to be extended for two years. As Occupational Therapists are competent to work in an integrated way with the target groups they can definitely contribute to the CHRODIS program. Therefore, it is recommended to address the coordinators of the CHRODIS Plus with the description of competencies and values of occupational therapists with request to be part of the joint actions.

*Giedre Kavaliauskiene, President of the Lithuanian Association of Occupational Therapists
Stephanie Saenger, COTEC President*



European Brain Council Plenary Meeting



On 18 January 2017 Daphne Kos (OT, PhD, member of the COTEC Register of Experts, KU Leuven Belgium) represented COTEC/OT-EU at the **European Brain Council Plenary Meeting – Project “Value of Treatment: Bridging the Early Diagnosis and Treatment Gap for Brain Disorders.”** in Brussels.

The project which was presented aims at assessing the socio-economic impact of interventions (clinical practice), or the lack thereof, and to provide evidence and tools that can assist policy makers and healthcare actors in shaping effective policy responses to some of the most prevalent brain disorders.

The meeting provided preliminary results of the working groups and invited experts to discuss these results and implications.

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.

Daphne Kos

The focus was mainly on medical treatment. The multidisciplinary approach presented was often limited to collaboration with nurses and social workers. Daphne was able to emphasize the value of (early) **rehabilitation** and the potential effects of rehabilitation on brain activity.

The majority of the groups highlighted **patient-centered care**, but did not make that very concrete Daphne has raised issues like shared decision making and health literacy. Also, the message “what matters to you” instead of “what’s the matter”, in line with COTEC’s view, was explicitly communicated. The expert panel agreed on this and noted that apart from clinical (function) measurement, self-report measures should be used. Besides, several groups mentioned participation as an important outcome, but did not specify how this was/should be assessed.

It is clear it was important and effective to have occupational therapy represented in this meeting to make our profession visible and valued to other professions.



Follow the [link](#) for more information.

Brain Awareness Week

Following the presence of Daphne Kos at the meeting of EBC in Brussels in January Annick van Gils, colleague of D. Kos (KU Leuven, Belgium) has represented COTEC at the **“Brain Awareness Week – Lunch Debate” on 14 March 2017 in Brussels.**

The Brain Awareness Week is a global campaign to increase public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research. The European Brain Council has organized a lunch debate to highlight the growing societal need to expand brain research in Europe and to provide a platform in Brussels to a broad audience of stakeholders to address the continued need for brain research.

Through the lunch debate on 14 March 2017 in Brussels, EBC aims to highlight the growing societal need to expand brain research in Europe, and to provide an open forum for policy makers to discuss and debate on the subject.

The engagement of COTEC in this meeting was mainly to give the occupational therapy’s frame of reference (and rehabilitation in general) a voice. During the welcome coffee in more informal contacts this message was given.

Contacts were strengthened with Vanessa Challinor of Alzheimer Europe and with Vinciane Quoidbach, who is the research project manager of the EBC research project. She would like to involve OT (COTEC) into next stages of this project.

In June 2017, EBC will launch the Policy White Paper at a final conference. COTEC strives to have COTEC represented there.



Vanessa Challinor (left) and Annick van Gils (right) in Brussels

ECCO2017: European Cancer Congress



Marije Bolt, former representative for COTEC at EFPC advisory board, represented EFPC, COTEC and Ergotherapie Nederland at the ECCO 2017 conference in Amsterdam in January this year

care. Murray developed a validated tool to improve how we identify people with deteriorating health who are at risk of dying so that they and their families can be offered a holistic review of their needs and care planning. The [Supportive and Palliative Care Indicators Tool](#) is freely available to download in several languages. The SPICT is useful in hospital and primary care and can be used by occupational therapists.

As in 2013 more than one and a quarter million people died from cancer in the [EU-28](#), just over one quarter (26.0 %) of the total number of deaths and there were more than 7.1 million in-patients who were discharged from hospitals in the EU having been treated for neoplasms, oncology and palliative care are major areas for occupational therapists to work. [Read more here](#).

Marije was the only occupational therapist present, but this did not prevent her to explain and promote occupational therapy to a lot of people.

On Youtube you can see highlights of the ECCO2017 conference.



