

COTEC Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 4, November 2013



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COTEC 1st General Assembly



The 1st COTEC General Assembly was held Oct 21.-22., 2013 in St. Pauls Bay, Malta. 21 COTEC Member Associations were represented and Lithuanian Association of Occupational Therapists was accepted as a new member of COTEC. COTEC now has 30 Member Associations. The meeting was successfully hosted by Malta Association of Occupational Therapists.



COTEC meetings with politicians in Malta

During their stay in Malta for the 1st COTEC General Assembly, members of the COTEC Executive Committee together with representatives from the Malta Association of Occupational Therapists (MAOT) met various Maltese politicians.

Mette Kolsrud, MEP Claudette Abela Baldacchino, Maria Daniela Farrugia, Demis Cachia, MAOT President

The first meeting was held on Friday 18th October with Ms Claudette Abela Baldacchino who is a Member of the European Parliament. Ms Abela Baldacchino remarked that her search in various European documents as well as in interest groups in the European Parliament, none yielded any information about occupational therapy. She stated that through the information that she has gathered through other sources about occupational therapy, through her visit in a local occupational therapy department, as well as through the data presented both in the summary of profession and throughout this meeting, occupational therapy is an important profession that has a significant role to play in reducing poverty and social exclusion. A press release was issued by the office of Ms Abela Balacchino to this effect. Additionally, Ms Abela Baldacchino and COTEC discussed the possibility of making a question about occupational therapy in the European Parliament, making a petition about occupational therapy, and hosting a conference about the profession. These possibilities will be explored further. This will help in making occupational therapy more visible in the European Union.

Another two meetings were held on the following day with the Maltese Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, Dr Marie Louise Coleiro Preca and well as with Ms Helga Ellul, from the Nationalist Party and who is also candidate for the European Parliament elections to be held next year. The role of occupational therapy in reducing poverty and social exclusion was again discussed, as well as the role of the profession in keeping workers in the workforce.



Cynthia Formosa, MAOT Assistant Secretary, Demis Cachia, MAOT President, Mette Kolsrud, Dr Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, Maria Daniela Farrugia



Mette Kolsrud, Ms Helga Ellul, MEP candidate on behalf of the Nationalist Party - Malta, Maria Daniela Farrugia, Josephine Cassar, MAOT Treasurer

Meeting with the President of Malta

The COTEC Executive Committee, members of the Malta Association of Occupational Therapists Executive, the Vice President Finance of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, and the Manager of Occupational Therapy Services in Malta, also had the honour to meet His Excellency Dr George Abela, President of Malta. The role of occupational therapy in reducing poverty and social exclusion was again an important topic in this meeting. The CD-rom of COPORE was given to the president as well as other documentation on the profession.



From left: Cynthia Scerri, OT Manager - Malta, Renée Oltman, Samantha Shann, Vice President Finance - WFOT, Maria Daniela Farrugia, Mette Kolsrud, HE Dr George Abela, President of Malta, Demis Cachia - MAOT President, Stephanie Saenger, Josephine Cassar, MAOT Treasurer, Anabel Cortis, MAOT Board Member

Tonio Borg video message: Occupational therapy is important



Mr. Tonio Borg, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy

The COTEC Executive Committee also hosted the Maltese Minister for Health, Dr Godfrey Farrugia, who opened the COTEC seminar on Monday 21st October, as well as the Head of the European Commission Representation in Malta, Mr Martin Bugelli. The European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, Mr Tonio Borg, sent a video message to the Council whereby he talked about the key role of occupational therapists in supporting and helping patients. The importance of occupational therapy in healthy and active ageing in Europe was emphasised throughout the message, as well as occupational therapy's contribution in improving the health worker shortage in Europe. Occupational therapists were encouraged to share their expertise in Europe and provide input the European health agenda.

New COTEC Executive Committee

At the October meeting in Malta, the first, newly structured General Assembly of COTEC elected its new Executive Committee:

President: Stephanie Saenger

Vice President: Anne Lawson-Porter

VP Administration: Anu Söderström

VP Finance: Renée Oltman

Members: Maria Daniela Farrugia and Helena Cronebäck



Stephanie Saenger
President



Anne Lawson-Porter
Vice President
COTEC-ENOTHE Link



Renée Oltman
Vice President Finance



Anu Söderström
VP Administration



Helena Cronebäck
Member
Communication, website



Maria Daniel Farrugia
Member

The new Executive Committee held its first SKYPE meeting on 11 November 2013, where individual roles were discussed and clarified. In addition to the known roles the following decisions were made:

Anne Lawson-Porter – COTEC ENOTHE Link

Helena Cronebäck – Communication and Website

The Executive Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the General Assembly and especially to former president Mette Kolsrud, who dedicated so much of her time and energy to COTEC achieving many positive results, in both the restructuring of COTEC and the increased visibility of occupational therapy in the EU arena. The new Executive Committee looks forward to developing a good team approach and working towards the achievement of the COTEC Action Plan for 2013-2014.

