



European Co-operation  
in Anthroposophical Curative  
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## ECCE 1992 – 2016 OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

### Introductory

The association ECCE "European Co-operation in Anthroposophical Curative Education and Social Therapy" was set up in 1992 by the Council for Curative Education and Social Therapy, as a legal body with the objective to represent people with special needs and to protect their interests at the European level, from an anthroposophical perspective. This was an advise of Prof. Dr. Bernhard Schloh, legal advisor and staff member at the Council of Ministers of the European Union and also representative of the German parents' organisation Bundes ElternVereinigung.

At the foundation of ECCE, The Dutch association for Curative Education and Social Therapy (Heilpedagogisch Verbond) was asked to give hospitality to ECCE; so it was founded in the Netherlands according to Dutch law. The secretary general of the Dutch Heilpedagogisch Verbond became secretary general of ECCE. Johannes Denger, the secretary of the International Council for Curative Education and Social Therapy within the Medical Section of the School of Spiritual Science in Dornach (CH) at that time, was the first president of ECCE. At the end of 2016, the legal registered seat of the ECCE will be moved from the Netherlands to Belgium, according to Belgian law.

ECCE represents nowadays through its members (30 umbrella organisations), about 400 organisations of professionals and trainers who work on the basis of anthroposophy and of families of the disabled who have close links to curative education and social therapy. It concerns some 90 000 people in 19 European countries. It has also supporting members.

The work performed by its regular and Committee members within the framework of ECCE is done on a voluntary basis without any payment; on average they spend **140 days** a year for ECCE.

This document will summarize the aims ECCE has worked towards for the last 24 years and what results have been attained.

### Articles of Association ECCE

#### Purpose

#### Article 3

1. The purpose of the association is the promotion of the interests and needs of people with special needs within Europe. The ideas and impulses of anthroposophical curative education and social therapy, as developed and upheld by the International Council for Curative Education and Social Therapy within the Medical Section of the School of Spiritual Science in Dornach, Switzerland, are the essential basis for this work.
2. The association will devote itself to the realisation of this task by way of the following goals:
  - a. The right of people with special needs to live in our society and the provision of specific assistance for the individual.
  - b. Freedom of movement throughout Europe for people with special needs, including access to and financial support for any necessary social and therapeutic help.



- c. Freedom to initiate, form and found establishments for education, training, work, social experience, and the care and encouragement of people with special needs as well as the financing and maintenance of such establishments.
- d. Freedom to initiate the formation of training courses for the staff of such establishments and recognition of the said training; the financing and maintenance of these course facilities as well as freedom of movement for staff throughout Europe.
- e. Public-relations activities for the purposes mentioned above, co-operation with other associations, regional and government agencies and with European and international organisations.
- f. The support of research in the field of anthroposophical curative education and social therapy as well as maintaining its essential framework and requirements.
- g. The promotion of institutions and projects to benefit people with special needs.

## **Aims and results of ECCE**

### **1. To bring curative education and social therapy to the attention of the European Commission and its staff members**

- In 1995, 3 years after its founding, the EU Commissioner of Social Affairs, Pdraig Flynn, has given a lecture on the congress *Together we Work*, ECCE had organised in Amsterdam. The Lord Rix, Secretary-General of the British National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults (Mencap) presided over the congress. The meetings to prepare the lecture of Mr. Flynn were the first contacts of the Curative Education and Social Therapy movement with the European Commission. The congress got financial support of the European Commission.
- In 2002, ECCE organised the congress *Let's learn to count on them* in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The congress carried the official subtitle '*under the high protection of the European Commission*'. This protection is only given after a thorough investigation of background, working practices and fulfilling standards. Mrs. Anna Diamantopoulou, EU Commissioner for Social Affairs, held the opening lecture.
- In 2008, Mr. Johan ten Geuzendam, head of the Disability Unity of the Directorate General Social Affairs, held on behalf of EU Commissioner Špidla (Social Affairs) an opening lecture on the 4<sup>th</sup> 'Living in the Encounter' congress *The tide is turning*, in The Hague, Netherlands. ECCE was the organiser of this congress, together with the independent European initiative 'Living in the encounter' (In der Begegnung leben), on behalf of the Dutch association for anthroposophical service providers NVAZ. This congress with 700 participants was also held '*under the high protection of the European Commission*'.
- ECCE sympathizes with the independent initiative '*Living in the Encounter*' (In der Begegnung leben), which started in Berlin, (D) 1998 and continued successfully in Dornach (CH). In 2005, 600 participants from 23 countries met in Prague (CZ). In 2011 600 participants met in Vienna (AU). The last congress for and with persons with disabilities was organized in Brussels, May 2015, with the title: 'Creating Social Art'. ECCE supports the first world congress for persons with disabilities '*Making Values Visible*' September 7–10 2017 in Yekaterinburg, Russia.
- In 2015 ECCE launched the project '**Building Bridges**' in order to strengthen international partnerships between all members as anthroposophical organisations of community-based services for persons with special needs and parents organisations, to create broader mutual support within our European network. ECCE sees mutual exchange and support as a crucial action to face the social challenges of our time. **Building Bridges** will be the theme of the 25<sup>th</sup> years celebration of ECCE in 2017 in Arlesheim (CH).

