



**Minutes of the General Assembly of ICEVI-Europe held on July 6, 2017
at Sint-Lodewijkscollege in Bruges, Belgium**

Present:

Hans Welling, Nathalie Lewi-Dumont, Steve McCall, Tarja Hännikäinen, Francis Boe, Andrea Hathazi, Vladimir Ruchin, and Martha Gyftakos (minutes).

Apologies:

Ana Isabel Ruiz López, Patrick Temmesfeld, & Krisztina Kovacs

Nathalie Lewi-Dumont, Vice-President of ICEVI-Europe, opened and welcomed all participants at the 2017 General Assembly of ICEVI-Europe in Bruges. Each Board Member that was assigned to a Meeting of a specific ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Group gave a brief presentation on the outcomes of their meeting, with the exception of certain cases, wherein, the Leader of the Interest Group presented the outcomes of their meeting.

Outcomes of the Professional Interest Group Meetings:

European network for psychologists and related professions working in the field of Visual Impairment, ENPVI – Leader: Peter Verstraten; Board Member in Attendance: Nathalie Lewi-Dumont

- 24 Participants attended the Meeting
- The Psychologists are expanding their website with a Message Board.
- They exchanged trainees and internships.
- For their upcoming conference in 2018, the late Betty Leotsakou had offered to host this event in Thessaloniki or Athens, Greece. In light of this, a discussion took place on which themes would be interesting for the conference. Possible themes discussed were the following: fundamentals of assessment, the exchange of tool kits and materials, awareness & society.
- For the fundamentals of assessment theme, the group discussed incorporating ICT, MDVI and more attention for the Elderly.

Rehabilitation (Orientation & Mobility Instructors, Daily Living Skills and Low-Vision) – Leader: Beata Pronay; Board Member in Attendance: Hans Welling

- 20 Participants attended the Meeting- The Majority were Occupational Therapists, and the remaining were O& M Specialists and Daily Living Skills Specialists- The target group of their work ranged from Early Intervention until the age of 20.
- Given that the Leader (Maria Tsekoura) of the Habilitation Professional Interest Group (Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, & Speech Therapists) was NOT present at the Conference, a decision was made for the 2 Interest Groups to Merge and become 1- the Rehabilitation Interest Group with the Leader being Beata Pronay.

- A Mailing List was circulated in hopes of increasing the Number of Interest Group Members.
- The group decided that a good starting point for this interest group would be networking among its members and the exchange of knowledge
- The group expressed their interest to organize Meetings in the Rehabilitation & Habilitation Field

Vocational Training and Employment Rehabilitation – Leader: Stephanie Demartin; Board Member in Attendance: Vladimir Ruchin

- The Group discussed the many issues and problems that exist within this field of interest- The group concluded that the Labor Market was the main issue at hand.
- The group agreed to prepare and submit articles for the ICEVI-Europe Newsletter
- The exchange of contact information- Names & Email Addresses- took place.

Early Intervention –Leaders: Ana Isabel Ruiz López & Elena Gastón López; Board Member in Attendance: NONE

- 4 Participants attended the Meeting
- The group discussed how elements of the Quality of Life Framework pertained to Early Intervention
- A discussion took place on what can be done to improve Early Intervention.
- The group agreed to Network, and therefore, the Leaders will contact the group members through the email address they gathered.
- It was agreed that contact with other Professional Groups will be pursued.
- The exchange of best practices took place.
- The promotion of participation by writing articles for the ICEVI-European Newsletter was stressed.

Teaching and Teacher Training (Advisory Teachers, Subject Teachers, Classroom Teachers, & Teacher Trainers) Leader: Tarja Hännikäinen; Board Member in Attendance: NONE

- 20 participants attended; 4 Discussion groups according to their interest were created: Advisory / Itinerant teachers, Subject teachers, those interested in in-service training & those interested in teacher training
- Concern about teacher training at its all levels was shared by all.
- The possibility to have trainings has reduced in many countries and in some countries there is no possibility for professional training at university level. Thus, some countries lack of trained teachers for pupils with V.I. So, all members need each other and sharing in many ways.
- In theory yes, there was interest for a structural network of professionals- everyone felt that it is good to have support and know the others, however, in practice, not that much, due to the fact that the variety of the needs in the group was huge. And there are some subgroups already going on nationally. Subject teachers, math teachers promised to start the cooperation and create a course together- They will present it in the next ICEVI Europe congress.

