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### **1. ECCE General Meeting 2020 – May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – per Video Conference**

Due to the actual situation of Covid-19 the ECCE General Meeting 2020 could not take place as planned in Emerson College.

**This extraordinary General Meeting was held** in form of a „Zoom“ Video Conference on **Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>**.

After a short welcome and an spiritual introduction by Michael Dackweiler the organisational, administrative part started with the annual report and the financial report 2019, followed by the re-election of the boardmembers **Ann Naeyaert (treasurer) and Fidel Ortega Dueñas**. Both boardmembers were elected unanimously.

**Béatrice Cussac de-Verteuil, the president of ECCE**, was satisfied with the elections, but stressed out the ECCE must be aware of finding new members for the future. Several members reported and confirmed that it is difficult in all countries to find new engaged members in the parents' organisations. It was good and interesting to reflect on the situation; ECCE will have an open ear and pursue that theme.

The conclusion of this special General Meeting was, that we now realize how important is to meet each other physically. There were 17 participants, normally are more, and in person it is easier to meet and to talk to each other.

In this special moment we feel how important gestures, speech and meeting is. Hopefully the ECCE members will be able to meet each other physically again next year.

## **2. After a short pause the informal part of the General Meeting followed with reports from the countries.**

Nearly all members reported that since the beginning of the pandemic social therapeutic institutions have been imposed severe restrictions: only the residential activities were allowed, while all the non residential (day care) activities had to be temporarily interrupted. Therefore, all the activities had to be adapted to the new situation and requirements. Small, consistent groups of clients were formed, with less co-workers employed. Most of the activities have been turned towards outdoor work and life, which has proved to be very healthy and balancing for the well being of the clients and the prevention of the contamination. In spite of all these requirements, it was possible to quickly establish a well-functioning new daily rhythm in the social therapy facilities. Despite the hard times, things have gone quite well.

In some countries, the clients from the daily structure were looked after in their families; many of them were supported by the social therapeutic institutions via telephone or skype.

Fortunately from July 1st the situation has improved in most countries.



## **3. Report by Matthias Spalinger, vahs and Thomas Kraus, socialartist.events**

Stimulated by two people with disabilities who participated at previous European Congresses, an organizing committee has come together that is working intensively to organize a new European congress in Zurich from June 2-5, 2021 for people with and without disabilities entitled "Moving Borders". It builds on the impetus of the past seven European congresses "Living in the encounter", which were finished 2018 in Belgrade. For Zürich the target group persons with disabilities are inviting professionals, relatives and interested persons to make their congress inclusive. More than 500 participants from all over Europe are expected. A congress venue and most of the accommodation facilities are already booked. Despite the high costs in Switzerland the participation fee won't be more than at previous congresses. Therefore a large fundraising campaign is being launched to enable people outside Switzerland to participate.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Inclusive Congress in Zürich, Switzerland, from June 2 – 5, 2021 "Moving borders"**

The aim of this congress is to offer those concerned a platform: for encounters and exchanges, education and further development, and to represent their own interests. From the very beginning, people with disabilities have been involved themselves, for example, in the organization, design and implementation of the program and in finding topics. In addition to the positive individual impact, some congresses also led to sustainable social improvements. The participants are encouraged to participate actively in an inclusive society for all people. In this way, the congresses can also contribute to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Under the motto "Moving borders", the congress program should offer a rich mix of content-related suggestions (lectures, panel discussions, working groups to deepen theoretical content), cultural offers and excursions. The variety of offers should meet the different needs and possibilities of the conference participants and should not only appeal to the head, but also to the heart. Especially persons with disabilities who would like to offer a workshop, presentations or cultural performances are very warmly welcomed to contact the organizers. Please spread out the information about this upcoming event in Zürich. More detailed information will follow as soon as available.



#### 4. Covid 19 – Information from ELIANT (ECCE is one of the founders of ELIANT)



##### Where do we stand? What can we do?

##### Dear Friends of ELIANT,

Never before has there been a crisis that has affected virtually everyone in one way or another. It has drawn our attention to three particular burning issues:

- The large number of serious Covid 19 cases in regions with a high level of air pollution makes a change in our approach to the climate even more urgent.
- The transfer of viral infections from animals to humans demands a reassessment of our relationship to animals.
- The imposed lock-down threatens basic human rights, draws attention to weaknesses in the healthcare system and raises the spectre of a future 'medical dictatorship' complete with all its centralised surveillance structures.

How can ELIANT contribute to the changes that are so necessary in our society? With regard to these three burning issues we hope – with your support in [circulating this newsletter](#) to your contacts – to raise awareness for biodynamic agriculture with renewed vigour. It is truly inspiring to experience the positive effect it has on climate and livestock management as well the essential behavioural changes that are made possible and put into practice on a daily basis.

##### **Climate**

Climate change and the associated warming of the earth is caused by human activity. It threatens plant life, animals and human beings. It threatens the future of the earth. In biodynamic and organic agriculture we have the means for counteracting this process, see "[The Externalised Costs of Agricultural Production](#)"

##### **Animal well-being**

Our forebears tamed animals, integrated them within agriculture, domesticated and cared for them. They became in effect part of the family and both parties benefited. More recently they have come to be considered as objects, as commodities kept for the most part in intensive livestock units. Packed together in a confined space, without access to fresh air and fed on cheap and often unsuitable feed stuff, they are forced to lead an undignified animal existence. In order to prevent the animals falling ill under these conditions, they are given vast amounts of antibiotics, "[Antibiotic Resistance](#)".



For these are the conditions which make it possible for the consumer to have cheap meat each day not realising that it is unhealthy and factory farming is an environmental burden.

### **Citizens rights and responsibilities**

There is no question that a positive aspect of the Corona crisis is that the weak points of our society are now being clearly exposed and that there is a real incentive for politicians and civil society to move forward and make the changes that are necessary rather than returning to 'how things were' once the pandemic is over. Each one of us can make a significant contribution by informing ourselves, gaining expertise, changing habits and taking responsibility.

The first steps can be taken immediately by prioritising the purchase of organic and regional products including meat from animals that have been cared in a way that respects their dignity – and by paying somewhat more for it and consuming somewhat less. By doing so we protect the climate, encourage responsible livestock farming and as citizens carry our share of responsibility for the earth and all its life forms.

Many thanks for thinking about and supporting our work.

Greetings from the ELIANT Team

Michaela Glöckler

You can sign **our petition**: [www.eliant.eu](http://www.eliant.eu) Thank you.



The ECCE members will be very happy to meet each other physically again next year and hope to be able to post a "family photo" from the ECCE General Meeting 2021 again.