### **2. To represent curative education and social therapy in the European field of NGO's**

- In 1997, ECCE was one of the founders of the European Disability Forum, an organisation in which representatives of National Disability Councils of the European member states and national NGO's

in the field of disabilities meet and discuss European policy in order to give advises. ECCE has become a full member since then.

The mission of the EDF is to promote equal opportunities and human rights of disabled and chronically ill people in Europe. It stimulates emancipation and inclusion into society by setting up working groups in which disabled people or their representatives are directly involved. In addition to that, EDF takes part in discussions on the level of European authorities and publishes documents. The EDF is the legal advisory organ of the European Commission.

- For its parents associations, from 1994, ECCE is an associate member of Inclusion Europe and Inclusion International. ECCE represents the points of view of curative education and social therapy in those NGO's. Vice versa Inclusion Europe is an associate member of ECCE.
- For its national umbrella associations of service providers, ECCE is a member of The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) since 2008 and represents the points of view of curative education and social therapy.
- With the above mentioned colleague organisations, ECCE meets on a regular basis to consider the European political developments in the field of disability care and support.

### **3. Support of ECCE members in European programs**

- From 1992 till 1996, ECCE participated in the EU HELIOS program, which aimed to support the exchange of knowledge between organisations of European member states.
- In 1997, ECCE successfully applied for the EU Leonardo da Vinci Program with the CESTE project (**C**urative **E**ducation and **S**ocial **T**herapy in **E**urope) in order to produce a Training Handbook, based on the principle of vocational training, the *Threefold (trinal) Training*, which integrates theory, practice and the arts. The project ran under the auspices of ECCE by order of the International Training Group of the Medical section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum. It ran until 2001. The result was the *Handbook for Training in Curative Education and Social Therapy* which is published in 8 European languages.
- In 2005, the International Training Group itself successfully applied for the EU Leonardo da Vinci Program with the CESTE-NET project (**C**urative **E**ducation and **S**ocial **T**herapy in **E**urope **N**etwork): *Train the trainer*. The project's aim was to develop, design, test and assess a European Training of Trainers Program and at the same time developing and document a new pedagogical methodology – *the threefold (trinal) approach* (combining and supplementing the traditional dual *system of theory and practice* with training in *art* for Competency Directed Training. ECCE was the financial-administrative umbrella responsible for finance, along with an official Norwegian coordinator, member of the International Training Group. The project ran until 2007. The project result was a report, titled: *'The Trinal Method, co-operation of theory, practice and art in vocational training'*. It is published in English and German.

### **4. To bring people with complex dependency needs to the attention of policymakers**

Under the presidency of Mrs. Christa Schloh, ECCE, as a full member of the EDF, actively participated in the EDF standing working group *People with complex dependency needs* from 1997 until the working group was dissolved in 2005.

This group of persons with complex dependency needs was and still is a group neglected by EU policymakers. In the European Disability Strategy 2011-2020, you will not find any mention of them. In the final report of this standing working group, the viewpoint of ECCE was acknowledged, and the co-operation of ECCE was noted.

In the brochure of the congress *Let's learn to count on them'* (2002) it states:

Unilateral integration based on the idea that people with complex dependency needs should simply move into society, schools or into trade and industry will not work. Economically speaking the work they are capable of doing yields little profit. A different perspective is required if we want these people

to attain their rights of citizenship. They require us to develop a sensible, meaningful view based on the equality of all human beings in which the quality of each human being's commitment is the key idea. Most people with complex dependency needs are not in a position to stand up for themselves in which case their family members, parents and friends have to do that on their behalf. For that reason ECCE seeks to draw your attention through this congress to these special people.

