

TOWARDS A EUROPEAN TALENT SUPPORT NETWORK

“...it will make a great difference to our children and their children whether they live in a society where talents are valued and developed to their utmost or in one where their potentials are left stagnant and unfulfilled.”

(Csíkszentmihályi – Rathunde – Wahlen, 1996)



Edited by Csilla Fuszek, Peter Grosschmid and Balázs Hornyák
Revised in English by Emma Tóth-Plumtree



Lobbying in the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 2012

Talent has become more and more of a key factor determining the competitiveness of a country or even a continent. In the past 25 years, awareness of the needs of the most able individuals increased all over the world and especially in Europe. This is attributable to the recognition that **talented people of all ages are the life insurance of Europe**, especially at times of economic and social crisis.



ECHA (EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR HIGH ABILITY)

In the past 25 years a number of initiatives appeared on the Continent to promote talent support. One of the first measures to coordinate the relevant efforts in Europe was the establishment of the

European Council for High Ability in 1988. Ever since its foundation, ECHA's major goal has been to act as a communications network to promote the exchange of information among people interested in high ability, i.e. educators, researchers, psychologists, parents and the highly able themselves.

The basis for this specific European Council comes from a belief in our common cultural heritage, which is distinct from what is encountered in other parts of the world. Although Europe is made up of different countries with many languages, we share the traditions and outlooks of societies in which education has been widely available for centuries. We also share the same kinds of problems, and it makes sense **to work towards their solution together**.

Stemming from its traditions – and especially due to its consultative status as a non-governmental organization (NGO) at the Council of Europe – ECHA has to stand in the forefront in building a **European Talent Support Network**; a network of all people involved in talent support.



Péter Csermely,
President, European
Council for High Ability

HUNGARIAN EU PRESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE ON TALENT SUPPORT, 2011

Hungarian talent support professionals had joined the common workshop activities focusing on the practice of talent support organized by ECHA even before Hungary's accession to the Union. This relationship intensified later on, and Hungary acquired something of a lead role. **Hungarian talent support**, especially the achievements of the past few years, is **of outstanding significance** in European comparison. The long-term, 20-year, Hungarian talent-nurturing strategy, its systematic approach and in particular the so-called **talent point network co-operation model**, has been accompanied by considerable **European attention** ever since its conception. Joint work has resulted in talent support conferences of decisive professional importance organized in Hungary with the help of the ECHA network in 2006 and in 2011.

The Hungarian EU Presidential Conference on Talent Support



Hungarian EU Presidential Conference on Talent Support, 2011

organized in 2011 highlighted the theoretical aspects and the policy implications of talent support issues at European level, and on the last day of the Conference, the **Budapest Declaration on Talent Support** was accepted by the 300 participants (experts and decision-makers) representing 24 European countries. In the declaration the participants agreed to invite stakeholders from every country of the European Union to convene annually to discuss the developments and current questions of talent support. Upon the invitation of the Government of Poland, the next conference was held in Warsaw, in October 2012. It was organized by the Polish Ministry of National Education together with the Polish Centre for Education Development.

The Hungarian Presidency Conference was a major step forward in the coordination of talent support efforts in Europe and, besides the Warsaw conference, one of its outstanding results was the formation of European Talent Centre – Budapest, the first European Talent Centre ever.

WRITTEN DECLARATION PROPOSAL IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



Flyer of WD 34/2012

Partly inspired by the Final Declaration of the Hungarian Presidential Conference, a **Written Declaration** was composed with the contribution of the talent and educational policy experts of several EU countries and MEPs. This is most important, considering that the topic of talent support, of relevance for the competitiveness and economic stability of the EU, was last treated by the European Parliament in 1994.

Four members (Kinga Gál, Mojca Kleva, Barbara Lochbihler, Hannu Takkula) of the European Parliament have initiated to issue the EU Written Declaration on talent support. The Declaration refers to the marked emphasis of the Europe 2020 strategy on talents as depositories of creativity and innovation, without whom it would be inconceivable to preserve the competitiveness of the European Union. It stresses that the European Parliament is deeply concerned that Europe faces an increasing shortage of, and a growing need for, discovered talents. It notes that talent support enhances the self-esteem, employability, social mobility and cohesion of EU citizens, and it is an important ingredient of programmes for the underprivileged social groups.