- The email list gathered during this meeting will be shared by all, in order to create a possibility to have focus groups on certain subjects.
- Sharing of everyone's work in the ICEVI-Europe Newsletter and Face Book page was encouraged.
- Renate Walthes presented a possibility to share the practical ideas at ISaR International www-pages (<http://isar-international.com/>)
- The importance of contacting the ICEVI-Europe country representative to get more information about the contacts in each member's country was stressed.

ICT – Leaders: Marian Padure & Lars Ballieu Christensen; Board Member in Attendance: Steve McCall

- There was good discussion in the ICT group and a willingness to support outside researchers who wanted access to the expertise of the group, and there was agreement about setting up a mailing list.
- There was feeling that the topic of ICT was not well represented at the conference and there was a suggestion to have an ICT focus day at the next conference with an ICT person on the organizing committee/ scientific committee.
- There was not really interest for a structural network of professionals of this interest group- People couldn't see the advantage of such a group because the range of interests at the meeting was so wide. There was interest in MDVI and technology but this might come under the MDVI interest group.
- As a follow up, Steve McCall will be setting up the mailing group.

Parents Interest Group – Leader: Önder İşlek; Board Member in Attendance: Andrea Hathazi

- Parents Interest Group was a very small meeting, just Onder Islek who is the Leader, Andrea Hathazi and Albert Ruf from ONCE were in attendance.
- The development and promotion of this group that will be for parents, but also for professionals who are involved in the domain was discussed.
- The group will be disseminating in the newsletter and on the ICEVI-Europe page.
- An article will be published in the August issue of the ICEVI-Europe Newsletter.

The Treasurer of ICEVI-Europe, Steve McCall, presented the Financial Report 2016 and the Estimate 2017 of ICEVI-Europe. For the Financial Report 2016, the Balance as of 31/12/2016 was at 38.910,73€. After subtracting Expenditures from Income, the year 2016 offered a positive Result of 5.767,72€. In regards to the Estimate 2017, The Treasurer informed the GA that the year 2017 is projected to still be a profitable year, however, with a slightly reduced profit. 2017 is not projected to be as financially strong year as 2016, due to the fact that in 2017, a reduction in funds and an increase in the administration expenses are expected. A Balance as of 31/12/2017 is projected at 40.262,73€, with a positive Result of 1.352,00€.

The Financial Report 2016 and the Estimate 2017 of ICEVI-Europe were approved by the General Assembly. The 2016 Annual Report of ICEVI-Europe was also approved.

The Presentation of the ICEVI-European Awards 2017 took place. The Board of ICEVI-Europe has proudly decided to continue the tradition of presenting an award to individuals and organizations that have made a significant improvement in the quality of life of people with visual impairment. This year 3 Awards were presented – one award to an Individual, one award to an Organization and one award to a Past President of ICEVI-Europe. The intention of the awards is to recognize the work of those individuals or organizations whose contributions, efforts, research, best practices, innovation or cooperation have had an impact in Europe and an after effect in the field of visual impairment. The awards presented consisted of a Certificate of Recognition and a Commemorative Plaque. Andrea Hathazi , Board Member representing the Balkan Countries region, chaired the Presentation of the ICEVI-European Awards 2017.