Upcoming events

ENOTHE Annual meeting 2017

The 2017 ENOTHE annual meeting will take place in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, between 26 and 28 October. Conference rooms are located in the [Panorama Zagreb Hotel](#), which is in close proximity to the city centre where numerous museums like the Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters, or the Arts & Craft museum can be found. Decent hotel rooms range from 60€ to 100€ per night. Zagreb's cuisine is characterized by national, Mediterranean and International cuisine. This year's ENOTHE meeting focuses on the three theme areas:

- Global Health Trends (Theme Area 1)
- Education and Training (Theme Area 2)
- Innovation and future Occupational Therapy practice (Theme Area 2)

Abstracts can be [submitted](#) until 1 May 2017. Conference fees could be kept on the same level as 2014 and 2015; 200€ for students, 300€ for ENOTHE members and 400€ for non-members. Visit [www.enothe.eu](#) for more information.



CALL FOR ABSTRACTS



Deadline 1st May 2017

The 4th Conference of Occupational Science in Europe

Hildesheim's Faculty of Social Work and Health in collaboration with the Alice Salomon University of Applied Science Berlin will host the 4th Occupational Science Europe conference on 8 and 9 September 2017. It is the conference debut in continental Europe and will be held in the cosy town of Hildesheim close to Hannover, which makes it easy to reach for international audience. Working language will be English and main themes are:

- Occupation, Diversity, Justice and Social Transformation
- Occupation as a Common Ground: Interdisciplinary Perspectives
- Occupation: Its Theories and Concepts in Critique/Debate
- Occupation in and Throughout Everyday Life
- Occupation Between Paid Work, Voluntary Work, and Unemployment
- Occupation in Therapy, Health Care, and Health Promotion



Early bird fees (before 1 June 2017) are 110€ for students and 160€ for regular visitors via the following website: <http://blogs.hawk-hhg.de/osee/registration/>.

Conferences are also available in the COTEC [Events Calendar](#) within the news section of [www.cotceurope.eu](#).



COTEC Secretarial News

5th COTEC General Assembly 2017

The 5th COTEC General Assembly will be held at FH Campus Wien in Vienna, Austria, 1 October 2017. Call for agenda items will go out in April and the Agenda with papers will be circulated two months prior the meeting.

COTEC Governance day will be held on 30 September and the Executive Committee will prepare a program for the day. Provisional program and general information about the GA weekend has been circulated to Members. GA Representatives of COTEC Member associations are asked to register no later than 31 August through [the registration form](#).

COTEC Executive Committee Elections 2017

There will be Elections for three positions of the Executive Committee – President, Vice President and Vice President Administration - at the 5th General Assembly 2017. All enquiries about the Elections should be addressed to Elisabete Roldão, a member of the COTEC Electoral Committee, email elisabeteroldao@hotmail.com

Call for Nominations has been circulated to Members and nominations are welcome.



COTEC on social media

COTEC facebook page was launched in October, please join us on <https://www.facebook.com/COTECEurope/>

You can also follow @CotecEurope on twitter and make COTEC and occupational therapy more visible in Europe.

The Thunderclap community raises awareness for special campaigns. @COTECEurope supports those campaigns that are relevant for our profession. In the last months we supported two campaigns. The Executive Committee encourages national associations and individual occupational therapists to be aware of these possibilities to raise awareness for our profession and make occupational therapy visible.

@COTECEurope supported the Thunderclap campaign **#IloveMyBrain** of the European Brain Council on which was successfully launched on Twitter on Valentines Day, 14 February 2017.

<https://www.thunderclap.it/en/projects/51969-ilovemybrain>



@COTECEurope supported the **#BeBoldForChange** Thunderclap campaign on 8 March 2017 to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievement of women and raise our voice for gender equality.



@COTECEurope has now 1,072 followers on Twitter

COTEC Executive Committee meetings

The Executive Committee has a Skype meeting every month. The next Skype meetings is scheduled for Wednesday, 19 April and Thursday, 18 May 2017. For agenda items and other issues or proposals please contact anu.soderstrom@cotec-europe.eu. The meetings are scheduled to start at 18:00 CET the abovementioned dates. The next COTEC Executive Committee face-to-face meeting will take place in Madrid, Spain, 9-11 June, 2017.

COTEC

Council of Occupational Therapists
for the European Countries



***Wishes spring to be a source of
enjoyment***



HAPPY SPRING!