

Hamburg, 22 - 25 May 2008

Hosts to Europe and to the world

8th European Congress of Occupational Therapy held in Hamburg from 22 to 25 May 2008 characterised by international exchange of views and ideas, the latest occupational therapy studies, and developments in the profession

Karlsbad (dve): the 8th European Congress of Occupational Therapy held by COTEC, the European professional association, in the Congress Centre Hamburg (CCH) was at the same time the 53rd Congress of the German Association of Occupational Therapists (DVE) too. The keynote speaker Marilyn Pattison from the WFOT (World Federation of Occupational Therapists) also took up the Congress motto "Investing for progress – shaping our own future" in the opening talk.

The Congress attracted over 1,800 participants from 46 countries. The programme offered over 200 talks and presentations, and some 60 workshops on the issues of training, health promotion and prevention, rehabilitation and community-based practice. Papers were also read on the client areas of children and young people, adults and also on older people and the elderly. Presentations and workshops on occupational therapy research and science were also an important part of the programme. They covered evidence-based practice and assessment tools used in the profession, and the results of studies from various countries carried out as part of Master programmes in the OT academic world. Both the presentation of the latest research methods in the form of qualitative studies, as well as client-centred evaluations met with keen interest on the part of the visitors.

"Our discussions with our colleagues from Europe and around the world are clear confirmation for us of what we have been calling for, and that is basic training for occupational therapists in Germany at the higher education level", said Arnd Longrée, President of the DVE. He added that in the interests of the patients, it was essential for occupational therapy in Germany to embrace evidence-based care which was oriented towards researched efficacy studies, and which was not only already a tradition in all other countries but could also boast successes.

Kit Sinclair, President of the WFOT, told attendees about the WFOT's increased cooperation with the United Nations and WHO, the World Health Organisation. She underlined in particular the importance of the WFOT signing the United Nations' "Global Compact", which sees the World Federation giving a commitment to maintaining human-rights, social and ecological minimum standards. The WFOT, which the DVE has been a full member of for 50 years now, is seeking further close cooperation with the World Health Organisation.

"It really is something special being able to meet and compare notes with such a lot of colleagues from so many different countries", said Maria Fechtenkötter, who had

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come from Bingen. "You realise so clearly here that you are working on mutual fundamental convictions and frequently on similar issues too, regardless of which country or which cultural environment the colleagues come from", observed Andrea Schwarz-Brixius from Mainz. "My practical work with clients will definitely benefit from the latest developments in occupational therapy and the fresh ideas I'll be taking home with me", said Martina Bruns from Berlin.

The specialised exhibition also featured a poster presentation with over 160 national and international posters from all the disciplines of OT theory and practice. Some 80 exhibitors presented their products and services on an area covering approximately 1,000 sq. m., and it gave the visitors the opportunity to learn about the latest assistive equipment, therapy material and specialist literature.

Ahead of the Congress from 19 May there had already been working meetings of the COTEC committee and the some 40 European COTEC delegates to discuss future developments in the European OT association and to plan further decisions.

Date of the next German Congress of Occupational Therapy:
22 to 24 May 2009 in Cologne

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