*Final report Congress Let's learn to count on them, Strasbourg 2002*

## **5. Giving good arguments against one sided de-institutionalisation**

'Mainstreaming' expressed the basic idea by comparing society to a river. 'Normal' life is considered than as the main flow of the river, confronting all different opportunities and risks, life has to offer such as providing human dignity and a meaningful life for everyone. 'Into the mainstream' had become celebrated as a goal to be achieved for both children and adults with special needs from 1995 towards the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This mainstreaming movement concluded that only places with less than 30 persons could be thought as good living places.

In principle this mainstreaming idea is a great step forward for people with intellectual disabilities. But, to use the river analogy, the flow of life in the mainstream can be too strong and competition too extreme for some children and adults with special needs, if this idea is implemented.

In a natural river, there are lots of calm places where the same water flows calmly, while connected to the mainstream. These calmer places can do a wonderful job in giving support and orientation and can also provide a meaningful and dignified life for people who are intellectually and physically incapable of swimming in the deep waters of the mainstream.

ECCE pointed this out on every possible occasion, such as meetings with officials of the EU, congresses, meetings with colleague NGO's. The ECCE viewpoint is that it is not the number of persons living in a community that counts, but good quality criteria, which indeed also concerns the state of inclusion into society. So many colleagues hold this opinion that it has now become the accepted viewpoint.

ECCE demands the need for policies and a European legislative framework which would offer people a cultural diversity and a real diversity of choice when making decisions that affect their quality of life.

## **6. Contribution to the UN Convention**

ECCE has never been to New York. Inclusion Europe and the European Disability Forum however organised in the premises of the United Nation's buildings listening sessions with disabled people – the first time disabled people ever joined meetings in this organisation – regarding the developments and drawing up of definitions by the new UN Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities, in which ECCE participated. The statement of ECCE brought about in the congress in the European Parliament in Strasbourg (2002) can be easily seen behind the vision of the UN Convention. At that time the word *inclusion* was still not being used.

### **Mutual adaptation of all citizens**

If we are to integrate them in a meaningful way, we will have to do it on their terms. We will have to give primary consideration to fundamental human values, if the Article 26 rights (Charter of Human Rights of the European Union) are to be honoured. They ask us to come up with a sensible, meaningful view of the relationship between man and society: a view based on the equality of all human beings, in which the quality of each person's commitment finds full expression.

Each individual bears a potential for development, which he is willing to make available to society. It is essential that people be given the opportunity to contribute to life, to be asked to commit themselves to what they are good at or able to do, even though someone else may do things better. Integration is not the unilateral fitting-in of the marginalised into existing structures, but the mutual adaptation of all human beings as citizens of a common society.

*Final report Congress Let's learn to count on them, Strasbourg 2002*

## **7. Curative Education and Social Therapy is *Sustainable inclusion***

As soon as the word *inclusion* was used, ECCE immediately characterized curative education and social therapy as a model for qualitative and sustainable inclusion.

In 2007 an advertisement was presented by ECCE in the European Parliament Magazine, with the preamble:

### **Sustainable Inclusion**

Recognising that people with learning disabilities have the same inherent dignity, equality and inalienable rights as all people makes us create a new concept of human relationships. This new concept – sustainable inclusion - starts with expanding and improving the quality of comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Sustainable Inclusion means an approach that will guarantee a successful and durable setting of education and life for children with learning disabilities. The decisive factor will be a change in the attitude of all citizens towards the respectful recognition and association with individuals with disabilities in a multiform and multicultural society. Real inclusion means participation. This is only possible if everyone in society is willing to do his bit. Children with disabilities can become adults with a happy life, if they are surrounded by people who are happy that they are there!

*Preamble advertisement European Parliament Magazine, 2009*

## **8. Action against so-called sectarianism in France**

In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in several European countries anthroposophy had been accused of so called 'sectarianism'. Especially in France Walldorfschools and curative education and social therapy communities had to deal with this false allegation. A member of the French parliament who accused on TV of sectarian practices an institution working on the basis of anthroposophy was later condemned for defamation, however the stigma of sectarianism had already taken hold.

