

9th E.D.E.-congress : Distinguished by openness!

Openness was definitely the most important feature of the recent 9th E.D.E.-congress that was held from 22 through 24 September in the Slovenian capital Ljubljana. This openness was manifest in the main programme, in the parallel sessions and also during the proceedings around the congress activities.



Boris Koprivnikar, Wilfried Schlüter and Danica Simšič, mayor of Ljubljana

While the participants tended during the previous eight congresses to seek contact with people from their own country, this was scarcely the case during this congress with the participants this time seeking contact with participants from different countries. On the opening day Prof. Dr. Reimer Gronemeyer made a number of observations that were met not only by applause, but also by irritation; irritation particularly in response to his comments on Dutch euthanasia policy. The opportunity that the congress organization provided to discuss this at a later session was highly deserving of praise.

The participants who came from 18 countries, were able to enjoy during the official opening a tightrope performance followed by speeches from Boris Koprivnikar, the chairman of the organizing committee, Wilfried Schlüter, the E.D.E. president and the minister of social affairs of Slovenia. The newly appointed representative of the European Union was, to the regrets of those present, unable to attend. The reception held by the mayor at the castle of Ljubljana

however made up for that. After Ute Wiegand on political lobbying and Urs Baumgartner on price and quality day 2 was defined mainly by the parallel sessions on quality, sponsorship, conflict resolutions, information technology and volunteers.

The second day was rounded off with a gala evening in the Grand Hotel Union. Taking account of the party of the previous evening the third day commenced at 10 hour with a lecture by Prof. Dr. Frans van Wijmen on ethics and code of conduct. With a view to the intention already tabled of drawing up a European code of conduct Ton van Daelen, chairman of the VDZ the Netherlands received ample time to explain the Dutch example after which all E.D.E. associations from all countries present signed this document.

After an announcement had been made of where the next E.D.E.-congress is to be held in 2007 (of this more later) a satisfied president Wilfried Schlüter concluded the congress with hearty thanks to the host nation Slovenia.

EDE VISION

This is the 2nd edition of the electronic newsletter of the E.D.E.: E.D.E. VISION. This publication will inform you of the most recent developments within European care institutions and in particular on the position of the director/ administrator. The E.D.E. also intends to adopt a position in current issues within European politics in the context of care for the elderly. EDE VISION wants primarily to inform you



about projects of the E.D.E. and its member countries. Because this newsletter is published electronically, it is readily accessible enabling national associations to distribute the contents to their members. E.D.E. VISION is published by the VDZ the Netherlands.

Editor: Wim Schepers



Martin-Michael Birkholz: a tenacious type

He is one of the founders of the E.D.E. In 1989 he founded, as representative of the DVLAB (verband der Leiter/innen für Alten- und Behinderteneinrichtungen in Germany) together with, among others, representatives from the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Denmark the E.D.E. He was in that same year the driving force behind the first E.D.E.-congress in Berlin. A congress of special significance to the many participants. Berlin was showing at that time all the symptoms of great future change. A few weeks later, on 9 November 1989, the Berlin wall collapsed.



Although Martin was born in Berlin in the war year 1943, he spent his childhood years in Eisenach (Thüringen) and trained as baker. He even became master baker.

But immediately thereafter he took and completed in 1972 his studies in Berlin as social pedagogue.

In that same year he was already owner/director of two care homes in Berlin (Alten- und Pflegeheimen). These were followed by four more care homes in Minden (2), in Eltorf (NRW) (1) and in Eisenach (1). He was in charge of all of these care homes for nearly 15 years.

In the meantime he continued his studies at the GHK University in Kassel gaining his diploma as social gerontologist in 1991. In 1984 he became a member of the VLA (that has now been transformed to DVLAB) and has for the last 3 years been chairman of this association.

What most people don't know is that Martin, despite his busy professional life, makes time for his hobbies. He plays splendid TUBA but generally only within the confines of his family when he, together with his brothers provides the music during holidays such as Christmas and New Year. From time to time they also give concerts in care homes. He is also a fervent antiques collector.

He has an aversion to bureaucracy. He believes that the ever-increasing bureaucracy is a significant obstacle to the quality of the care for the elderly. That is also his main reason for being a member of the E.D.E. Improvement of the care for the elderly in care homes. Together with the other European member countries forming a platform and in this way realize quality standards and norms and table these within the European Union and try to attain them. The E.D.E. should for this reason receive more recognition from the EU.

Martin calls therefore upon his E.D.E.-colleagues, notwithstanding their hectic daily work schedules, to invest more effort in realizing the objective of the E.D.E.

