

Short History of ECA

After years of informal contact and meetings just for exchange of experience, in 2000 Austrian Institut Keil initiated the first European project in the frame of Socrates Comenius for the duration of 3 years.

7 organizations from England, Germany, Norway and Austria were participating. Unfortunately at that time the Petö Institute could not yet participate. The goal was to analyze and compare different ways and types of conductor trainings in Europe.

Next steps towards a sustainable European cooperation were necessary and had to be done. First of all national professional associations were founded in countries where they did not exist before. As a consequence the representatives of these professional associations decided that they needed a European umbrella association – and so the European Conductive Association was founded. The first intensive cooperation with Hungary was started – the Hungarian conductive association became a founding member of ECA.

The discussions and decisions of the articles were the first important task of the members. “We call Europe” was the motto of this time! The founding members were: the Austrian, the German, the Hungarian as well as the United Kingdom associations. Soon the Swedish association followed and then New Zealand, Belgium and France as well as individual extraordinary members followed.

The milestones which were achieved until now are:

- In 2006 the definition of **the professional profile** was completed.
- In 2008 **minimum standards of structural quality** were defined.
- And different European partnerships were accepted and funded by the European commission.

In the Board members of different national associations are represented, so the board members have a very good overview about the ongoing development in Europe.

In the role of an European umbrella association ECA supports the **promotion** and **quality assurance** of Conductive Education. Individual conductors as well as conductive institutions or national associations can initiate themes or topics which are elaborated in the expert sections. A new work area could also be the cooperation in the field of international research. One of the main tasks of ECA is to strengthen and widen the European network and to cooperate with all existing European conductive associations, organizations and training institutes.

The EU projects had an important and winning success for ECA: the national conductive associations and training units as well as national institutions were

involved in 3 European multilateral partnerships initiated by ECA in the following programs:

- Comenius: in the field of school and preschool education,
- Leonardo: in the field of vocational training and
- Grundtvig: in the field of adult education and rehabilitation – all in the action of Lifelong Learning.

The following goals were placed in the different projects:

- **Exchange and networking** of conductors, therapists and pedagogues working in a conductive environment in the Comenius partnership.
- Definition of **quality standards** and creation of a certification system in the Leonardo partnership.
- Creating a foundation for a common European conductors' training in the Grundtvig partnership.

The Grundtvig program – a program for adult learning – was joined by 6 partner institutions. An information platform for all existing courses with CE contents on different levels was elaborated. In very open discussions a common vision and a result how to build up the future European conductor training at Colleges and Universities in the European countries was reached. We have already started to implement ideas of the project in Austria, UK and finally in Germany in October 2017 started a BA study course in special education with main focus on CE. All results were presented in the handbooks and at the websites.

In 2013 two further projects were set up: Communicate and Participate was a 2-years partnership with 6 partners from different European nations. All partners provide Conductive Education, most in mixed teams with conductors, pedagogues and therapists.

The main intention of the partnership was to support professionals in how to choose and how to use Augmentative and Alternative Communication aids and systems in the Conductive Education classroom.

The consortium created guidelines and material for different target groups (for example visual impaired or early intervention) and different situations (for example AAC assessment)

ECA compiled a booklet and so disseminated the results at the last General Assembly.

EVIBACE was also a 2-years partnership. The starting point was the fact, that schools have varying ways of measuring progress and development in different European countries. There are no standardized assessments that evaluate all areas of child development. So the consortium selected, tested and compared various standardized measurements and evaluated them – all with the aim to find out assessments that are appropriate for everyone to use and at the same time cover most areas of the personality. The handbook is a very useful compilation of the findings and results.

Having these experiences of successful and winning cooperation, we encourage our partner organisations to apply for partnerships and we support them in finding partners and filing an application.

At the moment (2017) an Erasmus+ partnership is about to start, again under the leadership of Austria. Topic is the "translation" of Conductive Education into adulthood.

The following topics are placed in the ECA activities: Discussion about challenges through the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and the impact on the conductor profession.

The extending tasks in inclusive settings for the conductor were discussed, and finally the professional profile also has been necessary to be extended. The exchange of the professionals in the meetings of ECA brings ideas to the national associations

The following activities are placed in the different projects:

Exchange and networking of conductors, therapists and pedagogues working in Europe – also through a regular newsletter or through the participation at the worldwide CP Day, at EU Projects, at conferences.

ECA is in mutual contact with intercontinental CE associations such as ACENA, SAHK in Asia or Tsad Kamdima in Israel.

But one of the most important goals is to bring the conductor profession to recognition in all EU countries as a profession in the field of education and rehabilitation. The conductor profession is the only one which juggles two aspects - pedagogical and medical-therapeutic aspects in one professional person. Perhaps the work of conductors should be called CER in the future – Conductive Education and Rehabilitation. It must be financed by the different assurances or ministries, depending from the kind of provider –educational institute like a school or rehabilitation institute like a hospital. Conductive Education and the profession of the conductor is Hungarian and a real European treasure. The center is the Andras Petö College – from here this treasure must be brought to all European countries with the help of the European Commission.

The big strategic aim 2018 – 2020 of ECA together with the Petö Faculty in Budapest is: Let us invent together the new and important future for a conductive Europe!

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