

## Presidential Report to the ECHA General Assembly – 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017, Brugg-Windisch

Dear ECHA Members!

First and foremost: great apologies that I am unable to present this report personally. Originally I had noted a different time of the hosting congress to my calendar, and by the time I realized the exact date, there was an overlapping commitment, which I was unable to change. I am thankful to Albert Ziegler, our vice-president to convey this report to you. The report covers the 1.5 years from our 2016 General Assembly in last March in Vienna. However, 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 1.5 years will follow.

- ECHA has its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. It was on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1987, when ECHA was founded in Utrecht. The General Committee decided to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday by collecting information on all International ECHA Conferences and by publishing them on the ECHA website. Please send your photos, or any other electronic document you have on former ECHA Conferences to Ragnild Zonneveld, the vice-president of the ECHA association in the Netherlands at [echahistory@outlook.com](mailto:echahistory@outlook.com). Ragnild will be helped in her work by our ECHA General Committee member, Lianne Hoogeveen, who keeps the ECHA archives. They will also lead the efforts to make a short history of ECHA training.
- After issuing two calls and receiving several, high quality applications, the General Committee decided that the 17<sup>th</sup> International ECHA Conference will be in Porto (Portugal) on 9-12 September 2020. The First Thematic ECHA Conference on Creativity will be in Dubrovnik (Croatia) on 16-18 October 2019. We very much hope that these conferences and our upcoming ECHA Conference in Dublin (Ireland) on the 8-11 August 2018 will have many-many participants. Please mark these days to your calendar.
- We have a stable number of paying members of ECHA having more than 310 members now. This is the same number we had 1.5 years ago, and a significant increase from the membership a few years ago, which was below 200. Our membership will increase further as former ECHA members start to register to our 2018 Conference in Dublin.
- Thanks to our Secretary, Colm O'Reilly and our web-master Emily Church, ECHA introduced a new membership application system, which sends automatic responses and renewal notices. We hope that this system will significantly reduce the number of previous – justified – complaints that ECHA received from the members.
- The General Committee introduced a new understanding of the duration of ECHA membership by dividing the year to four quarters. In this way it is not an economic disadvantage to become an ECHA member e.g. in December, since this membership is not expiring within a month (as in the former system) but in September 30<sup>th</sup> next year.
- Our scientific journal, High Ability Studies has increased its impact factor from 0.737 to 1.13. Great thanks to all contributors and to the Editor-in-chief, Albert Ziegler!
- We continued the distribution of the spring and autumn issues of ECHA News as a pdf file directly to our members. Many thanks for Annette Heinbokel for her continuous efforts to fill ECHA News with high-quality content! Please help her more in this!
- Thanks to the efforts of Victor Müller-Oppliger, most ECHA National Correspondents have been re-elected, and members were able to read the reports of about a third of them in the Spring issue of ECHA News. We will continue this series, and will re-vitalize this key asset of ECHA in other ways, too.

- The Facebook-Group of ECHA increased its membership from 500 to more than 1900 and has a very actively changing and high quality content. Many thanks for those who contribute to the site regularly. Please join our Facebook site, if you have not done so.
- We continue the renewal of ECHA's web-site; our new web-master, Emily Church is establishing a personal access of ECHA members to the ECHA-intranet allowing to start discussions and establish Special Interest Groups. We are also working to introduce a PayPal payment option for the ECHA membership fee.

These 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 focus on the following three important areas:

1. We will continue our ECHA membership campaign. The growing interest towards the European Talent Support Network 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 next important focus area is ECHA-education. The ECHA Education Board led by Christian Fischer worked out the basic components and conditions of ECHA training including the details of the application and evaluation of trainings which want to be ECHA trainings. The Board will give a detailed summary of its work at the 2018 ECHA General Assembly in Dublin.
3. The 2014 General Assembly decided that ECHA will help and guide the formation of a European Talent Support Network. Currently the Network has more than 300 cooperating nodes in 39 countries in Europe and all around the world. The 3<sup>rd</sup> round of the qualification of European Talent Centres (or Associated European Talent Centres from outside Europe) is open until the 15<sup>th</sup> October. The 3<sup>rd</sup> call to become a European Talent Point (or an Associated European Talent Point from outside Europe) will remain open until October 30<sup>th</sup>. Please spread these news when returning home! The European Talent Support Network established its own Council led by Albert Ziegler and served as its coordinator and secretary by Csilla Fuszek. The Network has its Youth Platform which also elected its Council led by Armin Fabian. The Youth Platform organized two very successful European Youth Summits in 2016 and 2017. All future international and thematic ECHA Conferences will incorporate a European Youth Summit making a new tradition related to ECHA.

It was a great pleasure to see how the ECHA-spirit grew further in the last 1.5 years. Many thanks all of you for your contribution! See you at the 16th International ECHA Conference (and on the next ECHA General Assembly) in Dublin between 8th and 11<sup>th</sup> of August 2018!

Brugg-Windisch, September 2017.

*Prof. Peter Csermely  
president of ECHA*