If you would like to get to know Martin Michael Birkholz better, reserve now in your diary the following congress dates for the 10th E.D.E./ World Congress in Berlin from 15 to 17 November 2007.

10th EDE-congress and 1st World Congress in 2007 in Berlin

During the morning session of the final congress day in Ljubljana on 24 September 2005 the chairman of the D.V.L.A.B. Martin Michael Birkholz announced that the next EDE-congress would be held in Berlin from 15 to 17 November 2007.

This 10th EDE-congress will also be the first EDE world congress.

The first EDE-congress was held in September 1989 in Berlin.

Berlin was then in the grip of major, imminent changes to world politics and that was something that the participants of that congress experienced very intensely.

A few weeks later, on 9 November 1989, the deeply hated and detested Berlin wall collapsed.

The collapse of the wall will also be the basic theme for the congress in 2007, now however for managements in the care sector for whom walls will also have to be flattened if there is to be an opportunity for them to exercise their professions with integrity, innovation and competence.

Not only regulations, political decision making and interference, but also own abilities may function as insurmountable walls that need to be finally removed.

Walls are often thought of as being insurmountable and that was also believed of the Berlin wall. That however was also breached!

At the basis of the collapse of the Berlin wall was beyond doubt the then president of the USSR, Michael Gorbachov.

It is for this reason that the organization committee has invited him as patron and guest of honour for the opening of this 10th EDE-congress.

The substance of this congress will to a large extent be determined by contributions from sincere, innovative and competent speakers who will prove that it is in our profession too to demolish walls with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of our care.

E.D.E. Code of Professional Conduct

E.D.E. is an international federation of national professional organizations of managing directors in long term care for the elderly in 18 European countries.

The Code of Professional Conduct is based on the constituent charter and mission statement of E.D.E. The Code also reflects E.D.E. policy on corporate governance in the field of long term care, especially in residential care homes and other retirement facilities. Additionally, the Code is related to accepted terms of employment in Europe for managing directors in long term care.

In consequence of their affiliation with E.D.E., national organizations are expected to endorse the Code and to promote that its standards be observed by their members, with all circumstances taken into account and within reason.

Moreover, the Executive Committee of E.D.E. recommends reference to the Code of Professional Conduct in employment contracts and job specifications of managing directors in member countries.

The articles of the Constituent Charter of E.D.E. referring to conditions for affiliation with E.D.E. also apply to the Code of Professional Conduct. For the time being, the Executive Committee of E.D.E. will not systematically evaluate whether national organizations affiliated with E.D.E. actually are complying with the Code. Nevertheless, in cases of justified misgivings about compliance, the Executive Committee will open a meticulous and balanced investigation, and, whenever necessary, take administrative action in accordance with the constituent charter of E.D.E.

Furthermore, the Executive Committee of E.D.E. supports all affiliated organizations sponsoring voluntary arrangements of peer review among their members, using the Code of Professional Conduct as a starting point. Finally, other professional associations in long term care, unions, organizations representing the interests of consumers and clients and governmental and public institutions in member countries are invited to call organizations affiliated with E.D.E. into account on their compliance with the Code. Partly because of this, both the Code and the list of national organizations affiliated with E.D.E. have been made public.

E.D.E. is an international federation representing national professional organizations of innovative, responsible and competent managing directors in long term care, especially in residential care homes and other retirement facilities. Their members are in support of socially orientated entrepreneurship, with a view towards the future. They have affinity with frail, elderly people and with delivering care and services to this group of people.

INNOVATION

In developing and offering products and services for the elderly, members of E.D.E. and of affiliated national organizations are taking meticulous care to give priority to their clients. The needs and expectations of elderly people have precedence, also when these needs and expectations are changing in due time and differ from person to person.

National organizations affiliated with E.D.E. guarantee that all care and other services provided by facilities that are run by their members will be geared, now and in the future, to the individual wishes and capabilities of elderly clients. Principles of equality and accessibility are thereby taken into consideration. Quality assurance and continuous quality improvement in long term care are important points of interest for E.D.E. and affiliated organizations.

RESPONSIBILITY

Members of E.D.E. and of affiliated national organizations are approaching their colleagues in a positive manner and adopt an attitude of professionalism, both within and without the facilities for which they are responsible. They are promoting cooperation and mutual support among themselves and are open to constructive criticism. Members are dealing conscientiously with ethical questions. Furthermore, they will refrain from harming the standing of the profession or the reputations of their colleagues.

They are carefully aiming to achieve a right balance between their own interests, the interests of the facilities they run and the interests of the field of long term care in general. Members of E.D.E. and of affiliated national organizations are fully aware that they set an example to all those employed in the field of long term care for the elderly.

