European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education (ENOTHE) - STRATEGY 2015 – 2020

Introduction
At the Annual Meeting (AM) 2014, the General Assembly mandated the Board to create a five year strategy from which yearly action plans can be identified. This reflects the networks desire to be mindful of European policy and the need to be more strategic and proactive in addressing educational, health and social issues across the European region. Occupational therapists and occupational therapy educational programmes need to be aware of the policy context they operate within, future trends and emerging fields of practice in order to remain relevant and credible moving forward.

As a small organisation, without official Non-Governmental Office (NGO) status, it is necessary that ENOTHE collaborate with other organisations, networks and stakeholders to promote and develop the profession and to communicate occupational therapy views and contribute to the wider debate on health and social policy. As an educational network, ENOTHE’s actions should have an influence and the content and pedagogy in the education of occupational therapy professionals. This strategy document will enable members to participate in discussions and development of yearly action plans for the strategic period.

Background Context
During the two decades since ENOTHE was established the network has been engaged in its Annual Meetings and projects, an important arena for occupational therapy educators to meet, share experiences, find inspiration and not least establish international partnerships. ENOTHE members and their representatives on the board, value ENOTHE’s contribution to developing occupational therapy in Europe by promoting occupational therapy education. We would like to see the network continue to develop as a resource and arena for collaboration. To be fit for purpose ENOTHE needs to address contemporary issues such as trends in health and social care, decentralization of services and multidisciplinary collaboration. Additionally ENOTHE is engaging in discussion about the tuning competences relevance and sustainability to ensure that competences comprise and include social and political changes, E-health and entrepreneurship

In creating this strategy the board have discussed the policy issues that are likely to influence the next five years. These are outlined below:

- The World Health Organisation’s Health 2020 Strategy is aimed at strengthening public health through the life course. In particular strategies for mental health, children and adolescents, with continued work on non-communicable diseases (NCD) and the ageing population. NCDs are chronic diseases such as neurological, respiratory, cardiovascular, cancer and palliative care. Providing healthcare for NCDs is becoming increasingly expensive, so better managing of chronic disease through public health, primary care and health improvement strategies are more pressing.
UNESCO's message is about creating holistic policies that are capable of addressing the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development. See more at: http://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco#sthash.iM6JjZEf.dpuf

European 2020 targets also form part of the political context in which occupational therapists learn and practice. The five targets are focused on employment for 16 – 25 year olds, poverty reduction aimed at children, tertiary education for 16 – 35 year olds, increases in % Gross Domestic Product (GDP) earmarked for research and development and improvements to emissions affecting climate change. Whilst these targets at face value may have limited application to Occupational Therapy, there are potential opportunities in research, work and education for example through Horizon 2020 (research) and other initiatives aimed at health and social care.

The overarching initiatives influencing all the above areas are concerned with public health, health improvement and primary care, as these are seen to be preventative. They will require personal engagement and responsibility and be more accessible to greater numbers of people. Inequity of access though will continue to be a challenge as many people in society are severely disadvantaged through poverty and lack of social participation opportunities.

Strategic Aim
To ensure that occupational therapy and occupational therapists are visible and able to actively promote the contribution to European health and societal issues.
To ensure that the education of professional occupational therapists produces graduates who are fit for the future and able to work within an evolving political context.

The following four strategic areas were defined to develop yearly action plans:

Strategic Area 1: Education

To support, develop and improve educational programmes for European occupational therapist that are comparable high quality, relevant and responsive to changes in society.

- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT – EMERGING FIELDS: To promote the OT contribution and role in the health and social system within inter-professional collaboration by focusing on emerging fields such as urban development, OT and technology, decentralization and community work.

- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT – COMPETENCIES: To enhance competencies in relation to social, political, cultural and technological development and by including entrepreneurship, innovation and internationalisation.

- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT – FIELDWORK: by providing links and networks for cooperation to take place within and between educational programmes, fieldwork educators, stakeholders and clients in order to address the occupational needs of clients and society.
Appendix 3.2

- **TEACHING COMPETENCIES**: To support the development of teaching and learning competences by the integration of evidence based teaching methods and promoting sharing of experiences through mobility between students, staff and practitioners.

- **SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT** - To disseminate and strengthen evidence informed practice by linking research and occupational science to occupational therapy practice in existing and emerging fields.

---

**Strategic Area 2: Partnerships**

Developing strong partnerships locally, nationally and internationally to increase our presence, to raise our profile and visibility when working with health and societal issues and to promote an occupational perspective of life.

- **INTERNAL PARTNERSHIP** to develop a European OT organisation with three elements comprising of ENOTHE, Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries (COTEC) and Research in Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science (ROTOS) each contributing from their respective roles in society such as teacher, practitioner, and researcher to support joint international programme initiatives of ENOTHE members.

- **EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS** to encourage a solid relation between theory discourses, practice actions and research priorities by building partnerships at University level in different interdisciplinary projects, activities and networks, to build partnerships with the third sector (social partners as NGOs, organisations, associations, cooperatives and community groups) and other social partners.

- To identify OTs with political awareness or knowledge within specific fields to become members of partners in health and social care systems at all levels to raise awareness of the importance of occupational therapy in health and social care systems among the public, community, opinion makers, politicians and decision makers on different dimensions through local, national and international levels. Examples to date include representatives in primary care, European Parkinson network Geriatrics.

---

**Strategic Area 3: NETWORK ORGANISATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Continue to work towards the development of a sustainable network organisation with improving membership engagement comprising all European regions.
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES – Create effective internal communication strategies by establishing communication channels for members—website, newsletters, social media and emails and to create effective external communication strategies by supporting distribution of information concerning European health, social and educational policy.

- **BRANDING** – to develop a unique brand and style for use in public relations and marketing by creating a logo, business cards, email addresses, newsletters and social media forums, website, facebook and twitter

- **GOVERNANCE** – Transparency and openness of internal procedures by developing good governance procedures by producing a set of governance documents that guide the operations of organisation of all activities undertaken on behalf of members

- **ADMINISTRATION** Securing financial sustainability underpinned by robust, fit for purpose administration systems by increasing membership to meet current costs and sustain future developments.

- **Offering transparency to members of the financial administration activities that are undertaken by the office and the elected board. Including regular review current costs of all activities and pricing structures for membership and annual meetings**

- **Exploring options for a future permanent base of the ENOTHE office**

- **MEMBERSHIP** – To incorporate university members from all European regions by creating financial and practical solutions. Marketing and promoting the value and contribution that becoming a member of ENOTHE brings.

**Strategic Area 4: OT-EU Umbrella**

To collaborate with COTEC and establish a new European umbrella organisation to coordinate and strengthen the impact of occupational therapy in Europe

- **ORGANISATION** - To develop an organisational structure to facilitate communication, joint decision making and effective administration, whilst preserving the autonomy of each respective organization by engaging in joint projects, organizing joint congresses in 2016 and 2020 and developing technically and visually compatible integrated websites.

- **ROTON** - To collaborate in developing, marketing, branding formats and strategies facilitating the establishment of ROTO network as part of the European umbrella organisation by coordinating and sharing resources in connection with participation and representation at conferences and in other relevant forums.

- **EXPERT GROUPS** - To establish mutual expert groups in case of European wide issues focusing on minimum standards of degree content, scientific development, professional qualifications and regulations of Occupational Therapy in Europe

11 September 2015 ENOTHE Board