Agenda Items for Executive Skype

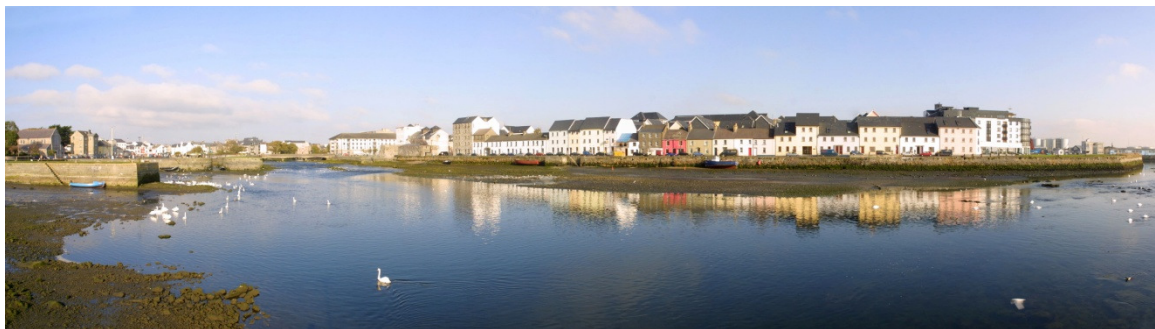


The Executive Committee has decided to hold a SKYPE meeting every second Monday of the month. If members have any items they want to be discussed, they can send their request before the *first* Monday of the month to info@cotec-europe.org

COTEC Fee group

COTEC's fee structure has remained unchanged for many years. Yet, in order to become more professional and influential on the European level and to stay financially sustainable COTEC is in need of a larger budget. Since recent proposals for changing the fee structure were not acceptable to all member countries a working group was appointed with the assignment to develop a membership fee structure for COTEC. At the first General Assembly in Malta five member countries with a wide range of membership numbers in their national associations ranging from 124 to over 23,000 members have agreed to carry out this task including Greece, Ireland, Latvia, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

COTEC ENOTHE Congress 2016



Joint Congress Galway 2016, well on its way.

During the Annual Meeting of ENOTHE representatives of the ENOTHE board and the COTEC Executive Committee met with Agnes Shiel, who is the head of the OT programme in Galway, to discuss the progress of the organisation of the joint COTEC ENOTHE congress in Galway 2016.

- The organisation is well on its way.
- The theme of the congress was discussed and is still to be decided upon.
- The domain name www.COTEC-ENOTHE2016.com has been purchased and is live. Work on the website will continue.
- It was proposed that a logo for the conference be commissioned, which can be used by the organisations in the future.
- A revised budget based on 1000 delegates to include students, delegates from World Bank designated lower income countries and invited guests was presented. The budget includes sponsorship from different organisations and 50% reduction in all room hire has also been agreed by NUI Galway. Sponsorships by exhibitors and Aer Lingus are in progress.
- The Scientific Committee will comprise 3 representatives each from COTEC and ENOTHE and Agnes Shiel.
- In 2015 COTEC and ENOTHE will invite members to review abstracts. Abstract submissions and reviews will be online.
- A draft flyer for an early alert for the conference was presented. It was agreed that this could be circulated by COTEC and ENOTHE early in 2014. The aim of this is to alert people to the conference so that prospective delegates can begin preparation in order to have material / data / ideas for presentation.
- COTEC Member Associations can order postcards and pens for promotional purposes. Send an email with details in good time to Agnes Shiel: agnes.shiel@nuigalway.ie

ENOTHE New Board

The ENOTHE Annual Meeting was held in October this year in historic York, UK. York Racecourse was the impressive venue for the event.

At the General Assembly, two Board members, Anne Lawson-Porter and Erwin Vanroye, and the COTEC ENOTHE Link person, Stephanie Saenger, ended their tenure on the Board. Two new Board members were elected from the GA of ENOTHE; Mandy Boaz from the York St John University in York, UK, and Marie Antoinette van Kuyk-Minis from HAN University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands. The continuing ENOTHE Board members are Brian Ellingham (Norway), Inés Viana Moldes (Spain) and Karin Lilienberg (Estonia). Anne Lawson-Porter was elected by the COTEC Executive Committee to be the new link person to ENOTHE as reported earlier. The ENOTHE Office will also be moving during 2014 as the four year term of office at Metropol University College, Copenhagen, comes to an end. COTEC wishes its colleagues on the ENOTHE Board a successful transition in the coming months.



The previous and new board members of ENOTHE

WFOT Council meeting and Congress, Japan

Action Plan priorities will be difficult to achieve given COTEC's financial situation. It is against this background that the COTEC Executive Committee has decided that there will not be a COTEC representative at the WFOT Council meeting or Congress in Japan.

We know that COTEC and WFOT have a good relationship, thanks to the very active role of WFOT link to COTEC via WFOT VP Finance Samantha Shann. Also the cooperation with the WHO and the joint communication strategy will continue to strengthen the bonds between our organisations and will enable us to work in an efficient and effective way. The executive wants to stress this decision has nothing to do with our opinion of the importance of WFOT, but is based on the conviction we should spend the money we have on EU matters benefitting the occupational therapy profession in Europe.

COTEC Executive Committee Interim meeting - Feb, 2014 in Brussels

The new Executive Committee has planned its first face to face meeting in the first week of February in Brussels. The meeting will involve a day and a half workshop with EPHA to identify the opportunities and challenges for the profession in the EU. The revision of the COTEC Action Plan, as decided in Malta, will be one of the main topics for the meeting agenda. Meetings with other EU officials or organisations are being investigated to ensure efficient use of both time and money.

A bay laurel tree in honour of COTEC planted in Malta



The mayor of the village Qrendi, home town of Executive Committee member Maria Daniela Farrugia, has decided to plant a bay laurel tree in honour of the first GA in Malta. COTEC is delighted and deeply grateful for this touching traditional gesture. Il-Maqluba is a Natura 2000 site that consists of a deep, large-scale inland collapsed solution structure. This site is home to a number of rare species of plants and fungi, such as the Maltese Salt Tree, which are found only in Malta. Nowadays, il-Maqluba supports an important population of native tree communities, dominated by the Bay Laurel tree, which is nowadays rare in Malta.

We do hope our bay laurel tree will prosper in future.

Renée Oltman, Maria Daniela Farrugia, Mr Charles Zerafa, Qrendi Vice-Mayor, Stephanie Saenger and Mette Kolsrud

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