They are paying attention to the position of employees and volunteers. They intend to provide good employment conditions, in the broadest sense.

COMPETENCE

Members of E.D.E. and of affiliated national organizations are continuously aiming at maintaining, and, if necessary, raising the level of their individual expertise. Amongst other things, they achieve this objective by participating in continuing education and post-graduate training, through peer review and by mutual exchange of know-how and experience, both within and without their professional organizations.

Members are carrying out their professional duties in a transparent and accountable manner. They are at all times prepared to explain their professional acts to clients, personnel and their representatives and also to budgetary and supervisory bodies. Furthermore, within the context of E.D.E. and affiliated national organizations, members are willing to exchange views on each others professional performance, both invited and uninvited. Within their own facilities, members are seeking to develop a transparent structure of corporate governance that fits their individual experience and capabilities and does justice to the standards set out in the Code of Professional Conduct.

EDE members prepare code of conduct for directors in the care of the elderly

An important element of the congress in Ljubljana was the EDE Code of Conduct to be prepared for directors in the care of the elderly.

On the final day of the congress all representatives of the various EDE member countries signed a declaration of intent to develop this Code of Conduct.

As basis for the discussion in the various EDE countries the code of conduct redrafted for this purpose for the members of VDZ the Netherlands that you will find below applies.

The discussion in the member countries will now commence and the intention is to definitely adopt the code of conduct at the first world conference in Berlin in 2007.

News flashed from the member countries E.D.E.

BELGIUM • ADMR (Jean Liegeois). The association is represented in two round table meetings with the Ministry of Wallonia on nutritional quality and careers of care workers.

• VDOR (Marc Notredame). This association is also to become a member of the E.D.E.

DENMARK • (Eric Lehm). While there has never been a private sector there is now a change of heart and clients are now free to choose.

• Since there have been once again in Slovenia no participants from Denmark, the administration will hold in April 2006 discussions with the Danish managements.

GERMANY • DVLAB (Martin Birkholz). Two ministries are holding round table meetings with representatives from DVLAB with a view to curbing the bureaucracy. The aim is to create uniform training for the occupation of Heimleiter.

ESTONIA • (Egon Simson). A great deal of discussion about the motivation of the employees, but hardly any on the quality of the

care. The Estonian association is engaged with this point.

FRANCE • Adepca (Pascal Champvert) and Fnadepca (Angela Cluzel). The Ministry has organized a round table conference from which has emerged that there is a deficit of 10,000 care places. The new minister wants to widen the discussion.

ITALY • South-Tyrol (Irene Morandell). 70 houses, of which 63 public sector. There has for the last three years been a separation of accommodation and care. There is a discussion on quality norms in the care sector. Directors are appointed for five years only.

THE NETHERLANDS • VDZ the Netherlands (Neeltje Peters) On 27 October a white book will be presented to the Junior Minister as response to negative reporting on incidents.

AUSTRIA • (Edgar Führer). Many problems with varying legislation in the nine provinces. In addition to that many low-paid and under-

trained employees from surrounding countries.

SLOVENIA • (Boris Koprivnikar). The EDE-diploma is now legally accredited. 400 of the planned expansion of 5000 care places have now been realized.

CZECH REPUBLIC • (Martin Dürrer). There is still no mandatory training for directors of care homes. Previously 2 years long, 2 days per month. Fresh attempts are being made with subsidies.

SWITZERLAND • (Carlos Marty). Here too criticism of the quality of care, to few places and too much legislation. Care homes are now expected to provide homecare. Hope is vested in a solution from Europe.

A positive image, here's how!



Increasingly and in almost every member country of the E.D.E. there is concern over the image of the care provided because that image is determined primarily by news of incidents that receive a great deal of attention in the press.

Of course all is not perfect in the thousands of European care homes. Were it so then the managements would not be working so hard to improve quality. That does not mean

however that the image should be determined by incidents.

VDZ the Netherlands has called on its members to submit instances from practice *with which residents and employees are happy* and has been overwhelmed with the reactions. These reactions have been assembled in a publication that, in part financed by the ministry involved, was presented to the junior minister responsible



Clemence Ross-van Dorp during the annual general meeting of VDZ the Netherlands (27 October 2005).

The management committee of the E.D.E. is currently examining the possibility of taking this approach in the context of E.D.E. too in order to convince the political leaders, who were once more absent during the congress in Ljubljana, of the deserved positive image of the care of the elderly in Europe.

If you are unable to wait any longer, please send your contribution to the secretariat of the E.D.E. via: www.ede-en.org