

Presidential Report to the ECHA General Assembly – August 8th 2015, Odensee

Dear ECHA Members!

First and foremost, I would like to apologize for not being present at the General Assembly meeting. As you know, it turned out a year ago, that ECHA is mandated to make a General Assembly each year and not biannually as before. By the time we agreed on the time of the 2015 General Assembly, I had a previous assignment to another conference elsewhere. I thank Lianne to accept the interpretation of my report to you.

This report covers the slightly less than a year period from our excellent Conference in Ljubljana last September. Therefore I have good news: I will be brief.

ECHA is first and foremost serving its members. A few highlights of this work from the past year will follow.

- Revitalizing the former practice that we invite non-member participants of the ECHA conferences as ECHA members for one year, we doubled our membership from less than 200 to more than 500 members today. Invited members get ECHA News, access to our web-page, and can purchase High Ability Studies at a nominal price of 27 EUR/year. We hope that the improving activity and services of ECHA will convince many of our new members to extend their membership in 2016 and beyond. Please help us in these efforts! We also offer the nominal fee 27 EUR access to High Ability Studies to our student members.
- We continued the distribution of ECHA News as a pdf file directly to our members. There will be a special issue of ECHA News on the first 14 European Talent Centres. Many thanks for Annette Heinbokel for her continuous efforts to fill ECHA News with high-quality content! Please help her more in this!
- With the work of Lianne the Articles of ECHA (which were accepted in our 2014 Assembly) were re-incorporated to the Dutch Law. With this, after almost 20 years, ECHA is legally up-to-date again.
- Prof. Albert Ziegler started his term as the Editor-in-Chief of High Ability Studies in January. We thank for the vigorous and high quality start, and ask our members to contribute high quality papers to our journal.
- We have renewed the Facebook-Group of ECHA cancelling the former one. The new site enjoys a much higher popularity than our former site having now close to 350 members.
- We continue the renewal of ECHA's web-site; the team of Stefan Schmedt, our new web-master, Daniel Tuzes, the content manager and Balazs Hornyak, the editor, put up a high number of up-to-date news, currently establishes the Talent Map of Europe, as well as a personal access of the web-site for each ECHA members. Members of the General Committee will have personal sections on the web-site, and we will renew the photo and video upload options, too.
- The General Committee issued a call to organize the 2018 ECHA Conference. The Committee will decide and announce the location and time by November.

This were a few "small" steps to make ECHA's activity more continuous between its excellent conferences, but none of them is really small, since they are all vital to allow our members to share their expertise and knowledge.

As large-scale steps to give ECHA more strength we made and make three important changes:

1. First, we will continue our ECHA membership campaign. The interest towards the European Talent Support Network helped and will help us in this. However, your personal contribution can not be underestimated to convince people that it is worth to join to the ECHA family. When going home, please ask your colleagues and friends to be members to this excellent community!
2. The second very important breakthrough area is ECHA-education. The General Committee established an ECHA Education Board led by Christian Fischer and with the membership of Lianne Hoogeven, Victor Muller-Oppliger and Ulrike Kempter. They are about to finalize a set of criteria for ECHA-Diplomas, and will extend the education structure towards a European Masters degree and PhD in gifted education.
3. Last, but not least the 2014 General Assembly decided that ECHA will help and guide the formation of a European Talent Support Network. The Accreditation Committee elected in our 2014 General Assembly (led by Lianne Hoogeven, having Csilla Fuszek as secretary, and Margaret Sutherland, Christian Fischer and Colm O'Reilly, as members) did a great job to formulate the accreditation call, application form and criteria of European Talent Centres. Congratulations to their perseverance and high quality, tedious work! To our great pleasure we received 29 applications from 19 countries. In the first round of applications 14 applications from 13 European countries passed the very strict, 70% threshold of the scores, and became the first European Talent Centres. Congratulations to them and to all who applied! The accreditation certificates of the European Talent Centres will be presented at the European Parliament in the end of September. The Centres will consider various means to receive financial support from the EU. EU Parliament members, as well as the education and research sections of the European Commission are helping us in this process. The European Talent Centres will invite all organizations contributing to talent support in Europe to become European Talent Points by the end of this year. Please consider your application! There will be a second round of applications to become a European Talent Centre in 2016. This whole process (as we already witness it now) will strengthen ECHA in its education program, in the efforts to give more to ECHA members, and in the increase of its membership.

It was a great pleasure to see how the ECHA-spirit grew further in the year passed. Many thanks all of you for your contribution! See you in Wien in March 2016!

Budapest, August 2015.

Prof. Peter Csermely
president of ECHA