

Newsletter

Summer 2016

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Edition



Montessori-Europe

Dear Members of Montessori Europe,

As you know, the 17th Montessori Europe Congress will take place in Berlin from October 7th – 9th this year.

We want to make this congress as interactive and exciting as possible and have therefore introduced new formats to make it easier for you to share and contribute:

- In addition to the workshops, we will have bigger forums for groups of up to 80-150 people to work together on a topics.
- We are introducing poster presentations into the congress. This could be on any topic of your interest. Depending on your feedback we will find a way of integrating these into the congress as part of the meeting point or the exhibition.
- Another idea is that we will include national presentations of schools or children's houses at the congress. We need your help and input here - please let us know what you think about this and how you would like to contribute.

The topic of this year's congress is: Responsibility – the core of Montessori Education. Throughout history Europe has had to face international conflicts, wars and their consequences. No law and no external regulation has ever been able to form human consciousness towards citizenship, a consistently positive social attitude and, ultimately, peace. Montessori states that "in reality, the cause of war does not lie in armaments, but in the men who make use of them."

Montessori pedagogy organizes conditions for the development of a child into a self-governing person, building from the inside, making independent decisions and actively taking responsibility towards both himself and others. As educators, school managers and parents our responsibility is to help children to become responsible members of society - on a local as well on a global scale since society is no longer limited to a single country.

Thus our Congress this year will focus on the development of a sense of responsibility in all age groups, from 0 to 18 years of age, including children with special needs. During the congress speakers, workshop leaders, and participants – teachers, school managers, teacher trainers and parents – will share their insights and methods for working with different age groups on the topic of responsibility.

Registration for the congress has started in May and will be open until September 18th.

Please share this information with as many of your colleagues and people as possible. We intend to gather at least 500 people from all over Europe to inspire each other. Be part of it and contribute to an exciting event in Berlin!

Montessori Europe would like to thank our congress sponsors:

Nienhuis, Waterpark, MMI, Montessori Bavaria, Institut Duhovka, Thilo-Körner-Consulting

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE FOCUS OF MONTESSORI EUROPE

In the last two board meetings we discussed the focus of Montessori Europe as a foundation for our work as a board.

As a starting point the board posed a few questions, such as:

- What is the purpose of ME?
- What are the benefits for members?
- What is distinctive about ME?
- What can bring a sense of urgency to ME's activities?

We have made a start in answering these questions and would like to discuss them with you, our members, in the AGM during the Berlin congress.

The purpose of Montessori Europe

Montessori Europe has always had three goals:

- to be a networking platform for teachers, teacher trainers and school leadership;
- to bring together the national Montessori associations in Europe;
- to act as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) to promote Montessori Education and children's rights.

Starting with Montessori Europe as a platform for people working in Montessori education, the board feels that this has been the most successful outcome of ME's work over the last 15 years. Meeting one another is probably the most tangible benefit for ME members.

To organize cooperation between national associations ME established NOCME, which also operates as a council for the ME board. Over the years it has proved difficult for NOCME to operate in an effective way. This is partly due to the very different way the national associations are organized. There are countries that only have a limited number of Montessori schools and therefore a small national association or none at all. Other countries have a number of organizations, either regional or based on ideals. Finally, some countries do attend ME congresses but do not take part in NOCME. Perhaps it is time to look again at the rules of becoming a member of NOCME.

As an NGO it has been difficult for ME to be really influential. ME representatives have taken part in various European networks in Brussels. As we are quite small on a European scale, our influence is limited. Nevertheless, we think it is useful to continue devote a limited part of our time to this goal.

Focus of our work

As a board we think that our members are motivated to join ME to work toward a common goal: expanding and improving contemporary Montessori education. Therefore we see ME primarily as an organization for networking, collaboration, exchange, support, synergies, motivation - a hub for Montessori education in Europe.

We will therefore focus on this goal. We think it distinguishes ME from other international Montessori organizations. Our new approach can be seen in the programme for this year's congress, in which we hope to establish new Working Groups for research and secondary education. We hope that ME members feel motivated to join in so that we can keep on building 21st century Montessori education and change ME into a very effective organization.

MONTESSORI EUROPE (ME) BOARD ELECTIONS IN BERLIN

We would like to inform you about the ME Board's plans to modify the election regulations for the Board.

The current ME Board was elected in 2014. The next elections take place at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Berlin.

1. Changes to the Statutes

The Board consists of 6 - 8 persons, with not more than 2 persons from the same country.

The Board proposes to change several Board-related provisions in ME's Statutes at the AGM, prior to the election of the new Board.

Current provisions include the following:

- The Board members are all elected at the same time, for a tenure of two years. This time period is too short to achieve continuity and build up know-how within the Board.
- There are 5 Board positions explicitly stated in the Statutes, each requiring a special election procedure. These positions are not practicable for the work of the Board.

The Board would like to change these provisions as follows:

1. The Board members are elected for a tenure of 4 years.
2. In order to ensure continuity within the Board, the election of half of the Board members takes place every two years.
3. In order for the staggered elections to be implemented, this year half of the Board is to be elected for 2 years.
4. The only explicit Board positions are President, Vice-President and Treasurer.
5. The Board can recommend to the AGM whether 3 or 4 persons are to be elected at a particular election, depending on its own assessment of need.

2. Board Elections

Assuming the changes to the Statutes are voted for by the AGM, the following six Board positions are to be filled in the Board elections. Six current Board members are willing to be elected again.

Board Positions	Tenure (2017 elections)	Candidates thus far
President	4 years	Mirjam Stefels
Vice-President	2 years	Beata Bednarczuk
Treasurer	2 years	Joerg Boysen
3 Regular Board Members	4 years	Eva Baekkel, Ken Healy, Michael Rubinstein
2 Regular Board Members	2 years	

MONTESSORI EUROPE RESEARCH WORKING GROUP

The progression and understanding of Montessori education must come from research and studies carried out in the contemporary world. To reach this aim Montessori Europe starts a new initiative: a Research Working Group.

As announced in 2015 Montessori Europe will create working groups to keep people involved and active in between congresses. The basic task of the new Research Working Group is to search for research topics that are relevant for Montessori teachers and to actively promote and carry out research. The research results will be available to the whole Montessori Europe community

Montessori Europe members have a diversity of interests and this can lead to a variety of research projects. We want the ideas to come from the source of Montessori education: Montessori teachers from all levels and Montessori academics.

Montessori Europe has planned a first meeting of the Research Working Group at the opening day of the congress in Berlin, Friday 7th October. At this meeting ideas for research topics can be brought forward. Also the way the working group will operate will be discussed 'in action'.

Teachers of all Montessori school levels and academics are invited to participate. Join the meeting, which consists of two parts: 11.-13.00 and 13.00-15.00. Hyde Park Ideas Sessions are planned. Everyone is welcome! There is no such thing as a bad idea, there is a world of concepts. Suggest topics. Present a hypothesis, assumption and/or observation as a stimulus for a research project. Provoke debate by expressing an opinion. Contribute your impressions, your own research work. Get involved in this discussion! You can become a part of an collaborative and supportive network of researchers with similar interests. This is an excellent opportunity to have your name attached to a Montessori research project. It really is well timed as the new call for Erasmus+ projects is March 2017. If you are experienced in exploring the sources of funding, come to help the others.

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Please send all your comments, proposals and applications until the 15th of September