**Minutes for the European Regional Assembly 2022**

**Athens, Monday 11th July 2022**

Venue: Athens Metropolitan College AMC, Athens Campus, 42 Akadimias Str., 10672

The meeting started ad 14.30.

1. **Opening of the meeting**

AdrijanaVišnjić-Jevtić started the meeting welcoming and thanking everyone for participating.

Effrosyni Katsikonouri welcomed and thanked everyone as well.

Adrijana Višnjić-Jevtić thanked Ingrid Engdahl for her support and advice.

1. **Appointing chair, secretary and 2 scrutineers**

The following roles were proposed and appointed:

Chairperson: Milada Rabušicová

Secretary: Eleni Alifieraki

Scrutineers: Mary Moloney and Renata Stawczyk-Mizinska

1. **Roll call**

Seventeen countries were represented at the European Regional Assembly as follows:

Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, Sweden, Turkey, and United Kingdom.

Eleven countries were absent:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine,

1. **Adoption of the Agenda**

Milada Rabušicová asked if there were any questions about the Agenda. Agenda was adopted unanimously.

1. **Minutes from the last European Regional Meeting**

Ingrid Engdahl spoke about the last European meeting, which was held virtually: it was a successful on-line meeting.

Meeting minutes accepted.

Ingrid Engdahl gave an overview of the transition of VP Europe and talked about collaboration with Adrijana regarding the responsibilities of the European presidency.

The 1st year of the pandemic was a shock. The 2nd year of the pandemic we found new ways to deal with it and we developed ways to support teachers which they could follow from home.

Ingrid Engdahl said that Elin Eriksen Ödegaard (the OMEP World Treasurer) put in place reports from all over the world, which shows the broadness of the countries that represent OMEP. We reach more people with on line communication. Daniele Perruchon raised the question as to whether we will have a World Assembly every two years instead of every year.

Adrijana Višnjić-Jevtić talked about new ways to promote OMEP: to continue with the newsletter, to exchange news and expertise, but also to develop new means of communication, for example Facebook in order to share what countries are doing. Adrijana invited everyone to participate and contribute. On the Newsletter there is information about Facebook.

1. **Reports from National Committees in Europe**

Milada Rabušicová asked everyone to share information about what they have done in their countries, suggesting one minute for each country.

Belgium started by saying that as they are still a preparatory committee they haven’t done much yet, but they have many plans, including the plan to go and visit children in Ukraine. They reminded the meeting that Belgium is a federalised country with three languages.

The Bulgarian President was in the 1st year of her presidency and reported that they are increasing membership and becoming more established as an organisation with fruitful activities and they have 300 members this year.

Croatia talked about projects and conferences. An international project about sustainability is in progress.

Cyprus has given out to all presidents cards of the “color your rights” project, talked about the project and the book, conferences, festivals and exhibitions, as well as their efforts to approach new members.

The Czech Republic committee have been invited to nominate deputies for the ministry of education to discuss the curriculumand talked about their efforts to support refugees (who tend to stay in Prague and the big cities).

France talked about participation in seminars, conferences, a national congress, and the project “color your rights”, as well as collaboration with universities and participating in Forum “Art for peace”, supporting refugee children.

Greece talked about their collaboration with Ingrid Engdahl for the organization of the world conference in special pandemic situation, participation to the “color your rights” project and training activities for teachers with great success. In May 2023 the 13th Panhellenic conference will be held in Thessaloniki co-organised with the University.

Germany talked about their peculiar situation of having 16 different federal states and their efforts for quality development and equal systems, and dealing with children rights, environmental issues, and refugee children on the borders of Germany.

Iceland celebrated their 30th anniversary just before the 2020’s lock down. The preschool settings were not locked down during the pandemic. They are working on a new national curriculum with changes to the preschool curriculum.

Ireland has an increase of members (70 members now) and are having lots of discussions: the impact of Covid on children and families, updating the Early Childhood Curriculum, focus on social and emotional development and focus on the age group of birth to 3.

Since the official re-establishment in 2020 Italy has worked on involving young people, renewing communication strategies on social channels, collaborating with other European committees, implementing national activities and projects involving arts and culture in order to fight against child poverty, and a stress on the importance of Early Childhood Education across the country.

Norway talked about how the lock down affected their planned activities, but now they are moving forward with local working groups in several cities of the country and seminars about Early Childhood Education and Children’s Rights.

Poland has been affected last year not only by the pandemic but also by the war and their support for Ukrainian children and families. They have been doing on-line meetings and webinars to support Ukraine children and parents and to exchange knowledge about life, in collaboration with university. A book has also been published.

The Slovak Republic reported a very difficult time for kindergartens and schools, as a neighboring country to Ukraine. Activities have been undertaken, in collaboration with university, about forest schools, children’s holistic development, project day of kindergarten to see it by eyes of children and a special book about how children feel.

