



montessorieurope

Montessori Europe Newsletter July 2018

Montessori Europe is looking for new board members

A few years ago we started with a four-year tenure and staggered elections for board membership. This means that board members are elected for a four year period, with elections of some board members taking place every two years. After that they end their terms can either stand for re-election or be replaced by new members.

Here is an excerpt from our statutes:

"Elections take place in a staggered manner every two years. At one election, the President and up to three further members without portfolio are elected; at the next election two years later the Vice-President, the Treasurer and up to two members without portfolio are elected."

The term of four board members ends at our next AGM in October Beata Bednarczuk (vice-president), Jörg Boysen (treasurer), Eva Baekkel and Ken Healy. Jörg Boysen and Ken Healy will stand for re-election; Beata Bednarczuk and Eva Baekkel will not.

In this short paper we will try to sketch a picture of what it means to be a board member. At the end we will explain what to do if you would like to be a candidate for board membership.

What does it mean to be an ME Board Member?

In the board each member has a number of designated task. Examples are: finances, congress management, Facebook, website, newsletter, working groups. These tasks differ in weight: obviously finances and congress management do take a lot of time and effort. Although it is very hard to assign the precise time investment to each of our tasks, it is relevant to note that being in the board demands time, from 'some time' to 'a lot of time' and this for many weeks of the year.

We have full board meetings four times a year. They last a day, but with travelling to and from the meeting location, the real time investment can be two days on average. We do not have a fixed place to meet; the meeting place depends on current tasks and needs. There is also quite a bit of mail traffic and there are phone calls and skype sessions between board members. All in all it is a lot of communication, and board members need to be able to react quickly.

In the board, English is our working language. For board members it is necessary to be fairly fluent in both spoken and written English. All communication with our members and with our office is also in English. Board members should be able to communicate effectively, to constructively address issues and to stand behind their convictions.

Board members do not represent a country or an organisation; they are individual members who are committed to the goals of Montessori Europe. We would expect board members to be familiar with the mission, goals and activities of Montessori Europe. Formally speaking, they do not even have to have a professional connection to Montessori education. Having said that, we prefer the board to contain members from a broad spectrum: from different countries, from different kind of backgrounds, from different age groups. We do think that a heterogeneous group works very well. That way we can inspire each other looking at matters from different perspectives.

Montessori Europe is a volunteers' organisation. We do have an office that maintains our membership database, daily finances and congress registration. But office tasks are limited and we do not have a general secretary at this moment. Therefore, a lot of the work is done by board members. As described above, there are a lot of designated tasks and also temporarily-arising tasks. Sometimes delicate decisions must be made, which can be difficult at times.

Since we are not a professional organisation, occasionally there may be a certain looseness in the way we work. Flexibility is a desirable quality for board members, as is being thick skinned, since you, as members, can at times be critical ... A fair degree of optimism is also very helpful.

Having said that, being a board member is mostly a very pleasant and rewarding activity.

Are you interested? Standing as a candidate:

According to our statutes, there are no fixed rules for board candidacy. Members can even apply during the AGM. However, we prefer candidates to present themselves at an earlier stage, so that we can discuss board responsibilities and answer questions. That way it will also be clear who will be candidates and also how many candidates there are. We can then add the texts from the so-far-declared candidates to the invitation for the AGM.

So, if you are interested, please write a short text (150 words maximum) describing who you are, especially in connection to Montessori education, and why you would like to become a board member. Send your text (and a picture) to office@montessori-europe.net.

If you would like more information on board membership, please contact Mirjam Stefels: mirjam.stefels@montessori-europe.net.

Montessori Europe Annual General Meeting (AGM)

We are organizing our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Sofia in a new way, with more attention to topics that are of interest to ME members and congress attendees in general.

As a registered association, we need to have this yearly meeting to conduct official business. This includes the regular reporting to the members, the exoneration of the Board, the election of Board members and revisors, as well as decisions on any proposals that may have been submitted.

This AGM is always conducted during the ME congress. ME members and also guests are invited to attend. Due to its formal nature in past years, actual attendance has been limited.

This year we are changing the AGM content and format. It will include reports on ME activities and working groups, and will allow an open discussion of ME's direction and future activities. This discussion is important for the Board, so that we meet the needs and interests of our members and future congress attendees.

We invite ME members and guests to join us from 11.30 am to 3 pm on Saturday, Oct. 6. Lunch is included.

Montessori Europe Research Group meeting in Sofia

During the congress in Sofia we will look at best practices. MERGe wants to go further and to make usage of classroom-based teachers resources. We will give you examples of school-based practitioners' research. In this way we will continue the discussion started in Berlin (March 2018) about reflectivity as a central part of teachers' investigations. However, we need your support and involvement to develop new statements and initiate new actions. MERGe needs active members to create a living research community, responding to teachers' needs.

In Berlin we focused on two main topics: THE TEACHER AT THE CENTER OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN THE PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT OF MONTESSORI CLASSROOM and TEACHERS AS USERS AND CREATORS OF RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES. To give meaning to the first issue, we propose the Sofia meeting to be a place of sharing results of teachers' small scale research. That is why presentations of teachers from Poland, The Netherlands, Bulgaria and possibly from Norway will be a part of the agenda. Join the MERGe actions in Sofia so that we can think of the research group as a place offering support in the usage of everyday classroom information and as a contact place for teachers and experts.

In the congress, MERGe member Jarosław Jendza will present useful tools in his workshop for how to provide a survey in a Montessori classroom. Finally, during the panel discussion organized by MERGe, you will be given a chance to address the problem of how to conduct research in your professional development.

Join us for discussion at MERGe, Friday 5 June, 14.30-16.00.

Do not forget to register for the Congress

We are sure that the upcoming 19th Montessori Europe Congress in Sofia will provide a great platform for teachers to gain new insight of Montessori classroom practice and add greater value and knowledge. 160 participants have already registered for the Congress, so secure your attendance on time.

We are looking forward to meeting you in Sofia!

The Board of Montessori Europe

Mirjam Stefels, Dr. Beata Bednarczuk, Dr. Jörg Boysen, Bojana Mikarić, Christian Grune, Ken Healy, Eva Bækkel & Michael Rubinstein

Montessori Europe e.V.

Grünstr. 23, 12555 Berlin, Germany

www.montessori-europe.net

Mail: office@montessori-europe.net

Phone: +49 30 21 480 18 40

President: Mirjam Stefels; Registered with: District Court Berlin-Charlottenburg, VR 36635 B

Please note: If you are a member of Montessori Europe, you do not have the option to sign out from this mailing list. If you are not a member and would like to sign out of the mailing list, please write us at office@montessori-europe.net.