ICEVI-European Award 2017 Recipients:

- The late Panagiota (Betty) Leotsakou was the recipient of the ICEVI-European Award 2017 for an Individual- The Award was respectfully accepted by Martha Gyftakos, Executive Assistant to the Presidency of ICEVI-Europe.
- Perkins International the recipient of the ICEVI-European Award 2017 for an Organization. The Award was respectfully accepted by Dennis Lolli, Regional Director of Europe & Eurasia for Perkins International.
- Elizabeth (Kate) Chapman was the recipient of the ICEVI-European Award 2017, being that she was the 1st Female President of ICEVI-Europe. The Award was respectfully accepted by Steve McCall, Treasurer of ICEVI-Europe and Board Member representing the English Speaking Countries Region- A video acceptance speech of Elizabeth Chapman was shown.

The results of the Nominations held during each of the 8 Regional Meetings for the Elections and Re-Elections of the Board Members and National Representatives of ICEVI-Europe were presented.

Outcomes (Re)-Elections of the Board Members and National Representatives of ICEVI-Europe:

- Since there was no Candidate for the Position of President of ICEVI-Europe, **Dr. Hans Welling**, generously, temporarily agreed to **endorse the Role of Interim President of ICEVI-Europe**.
- The following **Board Members were Re-Elected** within their existing position:
 - Steve McCall, representing the English speaking countries region
 - Nathalie Lewi-Dumont, representing the French speaking countries region
 - Ana Isabel Ruiz López, representing the South European countries region
 - Vladimir Ruchin, representing the East European countries region
 - Andrea Hathazi, representing the Balkan countries region
- It was announced that the following 3 Board Members are NOT able to continue to work within their role:
 - Tarja Hännikäinen, representing the Baltic and Nordic countries region
 - Patrick Temmesfeld, representing the German and Dutch speaking countries region
 - Krisztina Kovacs, representing the Central European countries region

- The following individuals were **Elected as New Board Members** for their respective region:
 - Anne Kristine Grosbøll, (Head of the The Institute for the Blind and Partially Sighted (IBOS) in Demark), representing the Baltic and Nordic countries region
 - Kathleen Vandermaelen (Expertise Coordinator of Centrum Ganspoel in Belgium), representing the German and Dutch speaking countries region
 - Beáta Pronay (Associate Professor at Eotvos Lorand University, Faculty of Special Education in Budapest, Hungary) representing the Central European countries region
- Individuals that were **newly elected as National Representatives of ICEVI-Europe stood up in the audience.**
- The following individuals were elected as **New, National Representatives of ICEVI-Europe:**
 - Mr. Peter Verstraten, National Representative of the Netherlands**
 - Mr. Rory Cobb, National Representative of England in the United Kingdom**
 - Mr. John Ravenscroft, National Representative of Scotland in the United Kingdom**
 - Mrs. Dorthe Marie Degn, National Representatives of Denmark**
 - Mr. Benjamín Júlíusson, National Representatives of Iceland**
 - New National Representatives were also elected in the Balkan countries region.**
- **The Remaining National Representatives of ICEVI-Europe were Re-elected within their role.**

Mr. Zohar Ginio, President of the Aleh Society in Israel, presented the First announcement of the upcoming, 10th ICEVI- European Conference in the year 2021, which will be held in Israel. It is yet to be decided if the conference will take place in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. A brief video presentation was shown with pictures of the Aleh Society and a description of their 4 Programs. Following this, a 5-6 min. video consisting of photos and 60 fun-facts of Israel was shown. Mr. Ginio addressed the security issue in Israel and sincerely expressed his hopefulness of meeting all of the GA Participants at the next conference in Israel in 2021.

Nathalie Lewi-Dumont welcomed the Newly Elected Board Members of ICEVI-Europe and expressed her gratitude for their time, efforts and contributions to the Board Members that were NOT able to continue to work within their role: Tarja Hännikäinen, Patrick Temmesfeld, & Krisztina Kovacs. A Special thank you was expressed to Dr. Hans Welling for agreeing to endorse the role of Interim President of ICEVI-Europe.

The 2 Chairwomen of the Conference in Bruges, Mrs. Eliane Bonamie & Mrs. Joke Luyten genuinely thanked the Board of ICEVI-Europe for their trust in the Belgian Host Committee.

The General Assembly was adjourned.