Sweden has been working on a large ESD project involving 200 preschools and a big report will be published soon. They participated in the “color your rights” project and made a calendar with the drawings. They had surveys about child health and a project about potty training for the 1-2 years old, campaigning on the benefits of autonomy and challenging the current mindset, introducing a scientific argument for the teachers and the industry which produces disposable nappies.

Turkey has been working with disadvantaged children, collaborating with university, giving presentations with the participation of academies and producing publications and 60 podcasts.

United Kingdom has been doing on-line seminars (webinars), continues to run the ESD citizenship award, and has published a book in collaboration with Croatia, Norway, Greece, and Poland which examines practice, research and policy in Partnership with Parents in 5 European Countries. They are planning the OMEP UK Annual Conference and AGM on the 15th October at Liverpool Hope University.

Milada thanked all about their reports.

Adrijana summed up that the OMEP has been very active. In some countries OMEP members contribute to national educational policies which shows importance of the OMEP. Adrijana invited everyone to publish words with all the work and spread ideas about Early Childhood.

Current projects are:

Erasmus project by OMEP national committees: Sweden, Czech Republic, France, Ireland and Croatia,

ESD project (everyone is encouraged to apply) – the call will go in September.

Color your rights (to be continued).

Ingrid spoke about the ESD project connected to the diaper project and encouraged people to make a new approach on this and exchange ideas.

1. **Preparation for World Assembly2022**

Preparation for World Assembly tomorrow.

Program of the next days (assembly and conference) with exact timings of starting and finishing for each day and definition of the venues.

1. **Changes of the Constitution / Administrative Guide**

Discussion about changes of constitution and administrative guides. The constitution was established for the first time in Paris, France and the administrative guides were made afterwards to support it.

Adrijana reported about EXCO of this morning: discussion about the virtual assembly and a change of the agenda tomorrow.

Daniele Perruchon confirmed that the administrative guide is in many parts and suggests a framework from people from each region (young people and people with experience in law) to work on changes.

Maria Vassiliadou shared Cyprus’s experience that it took 4 years to change constitution and suggested a survey to see about the renovations and regulations in every country.

Geir Aaserud talked about Norway’s experience on the matter.

Liz Hryniewicz said that in UK also they are in the process of changing and has found it hard work to find the archives.

Effrosyni Katsikonouri reported that in Greece 3 years ago they changed to a contemporary constitution with a lawyer’s help.

Milada suggested a discussion of what kind of changes (big or minor) first, before forming a group.

Maria Vassiliadou said that a majority of 70% is needed.

Ingrid said that for every little piece of change (for example the decision to meet every two years instead of every year), a huge discussion and a survey is needed.

Serap Erdogan suggested every OMEP committee be represented in the government of their country. Ingrid explained the representatives pyramid that goes in world – region – local level.

Matteo Corbucci would like to understand some more information about the mission of this small group that it is about to be formed, if it is going to be limited in the present conversation, if it is only suggestions going to EXCO (no voting or final decision), the interpretations of the points to discuss and change, if the discussion concerns only practical issues (is the assembly going to be virtual next year?) and how many people forming the group with regards of mixture of young people and people with experience.

There was an expression of interest about forming a group. The priorities and tasks of the group were discussed, together with technical issues, like if it is going to be a reformative or advisory committee, and the possibility to make a survey. All national committees were invited to discuss and then to put things together and suggest EXCO a guide in a 3 months period.

1. **OMEP European Regional Assembly 2023**

There were 3 suggestions: for 2023 Turkey or Cyprus / for 2024 Sweden or Cyprus. Past conferences hosted by these countries: Turkey had hosted the World Assembly in 2003, Sweden the World Assembly in 2010 and Cyprus the European Assembly in 2011.

All three countries presented their applications talking about their key points and the collaboration with universities.

Sweden presented by Ingrid Engdahl.

Turkey presented by Serap Erdogan.

Cyprus presented by Maria Vassiliadou.

Voting process for each year’s assembly agreed:

Cyprus will host the European Regional Assembly 2023.

Sweden will host the European Regional Assembly 2024.

1. **Any Other Business**

Elin Eriksen Ödegaard raised the issue of the war in Europe, a very serious situation for two members of OMEP Europe and how it affects children.

Liz Hryniewicz said that in the European assembly in Canterbury had raised such matters in the resolution.

Milada said to consider in the world resolution about the children staying in the Ukraine, not only the refugees.

Ingrid agreed that the world resolution should always include the war issues.

Elin Eriksen Ödegaard suggested we have this in the agenda for the future, as the war in Ukraine and food from Ukraine is a world situation (world famine), it doesn’t concern only Ukraine, and we cannot ignore it.

Adrijana suggested we discuss it further these days we are here and exchange ideas.

1. **Closure of the meeting**

Adrijana Višnjić-Jevtić gave thanks to Milada Rabušicová, to Ingrid Engdahl, to Eleni Alifieraki and to everyone contributed at this productive meeting and democratically discussed all these important issues and closed the meeting.

The meeting finished at 18.45.

Minutes taken by Eleni Alifieraki