A group of Hungarian young people travelled to Strasbourg in November 2012 to assist with promoting the Written Declaration on supporting talent in the European Union. The group consisted of representatives of European Talent Centre – Budapest, talent experts, young researchers, and winners of innovation competition. To support the cause represented by the Written Declaration, a **European Parliament hearing** was held in Brussels on 23 January, 2013 on the future and options of European talent support. Representatives of the European Commission, the Presidency



Parliamentary Hearing on the Support of Talents in the EU, 2013

of the European Council for High Ability (ECHA), academics, experts and representatives of NGOs participated in the event and were addressed by Anneli Pauli, the Commission's Deputy Director General of the DG for Research and Innovation. The speakers of the event were Ms Kinga Gál, MEP (EPP), Ms Mojca Kleva, MEP (S&D), Dr. Anneli Pauli, Mr. Michael Privat, Prof. Franz Mönks, and Prof. Péter Csermely, President of the European Council of High Ability (ECHA).

Every speaker emphasized that **each European citizen may be the repository of some form of talent and hence** any initiative helping professionals to discover and develop talents should be supported. At times of economic crises, it is even more important to pay attention to talent support, as it is a key measure for the sustainability of research, innovation and competitiveness in Europe. In his speech, Prof. Csermely focused on the current and future efforts of European governmental and non-governmental organizations to develop a European Talent Support Network.

Despite of the decision of the European Parliament not to favour the form of written declarations 178 MEPs had signed the written declaration proposal, which shows a broad support of talents in the EP.



Press conference on lobbying activities of the WD 34/2012

EU THEMATIC WORKING GROUP ON TALENT SUPPORT

Confirming the importance of WD 34/2012, an EU Thematic Working Group on supporting talent and creativity was initiated by Prof. Péter Csermely. As a starting activity, the EU Thematic Working Group will work out the detailed agenda of discussions and possible EU member state co-operation in the area of talent support. This agenda may include items like:

- mutual information on measures to promote curricular and extra-curricular forms of talent support, including training for educational professionals to recognise and help talent;
- consideration of the development of an EU member state talent support network bringing together talent support communities, Talent Points and European Talent Centres in order to facilitate co-operation and the development and dissemination of the best talent support practices in Europe;
- consideration of celebration of the European Day of Talented;
- suggestions to the Commission to include talent support as a priority in future European strategies, such as the strategies guiding the European Research Area and the European Social Fund.



Lobbying in the
European Parliament,
Strasbourg, 2012

NEW STEPS TOWARDS A EUROPEAN TALENT SUPPORT NETWORK

The next step towards the establishment of the European Talent Support Network should include the build-up of a much deeper and more intensive contact structure among European actors involved in talent support (ECHA, the European Parliament, the European Commission, other related Europe-wide NGOs and multi-national firms).

Such a network could contribute to solving the problems that Europe is facing nowadays; new problems need novel solutions, inconceivable without creativity and the contribution of talented people. **Networks not only bring together** different stakeholders interested in talent support, but they also help generate new forms of support. Each European citizen may hide a special type of talent. We need to discover and tap this huge reserve for the benefit and success of the Old Continent. The Talent Support Centres of the European countries could serve as regional hubs of this network building a contact structure going beyond their own country, while the core elements of our unique network could be the so-called European Talent Points.



Talent Support map of Europe, April 2013

PROPOSED CRITERIA OF EUROPEAN TALENT CENTRES AND TALENT POINTS

EUROPEAN TALENT CENTRES

European Talent Centres are proposed to be registered by the Committee of the European Council of High Ability (ECHA, www.echa.info). A European Talent Centre should be an organization or a distinct part of a larger organization established for this purpose.

PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS FOR A EUROPEAN TALENT CENTRE

- has an expertise of at least one year to coordinate the talent support activity of minimum 10 thousand persons
- has minimum two full-time employees who are dedicated to the tasks listed below
- is able to provide high quality information on theoretical and practical issues of gifted education and talent support
- is able to keep records on the talent support activity of its region including the registration, help and coordination of European Talent Points and making this information available on the web (in the form of a Talent Support Map of the region)
- is willing to cooperate with other European Talent Centres and with ECHA

- is willing and able to coordinate joint actions, international events, Talent Days and other meetings in the field of talent support
- is open to be visited by representatives, experts, talented young people of other European Talent Centres
- is able to help and influence decisions on regional, national and/or European policies concerning the gifted and talented.

EUROPEAN TALENT POINTS

European Talent Points are registered by the European Talent Centres. A European Talent Point may have the properties of one or more of the following organization types:

- organizations/institutions focusing mainly on talent support: research, development, identification (e. g: schools, university departments, talent centres, excellence centres, NGOs, etc.)
- talent-related policy makers on national or international level (ministries, local authorities)



Parliamentary Hearing on the Support of Talents in the EU, 2013

- business corporation with talent management programs (talent identification, corporate responsibility programs, creative climate)
- organizations of gifted and talented people
- organizations of parents of gifted and talented children, or
- umbrella organization (network) of organizations of the above types.

PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS FOR A EUROPEAN TALENT POINT

- has a strategy/ action plan connected to talent (identification, support, research, career planning, etc.)
- is able and willing to share information on its talent support practices and other talent-related matters with other European Talent Points (programs, conferences, Talent Days) including sending the necessary data to a European Talent Centre and sharing at least one best practice/research result on the web
- is open to cooperate with other European Talent Points including the hosting of visiting representatives, talented young people from other European Talent Points.



Hungarian EU Presidential
Conference on Talent
Support, 2011

EUROPEAN TALENT CENTRE – BUDAPEST

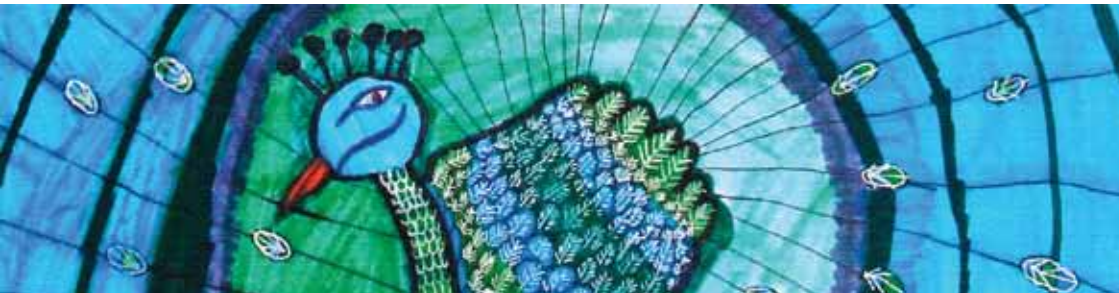


Establishment of the Centre

The desire to establish a Budapest-based European Talent Centre arose at the European Talent Support Conference organized in 2011 as part of the Hungarian EU Presidency programme. In the Final Declaration of the Conference, the participants proposed to create European Talent Centre – Budapest to foster and coordinate the joint European talent support activities. The organization was formed under the aegis of the Association of Hungarian Talent Support Organizations in 2012.

Mission and long-term goals of the Centre

There is a plethora of parental, school-based or social talent support methods, but all of them are driven by the realization, whether based on tradition or on a conscious or unconscious decision, that **excellence represents value** and it is to be recognized and respected all over Europe.



As the First European Talent Centre, the mission of the Budapest Centre is to offer organizations and individuals acting in a network-based form or framework structure an opportunity to work together to achieve the following:

- to give talent support a priority role in the transformation of the sector of education;
- to reduce talent loss to the minimum in Europe,
- to accelerate the sharing of information on the topic by integrating talent support initiatives of the Member States of the EU into a network
- to make it easier for social actors interested in talent support to find each other through the European talent support network.



