

The set of activities of individual European Talent Centres may differ: some tend to focus more on teacher training due to their university linkages; others on working directly with young talents. Most are in contact with the highest-level decision makers of their state, its ministries competent in education, and help decision making through their research activity and professional recommendations. This diversity is crucial to the strength and complexity of the emerging European Talent Support Network. Within the Network, the European Talent Centres now assume more responsibility for coordination and information exchange at regional, national or all-European level.

#### Talent Points:

- organise local activities in the field of high ability;
- are organisations focusing on talent support (for example educational institutions), and/or on highly abled, young people, their parents, teachers, mentors, policy makers.

Access to the Call for applications to become a Talent Point and to application forms and selection criteria is made available on the ETSN website constantly. Participation in the European Talent Support Network requires community thinking: each country contributes its own perspectives to articulating and achieving the common goals; at the same time, networking provides its members structural, professional and emotional security. Currently, the European Talent Support Network materialises in the common activities and interactions of its members. In practice, this means the joint design of calls for tenders, network-building or the implementation of the youth programme.

#### Network Council

The need for a management committee had become obvious by the second half of 2016. The Network Council has five members and it is responsible for strategic management of the Network. At the election held with the active participation of the whole Network, Prof. Albert Ziegler was appointed Chairman of the Council and Fuszek Csilla its Secretary, Colm O'Reilly its treasurer, Prof. Mojca Jurisevic and Antonios Apostolou as representatives. Network Council officials were re-elected at end-2018 and previous post holders retained their positions.

#### Youth Platform

- The Youth Platform gathers talented youth and young people interested in talent education delegated by Talent Centres and Talent Points.
- Some 80 in all from 20 countries at the moment, and it plays an important role in the Network.
- The Youth Summit is their most prominent annual event where they have an opportunity to share their concerns and experience about talent support, to learn and to listen to presentations on the topic.

#### OUTLOOK

For the members to experience the benefits of network-based activities, ETSN members had to invest voluntary work creating the network instead of considering it a simple administrative framework. However, to start work in a network, strategic thinking and considerable initial "capital injections" are needed. In the longer run, however, networking can offer many, almost unforeseeable, advantages to all concerned:

- It can accelerate the substantive exchange of best practices in talent support,
- increase the number of international research projects,
- ensure more efficient intra-regional resources utilisation and promote creative productivity through the cooperation of talented young persons.

Although the Network is part of the wider, more remote, environment of the talented individual, its goals and activities can create system-level synergies that will impact on the action potentials of individuals through their political, cultural, economic and social macro-systems surroundings.

- throughout Europe, a growing number of young talents will be provided real attention and support, assistance and an opportunity to unfold and experience their talent through the European Talent Support Network.

ETSN is still in its infancy, but hopefully it will continue to grow and gather together all European organisations that deem talent development extremely important. Of course, this will require further growth combined with international cooperation and advocacy, that will make it obvious that talent development does not only depend on the direct environment of the youth concerned, but also the supportive attitude and assistance of talent-friendly societies and international networks.

#### USEFUL LINKS

- Website of the Network: <http://etsn.eu>
- The website displays the map of the institutions making up the network, with the key data of the participating Talent Centres and Talent Points: <http://etsn.eu/map-of-etsn>
- On 2-3 occasions, it delivers its newsletter, the so-called TalentWeb: <http://etsn.eutalentweb-newsletter/> to Network members. Please sign up!
- You can more read more about the Youth Platform here: <http://youthplatform.etsn.eu>

#### HOW TO JOIN

To be a European or an Associated European Talent Point you can register through the website: <http://etsn.eu/apply-to-join-etsn>

To be a European or an Associated European Talent Centre please look for our annual calls on our website: <http://etsn.eu>

#### CONTACT PERSONS

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## DESIGNING A EUROPEAN TALENT SUPPORT NETWORK (2011-2019)

Enrichment, collaboration, cooperation

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – THE FORMATION OF ETSN

Collective thinking about the European Talent Support Network (ETSN) started in 2011 in Budapest, in the wake of the Hungarian EU Presidential Conference on Talent Support. The Final Declaration of the Conference stressed that it would be worthwhile to align and organise into a network of the relevant European initiatives in order to increase the weight of talent support in European educational policies.

- A breakthrough came with Professor Csermely's election to the post of President of the European Council for High Ability (ECHA) in 2012. Within 2 years, ECHA adopted Professor Csermely's idea, i.e. a novel, network-based approach to talent support and undertook to support the establishment of a European Talent Support Network.
- Between 2012–2014 several professional consultations were coordinated and international roundtable discussions were organised to clarify concepts for the Network.
- Following this series of consultations, the first document presenting the components of the future European Talent Support Network was compiled by Professor Csermely by Autumn 2014, and it was adopted by the General Assembly of the 2014 Ljubljana conference of ECHA almost unanimously.

- This was followed by the election of the members of the first “operative unit”, the so-called Qualification Committee, consisting of talent support professionals of 7 countries, in charge of the evaluation of European Talent Centres.
- The criteria of European Talent Centre have been specified and converted into a call form on the basis of the adopted document and further Qualification Committee consultations over several months. The first “Call to Be a European Talent Centre” appeared – still on the ECHA website – in February 2015.
- Based on the applications, the Committee selected the first 14 European Talent Centres in the summer of 2015, and the Network was officially founded with these participants on 29 September 2015, in the Brussels European Parliament building.
- The second round (2016) of the Talent Centre call opened the way for including also so-called “Associated” Talent Centres from outside Europe. Since 2016, the Talent Centre call has been announced annually to help institutions from all around the world join the Network.
- By the first half of 2019, the Network had 25 centres, 21 in European and 4 in non-European countries.
- The call to be a European Talent Point was uploaded to the ECHA website and its translated versions to the sites of the Talent Centres in 2015; Thanks to the joint networking activity of the Talent Centres, ETSN has been joined by almost 400 Talent Points from 44 countries.

## HOW COULD TODAY'S NETWORK BE DESCRIBED?

The European Talent Support Network is a continuously transforming system under development, that is made up of European Talent Centres, of equal standing, representing its hubs, and European Talent Points representing the nodes of the Network.

### Talent Centres

European Talent Centres are institutions doing excellent professional work in several talent support fields within a region or in the whole of a country. They are quite different from each other in many respects. Some are non-profit, others for-profit organisations; some are public entities or even background institutions of national ministries, others are NGOs, but there are also Church-maintained institutions among them. Understandably, most work within universities, but the others also have considerable professional teams that can provide up-to-date relevant information on talent support.

- They have to demonstrate that they conduct professionally sound talent support activity in their country or in a major region, with a professional staff that can provide information of adequate quality on matters concerning talent support;
- They must be open to networking, to efficient information transmission, talent point registration, exchange of best practices, cooperation, participation in joint projects with other Centres/Points.
- Their tasks include, in addition to their own quality work, network-building and supplying relevant professional information to the Network members.

# EUROPEAN & ASSOCIATED EUROPEAN TALENT CENTRES IN 2019