ECCE immediately took action by taking their case to the congress of 2002 in the European Parliament in Strasbourg under the high protection of the European Commission. ("Do you really think the European Commission and Parliament would support and admit us, if ECCE were a sect?").

Committee and staff members of colleague NGO's were also consulted.

The message that came back to us was: 'Be open in what you do. Your communities often seem closed communities, which can easily give the impression of a sect.'

So ECCE still takes this message seriously and disseminates it to its members. Unfortunately in 2011 the 'sect' labelling came up in France once more. ECCE is now in consultation with French members in order to develop a strategy to change this false perception.

## **9. ELIANT**

ECCE is one of the initiators of the ELIANT project, **E**uropean **A**lliance of **I**nitiatives for **A**ppplied **A**nthroposophy, an alliance of 10 European associations. ELIANT is working to ensure in view of growing European integration, that legislative framework conditions are created to safeguard the various aspects of applied anthroposophy, including education, nutrition and agriculture, special needs (curative) education and social therapy, medicine and therapeutic disciplines. It demands the need for policies and a European legislative framework which would offer people a real diversity of choice when making decisions that affect the quality of their life and cultural diversity (see [www.eliand.eu](http://www.eliand.eu)).

As an NGO, ELIANT advocates humanitarian and cultural aims and calls for a legal framework in Europe which acknowledges and supports the citizens' rights to a diversity of lifestyle and choices, particularly with regard to the areas mentioned above.

In order to support for these objectives visible as laid down in the *ELIANT Charter*, ELIANT collected more than 1 million signatures within all EU Member States. Nearly 120 000 additional signatures came from non EU countries.

ELIANT planned its action to collect signatures along the lines of article 11§ 4 of the Lisbon Treaty.

In accordance with the Council for Curative Education and Social Therapy, ECCE represents the whole European movement in ELIANT and contributes actively in ideas and actions. Because of ECCE, the European Disability Forum advised on action to gather 1 million signatures and placed a call for signatures in its members' internet magazine. May 13<sup>th</sup> 2011, these signatures were handed over to EU Commissioner Dalli (Health and Consumer policy). The representatives of the ELIANT member organisations, under which the president and secretary general of ECCE, explained their aim to open a debate on the risk that European mainstream policy and legislation may pose by unduly restricting valuable activities and lifestyle choices of small groups of citizens. They felt encouraged by the new rules of the Lisbon Treaty to contribute to an open and transparent dialogue between the EU institutions and civil society.

ELIANT has opened an office in Brussels where the 10 European associations will co-operate as an alliance. The alliance ELIANT aims to exert influence on the EU policy and legislation.

## **10. Ethics**

ECCE focuses on the European development concerning ethical issues. The free will of persons with intellectual disabilities and their rights to choose and make decisions for themselves is a theme that is currently manifesting itself as a paradigm, due to the UN Convention related to the rights of persons with disabilities. Parent organisations have to have their opinion on this issue with regard to their children, juveniles and adults in need of special care. What is necessary, what is appropriate for people in need of special care is a central issue of curative education and one has to be aware of the changes in paradigms with regard to their rights as far as autonomous decision making is concerned. In all symposia by ECCE, which occur every year during the General Meeting, European legislation as well as measures coming out of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and all other rules, are approached and discussed from an ethical point of view. Respecting the dignity and freedom of every individual in communities and there by seeking the most appropriate and responsible guidance with respect to his inner being has been the core of the research on this field. In these discussions and talks, parents bring their very important and particular points of view into the round and voice what they have to say to legislative theories and regulations. This is always a fruitful and onward going issue of importance and is a foundation for further opinion building.

## **11. Foundation of parents' associations and national umbrella organisations**

ECCE stimulates and actively the founding of national parents' organisations in European countries where they don't exist. National parents' organisations have proven to be a powerful instrument to voice the opinions of persons with disabilities for freedom of choice in a diverse society. Due to the membership of parents' organisations, ECCE can be a full member of the European Disability Forum and associate member of Inclusion Europe. Thanks to the parents' organisations ECCE can bring the viewpoints developed in curative education and social therapy under the attention of the decision makers in the EU and the UN. Where no national parents' organisation exist, ECCE will meet interested parents and stimulates them to get organised.

ECCE also stimulates the founding of national umbrella organisations for institutes, in order to strengthen the influence and voice of curative education and social therapy in the EU.

Committee ECCE  
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