Comenius Preparatory Meeting, 2012

Short-term objectives

- As a hub of a European network, try to trigger mechanisms which bring organizations and individuals together to facilitate collaboration, share best practices and resources
- draw the Talent Support Map of Europe
- organize conferences for professionals in the region
- do research on the field of talent support
- collect and share best practices.



Activities of the Centre

The activities of the Centre fall into four large groups: advocacy, research, organisation (conferences, meetings, Talent Days), contact-keeping (meeting delegations from all over the world) and sharing information.

As a result of our colleagues' enthusiastic work, two volumes of International Horizons of Talent Support as well as best practices collected from the Carpathian Basin were published. The books provide an overview on best practices within and without the European Union. The books as well as other reviews of best practices and studies are available on our website: <http://www.talentcentrebudapest.eu/content/best-practices>

The Organization

International Advisory Board

Csermely, Péter (President, European Council for High Ability; President, Hungarian National Talent Council; Head of the Advisory Board of European Talent Centre – Budapest)



Freeman, Joan (elected Fellow of the British Psychological Society; Founding President of the European Council for High Ability; Honorary Fellow of the College of Teachers and Visiting Professor at Middlesex University)



Hoogeveen, Lianne (developmental psychologist, Head of the Center for the Study of Giftedness (CBO) of Radboud University, Board Member of the 'Internationales Centrum für Begabungsforschung'; Member of the Executive Committee of the European Council for High Ability)



Director: **Csilla Fuszek**

Office Manager: **Zsuzsanna Szilágyi**

link: <http://www.talentcentrebudapest.eu/>

Contact: network@talentcentrebudapest.eu

THE HUNGARIAN BEST PRACTICE

In this section we describe some achievements of talent support in Hungary as an example of the many similar actions in Europe.

National Talent Support Council



Talent support has long traditions in Hungary. Large numbers of successful programmes run by schools, state/local governments, churches and NGO-s were created in the past century all over the country. One of the most remarkable steps was the establishing of the **National Talent Support Council** in 2006 followed by a 20-year **National Talent Programme** passed by the Parliament in 2008. The implementation of the National Talent Programme is co-ordinated by the State Secretary responsible for education financed by the **National Talent Fund. The Fund is supported by the offering 1 % of the personal income tax by Hungarian citizens.**



The intention of talent support initiatives from the beginning was to involve and strengthen the civil sphere. It was recognised that the professional and civil sphere's efforts on talent's development can be more effective – in order to achieve their purpose – with proper government participation. The ultimate goal of the Program is to create a talent friendly society.

The objective of the Hungarian National Talent Support Council, a forum established by Hungarian and cross-border NGOs supporting Hungarian talents, is to reach common positions on the matter and to ensure the further development of the Hungarian talent support system by studying the relevant domestic and foreign examples; by organizing professional fora; by grasping the support opportunities and considering new forms of support and by announcing calls for applications.



Péter Bajor, President of the Association of Hungarian Talent Support Organizations

The Council, under the presidency of Prof. Péter Csermely, is the instrument of the dialogue between the talent support organizations and the administration; it promotes the various forms of talent identification, selection and support, and the recognition of the talents themselves and their coaches/masters; the relevant training activities, and also networking, self-organization and commitment to social responsibility among the talented youth. It is an independent organization created on civil society initiative; its functions include coordination, direction-setting and occasionally organization. Representation for the Council is provided by the Association of Hungarian Talent Support Organizations (Hungarian acronym: MATEHETSZ) as legal body.



Association of Hungarian Talent Support Organizations

The Association of Hungarian Talent Support Organizations is a non-profit association managed by Péter Bajor; it contributes to the unfolding and utilisation of talent through identification, selection and development of the talented youth. It is the owner of the priority project called National Talent Point, the European Talent Centre and the professional manager of the Talent Bridges Programme. The association managed the Hungarian Genius Programme that aimed at developing a nationwide co-operation network of talent support organizations, which will help create or strengthen bonds between the educational and talent support processes covered in schools and such opportunities provided by NGOs or even private persons. The greatest achievement of the programme was the Talent Point Cooperation Model, which is maintained by the National Talent Point.



