

Interim Desk Report

January 2004 – July 2004

Desk change

I took over the desk in January 2002. I went to Utrecht with the car and took all the desk-material with the car to Berlin. It was several big boxes, which I was given from Clemens Huitink (who hosted me to stay over night) and Paul Fijn.

Together with Kerstin, who supported me all the time, in Berlin we went through all the staff – it was exclusively old magazines.

Afterwards Clemens supported me to make a list with the member-organisations and addresses of the members, there was no material. Clemens' Laptop was stolen shortly before, so all material had to be reconstructed.

Paul supported us to install the connection to the ENUSP Bank (ABN AMRO in Utrecht), to receive bank accounts and internet-access.

Together with Kerstin I tried to make a financial beginning of the ENUSP-account, because we did not have any figures about past money incomes and expenses, no overview about outstanding debts or money to expect – nothing. Clemens was supportive and tried to find or remember data, and Paul was supportive to find copies of ENUSP material at place of the former ENUSP desk in the Clientenbond bureau.

Clientenbond had treated ENUSP as a subgroup in its own balances since the beginning of ENUSP as registered organisation, because money from the Dutch government went to the Clientenbond to pay for ENUSP-desk-work. It was not possible to receive original records of ENUSP money topics when the desk moved to Berlin and needed a financial basis for balancing incl. the documents. Even the original ENUSP-statutes, paid by ENUSP, was treated as Clientenbond-possession and not handed out to ENUSP.

There was no material about the applications and contracts referring to European Commission's grants. Data were delivered from Mental Health Europe, because in new applications you have to inform the Commission about all applications in the last years. Mary van Dievel from MHE was very supportive. Paul was supportive to organize copies, as far as they were to find.

Originally it was planned to install the desk in the meeting-rooms of runaway-house organisation, but after a split of this group, I hosted the desk in my publishing facilities, where I have the full equipment.

Money

In this topic Kerstin supported me fundamentally. We had to make everything new from the beginning. To ground the accountancy of old data in Dutch language, often full of mistakes, was not easy. We tried to make it transparent towards the board and towards the public, to enhance the financial situation of ENUSP by different applications to the European Commission, to develop support membership, to ask for donations. As ENUSP is registered in the Netherlands as non-profit organisation according to the Dutch non-profit law, ENUSP cannot ask German institutions for donations, because German tax administration cannot accept Dutch non-profit law.

But the Berlin tax administration is supportive and proposes small statutes changes, which give ENUSP non-profit statutes additionally in Germany.

As long as the international transfer costs were very high, I took or transferred all money to a German account, and when this was not possible any more, because a Dutch organisation with Dutch statutes cannot have a German bank account, I took all money cash and paid invoices cash too, to save money transfer costs. This problem does not exist any more since July 2003, when international money transfer in Euroland cannot be more expensive than national money transfer.

The statutes require a balance, examined by an accountant. This is quite expensive; in Germany non-profit organisations do not need these documents. Until now, there is no problem that the balance is made by a Berlin accountant according to the German balance law. Hopefully this will be accepted by the Utrecht Chamber of Commerce, which might refer to the Dutch balance law. A united Europe might solve these problems.

Board-meetings

Different meetings were organised, and the possibility came, that there was no money for travel costs any more, Ronald Bartle in Berlin instructed us how to deal with MS Messenger to have Internet phone conferences as expensive as local calls.

Communication

The desk organised the communication between the desk and board, which was not a big problem, because I am board member additionally. I tried to make the meetings, decisions, topic-lists and minutes transparent and published them in the website. The mailing list (hosted by Topica) meanwhile has about 130 members; to prevent misuse or expended use, a second parallel list for more private topics was installed.

A lot of mails had to be answered, from organisations, individual persons. Invitations to congresses had to be forwarded, or to be demanded, reimbursement of costs included.

EU-Programmes

As Secretary I represented ENUSP in programmes funded by the European Commission, lead by Mental Health Europe. Material about the "Harassment"-Project is available on the web site. Newsletter, enhanced group-registry, poster and anti-discrimination-recommendations are products of this collaboration.

Cooperation

Cooperation with the board was o.k. It was important that some board members answered mails responsible and quickly, especially Gábor, Mary, Piotr, Marinka, Heleen, and Paul as long as he was allowed by the Clientenbond chair. In case of heavy problems Gábor was there.

One major partner was Mental Health Europe. In general workers of MHE are friendly and supportive. Sometimes single people of Mental Health Europe have been a little discriminating, like Leo de Graaf, the former President. An example:

I was at the Mental Health Europe (MHE - member of WFMH) conference in Slovenia, May 27 (Thursday) to May 29 (Saturday) 2004. On Friday, day II of the conference, Joe Lucas, chair of Hamlet Trust, invited me to join a meeting of Pan-European organisations. When I was at the meeting point, MHE-Chairman and psychiatrist Leo de Graaf told me in front of the other participants (other European organisations like WHO, European department), that the meeting was organised by MHE, that I (as the represent of ENUSP) was not invited by MHE, and that therefore I was not allowed to participate. When I asked him, if Joe Lucas afterwards will be allowed to tell me what they speak about, Leo de Graaf seriously told her, and me that the outcome of the meeting might be secret and so she would not be allowed to tell me anything. Obviously some other people attended to this meeting, no matter that they were not invited by MHE. I do not know what the meeting was about.

Later I heard, that within that meeting of Pan-European groups Leo de Graaf was heavily criticized (by participants and other MHE board-members), and afterwards too, because he disgraced MHE and because of his discriminating behaviour towards me. One MHE board member told me, that he felt sorry for Leo de Graaf's behaviour. Leo de Graaf did not ask for excuse and there was no public excuse from MHE in the conference towards me up to today.

One of the main topics of the congress was anti-discrimination politics and involvement of users/survivors of psychiatry on all levels to combat discrimination.

To stay friendly and work for better conditions was an important task all the time. An other example for cooperation-problems was the realisation of the transnational agreement within the project that whenever there was additional paid work, first users/survivors should be asked to do this work. When then there was work really (paid translation) it took about 22 unanswered e-mails and a 14-month discussion to succeed.

Website

The web site was developed. Paid by the Commission, the registry was expanded for Austria, Spain, Netherlands, UK and France. Newsletters and a lot of other stuff are now available in the Internet. Because of lack of money, people without Internet should use internet-cafes, otherwise the information does not reach them.

A special topic of the web site was to install homepages and ENUSP-descriptions in all 39 bigger European languages. Finally the programme Babelmap enabled me to create homepages with signs in other languages, for example Cyrillic signs. Volunteers had to be found to make translations.

Thanks to all who supported the desk.

Berlin, July 16