Hungarian EU Presidential Conference on Talent Support, 2011



National Talent Point

The **National Talent Point** was created by the Association of Hungarian Talent Support Organizations as part of the National Talent Programme. The primary function of the National Talent Point is to keep in touch with the domestic and cross-border network of Talent Points and Talent Councils to ensure information exchange and to provide quality assurance for the talent support institutions of the network and training for the professionals working there.

The National Talent Point operates mainly on funds granted to it under the restricted call for tenders of the National Talent Fund, but its parent organization, the Association of Hungarian Talent Support Organizations does its best to attract also domestic application-based funding sources and donations and also EU funds.



First National Talent Day, 2010

Talent Bridges Programme



The Talent Bridges Programme is part of the long-term (20-year) National Talent Programme, and it is scheduled to last until mid-2014. Its direct antecedent was the Hungarian Genius Programme which focused as a first step on the establishment of a talent support network and on providing in-service training to talent support professionals. The Hungarian Genius Programme resulted in the establishment of the network of Talent Points in the Carpathian Basin, and it put in place a populous team of professionals with adequate qualification to detect/identify and develop talents.

The Talent Bridges Programme focuses on gifted/talented children and young persons. Its goal is to deepen the social integration of the talent support network; to trigger more active social participation; to convert talent support initiatives to practice. It stimulates the operation of the Talent Points; activates the network of professionals provided relevant in-service training and of the stakeholders of talent support in an effort to provide direct support to the talented youth and to advance their development. It defines as the centres of gravity the need to develop the potentials of the talented to the full, and to ensure the social utilisation of their results; to nurture the sense of social responsibility of the talented, and to “plough back” the energies of the mature, successful and dynamic talents into talent support. Besides, it contemplates a domestic communication campaign addressing society in general and the groups contributing to talent support one by one to call their attention to the model examples, the best practices and the opportunities for action, and it launches a campaign within the European Union to raise awareness abroad of the Hungarian talent support model and the mutual benefits inherent in it, and to strengthen the relationships between the domestic and the foreign talent support workshops and programmes.

The main tenet of the Programme is that talent support is a national cause, as expressed by the relevant Parliamentary resolution: talent is a main driver and its expansion and utilisation fosters social and economic growth. That, in turn, makes it imperative to support the professional as well as the personality development of the talented youth, to make them capable of “enduring” their talent without suffering any psychological injury and of finding their place and ideal field of operation.

Talent Bridges Programme is a priority project enjoying EU support; it is co-funded by the European Social Fund. The European Union and the Hungarian State allocated the Programme a budget of almost HUF2 billion. Its activities are organized under 14 sub-projects. The Programme can be joined through the calls being announced on the www.tehetseghidak.hu website.



Sub-projects of the Talent Bridges

Programme

Talent career tracking	Training organization
Development of the parent – teacher – talented youth triangle	Involvement of successful talents in talent support
Inter-regional knowledge transfer	“Bring the Hungarian talents home”
Support for talents in a disadvantageous situation and/or with special educational needs	Youth social responsibility programme
Talent Marketplace	Communication offensive
Encouragement to organize same-age peer groups	<i>Talentum</i> , a professional periodical in Hungarian
Organization of enrichment programme pairs	Links
Support for the exceptionally gifted	www.tehetseghidak.hu
	www.tehetseg.hu

Publication realised with the support of Grant Scheme No. NTP-EUT-M-12 announced by the Institute for Educational Research and Development and the Human Resources Support Manager on commission of the Ministry of Human Resources “To support international experience exchange serving the objectives of the National Talent Programme, and to promote the operation and strategic further development of the European Talent Centre – Budapest”.

Responsible publisher: Péter Bajor, President of the Association of Hungarian Talent Support Organizations

Drawings created by the students of the Igazgyöngy (Real Pearl) Foundation

Design: Teri Zsák

Pre-press: Jet Set Tipográfiai Műhely

Printed by D-Plus

Responsible manager: László Németh

Printed in Hungary

